Germany versus Russia: A Social History of the Divide between East and West

by

Florian Gassner

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

The Faculty of Graduate Studies (German)

The University of British Columbia
(Vancouver)
March 2012

© Florian Gassner, 2012
Abstract

The present study investigates European and in particular German representations of Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Specifically, it discusses the image of Russia with regard to its influence on the formation of German identity. This dissertation demonstrates that cultural and intellectual distinction from an ‘Eastern’ Russia was pivotal for consolidating the ‘Western’ identity of Germans in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The point of departure for this inquiry is the work of Larry Wolff, who argued that the origins of the modern east-west dichotomy lay in the late Enlightenment period. Wolff, however, by focusing on the history of ideas, describes but the first inception of this divide. This study, in contrast, through the example of Germany, discloses the socio-historical factors which led to the popularization and consummation of the distinction between Eastern and Western Europe in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Thereby, it becomes evident that the modern east-west dichotomy was not the result of intellectual speculation, as Wolff asserts. Rather, its origins are inextricably linked to core processes in the formation of European civil society, such as the rise of the nation state idea, the popularization of liberalism, and the proliferation of racial chauvinism. Considering these factors helps fully appreciate the power of the modern east-west dichotomy and its sustained influence on German identity.
Preface

In the course of my research, I have published part of my findings in the following articles.


**This article pertains to Chapters II through VIII.**


**This article pertains to Chapters II, III, and VIII.**


**This article pertains to Chapters IV through VIII.**
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii
Preface ................................................................................................................................................ iii
Table of Contents ................................................................................................................................. iv
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................ v
I. Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 1
II. The Early Eighteenth Century: The Birth of European Russia .............................................. 15
III. The Late Eighteenth Century: Russia Inside and Outside of Europe .................................... 48
IV. Revolutionary Europe: The Three Eastern Courts ................................................................. 75
V. 1815: A System of Alliances and Congresses ........................................................................... 101
VI. The Early Nineteenth Century: Central, Eastern, or Western Europe? ............................... 119
VII. 1830-1848: A War of Words .................................................................................................... 140
VIII. The Crimean War: East and West Divided .......................................................................... 169
IX. Conclusion .................................................................................................................................. 195
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................................... 198
Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my supervisory committee for their exceptional support in the course of my studies and during the completion of my dissertation. Professor Peter Petro ensured that I at all times kept my eyes on the big picture and retained the love for my research topic. Gaby Pailer provided me with every opportunity to establish myself in the academic world. My special thanks, however, go to Professor Thomas Salumets, the most dedicated mentor one can imagine.

I would also like to thank the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of British Columbia for generously supporting my studies with a Four Year Fellowship for PhD students. The same thanks go out to the University of British Columbia’s Faculty of Arts, who made possible my enrolment at UBC with a Faculty of Arts Graduate Award. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Eppich Family, the German Speaking Community of B.C., and the R Howard Webster Foundation, whose financial support significantly contributed to the completion of this dissertation.
I. Introduction

German attitudes towards Russia continue to be determined by the notion of an elementary divide separating East and West. The political developments of the past two decades, it seems, have not weakened the popularity of this binary. When, for example, in the fall of 2010 German chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicholas Sarkozy, and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met for a strategic summit in French Deauville, the participants spoke not of efforts towards a ‘Russo-German-French’ or ‘Russo-European’ rapprochement, but of a closer alliance between (Eastern) ‘Russia and the West.’ Ultimately, the persistence of this concept suggests that there indeed exists a sedimented rift separating inherently different cultures in the East and West of Europe. However, this not only belies the novelty of the modern East-West dichotomy, which dates back but a century and a half. With regard to Germany and Russia, it also conceals the close relations of these two nations in the time preceding this divide. As a matter of fact, before Germans came to think of themselves as a Western nation in the middle of the nineteenth century, Eastern Russia had often appeared much closer and far more kindred than the neighbours to the west.

Nevertheless, Germans today consider themselves citizens of a genuinely ‘Western’ nation with a decidedly ‘Western’ past. Recently, the leading historian August Winkler even termed German history *The Long Road West* (2006),¹ thereby implying that although

Germans may have struggled to accede to the Western community, this had always been their ultimate goal. This claim Winkler reinforced in the first volume of his ambitious *History of the West* (2009). In it he argues that the foundation of the modern West of the French, British, and German tradition was laid as early as the first centuries of the Common Era with the spread of Christianity. Winkler thus privileges and, in fact, essentializes Europe’s most recent history by projecting the modern East-West dichotomy onto a near-mythical past. As a consequence, the divide between East and West and, by extension, between German and Russian cultures appears an indisputable fact. However, other recent scholars have come to challenge this notion. They emphasize that German history is just as closely connected to the cultures and peoples of those regions which today constitute Eastern Europe. *The German History in the East of Europe* (10 vols., 1992-1999) is but the most monumental witness to the past Germans share with Poles, Ukrainians, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, and the Balkan peoples. This encyclopaedic endeavour recalls that the vast territories beyond the Oder River and the Bavarian Forest more than once set the stage for landmarks in German political, intellectual, and cultural history, from the Battle of Tannenberg (today: Stębark) in Poland (1410) over the foundation of the first German University in Prague (1348) to the publication of Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* in Riga (1781) and the signing of the *Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany* in Moscow (1990). However, this aspect of German history enjoys little currency in popular discourse. Rather, it is eclipsed by the hegemonic notion of a ‘Western’ identity.

It is important to bear in mind that in terms of symbolic geography the meaning of ‘east’ and ‘west’ is indeed arbitrary. Throughout European history, the binary has been invoked in different contexts to describe a wide variety of intercultural encounters. It was used to distinguish western Rome from eastern Byzantium, the Catholic from the Orthodox Christian creed, and Christian Europeans from Muslim Ottomans. Finally, in modern times, it has come to divide the European continent itself. Larry Wolff not long ago endeavoured to disclose the origins and the ideological implications of this last shift in his seminal study

---

Inventing Eastern Europe (1994). According to Wolff, the notion of ‘Eastern Europe’ was the by-product of efforts to imagine a ‘Western European’ identity based on the intellectual achievements of the European Enlightenment. “It was Western Europe,” he asserts, “that invented Eastern Europe as its complementary other half in the eighteenth century.” The distinction built on the notion of ‘civilization,’ a neologism Enlightenment philosophers in France and Britain had conceived to express the superior refinement of their respective cultures. Subsequently, Wolff argues, this concept was rendered more precise by contrasting it to Europe’s eastern realms which lacked these qualities. “Civilization discovered its complement, within the same continent, in shadowed lands of backwardness, even barbarism.” Wolff therefore concludes that ‘Eastern Europe’ was invented as a significant other that rendered meaningful the self-image of the ‘civilized West.’

Inventing Eastern Europe has since attracted much criticism, not however for the claim that Europe’s less developed eastern regions – and in particular the Russian realm – were used as an example to give substance to the Enlightenment’s idea of ‘civilization.’ Wolff provides ample and convincing evidence for this thesis. He has rather been challenged for attributing the invention of ‘Russian barbarism’ to the Enlightenment and, moreover, for imposing on the philosophes of the late eighteenth century today’s ideologically charged usage of the term ‘east.’ Marshall Poe, the author of A People Born to Slavery (2000), has brought to attention that “Wolff neither proves that the East-West rift originated in the 18th century (it originated in the 19th), nor that the philosophes authored the image of the Russian barbarian (earlier generations had done this).” With regard to the latter point, Poe remarks that a “more extensive examination of Western Moscovitia of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demonstrates that […] virtually every book, pamphlet or cosmographical vignette written before 1700 about Russia (and there

---

5 Ibid.
were many of them) describes the Muscovites as comparatively primitive.”

‘Russian barbarism’ had been a trope in European public discourse long before the time of Kant and Voltaire. On the other hand, Wolff fails to document that the Enlightenment indeed used the east-west binary to express the contrast between ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilization.’ There is no clear indication that the *philosophes* considered Europe’s eastern territories a cultural unity which need be excluded from and intellectually dominated by ‘the West.’ As a matter of fact, as Ezequiel Adamovsky points out, “in a book that contains hundreds of quotations, Wolff provides evidence of only five appearances of what he thinks is a ‘name’ for the object of possession.” To be sure, the sources Wolff cites frequently refer to ‘the east of Europe’ and ‘the Orient of Europe.’ However, these terms are used as geographical denotations, not as part of a symbolic discourse. Such a discourse, Adamovsky explains, “is not composed by ‘words’ alone, but also by a whole set of tacit and interconnected assumptions and representations able to condition our behaviour, which are to some extent ‘independent’ from individual authors, and reproduce themselves through social practices.” In contrast, *Inventing Eastern Europe* does not show how the Enlightenment philosophers’ juxtaposition of ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilization’ shaped the perception of their contemporaries. Notably, Wolff’s study lacks a socio-historical analysis that could explain how this dichotomy became part of the cultural canon of the West. Rather, the author suggests the unlikely success of intellectual elites in imposing on the European mind a substantial modification of social reality.

Ultimately, by relying on intellectual history to describe a momentous social shift, Larry Wolff brings a knife to a gunfight. The problem is that the modern east-west

---

8 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 246–7.
11 Jan Assmann defines canon as “the founding and stabilizing principle of a collective identity which, at the same time, is the basis of individual identity. Collective identity is the means for individuation through socialisation, self-realization through integration into ‘the normative consciousness of an entire population’ (Habermas). The canon lays the foundation for the nexus between personal identity and collective identity. It represents the whole of a society and at the same time a system of interpretation and valorization. By committing himself to the canon, the individual integrates into and builds his identity as part of this society.” Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München: C. H. Beck, 1992), 126.
dichotomy is not an objective taxonomy. It is a complex ideology which has been and continues to be informed by a multitude of social and political factors. Arguably, Inventing Eastern Europe does point to a formative phase in the conceptualization of this discourse. However, it fails to disclose how and for which reasons the ideas of the Enlightenment proliferated in the western part of the European continent. As a result, Wolff’s notions of ‘East’ and ‘West’ lack the openness of social practices which may be adopted, challenged, or repudiated. Rather, they appear ready-made and incontestable. Notably, another modern scholar of Russian-European history has adopted a similar approach. In Russia under Western Eyes (1999) Martin Malia argues that foremost “high or elite culture” determined Russia’s place within the European imagination. “It is this level of discourse,” he suggests, “that has governed the West’s representation of Russia.”

Malia, too, thus factors out the socio-historical circumstances which led to the popularization of this elite culture. Moreover, he essentializes both ‘Russia’ and the ‘West’ – most remarkably, for example, when he claims that “Russian Russia since Peter the Great has generally moved toward convergence, however halting with the West.” On the one hand, speaking of ‘Russian Russia’ seems to imply that, in between a multitude of possible Russias, Malia has successfully identified an immutable ‘real’ Russia. On the other hand, the notion of convergence necessarily invokes the idea of a ‘West’ that is monolithic and timeless. It appears immune to historical change and supersedes the heterogeneous cultural identities it encompasses. As a point of departure, it therefore dictates rigid parameters for the analysis of Russian-European relations. To be sure, both Wolff and Malia provide very insightful studies about an exciting aspect of European intellectual history. Their methodologies, however, prevent them from fully appreciating the modern east-west dichotomy as a socially and historically contingent construct.

Keeping these qualifications in mind, it merits returning to Wolff’s theses as they do indicate a significant cultural shift taking place in Europe at the close of the eighteenth century. Although the Enlightenment philosophers did not invent the idea of ‘Russian

---

12 Martin Edward Malia, Russia Under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), 10–11.
13 Ibid., 12.
barbarism’ and were not the first to contrast it to European ‘culture,’ they did further substantiate this notion of cultural difference. Moreover, they laid the intellectual foundation for those socio-historical processes which then in the nineteenth century would corroborate the modern east-west dichotomy. In the German lands, the most significant of these developments was the rise of nationalism in the aftermath of the Coalition Wars (1792-1815). Above all, the inception of a national identity invited speculation on how Germans differed from their neighbours. Eventually, Russia became the most significant complement for the German self-image of a ‘Western’ nation. This dovetailed another fundamental shift in German society – the wide and positive reception of liberal ideas. Tsarist Russia provided a fitting contrast to notions of social mobility and popular governance, and thus became a favourite bugbear of the liberal movement. However, the divide between East and West was fully consummated only with the proliferation of modern racism. The notion of race essentialized feelings of difference, and thus made possible an unequivocal demarcation between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ between ‘East’ and ‘West.’ The rise of the east-west dichotomy is thus inextricably linked to core processes of the formation of German civil society in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. As a consequence, writing the history of the divide Germans imagined between ‘East’ and ‘West’ entails an investigation into the rise of the modern German self-understanding.

The study of how the perception of the other impacts identity formation is still strongly influenced by the pioneering work of Edward Said. His has become the dominant voice in the discussion of how “the construction of identity […] involves the construction of opposites and ‘others’ whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their difference from ‘us.’”14 A generation of scholars has since taken their cue from Said to analyze the image of the other as a purposeful cultural construct rather than the result of an ethnographic effort.15 “What is commonly circulated [within a

---

culture],” Said points out, “is not ‘truth’ but representations.”\textsuperscript{16} The result is by default culturally specific: To become meaningful, the image of the other must be constructed in accordance with the discursive practices of the target audience. Therefore, “in any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a \textit{re-presence}, or a representation.”\textsuperscript{17} In other words: The image of the other need be translated into a form which is commensurable with horizon of expectations of the onlooker. This is the basic precondition for a representation to be accepted into the cultural canon of a society, and to become part of the group narrative. Thereby, it is vested with significant power, as the authority to define the other is therefore closely linked to defining the identity of the reference group. In \textit{Orientalism} (1978), Said analyzes these processes as they apply to the relationship between French and British colonizers and their Middle Eastern and Indian counterparts in the nineteenth century. Famously, his observations led him to a fundamental reappraisal of the academic discipline of Orientalism, rejecting its professed intention to generate objective and scientific knowledge about the Orient. In contrast, Said denounced ‘Orientalism’ as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”\textsuperscript{18} By casting the Orient as something that need be explored, put in order, and dominated, Britons and Frenchmen ultimately consolidated their colonial and imperial identities.

‘Orientalism’ has since become a metaphor for the construction of national identities through distinction from a significant ‘other,’ with a legion of scholars heeding Said’s call for further investigation of the phenomenon.\textsuperscript{19} Studies on ‘German Orientalism,’ too, have been published, seemingly in open defiance of Said’s assertion that no such thing ever existed. Never, he argues, “could a close partnership have developed between [German] Orientalists and a protracted, sustained \textit{national} interest in the Orient.”\textsuperscript{20} According to Said, “there was nothing in Germany to correspond to the Anglo-French

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{19} See ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 19.
presence in India, the Levant, North Africa.” Since, this assertion has been challenged on two accounts. On the one hand, a recent study by Vejas Liulevicius demonstrates that Germans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century indeed developed a strong colonial interest in today’s Eastern Europe, specifically with regard to the territories of present-day Poland and Ukraine. The imperial attitude was thereby buttressed by ideas of cultural superiority and the notion of being Kulturbringer, i.e. an agent of culture for Europe’s lesser developed eastern peoples. At the same time, “this discourse about the East was often actually a definition of German national identity.” Eastern backwardness made meaningful the self-image of the Kulturnation and thus, in turn, further legitimized German colonial ambitions. This process would indeed be commensurable with Said’s notion of Orientalism. Todd Kontje, in contrast, in his study of German Orientalisms (2003) more generally challenges Edward Said’s dictum about Germany’s lack of a ‘sustained national interest in the Orient.’ He argues that “if we define national interest more broadly as an intellectual effort to locate and preserve a sense of communal identity, then we can indeed speak of a German national interest in the east.” Troy Paddock seconds this argument, in particular with regard to German-Russian relations in the nineteenth century. In Creating the Russian Peril (2010), Paddock explains that German Orientalism aimed not at “political domination,” but rather a “conceptual conquest” of the Russian other in order to consolidate the German self-image.

To be sure, it is evident that neither Kontje nor Paddock is studying Orientalism within the parameters set by Edward Said. Rather, both are undertaking a more general inquiry into the historical relationship between Germany and an ‘Orient’ quite different from the one Said had in mind: At least until the twentieth century, Germans did not seek to dominate the Russian Orient colonially but intellectually. Yet at the same time, this conceptual modification implies a criticism of the theses of Said, who closely links intellectual conquest to colonial ambition. Said thus suggests an unassailable vantage point.

21 Ibid.
24 Troy R. E. Paddock, Creating the Russian Peril: Education, the Public Sphere, and National Identity in Imperial Germany, 1890-1914 (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010), 4.
from which Western nations derived their imperial identities. In contrast, Kontje and Paddock challenge the notion that the main impetus for intellectual domination necessarily derives from a feeling of uncontested superiority. In fact, Paddock points out that the Russian ‘Orient’ for Germans was “the most frightening of Orientalist nightmares – an ominous Asian threat – [which] took the form of an Empire of the Slavs.”25 By contending that fear was critical for ‘German Orientalism,’ Paddock highlights how Said in contrast endorses a lopsided reading of the intercultural encounter. In the relationship between the European colonizer and the colonial subject, Said denies the latter agency and thus “removes the possibility of placing the dominant in the same field of discourse and power of the dominated.”26 In other words, the dominant partner alone can act, but is never required to react. As Homi Bhabha points out, “there is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer, which is a historical and theoretical simplification.”27 Ultimately, Said’s criticism of the Orientalist discourse fails to account for basic dynamics of social interaction. Gyan Prakash, for one, argues that “something that was pressed into service in conquering and ruling colonies could not remain a self-contained system of representations; it had to open itself to conflicts, change, and displacements generated by its operation in actual historical conditions.”28 To be sure, Said emphasizes that Orientalism “deals principally not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient.”29 Nevertheless, the notion of an intercultural encounter that is entirely dominated by one party is untenable.

In his critique of Orientalism, Homi Bhabha has therefore urged us to think more in relational terms, “beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities to focus on these moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural difference.”30 In the struggle for identity, meaning is not simply imposed by the dominant power. Rather, it is

25 Ibid.
29 Said, Orientalism, 5.
30 Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 2010), 2.
the result of a perpetual struggle. Ultimately, the intercultural encounter knows no privileged position. Rather, it opens up a third space where identities may be mutually constructed and contested. “These ‘inbetween’ spaces,” Bhabha argues, “provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself. It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.” Ultimately, Bhabha contends, the clash of two distinct cultures is a highly creative process, opening up a third place where meaningful identities can be articulated.

Such an interstitial space opened up for Germans and Europeans at large with the rise of a strong and powerful Russia from the obscurity of the continent’s eastern borderlands. Russia’s medieval predecessor, the Kievan Rus’, had virtually disappeared from the maps and minds of Europeans after the Mongolian invasion of the 1240s. Her sudden re-emergence as Imperial Russia at the outset of the eighteenth century then not only upset the political order. Moreover, it challenged traditional notions of European identity and, by extension, the self-image of her many distinct peoples. Consequently, the following century and a half witnessed an enduring effort to make meaningful Russia’s accession to the concert of Europe, especially after she had fully established herself as a great power at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. The significance of the encounter with the Russian other for the French and British has already been made the subject of several noteworthy studies. Its contribution to the formation of a German national identity, in contrast, has yet to be fully explored, and it will be the aspiration of this dissertation to add to this discussion. To be sure, it is not possible to investigate the history

31 Ibid.
32 In this context, the studies of Gleason, Anderson, Cross, Case, and Adamovsky deserve particular acknowledgement: John Howes Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1950); Matthew Smith Anderson, Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1958); Anthony Cross, Peter the Great through British Eyes: Perceptions and Representations of the Tsar since 1698 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000); Lynn Marshall Case, French Opinion on War and Diplomacy During the Second Empire (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954); Adamovsky, Euro-Orientalism. It should, however, be the noted that – with the exception of Adamovsky – these monographs deal primarily not with questions of identity, but popular opinion and the political discourse, respectively.
of German-Russian relations without considering the wider European context. The process of generating knowledge about Russia was never a distinctly national endeavour, particularly throughout the eighteenth century, when Europe’s intellectual discourse was shaped foremost by the transnational ‘Republic of Letters.’ But even with the proliferation of nationally distinct civil societies in the nineteenth century, the rise of Russia remained a conceptual challenge for Germans with regard to both their national identity and their self-image as a European people. As a consequence, this study shall at all times maintain a European scope and discuss cultural and political developments taking place beyond the German lands which were nevertheless significant for German-Russian relations and, by extension, the German self-image.

Already the following chapter will take a decidedly European point of view to demonstrate that European reactions to the rise of Imperial Russia were in no way unequivocal. In *The Early Eighteenth Century* (Chapter II), Russia was not uniformly perceived as an ominous threat from the east. Rather, various geopolitical agendas determined the rapport, and while some states indeed rejected the newcomer to the concert of Europe, others sought an economically or geopolitically favourable rapprochement. At the same time, Europe’s *philosophes* endeavoured to explain Russia’s sudden advancements and her future role within the European community. They thereby conceived the image of a barbaric, yet naturally ingenuous people which Tsar Peter I had enlightened by introducing European culture and learning. As a result, Russia appeared a pristine territory awaiting intellectual cultivation. In *The Late Eighteenth Century* (Chapter III), on the eve of the French Revolution, Europe’s greatest thinkers conflated this notion with the idea of human perfectibility. As a sense of crisis spread across the continent, virgin Russia appeared a space where Europe’s intellectual achievements could survive and, in fact, reach their full potential. The reign of Empress Catherine II further buttressed these ideas, for, in the eyes of many onlookers abroad, she appeared the last European monarch capable of implementing an enlightened reform agenda. Germans in particular directed such hopes at the Russian Empire, while their governments were forging an increasingly close alliance with the Russian tsars.
This alliance was consummated with the Partitions of Poland during *The Era of Revolutions* (Chapter IV), when Austria, Prussia and Russia mediated their territorial ambitions by truncating and, eventually, usurping the Polish Kingdom. At first, this development stood at odds with popular opinion in the German lands: Many began to fear the further advance of Russia which now bordered on Prussia and the Austrian Empire. However, faced with the downfall of the political order in the wake of the French Revolution, German enthusiasm for the Russian Empire once more soared and reached its peak in 1814, as the troops of Tsar Alexander I entered Paris. Other European peoples, and the French and the British in particular, were taken aback by this unexpected demonstration of strength. In contrast, Germans in the vast majority celebrated the Russian forces and were more than ever dedicated to a close alliance with the tsardom. This political and intellectual divide of the European continent became even more apparent in the decade following the Napoleonic era, as Europe’s great powers sought to once more bring peace and stability to the continent by instating *A System of Congresses and Alliances* (Chapter V). The initiative of Austria, Prussia, and Russia to form a ‘Holy Alliance’ which would restore and uphold a conservative order in Europe met with significant resistance from their western neighbours. The German population at large, however, strongly identified with the Christian conservatism of the Holy Alliance. Moreover, Germans – much as the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century – were optimistic that the influence of Tsar Alexander would revive the reform movement that had come to a standstill during the reign of Napoleon.

Yet at the same time, a radical minority began to consider Russia the greatest obstacle for progress in the German lands. The Tsar, they felt, was actively subverting efforts towards liberal reform and national unification by imposing on his Austrian and Prussian allies reactionary policies. Thus, already in *The Early Nineteenth Century* (Chapter VI), this group called for Germany’s renunciation of the Holy Alliance and her accession to what they esteemed a union of liberally governed nation states in the west of Europe. Events abroad helped popularize this notion throughout the German lands. While Russian military intervention in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) fuelled fears of a new hegemon rising in the east, Russia’s drastic crackdown on the November Uprising...
in Poland in 1831 corroborated the image of the reactionary ‘gendarme of Europe.’ In the following decades, this would trigger *A War of Words* (Chapter VII), as German liberals were convinced that their hopes for reform and national unification could be realized only by disrupting Russia’s influence on German policy. This belief became fully manifest at the Hambach Festival of 1832, where liberal politicians, intellectuals, civil servants, craftsmen and peasants assembled for the first truly popular political assembly in German history. In the course of the event, rejection of Russian influence became synonymous with the call for liberal reform and the formation of a German nation state. This discourse proliferated in the following decades and reached a first climax during the March Revolution of 1848: Anti-Russian sentiment soared in particular when tsarist troops intervened both in Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, thereby fatally weakening the revolutionary cause. However, it was not until the outbreak of *The Crimean War* (Chapter VIII) that Germans stood united in their denunciation of Russia’s ‘eastern barbarism’ and their desire to accede to an alliance of the civilized ‘west.’ On the one hand, this development was buttressed by the political developments which made it seem that Russia was indeed seeking hegemony in the concert of Europe. Most importantly, however, the rise of modern racism now enabled a clear-cut distinction between Europe’s ‘western peoples’ and an empire of the Slavs, which seemed to be dangerously looming in Eastern Europe. Thus, the notion of a continent symbolically divided into two distinct cultural and intellectual hemispheres became an inseparable part of the German self-understanding.

Throughout, this study will draw from a wide and eclectic selection of textual evidence to make its argument. This seeming disparity, however, corresponds to cultural studies’ emancipation from the history of ideas and the latter’s focus on canonical writings. As demonstrated above in the discussion of Wolff and Malia’s works, the notion that elites exert privileged influence over popular opinion essentializes dominant discourses by fading out the struggles that preceded their rise to hegemony. Cultural studies, in contrast, emphasizes the historical contingency of ideas and therefore focuses on elucidating the perpetual negotiation and contestation of the cultural canon. Ultimately, “cultural studies represents an expansion of the fields of objects of inquiry, challenging disciplines to go beyond the works of canonized literature to examine a wider, perhaps unlimited set of
texts.\textsuperscript{33} This enables the scholar not only to identify the dominant voices within a discourse, but moreover to determine how they attained hegemony.

A final word on nomenclature: When applied to any period before 1871, ‘Germany’ is a volatile term which may denote a wide variety of ideas and concepts. It has been used as a synonym for the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, as a collective term for the German Confederation of 1815-1866, or simply to identify a linguistic group located roughly in the territories of present day Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Throughout this investigation, an effort will be made to avoid ambiguity by explicitly referring to Austria, Prussia, the German central States, and, whenever the entire German-speaking population of Europe is concerned, the ‘German lands.’

\textsuperscript{33} Russell A. Berman, \textit{Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 14–15.
The history of European Russia begins in the late seventeenth century with the reign of Tsar Alexis I (r. 1645-1676) and, above all, the accession of Tsar Peter I (r. 1682-1725), later known as Peter the Great. In the preceding centuries, the Grand Duchy of Muscovy had been but one of many principalities in Europe’s eastern borderlands struggling for local hegemony while consolidating internal rule. In fact, the Russian state had once more attained independence only in the late fifteenth century, following two hundred years of Mongolian suzerainty. And it was not until the reign of Ivan IV ‘The Terrible’ (r. 1533-1584) that Muscovy was transformed into a modern state which incorporated those lands which until today make up Russia’s core territories. However, the consolidation of the Russian state was once more interrupted during the Times of Troubles (1598-1613) when the extinction of the ruling dynasty plunged the country into chaos and civil war. The ascension of the house of Romanov then established internal peace and, what is more, uninterrupted succession until 1917. Moreover, the Romanovs, and in particular Alexis I, led Muscovy to become the dominant regional power. Thus, as the seventeenth century drew to a close, Tsar Peter found himself in a favourable position to engage the world abroad. Famously, he turned to his neighbours in the west as he sought to shape the state he had inherited into the Russian Empire.
In the latter half of the twentieth century, leading historians came to interpret this westward turn as an act of aggression, thus keeping with the rhetoric of the Cold War. In *The Russian Empire and the World* (1997), for example, John LeDonne argues that the history of Russian-European relations need be considered in terms of ‘the geopolitics of expansion and containment.’ He bases this conclusion on geographical imperatives: Russia’s central location on the Eurasian continent, LeDonne asserts, necessarily prompted an expansionist foreign policy which, in turn, “naturally provoked resistance.”¹ Germans, for example, would have therefore at all times needed to fear and guard themselves from Russia’s “approaches from the east.”² Yet to be sure, LeDonne thus imposes the geopolitical reality of his own era on the past. Moreover, he essentializes the modern east-west dichotomy by ascribing it to immutable localities. Such assertions have to be contested, as it is overly reductive to identify geography as the single determinant in international relations, while disregarding the significance of intellectual, technological, and cultural developments.³ Taking the latter into account, it becomes evident that today’s ideological division between ‘Eastern’ Russia and ‘Western’ Europe was preceded by an extended period of close cooperation which in fact began during the reign of Peter I. Heikki Mikkeli may argue that Russia was in fact “regarded as belonging to Europe only during [a] relatively short period in history.”⁴ He himself is however conspicuously vague when elaborating this point, referring to the “period in history during which Peter the Great, Catherine the Great and a few of the other tsars set about westernizing it.”⁵ For if one were

---

² Ibid., 18.
³ Mathew Anderson criticizes that “such an approach almost enforces a highly deterministic attitude to the subject and means that Russia is too much presented as predestined by the facts of geography to a process of continuous expansion. References to the ‘logic’ of such growth and the ‘historical mission’ of different states seem to undervalue markedly the significance in international relations of the fortuitous, the personal and the unpredictable. The situation within Russia, her military potentialities and economic and technological weaknesses and the influence these had on her expansion, is also passed over almost completely.” Matthew S. Anderson, “The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment by John LeDonne,” *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 457 (1999): 773.
⁵ Ibid. The term ‘Westernization’ need be disregarded in this context, as it is incorrect to apply it to eighteenth century, and even early nineteenth century Russia. It gained currency only towards the middle of the nineteenth century as Russian intellectuals argued over Russia’s place within Europe. Hence the term presupposes the existence of an east-west dichotomy which itself was only conceived in the nineteenth century.
to extend this line to the reign of Tsar Alexander I (1801-1825) – arguably the most 'Western' ruler in Russian history – this period roughly encompasses a century and a half. And indeed, particularly with regard to German-Russian relations, this was a time of sustained political and cultural cooperation between Russia and its European neighbours.

Cynthia Whittaker has recently emphasized this fact. In the introduction to Russia Engages the World (2003) she points out that Russia in the eighteenth century acceded to the concert of Europe not only as a military power. She stresses that, at the same time, a significant cultural, intellectual, and economic rapprochement was taking place between Russia and Europe. This rapprochement, Whittaker explains, above all enabled Peter the Great and his successor Catherine II to make “their country an integral part and leading member of the European family of nation.” Similarly, Richard Wortmann makes the point that “a sign of Russia’s emergence into the ‘theatre of the world’” was foremost “its engagement in the European project of world exploration and its scientific pursuits.” The suddenness of this development, however, contained a challenge for the European imagination. A single generation had witnessed how “the formerly isolated kingdom of Muscovy [...] had become an integral part of the European state system.” Inversely, this expounded the problem of European identity, as the question arose what in fact made Russia ‘European.’ Thus, throughout the eighteenth century, the discussion of Russia’s place within the geopolitical order would perpetually prompt discussion of the European idea.

RUSSIA’S ACCESSION TO THE CONCERT OF EUROPE

At the outset of the eighteenth century, Russia could look back on a series of successful military exploits and a continuous expansion of its territory since the time of Tsar Ivan III

---

(1462-1505). Under Peter the Great and his successors, Russia then became a serious contender for influence in European power politics, and successfully asserted itself within a changing European order. The Great Northern War (1700-21), the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48), and the Seven Years’ War (1756-63) all provided opportunities for the expansion of military and political influence, and the Russian Empire was quick to capitalize from the social and political upheavals of the era. This, however, required not only the establishment of a strong military presence. Rather, a rigorous modernization of Russia’s industry and economy was equally vital for its accession to the concert of Europe. Moreover, diplomatic initiatives were of the utmost importance for the Russian-European rapprochement of the eighteenth century, while the establishment of trade relations increasingly tied Russia into the proto-industrial order that was emerging on the continent.

For Britons, it was above all the Great Northern War (1700-1721) which made it necessary “to revise completely their views of Russia’s potentialities as a European power.”10 Before the outbreak of this conflict, the Grand Duchy of Muscovy had appeared little more than a potential market for British industry and colonial wares. Briefly, the denouement of the war let Russia appear a rising military threat to British hegemony. In the end, however, it was Russia’s rise as an economic power which most troubled the government in London.

At the outset of the war, Britain had had every reason to be supportive of the joint effort of Norway-Denmark, the House of Saxony, and the Grand Duchy of Muscovy to curtail Swedish dominance on the Baltic. The upkeep of the British navy depended significantly on the region’s timber and naval stores. Therefore, the breach of the Swedish monopoly and the subsequent establishment of a more competitive market were desirable. The Russians, after initial struggles, emerged victorious. In 1709, they crushed Sweden’s main army at Poltava (located in today’s eastern Ukraine). After the conclusion of hostilities twelve years later, Russia had established suzerainty over the territories of today’s Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. Along with the foundation of St. Petersburg as a major naval base, the tsardom had become the dominant military and economic power

10 Anderson, Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815, 52.
around the Baltic littoral. This unexpected outcome, leading to the replacement of one monopoly with another, significantly changed British attitudes towards what had now become the Russian Empire.

The immediate reaction in London was fear of the rise of a new hegemonic power in the east of Europe. In 1714, some even predicted that the future might bring “down a Foe upon Europe, more formidable that the Goths and Vandals, their Ancestors.” Another contemporary warned that “if early Measures are not taken, by Way of Prevention, against the threaten’d Evil, the UNIVERSAL EMPIRE, [...] seems, in Reality, to be coming upon us, with all the Terrors of a Fifth General Monarchy.” Russian expansionism even seemed to threaten the political order in Britain. The downfall of Sweden as a great power had substantially weakened the cause of Protestantism in Europe, a cause which the house of Hanover had yet to fully consolidate in the United Kingdom: After the accession of William of Orange in 1688, the exiled Stuarts retained considerable support with the Catholic population, leading to uprisings in 1715 and 1719. The loss of a strong Protestant ally therefore could but weaken the position of King George I (r. 1714-1727) both in foreign and domestic policy.

Fears of Russia as a political and military threat, however, soon subsided in face of the economic threat she now posed. The power shift in the Baltic trade proved most troubling for the British. Hitherto, Britain had dominated the economic relationship between the two nations. London merchants had early on secured for themselves the lucrative Russian market as an outlet for colonial wares. One of their greatest achievements was attaining the monopoly for the import of Virginia tobacco during Tsar Peter I’s visit to London in 1698. Russian traders, on the other hand, held no similar privileges. As a result, the country was faced with a constantly growing deficit in its balance of trade which was slowly devaluing the nation’s currency. In response, Tsar Peter was determined to establish his future empire as an active and powerful agent on the international market. The victory in the Great Northern War was a decisive step in this direction. Russia now

---

11 *The Examiner*, June 26, 1713.
12 *Plain Dealer*, December 7, 1724.
virtually controlled the Baltic supply of pitch, tar, hemp, and timber, all of which were essential for the maintenance of Britain’s merchant and military fleet.\textsuperscript{13} Already in 1716, British Prime Minister Robert Walpole (1676-1745) addressed the potentially negative ramifications of this development:

> It is our misfortune at this juncture by the knavery of the Muscovites in imposing on our merchants last year, to have our naval magazines so ill provided with stores, particularly with hemp, that if the fleet of merchantmen, now loading in the Baltic, should by any accident miscarry, it will be impossible for His Majesty to fit out ships of war for the next year, by which means the whole navy of England will be rendered perfectly useless.\textsuperscript{14}

Britain’s great power status was threatened not so much by Russia’s military strength, but rather by her rise as an important agent in international trade.

Moreover, already in the 1720s it became apparent that fears of Russian expansionism had been exaggerated and unwarranted. Peter’s empire was growing but slowly, and “not for several years did Russian naval development seem to threaten any important interest of Great Britain.”\textsuperscript{15} In the latter years of his reign, the Russian Emperor was foremost concerned with consolidating his legacy by establishing Russian suzerainty in newly acquired territories, fortifying the administrative apparatus in his dominions, and securing a succession that would not lead to yet another palace revolt. As a result, British attention was increasingly directed at “the constructive aspects of his activities.”\textsuperscript{16} And indeed, “experience in the 1720’s showed that Peter I and his successors were not using their newly established ascendancy in the Baltic to damage British trading interests there.”\textsuperscript{17} This led to a significant rapprochement of the two powers, and finally mutually beneficial trade relations were agreed upon. “Above all, an important commercial treaty signed in 1734 did more than any other development during the whole century to bring and hold the two powers together. With these events began a period of generally friendly if

\textsuperscript{15} Anderson, \textit{Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815}, 59–60.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 74.
\textsuperscript{17} Horn, \textit{Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century}, 208.
sometimes rather distant relations between Britain and Russian which did not end until the 1790’s.”

Even when in the course of the eighteenth century the two powers took opposite sides in a military conflict, Britain remained dedicated to the lucrative exchange of goods with the Russian Empire, and with good cause: In effect, “there is a good deal to be said for the view [...] that without Russian naval stores Britain would soon have dropped out of the ranks of the Great Powers and might never have founded the first British empire.”

Therefore, throughout most of the eighteenth century, there was a general agreement in Britain that, “no matter how much bullion was lost to the country in purchasing naval stores from Russia, the Muscovy trade must be maintained.” Upholding an amicable rapport between London and St. Petersburg became a hallmark of British foreign policy. At one point, the great statesman William Pitt the Elder (1708-1778) even declared that he considered himself “quite a Russ.” Ultimately, “in spite of the fears of some journalists, it was becoming more and more easy for Englishmen and Scots to think of Russia as a natural ally of their own country.” This would indeed hold true for most of the eighteenth century.

France, in contrast, had failed to establish a similarly advantageous relationship with the increasingly powerful Russia. While the French at times controlled up to three fifths of the European trade on the Levant, throughout the eighteenth century their commercial prospects on the Baltic were dismal. “In 1741-3,” for example, “ten French ships reached St. Petersburg, compared to 315 from Britain and 167 from the United Provinces.” France’s ambitions for the Russian market had been the same as Britain’s: Export of luxury goods and colonial wares from overseas, and the import of timber and naval stores. Its failure to assert itself in this instance further precluded its monarchs’ ambitions to make France the dominant world power. In fact, it was another symptom of the declining influence of the House of Bourbon in international affairs. Already at the

---

18 Anderson, *Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815*, 110.
20 Ibid.
22 Anderson, *Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815*, 128.
height of the reign of King Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715), France’s position in matters of European foreign policy had become predominantly defensive. Henceforth, its paramount goal would be to sustain rather than expand its influence abroad. Consequently, the rise of Russia was rejected by both the Sun King and his successors, as it seemed to further jeopardize the volatile balance of power in Europe. Famously, the Russian Emperor was not included in the *Royal Almanac* of Europe’s great rulers until the year after the demise of Louis XIV in 1715, “as if the obstacle had lain but in the will of the late king.”

His successor Louis XV (1710-1774, r. 1715-1774), on the other hand, declared that “the sole object of my policy toward Russia is to keep it as far as possible from the affairs of Europe.” This, however, was wishful thinking, as the Great Northern War had firmly established the Empire of Peter the Great as a fixture of European politics. Moreover, this development immediately affected the Bourbons’ position within the system, since the virtual disempowerment of Sweden meant that France had lost its single most important ally in the eastern regions of the continent.

The first direct confrontation between the House of Romanov and the House of Bourbon followed less than fifteen years later, in the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1735), and for the following century, Poland would more than once set the scene for Franco-Russian conflict. In the 1730s, after the death of the Polish King August II (r. 1697-1706 and 1709-1733), both King Louis XV and the Tsarina Anna (r. 1730-1740) were eager to secure their influence in Poland by placing a weak vassal on the throne. The King of France championed the previously exiled Polish king – and his father-in-law – Stanisław I Leszczyński (r. 1705-1709). Empress Anna, on the other hand, favoured the late king’s son. As August III (r. 1734-1763), the latter would indeed succeed to the throne, yet only after his election had been secured by the deployment of 20,000 Russian troops to Warsaw. This diplomatic defeat further isolated France within the concert of Europe. Britain, careful not to jeopardize its stakes in the Baltic trade, throughout the conflict maintained “a position of benevolent neutrality towards the Russians.”

---

27 Anderson, *Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815*, 110.
Austria, on the other hand, considered the conflict an opportunity to challenge France’s position on the Italian peninsula.

This ongoing struggle between the houses of Habsburg and Bourbon in 1740 led to the next great military conflict on the European continent. Notably, it was above all the looming danger of a Russo-Austrian alliance which made France push for a military engagement. Already in the 1720s, French foreign minister Dubois had declared it a national interest “to divide the expanding powers of Central and Eastern Europe – Austria, Prussia and Russia – and to gain the support of the last two against the first.”28 The first opportunity arose with the death of the Austrian Emperor Charles VI (r. 1711-1740). The accession of his daughter Maria Teresa (r. 1740-1780) had been guaranteed only by the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713. By signing this treaty, Europe’s great ruling houses had agreed to acknowledge Charles’ daughter as the next ruler of the Habsburg Empire, even though this violated the rules of royal succession. The Bourbons, too, had signed the document, yet the French King saw an opportunity to alter the order of Europe, hoping that Maria Teresa’s unconventional accession would turn out to be a weakness of the Habsburg Empire. He therefore encouraged his Prussian ally King Frederick II (r. 1740-1786) to seize Austrian territories in northern Silesia (located in today’s Poland), thus causing the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). After initial successes, however, the Franco-Prussian effort to further pressure Austria’s borders proved abortive, in particular as Austria’s Russian ally for the first time threatened to move troops beyond the Oder River.29 Seemingly, Dubois’ dictum had been confirmed: Unless France succeeded in separating the courts of Vienna and Petersburg, she would find it difficult to assert herself in the concert of Europe.

Such separation of Austria and Russia, however, seemed highly unlikely, in particular as geopolitical considerations, among them the shared intent to curtail Ottoman influence on the Balkans, made an alliance of the two powers imperative. Consequently, in 1726 the two states signed a first military treaty which committed either power to support

28 Black, From Louis XIV to Napoleon, 74.  
29 See ibid., 99.
the other with 30,000 troops in case of an attack. This alliance with Austria “remained, with
certain exceptions, a cornerstone of Russian foreign policy until the Crimean War in mid-
nineteenth century.”

Therefore, the treaty was successively renewed in 1746, 1753, and 1781, each time underscoring the mutual interests of the two empires. Prussia, too, would eventually accede to this alliance, but not until later in the eighteenth century. Foremost the territorial ambitions of the adventurous Prussian king caused sustained dissent between the three powers. In the end, “the hostile Russian attitude toward Prussia lasted, with some interruptions, until the time of Catherine the Great and the partitions of Poland which satisfied both monarchies and brought them together.”

Until then, the rapport between Berlin and Petersburg remained strained, as did the one between Berlin and Vienna.

In the early 1750s, Maria Teresa began to prepare for a retrieval of the Silesian Provinces Frederick had wrested from her in the War of the Austrian Succession. The Prussian king however, with financial backing from Britain, initiated a pre-emptive strike, triggering the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763). Prussia’s early successes in the struggle would lay the foundation for Frederick’s later fame as a great military strategist. Yet when Russian troops for the first time ever deployed to central Europe in support of Austria, the Prussian advance came to an immediate standstill. The tsarist forces swiftly occupied East Prussia and from there assaulted on Berlin, which was captured in 1762. However, just as the downfall of Prussia as a great power seemed imminent, Frederick was delivered by the so-called ‘Miracle of the House of Brandenburg.’

While Russian forces were driving home the final victory over Frederick II, the Tsarina Elizabeth (r. 1741-1762) suddenly died. Her personal dislike of the Prussian king and, what is more, her outrage at the alliance between Prussia and Britain had been pivotal factors in the decision to take up arms. Yet Britain had refused to send a fleet in support

---

31 Ibid.
of its Prussian ally into the Baltic: The government in Westminster feared that Russia might strike back by interrupting the vital supply of naval stores.\footnote{Horn, \textit{Great Britain and Europe in the Eighteenth Century}, 210.} Therefore, as Russia entered the hostilities, Frederick was left alone to fight a losing battle. In this situation, he received assistance from where he least expected it. The death of Elizabeth brought to the throne the exceptionally prussophile Peter III (r. 1762). Originally raised to become the King of Sweden, Peter had never adjusted to his part as future head of the Romanov family. “Extremely limited mentally, as well as crude and violent in his behaviour, he continued to fear and despise Russia and the Russians while he held up Prussia and in particular Frederick II as his ideal.”\footnote{Riasanovsky, \textit{A History of Russia}, 247–8.} Once raised to the throne, the husband of the future Empress Catherine II ordered the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Berlin. Subsequently, he unilaterally concluded the Russian war effort in the treaty of St Petersburg, in which he also renounced any territorial gains made by the tsarist forces during the campaign. In the end, the Russian armistice enabled Prussia to regain the initiative and to conclude the war in 1763 with the consolidation of its rule in Silesia.

To be sure, this sudden rapprochement between Russia and Prussia ended with the death of Peter III but six months after his accession to the throne. His successor Empress Catherine II ‘the Great’ (r. 1762-1796) – although herself Prussian by birth – once more put Russian interests first in her foreign policy. For a while, she even considered re-entering the war effort on the side of Austria to secure at least part of the territorial gains her predecessor had blindly forfeited. In the long term, however, her reign witnessed a substantial convergence of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian interests. This development reached a first high point in 1772, when the three powers mediated their territorial ambitions in the First Partition of Poland. They were now united in and guaranteed each other the virtual domination of the eastern European realm. Moreover, they had come to share the same set of ideals in terms of governance, as they each strove to establish strong centralized monarchies in their respective territories, following the example of the sun king Louis XIV. “The pursuit of this ideal led to the growth of three ‘eastern courts’ in Prussia,
II. The Early Eighteenth Century: The Birth of European Russia

Austria, and Russia, each attempting to implement similar economic, political, and military reforms. In particular, all three faced the challenge of founding a centralized bureaucracy and of integrating the diverse ethnical groups inhabiting their respective territories into one people. These shared social and political challenges further tied together the three eastern courts, and laid the foundation for an enduring alliance.

But half a century after it had emerged from the obscurity of the continent’s eastern realms, Russia had fully established itself among Europe’s great powers. It was thereby not perceived as a monolithic eastern threat which needed to be contained at all cost. Rather, the Russian Empire took on a dynamic part as full member of the concert of Europe. To be sure, British animosity was latently present, but was superseded by commercial interests. France, on the other hand, herself on retreat in the battle for hegemony, adopted an outright hostile attitude towards Russia. The great German rulers, finally, were soon drawn into a closer alliance with the rising empire. Geographical proximity, the convergence of territorial ambitions, but in particular shared ideals of governance brought about a union that would last well into the nineteenth century.

THE IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The rise of Russia in the early eighteenth century had significantly impacted the political reality of the European continent. Consequently, it also posed a conceptual challenge: How should ‘old Europe’ classify this newcomer, what was an apt representation for this emerging power? In *Inventing Eastern Europe*, Larry Wolff argues that the philosophers of the Enlightenment successfully translated this relationship into a distinction between western ‘civilization’ and eastern ‘barbarity.’ The untenability of this analysis has already been addressed in the introduction to this study. As Marshall Poe pointed out, the notion of ‘Russian barbarism’ had become topical already in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. “Virtually every book, pamphlet or cosmographical vignette written before 1700 about Russia (and there were many of them) describes the Muscovites as comparatively

38 See above, p. 6.
primitive. The Enlightenment may have created the scale of civilization, but the Renaissance determined where the Slavs would reside on it.” Poe has convincingly demonstrated that it was in the late Renaissance – not in the late eighteenth century – that the image of Russians as *A People Born to Slavery* was conceived. By the time of Peter the Great, European representations had already become far more nuanced. Until then, however, Russia indeed appeared but a realm of tyrants and slaves.

Foremost, this image had been popularized through the wide dissemination of Sigismund von Herberstein’s (1486-1566) seminal *Notes on the Muscovites* (1549). Herberstein had from 1515 to 1553 served as a diplomat and ambassador for the Habsburg emperors. In this capacity, he was twice dispatched to the court in Moscow, first in 1517, and then again in 1527. The *Notes on the Muscovites* brings together Herberstein’s personal impressions and the knowledge of Russian history and culture he had acquired during his travels. His account particularly emphasizes the despotic rule of the Grand Duke and the servile nature of his subjects. To be sure, “Herberstein did not invent the image of Russian despotism, but his depiction of it was the first to be grounded in personal experience.” Hence, it carried particular weight among contemporaries and subsequent generations of readers, and became highly influential in shaping Europe’s image of the Grand Duchy of Muscovy.

Herberstein’s account above all emphasizes the seemingly divine power wielded by the Grand Duke of Moscow. In a notable passage, the tsar is described as follows:

He uses his authority as much over ecclesiastics as laymen, and holds unlimited control over the lives and property of all his subjects: not one of his counsellors has sufficient authority to dare to oppose him, or even differ from him, on any subject. They openly confess that the will of the prince is the will of God, and that whatever the prince does he does by the will of God; on this account they call him God’s key-

---

40 Poe, ‘A People Born To Slavery’.
42 Poe, ‘A People Born To Slavery’, 118.
 bearer and chamberlain, and in short they believe that he is the executor of the divine will.\footnote{Herberstein, \textit{Notes upon Russia}, 32.}

The rule of the Russian prince, this passage makes clear, is absolute. To be sure, Herberstein conjectures about “whether the brutality of the people has made the prince a tyrant, or whether the people themselves have become thus brutal and cruel through the tyranny of their prince.”\footnote{Ibid.} This, however, is as far as he goes to try to trace the origins of this condition. Herberstein’s main concern lies with depicting a society in which “all confess themselves to be Chlopos, that is, serfs of the prince.”\footnote{Ibid., 95.} Servitude, he explains, has become second nature to the Russian people. In his eyes, “the people enjoy slavery more than freedom; for persons on the point of death very often manumit some of their serfs, but they immediately sell themselves for money to other families.”\footnote{Ibid.} Thus, the Russians to him indeed appeared a ‘people born to slavery.’

Herberstein had created a powerful image with significant appeal for European readers. By the early seventeenth century, twenty-two editions of the \textit{Notes on the Muscovites} were circulating on the continent in several languages. Moreover, Herberstein’s theses were further disseminated through the works of Antonio Possevino (1534-1611)\footnote{Antonio Possevino, \textit{Moscovia, s. de rebus Moscuiticis et acta in conuentu legatorum regis Poloniae et Magni Ducis Moscouiae anno 1581} (Vilna: Apud Ioannem Velicensem, 1586).} and Adam Olearius (1599-1671).\footnote{Adam Olearius, \textit{Ausführliche Beschreibung der kundbaren Reys nach Muscow und Persien} (Schleswig: Johann Holwein, 1647).} Their studies relied heavily on the \textit{Notes}, and were themselves republished eight and twenty-five times, respectively.\footnote{Poe, \textit{‘A People Born To Slavery’}, 135–6.} More imitators followed and, ultimately, Herberstein’s theses exerted such powerful influence that it became difficult to distinguish between authors who borrowed directly from his work, and those who received their information from an intermediary source. “By the first quarter of the seventeenth century, it was not necessary to read \textit{Notes on the Muscovites} to learn that the tsar was a despot whose slave-subjects worshiped him as a god – this idea was available in any number of Herbersteinina descriptions, and furthermore, it was ‘common
knowledge’ among educated Europeans.”

Russian despotism had become a fixture of the European canon. This image was only challenged a century after the publication of the *Notes on the Muscovites* with the rise of Imperial Russia.

The first strong impulse for this reversal came neither from the foundation of the Empire in 1721, nor from Russia’s victory at Poltava in 1709, but already ten years earlier, when Peter set out for his illustrious Grand Embassy to England and the Netherlands in 1697/98. Famously, he was not only looking to establish closer political ties with those nations that held the largest stake in the Russian market. The embassy was foremost an intellectual and technological fact-finding mission. While Peter himself sought to be educated in the art of shipbuilding, his entourage was instructed to collect European know-how, particularly in the fields of civil and military engineering. By the time the embassy returned to Moscow, Peter had acquired a plethora of books and mechanical devices, recruited scholars and craftsmen who would help him build his new capital, and concluded a number of vital trade agreements with London merchants.

The European public at large and the British in particular had been quite struck by the Russian tsar. To be sure, the acts of debauchery committed by the embassy, too, had left a strong impression. Foremost, however, Peter’s enthusiasm for European learning drew much attention. This disposition of the tsar seemed to hold great promise for the advancement of the sciences and the improvement of society. “What is it that may not be expected from so Great a Prince, if God pleases him with a long life?” asked the popular author Jodocus Crull (d. 1713/1714) whose *Present Condition of the Muscovite Empire* was published but a year after Peter’s visit to London. In his opinion Russia, “formerly look’d upon as most barbarous [...] now bids fair for the Priority with any in Europe” – all thanks to “the indefatigable Vigilancy of the present monarch.” Following the victory at Poltava, Peter’s fame as reformer and modernizer of his country grew further. Remarkably, in Addison and Steele’s *Spectator* the Russian monarch was even raised above King

---

50 Ibid., 141.
51 Jodocus Crull, *The Present Condition of the Muscovite Empire, Till the Year 1699* (London: Coggan, 1699), 68.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
II. The Early Eighteenth Century: The Birth of European Russia

Louis XIV of France. Richard Steele (1672–1729), in a reflection on the essence of True Glory (1711), explains that the French monarch “mistook the spreading of fame for the acquisition of honour,” and had therefore developed “a fondness of vain glory.”\textsuperscript{54} Tsar Peter, in contrast, had “himself left his diadem to learn the true way to glory and honour and application to useful arts, wherein to employ the laborious, the simple, the honest part of his people.”\textsuperscript{55} The worker-tsar and the simple, honest Russian – henceforth, these elements would dominate European representations of the tsardom. On the one hand, Peter was considered the model of the benevolent autocrat who used his absolute power to improve both his domains and his subjects. The Russian people, on the other hand, were no longer considered a ‘people born to slavery,’ although, to be sure, their barbarous mores remained topical. Increasingly, however, the inherent potential of this ‘laborious, simple, and honest people’ was brought to the foreground.

A founding text in this tradition was John Perry’s (1669/70-1733) State of Russia under the Present Czar (1716). Perry, a commissioned captain of the English navy, had been recruited during Peter’s embassy in 1698 to engineer several canal projects in the south of the Russian realm. Upon his return to London, he published a circumstantial survey of contemporary Russia in which he casted Tsar Peter as a true renaissance man.

It may be said of him that he is from the Drummer to the General, a compleat [sic!] Soldier; besides his being Engineer, Cannoneer, Fire-worker, Ship-builder, Turner, Boatswain, Gun-founder, Blacksmith & c. all which he frequently works at with his own Hands, and will himself see that every thing be carried on and perform’d to his own Mind, as well as in these minutest things, as in the greater Disposition of Affairs.\textsuperscript{56}

Perry thus helped establish the image of the worker-tsar: an ingenious ruler who personally tended to the advancement of science and technology in his domains. It is with this account “that the British tradition of Petrine hagiography truly begins, as of yet quite independent of


\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{56} John Perry, The State of Russia, under the Present Czar: In relation to the several great and remarkable Things he has done, as to his Naval Preparations, the Regulating his Army, the Reforming his People, and Improvement of his Country (London: Tooke, 1716), 278–9.
similar phenomena in other European countries.”

Very soon, however, the treatise began to exert its influence beyond the borders of England. But a year after it was first published, German and French translations became available and further disseminated Perry’s theses across the European continent.

The introduction to the highly successful *Das veränderte Rußland* (1721), for example, notes that “there is only Captain Perry who in his *Account* of Russia, has given an impartial though not full Idea of the present State of the Country.” The author Friedrich Christian Weber (d. 1739) had himself spent five years between Moscow and Petersburg as the diplomatic representative of the Elector of Hanover. Beyond his personal experience, *The State of Russia* is the main source for his voluminous treatise which went through six editions between 1721 and 1744, and which was in turn quickly translated into English and French.

In his account, Weber, too, focuses primarily on the great personal feats and qualities of the present emperor. The foreword explains that it is not the author’s intention to provide either an historical account of the Russian state, nor an ethnographic description of its people. Foremost, he seeks to portray those recent “Changes and Improvements” which he considered most interesting to European audiences. Indeed, considering the length of the treatise – 800 pages small octavo for the English edition – it definitely “catches the eye that Weber makes use of his knowledge of the historical facts exclusively to show the

57 Cross, *Peter the Great through British Eyes*, 48.
61 Citations are taken from the English translation: Friedrich Christian Weber, *The Present State of Russia: Being an account of the government of that country both civil and ecclesiastical; of the Czar’s forces by sea and land, the regulation of his finances, the several methods he made use of to civilize his people and improve the country, his transactions with several eastern princes, and what happened most remarkable at his court, particularly in relation to the late Czarewitz, from the Year 1714, to 1720, the whole being the journal of a foreign minister who resided in Russia at that time. With a description of Petersbourg and Cronslot, and several other pieces relating to the affairs of Russia* (London: W. Taylor, 1723), 1: xliv.
62 Ibid.
present situation as a success of Peter’s attempts to reform.” Ultimately, both Perry and Weber perpetuated a Manichaean reading of Russian history. They implied that the time before Peter need be considered an obscure pre-history, a time of darkness that does not merit the attention of the historian. The foundation of the Russian Empire, in contrast, had brought light into the domains of the tsars, and thus introduced Russia to Europe, to the world, to history.

This ‘Russian theme’ became topical in particular among European scholars, as it bore witness to the conviction of the *philosophes* that implementing their ideas for reform could indeed create a strong and assertive state *ex nihilo*. In 1725 the Academy of Sciences in Paris even felt justified in presenting a public eulogy to Tsar Peter, a privilege which was reserved only for the greatest and brightest scholars. The Academy, however, assured that “we look upon the late Czar but as an Academician, tho’ he was a King and Emperor of Academicks.” Peter had in fact visited the institution in 1717 and throughout his life forwarded to the society many improved maps of his domains, as well as treatises on naval affairs. He had thus secured for himself during his lifetime the title of ‘academic without rank’ and, later, that of ‘foreign associate.’ As secretary of the Academy, Bernard de Fontenelle (1657-1757) was commissioned with the composition of the eulogy for which he consulted above all the works of Perry and Weber. Tellingly, Fontenelle, too, evokes the image of a nation which had but recently, under the rule of Peter, entered into history. “Muscovy,” he declared, “remained till his Time so grosly ignorant, that it was almost equal to the Infancy of Nations.” The great emperor, however, had single-handedly crafted a modern state on Europe’s eastern borderlands. “Every Thing was to be done in Muscovy,” Fontenelle explains, “and nothing to perfect it with” – but Peter “laboured to

---


66 Fontenelle’s eulogy was already in 1728 available in English translation under the title of *The Northern Worthies*. In the following, I quote from the second English edition: Bernard de Fontenelle, *The Northern Worthies: Or, the lives of Peter the Great, Father of his Country, and Emperor of all Russia. And of His Illustrious Empress Catharine, the late Czarina* (London: E. Morey, 1730), 4.

67 The eulogist Fontenelle conceded that “it is without Example, that the Academy ever made the Elogium of a Sovereign.” ibid.

68 Ibid.


create a new Nation; and whatever was to be done therein, it was he alone must form it, without Help, and without Instruments.”71 His only assistance was the intellectual and technological know-how he had acquired in Europe. This – bringing the sciences to Russia – Fontenelle considered Peter’s greatest feat. “The Sciences,” the eulogist concluded, therefore “ought to raise him in Return to the Rank of Augustus and Charlemaign.”72 By opening his country to European scholarship – with the French Academy of Sciences at its center – Peter had been able to create everything from nothing. Thus, the rise of the Russian Empire became a case in point for the viability of the reform ideas of the European Enlightenment. Ultimately, Fontenelle’s eulogy was a “hymn to reason and progress” which “incorporated the entire vision of the age: Rejection of tradition, religious tolerance, and a belief in science or – even better – technology as the source of progress.”73 The Russia of Peter the Great had thus become a metaphor for Enlightenment progress.

For some, however, the ‘Russian theme’ became more than a metaphor. The German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), for example, hoped to actually complete the progress of humankind in the Russian realm. Already in 1698, Leibniz had sought an audience with the travelling tsar: His intention was to convince Peter of the necessity “to found an academy to import all that is good and useful from Europe, without adopting the latter’s shortcomings.”74 Leibniz was driven by the conviction that moral corruption would sooner rather than later lead to the downfall of Europe. He hoped to preserve its great achievements by literally transplanting them to virgin Russia. Since Peter’s empire had but recently appeared on the stage of world history, Leibniz thought, it had remained uncontaminated by those vices that would eventually cause the European order to disintegrate. “As the tsar seeks to remedy the barbarism of his state,” the philosopher argued, “he will there find a tabula rasa just as a new earth which he will make

71 Ibid., 21.
72 Ibid., 40.
73 Lortholary, Le mirage russe en France au XIIIe siécle, 23–4.
fertile.” In 1711 Leibniz finally received the opportunity to present his vision to the tsar, and until his death he would unrelentingly implore Peter to implement his ideas for reform. One of his letters to the emperor reads: “Because in your great Empire everything concerning the sciences is yet new and everything just like a blank paper, countless mistakes which have slowly and unnoticed attained a foothold in Europe can be avoided.” Notably, Leibniz in no way considered ‘Russian barbarism’ an impediment for Peter’s reform program. Rather, it was exactly because the people had yet to enter modernity that – given certain precautions were taken – it may carry out the philosopher’s designs for the advancement of humankind. Russian backwardness had been reassessed as a positive potential. Consequently, this notion of a *tabula rasa*, of a blank slate in the eastern realms of Europe, invited philosophical and sociological speculation.

Already John Perry, in his *State of Russia under the Present Czar*, had expressed hopes for the Russian people similar to those of Leibniz. Perry’s vision was, however, in the first instance determined by socio-economic considerations. He argued that the root of Russian backwardness lay in the “very many sinister Ways which the Governors and Men in Power take to oppress the People.” The ruling class stifled growth and prosperity by anachronistically perpetuating a feudal economic order: Forced labour was the norm, and “if any Artificers are more ingenious than their Fellow-Workmen [...] they have oftentimes more Labour and Care of Work committed to their Charge, but have no Encouragement given them for their Ingenuity more than another Man.” As later Adam Smith (1723-1790) in his *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Perry underscores the importance of ‘encouragement’ for the social and economic advancement of the state. Without the incentives of a free market, he argued, the Russians were unlikely

---

76 Ibid., 207–8.
78 Ibid., 256–7.
79 “The liberal reward of labour, as it encourages the propagation, so it increases the industry of the common people. The wages of labour are the encouragement of industry, which, like every other human quality, improves in proportion to the encouragement it receives. A plentiful subsistence increases the bodily strength of the labourer, and the comfortable hope of bettering his condition, and of ending his days perhaps in ease and plenty, animates him to exert that strength to the utmost.” Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 4 vols. (London: Charles Knight, 1835), 1: 199–200.
to develop the initiative necessary to become a modern society. Therefore, Perry suggests, “it is no great wonder that the Russes are the most dull and heavy People to attain to any Art or Science of any Nation in the World.”\textsuperscript{80} Peter, however, may remedy this grievance, for “the Czar, where he is present, does give Encouragement to some of those common Artisans and Workmen, who have the Happiness to be under his Eye.”\textsuperscript{81} It therefore lay in the power of the emperor to activate the inherent potential of his people and to thus lead them to a place among the principal nations of the world. “Was the Industry cultivated and incouraged [sic!] as it is in England and other free Countreys,” Perry concluded, “the Product of it might, it is certain, be much farther improv’d, Trade be extended, the People made happy, and the Czars of Muscovy, as the Extent of their Countrey is very great, might in a short time become equal in Power and Strength to any Monarch on Earth.”\textsuperscript{82} Similar to Leibniz, Perry conceived of Russia as a great experimental ground for the intellectual, and particularly the economic achievements of European culture.

The great success of John Perry’s \textit{State of Russia under the Present Czar}\textsuperscript{83} (1716) within and outside of Britain illustrates to what extent “the juxtaposition of a rude and barbarous Russia and the shining image of a reforming, ‘Europeanizing’ Peter was [...] appealing to European minds.”\textsuperscript{84} Friedrich Christian Weber in \textit{Das veränderte Rußland}, too, builds on this notion. To emphasize the singularity of Peter’s achievements, he asks his readers to keep in mind the original state of the domains the tsar had set out to reform. Undoubtedly, he suggests, the improvements he implemented had to “surprise those who have seen them happen, and leave Posterity to doubt whether it was possible that such a Revolution could be brought about in so few Years among a People formerly so rude and unpolished, and at the same time so refractory to all Culture.”\textsuperscript{85} However, Weber points out, the people’s seeming backwardness belied its inherent potential. “It can be made out by several Instances,” he argues, “that it is possible for a young Russian, by reason of that Sagacity and Cunning which is natural to almost the whole Nation, to attain by the means

\textsuperscript{80} Perry, \textit{The State of Russia, under the Present Czar}, 260–1.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 256–61.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 247.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Cross, \textit{Peter the Great through British Eyes}, 48.
\textsuperscript{85} Weber, \textit{The Present State of Russia}, 1: xlv.
of a good Education and Instruction, to the same Degree of Perfection as Children of other civilized Nations [sic!].‖

As Peter’s reign came to a close, Weber appears convinced that the Russians indeed had the “potential to develop a set of positive abilities and character traits,” that is, to successfully emulate the culture of their European neighbours. However, in his eyes “these abilities and character traits are inextricably linked to the personal abilities and traits of Peter I and appear but as the success of his educative measures” – measures to which he had been inspired while residing in Europe. Inversely, this dependency of intellectual achievements from abroad made possible Russia’s inclusion into a modern vision of ‘Europe.’ Although Peter’s subjects had yet to attain the level of refinement of the French, the British, or the Germans, they were now considered to share the same values and to strive for the same intellectual and economic achievements. Therefore, the Russian development could be considered within the same parameters as that of the rest of Europe.

As the century progressed, the notion of Russia’s European potential was further corroborated, and even Montesquieu (1689-1755) discussed the issue in the Spirit of the Laws (1748). As a matter of fact, the ‘Russian theme’ played an important part in resolving the problem the tsardom posed for Montesquieu’s theory of climate. Herbersteinian notions of Russian despotism contradicted the philosopher’s assertion that, unlike impassionate southerners, the peoples of the temperate northern climates were governed foremost by reason. Consequently, Montesquieu asserted, these societies would be naturally inclined to implement civil liberties, Britain being the obvious example. However, Russian autocracy stood at odds with this contention. Montesquieu resolved this conflict by arguing that the despotic form had in fact been imposed on the Russia by southern barbarians, i.e. the Mongols that had occupied her territories from the thirteenth to

---

86 Ibid., 1: 18.
88 Ibid.
89 Montesquieu generally cites John Perry as an authority. See for example Charles L. S. baron de Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, ed. Anne M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), 28, 209, 251. It is also documented that Montesquieu requested a copy of Fontenelle’s eulogy to be sent to him in 1728. See Lortholary, Le mirage russe en France au XIIIe siècle, 33.
the fifteenth century. He was convinced that Russia had always shown “marks of impatience that the southern climates do not produce.”91 Recalling the feudal traditions of the Kievan Rus’ preceding the Mongolian conquest, he asks: “Did we not see aristocratic government established there briefly?”92 Therefore Montesquieu suggests that the success of Peter I’s reforms stemmed not so much from the genius of the great tsar, but – quite the contrary – from the inherently ‘northern’ nature of his people. In fact, “the ease and promptness with which this nation has become orderly,” the philosopher remarks, “has shown that this prince had too low an opinion of it and that these people were not beasts as he said.”93 In particular “the violent means he employed were useless; he would have accomplished his purpose as well by gentleness.”94 Thus, in the eyes of Montesquieu, it had not been necessary to re-educate the Russian people, but merely to reconnect it to its true self. “The empire of climate,” he maintains, “is the first of all empires. Therefore, [Peter] did not need laws to change the mores and manners of his nation; it would have been sufficient for him to inspire other mores and other manners.”95 Ultimately, Montesquieu argues that Peter’s rule need be considered not an era of reform inspired by the achievements of European civilization, but a renaissance which literally reawakened the European element that had lain dormant in the Russian population. As a result, the people appeared not simply an apt emulator, but in fact a natural agent of European culture.96

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century, such tendencies to consider Russia as part of European culture were further buttressed by a significant shift in symbolic geography. By default, the eastern demarcation of the European continent poses a challenge. To the west, north, and south, the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the White Seas have left Europe with largely unequivocal boundaries. In contrast, the east provides for no such clear-cut border. Rather it is a shifting frontier that may be contested and reinterpreted. To a certain extent, it therefore determines the essence of Europe by posing the question of who is to be included in a respective (cultural, economic, geographical, 

91 Ibid., 280.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 316.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 See also Lortholary, Le mirage russe en France au XIIIe siécle, 38.
political, etc.) interpretation of the European idea. The rise of the Russian Empire prompted a gradual eastward adjustment of the imagined line separating Europe from Asia, eventually allocating a large portion of Russia to the former.\textsuperscript{97} This shift can, for example, be found in the geographical survey of Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg (1676-1747). During the Great Northern War, this officer in the Swedish army had been taken prisoner by the Russians and subsequently spent thirteen years in the Tomsk region before joining the Siberian expedition of the German explorer Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt in 1721.\textsuperscript{98} When Strahlenberg eventually returned to Stockholm, he compiled his observations from Russia in a voluminous treatise, \textit{Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia} (1730).\textsuperscript{99} First and foremost, the volume was a comprehensive statistical account.\textsuperscript{100} As such, it was a seminal achievement, and provided unprecedentedly thorough insight into Russia’s climate and geography, her administration and military force, as well as her ecclesiastical structures and trade relations. The centerpiece of this ambitious project however was a detailed map of Russia and Asia, and the first quarter of the treatise is in fact dedicated to the discussion of the charted ‘divisions’ and ‘boundaries.’ Thereby, special attention is given to ‘the Boundaries between Europe and Asia’\textsuperscript{101} which had become increasingly ambiguous in the preceding decades. The author therefore assures his readers that “whereas, in several new Maps, from an Uncertainty where to place them, they have been wholly left out, I have shew’d them so plain in mine, that they will remain determin’d for ever.”\textsuperscript{102} Notably – whether self-consciously or inadvertently is difficult to say – Strahlenberg contends that geographical demarcation lines result from an act of cultural meaning-making. Borders must be ‘determined,’ and are consequently the product of an interpretative process.

\textsuperscript{97} Mikkeli, \textit{Europe as an Idea and an Identity}, 159.
\textsuperscript{100} Strahlenberg incorporates some socio-historical information as well. Much of it is taken from John Perry, whom Strahlenberg quotes frequently; see for example Strahlenberg, \textit{An historico-geographical description of the North and Eastern parts of Europe and Asia}, 224, 265.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 105–26.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 16–17.
Strahlenberg’s interpretation of the border separating Europe from Asia “largely anticipat[es] today’s school textbook definition.” In Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia, he argues a line that stretches from the Ural mountain range in the north to the mountains of the Caucasus in the south. From a contemporary point of view, this equalled a momentous expansion of the European continent. “Until the seventeenth century the eastern border of Europe was most often drawn from the Black Sea via the River Dnieper and the city of Kiev to Lake Ladoga and on up the water-ways to the White Sea.” Strahlenberg now located this border roughly 1,500 miles further eastwards, making not only for a geographically larger, but also for a culturally more diverse Europe. It now included not only Russia’s Orthodox population, but also many of its imperial subjects such as the Muslim Tatar tribes that inhabited the Steppes on the northern Black Sea littoral. Such an expansion necessarily challenged notions of an homogeneous European identity. Strahlenberg, like many of his successors, sought to symbolically circumvent this challenge by only including part of the Russian Empire – which by 1730 already stretched to the Pacific – into his vision of Europe. The Urals thereby acted “as a psychological border between the more developed part of the principality and the more primitive eastern regions.” Nevertheless, there remained significant ambiguity concerning Russia’s place within the community of European peoples. On the one hand post-Petrine Russia did, in fact, appear a contributor to technological and cultural progress. The new capital St Petersburg, for example, had been built in the newest French and Italian styles, and was equipped with such cutting-edge innovations as a police department, a fire brigade, and nightly street lighting. At the same time, the seemingly despotic rule of the tsars, the destitute condition of the population, and the Muslim tribes inhabiting substantial parts of ‘European Russia’ stood at odds with the notion of a modern and progressive state.

104 Strahlenberg, An historico-geographical description of the North and Eastern parts of Europe and Asia, 121–2.
105 Mikkeli, Europe as an Idea and an Identity, 158.
106 As Delanty points out, “Orthodoxy was seen as semi-oriental and foreign to the identity of the Latin West.” In fact, after the Crusade against Constantinople in 1204, “the difference between Orthodoxy and Latin Christianity was almost as great as the difference between Christianity and Islam.” Delanty, Inventing Europe, 52.
107 Mikkeli, Europe as an Idea and an Identity, 160.
In the decades and centuries to follow, this seemingly split nature of Russia, its incorporation of both European and Asiatic elements would call forth widely diverging interpretations of its place within the community of European nations. To be sure, outright rejection of its membership was possible only in open contradiction to the geopolitical reality. Nevertheless, Russia’s hybrid nature would particularly in the nineteenth century lead many to dismiss it as a deficient manifestation of European culture, neither fully barbarian, nor entirely civilized. In contrast, in the immediate aftermath of the Petrine era, Russia’s position ‘in-between’ was often considered a distinguishing quality and, as a matter of fact, part of its historical mission. “The educated circles of eighteenth-century Europe saw Russia as a country of cultural potential that could undertake the task of civilizing (for which we read Europeanizing) the continent of Asia, then at a lower stage of development.”

Inversely, as an agent between distinct cultures, Russia challenged, or rather made possible, the explicit articulation of what it meant to be European by staging the encounter with the non-European other. Thus, her realm had become – to recall the words of Homi Bhabha – an ‘interstitial space,’ in which “intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.”

As a result, the ‘Russian theme’ was vested with significant metaphorical potential. By thinking and writing about Russia, authors such as Perry and Montesquieu were at the same time exploring the idea of European civilization. More generally speaking, the Russian theme captured the public imagination as a locus where the European self could articulate itself.

**LITERARY EXPLORATIONS**

Authors of fictional works in a remarkable way adapted and exploited the metaphorical potential of this notion. They cast the Russian realm as a significant otherworld, a transitional space in which their protagonists could explore and consolidate their own identity. In the early eighteenth century, the Russian theme featured most prominently in the adventure novel. This connection was grounded foremost in the genre’s structural logic. In these narratives, the focus lies not so much on the psychological development of the

---

108 Ibid., 161.
109 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2.
main character. Rather, the biography of the hero or heroine serves as a link for a series of loosely connected, marvellous episodes. Most generally, the plot is ruled by “a primary interest in the sheer narrative excitement of rapidly occurring happenings.”\(^{110}\) ‘Russia,’ in this context, provided for another remote and exotic backdrop which would excite the reader’s imagination. A 1721 novel by Penelope Aubin (1679-1738) gives an illustrative example. Its full title promises an account of *The Life of Madam de Beaumont, a French lady; who lived in a cave in Wales above fourteen years undiscovered, being forced to fly France for her Religion; and of the cruel Usage she had there. Also her lord’s adventures in Muscovy, where he was a Prisoner some Years. With an account of his returning to France, and her being discover’d by a Welch Gentlemen, who fetch’d her Lord to Wales: And of many strange Accidents which befel them, and their Daughter Belinda, who was stolen away from them; and of their Return to France in the Year 1718*. The title alone shows that Aubin’s novel is little more than an amalgamation of ‘penny dreadfuls,’ and “the narrative’s geographical sweep in itself constitutes a bid for the attention of those addicted to tales of adventure.”\(^{111}\) Thereby, ‘adventures in Muscovy’ fall in line with tales of abduction, exile, and violence. And as is typical for the genre, the “moral and prudential lessons” of the story don’t go beyond demonstrating the reward for constancy in the face of adversity.\(^{112}\) The Russian episode is therefore nothing more than a further link in the chain of loosely connected events.

Yet as the *philosophes* further elaborated on the Russian theme, its possibilities were more thoroughly explored by literary authors. Daniel Defoe (1659-1731), for example, in *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) already makes full use of the Russian theme’s metaphorical potential as it emerged in the early eighteenth century. It is noteworthy that Defoe at first vehemently rejected the notion of the worker-tsar who had single-handedly modernized his country. In a pamphlet entitled *On the Clemency of the Tsar* (1718) he doubts “that the Nation which [Peter I] governed would have been

\(^{111}\) Ibid., 50.
\(^{112}\) Ibid., 57.
effectually reformed by his Authority and Example.”\textsuperscript{113} Rather, Defoe argues, the tsar had “made himself entirely Master of every valuable Thing in these Parts of the World, – except Humanity.”\textsuperscript{114} This was a grave indictment, as “Humanitarianism, or – more properly speaking – its growth, was, whatever else may be said of their writings, the unifying aim of Enlightenment thinkers.”\textsuperscript{115} Ultimately, the author fundamentally opposed the ‘Russian theme.’ However, but a year later, an entirely different attitude towards Russia emerges from the sequel to Defoe’s \textit{Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe} (1719).

At the outset of \textit{The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe}, the hero has aged, but not matured. Still not cured from his “wandring inclination,”\textsuperscript{116} Crusoe once more sets out for his island, subsequently engages in trade in the Bay of Bengal, and finally reaches China with a cargo vessel. From there, sometime in the early 1700s, he takes the overland route to England which eventually brings him into the domains of the Russian tsar. Crusoe experiences Russia as the first outpost of civilization, and by locating the border between Europe and Asia along the River Kama, he generally follows Strahlenberg’s Ural-Caucasus axis.\textsuperscript{117} Notably, Peter I is in no longer considered to be lacking \textit{humanitas}, as in Defoe’s earlier treatise. Rather, he is now compared to the great emperors of antiquity, in particular for having “Cities and Towns built in as many Places as are possible to place them, where his Soldiers keep Garrison something like the Stationary Soldiers plac’d by the \textit{Romans} in the remotest Countries of their Empire.”\textsuperscript{118} Seemingly, the tsar is continuing the imperial traditions of the Italian Caesars. Thus, \textit{The Farther Adventures}, too, perpetuates the notion of Russia’s civilizing mission and her potential to act as an agent of European culture.

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 191.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The full metaphorical potential of Russia as a space in-between is developed in the hero’s encounter with a prince who had been exiled from the capital to the remotest outskirts of ‘European Russia.’ Crusoe offers him assistance to flee the country, but the latter declines: He explains that only “here I am free from the Temptation of returning to my former miserable Greatness; there I am not sure but that all the Seeds of Pride, Ambition, Avarice and Luxury [...] again overwhelm me.”119 In fact, the prince explains, the inner-Russian exile has made him “Master of his Soul’s Liberty.”120 Not even the prospect of owning an island in the Caribbean, Crusoe lets his readers know, could make his host consider abandoning his post: “The Prince told me, with a Sigh, that the true Greatness of Life was to be Master of our selves; That he would not have exchang’d such a State of Life as mine, to have been Czar of Muscovy.”121 This tellingly reflects back on Crusoe who, due to his ‘wandering inclinations,’ has time and time again failed to satisfy social and, by extension, religious norms in his conduct of life. Already at the outset of The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures, the hero realizes that his flight is a sin against his community, a “Breach of my Duty to God and my Father.”122 This is Crusoe’s “dilectum delictum (or ‘commanding sin’) which rules his life and leads him into the straits from which he needs deliverance.”123 The hero has fallen victim to one of “the most basic human sins, a restlessness of body and mind which leads to discontent with one’s station. It was this sin which caused man’s original fall, and Puritan moralists regarded it as man’s first and worst enemy.”124 Ultimately, “Crusoe’s life, like that of all other men, is simply a battleground on which one phase of a general struggle takes place.”125 Remarkably, it is only after Crusoe’s encounter with the exiled prince that he manages to fully appreciate and to successfully overcome this conflict. “I told [the prince],” he relates,

I once thought my self a kind of a Monarch in my old Station [...], but that I thought he was not a Monarch only, but a great Conqueror; for he that has got a Victory over

119 Ibid., 210.
120 Ibid., 205.
121 Ibid.
123 Defoe, The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, 71.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid., 69–70.
his own exorbitant Desires, and has the absolute Dominion over himself, whose Reason entirely governs his Will, is certainly greater than he that conquers a City.\textsuperscript{126}

The encounter with the Russian prince makes a lasting impression on Crusoe. From this sojourn, he returns to England where he finally cherishes “the Blessing of ending our Days in Peace.”\textsuperscript{127} Of all of his adventures, it is the Russian episode which most explicitly confronts Crusoe with his errors, and ultimately prompts his conversion and full restoration to society.

The change in Defoe’s attitude towards the Russian Empire between The Clemency of the Tsar and The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe is remarkable, and, moreover, need not be attributed to the poetic license enjoyed by the fictional genre. A later historical text demonstrates that this positive reassessment was genuine and sustained. In An Impartial History of the Life and Actions of Peter Alexowitz (1723), Defoe joins the chorus of Russia’s panegyrics: He, too, now celebrates Tsar Peter I for enlightening his people, marshalling the army, policing the state, regulating commerce, and increasing the overall wealth of his domains. In short, he believed the Russian Emperor to be as great a “School-Master [...], as the whole World can show not One Example of the like.”\textsuperscript{128} Both the Farther Adventures and the Life and Actions of Peter thus bear witness to the shift in European representations of Russia in the aftermath of Perry’s State of Russia and Weber’s Das veränderte Rußland. Most importantly, however, Defoe was among the first to translate the notion of Russia’s place in-between into a powerful literary trope. In one of the first novels to focus on the psychological development of its protagonist, Russia tellingly enables the hero to reflect on his identity and successfully articulate self-hood.

In the following decades, this became a recurring motif in European literature, and by the middle of the eighteenth century, the Russian theme had been elaborated and furnished with further nuances, as for example in Christian Fürchtegott Gellert’s (1715-1769) Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von $G^{**}$ (1747/48). Notably, the novel’s plot

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 206. \\
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 217. \\
\textsuperscript{128} Daniel Defoe, An Impartial History of the Life and Actions of Peter Alexowitz, the Present Czar of Muscovy (London: Chetwood, 1723), 8.
\end{flushleft}
appears to be inspired by the life of Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg,\textsuperscript{129} the author of 
\textit{Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia}: In the course of the Great Northern War, the Swedish count G** is taken prisoner by Russian forces. After a short incarceration in Moscow, he is exiled to Tobolsk in Siberia, where he endures his fate together with the Englishman Steeley. In the end, both return home to be reunited with their families. The structure of the novel, and in particular its treatment of the Russian theme, strikingly resemble Defoe’s 
\textit{Farther Adventures}, as the Russian space ‘in-between’ once again enables catharsis for the main characters. After their capture, the count and his companion are held prisoners in an underground dungeon, expelled from society. Once re-admitted to the world, they must retire to its outermost extremity where they are forced to submit to an adverse fate before being restored to their place in society and allowed to return to their families. The storyline thus follows a secularized progression of inferno, purgatory, and paradise, and indeed, both G** and Steeley are at the outset presented as sinners: The former had in his youth seduced and impregnated a young maidservant; the latter disobeyed his father by joining the forces of Charles XII of Sweden. The Russian exile enables both to demonstrate humility which, in turn, elevates them in the eyes of their fellow men. “Who knows of what noble birth he is,” exclaims one Russian after meeting Steely, “and still he had to endure so much in this godforsaken land! If I may do so, I shall serve him endless hours to restore his well-being.”\textsuperscript{130} As in the 
\textit{Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe}, the heroes arrive in the Russian realm carrying a 
\textit{dilectum delictum}, which they have successfully shed by the time of their departure.

Gellert’s novel, however, adds a further dimension to the Russian theme through his incorporation of the motif of the noble savage. This topos had been conceived by Enlightenment authors who subscribed to the antagonism between the seemingly corrupting powers of European civilization and the Rousseauean notion of an unblemished ‘natural state.’ Lacking both the virtues and the vices of refined culture, the peregrine territory and its inhabitants appeared a pristine space which the European onlooker “filled with the

\textsuperscript{129} See above, p. 38.
Moreover, the good-natured naïveté of the *Naturmensch* – one may recall Leibniz vision of Russia as a ‘blank slate’ – implied a natural susceptibility for the positive achievements of European culture. The noble savage therefore was a fitting allegory for the Russian Empire as Europeans had come to see it after the reign of Peter I. In *Das Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G****, Steeley encounters such a creature in Siberia: A young Cossack maiden who proves that “even under the rudest people there are to be found susceptible and noble hearts.”\(^\text{132}\) Foremost, the girl embodies the ability and desire of Russia to adopt the culture of its European colonizer:

As Steeley recognized the formidable heart of the beauty, he put all effort into shaping her and cleansing her noble sentiment from the coarse impressions of her education. Encouraged by love, she soon had embraced his opinions and morals and attained so much sense that it required no further efforts on his side to be well-disposed towards her.\(^\text{133}\)

However, the motif of the noble savage, particularly in its female manifestation, not only exemplifies the cultural receptiveness of the colonized land. Inversely, the encounter with the savage maiden may encourage the personal development of the (traditionally male) explorer. In the eighteenth century,

the encounter of travellers with women literalized a widespread operative metaphor [...] . Because women and men are quite encounterable in real life, the conceptualization of travel in terms of their interaction (and, conversely, of their interactions in terms of travel) could dramatically shape literature and experience.\(^\text{134}\)

Travel was represented as, and often conflated with, a ritual of (sexual) initiation. The experience could thus separate adolescence from adulthood – “properly managed, travel/women could ‘make’ the man.”\(^\text{135}\) Steeley’s encounter with the wild Cossack maiden closely follows this pattern, and his educational efforts are rewarded “with willing

---


\(^\text{133}\) Ibid., 82.

\(^\text{134}\) Susan Lamb, *Bringing Travel Home to England: Tourism, Gender, and Imaginative Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 41–42.

\(^\text{135}\) Ibid., 46.
kisses.\textsuperscript{136} In the end, the encounter proves formative for both the Cossack maiden and Steely. In the course of their relationship, the exiled Englishman comes to witness and personally experience the value of a strong family bond. Tellingly, upon his return to England he will care for the well-being of his father, a widower who had been approaching the end of his life without the consolation of being tended to by his only child. Thus, the Russian experience proved a decisive step in Steeley’s maturing and subsequent re-integration into British society.

In \textit{Das Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G**}, Gellert gives a concise impression of the image of Russia in Europe after the reign of Peter I. His empire was no longer considered an obscure and backward otherworld. Rather, it appeared a young and virile ascendant to the community of European nations. Since the beginning of Peter’s rule, Russia had proven itself to be an apt pupil of European culture. Moreover, it seemingly held great promise for the future, and could be imagined to one day further the cause of European civilization in the same way that this civilization had encouraged Russia’s rise to greatness. The German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was among the first to express this hope which subsequently was replicated by many great thinkers of the European Enlightenment. In their eyes, the empire founded by Peter the Great was a formidable diamond in the rough. It was Europe’s raw extension where the project of human perfectibility could reach its full potential. However, the more Russian power grew towards the end of the century, the more such uncritical adulation subsided. In particular the expansionist policies of Tsarina Catherine II would trouble the chancelleries in Europe’s capitals and once more raise the question of Russia’s place within the concert of Europe.

\textsuperscript{136} Gellert, “Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G**,” 81.
The late Enlightenment arguably witnessed the closest cultural and political rapprochement between Russia and the rest of the European states in modern history. This stands at odds with the theses of Larry Wolff who in *Inventing Eastern Europe* argues that Russian-European relations of this era were centered on the intellectual mastery of the former through the latter. Wolff’s interpretation builds on the premise that ‘Western’ Europeans discovered in the ‘Eastern’ part of the continent the underdeveloped complement to their own refined culture. Enlightenment philosophers “exploited” the ambiguous situation of a region located “within Europe but not fully European,” and fitted it “into a scheme of backwardness and development, making it into a defining characteristic that combined different lands under the sign of Eastern Europe.”¹ The conceptual shortcomings of these ideas have been pointed out in the introduction. These problems are, however, further exacerbated by Wolff’s non-observance of social history. As Matthew Anderson has pointed out, “Wolff is perhaps too eager to condemn the assumption of superiority with which westerners approached the eastern half of the continent. Such attitudes may be difficult to reconcile with some non-judgemental ones fashionable at the present day; but were they really unjustified?”² In other words: Europe’s eastern states were at the time

---

Indeed less developed than her western neighbours. Hence, the notion of eastern ‘backwardness’ need not necessarily be considered a fabrication with the purpose of excluding these parts of the continent from the core of the European family. Yet by focusing on what he considers “a style of intellectual mastery” akin to Said’s notion of ‘Orientalism,’ Wolff misses out on the finer nuances of the relationship between the two hemispheres in the late eighteenth century. His disregard for the close ties between Russia and the rest of Europe at the close of the century lead him to a lopsided reading of his sources, and yields misleadingly unequivocal results. The attitudes of the philosophers, ethnographers, and travellers he references in his study are no less complex than the political reality of their time. For as much as Russia’s position within the European community remained ambiguous, she had evidently established herself as a strong member. At the time, a meaningful division of the European continent into ideological bulwarks was not feasible. “No one,” Martin Malia points out, “spoke in antithetical fashion of ‘Russia and the West,’ since no one had as yet formulated the cultural categories for such a sheep-and-goats distinction.”4 Politically and intellectually European geography remained in a constant state of flux.

**RUSSIA AND THE OLD ORDER OF EUROPE**

Russia’s full integration into the Old Order of Europe in the course of the eighteenth century was, both intellectually and politically, closely linked to a concurrent, radical transformation of European identity. By about 1700, the notion of a continent united by the true Christian faith had lost significant ground. Instead, many came to regard Europe as a secular community founded on a shared cultural heritage. At the outset of the eighteenth century, “the term Europe was in regular use and had almost completely replaced the earlier ‘Christendom,’ especially in the political thinking of the Protestants.”5 The Reformation movement had been one of the strongest internal challengers to a social framework which, in the last instance, was held together by the Pope in Rome. Accordingly, Protestants were

---

4 Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, 73.
among the first to subscribe to the new, secular vision of Europe. Following the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which acknowledged the Reformation as irreversible, this new worldview continuously expanded its influence and undermined the integrative appeal of ‘Christendom.’ The internal process of decomposition was further accelerated by external factors, above all the decline of Ottoman power on the Balkan Peninsula. The failure of the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683 was but the first in a long series of military defeats that would eventually lead to the downfall of the Ottoman Empire. From a European point of view, this rendered obsolete the idea of an antemurale christianitatis, a bastion defending Christian faith against Muslim barbarians.

However, the notion of a continent united by the Christian faith was not abolished all at once. While “the term ‘Europe’ replaced the former ‘Christendom’ with growing frequency, the latter was very slow to die.” The expression respublica christiana, for example, is still found in the Peace of Utrecht (1713) which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession. Yet as the century progressed, Europeans less and less based their identity on a Christian humanism “in which pan-European values were to a great extent founded on a common religion.” The focus now lay on a cultural program developed by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. This was, by contrast, “fundamentally non-Christian, and excessive reliance on the Christian tradition was even regarded as being injurious to the fostering of a pan-Europeanism.” Inversely, this attitude provided for a more open concept of Europe which could now incorporate peoples and countries formerly excluded as infidels, heretics, or apostates. The Grand Duchy of Muscovy, adherent to the schismatic faith of the ‘Greeks,’ had been incompatible to ‘Christendom.’ The Russian Empire on the other hand, striving to emulate the cultural and intellectual achievements of French and British civilization, easily found its place within a European community whose shared identity focused on the maxims of the philosophes. Indirectly, the decline of Ottoman power, too, was crucial for the integration of Russia into the Old Order of Europe. As the Porte was increasingly weakened by internal strife, her client states on the northern

---

6 Ibid., 40.
7 Ibid., 61.
8 Ibid., 61.
littoral of the Black Sea could no longer depend on the Sultans. This paved the way for Russian conquest in the region, but more importantly, freed up military and financial resources necessary for the modernization of the state and a strong military presence in Europe. Thus, the redefinition of European cultural identity and Russia’s rise to great power status were closely interrelated and, in fact, largely complementary.

Nevertheless, the cultural integration of the Russian Empire into the European sphere generated noteworthy intellectual resistance. Her accession bore witness to a fundamental shift affecting the continent, and thus met with conservative opposition. While commercial ties and military alliances set the ground for mutual understanding, Russian autocracy and neo-feudalism seemed at odds with the European self-image. To accept this foreign body into the European community therefore meant accepting a new, pluralistic world view which differed significantly from traditional attitudes. Thus, even after the expiration of the Ottoman menace, the eastern part of Europe retained part of its threat, and as such remained central to the definition of the European idea.  

Russia, however, did not provide for such a clear distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as the Turks on the Balkans Peninsula. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, even geographically speaking the tsardom needed be considered both inside and outside, and thus perpetually challenged the European self-image.

But even though the Russian Empire expounded the conceptual problems of ‘Europe’ in the middle of the eighteenth century, her accession to the political order was undeniable. “Eighteenth-century Russia was accepted into the European concert as it was understood at the time by all segments of society.” Cultural animosity could not repudiate this fact. “The men of the dynastic, the aristocratic, and the enlightened system of value, no matter how ambivalent towards one another, were in essential agreement with respect to Russia: she was Europe's new and raw eastern extension, but a part of Europe nonetheless.”

Correspondingly, Russia had soon successfully asserted itself within the

---

9 See Delanty, Inventing Europe, 7: “Unlike the western frontier, which has been a frontier of expansion, the eastern one has been a frontier of defence and has played a central role in the formation of European identity.”

10 Malia, Russia Under Western Eyes, 73.

11 Ibid.
concert of Europe. At the time, this primarily meant the establishment of close personal relations with Europe’s ruling families. Until late in the eighteenth century “foreign relations were the supreme affair of kings – a mystery, a secret, a prerogative which only they could or should control and understand.”\textsuperscript{12} Accordingly, already Peter I had delegated personal confidants to more than twenty of Europe’s leading courts, and received almost as many representatives in Petersburg.\textsuperscript{13} However, in a system where international relations were often conducted along the lines of personal relationships, royal intermarriage provided the most powerful tool in foreign policy. The tsars entered this practise most aggressively, and the lineage of Russia’s rulers bears witness to the particularly close relationship with the German lands that evolved throughout the eighteenth century: Tsar Ivan VI (r. 1740-1741), for example, was the son of Duke Anthony Ulrich of Brunswick, Tsar Peter III (r. 1762) the son of Charles Frederick, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Tsarina Catherine II (r. 1762-1796) was born Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg. It was not least such close personal ties which helped establish Russia as a great European power.

One event in particular may illustrate Russia’s ascendancy to the concert of Europe in the eighteenth century. In 1787, Catherine II assembled a truly majestic travelling party for her famous procession to the Crimea. Louis Philippe Comte de Ségur (1753-1830), the French envoy to Petersburg from 1784-1789, gives the following description of the company.

Amongst these, was a king of Poland, once beloved and crowned, but lately deprived of part of his dominions by this imperious Princess; amongst them too was the heir of the Caesars, the emperor of the West, who, humbling his diadem, and for a time laying aside the purple, came to mingle with the courtiers of the victorious Empress, in order to draw closer the bonds of an alliance with her, equally formidable to the liberty of Poland, the security of Prussia, and the peace of Europe.\textsuperscript{14}

The Polish King Stanislaw August Poniatowski (r. 1746-1795) and the Austrian Emperor Joseph II (r. 1780-1790) were clearly the highlights of the illustrious party. Other notables

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 267.
included the Prince de Ligne (1735-1814), a highly accomplished general and close advisor to the Austrian Emperor, as well as the British minister plenipotentiary to Russia from 1783-1788, Alleyne Fitzherbert (1753-1839). The latter had been commissioned to renew the trade agreement between the two states which was due to expire. At the court in St Petersburg, this made him the direct rival of the Comte de Ségur, who, in a notable shift in French foreign policy, had been deployed to establish the first ever formal treaty between France and the Russian Empire. But the members of the travelling party pursued not only commercial and representational interests. Especially for the Empress and the Emperor, the visit to the Crimea held substantial geopolitical implications. The inhabitants of the peninsula, the Crimean Tatars, had been the last powerful clients of the Ottomans on the Black Sea’s northern littoral. After the last Russo-Turkish War from 1768 to 1774, the Peace Treaty of Kuçuk Kainarji (1774) had established the independence of the Crimea, and thus paved the way for Russian annexation in 1783. Joseph’s participation in Catherine’s procession therefore was above all a public demonstration of the Emperor’s and Empress’ shared intention to further curtail Ottoman influence around the Black Sea and on the Balkan Peninsula. The procession to the Crimea signified the leading role Russia had taken on in power politics, and her importance – as Ségur noted – for maintaining the ‘peace of Europe.’

As a result, Russia began to attract not only the imagination of the peoples in the rest of Europe. Many members of the educated classes set out to seek employment with such a formidable power whose military, intellectual and technological advances promised more opportunities than the often constrictive realities of their native countries. Germans made up a significant part of this immigration movement. Already during the reign of Tsar Alexis I (r. 1645-1676), the suburb of Moscow designated for the housing of foreigners was named the ‘German city,’ and the majority of Tsar Peter I’s personal advisors had been recruited from the German lands. It is therefore not merely rhetorical when in 1768 the Württemberg poet and journalist Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (1739-1791) writes to his brother-in-law: “I feel quite inclined to offer my service to the Russian Empress which
is said to be quite fond of Germans.”\textsuperscript{15} The liberal minded author was throughout his life subject to rigorous government scrutiny, and even suffered ten years of incarceration without indictment. Emigration to Russia seemed to him similarly attractive as to the legion of European adventurers who actually sought their fortune in the Empire of the tsars, many of them quite successfully. For example, in the 1770s, the Russian government managed to recruit workers from the famous Carron works in Glasgow who would significantly improve the military technology of the imperial navy. Among them was Charles Gascoigne (1738-1806),\textsuperscript{16} who introduced major innovations to the armament of the Russian fleet, supervised the installation of a steam pump for the dry docks in Kronshtadt (then esteemed a wonder of its age), and – probably his greatest accomplishment – arranged for Russia’s first steamship to be built. Gascoigne was eventually raised to the rank of a knight of the order of St Vladimir and spent his retirement as proprietor of 2,000 serfs awarded to him by Emperor Paul. At roughly the same time Friedrich Maximilian Klinger (1752-1831),\textsuperscript{17} one of the most prominent writers of the German Sturm und Drang period, entered the Russian service under Grand Duke Paul, the future Emperor Paul I. In 1780, Klinger was assigned the position of lieutenant of a marine battalion before accompanying the heir to the throne on a Grand Tour of Europe. Later he took part in the military action against the Turks led by General Suvorov from 1783-1785, and went on to become a key figure in Russia’s educational system.

Such careers became increasingly common in the course of the eighteenth century. By adapting to the francophone world of Old Order Europe, Russia had opened itself to a great influx of tradesmen, artisans, entrepreneurs, and adventurers. Inversely, this development drew the tsardom increasingly closer into the imagination of its western neighbours. Thus, as the century progressed, the perceived distance between Russia and the rest of Europe diminished significantly. Contemporary travel accounts attest to this shift in

\textsuperscript{17} For an account of Klinger’s life in Russia see: Olga Smoljan, \textit{Friedrich Maximilian Klinger: Leben und Werk}, Beiträge zur deutschen Klassik 12 (Weimar: Arion Verlag, 1962), 96–155.
symbolic geography. Whereas, in the times of Peter I, the toils of the overland route from Berlin to Petersburg had been topical, subsequent generations spoke favourably of the comfort and swiftness of the voyage – even though the infrastructure had not been improved in a way that merited such a reappraisal. Rather, the geographical perception was shaped by the geopolitical reality. As Russia established herself as part of the European community, Petersburg came to seem just as nearby as Paris or London. This is reflected, for example, in an episode from the memoirs of the Italian adventurer Giacomo Casanova (1725-1798). While residing in Berlin in 1764, he runs into a famous dancer, who, Casanova relates, “introduces his wife to me, also a dancer, known as La Santina, whom he had married in Petersburg, whence they were on their way to spend the winter in Paris.”

These remarks are made in a notably casual tone. A trip from the Russian to the French capital was no longer out of the ordinary, and had, in fact, become a regular undertaking of artists in search of patrons at the great European courts. Moreover, the encounter with the dancer makes Casanova, too, “think of going to Russia,” and seemingly on a whim he sets out for the Petersburg, regardless of the impending winter season. “I left Riga on December 15th,” he reports, “in atrociously cold weather, but I did not feel it. Traveling day and night, shut up in my Schlafwagen, which I never left, I arrived there in sixty hours.”

As far as the Chevalier de Seingalt is concerned, the road to Russia in 1764 was swift and enjoyable.

Other contemporary visitors to Russia, too, reported agreeable conditions, such as the Englishman William Coxe (1748-1828). From 1775 to 1779, Coxe had accompanied the eldest son of the Fourth Duke of Marlborough (George Spencer, 1739-1817) on his Grand Tour of Europe. By then, this male coming-of-age ritual of British high society no longer focussed on the French, German and Italian experience alone, but now also included a northern leg. In his account, Coxe broadly details the comfort of travel in these regions. “From Tolotzin, through the new government of Mohilef [today: Mogilev, Belarus],” he relates, “the road was excellent, and of considerable breadth, with a double row of trees

---

19 Ibid., 77.
20 Ibid., 98.
planted on each side, and ditches to drain off the water.”\textsuperscript{21} The accommodations for travellers, too, proved rustic but pleasant.

We took up our quarters at the post-house, where we procured a very comfortable apartment. These post-houses, which frequently occur in the principal high-roads of Russia, are mostly constructed upon the same plan, and are very convenient for the accommodation of travellers. [...] The luxury of clean straw for our beds was no small addition to these comforts. Upon calling for our bill in the morning, we found our charge as reasonable as the entertainment was good.\textsuperscript{22}

Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835), the famous author of the \textit{Statistical Account of Scotland} (1790), similarly emphasized the ease of travel to Russia. In 1786, Sinclair had “systematically planned a tour of the northern capitals of Europe, which would fit into the seven-month Parliamentary recess between June 1786 and January 1787.”\textsuperscript{23} The results of this political fact-finding mission he privately disseminated as \textit{General Observations Regarding the Present State of the Russian Empire}. Also, upon his return he commissioned a map of Northern Europe which depicted his itinerary and included the following note:

The Journey amounts to 7500 English miles, or 33 miles a day. However short the time may appear, yet, it is certainly possible, by great activity and perseverance, even in seven or eight months, to see the objects the best intitled [sic!] to attention, and the persons the most distinguished for their power, their beauty, or their talents, in the greater, and (what is justly accounted) the most interesting part of Europe.\textsuperscript{24}

Literally, Sinclair demonstrated that Russia was now ‘on the map.’ Moreover, he encouraged both curious travellers and committed policymakers to discover the ‘beauty’ and the ‘power’ of the Russian people. It was due time, he thought, for his fellow Englishmen to explore this ‘most interesting part of Europe,’ which many then still considered but an exotic otherworld.

\textsuperscript{21} William Coxe, \textit{Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark: Interspersed with Historical Relations and Political Inquiries}, 3 vols. (Dublin: S. Price, 1784), 1: 287.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Anthony Cross, \textit{Anglo-Russica: Aspects of Cultural Relations between Great Britain and Russia in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries} (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 52.
\textsuperscript{24} Quote taken from ibid.
This Russian otherworld continued to attract the European imagination as it did the many European soldiers of fortune. The liberties of the Russian theme enabled authors to let their fancy run free, be it to conjecture about the human condition as Leibniz had done, or to stage an space ‘in-between’ as in the novels of Gellert and Defoe. A notable example for the latter are the *Munchausen Tales* (1786), which take their reader on a marvellous adventure through Europe’s eastern borderlands. Largely, the legend of the notorious Baron of Lies was founded in reality. Rudolf Erich Raspe (1736-1794), the author of the first edition, was probably personally acquainted with the Baron Karl Friedrich Freiherr von Münchhausen (1721-1791), whose biography generally coincides with that of his fictional surrogate. Münchhausen had indeed fought in the Russo-Turkish War of 1735-1739 under count Burkhard Christoph von Münnich (1683-1767) – another German with a remarkable career in the imperial army –, partaking in the attack on the fortress of Ochakov in 1737 before returning to Germany. “Years afterward, as a country squire at Bodenwerder, near Hameln, he regaled his guests (Raspe supposedly among them) with droll recitations of incredible personal adventures, adding straight-faced assurances of their veracity.” The editor Raspe sought to preserve this performance situation for his readers, and the full title of the first edition, a chapbook not fifty pages strong, reads: *Baron Munchausen’s Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia. Humbly Dedicated and Recommended to Country Gentlemen; and, if they please, to be repeated as their own, after a hunt, at horse races, in watering-places, and other such polite assemblies; round the bottle and fire-side.* To be sure, the stories were tongue-in-cheek, but Raspe argues for an underlying pedagogic value. “Munchausen,” he explains,

---

25 See above, p. 33.
26 See above, pp. 42–47.
28 Ibid.
30 Rudolf E. Raspe, *Baron Munchausen’s Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia: Humbly Dedicated and Recommended to Country Gentlemen; and, if they please, to be repeated as their own,*
having found that prejudiced minds cannot be reasoned into common sense, and that bold assertors are very apt to bully and speak their audience out of it; he never argues with either of them, but adroitly turns the conversation upon indifferent topicks, and then tells a story of his travels, campaigns, and sporting adventures, in a manner peculiar to himself, and well calculated to awaken and shame the common sense of those who have lost sight of it by prejudice or habit.31

Ultimately, Raspe asserts, the real-life Münchhausen was seeking to enlighten his listeners by confronting them with their own credulity. This moral impetus recurs in the Munchausen tales: Raspe encourages his readers, should they find the account “rather extravagant and bordering upon the marvellous, which will require but a very moderate share of common sense, to exercise the same [common sense] upon every occurrence of life, and chiefly upon our English politicks.”32 This was a pressing matter, for “old habits and bold assertions, set off by eloquent speeches, and supported by constitutional mobs, associations, volunteers, and foreign influence, have of late, we apprehend, but too successfully turned our brains, and made us the laughing-stock of Europe.”33 Seen in this light, the Munchausen tales are an exercise of the imagination that seeks to activate the reader’s critical faculties.

Following this programmatic introduction, the narrator takes the reader away to the Russian realm where Munchausen turns bears inside out, beats foxes out of their furs, and even climbs to the moon to retrieve a gardening tool. In this context it must be pointed out that for a majority of Europeans the continent’s eastern borderlands retained a fantastic, quasi-mythical air well into the eighteenth century. As a matter of fact, John Cook as late as 1730, on an excursion to southern Russia, inquired locals about the legendary boronets, “a creature having the exact shape and appearance of a lamb but growing like a plant on a stalk attached to its stomach. When it had devoured all the grass which the stalk permitted it to reach, it died.”34 In the end, however, Cook found, “that the people of Astrakhan

---

31 Ibid., ii–iii.
32 Ibid., iii–iv.
33 Ibid.
34 Anderson, *Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815*, 18.
laughed at the idea of such a creature.”

This mythical potential of the Russian realm is taken up by the Munchausen tales. Throughout the narrative, “the distant lands of Russia appear a bizarre hybrid of a topsy turvy world and a promised land of unlimited opportunity.”

The reader is invited to give rein to fancy, and to imagine possible the impossible. At the same time – as pointed out in the introduction – he is reprimanded for his willingness to engage in such flights of the imagination. Thus, in a remarkable inversion, mythical Russia calls the enlightened European back to reason.

A similar inversion occurs in the *Travels of Anacharsis the Younger in Greece* (1787) by the French scholar Jean-Jacques Barthélemy (1761-1795).

Herodotus (484-425 BCE) had been the first to relate the legend of this ‘barbarian’ traveller to ancient Greece who, upon his return to Scythia, was killed by the king for attempting to introduce Greek cultural traditions to his homeland north of the Black Sea. For centuries to come, Anacharsis “remained a paragon of barbarian virtue [...]. Plato praised him as an ingenious inventor and a man of practical skill, Aristotle said he was an estimable rhetorician (but bad logician). Strabo noted that he was a man of frugality and justice. [...] In Greek literature, Anacharsis was celebrated as the embodiment of practical wisdom despite his barbarian origins.”

For many authors of classical antiquity, the fact of Anacharsis’ “foreignness provided a useful literary device. Putting words in the barbarian’s mouth and letting him speak as a social critic was a favourite trope.”

When Barthélemy revived the spirit of Anacharsis, he largely remained true to this tradition. Once more, the barbarian set out from ancient Scythia – now synonymous with the Russian heartland – to explore the intellectual achievements of European culture. The preface of the first English translation promises that “the work now offered to the English reader exhibits a complete view of the antiquities, manners, customs, religious ceremonies, laws, arts, and literature of ancient Greece, at the

---

35 Ibid., 80.
39 Ibid.
III. The Late Eighteenth Century: Russia Inside and Outside of Europe

period of its greatest splendour." It was indeed and encyclopaedic endeavour: The work encompassed four volumes in the French, and five in the English edition. It was a great success with contemporaries and following generations and became a key reference for classical learning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In fact, "no single work in this genre had as great an impact on the average educated European's understanding of the art, architecture, and philosophy of the ancient world as the *Travels of Anacharsis the Younger*." Herein lay the great irony of the Anacharsis story. "The popular European vision of ancient Greece as ordered, rational, virtuous, and civilized – the vision that Europeans would eventually come to hold of themselves – was refracted through a Scythian lens." As in the case of the Munchausen tales, the experience of otherness enabled reflection on the European self-image. In the end, "it was a barbarian from the shores of the Black Sea who helped to introduce the ancient Greeks to the grammar schools and middle-class drawing rooms of modern Europe and, in a way, to introduce modern Europeans to themselves." It no longer seemed that the eastern borderlands of the European continent were simply absorbing European culture. Rather, it became possible to imagine ‘Scythian barbarians’ as its key agents.

The great French orator Antoine Léonard Thomas (1732-1785) confirms this notion in his *Essai sur les éloges* (1773) as he discusses Mikhail Lomonosov’s (1711-1765) eulogy for Peter I. "A hundred years ago," Thomas explains,

when Russia was barely known, the descendants of the ancient Scythes were still half-barbarians, and the place where today is situated their capital was but a desert, one could not then expect that by the end of the century, eloquence should have arrived at such a level; and that a Scythian [i.e. Lomonosov], behind the gulf of Finland, and fifteen degrees beyond the Euxinian [Black] Sea, would produce such a panegyric at an Academy of Petersburg."

---

40 Jean-Jacques Barthélemy, *Travels of Anacharsis the Younger in Greece: During the Middle of the Fourth Century Before the Christian Aera*, 5 vols. (Dublin: M. Mills, 1795), 1: iii.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
European learning, Thomas asserts, had not simply been adopted by Russia. Rather, the tsardom had become a harbour for European arts and sciences. “It is thus,” Thomas explains, “that the arts travel around the world. It is no longer the Scythian Anacharsis who is travelling to Athens; it is the arts themselves who seem to be travelling to the Scythians.”\(^{(45)}\) Denis Diderot (1713-1784) similarly argued a reversal of the relationship between ‘old’ and ‘new’ Europe. The French philosopher had spent the winter of 1773/74 as guest of the Empress in St Petersburg. Ten years earlier, Catherine II had saved Diderot from bankruptcy by purchasing his private library, which was to be overturned after his demise.\(^{(46)}\) Already at that time, the *enfant terrible* of the French Enlightenment had been all praise for his royal benefactress. After his visit to the Russian capital, he then insisted that there, in a country which European arrogance “calls that of slaves,” he for the first time ever felt like “a free man.”\(^{(47)}\) Diderot’s friend Voltaire (1694-1778), in a letter to the former, further sharpens this inversion. “What times we live in!” he exclaims. “France persecutes the *philosophes*, the Scythians show them favour!”\(^{(48)}\) When writing these lines, Voltaire was thinking as much of Diderot as of himself – fallen out of favour with King Louis XV, but courted by the Russian Empress.

**RUSSIA IN THE CULTURAL IMAGINATION OF EUROPE**

From the outset of her reign, Catherine II had sought to establish personal ties with leading scholars of the European Enlightenment. Famously, she offered Diderot and d’Alembert to publish the remaining volumes of the *Encyclopédie* in Russia at her personal expense, since their printing license had been suspended by the French government in 1759. Largely, Catherine’s interest was politically motivated. Her accession to the throne had been brought about by a palace revolution, and she was the first ruler since the Time of Troubles (1598-1613) who wasn’t a Romanov by birth. Consequently, her claim to sovereignty was contestable. “To consolidate her newly acquired power, she had to establish her public

\(^{(45)}\) Ibid., 2:188–9.


\(^{(47)}\) Quote taken from ibid., 79.

III. The Late Eighteenth Century: Russia Inside and Outside of Europe

credibility on foundations denied her by race, lineage or law. A good reputation was not just flattering to her ambition; it was essential to her security.” Therefore, her overtures to prominent European scholars were foremost attempts to increase her prestige in the eyes of the public at home and abroad. “And since – as Voltaire himself boasted – the philosophes were the moulders of public opinion, it was at Voltaire above all that she set her cap.” Catherine’s expectations were satisfied: In the end, Voltaire played a key part in recasting her image from that of the bloodstained usurper to that of the enlightened monarch.

Meanwhile, the philosopher pursued an agenda of his own in the collaboration with the ‘Semiramis of the North,’ as he termed the Russian Empress. On the one hand, “it was irresistible, after years of persecution, to be courted and complimented in so charming a fashion.” The prospect of seeing his designs for humankind implemented by one of Europe’s most powerful monarchs was highly tempting for Voltaire. He needed be flattered “to learn that, inspired by his ideas, the largest nation in Europe was being transformed, and the work of Peter the Great completed; that Catherine was introducing, at a stroke of the pen, measures which Voltaire had struggled vainly to see introduced in France.” Yet at the same time, the philosopher’s interest in the tsarina’s patronage was highly pragmatic. Dropped by the court in Versailles, and his longstanding relationship with King Frederick II of Prussia disrupted, Voltaire had already before Catherine’s accession set out to win the Russian tsars as his new royal benefactors. He took the initiative by seeking the commission as official biographer of Tsar Peter I. Empress Elizabeth (r. 1741-1762) granted this privilege, and Voltaire set out to compose The History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great (1759-1763), a study which, he claimed, would “eclipse all others,” and which indeed remained a reference work well beyond the eighteenth century.

Voltaire’s History of Russia is vocal of the author’s desire to please his royal benefactresses, who generously remunerated the author: From Elizabeth he received valuable medals and furs, while Catherine honoured him by opening up a personal

---

49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 10–12.
51 Ibid., 16.
52 Ibid.
53 See Cross, Peter the Great through British Eyes, 79.
correspondence. In his effort to embellish the Russian Empire, Voltaire connects with the older traditions of the Russian theme – tellingly, he references the works of Fontenelle,54 Perry,55 and Strahlenberg.56 Thus, Russia once more appears a realm of near infinite potential which was first activated by Emperor Peter, and which had been equally fostered by his successors. In fact, the myth of Peter the Great is put into its most pointed form: “At last,” the text reads, “Peter was born, and Russia was created.”57 At the same time, Voltaire further develops Montesquieu’s ‘European’ interpretation of Russian history, frequently drawing analogies to historical developments the rest of the continent. For example, the palace revolution instigated by Peter’s sister Sophia in 1689, the author argues, “resembles the proscriptions of Sulla [138 BC-78 BC] and the Roman Triumvirs, renewed by Christian II in Denmark and Sweden [r. 1513-1523].”58 In one sentence, the reader finds Russia linked to hallmarks of occidental history and thus implicitly presented as a traditionally ‘European’ nation.

Voltaire’s intention to please the tsarinas becomes most apparent when he turns to the introduction of modern arts and sciences to Russia, a feat which, in the words of the philosopher, “testified to [Peter’s] genius and immortalized his memory.”59 In a notable anticipation of the Anacharsis motif, Voltaire argues that the arts and sciences today seem to have originated in the very lands, to which [Peter] took them. Legislation, civil administration, diplomacy, military discipline, the navy, commerce and industry, the sciences and fine arts, everything has been brought to perfection as he intended, and, by an unprecedented and unique phenomenon, all his achievements have been perpetuated and all his undertakings perfected by four women who have succeeded him, one after the other, on the throne.60

However, such exaggerations were not only meant to flatter the Russian Empresses. The History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great was also a parable written for those

---

55 Ibid., 48.
56 Ibid., 50.
57 Ibid., 68.
58 Ibid., 73–74.
59 Ibid., 251.
60 Ibid.
European rulers who had failed to implement the program of the Enlightenment and, more specifically, Voltaire’s designs for the improvement of society. In his conclusion, the author therefore expresses the hope that, after reading his book, “the sovereigns of nations long civilized will say to themselves: ‘If, in the frozen regions of ancient Scythia, one man, by his own unaided genius, has accomplished such great things, what should we not achieve, in kingdoms where the accumulated labours of several centuries have made everything easy for us?’”\(^{61}\) This call is eloquent of Voltaire’s very real disappointment with the social and political development in his native France. In February of 1769 he wrote to Catherine: “I do not know what has become of our nation, which used at one time to set great examples in everything; but we are very barbarous in some things, and very pusillanimous in others.”\(^ {62}\) In contrast, the Russian Empire at least held the promise of a better future.

A similar image of Russia under Catherine the Great emerges from Giacomo Casanova’s memoires. Notably, the Italian adventurer compares the Empress to the Prussian King Frederick II who, by the time Casanova was writing the *Histoire de ma vie*, was considered the model of an enlightened ruler,\(^ {63}\) and whom the author had personally met while residing in Berlin. However, after an audience with the tsarina, Casanova concludes that “the Empress’s bearing, the very opposite of that of the King of Prussia, showed me a genius far greater than the latter’s.”\(^ {64}\) Frederick he considers little more than a militarist hot-head who “but for the aid of Fortune”\(^ {65}\) would have failed in all his endeavours. But “when we examine [the rule] of the Empress of Russia,” Casanova asserts, “we do not find that she counted much on the help of the blind goddess. She accomplished things which, before she mounted the throne, appeared great enterprises to all Europe.”\(^ {66}\) William Coxe\(^ {67}\) was similarly impressed with Catherine’s efforts to modernize her state and to spread learning among her subjects. As a case in point, he enclosed in his travel account

\(^{61}\) Ibid.
\(^{63}\) See below, p. 88.
\(^{64}\) Casanova, *History of my Life*, 144.
\(^{65}\) Ibid.
\(^{66}\) Ibid.
\(^{67}\) See above, p. 56.
the syllabi of several Petersburg schools which, among other things, covered “Cicero’s Orations against Catiline, Vergil’s Eneid, plays of Plautus and Terence, verse of Horace, [...] comparison between Roman and Russian law, [...] Botany after the system of Linnaeus.”68 Generally, this selection corresponded to curricula in the rest of contemporary Europe. In late eighteenth century Germany, for example, Latin and Greek similarly maintained their primacy on the syllabi of primary and secondary schools, while, at the same time, an “advancement of the realia,” i.e. the natural sciences could be observed.69 Other public institutions which particularly aroused Coxe’s interest were the prisons, hospitals, and orphanages Catherine had founded in Russia’s major cities.70 A new foundlings’ hospital in Moscow, in which the orphans were educated to become useful civil servants, he esteemed among Catherine’s greatest achievements. “Upon the whole,” he assures his readers, “I never saw a finer or more complete institution.”71 Coxe was similarly impressed by the Empress’ design for a new kind of prison, and even went through the trouble to have the building plans copied for the benefit of his fellow Britons.72 In this instance, Voltaire’s dictum held true: Old Europe was literally importing the blueprints for social and cultural progress from the land of the Scythians.

The ‘Russica’ of Coxe, Casanova, and Voltaire are indicative of a sense of crisis in late eighteenth century Europe and the inclination of intellectuals to look abroad for deliverance. In the end, however, their hopes were not fulfilled: The Russian Empire was in no position to avert or even contain the catastrophe which befell Europe at the close of the century. As the Comte de Ségur wrote in his memoirs: In 1787, when Catherine undertook her procession to the Crimea, “none of us foresaw that this triumphal march of the Cleopatra of the North would be nearly the epoch of as great a change as had been the

68 Coxe, Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, 1: 404–405.
70 He discusses them at length in his Account of the Prisons and Hospitals in Russia, Sweden, and Denmark (1781).
72 Ibid., 29–30.
voyage of the Cleopatra of Egypt, which was followed by the fall of the Roman republic.”

Nevertheless, Ségur contends that Russia emerged from the following turmoil as one of Europe’s leading nations. “Rarely,” he is convinced, had a state “become at once so powerful and so colossal on its very first advance towards civilization.”

The use of the word ‘civilization’ in this context is significant. At the time, this neologism delineated the intellectual program of the European Enlightenment. It expressed the conviction that the proliferation of enlightenment thought could significantly improve society. However, this optimistic world view was vitiated by the Terreur of 1793, when French revolutionaries turned the struggle for popular governance into a massacre of the people. The violent downfall of the French monarchy, followed by the similarly haphazard disintegration of the First Republic, demonstrated that the philosophes had failed in bringing about progress and reform. However, as Old Order Europe staggered through this great crisis, Russia seemed remarkably unaffected by its outgrowths. This once more precipitated hopes that ‘civilization’ could indeed survive in the realm of the tsars.

**CIVILISATION AND KULTUR**

The notion of *civilisation* first originated as a means of social distinction for the French upper classes in the early modern period. Although in the course of time its nomenclature shifted as frequently as the specific norms it prescribed, it remained until the early eighteenth century a fairly stable concept.

*Civilisé* was, like *cultivé*, *poli*, or *policé*, one of the many terms, often used almost as synonyms, by which the courtly people wished to designate, in a broad or narrow sense, the specific quality of their own behaviour, and by which they contrasted the refinement of their own social manners, their “standard”, to the manners of simpler and socially inferior people.

In the course of the eighteenth century, however, intellectual elites no longer regarded *civilisation* as a quality inherent to one particular class. Rather, they considered it a
“gradual process, an evolution”\textsuperscript{76} in the sense of the enlightenment: It called for “the improvement of institutions, education and law,” and was to be “be brought about by the advance of knowledge.”\textsuperscript{77} The logistical problems of this enterprise – foremost the disenfranchised majority’s lack of literacy – gave birth to the idea of enlightened absolutism: Benevolent autocrats with a vested interest in the well-being and prosperity of their subjects, the \textit{philosophes} hoped, would implement reform ‘from above’ and thus provide for a more ‘enlightened,’ a more ‘civilized’ society. “Progress would be achieved, therefore, first by the enlightenment of kings and rulers in conformity with ‘reason.’”\textsuperscript{78} To be sure, the \textit{philosophes} were convinced that they had in their time already “reached a particular stage on the road to civilization. But it was insufficient. Society could not stand still there. The process was continuing and ought to be pushed further.”\textsuperscript{79} However, as seen in the example of Voltaire, domestic progress seemed to have come to a standstill at the close of the eighteenth century. It was under these circumstances, that the idea of \textit{civilisation} was projected onto the Russian realm.

In this context, the notion of Russia as a space simultaneously inside and outside of Europe was particularly attractive. Its position within tied it to the same principles of social development. Russia’s distinctiveness, on the other hand, made it possible to imagine it as unaffected by the negative by-products of \textit{civilisation} – an idea already put forth by Leibniz.\textsuperscript{80} Most importantly – and this above all illustrates a lack of insight into Russian affairs – the tsars were considered to be Europe’s last true sovereigns, whose power was checked neither by an irksome parliament, nor by a demanding nobility. Consequently, the Russian emperors were expected to be in a privileged position to implement enlightened reform ‘from above,’ following the example of Peter the Great. At the close of the eighteenth century Europe’s eastern realm therefore appeared to be “the domain in which enlightened absolutism proved itself as a political theory, as the formula for development

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 41.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} See p. 33.
and civilization.”\(^81\) At the same time, however, the notion of *civilisation* once more took on a normative character. It was no longer considered a process, but rather an objective good which could be imitated and reproduced. Both Coxe and Ségur use the term in this normative manner when describing Russian state of affairs. Yet it was Casanova who, in his *Histoire de ma vie*, presented the most striking allegory of the increasingly colonial implications of *civilisation*.

Upon his arrival in Petersburg in December 1764, the Chevalier de Seingalt first explores the Europeanized high society of the capital. “ Everywhere,” he relates, “I see joy and freedom. […] As I should expect, I find it all magnificent, superb, and worthy of admiration.”\(^82\) But Casanova also mingles with the general populace and thereby encounters a young peasant girl who, for the time of his Russian sojourn, will become his mistress. Their relationship, as described by the Italian adventurer, tellingly exemplifies the colonial attitude contained in the notion of *civilisation*. Casanova chances upon the girl in the course of an actual – rather than a metaphorical – hunt. He and his acquaintances had set out with “guns and dogs” when the Italian visitor discovers his preferred game: “Having left the imperial residence a hundred paces behind with Zinoviov, I point out to him a peasant girl whose beauty was surprising; he sees her, he agrees.” A chivvy follows, and the prey submits only when robbed of all options for further flight: “She runs away to a hut, which she enters; we enter it too, we see her father, her mother, and the whole family, and she herself in a corner of the room, like a rabbit afraid that the dogs it saw would devour it.”\(^83\) The huntsmen negotiate with the parents; the latter agree to sell the girl of thirteen years, whom Casanova “at once gave the name Zaïre.”\(^84\) For contemporaries, this unusual choice inadvertently invoked the play of the same name, which had been Voltaire’s greatest success on the stages of Europe. And it is much in the spirit of the French philosopher that Casanova now begins to civilize his little barbarian, as for Voltaire, too, “the civilizing of Russia was […] a matter of importing arts across the continent.”\(^85\) To begin with, the

\(^{81}\) Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 205.


\(^{83}\) Ibid., 111.

\(^{84}\) Ibid., 114–5.

Chevalier explains, “I stayed at home for four days, never leaving until I saw her dressed in the French style, simply but neatly.”\textsuperscript{86} This visual transformation is then complemented by an immersion into civilized culture, as the girl “in less than three months, learned Italian – very badly, but well enough to tell me whatever she wanted to.” Casanova experiences the satisfaction of Pygmalion: “The pleasure I took in hearing her talk to me in Venetian was inconceivable.”\textsuperscript{87}

This act of colonization reflects the aforementioned shift in the contemporary understanding of \textit{civilisation}. “Unlike the situation when the concept was formed,” Norbert Elias explains, “from now on nations came to consider the \textit{process} of civilization as completed within their own societies; they came to see themselves as bearers of an existing or finished civilization to others, as standard-bearers of an expanding civilization.”\textsuperscript{88} Inversely, this led to tensions within the European community, as different nations insisted on the primacy of their respective \textit{civilisation}. Germans in particular contested the term in its primary relation to British and French culture, and thereby laid the foundation for Germany’s distinguishing identity in the European context. In the end, this self-understanding would further buttress in intellectual terms the political rapprochement with Russia at the end of the eighteenth century.

German intellectuals opposed ‘French’ \textit{civilisation} with the notion of German \textit{Kultur}. The Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) – a resident of Europe’s eastern borderlands – elaborates on the difference between the two in his \textit{Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose} (1784). The former, he argues, may effectively regulate society, but falls short of the Enlightenment’s principal goal: The moral improvement of mankind. “We are \textit{civilized} to the point of excess in all kinds of social courtesies and proprieties. But we are still a long way from the point where we could consider ourselves \textit{morally} mature.”\textsuperscript{89} Morality, Kant suggests, does not equal compliance with an arbitrary canon of social norms. Rather, true morality is “present only in culture

\textsuperscript{86} Casanova, \textit{History of my Life}, 114–5.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Elias, \textit{The Civilizing Process}, 43.
III. The Late Eighteenth Century: Russia Inside and Outside of Europe

[Kultur].” In contrast, “an application of this idea which only extends to the semblances of morality, as in love of honour and outward propriety, amounts merely to civilisation.”

Civilisation, Kant argued, was superficial and thrived on self-interest. Kultur, on the other hand, demonstrated the moral maturity of its (German) bearers, and was considered the result of an holistic Bildung, the term expressing a conflation of ‘formation,’ ‘education,’ and ‘edification.’ It is aptly paraphrased with “the nurturing of the inner man, the moulding of his soul or spirit.” However, the “exaltation of Kultur was not intended to deny the merits of civilisation. The latter continued to mean the material, scientific, technological, and even moral or behavioural improvement of society; and civilization in this sense remained the basis of the European community as a whole. In the new German perspective, however, the basic civilization was only a preliminary to the higher human attainments, the fostering of inner Bildung and national ‘cultural’ creativity.” Consequently, the term Kultur provided Germans with a means of distinction from the civil societies in the rest of Europe at the close of the eighteenth century. Moreover, it enabled a conceptual reappraisal of the order of Europe, contrasting merely ‘civilized’ peoples with the standard-bearers of Kultur. Notably, Germans considered Russia a member of the latter group.

The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) made this point in his most ambitious early work, the Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769. Its elated “main subject matter: The lineage of man will not perish before all has come to pass! Until the genius of enlightenment [Erleuchtung] has pervaded the earth! Universal history of the formation [Bildung] of the world!” Like Leibniz and Voltaire before him, Herder takes his cue from the increasingly apparent crisis of old order Europe. “Holland,” he claims, “is on the verge of sinking. […] England – is it her imperative to ruin herself through her trade? […] France: The century of Louis is over; the Montesquieus, d’Alemberts, Voltaires, …

90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Malia, Russia Under Western Eyes, 104.
93 Ibid.
94 Throughout the following chapters, the term ‘civil society’ is used to describe not a cultural practise, but a social configuration: The ‘bürgerliche Gesellschaft’ of the German tradition, a heterogeneous group of burghers, intellectuals, and artisans, united in their commitment to enlightened education (Bildung) and a mutual struggle for political participation.
Rousseaus are over, too: one lives on the ruins.”96 Little should be expected from Frederick the Great: “Without a doubt, he is greatest in the negative, in matters of defence, and perseverance.”97 And, finally, the verdict on the provinces around the Baltic littoral: “Mischief, especially Riga.”98 Nevertheless, Riga, where Herder had spent the years from 1765 to 1769, was of paramount interest to the philosopher. Here, he intended to found an holistic educational facility to foster “the improvement of morality,”99 which would then spread across “Poland, Russia, and Courland.”100 Indeed, Herder prophecies, the lands of “Ukraine shall become a second Greece,” with its “many small and untamed peoples [...] formed into a mature nation, just like once the Greeks.”101 But in a radical break with Enlightenment tradition, Herder rejects the idea that this program requires the import of civilisation. Rather, he makes the case for a “Livonian school for and of the fatherland [Livländische Vaterlandsschule],” because for “a nation to attain culture [Kultur], it requires more than laws and colonies.”102 Kultur, Herder contends, cannot be taught, but is a quality innate to the land and the people.

At the same time however, Herder’s conception of Kultur is decidedly cosmopolitan. In his Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1784-1791), he argues the interdependence of national manifestations of Kultur and the overall progress of humankind. To attain true humanity, he explains, Kultur must pass through different social and historical configurations to be increasingly refined. Yet to effectively contribute to this project, a nation must have fully developed its distinct qualities. Herder, in his time, considered the Russian domains between the Black and Baltic Seas best suited to further advance the cause of Kultur. “What seed,” he asked, “may not be discovered in the spirit of its peoples?”103 From his school in Riga, Herder hoped, humanity would first “stretch to the Black Sea and from there all across the world [...]. From the northwest this spirit will

96 Ibid., 73.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid., 36.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., 67–68.
102 Ibid., 36.
103 Ibid., 67–68.
traverse slumbering Europe and bind it to this new spirit.”

The favourable disposition of Russia’s imperial subjects would thereby be complemented by the enlightened absolutism of the Russian suzerain. “Our century calls for action,” Herder urges his readers, “for there is now an Empress of Russia.” He was convinced that the court of Catherine II could indeed become his champion in the struggle towards human perfectibility. “Here, I shall make my attempt [...]. And if it succeeded? How great to be legislator for sovereigns and kings! And what time could be better than the present, with regard to age, spirit, taste, and Russia?”

With such hyperboles, Herder added a new quality to the Russian theme, suggesting that the empire’s greatest feats and, by extension, the greatest achievements of Kultur were yet to come: “Peter the Great,” he predicts, “will always be the creator who brought about the first dawn and a possible day. Noon is yet to come, and with it the great work of a culture of a nation leading to perfection.”

Perfection, of course, meant the attainment of humanité, an idea which had been usurped by the German notion of Kultur.

In a similar vein, the German author and literary critic Johann Heinrich Merck (1741-1791) encouraged his countrymen to orient themselves towards Russia rather than France or Britain. In a review of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall’s *Cursory Remarks made in a Tour through some of the Northern Parts of Europe* (1775), he relates to his readers the virtues of the Russian people by scolding Wraxall for not doing them justice. “Not one word on the character, organization, culture [Kultur] of this so highly remarkable people! Always the Englishman screams for freedom, and summarizes everything which doesn’t resemble his country under the general expression: Despotism.”

Merck does not deny that the Russian Empire is governed autocratically, but argues that the benefits of the system outweigh its drawbacks. “In possibly no other country,” he claims, “is humanity treated more gently by the government.”

The result, Merck argued, was a remarkably healthy and cohesive polity: “The spiteful distances and rifts which birth and prejudice have securely fastened

---

104 Ibid., 36.
105 Ibid., 67–68.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., 20–1.
109 Ibid., 293–4.
between the people are by far more oppressive at the smallest of courts in Germany than here.”110 Similarly, Merck’s contemporary Christian Schubart111 believed that the Russian example demonstrates how “culture [Kultur] renders the people happier than any natural state – as long as its culture is not excessively refined.”112 In a single sentence, Schubart thus distinguishes the Russian model from the two dominant anthropological doctrines of the European Enlightenment: The overly refined civilisation of Diderot and Voltaire, and the idea of a ‘natural state’ advocated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). In Schubart’s eyes, both were detrimental to the natural development of the people. The “wise” Empress Catherine, in contrast, had refrained from subscribing to either of these misbeliefs, and rather tended to the fundamental needs of her people. “Through her legal code,” Schubart claims, “she laid the foundation for the people’s culture [Kultur]. Her laws are founded on the principles of civil liberty, banishment of slavery and torture, and they express the greatest regard for life, property, and freedom of all her subjects.”113 To be sure, Schubart, like many of his contemporaries, here projected his desire for an enlightened government on the Russian realm. His remarks, first and foremost, express dissatisfaction with domestic policy. Moreover, their cursory nature demonstrates lack of any real insight into the socio-political situation in contemporary Russia. In this regard, his assessment largely coincides with the Russian fantasies of the French philosophes who had prophesied the future of civilisation in Russia. However, the colonial implications of the latter term were notably lacking in German visions of Russian Kultur. Thus, while the European image of Russia generally remained positive, different attitudes towards the tsardom gradually emerged.

Altogether, at the end of the eighteenth century, the Russian Empire was fully integrated into the European community. This was equally reflected in a significant shift in symbolic geography, an increase in interregional traffic, and a political rapprochement between the tsars and Europe’s ruling houses. Correspondingly, the Russian theme was

110 Ibid.
111 See above p. 54.
113 Ibid.
further elaborated upon. Russia no longer appeared but a fertile ground for European arts and sciences. Rather, she seemed able to make a significant contribution to the development of European culture. At the same time, first indications of a colonial attitude towards Europe’s eastern borderlands became manifest. This was met, however, by voices arguing that, in the future, Russia would no longer be the recipient of European *civilisation*, but the bearer of a new, superior *Kultur*. Notably, these divergent interpretations were culture-specific and representative diverging national attitudes at the close of the century. For the time being, these attitudes exerted little influence over the political reality of their carriers. International policy remained determined by old regime structures. However, as these structures disintegrated in the wake of the French Revolution, the popular image of Russia began to more strongly affect the European balance of power.
IV. Revolutionary Europe:
The Three Eastern Courts

The Era of Revolution in Europe, from the storming of the Bastille in 1789 to the defeat of Napoleon and the Restoration of the Old Order in 1815, strongly impacted Russian-European relations. French animosity against the tsardom, both on the government and popular level, reached an unprecedented climax. As Russia emerged from the Coalition Wars (1792-1815) as a serious contender for hegemony on the continent, Russia’s membership in the concert of civilized nations was emphatically challenged. British popular opinion followed suit. Precisely because Russia had successfully repulsed the Grande Armée in 1812 and thus initiated the downfall of Napoleon’s empire, she was henceforth feared as a potential threat to Britain’s geopolitical interests. Meanwhile, the political alliance between Russia and the German lands drew ever closer, as more and more Germans considered their eastern neighbour a natural ally. To be sure, in the last decades of the eighteenth century, the continuous expansion of Russia’s sphere of influence had met with some reservation. Yet as the outgrowths of the revolution in France swept Europe, Germans dismissed earlier apprehensions and in the majority looked hopefully to their eastern neighbour. As the order of Europe rapidly disintegrated, the Russian Empire seemed to exemplify all that was desirable of a stable society in which a benevolent autocrat protected the interests of his subjects. Thus, to a certain extent, attitudes towards
Russia politically and intellectually divided the European continent into two distinct hemispheres.

**RUSSIA AS HEGEMONIC THREAT TO FRANCE AND BRITAIN**

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the rise of Russia had but marginally affected the geopolitical interests of Europe’s traditional great powers. Russia’s gradual westward expansion had somewhat disrupted the alliance system of the old order, while the seizure of the Baltic littoral made it an invaluable trading partner – to the benefit of Britain and the detriment of France. These developments were duly noted, as were the successes of the tsars in modernizing government and industry. At the same time, nobody considered the tsardom a serious contender for hegemony. Especially Russia’s ongoing struggle with local rivals, particularly the Ottomans and their Muslim clients on the northern Black Sea littoral, suggested an enduring confinement to Europe’s eastern borderlands. By the end of the century, however, as the Russian Empire fully consolidated its primacy in the region, this notion was fundamentally challenged. The Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 marked the beginning of this process, witnessing Russia break out of what most until then had considered her natural boundaries.

The war was prompted by a crisis in Poland, where a growing opposition to the Russian suzerain sought to overthrow Catherine II’s weak vassal King Stanisław August Poniatowski (r. 1764-1795). The Ottoman Empire, wary of Russia’s gradual advance along the Black Sea littoral, supported the uprising, hoping it would permanently stifle the tsars’ ambitions for territorial aggrandizement. However, the Polish rebellion was quickly dispersed, and Russia’s army therefore free to fully engage Turkish forces. Russia gained its most spectacular victory in a naval battle which, to the general astonishment of European onlookers, was fought not on the Black Sea, but in the Aegean. With assistance from Britain, a Russian fleet had circumnavigated the continent to meet and utterly destroy the Turkish navy at Chesme in 1770, a small harbour town just south of the Dardanelles. The concluding Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) foresaw substantial territorial gains for the Russian Empire in the Caucasus and the Ukraine, including the strategically important
mouth of the Dnepr River. Moreover, the Porte relinquished her protectorate over the Khanate on the Crimean peninsula and at the same time accepted Russia as protector of the religious rights of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman realm.

This suddenly apparent weakness of the Turks gave rise to the ‘Eastern Question.’ At its center stood the fear that the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire would not only destabilize the region, but indeed endanger the balance of all Europe, since it was more than likely that all major powers would be drawn into an armed struggle for the spoils. Above all, the conduct of Empress Catherine made this a pressing issue. As many had expected, her push for an independent Crimea in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca led to the annexation of the peninsula in 1783. Moreover, her decision to have her second grandson baptized Constantine and taught Modern Greek left little doubt of her intention to place him on the throne in Constantinople. Largely, these plans complemented the ambitions of the Austrian Empire to further secure and expand its hold on the Balkan Peninsula. Already during the famous procession to the Crimea in 1787,¹ Emperor Joseph II and Catherine informally discussed the possibility of partitioning of the Ottoman Empire. Neither, however, was willing or, for that matter, able to risk a full-fledged war against the combined force of France and Britain. Thus, the Ottoman Empire lived on as the proverbial ‘sick man of Europe’ and a source of perpetual conflict between Europe’s great powers.

Nevertheless, the developments in Poland and around the Black Sea proved particularly unsettling for the geopolitical ambitions of France. For the Bourbons, “as late as the close of the 1760s it seemed reasonable to hope that Sweden, Poland and Turkey could counteract Russia.”² Yet two decades later, both their Polish and Turkish allies stood denuded of any substantial political or military influence. Especially the increasingly rapid disintegration of the Ottoman Empire was troubling, as the Porte had hitherto safeguarded France’s trade monopoly on the Levant. The Bourbons reacted by taking to the offense. The first opportunity hereto arose in the 1780s. At the height of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), London pushed for her allies to scrutinize all French shipping for

¹ See p. 52.
² Black, From Louis XIV to Napoleon, 123.
contraband in order to preclude France’s support for the rebelling colonies. The Russian Empress refused this and reacted by founding the First League of Armed Neutrality (1780-83) to protect neutral shipping in wartimes. This prompted the strongest alienation between London and Petersburg since the time of Peter the Great, a situation which France immediately exploited to establish closer diplomatic ties with the tsardom. The rapprochement yielded first results in 1783 when Russia supported France in the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris (1783) which concluded the American Revolutionary War. Foremost, however, it was the deployment of a “new French ambassador, the Count of Ségur, [that] inaugurated a brief period of friendly ties.”

Ségur’s paramount mandate was to convince the government in Petersburg “that direct trade relations with France, without Dutch intermediaries, would serve the interests of Russian, Greek, and Armenian merchants in his new bailiwick of New Russia.” Ségur’s mission was successful, and “Russia refused to renew its commercial treaty with Britain but signed one with France in January 1787, giving a monopoly of French trade to Marseilles and Toulon.” In the end, this period of mutually friendly relations was short-lived. Above all the increasing urgency of the Eastern Question stopped short this rapprochement, and much rather united France and Britain in their ambition to curtail Russian influence.

The French and British made their move already in 1788, when they encouraged the Porte to attack the Russian Empire in an attempt to repeal concessions made to the tsardom in the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca. At the same time, Britain instigated a Swedish attack on Russia to support the Turkish war effort. However, the Russo-Swedish War of 1788-1790 neither curtailed Russian influence on the Baltic, nor did it detract sufficient resources from her southern war zone to put at risk her repulsion of the Turkish onslaught. In fact, the Peace of Jassy (1792) that concluded the Russo-Turkish altercation further secured Russia’s hold on the Black Sea coast by officially recognizing the annexation of the Crimea. As a result, public opinion in Britain fully turned against the Russian Empire. Empress Catherine’s inception of the League of Armed Neutrality and her “readiness for a

---

3 Ibid.
4 LeDonne, The Russian Empire and the World, 298.
5 Ibid.
rapprochement with France\textsuperscript{6} proved equally troubling. Moreover, the Russo-French commercial treaty “was unpleasant and might be dangerous” to British interests. Finally, the Eastern Question loomed threateningly, and the parliament in London could not see “without uneasiness the apparently endless and irresistible growth of Russian power.”\textsuperscript{7} To be sure, this uneasiness needed not imply “any fundamental or deep-rooted hostility to Russia on the part of the British government.”\textsuperscript{8} It did, however, lay the foundation for a growing Russophobia in Great Britain. A case in point are Sir John Sinclair’s \textit{General Observations}: Therein, he also discusses fears that “the Grand object which the Empress has in view is, the Turkish empire.”\textsuperscript{9} On the one hand, the author explains that “there is little prospect of such absurd plans being ever realised.”\textsuperscript{10} On the other hand, Sinclair qualifies this seemingly unequivocal statement with a call for caution: “All Europe,” he urges his readers, “must unite to check the ambition of a sovereign, who makes one conquest only a step to the acquisition of another. And bad as the Turks are, were the Russians to succeed them, it would only be one brute driving out another.”\textsuperscript{11} It is striking that even though Sinclair did not identify Russia as an immediate threat, he nevertheless warns of the danger she posed to Europe. Thus, the \textit{General Observations} are eloquent of a fundamental reassessment of the Russian Empire at the turn of the century.

Among other things, this shift in popular opinion was reflected in a revaluation of Russia’s advances in \textit{civilisation}. For example, the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his \textit{Social Contract} (1762) challenged the notion of Russia being a state governed by enlightened autocrats, even questioning the achievements of Peter the Great in this regard. Rousseau argues that “for Nations as for men there is a time of maturity for which one has to wait before subjecting them to laws [...] and if one acts too soon, the work is ruined.”\textsuperscript{12} Peter, he contends, had unduly hastened this process, and therefore the

\textsuperscript{6} Anderson, \textit{Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815}, 146.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
Russians “will never be truly politically organized [policé] because they were politically organized too early.” Rousseau’s criticism did not stop here, and he goes on to dismantle the myth of Peter the Great.

Peter’s genius was imitative; he did not have true genius, the kind that creates and makes everything out of nothing. Some of the things he did were good, most were misguided. He saw that his people was barbarous, he did not see that it lacked the maturity for political order; he wanted to civilize it when all it needed was to be made warlike. He wanted from the first to make Germans, Englishmen, whereas he should have begun by making Russians; he prevented his subjects from ever becoming what they could be by persuading them that they are what they are not.

Civilization, incorrectly applied, had bastardized the Russian’s nature – in the same way, to be sure, that Rousseau thought the rulers of old Europe were corrupting their subjects. As such, his criticism was all-encompassing, and culminated in a dystopian vision: The Russian Empire, he predicts, “will try to subjugate Europe, and will itself be subjugated. The Tartars [Muslim nomads on its southern borders], its subjects and neighbours, will become its masters and ours: This revolution seems to me inevitable. All the Kings of Europe are working in concert to hasten it.” False civilization, Rousseau prophesies, will lead to the downfall of European culture, in Russia as much as in France or anywhere.

This was not least an attack on Voltaire, whose first volume of the History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great had appeared but three years earlier. Voltaire was quick to retaliate against the author of “some Social – or anti-social – Contract,” and his contention that the collapse of the Russian Empire was imminent. On the contrary, Voltaire argues that “the astounding achievements of Catherine II and the Russian nation are sufficiently convincing evidence that Peter the Great built on a solid and enduring foundation.” Increasingly, however, the French public at large questioned this image of Russia and the tsarina. Even Jean d’Alambert (1717-1783), a friend and colleague of Voltaire, privately wrote that the History of the Russian Empire “makes one vomit by the

---

13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Voltaire, Russia Under Peter the Great, 23.
17 Ibid.
baseness and platitude of its eulogies.”18 Similarly, Diderot came to be considered “the image of the philosopher compromised at and by the court of the despot.”19 The further Russia expanded her influence in European affairs, the more the image of Russian enlightened absolutism was rejected in France. Similarly, Britons were “as far as ever from regarding the Russian people as civilized, and even the glittering achievements of the Tsaritsa had failed to persuade them that her country was in any real sense a part of Europe.”20 Henceforth, a most popular indictment against Russia was its lack of ‘true’ civilization which the people sought to cover up by imitating European mores. “They are very deficient in point of invention,” John Sinclair argued, “but will imitate any thing, and will come very near, if not equal the original they were ordered to copy.”21 The Russian could mimic, but never attain true civilization. “Take it all in,” Sinclair concluded, “Russia has not been improperly compared to an ape on the back of a tyger, or to their own houses at Petersburgh, which, without, are well plastered, and have a handsome enough appearance, but within, are made up of bad bricks, and other miserable materials.”22 At roughly the same time, the French ambassador de Ségur made similar observations at a ball held by the Empress Catherine on her way to the Crimea. “Three hundred ladies,” he relates, “splendidly attired, gave ample evidence of the progress, which the provinces of the empire had already made in imitating the luxuries, the fashions and the elegance which excite admiration in the most brilliant courts of Europe.”23 However, European attire barely managed to cover up the raw nature of the Russian barbarians. “The outward appearance of all,” Ségur lets his readers know, “presented a picture of civilization; but the colouring was thin, and the attentive observer easily detected the characteristic features of ancient Muscovy.”24 Paradoxically, just as the Russian Empire was breaking out of its traditional boundaries in Europe’s eastern borderlands, Britons and Frenchmen revived the image of a region clouded in medieval darkness.

18 Quote taken from Wolff, Inventing Eastern Europe, 206.
20 LeDonne, The Russian Empire and the World, 141.
22 Ibid.
23 de Ségur, Memoirs and Recollections of Count Segur, 3: 27.
24 Ibid.
RUSSIA, AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA: THE THREE EASTERN COURTS

While tensions between Russia, Britain and France were increasing on all levels, the political rapprochement between Austria, Prussia, and the Russian Empire continued in the late eighteenth century. At first, tensions remained strong in the immediate aftermath of the Seven Years’ War. The Habsburgs were slow to accept the loss of their territories in Silesia. Moreover, they needed to fear that Russia’s designs for liberating the Balkans from Ottoman suzerainty would spark nationalist movements in the entire region – a development which would be detrimental to upholding the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire. King Frederick II of Prussia, on the other hand, feared a new military alliance between Vienna and Petersburg, as the last campaign had all but drained the state treasury. Most importantly, however, both the Austrian and Prussian governments were concerned that Russia may seek further expansion towards central Europe at their expense. However, these tensions were largely released in 1772 as Russia, Prussia and Austria mediated their territorial interests in the First Partition of Poland.

Poland’s truncation was possible not only because the Kingdom had in the preceding decades virtually lost its sovereignty to the Russian Emperors. Moreover, the lack of an effective central government had stifled economic growth and prosperity. Inversely, the lack of centralization had enabled the landed gentry to establish neo-feudal rule in their territories. As the population, in the majority petty peasants, suffered under destitute conditions, the political discourse was dominated by rivalry and dissent amongst the nobility. Ultimately, the primacy of King August Poniatowski was secured only by his Russian benefactress, and in 1772 Catherine II used this leverage to have the Polish government officially ratify the First Partition of Poland. In terms of sheer land mass, Austria received the lion’s share of the Polish state, which lost altogether thirty per cent of its territory. Over two and a half million Poles became subject to the Empire as the rich pastures of Galicia were overturned to the Habsburgs. Prussia received the smallest portion which, however, was of utmost strategic importance to the house of Brandenburg. King Frederick II acquired large stretches of the Baltic littoral, which now linked the core territories of his realm to the formerly isolated East Prussia, a coastal province with the city...
of Königsberg (today: Kaliningrad) at its center. Russia, in turn, further advanced into central Europe, an expansion that complemented the territorial gains from the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774. Catherine II annexed large parts of present-day Ukraine, while at the same time fully establishing her suzerainty over the truncated Polish state. Thus, in the wake of the First Partition of Poland, the three eastern courts emerged as the new arbiters of central Europe.

In this regard, the War of the Bavarian Succession (1778-9) was another point in case. After the death of the Elector Maximilian III Joseph in 1777, the state had been left without an heir to the throne. Pretensions of the Archduke of Austria – the future Emperor Joseph II – prompted a strong reaction by the Prussian King. However, before hostilities could break out, the Russian Empress intervened and united the quarrelling parties at the negotiation table. In the end, the affair was amicably concluded in the Treaty of Teschen (1779). The three eastern courts exhibited this unanimity once more in the early 1790s in face of a growing Polish resistance against foreign occupation. Polish efforts to introduce a new constitution in 1791 were met with a further partition of the land in 1793. The subsequent armed uprising led by Tadeusz Kościuszko (1746-1817) in 1794 finally led to the Third Partition in 1795, after which all of Poland was absorbed by its powerful neighbours. The three eastern courts had virtually obliterated the Polish state from the map.

The downfall of the Polish Kingdom was no great surprise to the European community. To a certain extent, the First Partition was even welcomed as an opportunity, both for the development of Poland and as a means to absorb political tension between the partitioning powers. This attitude changed however in the wake of the Second and Third Partition, for now it appeared that the three eastern courts were seeking to rearrange the political order of Europe.²⁵ Above all, this indictment was raised against the Russian Empire, whose ambitions on Constantinople seemed to buttress this fear. Even in the German lands public opinion at the time began to resonate with russophobic sentiments. Under the impression of the Russo-Turkish War 1788-1792, for example, the author

²⁵ See Liulevicius, The German Myth of the East, 42.
Ludwig Gleim (1719-1803) in his *Prussian War Songs* warns of an ever expanding Russia: “Should one power become too powerful / and demonstrate proud audacity: / Let every peoples’ shepherd be cautious / and well prepared! | For believe me, nothing is more dangerous / than such a power! / It becomes a wolf which far about / devours the peoples’ shepherds.” The lyrical voice of the poem, a retired grenadier who served in the Seven Years’ War, calls upon Germans to ready themselves for an attack: “Do you know, German Patriot / Such a power? Then stick up / for an early call to arms / and may Germany remain free!” Christian Schubart, too, expressed concern about the further aggrandizement of Russia. In the discussion of a pamphlet concerning this matter, he rhetorically asks: “Who will receive Constantinople, should it be conquered by Russians and Austrians? – The author [of the pamphlet], with the most imprudent zeal, awards it to the Russians. Well then good night, freedom of the Hungarians! Good night, Austrian magnificence! German Freedom! Europe’s balance of power!” Clearly, Schubart is applying a double standard, considering that ‘Austrian magnificence’ at the time in fact bloomed at the expense of ‘Hungarian freedom.’ Similarly, Gleim tacitly ignores that Russia’s westward expansion was complemented by Austro-German colonization in central Europe. Indeed, the German states significantly profited from the rapprochement with Russia. The German people, however, feared the increasingly assertive empire of the tsars. A poem by Schubart written in 1790, at the height of the Russo-Turkish War, bears witness to this ambivalent attitude. Much in the tradition of the Enlightenment, the lyrical voice celebrates the tsardom as an agent of European civilization. “Russians, bring the muses of Europe / To Japan and Persia, / Humanity to Siberia; / Tame Mongols and Tonguses; / Curb Stambul, spread light / Victoriously over China, / Cover America with creatures.” The poem, however, closes on a more sombre note, and concludes with the plea for the Russians “not to singe

---

26 Gleim’s *Prussian War Songs in the Campaigns of 1757 and 1758 by a Grenadier* (first edition 1758) were originally conceived as a celebration of Frederick II and his victories in the Seven Years’ War. Subsequently Gleim often reactivated the lyrical voice of the ageing grenadier to comment on current social and political developments.
28 See above, p. 54.
30 Ibid., 784.
Europe!!"\(^{31}\) News arriving from the battle zones around the Black Sea in the Russo-Turkish War 1788-1792 reinforced such fears. Particularly reports on the bloody siege of Ismail in 1790 revived the notion of a barbarous people inhabiting Europe’s eastern borderlands. Russian forces had stormed this strategically important city, located on the mouth of the Danube, in late September. Of the roughly 40,000 inhabitants, among them women, children, and the elderly, but a few hundred survived as captives. Schubart, too, was appalled and wrote that “the Russians, through their abominable way to conduct war, make enemies of all enlightened people.”\(^{32}\) The abstract fear of a disruption of the European balance of power was thus reinforced by the very real fear of Russian barbarity making its way across the European continent.

THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

In the end, however, the order of Europe was upset not by Russian expansionism, but by the global effects of the Revolution in France. Initially, her neighbours considered the events of 1789 a local, if indeed highly remarkable phenomenon. As of early 1793, more attention was still attracted by the Second Partition of Poland and the seeming threat of Russia’s advancement into central Europe. In the summer of the same year, however, the Terreur of the guillotine reached its peak, while the influence of Jacobin revolutionaries was increasing across Europe. Thus, the political threat of Russian aggrandizement was now superseded by an ideological threat emanating from the National Assembly in Paris. Famously, the British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) vehemently rejected the movement in his widely received _Reflections on the Revolution in France_ (1790), not, however, because of its democratic impetus, but because of the revolutionaries’ expressed disregard for tradition.\(^{33}\) As a liberal politician looking back with pride on the constitutional traditions of his native Britain, Burke was the first to welcome liberal reform. Yet he was uncompromising in his conviction that reform must be the result of an...

\(^{31}\) Ibid.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., (1791), 68.
evolutionary process, a natural development of society. It could not be brought about by a revolution which he deemed unnatural. In the long run, however, such critical juxtaposition of ‘revolution’ and ‘reform’ was unable to salvage the latter in the eyes of European governments.

Events in France had so terrified established authorities elsewhere that they were unable mentally to separate the two. Thus the Revolution also gave birth to an ideology of Conservatism, in which all change was regarded as equally dangerous. When it had flourished, before 1789, the old order had felt little need to protect itself from change. It had often actively promoted it. Now that it was dying and only change could save it, the old order completely rejected this remedy lest it hasten the fatal moment.34

Thus, at the close of the eighteenth century, two distinct principles of governance could be identified by the way they related to the defunct old order: While some considered the era of revolutions as an incentive for modernization, others looked back with conservative nostalgia. Consequently, “by 1800 Europe stood ideologically divided in a way quite unknown before 1789.”35 Popular opinion, on the other hand, was not as clear-cut. The British public, for example, viewed the developments in France ambiguously, and Thomas Paine (1737-1809) successfully challenged Burke’s theses in his rebuttal The Rights of Man (1791). To be sure, the British upper class rejected Paine’s advocacy for revolution, and the author eluded legal prosecution only by fleeing to France. However, “as the sanscoulottes emerged as a permanent force in French politics, many English artisans took up the call for political rights. [...] Taking sides in the great debate over the revolution launched in 1790 by Burke’s impassioned Reflections on the Revolution in France, they adopted Paine’s great rejoinder [...] as their bible.”36 Ultimately, the population in the United Kingdom was divided in its attitude to revolutionary France.

Germans, in contrast, largely stood united in their rejection of the uprising against the French monarchy. Moreover, as the revolution turned violent, dismissal of French culture became an even stronger hallmark of German national identity. France’s civilisation

---

34 Doyle, The Old European Order, 362.
35 Ibid., 349.
36 Ibid.
had failed to maintain order and now threatened to upset the peace of Europe. Unlike in the preceding decades, when civilisation and Kultur were reckoned distinct but complementary, Germans now considered them innate qualities that made for a clear distinction. As the rising German bourgeoisie sought to define itself “against competing nations, the antithesis between Kultur and Zivilisation, with all its accompanying meanings, changed in significance and function: from being a primarily social antithesis it becomes a primarily national one.”

Notably, this shift in German attitudes towards France was complemented by a change in the popular image of Russia. As Germany’s western neighbours threatened the continent with chaos, the eastern borderlands once more promised security and stability. While the Jacobins where butchering the people on the scaffold, the Russian emperor seemingly upheld the principles of enlightened governance.

In Germany, the notion of enlightened absolutism had significantly increased in popularity at the close of the eighteenth century, both in conservative and reform-oriented circles. As a matter of fact, it had proven itself as a viable principle of governance. Numerous rulers of lesser German states in particular had successfully implemented enlightened reform ideas in their domains. “Monarchs such as Archduke Peter-Leopold of Tuscany (later Emperor Leopold II) or Margrave Carl-Friedrich of Baden, immune from the international ambitions which were the real motivation of the more famous so-called ‘enlightened despots,’ had read ‘enlightened’ writers, corresponded with them, and were advised by their disciples.”

Famously, the Duke Karl August of Saxony-Weimar (r. 1775-1828) assembled some of the brightest minds of his time at his court, among them Christoph Martin Wieland, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and Friedrich Schiller. Many princes similarly invited artists and scholars into their domains, to conduct “experiments in economics, education, and administration [which] were inspired by a genuine desire to improve their realms.” But also the monarchs of the greater German states sought govern according to enlightened principles. King Frederick II of Prussia, for example, received the epithet ‘the Great’ above all for his modernizing efforts.

---

38 Doyle, The Old European Order, 296.
39 Ibid.
One of his eulogists explicitly emphasizes that Frederick was not just a “king,” a “hero,” or a “secular ruler,” but first and foremost the “father of his country.”⁴⁰ In fact, “in contemporary Europe he was rightfully considered the representative, even the embodiment of [...] enlightened absolutism,” seeking to “implement reason from above.”⁴¹ At roughly the same time, the Austrian Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790) came to be considered another “classic representative”⁴² of enlightened governance. “In some areas, Joseph even outstripped his role model Frederick: He abolished serfdom in Bohemia, Moravia, and the south-western corner of Silesia which had remained Austrian; he had both the civil and the penal law reformed in the spirit of the Enlightenment; he turned the school system into an affair of the state, and granted non-Catholics full civil rights and the right to privately practice their religion.”⁴³ Tellingly, both Frederick and Joseph were considered by their subjects to be antipodes to the developments in France. “The path of peaceful reform (or, as it was often called, ‘reformation’) was considered the German path to the attainment of those goals which the French had sought to implement through a revolution.”⁴⁴ However, soon after the death of Joseph and Frederick, their efforts towards modernization stagnated. Weary of the outgrowths of the revolution in France, their heirs sought above all to secure noble privilege and maintain the political status quo. By the end of the century, virtually all of Joseph II’s initiatives aiming at liberalization had been repealed. And in Prussia, a new code of law in fact assigned a special status to the governing elites. In unequivocal terms, the law now stated that “the noble has an especial right to places of honour in the state.”⁴⁵ Thus, under the reign of Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia (r. 1786-1797), the hitherto most comprehensive efforts were made to install an autocratic government. At the same time, Francis II of Austria (r. 1792-1835) initiated a conservative movement that has since been

⁴⁰ Gleim, Ausgewählte Werke, 103.
⁴² Ibid., 32.
⁴³ Ibid.
⁴⁴ Ibid., 40.
⁴⁵ Doyle, The Old European Order, 372.
termed ‘conservative absolutism,’ and which successfully paved the way for the post-Napoleonic Restoration.\footnote{Robin Okey, \textit{The Habsburg Monarchy, c. 1765-1918: From Enlightenment to Eclipse} (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 71.}

In this context, public opinion in Germany conceived a very distinct image of Russia. While Britons and Frenchmen saw in her a debased culture and a threat to their political interests, Germans regarded the empire of Catherine II and her successor Paul I (r. 1796-1801) as the last strong bastion of enlightened absolutism. Johann Gleim for example, who had earlier been very critical of Russia’s policies,\footnote{See above, p. 84.} celebrated the ascendancy of Paul I in a poem dedicated \textit{To Russia’s Poets} (1796). The motto reads: “As it was announced in the newspapers, that the new Emperor of Russia had left at the plough fifty thousand youth of the land destined to carry the sword.” The poem solemnizes in the person of the Emperor every aspect of enlightened absolutism: Respect for human life (“Praise him! He murders not. He spares the life of the people / Thereby he will elevate his Empire to the highest’’); advancement of knowledge and the arts (“Praise him! He esteems the minds of men as much as we do / to be artful and valuable creations of god’’); and a vested interest in the well-being of his subjects (“He is the father of his people, and we his dear children’’). In the last verse, the poet strikes a semi-religious tone, hailing the new tsar as the future saviour of Europe:

\begin{quote}
It is him whom god created, to himself become creator
And in his city of god, to teach the kings of the earth
To become creators as well. – It is you!
You are the founder and upholder of a better people,
You, Emperor, are the god-like steward of your realm!
Every singer, praise him! It is him!\footnote{Johann W. L. Gleim, “An Rußlands Dichter,” \textit{Berlinische Monatsschrift} 28, no. 2 (1796): 428–9.}
\end{quote}

To be sure, Gleim’s change of heart is one of the more extreme examples of the shift in German attitudes towards Russia at the close of the eighteenth century. Largely, however, his views agreed with those of the general population of the German lands.
The poet and journalist Johann Gottfried Seume (1763-1810), in an essay from 1799, even sought to put into perspective the conduct of the Russian army during the bloody siege of Ismail, arguing that “the German officers in the Russian army, although better trained, were themselves not the most humane.”⁴⁹ The Russian general leading the onslaught, on the other hand, Seume refused to see as the cold-blooded enforcer of Catherine II’s iron will. Rather, Alexander Suvorov (1729-1800) needed be considered out of “all our public contemporaries the man who exhibits the most character, the greatest vigour, and the most encompassing vision which he combines with personal integrity and humanity.”⁵⁰ In another essay, written six years later, Seume further marks off the Russian example from the rest of Europe, in particular from the debased culture of the French and the stagnant development in Germany. Perpetuating the ideal of enlightened absolutism and reform ‘from above,’ he warns of societies “where things become increasingly brighter in the middle, while the dawn has barely reached the higher regions.” The French example in particular, Seume explains, illustrates how “great many evils originate from this state of affairs.”⁵¹ The German nobility, on the other hand, had failed to implement reform by tending exclusively to its own interests. Only the Empress Catherine had “equally disseminated the light Peter the Great had struck around his throne among the entire people. No other monarch known to history had ever contributed more to the promotion of enlightenment and liberal thinking of a great nation.”⁵² Catherine alone, Seume explains, had correctly implemented reform by following the natural progression from ‘above’ which “alone appears to be appropriate for the peace, welfare and honour of a state.”⁵³ Similarly, the great historian August Ludwig Schlözer (1735-1809) in a review from 1798 builds on the Russo-French antagonism to embellish the legacy of Catherine II. “It is by far easier,” he explains, “to slander than to comprehend this rare woman. From various sources, but especially from France, the most ludicrous accounts have been disseminated which, nevertheless, were greedily consumed. Now [with the help of the book he is reviewing] it

⁵⁰ Ibid., 205.
⁵² Ibid., 121–2.
⁵³ Ibid.
Following the revolution in France, the Russian Empire seemed to Germans more than ever to guarantee the future prosperity of European culture and enlightenment principles. Correspondingly, the devout Russian was once more cast in a highly favourable light: As in the early eighteenth century, he once more exemplified a people embracing enlightened reform. Seume, for one, declared that “the Russians are an honest, good-natured people, gifted with excellent facilities, and capable of any culture [Kultur].” In fact, Seume continues, “they have proven themselves worthy of the motherly disposition of their great monarch.” He therefore predicts that these qualities will lead “within a relatively short period of time to a better civic and cosmopolitan education than most European nations have attained in the course of several centuries.” Thus, as Herder before him, Seume imagines the Russian realm as a space where Kultur could reach a new level of perfection.

Notably, the Russian theme at this time and in this shape prominently featured in an emerging literary genre which discussed the very foundations of German Kultur, the so-called Bildungsroman. By the last decade of the eighteenth century, these coming-of-age narratives had become highly popular with German audiences. Their plots build on the notion of the formability of the individual, i.e. its receptiveness to Bildung. Particularly in the adolescent, this presupposed “the capacity to develop, through the engagement with the demands of the environment, a personal identity and an awareness of the consistency and the continuity of the self.” The Bildungsroman thus takes on the project of humanité as it had been conceived by the philosophers of the European Enlightenment. “In their conception mankind passes through a process of formative education – a Bildungsprozess – towards humanity. The development of the individual towards his highest possible level of

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 See p. 70.
perfection is part of this process.”60 The social integration of the individual, however, needed be preceded by a process of individuation through exclusion. Essentially, this links the Bildungsroman to the tradition of the adventure novel. “Education [Bildung], Humanity, and the realization of individual potential are not attainable if the individual abides by the commonplace and lives in accordance with the existing.”61 Rather, the protagonist must set out and live through a series of adventures, in order “to gain a new orientation in life through experience and productive processing of the world.”62 It is in this context that the Russian theme entered this literary tradition.

Friederike Helene Unger’s (1741-1813) novel Julchen Grünthal (vol. 1: 1784, vol. 2: 1798) has received much critical attention as one of the first Bildungsromane featuring a female protagonist. Julchen, the daughter of a bourgeois bailiff, initially develops according to the traditional values of her rural German Heimat. Her downfall begins only when she is sent to Berlin to acquire the refined (viz.: French) education of the urban upper classes. Subsequently, Julchen is corrupted by French civilisation, exemplified by “profuse French novels,” and she later explains that not her heart, but only her “sensuality was greatly fostered” in this environment.63 This leads her to a life of crime and debauchery which eventually necessitates her flight to Russia, seemingly bound to become the mistress of a Petersburg nobleman. As Julchen leaves the German lands, she has forfeited not only virtue and social standing. What is more, even her personal identity has been shattered, and she feels compelled to adopt a different persona. “Once Julchen from Lindenau, now the fake and artificial Ida of a Russian prince – I no longer appeared to myself the same creature; a return seemed almost impossible.”64 Yet just as Julchen readies herself for a life of hopeless misery, Petersburg turns out to be a positive counterpoint to the corrupting French culture of the Prussian capital. To be sure, initially Russian otherness

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 2: 274.
fills the heroine feelings of “horror.” Soon, however, she discovers under this rough exterior kind and good-natured souls. Everywhere she encounters “content and singing people who in posture and gesture signalled submissiveness without appearing to be weighed down by a sense of enslavement.” The novel thus perpetuates the notion of a society ruled by a stern, but benevolent government that secures the safety and well-being of its subjects by upholding a firm social order.

This environment enables Julchen to redeem herself and, “for the first time in a very long while” she feels that “better, more innocent days are kindly beckoning.” Moreover, a wise Russian, whose “deeply furrowed face and snow-white beard” provides a telling contrast to the “flat and nondescript physiognomies” of other Europeans, helps her regain agency over her life. Throughout this process, the “disgusting pleasantries” of French culture are contrasted with the natural “affection and emotion” Julchen experiences in Russia. Thus, the language of bourgeois morality is projected onto the Russian sphere, which eventually enables the resurrection of the heroine’s personal identity and her re-integration into society. As ‘Julchen,’ she returns to her family and her father attests that her adventures “had cleansed her senses and her will. She shall proceed on the path of righteousness, and become as white as she once was.” The father in fact asserts that it was “a fortunate fall which helped her regain herself [sie zu sich brachte],” and thus discloses the structural logic of the novel. “The transgression of the narrow boundaries of predetermined female roles, i.e. a false step is the first and necessary step on the path toward self-experience.” Julchen returns from her Russian adventure fully matured. Her Bildung has been completed, making possible her full restoration as a member of her rural Heimat.

---

65 Ibid., 2: 276.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 2: 288.
68 Ibid., 2: 328.
69 Ibid., 2: 330.
70 Ibid., 2: 247.
71 Ibid., 2: 339.
This notion of Bildung as a finite process recurs in Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s (1749-1832) novel Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (1795/96), and once more Russia takes on an important part in this project. Jarno, an instance of authority within the narrative, explains that “it is good for the human [...] to acquire as much virtues as possible, that he may try to accomplish as much as possible. Yet when his education [Bildung] arrives at a certain level, it is beneficial if he learns to lose himself in a larger mass [...] and to forget himself in an occupation performed with a sense of duty.”

At the conclusion of the novel, the hero Wilhelm has completed the first part of this cycle. He is therefore admitted into the secret Society of the Tower which has dedicated itself to the improvement of humanity. At the same time, its leaders have come to see that “it requires but little familiarity with the state of the world to notice that great changes lie before us.” In a subtle reference to the Revolution in France, they explain that even private property has “ceased to be safe,” and that the Society of the Tower will seek to meet this threat to the peace of the continent by founding “a partnership which will expand towards every corner of the world [...] We shall insure each other’s existence in case a state of revolution was to completely drive the one or the other from his property.” In the end, one group will set out for America, while the leader of the Society will lead a party to Russia. Thus, as German society appeared in danger of succumbing to the political and cultural threat from the west, both Goethe’s and Unger’s characters find retreat in Europe’s eastern borderlands. At the close of the eighteenth century, Russia emerges as the champion of order in Europe.

THE ERA OF NAPOLEON

The era of Napoleon, and in particular the events of the Coalition Wars (1792-1815), further corroborated late eighteenth century Russian-European relations. The rapport between the governments in Petersburg and Paris constantly deteriorated, and public opinion followed suit. Russia’s encroachment on the Mediterranean conflicted with
France’s interests on the Levant which had been further sapped by the failure of Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign (1798-1801). Moreover, it was the Russian imperial army under the command of General Suvorov that first inflicted significant damage on the French in the course of the War of the Second Coalition (1798-1802). Finally, the disastrous rout of the Grande Armée in the Russian Campaign of 1812 laid the foundation for a permanent alienation of the two nations. Britons, in contrast, held a more favourable opinion of the tsar and his subjects, as long as their nations were united in the struggle against the French Emperor. However, Russia’s defeat in the War of the Fourth Coalition (1806-1807) and the concluding Treaty of Tilsit (1807) upset this relationship: The treaty foresaw Russia’s accession to Napoleon’s Continental System which effectively stifled British overseas trade. Consequently, “the years which followed the treaty of Tilsit saw the popularity and respect enjoyed in Britain by the Russians and their ruler sink to the lowest level in living memory. […] The complete disappointment of hopes cherished so long and so desperately was bound to produce bitter feelings, and after Tilsit every section of the British press, almost irrespective of party, denounced the treaty as an act of weakness and treachery.”

To be sure, the utter destruction of the Grande Armée in 1812 momentarily revived the enthusiasm for the tsardom. Soon, however, the arrival of Russian troops in Paris aroused both jealousy and apprehension of the tsar’s increasing power. Robert Thomas Wilson (1777-1849), a British diplomat and general who had partaken in the War of the Sixth Coalition (1812-1814) in the ranks of the tsarist forces, testified to this growing uneasiness in view of Russia’s military prowess. “Her display of force, of resources, and of character, has given strength to the arguments of her enemies, and increased the fears of her neighbours, even of those now co-operating with her.” Indeed, at the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, “Russia had become to a large sections of British opinion suspect not so much because of her reactionary political structure or even her suppression of Polish claims to independence, but because of the very power and physical size which had ensured her

77 Anderson, Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815, 208.
Thus, British and French perceptions of Russia coalesced at the outset of the nineteenth century. To a certain extent, this conflict perpetuated the intellectual distinction between Europe’s ‘civilized’ and ‘barbarian’ hemispheres. However, the demonstration of Russian power in the course of the Napoleonic era ensured that she was now first and foremost rejected due to the geopolitical threat she seemed to pose. In consequence, containment of Russia was a mutual goal that would lead to a gradual rapprochement of Britain and France in the course of the following decades.

Across the Channel and the Rhine, Russo-European relations followed a markedly different path. In particular the accession of the Alexander I (r. 1801-1825) had deepened German sympathies for the Russian neighbour. As more and more German cabinets, in reaction to the Jacobin threat, adopted conservative policies, reports on the progressive zeal of the young tsar revived hopes for a new period of enlightened reform that would bring peace and prosperity to the continent. Christian Schlözer (1774-1831), son to the famous Russian scholar Ludwig August Schlözer and for most of his life officer in the service of the tsars, was among those who ardently celebrated the benevolent autocrat as a ruler “who seeks not to found his power on fear and terror.” Rather, Schlözer argues in a treatise On the Principle of a Wise and Just Prince (1803), Alexander “regards the love and veneration of his peoples to be far stronger pillars – the kind of love and veneration which is founded in the consideration of his noble actions, not in blind and slavish subordination.” As in the novel of Karoline Unger, the Russians seem ‘submissive’ to Schlözer not because they are slaves, but because they understand that their absolute ruler governs them with their best interests in mind.

Remarkably, not even Alexander’s withdrawal from the Fourth Coalition and the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit changed this perception, even though the agreement proved just as taxing for the German nations as for the British. Austria was excluded from all negotiations of the Eastern Question and had to watch from the sidelines as France and

---

79 Anderson, Britain’s Discovery of Russia 1553-1815, 229–31.
81 Ibid.
Russia settled amongst themselves the status of the Danubian Principalities. Prussia, in a separate treatise, was truncated in order to enlarge the territories of both the French and – in recompense for the tsar’s retreat from central Europe – the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, the Prussian officer Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz (1741-1812), a liberal freemason and the founder of the widely circulated journal *Minerva*, was all praise for the tsar. In the wake of Tilsit he reminded his countrymen of “their great obligation” to Alexander “for the zeal with which he has repeatedly tended to their interests and well-being. And even if fate has not crowned this zeal with a fortunate success, this does not diminish the indebtedness of the German nation to eternal gratitude.”\(^8^2\) Inversely, as Russia emerged victorious from the campaign of 1812 and entered the gates of Paris in March 1814, this new dominance in no way prompted apprehensions similar to those emerging in Britain. Rather, Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus (1772-1823), the greatest German publisher of his generation, saw in Alexander nothing but “Germany’s liberator” and, indeed, “the father of a political system which will secure for the world a permanent peace.”\(^8^3\) In a poem from 1814, Brockhaus even casts the Russian Emperor as a quasi-transcendent force, sent to reinstate the order of Europe which the French demon had disrupted:

The dragon that clasped the world  
Was defeated by Him whom god has sent [...].

And in Paris, the stage of the bloody play,  
He completes Europe’s atonement!  
The idol tumbles, the image breaks,  
God judges! Behold the Last Judgment.

The wrath of the deity is averted  
We see, as a sign of its end

The wasp-like bees withdraw
And young lilies blossom.\(^{84}\)

Brockhaus portrays Alexander as a proper St George driving out the evil that Napoleon had brought to the continent. A similar, yet more secular image is evoked by the liberal publicist and freemason Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (1785-1858) in his poem *The Russians in Holland* (1813). Varnhagen, who had served in the War of the Sixth Coalition, celebrates the Russians for harbouring enlightenment culture while it was being persecuted in the rest of Europe. Peter the Great, the allegory intimates, had saved on his travels a single sapling of freedom before its roots were pinched by the revolution. Now, Peter’s successor was returning the sprout to its homeland.

> O Alexander! The dear pawn
> Which once we gave up
> Returns to the impoverished
> A thousand fold from your hand!

> And in every Russian weapon shines
> A bough of green saplings
> Which intimately greets us
> As the sprout of domestic freedom.\(^{85}\)

In the great majority, Germans considered the Russian Emperor the deliverer of Europe and hoped that he will “remain for a long time the oxygen of the peoples.”\(^{86}\) France, on the other hand, in a notable inversion was considered the realm of an oriental despot who had built his empire with the help of dull slaves.\(^{87}\) Reports of the demeanour of French soldiers in the Russian campaign – “murderers, barbarians, and thieves”\(^{88}\) – further buttressed this

---


\(^{88}\) Robert K. Porter, “Napoleons letzter Aufenthalt in Moskau (Beschluß),” *Deutsche Blätter*, June 23, 1814.
notion. France was equated with “corruption,” while the Russians, in contrast, “had not become traitors to the independence of their empire or the sun of spiritual light and personal freedom which rose above the land with the star of Alexander.” Thus, in the German imagination, the Russian people came to exemplify the ideals of freedom, independence, and enlightenment.

A popular anecdote from the War of the Second Coalition, related by the Lutheran priest Wilhelm Aschenberg (1768-1820), is a telling case in point. A Humane Cossack on the Peaks of the Gotthard (1803), following a successful defence against the Grande Armée, risks his life to save that of a young French officer. The Russian’s superior lauds the Cossack’s “humanitarian zeal” and, most notably, the narrator attests to him the disposition of a true “Biedermann.” At the time, this term evoked all the positive qualities central to the German self-understanding, such as righteousness, industriousness, honour, and trustworthiness. In a similar vein, a contemporary study on the Russian National Character (1813) defines the Russian as a model citizen. The people are described as good-natured and eager to learn, as dexterous craftsmen, adroit in learning languages, musically inclined, brave and noble. They practice a happy and devout religion, exhibit remarkable tolerance, and their hospitality is outstanding. Thus, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic era, Germans continued to consider Russia “the land of opportunity,” as Seume writes. “The great, rather unusual, and unexpected development of things and persons in this empire,” he further explains, “is in fact nothing unusual. The entire history of this nation gives testimony to this remark. We need only take into account the occurrences of this

89 Porter, “Napoleons letzter Aufenthalt in Moskau,” 196.
90 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
century to convince ourselves, how true it is.” In the eyes of Germans, Russian exceptionalism was no longer based on the myths surrounding the nation’s great emperors alone, but on the history of the nation itself. Notions of a spiritual union between Germans and Russians therefore soon complemented the political rapprochement between the ‘three eastern courts.’ A poem published in 1814 in the Zeitung für elegante Welt vocalizes this popular sympathy for the “kindred brethren of the North,” which the author wishes to welcome with “the rejoicing tone of the German harp.”

Consecrated be the holy union of humanity
In word and action, with heart and tongue
United forever now stand forth
Germania and Ruthenia.

This alliance of ‘Germania and Ruthenia’ emerged from the Napoleonic era as a powerful political and intellectual faction in the concert of Europe. Suddenly, the three eastern courts found themselves in a position where they could even aspire to hegemony on the European continent. The distinction from France and Britain, however, was based not only on geopolitical interests. Moreover, the vigorous advocacy for the principles of enlightened absolutism tied Germans to their eastern neighbours and made for a telling contrast to French and British efforts to establish strong civil societies. Thus, the continent indeed stood ideologically divided as it had never before, laying the foundations for the major political conflicts of the nineteenth century.

96 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
In the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic era, Europe’s great powers stood united in their intention to re-establish a strong and lasting order on the continent. Very soon, however, opinions diverged how best to implement this design. The initiative of Tsar Alexander I to found a conservative alliance based on the Christian principles and the notion of legitimate rule resonated only with the Austrian and Prussian governments. Thus, the three eastern courts *de facto* formed a distinct geopolitical entity which France and Britain treated with open reserve. The German population at large, in contrast, readily identified with the Christian conservatism of the Russian-led alliance and largely rejected the intellectual heritage of the French Revolution. Moreover, Germans were optimistic that the Russian tsar would once more take up the initiative to implement enlightened reform ‘from above,’ and thus inspire a process of gradual reform in all of Europe. A radical minority, however, took the exact opposite position and considered Russian influence the single most powerful stumbling block for liberal reform in the German lands. Yet this was but the first expression of the belief that German liberalisation and unification would need to be eked out against the resistance of the court in St Petersburg. Only in the following decades would this conviction gain significant currency in the German lands.
A SYSTEM OF ALLIANCES AND CONGRESSES

The reorganization of post-Napoleonic Europe began with the foundation of the Quadruple Alliance between Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia in March 1814. As they marched on Paris, the four partners sought to lay the foundation for a political order that would henceforth preclude attempts of any single power to adopt a policy of divide and rule similar to that of the Corsican tyrant. A key measure thereby was the reaffirmation of the rights of the monarch at the expense of the principle of national self-determination. The latter, many feared in the aftermath of the Terreur of the French citoyen, “would have been an endorsement of revolution.”¹ This decision reflected that, at the time, Europe’s political borders generally did not follow ethnic lines. Endorsement of nationalism could have at once upset the political order of the entire continent. Therefore, rather than pursing a Europe of nation states, the members of the Quadruple Alliance sought to reinstate strong monarchies which would reciprocally ensure political stability. Accordingly, only eight days after Napoleon’s abdication on 6 April 1814, the allies agreed that a strong and stable French monarchy, too, was pivotal for the future balance of Europe. The Bourbons were therefore reinstated as France’s legitimate rulers, and even though Napoleon’s interregnum in 1815 called for caution, the Grande Nation was spared from exceeding demands for war indemnities.² The Bourbons knew that “the Allies of Waterloo were their allies, too.” Hence, “the aim of French diplomacy was to bring France back within the European state system as a trusted partner.”³ Already at the Congress of Aachen, held in the fall of 1818, France was invited to accede to the new Quintuple Alliance. Subsequently, at least for a short period, annually recurring congresses indeed mediated the interests of Europe’s five great powers. The fissures of this structure, however, were evident from the start.

Already the first gathering, the sparkling Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), made apparent that the shared intention to rebuild the order of Europe would not supersede the geopolitical ambitions of the participating governments. Russia, Austria, and Prussia were determined to maintain and, if possible, extend their suzerainty in central Europe. France

² Ibid., 331–37.
³ Ibid., 38.
and Britain, on the other hand, sought to curtail in particular the expansion of Russian influence. Consequently, territorial questions caused heated discussion, particularly in the case of the future status of Poland and Saxony. The latter faced repercussions for unduly supporting Napoleon, and King Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia made pretensions on the entire state territory. Alexander I, on the other hand, demanded that Poland – Napoleon’s most significant ally in the Russian campaign – be resurrected in its 1773 form and become a Russian protectorate. The French minister plenipotentiary responded by concluding a secret pact with the British and Austrian deputies. It bound the signatories to each mobilize a force of 50,000 should either Russia or Prussia seek to assert their demands by force.

Austria was torn, for as much as she feared Prussia’s advancement towards becoming the leading German power, the support of her Russian ally was pivotal for maintaining the volatile peace on the Balkans.\(^4\) In the end, the territorial questions were settled peacefully, although both Frederick Wilhelm III and Alexander I were dissatisfied: Prussia received permission to annex but two fifths of Saxony, while the tsar became the ruler of a truncated Kingdom of Poland. The experience proved particularly frustrating for the Russian Emperor, who until recently had been celebrated as the liberator of Europe,\(^5\) and now saw that his actions were met with suspicion and resistance. For the French, however, the outcome proved a full success, as it “suggested that France was not the only danger to European stability, and that Russia, whose armies had driven Napoleon across Europe to Paris, was also a potential menace.”\(^6\) Thus the Congress of Vienna under its harmonious surface had further buttressed the continent’s division into two political camps.

The foundation of the Holy Alliance in September 1815, three months after the conclusion of the Congress of Vienna, made this division evident. It had been conceived by the Russian Emperor as a means to create both political and spiritual guidelines for the future governance of Europe, and was designed to include all members of the Quadruple Alliance. It was “a serious attempt of Alexander I to conclude the revolution and create a

---


\(^5\) See Malia, Russia Under Western Eyes, 87.

new and extended political system with the help, or rather through the resurrection of Christian solidarity.\textsuperscript{7} Britain, however, abstained from the union,\textsuperscript{8} and since an inclusion of France was not envisioned, the Holy Alliance consisted but of the three eastern courts. The first article of the treatise thus reads:

Their majesties the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia have reached the inner conviction, due to the great events which have filled Europe in the past three years, and foremost due to the benefaction that divine providence has poured over those states which have set their trust and hope on her alone, that it is necessary to found their mutual relationship on the sublime truths which are taught by the everlasting religion of the divine redeemer.\textsuperscript{9}

A restoration of the pre-revolutionary political order of Europe became the paramount goal of the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian rulers as they perpetuated a monarchical system legitimized by divine providence. This ideological imperative was complemented by the shared geopolitical ambition to consolidate and expand their political influence and territorial acquisitions, to form a bulwark of order and stability in Mitteleuropa.

The notion of Mitteleuropa or Central Europe first gained currency in the early nineteenth century, as the three eastern courts interpreted their central location on the continent as a mandate to uphold the political order. Foremost, this implied keeping in check those ideas of liberal reform and popular governance which had initiated the downfall of France and, subsequently, all of Europe. As such, the notion of Central Europe “may be said to have emerged in opposition to Napoleon’s Europe and represented a kind of anti-Europe.”\textsuperscript{10} Moreover, the term contained “a certain historical mystique”\textsuperscript{11} and let the Holy Alliance appear the protector of venerable traditions against corruption. Particularly Germans considered themselves not just the “center,” but indeed “the heart of Europe,”\textsuperscript{12} and therefore destined to lead the continent in the aftermath of Napoleon’s rule. To be sure,

\textsuperscript{7} Groh, Rußland im Blick Europas, 135.
\textsuperscript{8} See Rumpler, 1804-1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa,140.
\textsuperscript{10} Delanty, Inventing Europe, 102.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 101.
\textsuperscript{12} Wilhelm Schütz, Rußland und Deutschland, oder, über den Sinn der Memoire von Aachen (Leipzig: Gerhard Fleischer, 1819), 53.
France and Britain acknowledged the central importance of the German lands for the post-Napoleonic order, foremost, however, because they feared that the foundation of a united Germany that could tilt the balance of power. Indeed, “neither the German people, nor Metternich, but the European great powers declared the German question to be an essential part of the reorganization of Europe.”

At the Congress of Vienna, it was decided that Germany should remain fractioned into many small states, and that this German Confederation would be presided over by the Austrian Emperor, who had little interest in the rise of a strong neighbour north of his territories. France, too, feared the rise of a powerful German central state, and the French minister plenipotentiary tellingly asked: “Who can estimate the consequences, if a mass similar to that of the Germans, mixed into a whole, were to become aggressive? Who can tell where such a movement would come to a halt?”

To a certain extent, Europe’s traditional great powers had emerged strengthened from the revolutionary era. A change in the geopolitical landscape would have jeopardized this outcome. Therefore the foundation of the loosely organized German Confederation was considered the “guarantor for the balance of Europe: In 1815 all great powers concurred in this regard, including the two great German powers.” A German nation state would have stood at odds with the conservative spirit that ruled the Holy Alliance.

However, it was not alone the conservative ideology of the Holy Alliance which soon alienated the other members of the Quintuple Alliance. Moreover, the former’s intention to maintain the political status quo by means of military interventions abroad provided grounds for conflict. In particular the Austrian Minister of State Klemens von Metternich (1773-1859) aggressively pursued this agenda, and “obtained support for his policy of intervention from Russia and Prussia at the Congress of the powers at Troppau [today: Opava in the Czech Republic] in Galicia in October 1820.”

Subsequently, “at a second Congress at Laibach (Ljubljana) in March 1821 the Tsar, Frederick William of Prussia, and Ferdinand of Naples authorized Metternich to send in Austrian troops to crush

13 Rumpler, 1804-1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa, 133–34.
14 Quote taken from Golo Mann, Friedrich von Gentz: Gegenspieler Napoleons. Vordenker Europas
15 Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, 1: 72.
16 Gildea, Barricades and Borders, 67.
the rebellions in Naples and Piedmont.”\(^{17}\) This violation of national sovereignty outraged Paris and London. Thus, before the Duke of Wellington was dispatched as the British representative to the Congress of Verona in 1822, he received instructions to no longer simply reject, but henceforth actively undermine any further military expeditions aimed at stifling ‘revolutionary activities’ abroad. In the end, the insistence of the three eastern courts to intervene in the Spanish Civil War (1820-23) brought the Quintuple Alliance and with it the congress system to an end.

**THE HOLY ALLIANCE**

Recent scholarship has indicated that Germans in the majority identified with the conservative agenda of the Holy Alliance. To be sure, this notion is at odds with canonical representations of nineteenth century German history. Abigail Green has, however, convincingly challenged “the long shadow cast by [...] the work of historians like Droysen, Ranke, and Treitschke,”\(^ {18}\) who portrayed the era from the Congress of Vienna to the foundation of the German Empire in 1871 as the national struggle of a liberally minded people against reactionary governments.\(^ {19}\) Rather, Green contends, Germans in the aftermath of the upheavals of the Napoleonic wars turned to time-honoured traditions in hope of stability and continuity. Indeed, only few were nationally inclined. “In the early nineteenth century, most Germans were Austrians, or Prussians, Bavarians or Saxons, first and foremost.”\(^ {20}\) Similarly, only a small fraction of society pushed for liberal reform. In fact, “during the 1820s, when the word *liberal* first began to be used to designate a political position, the movement consisted of small and scattered groups trying to protect the hopes born during the era of revolution and reform [...]. Most people showed little concern for the

\(^{17}\) Ibid.


\(^{20}\) Green, *Fatherlands*, 1.
constitutional struggles [...] and participation in elections was almost always very low."\textsuperscript{21} Thus, contemporary German conservatism need be understood literally as the popular will to preserve order, rather than polemically as the intention of German governments to curtail civil liberties.  

Even the few intellectuals pushing for liberal reform were wary of too aggressively engaging the old order, lest the result mirror the recent events in France. Consequently, they sought “to find a way of protecting the state from the dangers of the mob without excessively narrowing the opportunities for political participation.”\textsuperscript{22} To a certain extent, this agenda was also eloquent of a reluctance to share privileges with the wider population. As a result, the liberal movement had very little appeal for the lower classes, and “had to contend with distrust and passivity in the population at large.”\textsuperscript{23} Nevertheless, the movement was not willing to entirely disassociate itself from the governing elites. In fact, considering “the record of progressive reforms sponsored by the state [...] most German liberals did not want to limit or destroy the power of the state, but rather to purge it of its abuses and turn its power towards liberal aims.”\textsuperscript{24} And in the end, the German governments were pursuing anything but a strictly ‘reactionary’ agenda. Even Klemens von Metternich, the ‘coachman of Europe,’ sought foremost not to fight against, but to cope with the significant socio-political changes of the preceding decades.  

Not even in his dreams did he consider the restoration of a pre-revolutionary constitution; he knew that the complete social upheaval since 1789 was not reversible. What had changed had to stay: the new states, the burghers, the influence of public opinion, the factories [...] The new only had to be shaped into an order, secured by consensus and solidarity.\textsuperscript{25}  

The historian and liberal politician Karl von Rotteck (1775-1840) aptly summarized the mood of the epoch when he stated that “it is not the republican form which we consider the sun of today, no! It is the republican spirit. This spirit may very well agree with the

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 27.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 11.  
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 43.  
\textsuperscript{25} Rumpler, \textit{1804-1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa}, 134.
monarchic form, and possibly even govern more successfully in a well ordered monarchy than in the stormy empire of the democrats.” 26 Ultimately, Rotteck pleaded the case of enlightened absolutism. In the popular imaginations of Germans, this notion now went through a remarkable renaissance, and tellingly it was in the immediate aftermath of the Coalition Wars that the popularity of the enlightened rulers Frederick II and Joseph II reached its zenith. 27

An heir to this legacy was, however, notably lacking in the German lands. In lieu thereof, the Russian Emperor seemed to continue the tradition of the benevolent autocrat. Moreover, Alexander I, the vanquisher of Napoleon, appeared the guarantor of a stable yet progressive order in Europe. Unaware that domestic opposition had coerced the tsar to desist from key reform initiatives, 28 Germans saw in him the champion of a new and more just Europe. At the same time, they expected him to defend time-honoured traditions against those “who would like to completely uproot them and then plant their abstractions on the ruins.” 29 In fact, the author and nobleman Christian Wilhelm Schütz (1776-1847) argued, “no one had accepted and respected the individuality of Germany to a stronger degree than the ruler of the Russian Empire.” 30 With regard to fears that unification might rob Germans of their federal heritage, Schütz pointed out, Alexander had “declared that he wanted it to survive and persist as a mystery while a great part of the nationalists unrelentingly seeks to rob us of these ancestral singularities.” 31 Russia, many Germans hoped, would indeed contain the liberal threat emanating from France and Britain. This hope provided for a strong popular identification with the aims of the Holy Alliance.

The philosopher and publicist Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), for example – in his time a not uncommon mixture of intellectual radical and political conservative – rejected “liberal principles and attitudes which for Europe would mean little more than a modified

28 See Figes, Natasha’s Dance, 84–85. See also Riasanovsky, A History of Russia, 302–7.
29 Schütz, Rußland und Deutschland, oder, über den Sinn der Memoire von Aachen, 42–43.
30 Ibid., 42.
31 Ibid., 42–43.
relapse into revolution, which is their only goal.”32 In his eyes, “the rigid and mechanical equilibrium based on the restriction of sovereignty, as it has emerged in England, is no longer applicable and beneficial in the European context.”33 In contrast, Schlegel advocates a European order founded on Christian principles: “Only a religious fundament,” he argues, “can save and fortify, help and defend the entire civilized world as well as every individual and independent state.”34 The Russian Empire, Schlegel found, had in an exemplary manner implemented these principles:

These ideas have already been made the effective foundation of the state by the present Emperor who has distinguished himself in times of adversity and fortune [...]. Within this monarchy of peace, that has unswervingly persisted in the same ancestral ethos, this religious fundament has always been accepted and regarded as more valid than any other principle.35

Franz von Baader (1765-1841), a Catholic philosopher from Munich, was similarly convinced that a spiritual revival would restore order to the European continent, and that Russia was most qualified to initiate this renaissance.36 Thus, Baader in 1814 approached the tsar with a “treatise, in which he laid down these principles, and which [...] proved to be the igniting spark for Alexander’s decision to form the Holy Alliance.”37 In the same vein Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740-1817), a founding figure of German born again Christianity, considered Tsar Alexander Europe’s deliverer from the revolutionary Apocalypse and the antichrist Napoleon. Jung-Stilling’s followers adopted this vision and, moreover, believed that only Russia could protect the world from once more falling victim to demonic powers. In fact, “all that was now necessary was a minor incentive – which came about with the famine that struck southern Germany due to a crop failure in 1817 – to see thousands of born again Christians from Württemberg, Bavaria, and Switzerland,

---

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. 234.
35 Ibid., 234.
36 Franz von Baader, Ueber das durch die französische Revolution herbeigeführte Bedürfniss einer neuer und innigeren Verbindung der Religion mit der Politik (Nürnberg: Campe, 1815). See also Hildegard Schaeder, Die dritte Koalition und die Heilige Allianz nach neuen Quellen (Königsberg und Berlin: Ost-Europa-Verlag, 1934), 65.
37 Groh, Rußland im Blick Europas, 140.
Christians of all denominations set out for Russia to flee from the divine tribunal that was expected for Europe.”38 To a certain extent, Russia had become a conservative utopia.

However, not only outspoken conservatives welcomed Russia’s increasing involvement in European affairs. Eminent liberal thinkers, such as Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860), were similarly convinced that the Russian Emperor would once more bring stability and prosperity to the continent. In 1806, the university professor and author of anti-French poems had been forced to flee from the advancing troops of Napoleon. He eventually found refuge in St Petersburg and returned to Germany in 1812 in the train of the Russian army. In a poem from the following year, Arndt, too, celebrates Tsar Alexander as the “liberator, founder, and saviour of the world.”39 Correspondingly, during the Congress of Vienna, Arndt denounced French agent provocateurs in Germany “who are now complaining about Russia, and sensing from there a political and military danger which, in fact, we have felt only from France in the past decades.”40 These instigators, he argues, “seem to have already forgotten, or are disgruntled by the fact that it was Russia [...] who gave us hope and courage to crush the yoke of French tyranny.”41 In the wake of the Coalition Wars, this juxtaposition of Russia and France became topical as a means to determine Germany’s place in the world. Arndt, for one, after the foundation of the Holy Alliance assured that “Germany has nothing to fear of Russia. In France, however, all senses and thoughts once more express the traditional friendliness of our Gaulish neighbours who wish to first blind, confuse, and disunite us Germans, and then to subjugate and disgrace us.”42 This dichotomy even found its way into historiography, and the most popular History of Russia (1827) of the early nineteenth century makes the point that in the campaign of 1812 the French were nothing but “raiders and plunderers”43 while the Russians had exhibited all traits of heroic bravery. In this context, the inception of the Holy Alliance for Germans marked the conclusion of the era of revolution. The liberal publicist

38 Ibid., 138.
40 Linke, Quellen zu den deutsch-russischen Beziehungen 1801-1917, 57–58.
41 Ibid.
42 Ernst M. Arndt, “Belgien und was daran hängt,” in E. M. Arndt’s Schriften für und an seine lieben Deutschen, vol. 3, Dritter Theil (Leipzig: Weidmann’sche Buchhandlung, 1845), 181
Joseph Görres (1776-1848) indeed anticipated that it would “safeguard the world from the return of that bloody attempt.”\textsuperscript{44} As a matter of fact, Görres predicted that the alliance would achieve nothing less than “the rejuvenation of the old monarchies from the inside through metamorphosis, without leading them through complete decomposition, and thus salvage the true European Bildung.”\textsuperscript{45} Ultimately, this was the ideal of enlightened absolutism: Social change that was not the result of revolutionary ‘decomposition,’ but the implementation of reform by benevolent monarchs such as Alexander I. In the same vein, a majority of Germans came to see the Russian-led Holy Alliance as the protector of the peaceful \textit{status quo} and the guarantor of controlled social progress.

\section*{German Opposition to the Holy Alliance}

The notion of Russia as protector of legitimate rule made it the main target for those seeking to openly denounce what they considered the reinstatement of unchecked sovereignty and noble privilege which had, in fact, precipitated the Revolution in France. Moreover, this group argued, the Russian-led Holy Alliance was suppressing both the national and liberal movement in Germany, and thus obstructing the spirit of true reform. “Old and time-barred partiality,” one contemporary asserted, “imagined merit derived from birth and property, a love for the old jog-trot, and a host of prejudices are opposing this good spirit with the spirits of hell.”\textsuperscript{46} The progressive and liberal aspirations of the German people, these voices argued, had been brought to a standstill by Russian intervention. The tsarist “realm of slavery and German liberty,” the \textit{Nordische Beobachter} accordingly stated, “are contradictory principles in the European world.”\textsuperscript{47} The Holstein writer Fanny Tarnow (1779-1862) seconded this position in the letters she wrote to friends and family from a trip to St Petersburg. “As a German who is used to liberal views and used to seeing the noblest of our people agree in their estimation of these views,” she wrote in 1818, “much of what I

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[45] Ibid.
\item[46] Friedrich Schott, \textit{Kotzebue, Deutschland und Russland} (Leipzig: E. Klein, 1820), 46–47.
\item[47] \textit{Nordischer Beobachter} 2 (1819): 76.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
see and hear here is painful and nightmarish.”⁴⁸ And the radical publicist Hartwig Hundt-Radowsky (1780-1835) claimed that “the monarchs of Austria and Prussia actually hold a benevolent interest in humanity, and that it was only due to the influence of the Emperor Alexander that they were wavering in the implementation of their designs.”⁴⁹ Such auspices even led to substantial reinterpretations of recent history. “It is impossible,” one voice explained, “to dispute the reputation of our nation for having contributed the most to the fortunate conclusion of the war, as for having most harshly felt its strains. With all due respect to the other peoples – one may boldly assert that none fought with more enthusiasm for freedom than the Germans.”⁵⁰ The image of Russia as Europe’s deliverer from the Napoleonic threat had no place in this ideology. Rather, anti-Russian sentiment became a unifying rallying cry for a radical minority of Germans.

As soon as 1818, the Russian question precipitated open conflict. At the Congress of Aachen, the Bohemian nobleman Alexander Stourdza (1792-1854) had distributed among the delegates a treatise entitled Mémoire sur l’état actuel de l’Allemagne which soon after appeared in German translation.⁵¹ The author intimated that German liberals, in particular radical students, were seeking to destabilize the European order. Hence, he calls for more government scrutiny of the press, the suppression of political parties, and, most notably, for a stronger Russian involvement in German affairs. Those under attack immediately reacted by expressing “fierce anti-Russian sentiments,”⁵² even though nothing indicated that Stourdza’s pamphlet indeed represented official Russian policy. In fact, the German philosopher Wilhelm Krug (1770-1842) pointed out that “the entire memoire is conceived in a way that must create unnecessary mistrust against Russia.”⁵³ He therefore

⁴⁸ Fanny Tarnow, Briefe auf einer Reise nach Petersburg. An Freunde geschrieben (Berlin: Enslin, 1819), 98.
⁵⁰ Schott, Kotzebue, Deutschland und Rußland, 26–27.
concludes that it is most likely the “fabrication of a mind hostile to Russia, rather than the original product of a Russian privy councillor.” Yet while Krug’s rebuttal of the Mémoire sought to mediate between the warring parties, others welcomed the discord Stourdza had planted. In a private letter the Austrian diplomat and close advisor of Metternich Friedrich von Gentz (1764-1832) explains:

In Aachen, where the text was first circulated, it created uproar. The Prussians, or at least a large number of them, were rancorous and dismayed. [...] The treatise is being translated into every language; and since everyone considers it to be an authentic expression of the Emperor [Alexander’s] disposition (although this is far from the truth), one can imagine how much terror it will strike in Germany. This effect, Gentz concludes, “need thoroughly please us.” And indeed, Stourdza’s pamphlet had further radicalized the intellectual camps in Germany, thus further isolating the radical liberal movement and, ultimately, corroborating the political status quo Austria sought to uphold.

The Russian question had thus taken on paramount significance in German public discourse. Moreover, it provided for a vitriolic atmosphere, as witnessed by the public dispute it incited between liberally minded members of student associations – the so-called Burschenschaften – and the popular author August von Kotzebue (1761-1819). The latter, in his own weekly, the Literarisches Wochenblatt, eloquently spoke out for Stourdza while reprimanding those who attacked the Mémoire:

Who are these bawlers that have rebelled against the Memoire? A bunch of people who feel that sore spots were ungently touched and who fear to lose part of their corruptive influence if some matters were to be seriously addressed. No reasonable and just man who even from afar observes the humbug of the Turner and the students can doubt that it is imperative to wrest our youth – and with it, the fortune of coming generations – from the labyrinth through which it is currently stumbling.

54 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 375.
The Turner, whom Kotzebue here indict, were a gymnast movement founded by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778-1852) in the aftermath of the French occupation of Germany in 1807. Jahn considered a strong and virile youth indispensable to shed French suzerainty, and indeed a large number of his disciples went on to fight against Napoleon in the War of the Sixth Coalition (1812-1814), which was later glorified as Germany’s ‘War of Liberation’ (Befreiungskrieg). After peace was concluded, many of these young men returned to university where they began to organize themselves in Burschenschaften. Their aim was to translate the national enthusiasm they had experienced during the war into a political program which called for liberalization and unification of Germany.

The largest public manifestation of this movement took place on 18 October 1817 at the Wartburg Festival which celebrated both the tercentennial of Martin Luther’s 95 theses and the four year anniversary of the Battle of Nations at Leipzig (16-19 October 1813). Several hundred students gathered in the name of freedom, but “for the first time the issue was not freedom from the Corsican tyrant, but from the many domestic tyrants.”58 In a symbolic act, the participants then went on to burn books59 of those authors whom they considered mouthpieces of the conservative Holy Alliance.60 Notably, the selection, which had been assembled by Ludwig Jahn himself, included August von Kotzebue’s History of the German Empire (1814-15).61 The latter’s support for Stourdza’s suggestion to more thoroughly police the universities was therefore but one occurrence in a series of confrontations with the radical Burschenschaftler. In early 1819 Kotzebue responded to further defamations by denouncing academic freedom as “the unchecked liberty of all

---

59 See ibid.
60 Also thrown into the flames were books by French and Jewish authors. As Winkler points out: “The hatred of Jews and the French of Jahn’s disciples, Turner and Burschen alike, was unmistakable. To assure themselves of their ‘Germaness’ they seemingly required a radical distinction from everything they felt was ‘non-German.’” Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, 1: 73. In the same vein, the Jewish author Heinrich Heine relates that, during his membership in the Burschenschaften, he was coerced into applauding the “thoroughness of his old-German friends as they assembled proscription lists for the day when they would come to power. Those who up to the seventh degree were descended from a Frenchman, a Jew, or a Slav were sentenced to exile. Those who had written a single word against Jahn or the old-German ridiculousness could prepare to face death.” Heinrich Heine, Heinrich Heine’s Sämtliche Werke, ed. Gottfried Becker, vol. 6, Vermischte Schriften (Zweite Abtheilung) (Philadelphia: John Weik & Co., 1859), 522–23.
students to decide whether or not they choose to lead a life of debauchery [...].”62 Moreover, he criticized “insensible professors” for leading these young men to believe that “they had been chosen to reform their fatherland.”63 Kotzebue spoke for a majority of Germans who, like him, were “‘enlightened conservatives’ who opposed the political tendencies arising from the French revolution and favoured a return to the principles of enlightened kingship.”64 Thus, his verdict on the student associations was largely representative of German public opinion at large. A few months after the publication of his polemics against Burschen and Turner, Kotzebue was dead. On 23 March 1819 the student and Burschenschaft member Karl Ludwig Sand (1795-1820) stabbed the author in his Mannheim home. Questioned for his motives, Sand stated the following: “Kotzebue,” he claimed “is the seducer of our youth, the desecrator of our national history, and the Russian spy on our fatherland.”65 The first two indictments relate to Kotzebue’s remarkable literary success: Sand believed that “the nature of Kotzebue’s works, the magnitude of his popularity, and the ridicule of nationalist excess threatened to sap the manly German will and to undermine the Burschenschaft reform program.”66 The largest threat, however, seemed to emanate from Kotzebue’s links to Russia.

Before he became Germany’s most popular playwright, Kotzebue had indeed pursued a highly successful career within the administration of the Russian Empire. In the 1780s, he successively served as secretary to the governor general in St Petersburg, as assessor in the supreme court of Reval (today: Tallinn in Estonia), and as magistrate for the Estonian province. Moreover, he married the daughter of a high-ranking general and thus joined the ranks of the Russia’s landed gentry. The 1790s and early 1800s Kotzebue largely spent in Germany, until the French advancement in 1806 prompted his return to his estates in Estonia. During the War of the Sixth Coalition, he then edited the Russisch-Deutsches Volksblatt, an anti-French, pro-Russian propaganda newspaper. Finally, in 1816 Kotzebue was promoted to the rank of Imperial Russian State Counsellor and dispatched to Germany

63 Ibid.
65 Ibid., 936.
66 Ibid., 943.
to periodically report on the current state of Germany’s political, cultural, and intellectual life. This mandate in no way involved espionage, and it was well known to the German public that the Russian court remunerated Kotzebue generously. Nevertheless, this connection to the Russian Empire made Kotzebue appear to radical nationalists “the epitome of political reaction, of the non-German, of the subjugation of German liberty through foreign powers, of political corruption and national treason.” Since in these radical circles the Russian Empire had become synonymous with reactionary governance, service to the tsars equalled treason to their cause. Fear of Russia had indeed taken on irrational forms. “He had become Russian, and sought to bestow upon us the same bliss,” Hartwig von Hundt-Radovsky later justified the assassination of Kotzebue.

We, too, were supposed to be subjugated by such a despotic ruler. Moral and spiritual refinement of human kind meant nothing to Kotzebue; if the people were left with enough sense to applaud one of his farces and could spell out his boring Wochenblatt, they would be intelligent enough. The princes, as well as the Samojed, Korjakt, and Wallachian professors that he and Mr. Stourdza intended to employ at our universities, would ensure that we did not advance beyond this point.

The murderer Karl Sand made a similar argument in the course of his interrogation by the authorities. “Kotzebue,” he explained, “had always sought to prove that the German relationship with Russia was such that one may not act or think anything that the latter didn’t approve of; all of his writings bear witness to this. This demonstrates beyond a doubt that it was his intention to make German freedom a subject of Russia.” Those who identified with this position celebrated the assassin, such as the author of a treatise entitled Kotzebue, Deutschland und Rußland. He considered Sand “a man of admirable character” and the death of Kotzebue “a blessing for the world.” For some, Sand indeed “became a

---

69 Hartwig Hundt-Radovsky, Kotzebue’s Ermordung, in Hinsicht ihrer Ursachen und ihrer wahrscheinlichen literarischen Folgen für Deutschland (Berlin: Petri, 1819), 29–30.
70 Ibid.
72 Schott, Kotzebue, Deutschland und Rußland, 102–5.
symbol of resolute, selfless action on behalf of the fatherland.”  


Ibid.


78 See above, p. 108.
symbolically charged topic, with either approval or rejection of ‘Russia’ implying a complex set of beliefs about the present and future of Germany and Europe. “The respective position an individual took on the Russian question could identify supporters or enemies of the Holy Alliance and the policies of Metternich, proponents or opponents of [...] the idea of national unification.”⁷⁹ Thus, at the outset of the nineteenth century, the Russian theme had become a powerful rhetorical device in the struggle for power and identity in the German lands.

VI.
The Early Nineteenth Century: Central, Eastern, or Western Europe?

In the 1820s and the 1830s, the German perception of Russia was most strongly influenced by two major military conflicts. First, in 1821, the Greeks sought to assert their independence from their Ottoman suzerains. Europe’s great powers watched in apprehension as once again the volatile peace on the Balkans was threatened. The European population at large, in contrast, celebrated and showed great support for the cause of the Greeks. The liberal movement in particular identified with the insurgents, and many Germans felt that the Greek effort significantly coincided with their own ambitions for national self-determination. Therefore, the reaction was polarized when Greek independence was ultimately achieved by means of a Russian intervention. The majority of Germans welcomed the fact that Ottoman influence in Europe was further curtailed and that the European order had not been upset by the conflict. Yet liberal radicals felt that a blow had been struck at the national cause in Europe, and that in the end not the Greek people, but the conservatism of the Russian Empire had triumphed. This notion of an overpowering influence of the reactionary tsar was further buttressed in the course of the November Uprising in Poland. Following a revolutionary wave that swept Europe in 1830, the Poles rebelled against their Russian king, and thereby attracted even more German sympathy than the Greeks had in their struggle against the Ottomans. Thus, as Russia initiated a brutal crackdown on the insurgents, Poland became a surrogate for liberal and national aspirations.
in Germany, and a symbol for those who were discontent with the conservative policies of the Holy Alliance. In 1832, this growing popular dissatisfaction precipitated the first large-scale political assembly in German history, the Hambach Festival. There, reform minded members of all estates joined together to articulate their demands for a more just society. While these demands could strongly diverge, there were two ideas that united the entire congregation: The rejection of the Russian-led Holy Alliance and the call to for an association of the free peoples of Europe. Remarkably, this even led to the advocacy of a rapprochement with France to contain the Russian menace in the east. The early nineteenth century thus prepared a momentous shift in symbolic geography.

**THE GREEK WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**

From the outset it was evident that The Greek War of Independence (1821-1830) would change the face of Europe by deciding the fate of the Ottoman Empire. If the Greeks emerged victorious, the Sublime Porte would have all but lost its footing on the European side of the Bosporus. In the case of an Ottoman victory, a sustained revival of the declining Empire, the so-called ‘sick man of Europe,’ seemed possible. The Greeks had been tributary to the Sultan since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and although the Hellenes intermittently attempted to shed the ‘Ottoman yoke,’ the Turkish suzerain remained assertive until the outset of the nineteenth century. At this time, however, the continuous disintegration of the Ottoman state had reached a critical point. In the east and across the Mediterranean, particularly in the Caucasus region and in Egypt, unruly vassals were threatening the cohesion of the empire. On the Balkan Peninsula, on the other hand, the Porte needed fear Austrian and Russian territorial ambition, as well as calls for national self-determination from the various ethnic groups of the region. The particular strength of the Greek national movement stemmed from the strong integration of this ethnic group into the imperial administration in the course of the eighteenth century. “Paradoxically, the process of Ottoman decline was to precipitate a small but influential group of Greeks into positions of power in the highest reaches of the Ottoman state.”

---

to slowly dominate the intellectual infrastructure, and by the turn of the century, Greek had in fact become “the official lingua franca of Balkan commerce.”\(^2\) Moreover, as education flourished, key concepts of the European Enlightenment and romantic nationalism were popularized and laid a solid ideological foundation for the uprising against the Ottomans. Thus, when the movement’s leaders formally declared revolt on 25 March 1821, the Greek population in the majority supported the effort.\(^3\)

The Quintuple Alliance of Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia demonstrated rare concord in their initial condemnation of the Greek revolution, although their motives differed widely. The governments in London and Paris were concerned about the future of their trade on the Mediterranean should the Ottomans emerge weakened from the conflict. Free access to the Ionian Islands, key trading ports under the protection of the Sultan, seemed in jeopardy and with it the Levant trade as a whole. Moreover, France and Britain depended on a strong Turkey to bar Russia from the lucrative trade in the Near and Middle East, and therefore they “communicated their expectations to the Porte that the rebellion would be quickly suppressed.”\(^4\) In contrast, the members of the Holy Alliance, and in particular Austria and Russia, feared that a national awakening on the Balkans might threaten the balance of Europe and, moreover, upset their own geopolitical interests. After all, the perpetual lack of cohesive polities in this region had over the centuries enabled both them and the Ottomans to piecemeal establish their suzerainty: The Habsburgs had incorporated into their realm the Hungarian territories they wrested from the Turks in the late seventeenth century, while the tsars ruled north, the Sultans south of the Prut River. In fact, there existed between these three great powers a tacit agreement to conjointly suppress any political activity that might endanger their hold on the region. A case in point is the failed Greek uprising against the Ottomans in 1797: The leader of the movement, the writer Rigas Feraios (1757-1798) was quickly arrested by Austrian officials and extradited to Constantinople where he was executed along with his comrades.\(^5\)

\(^2\) Ibid., 23.
\(^3\) See ibid., 15–25.
The European population at large, on the other hand, strongly identified with the struggle of the Greeks against their Muslim suzerain. A wave of intellectual, financial, material, and even personal support soon reached the insurgents. “In Madrid, Stuttgart, Munich, Zurich, Genoa, Paris and London, Greek committees were formed, funds collected, loans raised and volunteers dispatched, so that the rebellion, ill-co-ordinated and ineffective as it generally proved, was sustained, and Ottoman attempts at its suppression were frustrated.”\(^6\) This enthusiasm for the Greek nation was a novelty of the era, and had been prepared in the previous century by a renaissance of Hellenic culture which, after the downfall of Byzantium, had largely faded from popular consciousness. Modern philhellenism received its first sustained impulse from the *History of Ancient Art* (1764) by Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768). It was not only a seminal study of the cultural artefacts of classical antiquity. Moreover, Winckelmann through his work all but ‘reinvented’ the Greek nation in the European context by calling to mind her rich cultural and intellectual heritage.\(^7\) A further milestone in this development was the publication of *The Travels of Anacharsis the Younger*,\(^8\) which – with its approximately 20,000 citations – became the authoritative “encyclopedia [...] of Greek culture.”\(^9\) In Germany, this development reached a first climax in the classical works of Goethe and Schiller. The latter, in his poem *The Gods of Greece* (1788), famously celebrated the Hellenistic period as an era of a higher consciousness. When the Greek uprising commenced in the 1820s, this cultural philhellenism was then transfigured into political partisanship. An extreme case in point is a treatise entitled *The Germans, and the Greeks. One Language, One People, One Resurrected History*, which was published a year after the uprising broke out on the Peloponnese. The author Johann Wilhelm Kuithan (1760-1831) therein not only argues “that every German word can be found in the Greek language and vice versa.”\(^10\) What is more, he asserts that this is not “because Thracian or Hellenic or even Asian tribes had

\(^6\) Macfie, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923*, 16.


\(^8\) See above, p. 59.


\(^10\) Johann W. Kuithan, *Die Germanen und Griechen: Eine Sprache, ein Volk, eine auferweckte Geschichte* (Hamm: Schulz, 1822), iii.
migrated to us, but because we and the Hellenes are One People.” 11 To be sure, this bold claim did not have majority appeal. Nevertheless, Kuithan’s theses are indicative of a great readiness to identify with the insurgents on the Peloponnese. German liberals in particular strongly sympathized with the cause of the Greeks, who, in their eyes, were braving a similar struggle for national self-determination. “In Germany, the philhellenic movement thus became the rallying point of the liberal and democratic opposition to the politics of restoration – an opposition that had barely been able to express itself on the political stage since the Carlsbad Decrees.” 12 Ironically, these opposition groups, the members of which most vehemently rejected the conservative policies of the courts in Berlin, Vienna, and Petersburg, ultimately hoped that the Holy Alliance and, above all, the Russian Empire would intervene on behalf of the insurgents.

Russia was in a favourable position for a military intervention. In the course of the Napoleonic era, it had further advanced towards the Balkans, wresting from the Ottomans in 1812 key territories in today’s Moldova. Now, ten years later, the uprising of the Greeks could serve as pretence to further curtail Turkish influence in the region, particularly with regard to the stipulations of the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), which had instated Russia as protector of the religious rights of Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule. France and Britain, but Austria in particular feared this scenario, for “if the Russians were successful, they were certain to take the war south of the Danube and perhaps move against Constantinople.” 13 This would have fundamentally upset the order of Europe, and then “the issue would have to be settled by force of arms.” 14 As it stood, the continent’s great powers hoped that Greeks and Turks would soon settle the affair in a manner that didn’t affect the political status quo.

In contrast, the European public, and Germans in particular, had already before the outbreak of the Greek insurrection hoped for a Russian intervention on the Balkans, which would end Muslim rule over European Christians. Ludwig Samuel Kühne (1786-1864), a

11 Ibid.
12 Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, 1: 76.
14 Ibid.
Prussian government official, already in 1818 published a treatise on *The Interest and Power of Russia in Regard to Turkey*, in which he most vividly portrayed the unbearable ‘Ottoman yoke’ under which fellow Christians were suffering:

> In times of peace, they [the Turks] prepare for war, and in their addiction to destruction they resemble barbarians. Cruel and cold-hearted, they destroy all that is living, and hate and despise *Christians* or those of a different faith to the point of fanaticism. They destroy the lives of men with such indifference as if they were cutting the head off a thistle. Without scruples they demolish the most magnificent monuments which have resisted millennia. In war, they are brave in one moment, and cowardly in the next, and they consider any war against *Christians* a war of faith. They are animated only by the thought that an infidel, as they call all Christians, deserves to die or live as their slave.¹⁵

A continuing presence of such a barbaric people on the European continent was untenable, Kühne argued. He therefore urged the Greeks to support the tsar in ousting the Ottomans from the Balkans. “Should the Russians be able to count on the support of this people,” the author asserted, “it would not only accelerate the subjugation of the capital, but of the whole of European Turkey.”¹⁶ In the German lands, such assertions had immediate mass appeal. Accordingly, German enthusiasm for the preliminary mobilization of Russian forces in 1821 was not all spontaneous. Rather, the publicist Friedrich Gleich (1762-1842) remarks, “everything seemed to point to a desired outbreak of hostilities between Russia and the Porte.”¹⁷ However, he disappointedly explains, while “people were being skewered, beheaded, hanged and agonized at the command of the lord of the Seraglio, the best friends of the Turks, the British, sought to mediate in the matter.”¹⁸ And indeed, London repeatedly forestalled a Russian intervention for fear that Greece would ultimately become a protectorate of the Russian Empire.¹⁹ In the same vein, the Abbé de Pradt (1759-1837) warned his French fellow citizens that a military altercation on the Balkans would precipitate Russia’s rise to hegemony. Therefore, he recommended that the French

---

¹⁶ Ibid., 120.  
¹⁸ Ibid., 255.  
government support Britain in the effort to avert this outcome by precluding the outbreak of hostilities between Russia and the Turks. However, the pressure of European public opinion for a military intervention prevailed, and rather than idly watching as the tsar expanded his dominions on the Bosporus, France and Britain chose to align with Russia.

In the Treaty of London (1827), the three powers called the belligerent parties to an immediate ceasefire and agreed on dispatching an allied fleet to cut off Turkish supply routes. On 20 October 1827, an inadvertent confrontation led to the sinking of virtually the entire Ottoman fleet in the Bay of Navarino. This incident provided the tsar with the eagerly anticipated pretext to officially declare war on the Turks in early 1828. After initial setbacks, Russian forces continuously drove back the armies of the Sultan, and by the end of August stood before Constantinople. However, in a remarkable reversal of policy, the tsar renounced the ‘Greek Project’ of Catherine II, settled for a moderate peace, and restored the majority of his conquests to the Ottomans. In the end, the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) expounded Russia’s new conviction that there “was more to gain from the preservation of the Ottoman Empire than from its destruction.” This outcome disappointed many German onlookers, as did the general denouement of the Greek War of Independence. To be sure, Greek sovereignty was ratified by the London Protocol in 1830. However, the appointment of the Bavarian Prince Otto as first King of Greece (r. 1832-1862) stood at odds with dreams of a revival of ancient Greek democracy. In a manner reminiscent of the traditions of old order Europe, the throne was awarded to the ruling house which posed the least threat to the balance of power. Ultimately, dynastic calculations had trumped the principle of national self-determination.

This was a heavy setback for those who had hoped that the idea of the nation state would prevail: “The great expectations with which liberals had looked towards the Russo-Turkish War,” Karl von Rotteck explained, “had been thwarted by Holy Alliance’s

22 Macfie, The Eastern Question, 1774-1923, 18.
23 See above, p. 108.
pusillanimous love of peace.”\textsuperscript{24} In fact, the author contended that Russia had conceded a generous peace only to strike a blow to the liberal movement, and that the tsar had made concessions to the Sultan first and foremost to disappoint hopes for a national awakening in Europe. “The Russian ministry,” Rotteck claims, “was led to negotiate an armistice simply by following the maxim of doing the opposite of what a detested and dreaded enemy seems to wish. Naturally,” he therefore concludes, “the interests of civilization and humanity could not prevail against the triumph over the desires of the arch-enemy.”\textsuperscript{25} Thus, from the point of view of liberal groups, Russia had deliberately let expire the Greek nationalist movement to further push its conservative agenda. Of course, this was the perception of an – albeit vocal – minority. The majority of Germans was content with the efforts of the Holy Alliance to curtail Ottoman influence in Europe. Accordingly, Samuel Kühne explained that “the war of the Russians against the Turks had been a just effort to coerce the latter into recognizing the rights of nations.”\textsuperscript{26} Generally, he argued, “as Mohammedans, the Turks need be forced to observe all treaties with Christians.”\textsuperscript{27} As long as Russian aggression was directed against barbarian Muslims, her image as enlightened autocracy remained largely unblemished in conservative circles. However, when little later the Russian Empire used military force against fellow Christians in Poland, public opinion immediately was far more polarized.

**THE NOVEMBER UPRISING IN POLAND**

In 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, the Kingdom of Poland had been resurrected by the Quadruple Alliance as a Russian protectorate.\textsuperscript{28} In a noteworthy juxtaposition, Alexander I “thus combined the offices of autocratic Russian Emperor [...] and constitutional Polish king.”\textsuperscript{29} Then, in 1818, the tsar granted the Poles a remarkably liberal constitution, and for


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26} Kühne, *Das Interesse und die Macht Rußlands in Beziehung auf die Türkei betrachtet*, 202–3.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 202.

\textsuperscript{28} See above, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{29} Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 314.
this received much praise from German contemporaries. Even Fanny Tarnow\textsuperscript{30} applauded “the magnanimity of Alexander’s soul,” and assured that “the powerful impression of such an example cannot fail to have an impact.”\textsuperscript{31} In particular, she suggested that the example of Poland would “console and cheer up the heart, unlike the dark and gloomy experiences that often stifle our hope for a greater future for our German fatherland.”\textsuperscript{32} Thus, like Greece, Poland became a surrogate for German hopes for reform. Notably, Tsar Alexander himself shared this view: In his address to the diet in Warsaw in 1818 he asked the Poles to demonstrate to the world that liberalization was the path to prosperity and not, as many conservatives feared, a one-way road to revolutionary chaos.

Show your contemporaries that the liberal institutions – which some seek to lump together with the revolutionary principles that in the past threatened the social order with a terrible catastrophe – are not a dangerous illusion. Show them that when sincerely implemented and genuinely directed at maintaining the welfare of humanity, these institutions become part of the order, and that they create the true well-being of the nation.\textsuperscript{33}

Until the death of Alexander and beyond, his treatment of the Poles came to exemplify for Germans the enlightened principles of his rule. His successor Nicholas I (r. 1825-1855) evoked similar enthusiasm – “who would not rejoice to see such a monarch successfully continue on such a glorious path,” one contemporary wrote\textsuperscript{34} – and some even foresaw a new golden age for Poland: “Presently, she will rise to that level of education \textit{[Bildung]} at which a people is capable of the true legitimate freedom.”\textsuperscript{35} And indeed, under Russian rule Poland flourished as it hadn’t for decades.

The noble elites of Poland, however, increasingly resented Russian suzerainty – a circumstance which Germans of all political colors criticized. Karl Heinrich Hermes (1800-1856), a liberal journalist and former \textit{Burschenschaftler}, urged the Poles to accept the historical truth of the matter: Even if Russia had in fact imposed on them the most severe

\textsuperscript{30} See above, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{31} Tarnow, \textit{Briefe auf einer Reise nach Petersburg}, 234–35.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} E. Pabel [pseud.], \textit{Rußland in der neuesten Zeit} (Dresden: Arnoldische Buchhandlung, 1830), 54–56.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 162–63.
despotism, “it would be more than fair to admit that a series of appropriate measures had continually healed the wounds left by the war, and that they had in particular been conducive to the industry.”36 Similarly, the Prussian officer and writer Leopold von Zedlitz (1792-1864) contended that “the Poles were never as fortunate as they have been since the time of Alexander.”37 While Napoleon had used the country but as a “military storage facility,” Zedlitz wrote in 1831, the tsar had brought “an abundance of good that remains in effect until today.”38 Those who denied these improvements the liberal publicist Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) strictly censured, asserting that “in Poland the call for liberty camouflages the nobility’s efforts to reassert their privileges.”39 Ultimately, Heine considered the ‘Polish reform movement’ nothing more than the attempt of Poland’s elites to enrich themselves. And indeed, even though Nicholas I “observed the Polish constitution much better than Alexander I had,”40 the Polish nobility aggressively confronted the ruler on the occasion of his coronation in 1830. Thus, Polish-Russian relations were already volatile as a new wave of revolution swept the European continent.

The movement began in July 1830 on the streets of Paris and subsequently spread to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, leading to the secession and formation of the constitutional Kingdom of Belgium. This development deeply troubled the Russian Emperor, and Nicholas I sought to move the Holy Alliance to a military intervention. His outspoken intention to include Polish regiments into the expeditionary force then sparked the November Uprising in Poland. It began on 29 November as a local insurrection in Warsaw, and, as a matter of fact, never became a truly popular movement. Rather, “the initiators were young officers and cadets of the army who wanted to anticipate the disclosure of their conspiratorial activities.”41 Nevertheless, two months later the insurrectionists renounced Russian suzerainty and thus prompted a war that would last until

38 Ibid., 12–14.
40 Riasanovsky, A History of Russia, 331–32.
October 1831. The paramount hope of the Poles, that other European governments would intervene on their behalf, however, proved to be in vain: France feared the disruption of the Balance of power, and Britain did not care to jeopardize its favourable trade relations with the Russians. Prussia and Austria even supported the Russian crackdown by closing their borders to Polish refugees. At the same time, the insurgents failed to mobilize the provinces, and soon alienated the peasant population by constantly deferring the promised reform of serfdom. Consequently, after ten months of fighting, the November Uprising had failed and instead brought about increased efforts aimed at the russification of the kingdom.

Germans, unlike their governments, had warmly received the news of the uprising in Poland. While hitherto the Poles had attracted but little attention, now literature on Poland’s culture and history, and in particularly on her historical struggle with Russia, abounded in Germany. As before in the case of the Greeks insurgents, a key reason for the “enthusiasm for the Polish cause was a sense that Germany’s own progress towards a liberal form of government and national unification paralleled the strivings of the unlucky Poles.” As one contemporary journalist put it, “the struggle for Poland is also a struggle for Germany.” In liberal circles, the altercation between Poles and Russians was considered a decisive “war of political religions.” In fact, liberals in Germany regarded Poland “as the battlefield upon which the near future of Europe would be decided. They were convinced that the Polish Uprising could completely unhinge or at least substantially weaken the restoration system in Europe and thus indirectly promote or consolidate the

---

44 Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühliberalen,” 113.
46 Liulevicius, The German Myth of the East, 73.
47 Deutsche Tribüne: Zur Wiedergeburt des Vaterlandes, September 20, 1831, 80.
48 W. Schulz, “Das eine, was Deutschland nottut,” Allgemeine Politische Annalen, 1831, 11.
VI. The Early Nineteenth Century: Central, Eastern, or Western Europe?

constitutional developments in Western and Central Europe.”⁴⁹ The ultimate defeat of the Poles, in contrast, suggested the complete downfall of the liberal cause: “As long as Poland lies under the Russian sceptre,” another journalist wrote at the time, “and as long as the constitutional spirit in Germany is suppressed by Russian influence, a permanent pacification of Europe is out of the question.”⁵⁰ These notions maintained their influence long after the abatement of the November Uprising, and even sparked a new literary genre – the so-called *Polenlieder* – as a plethora of poets celebrated the Polish cause “to inflame German political aspirations.”⁵¹ In a poem by August Graf von Platen (1796-1835), for example, a despairing Pole addresses

The German People that is impassively and idly  
Watching our downfall.  
Let flow your soul  
The ice of which has not yet thawed!  
The ruins of your empire  
Shall soon crumble just like ours.  
A future Catherine  
Shall make your disgrace complete!⁵²

Other alarmists similarly warned of a further advancement of the Russian Empire. “May it be a legend,” one voice argued, “that Nicolas I said: ‘Je roulerai la Pologne et alors –.’ In the end, his will to cast judgement over everything that has happened in Germany, Belgium and France is unmistakable.”⁵³ Thus, the German liberal movement presented its fellow citizens with the most extreme interpretation of Russia’s conduct in the Polish affair: The future would bring either liberty or Russian hegemony on the European continent.

To be sure, such fears were completely unfounded. Even though the Polish insurgents had mustered only 60,000 fighting men for their cause – most of them new

⁴⁹ Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühlängern,” 113.  
⁵⁰ Deutsche Tribüne: Zur Wiedergeburt des Vaterlandes, October 3, 1831, 93.  
recruits with no combat experience – this makeshift army struck several severe blows to the Russian forces, which were twice in size and largely comprised of veterans from the Balkans and the Caucasus. If anything, “the Russian military effort needed to crush the Polish uprising actually should have demonstrated the basic weakness of the empire of Nicholas I. Only after months had the Russians been able to assemble an army slightly superior to that commanded by the Poles.”  

Similarly, notions of a national uprising in Poland were simply incorrect. “The large majority of the peasant population barely took interest in the undertakings, and the aim of the insurrection was foremost the re-establishment of the old Polish republic of nobles, rather than the implementation of egalitarian freedom.” At the time, this was, for example, already pointed out by the Prussian writer Wilhelm Wackernagel (1806-1869), who heavily criticized the Polish nobility for disregarding the interests of the population at large.  

For what did the Poles lack?  
They had everything they needed.  
Now the entire people suffers,  
Because twenty heads steamed. [...]  
Now the entire population is being punished  
For the insolent desires of a single estate.  

However, such considerations were of little interest to the German liberal movement. The historical facts were superseded by “the function of the uprising in the struggle between progressive and restorative forces, in the battle between ‘absolutism’ and ‘constitutional liberty,’ to use the language of the era.” Thus, the fate of Poland became an operative metaphor for the national and liberal struggle against reactionary ‘despotism.’ This ‘Polish Messianism’ was most effectively preached by the Polish émigré Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), who suggested that his nation had been crucified as a surrogate for Europe’s

55 Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühliberalen,” 117.  
57 Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühliberalen,” 118.
oppressed peoples. Inversely, he argued, the resurrection of Poland would mark the beginning of the golden age of national self-determination.\textsuperscript{58} German liberals were very receptive to this message, and in a poem entitled Mickiewicz (1833), Ludwig Uhland declares that “the song of the master makes me certain / that Poland is not yet lost!”\textsuperscript{59} Similarly, the Leipzig writer Gottfried Wilhelm Becker (1778-1854) was convinced that “Poland is on a mission from God and the peoples to curb the [Russian] flooding of the European continent.”\textsuperscript{60} And Ludwig Börne (1768-1837) after receiving the news of Poland’s defeat remarked that “it is painful that Poland had to plant itself as a seed in the ground; but the seed will bloom beautifully. The blood that has been shed cries out so loud, that even the heavens will hear and send God, if too late for help, than surely not too late for vengeance.”\textsuperscript{61} Thus, the liberal movement in Germany called for action against the Russian Empire and, by extension, the Russian-led Holy Alliance, hoping that the resurrection of the Polish nation state would strike a severe blow to the conservative Restoration.

**THE HAMBACH FESTIVAL**

This program – celebration of the Poles, rejection of Russia and the Holy Alliance – subsequently informed the hitherto largest public demonstration of the liberal movement in Germany. In early 1832, the ‘German Press and Fatherland Association’ invited Germans of all estates to a ‘people’s fair’ – political assemblies were still banned – at the Hambach Castle in present-day Rhineland Palatinate, to take place from 27-30 May. To a certain degree, the gathering was reminiscent of the Wartburg Festival, and indeed many veteran Burschen and Turner attended. At the same time, the Hambach Festival indicated that political activity was no longer a monopoly of the educated elites: 25,000 delegates representing all parts of German society took part in the event, including women who had

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} Andrzej Walicki, *Philosophy and Romantic Nationalism: The Case of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).
\item \textsuperscript{60} Becker, *Der Freiheitskampf der Polen gegen die Russen*, vi.
\end{itemize}
been particularly welcomed by the organizing committee.\textsuperscript{62} The growing appeal of the liberal movement was foremost due to a deepening social crisis in the German lands. The destitute situation of many farmers was constantly exacerbated by rising grain prices and repeated crop failures. Those who had enlisted with the Coalition forces to escape poverty had returned to their homes unemployed. Moreover, the elimination of the patriarchal system had left a plethora of petty farmers with insufficient means to support their household. At the same time, the gradual abolition of guilds exposed artisans to the unyielding forces of a free market.\textsuperscript{63} Austria in particular witnessed poverty and misery of hitherto unknown dimensions.\textsuperscript{64} A contemporary eye-witness, the social revolutionary Ernst Violand (1818-1875), describes prostitutes and pimps roaming the streets of Vienna, carrying with them benches and pillows to more swiftly execute their business. The Austrian government at times saw no other remedy than to draft these outcasts as colonists for the New World, on occasion three hundred of them at once.\textsuperscript{65} Consequently, when in 1830 several German cities also experienced popular uprisings, protesters from the lower classes for the first time outnumbered intellectual reformers. The former, however, did not call for liberalization or national unification, but revolted first and foremost against “price-rises and unemployment.”\textsuperscript{66} The experience of crisis thus precipitated increasing political awareness throughout the German lands, and “the political shocks of the 1830s dispelled the mood of resignation which had characterised political life in Germany during the previous ten years.”\textsuperscript{67} The organizing committee of the Hambach Festival successfully catered to the different estates that were experiencing hardship in distinct ways, but who were united in their disapproval of their conservative governments. The festival thus became “the ‘first popular political assembly in the history of modern Germany’ [...] at which not only dissatisfied burghers, artisans and students came together, but also thousands of protesting peasants of the Palatinate who demonstrated beneath a black
banner.” For the first time, German liberalism had assumed the appearance of a truly popular movement.

The delegates to Hambach were also united in their shared sympathy for the Poles, and, as a matter of fact, several hundred Polish émigrés attended the festival, too. The centrality of the Polish cause for the event was reflected in the arrangement of the opening procession to the Hambach Castle. It was led by “a division of the civil guard with music” which was immediately followed by “women and maidens with the Polish flag. The latter carried by an ensign, draped with a red-white sash.” Next in line was a second division of the civil guard, and only then came the “division of speakers,” each outfitted “with a black, red, and gold sash, in the middle the German flag with the inscription Germany’s Rebirth.” The Hambach festival was, without a doubt, “the apex of the German enthusiasm for the Poles in 1831/1832.” And once more, celebrating the Poles was inextricably linked to calls for a German nation state and the rejection of Russian influence. Johann Wirth (1798-1848), member of the organizing committee, explicates this in the introduction to the proceedings of the festival. Therein, he recalls the heroism of the Polish insurgents and their tragic fate, censures “the Russian despot and his German underlings” for their crimes against this noble people, and reiterates the rallying cry of the liberal movement: “That Poland must be restored by Germany, that this must be accomplished by the liberation and re-unification of Germany, and that the Polish and the German cause are henceforth inseparable.” In the end, the Polish cause became so closely associated with German liberalism that the Polish societies, which had been founded after the downfall of the November Uprising, were soon shut down by the authorities in an effort to more strictly implement the Carlsbad Decrees.

Tellingly, Wirth in his speech at the Hambach Festival attacked the German rulers and challenged the hopes of conservatives that these ‘enlightened autocrats’ would

---

68 Ibid., 62.
70 Ibid.
71 Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühlabilen,” 123.
72 Wirth, Das Nationalfest der Deutschen zu Hambach, 3–4.
eventually implement reform ‘from above.’ In fact, Wirth asserted, the German governments had “emptied the state administration of reason.”

In the same vein, Philipp Jakob Siebenpfeiffer (1789-1845) in the inaugural address of the festival warned that “should the princes not step down from their lofty thrones and themselves become burghers, the German people itself will in a moment of sublime exaltation complete the task.”

Another speaker urged to no longer wait for reform initiatives from “the banqueting representatives of princely nepotism,” but to initiate “legal reform, brought about by the public opinion of the people. Let there be an assembly not of princely menials, but of free men capable of representing a free people.” This rejection of enlightened absolutism was complemented by indictment of the Russian-led Holy Alliance. The organizers of the Hambach Festival read out to the congregation an anonymous letter, the author of which warned of Russia’s intention to suppress the German national awakening. Moreover, he predicts “the battle of Euro-Asian despotism against the rights of the people, and in particular against the freer west of Europe, viz. the southern German constitutional states and France – especially now that the Polish barrier has fallen.”

The letter concludes with a drastic image: “Should the peoples of Germany and France, and of all the other states that demand the liberation of the peoples from contemptible tyranny not close ranks […], then Europe will forever be thrown into the dark night of slavery.” Such a scenario further buttressed the call for united action against the ‘Euro-Asian despotism’ of the Holy Alliance.

In this context, the positive references to France are highly significant, as they bear witness to a larger intellectual shift. Although German-French relationships were still strained by political and, in particular, territorial disputes, liberal thinkers had initiated an intellectual rapprochement between the two nations. “Why have Germans strengthened their borders against France, but not against Russia?” asked Hartwig von Hundt-

---

73 Ibid., 1.
76 Wirth, Das Nationalfest der Deutschen zu Hambach, 20–21.
77 Ibid.
Radowsky in 1831. "We have much less to fear from a constitutional state," he argued, "than form a non-civilized, despotic state whose sovereign by necessity desires the dissolution of all liberal constitutions because they appear to endanger absolute despotism." Similarly, the anonymous letter read out at the Hambach Festival denounces all hatred of France as the "fabrication of aristocrats, intended to deceive the German people." If we want enduring freedom," the author contends, "if we want an enduring and united Germany, it will require that we and the French people join arms and fight for the same cause." At Hambach, this new Franco-German affinity was displayed by the attendance of delegates form Strasbourg, Colmar, Paris, Metz, and other French cities. In fact, the third address of the opening day was given in French by the representative from Strasbourg, and he, too, called for an alliance between the two peoples: "France wishes the bond with Germany," he explained, "an open and honest bond that will ultimately destroy any barriers which the kings have planted between us – to our misfortune and yours. Without this union European liberty will be impossible." Thus, the Hambach Festival not only celebrated the Poles and called for an overthrow of the Holy Alliance. Moreover, the delegates introduced the vision of a free association of the liberally minded peoples of Europe. Accordingly, Philipp Jakob Siebenpfeiffer closed his inaugural address with this elated outburst:

Long live the free, the united Germany!
Long live the Poles, the ally of the Germans!
Long live the French, the brothers of the Germans who respect our nationality and independence!
Long live every people that breaks its chains and joins us in the league of freedom!
Fatherland! – Sovereignty of the People – League of Nations!

78 See above, p. 112.
80 Ibid.
81 Wirth, Das Nationalfest der Deutschen zu Hambach, 22.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 49–53.
In this battle cry Siebenpfeiffer had concisely summarized the program of the German liberal movement in 1832.

However, the opinions of the delegates at Hambach were not wholly unanimous. Most notably, Johann Wirth challenged the juxtaposition of Russian malice and French benevolence. Especially France, Wirth argued, would always be blinded by territorial ambitions. “Even if the French government could be swayed to support the [liberal] movement in Germany,” he contends, “it would still demand the left bank of the Rhine as remuneration for her assistance.”

Yet not only the French government, even the people could not be accounted for: “The lust for the left bank of the Rhine,” Wirth explains, “has become a part of the nature of the majority of the French people, so that even a small group of visionary cosmopolitans cannot resist it. […] Therefore, in the struggle for our fatherland we have little or no help to expect from France.” The Russian menace, on the other hand, Wirth considers a spectre conjured by the imagination of his fellow countrymen. Not the Russian tsar, he asserts, but the rulers of Prussia and Austria inhibited liberalization and national unification of Germany.

The cause for the nameless sufferings of the European peoples lies alone and without exception in that the Dukes of Austria and the Electors of Brandenburg have usurped the majority of Germany and that under the titles Emperor of Austria and King of Prussia they have established an oriental rule not only over their own territories which have been united as the victims of plunder, but also the smaller states of Germany that are made subject to princely autocracy and despotic violence.

Wirth refused to consider the Holy Alliance an instrument of Russian imperialism. Rather, he argued, “the main force of this sable coalition has always rested in the German powers, for without the alliance with Prussia and Austria, Russia would be helpless and sure to fall victim of interior storms and disruption.” Thus, Wirth had fundamentally challenged the geopolitical outlook of the Hambach Festival. His analysis, however, had little appeal for most delegates. In fact, the editors of the proceedings emphasize that Wirth’s remarks

86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 41–42.
88 Ibid.
concerning France were the opinion of an individual, and reflected neither the attitude of the organizers, nor the attendees of the festival. Ultimately, Wirth failed to effectively challenge the popular image of the Russian menace.

To be sure, in hindsight Wirth’s assessments seem far more sober and politically viable than those of his fellow speakers. In particular his interpretation of the relationship between France and Germany appears far more realistic. As long as the question of the Rhine border remained unsettled, the rapport indeed remained volatile. A disinterested French intervention on behalf of German liberalism was a daydream, and it is telling that it was a war against France that ultimately led to unification in 1871. Nevertheless, in the early 1830s the dichotomy of Russian malice and French benevolence proved far more attractive in liberal circles. In particular, it complemented the notion that reform in Germany, just as the Greek and Polish national movements, had been curtailed by a malevolent outside force. As of yet, however, these ideas were not apt to incite political action. In fact, the German governments met with no remarkable resistance as they once more intensified scrutiny of public discourse in the aftermath of the Hambach Festival. “It was evident from the facility with which the rulers of Germany managed to once more tighten the reins that the solidarity of European liberals – as much as it fascinated as an idea – ultimately amounted to no real power that could actively influence European politics.”

Thus, not only German conservatives, but also “moderate liberals [...] continued to hope for reforms within the existing states.” After the wave of revolutions had passed, the members of the Holy Alliance convened to assess the damage and to ensure that the events would not repeat themselves. In the Treaty of Münchengrätz (1833), the three powers renewed the alliance, resolved a stricter enforcement of the Carlsbad Decrees, and sought to make sure that Poland would never again be destabilized by rebellion. The treaty was meant to protect “not only the immediate interests of the signatory powers, but also the

---

89 See ibid., 48–9. Notably, no other contribution is preceded by such a proviso.
91 Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühliberalen,” 124.
entire conservative order in Europe."\textsuperscript{94} As such, it further agitated those who thought that reform need be implemented against the resistance of the three reactionary eastern courts.

\textsuperscript{94} Riasanovsky, \textit{A History of Russia}, 334.
VII.
1830-1848:
A War of Words

Following the crackdown on the November Uprising in 1831, anti-Russian sentiment steadily gained currency in the German lands. This development prompted a noteworthy countermovement. A small but influential group of intellectuals discovered in the Russian people qualities which were also central for the German self-understanding. Moreover they were convinced that, much in the way that German liberals did not feel represented by their governments, official Russian policy reflected neither the nation’s traditions nor the attitudes of the population at large. Therefore, they argued for a rapprochement between Germans and Russians to supersede old order geopolitics. Contemporary German travellers to Europe’s eastern borderlands, at the same time, altogether qualified alarmist perceptions of the Russian Empire. Indeed, “going through the records of the period” one is struck by “the contrast existing between the popular fears and exaggerated concepts of Russia and the more restrained observations of most individuals who directly examined the Tsarist Empire.”¹ In fact, many of the visitors to Moscow and Petersburg “came back with a more flattering, or less terrifying, picture than was current in liberal and democratic circles.”² However, such attempts to de-escalate the political conflict and to mediate between the two cultures were challenged by rising Russophobia. Across Europe, alarmists were warning of Russia’s ambition to destabilize the continent in order to attain cultural and political

² Ibid.
hegemony. In the German lands, these notions became particularly popular in the course of the Revolutions of 1848/49, as they allowed for the failure of the movement to be attributed to a malicious outside force. As a result, German Russophobia developed mass appeal and led to popular rejection of the Holy Alliance.

**IMAGINING ANOTHER RUSSIA**

The early nineteenth century presented Germans with unprecedented opportunity to acquire a more thorough and nuanced knowledge of all things Russian. The War of the Sixth Coalition (1812-1814) was a watershed moment, as legions of imperial soldiers advanced through Germany to besiege the French capital and fought side by side with German troops at the Nations Battle at Leipzig (1813). Yet already at the turn of the century, more information about the Russian Empire had become readily accessible. Since the time of Peter the Great, German knowledge about Russian culture and the Russian people had been mediated foremost by privileged elites who possessed the resources necessary to travel to and write about the distant eastern realms of Europe. Cases in point are the travelogues of the Count de Ségur, Sir John Sinclair, and Giacomo Casanova. This changed during the late reign of Empress Catherine. Significant improvements in the infrastructure connecting Russia to the rest of Europe incited an increasingly affluent Russian upper class to explore the western parts of the continent. Indeed, Russians themselves were now setting out on a ‘Grand Tour’ and as tourists introduced their culture to their German hosts. The latter, at the same time, could now discover authentic Russian cultural artefacts at their local book dealer. In the early 1800s, the German book market was thriving like never before, and to meet the constantly growing demand for ‘new’ works, publishers increasingly turned to printing works in translation. Thus Germans received the opportunity to more immediately encounter Russian culture, through interaction with guests from abroad, as well as by reading early translations of Russian literature.

---

3 See above, p. 52.
4 See above, p. 56.
5 See above, p. 55.
These two developments, the influx of Russian visitors to Germany and the literary encounter with the other, are tellingly exemplified in the life and works of the Russian publicist Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826). In 1789/90, Karamzin travelled across Europe, visiting Germany, Switzerland, France and Britain, thereby encountering leading intellectuals of the era. Among the famous German contemporaries he visited were Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801), and Christoph Martin Wieland (1733-1813). Upon his return to St Petersburg, Karamzin published his impressions and observations from the trip in a series of letters, which were later combined into the *Letters of a Russian Traveller* (6 vols., 1798-1801). Notably, even before the full set had appeared, a German residing in Petersburg had begun to translate the work for audiences in Germany. Thus, but a year after the first volume of Karamzin’s travelogue became available to Russian readers, a Leipzig bookseller was already distributing the *Briefe eines reisenden Russen* (1799-1802). The book had a strong and lasting impact, and firmly established Karamzin as the paramount Russian author in the mind of Germans. In fact, “when considering the knowledge of Russian literature in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Karamzin emerges as the single authoritative voice.” Accordingly, an early survey of Russian literature dedicates half its text to the author of the *Letters of a Russian Traveller*.  

The work itself was warmly received by German audiences, and already in 1799 Christoph Martin Wieland’s *Neuer Teutscher Merkur* likened Karamzin to the popular author of sentimental novels, August Lafontaine (1758-1831). Moreover, the review esteems Karamzin an important agent between cultures – note the metaphor –, “a new Anacharsis who left his home country in order to learn from other enlightened peoples and to then employ the knowledge he acquired abroad for the refinement and education of his

---

6 Much to Karamzin’s dismay, Johann Wolfgang Goethe had vacated Weimar for the time of his visit.
10 “Briefe eines reisenden Russen,” *Neuer Teutscher Merkur*, no. 9 (1799).
nation.” To be sure, this was a double-edged praise, and the author makes no effort to conceal his patronizing attitude. The Anacharsis-motif here takes on its traditional form, and therefore implies that the cultural transfer between Russia and Germany remains unidirectional. Once more, Russians appeared not contributors to, but merely benefactors of European culture. The erudite Karamzin most critics therefore considered but an anomaly, an exceptional Russian who in fact “surprised his hosts with a strong command of our language,” and who distinguished himself through a remarkably “correct perception, completed by a well-rounded education.” The *Neue Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* even considered it “most curious to encounter such an educated Russian,” and with similar ambiguity praised the *Letters of a Russian Traveller*: “Everywhere we find the enlightened, sentimental, and educated Russian.” Notably, these epithets recalled the great intellectual achievements of the past century, the enlightenment of Burke and Kant, the sentimentalism of Sterne and Gellert, and the education of Herder and Voltaire. Yet these were no longer current trends. In the same key, the *Neue Teutsche Merkur* commends the “delicate sentimentality and naiveté of the account,” which would certainly appeal to readers who have “retained an appreciation for unvarnished simplicity.” And the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, too, singles out Karamzin’s descriptions of “personal sentiments. [...] These, we thoroughly enjoyed reading, even when they made us smirk, as they reveal to us the youth of the author.” However, the author continues, “this is a youth that holds some promise, a youth which the man may grow fond of.” This juxtaposition of Russian ‘youth’ and German ‘manhood’ is telling of the reviewer’s attitude towards his subject. Moreover, it illustrates that the positive reception of Karamzin’s works did not challenge German

---

11 Ibid. This sentiment was echoed in a later review in the *Neue Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*: “Briefe eines reisenden Russen von Karamsin,” *Neue allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* 57, no. 1 (1801): 212.
12 See above, p. 59.
13 “Briefe eines reisenden Russen,” *Neuer Teutscher Merkur*, no. 9 (1799): 278.
18 “Briefe eines reisenden Russen,” *Neuer Teutscher Merkur*, no. 9 (1799): 278.
20 Ibid.
notions of cultural and intellectual superiority. The reception process is nevertheless highly remarkable. For once, the belief in Russia’s inherent potential was not derived from philosophical or world historical speculations, as in the case of Leibniz, Herder, or Baader. Rather, a first first-hand encounter with Russian culture precipitated hopes for the future of the ‘youth’ of Europe’s eastern borderlands.

German interest in Russian culture and history was further kindled by the wave of romantic nationalism sweeping Europe in the first decades of the nineteenth century. As Britons, Frenchmen, Germans, etc. began to think of themselves as ‘nations’ distinguished by shared history and cultural heritage, research into the historical origins of these distinctions thrived. Thereby, the intention was as much to excavate significant artefacts of one’s own past, as to demonstrate the time-honoured venerability of the national idea. Literature from the high medieval period in particular captured the imagination of theorists of nationalism, who considered it to be the most pure expression of an early national consciousness. In this context, the rediscovery and subsequent publication of the *Song of Igor’s Campaign* in 1800 highly excited German intellectual circles. The poem, an epic tale of warfare between the Kievan’ Rus and a neighbouring tribe, attested to the existence of a genuinely Slavic high culture as early as the twelfth century. Among others, the historian August Ludwig Schlözer (1735-1809) commended the discovery of this “venerable Russian antiquity,” and already by 1811 a first German edition introduced German readers to this testament of a “peculiar and genuine culture from the virile north.” A review in Cotta’s *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, too, highly praised the excavation of this cultural artefact: “The admirer of old poetry,” the author explains, “is drawn in by the distinctiveness of the poem, for it fully bears the mark of nationality and antiquity.” These qualities it shared with such texts as the *Nibelungenlied* (ca. 1200) and the *Chanson de

---


Roland (ca. 1100), thus substantiating the idea of a world inherently divided into distinct nations. This precipitated sustained interest in the text, and before the middle of the century, nine further translations appeared on the German book market.\textsuperscript{24}

The reception of the Song of Igor’s Campaign was also eloquent of a rising genuine interest in Russian history. For this reason, in the 1820s and 1830s the late work of Nikolay Karamzин once more attracted the attention of the German reading public. In 1803, the tsar had appointed the poet to the post of official historian of the Russian Empire. Nearly two decades later, Karamzín presented the Emperor with his \textit{summus opus}, the History of the Russian State in twelve volumes (1818-1821). Remarkably, once again a German translation began to appear even before the Russian original was completed.\textsuperscript{25} Karamzín’s \textit{History} met with great interest and was well received by German audiences. One reviewer even claimed that it rivalled the works of Voltaire, Schiller, Hume, and even Gibbon’s \textit{History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire} (1776-1789).\textsuperscript{26} Most importantly, however, it was considered a “truly national work,”\textsuperscript{27} and thus a testimony to the maturity of the Russian nation. The literary critic Ludwig Börne (1786-1837), for one, considered it “an indicator of a people’s greatness when from its midst arises a great historian,”\textsuperscript{28} and in his eyes “Karamzín’s \textit{History of the Russian State} was a masterpiece worthy of its subject.”\textsuperscript{29} This panegyric to the Russian people stands at odds with Börne’s implicit criticism of the Russian government. Specifically, he expresses a “pleasant surprise at the openness with which Karamzín gave a warm and positive expression [...] to certain principles which, unfortunately, Russia is still very far from implementing.”\textsuperscript{30} Thus Börne, a proponent for liberal reform and democratization in the German lands, comes to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} “Etwas über Karamzin’s Geschichte des russischen Reichs,” \textit{Zeitung für die elegante Welt}, June 8, 1827, col. 874–875.
\item \textsuperscript{27} “Karamzin Geschichte des russischen Reichs,” \textit{Hesperus. Encyclopädische Zeitschrift für gebildete Leser}, July 30, 1823, 724.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ludwig Börne, “Karamzin’s Geschichte des Russischen Reichs,” \textit{Literarisches Wochenblatt}, April 1820, 213.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
differentiate between the ‘great’ people that had given birth to the historian Karamzin and its reactionary government.

Börne’s attitude reflected a trend in non-alarmist circles, which encouraged a more differentiated image of Russia that superseded the monolithic notion of a ‘Russian menace’ to Europe. A number of writers and publicists tended to this matter, and some even founded new journals which were dedicated exclusively to familiarizing German readers with Russian and Slavic high and quotidien culture. In fact, Russian culture had developed sufficient mass appeal to become a marketable product, and as the century advanced, it were no longer accounts of the 1812 campaign that dominated the literature on Russia, but intellectual inquiries such as Philipp Strahl’s (1781-1840) *Das gelehrte Russland* (1828). The latter was a remarkable survey of Russian cultural history from the arrival of the Orthodox missionaries Cyril and Methodius in the ninth century to the reign of Catherine the Great. In his concluding assessment of the reign of Tsar Alexander I, Strahl asserts that, in the arts and sciences, Russians had of late made such progress that they would “soon be able to compete with any of the other learned peoples.” In fact, he argued, Russian culture and in particular “Russian language and literature had drawn level with the other erudite languages of Europe.” And indeed, as Strahl was writing these lines, Russia was experiencing “a ‘vernacular revolution’ in the domain of high culture [as] the poetry of Aleksandr Pushkin and the prose of Nikolai Gogol attained a level of aesthetic refinement quite comparable to anything in the contemporary West.” To be sure, largely “this development went unnoticed by Europe during the reign of the frightful imperial gendarme,” Tsar Nicholas I. It wasn’t until the highly publicized death of Pushkin in a duel in early 1837 that readers in Germany were introduced to the works of Russia’s greatest poet in a further attempt to stimulate a cultural rapprochement between the two peoples.

---

33 Ibid.
34 Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, 140.
35 Ibid.
A leading figure in the introduction of the works of Pushkin and Russian literature in general to German audiences was the writer and diplomat Karl August Varnhagen von Ense (1785-1858). His enthusiasm for the intellectual achievements of the Russian Empire is remarkable as he considered himself a member “of the liberal, later even radical-democratic spectrum,” i.e. those groups that “most vehemently rejected Russian influence in continental politics.” Nevertheless, he refused to share “the wide-spread Russophobia of these circles. [...] Rather, he proved himself capable of a differentiated verdict on the various currents and forces.” Varnhagen was in his fifties when he began to study the Russian language in order to be able to read Russian literature. The works of Pushkin in particular attracted his attention, since hitherto the author had been scarcely translated into German. In the end, Varnhagen brimmed with enthusiasm for Russia’s national poet, and encouraged his German contemporaries to more closely follow the rapid development of the arts in Russia, “whose future grandeur even the most audacious prophet cannot foresee.” Moreover, Varnhagen detected in the writings of Russia’s poets tendencies which intimated a strong affinity between Russians and Germans. “Steering clear of the rigid pedantry of the English and the convulsive exuberance of the French,” he explains, “the Russian writers seek to follow a path closer to us Germans; a path that strives for the exceptional, indeed does not spurn the adventurous, but also calls for profound thought and the essence of true feeling.” Varnhagen thus urges his fellow Germans to more favourably consider the cultural developments in Russia, hoping that “a great deal of community and reciprocity between the two peoples is yet to come.” In the end, Varnhagen was convinced that cultural exchange would bridge the political gap between the two nations.

This message was reiterated by the Hessian intellectual Heinrich König (1790-1869) who, like Varnhagen, was closely affiliated with those radical liberal circles that typically

37 Ibid.
perpetuated the notion of the Russian menace. Nevertheless, König became one of the most outspoken proponents for a cultural rapprochement between Russians and Germans. Moreover, together with the Russian minor poet Nikolay Melgunov (1804-1867), König published the first comprehensive history of Russian literature to appear in the German language, the *Literarische Bilder aus Rußland* (1837). In his autobiography, König later elaborated on his motives for producing the volume: “I do not believe,” he explains, “that as good Germans we are required to hate Russian literature just because we hate Russian policy.”

Similarly, in the introduction the *Literarische Bilder* he expresses the hope that “the gloomy look we cast over our shoulder at Russian politics will clear up when we direct it at Russian literature.” As a case in point, he calls to mind the works of the late Pushkin, and contends that the same Russia, “which we like to take for half Asian and barbaric, in the midst of its cold climate has produced eminent poetic genius.” König’s criticism of German public discourse for perpetuating an undifferentiated image of the Russian Empire was subsequently taken up by notable critics, who reprimanded the Germans for “letting politics lead the way.” “What indeed,” asked the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, “do the eternal laws of truth and beauty have to do with the inconstant currents of political opinion, with the kaleidoscopic deceptions of party politics?” Nothing, agreed Karl Gutzkow (1811-1878) and Gustav Kühne (1806-1888). The latter, in his review of the *Literarische Bilder*, even censured German booksellers for not sooner introducing Germans to Russia’s rich culture. “Only now we are presented with an overview of the momentous and unstoppable intellectual bustle that has, since the time of Peter the Great, led to a genuinely popular Russian literature.” Thus, it seemed that the *Literarische Bilder* had indeed initiated a revaluation of German-Russian relations.

43 Ibid.
44 “Die russische Literatur und ihre gegenwärtigen Richtungen,” *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, May 1, 1840, 489.
45 Ibid.
In the end, however, this proved an illusion as the *Literarische Bilder aus Rußland* themselves became a political issue. And as a matter of fact, it was the authors König and Melgunov themselves who caused this denouement by not adhering to their own standards of objectivity and conflating literary criticism with party politics. This concerns above all their discussion of the works of Faddey Bulgarin (1789-1859), a Petersburg journalist with close personal and professional ties to Russia’s secret police. Not only do König and Melgunov fiercely attack the author of popular (and, arguably, second-rate\(^48\)) novels. Moreover, they unequivocally hint at Bulgarin’s employment with the Russian government. In his writings, they for example explain, “alone the manners of police servants and victimizers which, to be sure, he had ample opportunity to examine, and which he treats with particular devotion, seem truthfully and aptly rendered.”\(^49\) The authors had thus quite deliberately crossed the line separating literary criticism from political journalism, and a response was not long in coming. A public feud ensued which largely eclipsed the original intention of the *Literarische Bilder* as both parties attacked each other in a series of voluminous and often slanderous pamphlets.\(^50\) In this instance, the cultural rapprochement between Germans and Russians failed because König and Melgunov themselves proved incapable of detaching the cultural from the political discourse.

Indeed it seems that on objective appraisal of Russia was nearly impossible in the charged atmosphere of the 1830s and 1840s. Another case in point are August von Haxthausen’s (1792-1866) *Studies on the Domestic Constitution, Popular Life, and Pastoral Conditions of Russia* (1847-1852). The work is the result of Haxthausen’s 1843 study trip to the Russian Empire, and presents itself as an objective ethnographic study. Largely, the author exhibits “no interest in state and administration,” but considers foremost “the inhabitants of the forests and the steppes he encountered on his voyage.”\(^51\) He was

---

particularly fascinated by the obshchina, or mir, i.e. the rural peasant communities that equally distributed both the communal property and the tax burden among its members. However, it was in the discussion of these communities that Haxthausen’s ethnographic survey turned into a political polemic:

Since every Russian is a community member and as such entitled to a fair share of communal property, Russia has no born proletarians. In every other country of Europe the heralds of a social revolution are plotting against wealth and property. – Abolishment of inheritance, even distribution of property, this is their shibboleth! In Russia, such a revolution is impossible as there the utopias of European revolutionaries are founded and present in the everyday life of the people!  

In the eyes of the Prussian nobleman, revolutionary incendiaries were plunging the continent into the misery of pauperism, while Russian autocracy had conserved a pre-industrial utopia.

German conservatives were quick to praise Haxthausen’s “enviable depiction of the Russian peasant and his conditions,” and were even convinced that “many European proletarians would feel inclined to move to Russia in order to partake in this idyllic way of life.” In contrast, the liberal Moritz Wagner (1813-1887), who in the 1850s left “reactionary” Europe for the United States of America, disputed the veracity of Haxthausen’s observations. Wagner considered the author but another of “those russophile travellers who produced only positive reports on the empire of the tsar, and who were generally known not to decline subsidies from St Petersburg.” These assertions were not far from the truth. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, a series of publications, and in particular the treatise of the Marquis de Custine (see below), had severely damaged Russia’s reputation in Germany and Europe in general. Subsequently, the imperial chancellery repeatedly sought to gain the support of an authoritative voice that would rebut


52 August Freiherr von Haxthausen, *Studien über die innern Zustände, das Volksleben und insbesondere die ländlichen Einrichtungen Rußlands*, vol. 1, Erster Theil (Hannover: Hahn’sche Hofbuchhandlung, 1847), xii.


Russia’s slanderers. For example, when in 1843 the French writer Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) set out on a trip to Ukraine, the Russian ambassador to Paris suggested pampering the visitor, hoping he would later “make use of his quill to disprove the hostile and calumnious M. de Custine.”  

Similarly, Petersburg supported Haxthausen, hoping that he might help repeal the image of the Russian menace which increasingly dominated the European imagination. And indeed, in the end the author painted a very favourable image of the tsardom. To him “Russia seemed to provide for a political and religious community which could serve as the last bastion against an escalating revolution.” Haxthausen may have set out to produce an objective report on the living conditions of the Russian population. The result, however, was multi-layered palimpsest that could not hide the various political agendas by which it was informed. In the context of the middle of the nineteenth century, it seems, intellectual investigations into Russian affairs could not successfully detach themselves from the domestic and international political struggles. In retrospect, a cultural rapprochement as König, Varnhagen, and others imagined it, seemed highly unfeasible.

**A WAR OF WORDS**

While efforts to mediate between the peoples of Germany and Russia failed to take off, the image of the Russian menace increasingly developed mass appeal. Faced with a political standstill and a stagnating economy, more and more Germans subscribed to the belief that the Russian Empire was purposely undermining progress and reform in the German lands. Tempers were further agitated by a series of ‘scoops’ which seemingly corroborated this reproach, such as the *Memorandum on the Present and Future of Germany* (1834). Purportedly, the pamphlet had been composed in the tsar’s chancellery to be distributed among the rulers of the lesser German states. It warned the latter from the shared interest of Prussia, Austria, and France to preclude the rise of a strong central Germany; it accused

---

56 Christoph Schmidt, “Ein deutscher Slawophile?,” 208.  
58 The pamphlet in its entirety is reproduced in Friedrich Daniel Bassermann, *Deutschland und Rußland* (Mannheim: Heinrich Hoff, 1839).
liberalism of endangering legitimate rule; and it explains that only Russia could guarantee the future stability and prosperity of the German small states.\textsuperscript{59} In conclusion, the treatise argues that “it were a natural necessity for the Bundestag to seek Russian patronage.”\textsuperscript{60} The liberal parliamentarian Friedrich Daniel Basserman (1811-1855) immediately sounded the alarm, warning that “this memorandum is one of those intellectual weapons which precede bayonets.”\textsuperscript{61} Whether or not this was a correct assessment is difficult to ascertain. The author of the Memorandum was never found out, and it could have easily been conceived and circulated to further instigate anti-Russian sentiments. For German liberals, however, the situation was quite clear: Russia, after extending her influence over the governments in Berlin and Vienna, was now seeking to directly intervene in German affairs.

This climate of mistrust was further exacerbated in 1839 by the publication of the notorious European Pentarchy. Although the identity of its author was never fully disclosed, contemporaries credited the text to a certain Dr. Goldmann,\textsuperscript{62} a journalist and censor in the service of Ivan Paskevich (1782-1856), the Viceroy of Poland and vanquisher of the November Uprising in 1831. If this attribution were in fact correct, it should not surprise to read in the Pentarchy that “Europe admires the Emperor Nicholas – his moderation when victorious, his unyielding courage in the hour of trial, his devout loyalty in alliances, his clear and just judgment on every issue in the orient and occident.”\textsuperscript{63} However, the text is not simply an unglossed paean of the Russian Emperor. Rather, it is a well informed, comprehensive discussion of European state of affairs: “The quill goes deep, the letters are clear, the sense of it is astute,” as one German review remarked.\textsuperscript{64} In fact, the Politisches Journal, at the time one of Germany’s most reputable political publications, esteemed the European Pentarchy “one of today’s more important political treatises.”\textsuperscript{65} The text needed be taken seriously. All the more did it affront European readers, for example

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid., 110–34.]
\item[Ibid., 154.]
\item[Ibid., 99.]
\item[See for example Ferdinand G. Kühne, “Der Pentarchist,” in Portraits und Silhouetten, vol. 1, Erster Theil (Hannover: C. F. Kuis, 1843), 315–16.]
\item[[Karl Eduard Goldmann?], Die europäische Pentarchie (Leipzig: Wigand, 1839), 407–8.]
\item[“Die europäische Pentarchie: Politische Principien-Debatte,” Politisches Journal nebst Anzeige von gelehnten und anderen Sachen 60, no. 2 (1839): 431.]
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
when its author argued for Russia’s right to territorial aggrandizement on the Balkan Peninsula: For the Russian Empire, the author explained, “it is only natural to assert its influence in this regard.”\textsuperscript{66} In the end, however, Germans were most of all offended by the author’s vision for the future of the pentarchy, i.e. his ideas to maintain the political balance between Europe’s five great powers. Henceforth, he argued, Prussia should align with France and Britain with Austria, while the lesser German states were to unite with Russia, who alone could become the “true and only protector of this central association.”\textsuperscript{67} For Germans, this was a highly alarming scenario. Not only would the Russian Empire thus extend its sphere of influence as far as the Rhine. Austria and Prussia would have been virtually surrounded by the tsardom and its clients.

The German public reacted with an emotional outcry: “The fundament of the entire machination,” one reviewer exclaimed, “is an absence of any moral compass, a lack of familiarity with higher, just principles, the demise of the last remnants of conscience, faith, and honour – all of these as they occur only at the highest level of moral decay.”\textsuperscript{68} Another commentary warned the German public from reacting too placidly to this threat, lest they indeed became accustomed to the thought of Russian suzerainty.\textsuperscript{69} The most popular reaction, however, was a call for national unification to ward off the threat of “Slavic protection.”\textsuperscript{70} Even outspoken conservatives, such as Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1798-1860), who, as a matter of fact, had been the protégé of a Russian benefactor in the early 1830s, heeded this call as he urged Germans to keep in mind that they alone were “‘the heart of Europe,’ the great repository of ideas, and the champions of Latin Christianity and its culture.”\textsuperscript{71} Gustav Kühne, on the other hand, asked his readers: If a new alliance system indeed became necessary, “should we submit to a protectorate that is being forced upon us from abroad, or form a protectorate of our own in accordance with our nature and honour?

\textsuperscript{66} [Goldmann?], \textit{Die europäische Pentarchie}, 219.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 70–71.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 325–26.
\textsuperscript{70} Jakob P. Fallmerayer, “Die deutschen Publicisten und die europäische Pentarchie (1840),” 157.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 168–71.
This is the question at hand; a question which patriotism will be quick to answer.”

Similarly, Wolfgang Menzel (1798-1873) repudiated the Pentarchist by explaining the “political necessity” of a “close union between Prussia, Austria and the rest of the German Confederation. Without exception,” Menzel argued, “the force of the whole German nation is indispensable for every great European struggle.”

Thus, notions of a ‘Russian menace’ looming in the east of Europe boosted the appeal of the nationalist movement in Germany. To this day, the exact motives of the author of the European Pentarchy remain unclear. On the one hand, it would be problematic consider him a spokesperson for the Russian government. In fact, it is more than unlikely that the chancellery in Petersburg, had it indeed pursued such an expansionist agenda, would have publicly advertised these necessarily controversial geopolitical ambitions. At the same time, it would be unreasonable to downplay the European Pentarchy as the work of an agent provocateur of the German liberal movement: This notion is irreconcilable with both the complexity and the scope of the text. Undoubtedly, the Politisches Journal asserted, the author was a member of the higher diplomatic circles. In the end, only the effect of the treatise on the German public is evident: It added credibility to those who had been employing the ‘Russian menace’ as a rhetorical means to rally the German population to the cause of national unification.

Already four years later, Russophobia reached a new climax with the publication of the infamous Letters from Russia by the Marquis Astolphe de Custine (1790-1857). In the political spectrum of the middle of the nineteenth century, Custine could be safely assigned to the conservative movement. He had lost most of his family to the Terreur of 1793, and, until the end of his life, he insisted that he was “an aristocrat in the widest, and consequently the most liberal, sense of the word,” who believed “that there is and that there will always be more wisdom and enlightenment in the ideas of a few superior men than in the opinions of the masses.”

---

1839, he looked forward to witnessing first-hand the benefits of enlightened autocratic governance. However, he later claims, upon his return to France he had not only changed his mind about the Russian Empire. Moreover, he found the experience so appalling, that he even reconsidered his political ideals. “I went to Russia,” Custine relates in the introduction to the *Letters from Russia*, “to seek out arguments against representative government, I return a partisan of constitutions.” Henceforth, he championed a pan-European liberalism founded in religious principles, and considered “the Catholic Church – if it succeeded in reuniting the Western Christian world – the only power capable of creating an effective barrier against Tsarist expansion.” In the *Letters from Russia*, Custine vilifies the Russian Empire, its people, the government, the court, even the tsar. Nicholas I, who had in fact granted the Frenchman an audience during his visit in 1839, “was outraged, and a courtier confirmed that he had thrown down the volume of the ‘despicable Custine.’” The European public, in contrast, enthusiastically received the account of the French traveller, and “within two years, three editions were sold in Germany and two in England.” Not counting illegal reprints, approximately 200,000 copies of the three-volume work were circulating across the continent. To be sure, the *Letters from Russia* contained no new information about the Russian Empire, and the author’s observations weren’t particularly original. Rather, Custine reiterated by then commonplace prejudices about the superficiality of Russia’s civilization, the backwardness of its culture, and the tsar’s aggressive foreign policy. Above all, “Custine’s accomplishment was that his work and the judgments it contained successfully catered to the expectations of his contemporaries, proving the author’s singular instinct for what was topical and up-to-date.” Ultimately, the *Letters from Russia* were simply a concise summary, but at the same time the epitome of European Russophobia in the middle of the nineteenth century.

77 Hammen, “Free Europe Versus Russia 1830-1854,” 27.
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Christoph Schmidt, “Ein deutscher Slawophile?,” 207.
82 Groh, *Rußland im Blick Europas*, 225.
At this time, the chancellery in St Petersburg had become very aware of its deteriorating public image abroad, and, as seen in the example of Balzac and Haxthausen, put much effort into counteracting this negative perception. As a consequence, the Letters of Russia and their author became the target of several vicious attacks, most of which were unable to hide their semi-official nature. Under the pseudonym of J. Yakowlef, the Russian writer and military captain Jacob Nicolay Tolstoy (1791-1867) published a 700-page rebuttal entitled Russia in the Year 1839 as the Marquis de Custine dreamt it (1844), which was published both in France and Germany. A certain J. Hubmann – a self-proclaimed Pole – on the other hand claimed that “Custine has intentionally conceived lies and calumniations.” And ‘Wilhelm von Grimm’ – another pseudonym, undoubtedly – even more aggressively repudiated Custine’s “Munchausiade,” this “monstrosity [Missgeburt]” based on “nothing but hearsay.” By all likelihood, ‘Grimm’ conjectured, “Custine is a hypochondriac, and it is safe to assume that he suffers from nervous dysfunction which is why his mind and intelligence often appear clouded, and why he arouses our deepest sympathy.” Finally Nicolay Grech (1787-1869), a Petersburg journalist sponsored by the Russian government and intimate associate of Faddey Bulgarin, joined the conversation, attacking Custine for his “edifice of chimeras, lies, and defamations of Russia.” The tsar’s chancellery, it appears, had come to fully appreciate that the negative image of Russia abroad was detrimental to maintaining a strong position in European politics. It therefore did its best to counteract the notion of the ‘Russian menace.’

Russian fears of a wide and positive reception of Custine’s work were well founded. Not only did the Letters from Russia reach a wide audience, in Germany as in the rest of Europe, they also received highly favourable reviews. Das Ausland, Germany’s leading

---

82 See above, p. 151.
83 J. Yakowlef [Jacob Nicolay Tolstoy], La Russie en 1839 rêvée par M. de Custine, ou lettres sur cette ovrage écrites de francfort par J. Yakowlef (Paris: Schneider et Langrand, 1844).
84 J. Yakowlef [Jacob Nicolay Tolstoy], Rußland im Jahre 1839, wie es der Marquis von Custine träumte (Leipzig: Theodor Thomas, 1844).
85 J. Hubmann, Ein Blick auf Rußland, das wirkliche, und Rußland des Marquis Custine träumte im Jahre 1839 (Dresden, Leipzig: Arnold, 1844), 32.
87 Ibid.
journal on foreign culture and literature, commended Custine for his accurate depiction of
the Russian Empire.\(^9\) The *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung* considered the *Letters from
Russia* “one of the most spirited and excellent phenomena of our literature.” \(^9\)

And in the *Literaturblatt*, Wolfgang Menzel explains that Custine, “a man of principle, endowed with
natural intelligence, refined education and culture, and of a mature age, had indeed
succeeded in giving such an unprejudiced account of Russia as is possible.” \(^9\)

What is
more, Menzel agrees with Custine’s central thesis, arguing that Russian “barbarism” was
indeed threatening the order of Europe. \(^9\)

In a similar vein, the *Zeitung für elegante Welt*
‘criticized’ Custine for not sufficiently warning his readers of the storm that was rising in
the east of Europe. \(^9\)

This reflected the constant rise of Russophobia in Germany in the
1840s, a development which led some to imagine Russia as an almost apocalyptic threat.
The champion of a liberal-democratic Germany Arnold Ruge (1802-1880) in fact predicted
that the impending war with Russia would occasion little less than “the foundation of a new
world age.” \(^9\)

Ruge’s choice of words to describe this final showdown is particularly
striking: The author expected this new age to follow the battle between the “*Quadruple
Alliance of Western Europe*” and the union “formerly known as the Holy Alliance.” \(^9\)

To be
sure, Ruge is yet far from using the east-west dichotomy in the modern sense. In fact, he is
unsure how precisely to term the Russian-led bloc which, he explains, “lacks a striking and
unifying name. Neither the term ‘Powers of the North,’ nor the antithesis of Eastern
Europe seems to fit, and is in the least apt to describe something like a principle [emphasis
added by F.G.].” \(^9\)

Other contemporaries similarly struggled to find an apt designator for

---

\(^9\) “Bemerkungen über Rußland (La Russie en 1839, par le Marquis de Custine),” *Das Ausland. Ein Tagblatt

\(^9\) “La Russie en 1839 par le marquis de Custine,” *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, December 12, 1843,
346–349.

\(^9\) “Rußland im Jahr 1839. Aus dem Französischen des Marquis de Custine von Dr. A. Diezmann,”
*Literaturblatt (Beilage zum Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser)*, January 12, 1844, 17.

\(^9\) Ibid.


\(^9\) Arnold Ruge, “Ueber Gegenwart und Zukunft der Hauptmächte Europas: Bei Gelegenheit von Menzels
Europa im Jahr 1840 (1840),” in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, *Verschiedene Stellungen der Kritik zur Zeit*
(Mannheim: J. P. Grohe, 1847), 359.

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^9\) Ibid.
“the modern Greeks of the North,”⁹⁷ as another author termed the Russians. Indeed, at times the search for a suitable terminology for the great impending conflict led some commentators to rather awkward compromises. A case in point is a contribution to the *Politisches Journal*: “The western alliance of nations which we, as it juts out over the south, would prefer to call a southern alliance, especially since it has its antipode in the north, is just as little a chimera as the northern alliance of cabinets which one arguably also calls the eastern great powers.”⁹⁸ Once again, even though this assessment indeed juxtaposes ‘east’ and ‘west,’ the author is far from using the terms consistently as a means to express the ideological rift that was growing between Russia and the rest of Europe. However, even though in hindsight all of the above were less-than-ideal solutions to a terminological problem, they do mutually attest to a significant shift in symbolic geography taking place in the 1840s. In particular the events of the March Revolutions in 1848 would fully corroborate the belief that Europe was divided in two hemispheres which were both politically and socio-culturally distinct.

**THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1848**

A key precondition for the outbreak of revolution in Germany was the proliferation of a firm national mindset in the German lands. “The breaking point” in this development “was provided by the Rhine crisis of 1840.”⁹⁹ France, in response to a further loss of influence on the Levant, had made pretentions on the left bank of the Rhine as compensation. These designs met with a surge of nationalist sentiments in the German lands. Nationalist poetry thrived, and both August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben’s *Deutschlandlied* and Max Schneckenburger’s *Wacht am Rhein* date from this period. For once, public opinion stood united across all parts of society as Germans rallied around their shared hatred of the French. Thus, “1840 proved a deep caesura for national sentiments in Germany: In that year, a nationalism of hitherto unknown proportions and encompassing all of Germany took

---

⁹⁹ Schulze, *The Course of German Nationalism*, 64.
hold of the masses.” It was this nationalism that held together the disparate groups and ideologies which expressed their disaffection with the political status quo in March 1848.

The revolutionary wave that swept the continent in early 1848 had once again originated on the barricades of Paris. There, a destitute population had risen against a government incapable of protecting the people from economic crisis and the unyielding forces of the free market. After revolts on 23 and 24 February, the Prime Minister was forced to resign and was soon followed by King Louis Philippe. Within weeks, German revolutionaries followed suit. In the Kingdom of Baden, the people rose on 1 March, in Prussia’s capital on 6 March, and in Vienna on 13 March. Yet while the events in France undoubtedly served as catalyst for the rebellions, the foundations for revolution had already been laid in the preceding decade. By the 1840s, increasingly widespread political activity began “to shatter the restrictive confines of Vormärz [pre-March] institutions.” This affected all levels of political organization, “provincial and state parliaments, city councils, clubs and associations” – altogether, a “new sense of crisis and opportunity” fanned hopes for progress and reform. However, the March Revolutions were as much a political as a social movement. The 1840s also witnessed an alarming spread of poverty and misery, a development which was critically exacerbated by the Hungerwinter of 1846/47. This last crisis “of the ‘old’ type, a starvation and manufacturing crisis unleashed by failed harvests and the ensuing enormous rise in price of basic foods” was complemented by “a ‘modern’ crisis of industrial growth, provoked by the collapse of the consumer-goods economy.” Therefore, at the end of the decade, public disaffection peaked in all parts of German society as liberals, radicals, socialists, and conservatives sought to hold their governments accountable. The demands of these distinct groups were, naturally, highly distinct. However, “this chorus of many voices was held together by the all-embracing demand for the establishment of a German nation-state.” In the end, “the March Revolution of 1848, notwithstanding its social and liberal driving forces, was principally a national

100 Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, 1: 87.
101 Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century, 52.
102 Ibid.
103 Schulze, The Course of German Nationalism, 68–69.
104 Ibid.
Therefore, when the first democratically elected National Assembly convened at the St Paul’s Church in Frankfurt am Main on 18 May, its paramount goal was to conceive and ratify a constitution that would lay the foundation for a German nation state.

The intensity of this nationalist fervour was reflected in a change of attitude towards the Polish cause since the November Uprising. In the 1830s, standing up for Polish independence was tantamount to a call for liberal reform and national unification in Germany. Prussia’s and Austria’s suzerainty over Polish territories, on the other hand, made them accomplices of the reactionary tsar, and enemies of the principle of national self-determination. The fate of Poles stood metonymically for the struggle of social progress, and in 1832 the Austrian journalist Heinrich Laube (1806-1884) tellingly wrote that “freedom is no private interest; this is why the Poles fought in the interest of their century; this is why their war is of world significance.” Poland exemplified all the struggles Germans would have to overcome to become a free and united nation – not least the struggle against the Russian menace. “The violated and crushed Poland,” liberal politician and future delegate to the Frankfurt Parliament Franz Schuselka (1811-1886) warned, “bears witness to how Russia treats its enemies.” And Friedrich Bassermann contended that “if Germans wish to evade the fate of Poland, they first and foremost need to stand united.”

In the 1840s, however, it became evident that, rather than arousing genuine compassion, the fate of the Poles had served merely as a rhetorical device in the political discourse. The same newspapers and journals that had once praised the November Uprising now denied Poland any support. “Suddenly all of the German press,” Schuselka observed,

---

105 Ibid.
106 Martin Broszat, 200 Jahre deutsche Polenpolitik (München: Ehrenwirth, 1963), 73.
107 See above, p. 126-132.
109 Franz Schuselka, Die Orientalische, das ist Russische Frage (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1843), 57–58.
110 Bassermann, Deutschland und Rußland, 221.
claims that the Poles do not deserve any German sympathy.” ¹¹¹ In fact, when an uprising in Krakow sought to re-establish the independence of Poland in February 1846, the effort was widely rejected by the German public. Above all the fact that, this time around, the insurgents sought to shed Austrian and Prussian as well as Russian suzerainty prompted a “markedly critical position on the aims of the insurrection, and in particular on the national aspirations of the Poles.”¹¹² The Polish theme had lost its momentum for the German reform movement. “It no longer appealed as a point of attack for the transformation of domestic and European affairs. Rather, a primarily nationalist perspective dominated in the assessment of Polish-German affairs.”¹¹³ Laconically, Heinrich Heine remarked that the only thing Germans in fact needed to thank the Poles for was “the hatred of Russia they sowed in us. As it quietly thrives within the German spirit, it shall once powerfully unite us when the great hour arrives where we have to defend ourselves from that great giant who is yet sleeping.”¹¹⁴ On the eve of their own revolution, Germans no longer sympathized with the Polish cause. As a matter of fact, many delegates to the National Assembly in Frankfurt even reacted with outright hostility when the future status of the Poles within Prussia’s dominions was addressed in the Polendebatte of 24-26 June 1848.

The issue at hand was the question of the future delimitation of a unified Germany, specifically whether it should follow ethnic, linguistic, or political lines. With regard to the multi-ethnic Habsburg state, this was a fundamental and troubling question. Would Austria accede to the German state as a powerful empire or simply as another German province? The Polish issue, from a German point of view, was far simpler: The delegates needed to decide whether the predominantly Polish provinces of Eastern Prussia were to become part of the future Germany. To be sure, since the time of Frederick the Great much effort had been put forward to ‘Germanize’ these territories, for example by creating incentives for German settlers and granting special liberties to German landholders, the so-called ‘Junkers.’ Polish culture, however, remained dominant. Nevertheless, the National

¹¹¹ Franz Schuselka, Deutschland, Polen und Rußland (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1846), 296.
¹¹² Kolb, “Polenbild und Polenfreundschaft der deutschen Frühliberale,” 125.
¹¹³ Ibid., 126.
Assembly in the majority considered these provinces German territory. Already at its inception, the parliament had made this point by accepting into its ranks the delegates from the province of Posen.

These delegates were particularly vociferous in their rejection of Polish sovereignty in Eastern Prussia. Adolph Goeden (1811-1888) from (Polish) Krotoszyn, in an emotive speech called on the Assembly to “first deliver justice to its German, mishandled brothers, before granting the same to a foreign people!” And Alexander von Wartensleben (1807-1883), a Prussian state official from Pomerania, censured the Assembly for even considering that “500,000 Germans should become the slaves of 700,000 Poles,” thereby neglecting its “duty to the fatherland.”

However, it was most likely Julius Ostendorf (1823-1877) who spoke the mind of the majority of the Frankfurt Parliament. A delegate from Westphalia, not immediately affected by the status of Eastern Prussia, Ostendorf’s analysis had a wider, geopolitical scope:

As soon as the Poles have gained their freedom, they will rather ally themselves with Russia than with us, they will rather throw themselves into the arms of Asian despotism than attach themselves to German freedom. [...] And if Mr. Janiczewski in the name of the Poles assures us of their friendly inclination towards Germany, I do intend to ask him, whether or not he, too, at the Prague Congress celebrated the speech of Count Lubomiersky; what the latter contained, we all know. Therefore I believe that it is in the interest of policy and in our own interest to maintain the fortress Poland.116

In a remarkable inversion, the Polish cause had come to be considered an extension of the Russian menace. How was this possible? The answer is contained in Ostendorf’s attack on Johannes Janiszewski (1818-1891) who had previously addressed the Assembly on behalf of the Poles. Janiszewski had three weeks prior attended the first Slavic Congress in Prague where, among others, the Polish nationalist Jerzy Henryk Lubomirski (1817-1872) spoke to the participants. Germans in the majority perceived this event as a public demonstration of


116 Ibid., 1175.
the will of Slavs to unite and overthrow their European suzerains. Ostendorf therefore implicitly accused Janiszewski of treacherous intent. To be sure (as we shall see below), Ostendorf’s comments were a crass misrepresentation of the Congress’ agenda. They were, however, eloquent of an increasing ubiquity of the Russian menace in the German mind. And to a certain extent, the denouement of the March Revolutions makes this fear understandable.

In early April 1848, but a month after the beginning of the revolution, the First Schleswig War (1848-1851) broke out, pitching the Duchy of Schleswig, the Duchy of Holstein, Prussia, and ‘Germany’ – represented by the Parliament in Frankfurt – against the Kingdom of Denmark. Thus, when the National Assembly first convened on 18 May 1848, the provisional government already faced the challenge of waging a full-fledged war. The stake was Schleswig-Holstein itself. For centuries, the territory, subject to the Danish crown, yet in the majority populated by Germans, had been jointly ruled. However, since 1846 nationalists on both sides were pushing for a full incorporation of these domains into their respective polities. The disorder precipitated by the March uprisings then gave a pretext for the escalation of the conflict. This was “the moment of truth for the German National Assembly.”117 A successful outcome would have made a strong case for the parliament’s ability to govern and protect the future of the German state. In the end, however, the delegates handled the situation poorly. Already their decision to accept delegates from Schleswig into the National Assembly demonstrated a lack of diplomatic finesse. To onlookers, this all but equalled a formal acknowledgment of the province’s accession to the German nation state. The international community was unimpressed. “Disorder: this, in the eyes of the European cabinets, was German unification; an outright rebellion against the principles of the European balance of power.”118 Britain and Russia were particularly alarmed, as an extended crisis would have likely disrupted the Baltic trade. Therefore, Britain quickly dispatched her navy to the North Sea while Russian troops assembled on the Prussian border. On 26 August, the Prussian government bowed to the pressure from London and St Petersburg and, in open defiance of the instructions from the

117 Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, 1: 108.
118 Schulze, The Course of German Nationalism, 73.
National Assembly, signed the Treaty of Malmö, therein agreeing to withdraw from the war and to jointly govern Schleswig-Holstein with the Danish crown.

The signing of the treaty precipitated a national outcry which was echoed in the National Assembly. The delegate Friedrich Dahlmann (1785-1860) attacked this “attempt to preclude the rise of the new German power. If, in the face of this first challenge,” he warned the deputies “we submit to foreign powers, then, gentlemen, you shall never again hold your head up high! Mark my words: Never!" Yet in the end, the crisis couldn’t but reveal the actual impotence of the parliament and the provisional government it supported. Neither were the delegates able to coerce Prussia into resuming hostilities, nor did the National Assembly possess the means necessary to outfit an army of its own. British and Russian influence had triumphed and, moreover, forced the delegates to accept the Prussian capitulation on 16 September. This denouement initiated the downfall of the parliament in St Paul’s Church. Already on the following day “an assembly of Frankfurt radicals accused the delegates of treason against the German people and deprived them of their mandate. [Prime Minister] Schmerling persuaded the city’s senate to call upon Prussian and Austrian troops stationed in the Mainz fortress; barricades grow out of the ground.”

The National Assembly had forfeited much of its popular support, and by December 1848 most delegates had left Frankfurt to rather become involved in the home states’ reform movements. In Austria, too, the revolutionary uprisings had subsided after the resignation of both Klemens von Metternich and the Emperor Ferdinand (r. 1835-1848), who was succeeded by his nephew Franz Joseph I (r. 1848-1916). In the end, the revolution had fallen well short of its main objective, the inception of a unified and constitutionally governed Germany.

Yet although the March uprisings had come to an end in the German lands, revolutionary activity continued to affect German governments, in particular the court in Vienna. On 13 April 1849, Hungary under the leadership of Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894) declared its independence from the Habsburg Empire after the diet in Budapest had failed to secure more extensive autonomy for the Magyar state. Already in September of the

---

119 Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, 1: 109.
120 Ibid., 109–10.
preceeding year, Austria had dispatched an army to foreclose the possible secession of the Hungarians. In turn, the latter were joined by 20,000 Poles who hoped that Magyar independence would become a stepping stone for the resurrection of Poland.\textsuperscript{121} Tsar Nicholas I watched with concern as the political balance on the Balkan Peninsula was once again threatened. Already throughout the March Revolutions, the Emperor had “exercised all his influence to oppose the numerous uprisings that had gripped the continent.”\textsuperscript{122} His government had “supplied Austria with a loan of six million roubles”\textsuperscript{123} to bolster her military, and in July 1848, the Russian imperial army intervened to suppress revolutionary activities in the Danubian Principalities.\textsuperscript{124} Thus, when Austria requested Russian military support to strike down the revolution in Hungary, Nicholas was quick to respond. On 12 May, a month after the Hungarian declaration of independence, her leaders were officially informed of the Austro-Russian alliance. On 21 May the two emperors met in Warsaw\textsuperscript{125} where the Viceroy of Poland Field Marshal Paskevich, the vanquisher of the November Uprising, “was put in charge of 190,000 Russian troops,” which “defeated 162,000 on the Hungarian side in August 1849,”\textsuperscript{126} thereby securing the integrity of the Habsburg state. Nicholas and Franz Joseph had preserved “the existing order of Europe, for the Austrian Empire was one of the main pillars of that order.”\textsuperscript{127} The political status quo was further buttressed by the Punctation of Olmütz, which was concluded between the rulers of Prussia, Austria, and Russia on 29 October 1849. Particularly for the Austrian Emperor, it was a “major diplomatic victory”\textsuperscript{128} as Nicholas I pressured his brother-in-law Frederick William IV (r. 1840-1858) to renounce all ambitions to rule over a unified Germany. Therefore, by the end of 1850, “nationalist rage was compounded” throughout the German lands “as Nicholas, together with his Hohenzollern and Habsburg ‘brothers’ had reaffirmed the Vienna treaties, reconsecrated the Holy Alliance, and restored the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{121} Gildea, \textit{Barricades and Borders}, 104.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Riasanovsky, \textit{A History of Russia}, 335.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Rumpler, \textit{1804-1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa}, 317.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Gildea, \textit{Barricades and Borders}, 104.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Riasanovsky, \textit{A History of Russia}, 335.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
VII. 1830-1848: A War of Words

Restoration everywhere east of the Rhine.”\textsuperscript{129} The liberal reform movement was staggered by this denouement, and even though “the failure of the Central European revolutions was the result of internal weakness more than of Russian intervention,”\textsuperscript{130} it was foremost the latter which Germans made accountable. In fact, “Russia became the \textit{diabolus ex machina} of the revolutionary tragedy,”\textsuperscript{131} and louder than ever the call for war against the tsardom resounded throughout the German lands. The notion of the Russian menace had thus undergone a significant reappraisal since the early 1830s. At the time, it appeared in the first instance an ideological threat which exerted its influence through the Holy Alliance. As such, it became a rallying cry for the liberal movement to intellectually resist the reactionary policies of the governments in Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna. At the end of the 1840s, however, Russia seemed to pose a very real threat to the liberty and integrity of the German lands. Thus, the call to take up arms against the Russian menace was no longer metaphorical, but indeed expressed the will to go to war.

The belief that a military altercation with Russia would bring liberalization, unification, and ultimately freedom to the German people had become increasingly popular in the course of the March Revolutions. Indeed, already in the pre-revolutionary period some remarked that “today in Germany a war with Russia would be indeed a popular and national endeavour. Every German patriot,” the author continues, “is united in the rejection of Russia, a sentiment which is even shared by the most avid conservatives.”\textsuperscript{132} To be sure, when revolution finally broke out, many at first feared the possibility of a military intervention by the Holy Alliance. Soon, however, “radical souls actively hoped for war with Russia, believing it would fuse Germans together in a common cause.”\textsuperscript{133} In fact, “German liberal newspapers in March 1848 urged the war, citing a common ‘flaming hatred of Russia.’”\textsuperscript{134} Even many delegates to the National Assembly cast all prudence aside and urged Germans to take to the offense. The Hessian deputy Carl Vogt (1808-1895), for example, was convinced “that eventually weapons would have to settle the

\textsuperscript{129} Malia, \textit{Russia Under Western Eyes}, 148–49.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Fournier, \textit{Rußland, Deutschland und Frankreich}, 76.
\textsuperscript{133} Liulevicius, \textit{The German Myth of the East}, 81.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
dispute between east and west; that eventually the war between the culture of the west and
the barbarism of the east must commence.”\footnote{Wigard, \emph{Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main}, 8: 5822.} Thus, but a few years after Arnold Ruge had
struggled to give meaningful expression to the cultural and intellectual rift that was
gradually dividing Europe,\footnote{See above, p. 157.} we find Vogt employing a terminology that would soon
dominate public discourse in the German lands. Thereby, it is striking to see him connect
‘west’ to ‘culture’ and ‘east’ to ‘barbarism.’ This corresponds to a semantic shift which had
been gaining significant momentum in the 1840s, and received a catalytic impulse in the
course of the March Revolutions (see below). The full range of meaning of ‘eastern
barbarism’ at the time is tellingly illustrated in a pamphlet which was distributed in August
1848 in response to rumours of a coming Russian military intervention. The text predicts
the horrors Prussia will experience should the imperial army indeed advance on Berlin:

\begin{quote}
Berlin, 10 July. The Russians, the most cannibalistic people of Europe, have arrived
at the Prussian border and are threatening to foray our blessed realm with their armies
of beggars.

Berlin, 20 July. What we feared has been fulfilled. Those barbarians from the east
penetrated Prussia under the leadership of their furious despot. May god’s justice
reach them soon. – Berlin shall not surrender.

Berlin, 4 August. The Vandals continue their approach. Their path is marked by
murder, plunder, arson, and the most heinous devastation.\footnote{Mn. Sohn, \emph{Die Zukunft Berlins: Eine Prophezeihung} (Berlin: n. p., 1848).}
\end{quote}

To be sure, the epithet ‘barbarian’ was anything but novelty as part of the Russian theme.
However, the semantic implications of the term had significantly changed. It no longer
designated merely a discrepancy in cultural refinement, as it did for the writers of the
Enlightenment. Rather, the Russians now appeared an antipode that opposed, or even
negated Europe’s cultural achievements. They were ‘cannibals’ and ‘barbarians’ under the
rule of a ‘furious despot.’ They are considered ‘vandals’ and thus likened to the hordes that
had brought destruction to the Roman Empire. This shift was entirely distinct from past
reassessments, when, for example, the enthusiasm for the vanquisher of Napoleon gave
way to the disappointment with the leader of the Holy Alliance. Now, Russia no longer was ‘inside’ of Europe, but conceived of as inherently different.
In the mind of the German public, the symbolic division of the European continent into ‘eastern’ and ‘western’ hemispheres was fully consummated in the 1850s. In particular the public reaction to the Crimean War (1853-56) attests to conclusion of this development. On the one hand, public opinion was largely united in its unequivocal rejection of Russia’s objectives in the conflict. On the other hand, Germans strongly identified with the war aims of their French and British neighbours. In fact, it was largely in opposition to the expressed will of the German population that Austria and Russia abstained from actively participating in the altercation. But what is more, Germans were henceforth dedicated to a sustained cultural and intellectual rapprochement with Europe’s ‘western’ states. This union, they hoped, would ultimately neutralize the threat of the Russian menace, which only now became fully identified with ‘eastern’ Europe. This final shift in symbolic geography was not least enabled by the rise and wide dissemination of racial chauvinism in the middle of the nineteenth century. As leading theorists of racism seemingly demonstrated the natural inferiority of the Slavic peoples, they made possible a fundamental distinction between Europe and Russia. Only now could the latter be fully excluded from the realm of European ‘culture’ and rejected as a parasitic foreign body. At the same time, the ‘scientific’ verification of Russian barbarism exacerbated fears of a naturally aggressive power looming from Europe’s eastern borderlands. This led Germans to fundamentally
misunderstand the contemporary Panslavic movement as an initiative to unite Slavs for a final, quasi-apocalyptic onslaught on the European continent. In combination, these factors not only provided for a strong and enduring intellectual rift separating ‘East’ and ‘West.’ Moreover, they encouraged a thorough reassessment and rewriting of history, as Germans consolidated their newfound ‘Western’ identity.

**THE CRIMEAN WAR**

In 1853, France, Britain, and Turkey joined forces to conclusively stifle Russian expansion around the Black Sea and to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The alliance itself was a remarkable occurrence, with two – traditionally hostile – Christian nations supporting a Muslim empire against Christian Russia. Most striking, however, is the fact that Russia, at the time, posed little real threat to the balance of power in the region. In fact, ever since the conclusion of the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, Tsar Nicholas I had remained dedicated to his new policy of maintaining the Turkish state at all cost.¹ When, for example, in 1833 the Sultan was attacked by his Egyptian vassal Mehmet Ali (1769-1848), Russia was the only European power that came to assist the Sublime Porte. Subsequently, France and Britain watched in disbelief as 10,000 Russian troops landed in Constantinople. To their further dismay, Russia and Turkey even concluded a defensive alliance, the Treaty of Hunkiar Iskelesi (1833), in which the Sultan agreed to close the Straits of the Bosporus to all foreign war ships. Russia, on the other hand, in the following year ratified the St Petersburg Convention, in which it guaranteed a swift withdrawal from the Danubian Principalities, regardless of Turkey’s ability to satisfy the war indemnities stipulated in the Treaty of Adrianople.² Then, in 1839, a second Mehmet Ali crisis was averted by the joint intervention of Russia, Austria, and Britain. One of the outcomes was that the Treaty of Hunkiar Iskelesi was replaced with the London Straits Convention (1841) which again closed the Straits for all war ships, now, however, even for those of Russia. Nevertheless, the tsar’s State Secretary Count Nesselrode (1780-1862) reassured his

¹ See above, p. 125.
Emperor that this was in Russia’s best interest. “The Convention,” Nesselrode explained, “has not so much destroyed the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, as perpetuated its aim in a different form.”3 The Straits Convention, he concluded, “recognized legally and universally as a permanent guarantee” the military neutralization of the Black Sea.4 Such conservative policies bore a most striking contrast to the expansionist agenda of Catherine II, who had “dreamt of a new Byzantine Empire with her grandson seated on the throne at Constantinople. Nicholas I and Nesselrode, by contrast, sought neither wealth nor glory at Ottoman expense.”5 Rather, their paramount goal with regard to foreign affairs was securing Russia’s southern borders and expanding her economic influence. In fact, for the tsar there was little to gain from taking Constantinople. “Access to the Aegean would not have made Russia a major naval power.”6 In contrast, “occupation of any significant portion of Turkey would have been as troublesome as occupation of Poland or the North Caucasus.”7 To be sure (as we shall see below), Russia’s diplomatic conduct in the years leading up to the Crimean War was not uncontroversial. Nevertheless, her bearing in no way merited the rising fear of the Russian menace which successfully mobilized anti-Russian opposition across the Europe.

Orlando Figes correctly points out that a thorough understanding of “European Russophobia” of the nineteenth century is pivotal to understand the Crimean war, “to grasp the conflict’s true significance.”8 Fear of the Russian menace was a key factor for the outbreak of hostilities. As a matter of fact, the French Emperor deliberately employed this fear to escalate the Eastern Question. After the Revolution of 1848, Louis Napoleon, a nephew of the first Napoleon, had successfully established a strong rule over France, first as President, and after 1852 as Emperor Napoleon III (r. 1852-1870). His regency was shaped by his strong personal conviction that he “was obliged to fulfill the popular expectations associated with his name.”9 Therefore, he early on “sought to disrupt the

---

3 Ibid., 53–54.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 58–59.
6 Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*, 153.
7 Ibid.
international order that had been established after the Napoleonic Wars [...] that still constituted the major obstacle to the reestablishment of French dominance in Europe.”\(^{10}\) An adequate opportunity arose in the late 1840s, as Catholic Christians in Jerusalem sought to reassert religious privileges that France had secured for them in earlier treatises with the Ottomans (1535, 1673, and 1740). Among these was the possession of the key to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as well as preferred access to the grotto of the Holy Manger. France had, following the Revolution of 1789, neglected the protection of these privileges which were subsequently usurped by the Orthodox community of Jerusalem. In 1850, Louis Napoleon sought to exploit the ensuing conflict towards his own ends. “Heavily dependent on the support of French Catholics at home, [...] he instructed his ambassador to raise the question in Constantinople.”\(^{11}\) However, this was not only meant to please the population in France. Moreover, Napoleon knew that, if he succeeded to provoke a military engagement, this would potentially pave the way for a reorganization of the European order. As the French Emperor had hoped, the tsar reacted harshly and imprudently. Nicholas I responded by demanding from the Porte an official recognition of Orthodox privileges in Jerusalem, as well as formal acknowledgement of his protectorate over the Sultan’s Orthodox subjects. The second demand was an uncalled for provocation. Hitherto, the tsar had been accepted as the defender of the religious rights of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. As their political spokesperson, in contrast, he would have \textit{de facto} represented one third of the Sultan’s subjects. For European onlookers, this was more than a diplomatic misstep. Rather, fears of the Russian expansionism finally seemed to materialize.

To be sure, in the following months a number of diplomatic initiatives were undertaken to avert a military conflict. However, it is telling of the scope of European Russophobia in the middle of the nineteenth century that precisely those charged with mediating in the conflict actively subverted a rapprochement due to their personal animosity towards the Russian Empire. This applies particularly to the British ambassador to Constantinople Stratford Canning (1786-1880) who, driven by a profound hatred of

\(^{10}\) Ibid.
\(^{11}\) Macfie, \textit{The Eastern Question}, 1774-1923, 27.
Russia, in fact deliberately sabotaged a peaceful resolution. Similarly, British Foreign Secretary Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865) sought to further incite anti-Russian sentiment in Parliament. Tellingly, Palmerston was an avid supporter of the Scottish diplomat David Urquhart (1805-1877), who in 1837 had ordered a trading vessel to illegally approach the coast of Russian-occupied Circassia, hoping that the inevitable seizure of the ship would provoke a military conflict between London and St Petersburg. Thus, the agenda of Britain’s highest-ranking diplomats coincided with the geopolitical aspirations of Napoleon III. In the end, all efforts to restore peace through negotiation failed because there were statesmen in Europe who did not want them to succeed, who were dedicated to the breakup of the existing international order, or who were not content to merely halt Russian expansion but wanted to eliminate the Russian threat permanently. Neither of these aims could be achieved through peaceful negotiation, for both required revolutionary changes in the European power structure that could only have been implemented through war. The latter objective especially – the permanent elimination of the Russian threat – would have required the annihilation of the Russian armed forces and the dismemberment of the Russian Empire or equally radical measures that would not only have necessitated war but war on an immense scale.

Thus, the Ottoman Sultan could be sure of allied support when he declared war on Russia in October 1853. Britain and France soon after acceded to the war effort, which first and foremost made apparent the inordinate exaggeration of the Russian menace.

Nevertheless, even though the tsar’s forces experienced one setback after the other, fears of Russia were unrelenting. Ludwig zu Oettingen-Wallerstein (1791-1870) for example, a seasoned Bavarian diplomat, in 1854 was still convinced that the “Nordic colossus had lost nothing in the war.” In his eyes, the tsardom was a Lernaean Hydra: “If you burn Russia’s outdated ships, she will build new and better ones. Should you stifle her trade […], she will quickly revive it. […] The few factories that succumb to the influence of

---

13 Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain, 190–204.
14 Rich, Why the Crimean War?, 5.
15 Ludwig zu Oettingen-Wallerstein, Deutschlands Aufgabe in der orientalischen Verwickelung (München: Georg Franz, 1854), 11–12.
war are soon replaced.”16 While Europe was exhausting herself in the war effort, Oettingen-Wallerstein argued, Russia was “striking a positive balance.” Moreover, it would emerge stronger than before.17 The governments in London and Paris, in contrast, had at this point discovered that “the spectre that had been haunting them since 1830 was no more than an insubstantial ghost […], a monstrous force in their imagination only.”18 To be sure, Russia’s imperial army could indeed boast an uninterrupted series of military victories since its triumphant entry to Paris in 1814. However, these victories had been won against haphazardly organized insurgents, the deteriorating Ottoman Empire, and the mountain tribes of the Caucasus. “Confronted with the industrially based power of England and France, the largest army in Europe was routed on its own soil.”19 The allies’ technological superiority was indeed devastating. At the time, Russian muskets had a range of approximately 100 meters. In contrast, the Minié rifle, the standard weapon of any French and most British soldiers, reached nearly 1,000 meters. Consequently, “the Russians were obliged to endure heavy casualties before they themselves came with effective range or could close with the enemy.”20 The effects this had on Russian moral “help explain their failure to break through the Allied lines even when they enjoyed great numerical superiority.”21 However, the majority of Russian casualties were not due to the superior weaponry of the allies. Rather, they were a result of the empire’s poor infrastructure, which made deployment to the Crimea a perilous enterprise. “So severe were the rigors of the long journey, especially in winter, that only one Russian soldier in ten actually reached the front after a three-month march.”22 In the end, “the Russian medical department estimated the country's losses at half a million men; in comparison, the British and French lost about sixty thousand, two-thirds of whom died of disease.”23 And contrary to the predictions of Oettingen-Wallerstein, these casualties took a heavy toll on the empire. As a matter of fact,

16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Malia, Russia Under Western Eyes, 158.
19 Ibid.
20 Rich, Why the Crimean War?, 126.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid., 136.
23 Ibid.
“the defence of Sebastopol bled the country white.”²⁴ Thus, the Crimean War not only demonstrated that the fear of the Russian menace was ill-founded. Moreover, it weakened the Russian Empire for decades to come.

**FROM THE ‘RUSSIAN MENACE’ TO THE ‘SLAVIC YOKE’**

At the outbreak of the Crimean War, the governments of both Austria and Prussia struggled to find a position in the conflict. Prussian officials were very aware that the altercation might fundamentally shift the balance of Europe. The precise outcome, however, seemed uncertain, and therefore Prussia maintained a neutral stance throughout the war. The Habsburgs, on the other hand, were hard pressed to declare their allegiance to either side. Franz Joseph was politically indebted to the tsar, who had enabled a swift crackdown on the Hungarian Revolution in 1849 and helped ensure that Prussia would not seek domination of the German Confederation. However, heeding Russia’s call for support in the theatre of war on the Balkans would have equalled a breach of the Vienna Settlement of 1815, and thus given the French Emperor a pretext to more aggressively pursue the reorganization of Europe. In particular, Napoleon III was likely to make himself the champion of Balkan nationalism, which in turn would have threatened the integrity of the Austrian Empire.²⁵ For the Habsburgs it was therefore important not to affront the Franco-British alliance. Overt support of France and Britain, however, would have irreconcilably alienated the Tsar Nicholas and, by extension, once more endangered Austria’s Balkan territories. Therefore, Austria, sought to position itself as a mediator between the two warring parties.

Public opinion in the German lands, on the other hand, unanimously sided with the Franco-British alliance while a flood of pamphlets and treatises perpetuated the notion of the Russian menace. The foreign policy of Nicholas I – the interventions in Greece, Poland, and Hungary, the Olmütz Punctation, the Schleswig-Holstein affair, the provocation of France and Turkey – now appeared but a concerted prelude to Russia’s final push for hegemony on the European continent. In this vein, one contemporary claimed that the tsar

²⁴ Ibid.
²⁵ See Rumpler, 1804-1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa, 368.
had quite deliberately kindled the “fanaticism of the Russian people,” and “thus initiated a struggle that will decide Russia’s European supremacy, either confirming or forever disrupting it.”

The philosopher Bruno Bauer (1809-1882) even predicted a quasi-apocalyptic end battle between “the Germanic and Russian peoples.”

According to Bauer, in 1853 the main question was “whether the dawning age was to be called the Russian age, or if it would be shaped by Germandom.”

Similarly, Karl Marx (1818-1883) asserted that “the Slavic race” had finally “found its unity and, in doing so, declared total war against the Romano-Celtic and Germanic races that hitherto ruled Europe.”

The alternatives, Marx concluded, were self-evident: “Submission to the Slavic yoke or conclusive destruction of its central power – Russia.”

To be sure, in the German lands such notions dated back to the beginning of the century, when liberals identified Russia as the main antagonist to their political and cultural ideals. However, the assessments of Marx and Bauer were novel in how they essentialized this antagonism through the rhetoric of race. It was this proliferation of a racial mindset which in the German imagination fully consummated the notion of a primordial rift between Germany and Russia, between the eastern and western parts of Europe.

The origins of this development lay in the late eighteenth century, and were part of the Enlightenment venture to classify all knowledge. In the spirit of this project, the Göttingen anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) first codified the principles of modern racism in his dissertation *De generis humani varietate nativa* (1775). Yet although Blumenbach’s work was motivated by scientific ambition, and even though the author himself rejected any form of xenophobia, his hierarchy of races following aesthetic categories – naturally placing European peoples at the top – invited further speculation on the classification of ethnicities. In particular Christoph Meiners (1747-1810), one of Blumenbach’s Göttingen colleagues, successfully radicalized the latter’s

---

27 Bruno Bauer, Rußland und das Germanenthum (Charlottenburg: Egbert Bauer, 1853), 7–8.
28 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
ideas. “He raised the interior and exterior correspondence of ‘hereditary traits of entire peoples to a basic axiom of modern racism, the more so as he created a hierarchy of racial merit.”31 For Meiners, the individual phenotype didn’t simply indicate aesthetic value, but indeed the worth of the individual human life. And in his view, the peoples of Europe – with the notable exception of the Slavs – in every respect outstripped the rest of humanity.32

In the course of the next decades, a legion of ‘anthropologists’ took up and expanded on these theses, until the French diplomat Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882) synthesized their findings in his seminal Essay on the Inequality of Human Races (2 vols., 1853/55). Much like Custine’s Letters from Russia,33 the great appeal of Gobineau’s Essay “lay not so much in the originality of its ideas, but rather in its concise summary and – seemingly convincing – systematization of disparate elements.”34 In other words: The audience was already familiar with the material and therefore receptive to Gobineau’s theses. The author himself was “downright possessed with the ‘purity’ and intermixture of ‘races.’”35 To be sure, he conceded that “mixtures could lead to new, higher races.” – however, “when these had attained their full potential, they needed to remain unmixed. Everything else,” Gobineau concluded, “would be degeneration and would lead to the death of the race.”36 Such ideas, once they were sufficiently popularized, had an enormous impact on public discourse: The rhetoric of racial chauvinism essentialized political, cultural, and intellectual difference. Nationalist zealots identified their significant other, or rather their “favourite enemy” to be “another race. Jeremiahs envisioned a race war to the death, though their scenarios varied: Anglo-Saxons against Celts, Syrians against Semites, Europeans against Asians.”37 At the same time, racial difference provided pseudo-scientific grounds for the inception of identities that were seemingly stable, enduring, and incontestable. This was a crucial development not least for the self-understanding of Europeans, who now sought to identify themselves in contrast to the Slavs in the east of the

32 Ibid.
33 See above, p. 155.
34 Ibid., 168.
35 Ibid., 169.
36 Ibid.
continent. It was in this context that the popular imagination conflated the notion of the Russian menace with fear of the Slavs in general. Especially Germans, who shared their borders with and exercised suzerainty over a large part of Europe’s Slavic population, developed a deep mistrust of their eastern neighbours, fearing that the Russian tsar could unite his brethren for an attempt to establish hegemony. A watershed moment in these developments was the First Slavic Congress, which was held in Prague from 2 to 12 July 1848.38

The congress was anything but a demonstration of Slav unity. Foremost, it was an assembly of Austrian Slavs seeking to assert themselves against the politically and culturally dominant, yet numerically inferior German and Hungarian populations within the Habsburg Empire. Notably, the delegates directed their criticism “not only against Germans or Magyars, but just as lustily against their Slav neighbours in the east.”39 Ultimately, the assembly endorsed “a great-Austrian solution, a federation of equal nationalities, united militarily and economically for the assurance of their unhindered cultural and social development.”40 The chairman of the congregation František Palacký (1798–1876) aptly exemplified these ideals. On the one hand, he insisted on being “a Czech of Slav descent,” devoted “wholly and for ever to the service of my nation.”41 On the other hand, Palacký was fully committed to the Habsburg Empire, “whose preservation, integrity, and consolation,” he argued, “is, and must be, a great and important matter not only for my own nation but for the whole of Europe, indeed for mankind and civilization itself.”42 Palacký, too, was worried about a further westward expansion of Russia, and reckoned that only the Austrian Empire would be strong enough “to resist successfully for all time the superior neighbour to the east.”43 This moderate and in fact conservative position largely reflected the attitude of the other delegates. Ultimately, the First Slavic Congress was a gathering of

---

38 See above, p. 162.
40 Ibid., 69–70.
41 Ibid., 65.
42 Ibid., 65–67.
43 Ibid., 69–70.
conservative intellectuals whose demands were much in line with those of their German contemporaries.

Nevertheless, the event deeply troubled the German public, not least because Czech nationalists at the same time instigated a revolt in Prague. Contrary to popular opinion, the delegates to the Prague Slavic Congress were neither involved, nor did they sympathize with the insurgents. “The leaders of the Congress were moderate men, conservative liberals, loyal to the monarchy,” and most departed as soon as the uprising broke out. Regardless, Germans conflated the two movements and, moreover, considered them harbingers of a Russian-led alliance of Slavs that would eventually turn against Europe. Already in 1848, in an immediate reaction to the First Slavic Congress, a treatise on *The Slavic Conditions* asserted that the delegates in Prague “would much rather form a protective wall against Germany than against their Russian brethren.” This, the author claims, applied in particular to “Palacký and Hawliczek,” the leaders of the Congress: Naturally, they would want to “unite with the Russians who were closer to them.”

Similarly, another German commentary on the events in Prague explained that “Croats, Slavonians and Illyrians were in fact seeking to turn the Austrian Empire into a Slavic Empire, and thereby working closely together with Russia.” The Russian government, however, entertained no such plans. As a matter of fact, the tsar even openly opposed Panslavic stirrings, as they seemed to endanger the cohesion of his empire by emancipating the various ethnicities under Russian suzerainty. For almost a century, this position remained official Russian policy, and until the 1930s “Pan-Russian nationalism trumped Pan-Slavism. The Kremlin thought of itself, not of the Slav ‘brothers.’” Only in the 1940s did Stalinist Russia adopt Panslavism in an effort to unite the peoples of Soviet Union in the struggle against Nazi Germany. This Panslavism, however, was more “akin to the universal Russian monarchy which Palacký had dreaded.” In 1848, Russia pursued no

---

44 Ibid., 74.
46 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 230–2.
such agenda. Rather, “St. Petersburg felt itself politically akin to Berlin and Vienna, not to its putative little Slavic brothers in Mitteleuropa, a feeling reciprocated by the two Germanic emperors.”

Yet the German public was ignorant of such nuances within the Panslavic movement. Rather, the Slavic Congress in Prague seemed to further substantiate German fears of a Slavic onslaught, a fear that had gained currency in conjunction with the spread of a racist mindset.

Already in 1839, even before the term ‘Panslavism’ became popular, Friedrich Bassermann cautioned his fellow citizens against an aggressive union of the Slavs. He asked his readers: “What if Russia was to exploit its tribal kinship to seduce Austria’s Polish subjects?” Undoubtedly, he concluded, a “battle between the Germanic and the Slavic tribes” would become inevitable. Similar predictions followed, and the closer the escalation of the Eastern Question approached, the more drastic they became. In 1843, a reviewer of Custine’s Letters from Russia warned of Russia’s intention to lead all Slavs in an attack against Europe: “The combination of Panslavism, the Greek Creed, and the military state of the government,” the author argued, “justifies such fears.” And in 1847, the Saxon historian Moritz Heffter (1792-1873) even claimed that a World Battle of Germans and Slavs had been raging since the End of the Fifth Century, “the end of which was still not in sight.” By the 1850s, the Slavic threat to Europe was self-evident to Germans. “Once we fully appreciate the significance of the blood relations between the Slavs in Europe,” one author argued in 1851, “we shall also recognize that the danger of a consolidated, anti-European Panslavic state is not just the nightmare of enthusiastic nationalists.” Consequently, anti-Russian sentiment soared as the conflict in the Near East intensified. It was, however, no longer the Russian menace that alarmed the German public. Rather, the ‘Slavic yoke’ now loomed in the east.

50 Malia, Russia Under Western Eyes, 134.
51 Bassermann, Deutschland und Rußland, 37–38.
52 Ibid.
53 “Custine’s Rußland,” Zeitung für die elegante Welt, July 7, 1843, 656.
In imagining the Slavic yoke, the German imagination consolidated disparate russophobic sentiments of the preceding 150 years. The notion of the Russian barbarism was corroborated, visions of Russian civilization inverted, and once more the Russian people was considered a blind mass of obedient slaves. Most importantly, however, modern racism allowed for these traits to be essentialized and considered as inherent. The Slavic threat thus appeared an immutable and unstoppable natural force, lest it be destroyed in a timely manner. The Württemberg publicist and politician Gustav Diezel (1817-1858), in his treatise on Russia, Austria, and the Eastern Question (1853) gives a concise impression of how Slavs were represented in Germany at the time:

The basic trait of the Slavic character is his lack of the ability to know right from wrong, and his lack of an inner drive to education [innerer Bildungstrieb] – the former is undoubtedly connected to the latter. Slavic tribes in general seem chaotic masses, blind in their faith, almost as if they had remained spellbound by the forces of nature; they are sensual, seem to live and care only for the moment without an understanding of personal freedom [...]. However, when stirred by any given flood of peoples [Völkerfluth], they will attach themselves to the movement as if they had no will of their own, and in the retinue of any given conqueror wander the earth pillaging, singing, and burning.56

Diezel’s denial of a Slavic Bildungstrieb is particularly notable in the German context. The author thus asserts that the Slavs inherently lack the qualities necessary to intellectually and culturally evolve both as individuals and as a nation: They are ‘spellbound by the forces of nature.’ Therefore, the Slav was not only a barbarian, but moreover a barbarian who could not be integrated into the community of civilized peoples. Naturally aggressive, he roamed the world as part of a ‘chaotic mass.’ Consequently, the Slav needed be feared or conclusively eliminated. To be sure, European Slavs time and again attempted to disperse such fears. The chair for Slavic literatures at the Collège de France, for example, published both in French and German a study entitled The Twofold Panslavism (1847), in which he distinguishes ‘real’ (intellectual, cultural) Panslavism from Russia’s imperial ambitions.57 The same point had already been made by an anonymous German writer in 1843, who, in a

56 Gustav Diezel, Rußland, Deutschland und die östliche Frage (Stuttgart: Karl Göpel, 1853), 4.
57 Cyprien Robert, Der zweifache Panslawismus: Mit Anmerkungen von Dr. J. P. Jordan (Leipzig: Slawische Buchhandlung, 1847).
treatise on *Slavs, Russians and Germans*, insisted that the Slavs were neither united nor striving to expand their territories westwards.\(^{58}\) And in 1848, another contemporary assured his German readers that even though “a Slavic Congress had indeed assembled, not a single word of hatred against other peoples, or a wish to rule over others was uttered at the occasion.”\(^{59}\) In the end, however, these incidental efforts to mediate could not prevail against the legion preaching an end battle between Europeans and the Russian-led union of barbarian Slavs.

**WESTERN CIVILIZATION AND EASTERN BARBARITY**

In the German lands, overflowing fear of the Slavic yoke further corroborated the Russian-European antagonism towards the middle of the nineteenth century. This development dovetailed and fully put into effect the momentous shift in symbolic geography Ruge and others had adumbrated in the 1840s.\(^{60}\) It was now that Germans began to consistently use the terms ‘east’ and ‘west’ to denote distinct hemispheres on the European continent. Hitherto, the assignation of Russia’s place on the imagined map of Europe had largely corresponded to the geographical traditions of classical antiquity. Russia’s Scythian ancestors, like “all ‘septentrional’ peoples had settled in an area that lay north of the civilized world of antiquity – north of the west Roman ‘occidens’ as well as the east Roman ‘orient.’”\(^{61}\) This notion persisted for most of the modern era: Russians, just like Swedes, Norwegians, and Finns, were one of Europe’s ‘northern’ peoples.\(^{62}\) This imagined geography was revised only towards the middle of the nineteenth century, and due to a fundamental change of Russia’s image abroad. Particularly in the aftermath of the failed 1848 revolutions, less and less Germans esteemed the tsar an enlightened leader of a

\(^{58}\) *Slawen, Russen, Germanen: Ihre gegenseitigen Verhältnisse in der Gegenwart und Zukunft* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1843), 222–32.


\(^{60}\) See above, p. 157.


\(^{62}\) Montesquieu, for example, in his theory of climate unequivocally declares the Russians a ‘northern’ people. See p. 36.
youthful nation. Rather, the majority came to despise him as an ‘oriental despot’ ruling over submissive ‘Asiatics.’ The Russian Empire was now fully identified with the Unkultur of Asia, i.e. the ‘orient’ of the French and British tradition which corresponded to the German ‘East.’ In terms of imagined geography, ‘Russia’ thus migrated to a space which in the European imagination had for the longest time been occupied by the declining Ottoman Empire and, more generally speaking, the Muslim populations of the Near and Middle East. As a result, “certain associations, which hitherto had been ruled out by the epithet ‘Nordic,’ could now be applied to Russia: the barbaric, the ‘hordes,’ the semantic field of avalanches, spates, floods (and the dams that needed be raised against them).”63 This, however, affected not only affected representations of the Russian Empire. Racial ideology made it possible to metonymically transfer these notions to Russia’s putative racial brethren, which is why “the Slavic part of Europe was increasingly considered a unity.”64 This union of Slavs was then “eventually identified with eastern Europe,” and accordingly Germans regarded Panslavism “a threat from the east.”65

This intellectual shift complemented and strengthened a fundamental reassessment of Germany’s own location on the imagined map of Europe. The cultural imagination no longer coalesced around the notion of forming a strong – unified or federal – block in Mitteleuropa. Rather, Germans increasingly saw themselves as members of a ‘western’ European community. In terms of symbolic geography, this union could be tellingly juxtaposed to ‘eastern barbarity.’ With regard to geopolitics, Germans conceived Western Europe as a means to conclusively halt the advancement of the Slavic threat from the East. Accordingly, at the outbreak of the Crimean War, “almost everywhere [in Germany] the people called for the battle of the Romano-Germanic peoples against Slavdom. In other words, they demanded Prussia’s and Austria’s entry into the war on the side of the western powers.”66 Especially in the early stages of the war, when both of the warring parties courted the hesitating rulers of Prussia and Austria, and when the outcome of the conflict

63 Ibid., 74–75.
64 Ibid., 67.
65 Ibid.
66 Groh, Rußland im Blick Europas, 243.
seemed uncertain, the public in the German lands vigorously pushed for its governments to accede to the allied war effort.

Naturally, much of the enthusiasm for the Franco-British cause derived from geopolitical considerations. The anonymous author of *Prussia and Russia* (1854), for example, cautioned against siding with the Russian Emperor, as this would not only estrange Prussia from the civilized powers of the west, but moreover render her a “fief and appendix of Russia.”67 Similarly, the *German Answer to the Oriental Question* (1854) warned the German governments that maintaining a neutral stance would indefinitely prolong the “struggles between east and west.”68 Such a denouement, the author argued, would be incommensurable with Austria’s and Prussia’s state interests, as well as the demands of their people.69 Therefore, he concluded, “the union with England and France is absolutely necessary.”70 Political reason, it appears, indeed called for a ‘western alliance.’

Even more pressing, however, was the notion that Europeans needed to unite against the impending onslaught of barbarism, that Germans needed to join the western powers to form a bulwark of European civilization. For Gustav Diezel, for example, it was not the military, but in fact “the cultural superiority of England” which made it “virtually impossible for Germany to join Russia” in the war effort.71 After all, he argued, “every thread of Germany’s existence is tied to English civilization.”72 Consequently, Germany’s “national interest made it imperative that she join western culture in opposing the barbarism threatening from the east.”73 Diezel had thus concisely and tellingly pinpointed the intellectual rift which in the minds of Germans henceforth divided the European continent in two fully distinct hemispheres, with western culture on the one side, and eastern barbarism on the other.

67 *Preußen und Rußland*, 39–42.
68 *Deutsche Antwort auf die orientalische Frage* (Heidelberg: Akademische Anstalt für Literatur und Kunst, 1854), 22–3.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
In terms of nomenclature, the ‘culture-barbarism’ dichotomy was not new. Rather, it predated even the era of Peter the Great. Its semantic implications, however, were fully specific to the nineteenth century. In the preceding centuries, cultural difference in the European context was assessed by using a scale that applied equally to all objects of investigation. Therefore, from Leibniz to Rotteck, Russia was perceived as a state which was not excluded from, but merely ranged lower on this scale of European civilization. In the mind of Germans, this permeable wall separating Russia from the rest of Europe was sealed in the course of the nineteenth century. The rise of modern racism essentialized difference and thus made it possible to unequivocally exclude the Slavs from the hemisphere of ‘culture.’

To be sure, the notion of Western European ‘culture,’ was also not ‘new,’ taxonomically speaking. Indeed, the idea of a continent unified by a shared, superior culture was as old as the notion of ‘Christendom.’ With the downfall of ‘Christendom,’ however, this cultural union had been shattered. In its stead, the nation state became the paramount point of reference for personal and collective identities. This created a gap between the distinct nations, as the national interests of Germans, for example, necessarily diverged from those of their European neighbours. However, towards the middle of the nineteenth century, developments in international affairs once again made an alliance of ‘western’ cultures attractive for Germans. Based on notions of a shared cultural heritage, they could align with their European rivals in the mutual struggle against non-western peoples – be it the colonization of the African continent or, as in the present case, the repulsion of eastern barbarians.

Throughout the German lands, this notion of a deep-rooted cultural union of Western Europe had steadily gained currency in the 1840s. Of course, this stood at odds with the political reality, particularly with regard to the sustained Franco-German conflict over the Rhine border. Nevertheless, Germans across all political camps called for a swift

---

76 See above, p. 158.
cultural rapprochement between the two nations whom, they argued, faith and history had inextricably linked together. Moses Hess (1812-1875), for example, the German-Jewish socialist and Zionist avant la lettre already in 1841 preached the cultural unity of “Romano-Germanic Europe” which needed to conclusively lay aside “its material disagreements.”77 And another German author explained that “in the past, friendly and neighbourly cooperation had always been the best policy with regard to France,” and in fact asserted that earlier disputes were now nothing but “lifeless memories, pathological moods, and fabricated bugbears.”78 Arnold Ruge, too, was a devoted advocate of a Franco-German rapprochement, and, moreover, published a circumstantial treatise On the Intellectual Alliance of the Germans and the French (1843). He even argued that, had Germans in the past accepted more influence from across the Rhine, their present situation would be significantly improved. “Nulla salus sine Gallis [‘there is no well-being without the French’],” he urged his compatriots, “the French are your necessary complement.”79 In particular, Ruge argued, Germans were indebted to their western neighbours “for the destruction of your old Empire [the Holy Roman Empire dissolved as a result of Napoleon’s attack on Germany in 1806]. Without them, undoubtedly you would still consider it holy in all its foolishness.”80 Ultimately, he considered France as the main source for social and political progress in Germany.

Ruge reiterated these theses in an address to the National Assembly in July 1848,81 and thereby received much support from the delegate Carl Vogt.82 The latter, too, argued that it was the French nation “with whom we desire an alliance, as it is them we need to thank for the freedom we enjoy this side of the Rhine.”83 Of, the political equilibrium between France and Germany remained volatile, for the remainder of the nineteenth century and beyond, and nobody was seriously considering a political alliance with the

78 V. S., Deutschland und die orientalische Frage (Nürnberg: J. A. Stein, 1855), 162.
80 Ibid.
81 See Wigard, Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main, 2: 1098–100.
82 See above, p. 167.
83 Ibid., 1103–04.
French *Erbfeind*. However, as Germans increasingly rejected the alliance of the three eastern courts, on an intellectual level they more and more identified with their western neighbours. This pertained not only to France, but to Europe’s non-Slavic peoples in general. A primordial union was imagined which superseded both historical and political divisions. As Moses Hess explained:

> The Romano-Germanic Europe has but One history, One culture, and One kinship of customs, languages, and tribes. Indeed, just as any higher life form, it has not remained an inanimate monotony. Rather, it dispersed in good order, became German, French, English, Protestant, Catholic, Anglican; France is surrounded by the Romanic countries and the Mediterranean; England possesses the Seven Seas; Scandinavia in the north and Austria in the south and West are attached to Germany. But this whole great and diverse mass of lands and peoples remains One organism. Not a single element can be injured without the whole feeling the pain.  

Thus, in one paragraph, Hess had concisely described the general idea of ‘Western Europe’ as it materialized in Germany towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Of course, it was imagined as a union of fully distinct nation states. These, however, purportedly shared not only their customs and culture. Rather, they were connected through a venerable ‘tribal kinship.’ Thus, the idea of ‘Western Europe’ was similarly essentialized as its ‘Eastern’ complement.

The strongest impetus for the formation of a Western European identity, however, came from abroad, and emanated in particular from the threat of the Slavic yoke. Consequently, German ideas about the West were most perspicuous when developed in contrast to the European East, and revolved as much around geopolitical as cultural notions. Ludwig zu Oettingen-Wallerstein,\(^{85}\) for one, deemed the inception of a Western alliance an indispensable a barrier against Russian expansionism. Thereby, he argued not only for “physical,” but also for a “higher spiritual resistance” against the Slavic onslaught.\(^{86}\) The power of the West, he asserted, lay not alone in its superior military force. Rather, an alliance of Europe’s western nations would equal “the establishment of an insurmountable

---

\(^{84}\) Hess, *Die europäische Triarchie*, 176.

\(^{85}\) See above, p. 173.

moral rampart,” against which Slavic aggression would be powerless. Thus, Oettingen-Wallerstein tellingly paired political and military with cultural resistance. This was eloquent of rising fears of Russian *Unkultur* in Germany. Hitherto, whenever notions of the Russian menace had gained currency, public opinion had taken fright at the prospect of the tsar asserting political suzerainty over the European continent. Now, however, these apprehensions extended to fears of cultural hegemony, or rather the destruction of culture through the incursion of barbarian Slavs. Thus, when Philipp Fallmerayer at the height of the Crimean War speaks of “the incurable fraction that has emerged between the east and west of Europe,” he tellingly juxtaposes Russians to Europe’s “civilized peoples.” The latter, Fallmerayer asserted, were inherently cosmopolitan and immune to the “corrupting forces of religion and nationalism.” The Russian, in contrast, was “so strongly devoted to his nationality and religion that, should he consider either of them under attack, he will give himself over to blind fanaticism.” Once more, the distinction between Eastern Russia and Western Europe no longer allowed for gradation, but made for two mutually exclusive socio-cultural spheres. Accordingly, Fallmerayer asserts that

the systems of Russia and the *occidental* civilized states [*Culturstaaten*] are diametrically opposed to one another. The one seeks to foster education and prosperity, develop the striving powers of their peoples and the rule of law; to these ends the governments consider indispensable an adequate degree of civic and personal freedom. *Russian* statesmanship esteems highest order and blind submission; her system declares freedom as invalid, education a threat, prosperity and private property of the peasants dangerous.

In a remarkable transfer, Fallmerayer considers the emphatically German notion of *Cultur* a hallmark of the Western (‘occidental’) states. Together, they would have to defend the highest achievements of civil society against the destructive influence of Russian despotism. It was the battle of the reactionary “Byzantine tsardom in the East with its

---

87 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid., 322–23.
opposite in the occident: Purified progress which has attained a higher degree of cultural refinement.” European civilization and Russian barbarism: Irreconcilably the two seemed to face each other at the middle of the nineteenth century.

Unsurprisingly, this East-West dichotomy developed its full force when coupled with the rhetoric of race: The fundamental difference it implied fully corroborated German notions of cultural superiority. At the same time, racism further buttressed fears of Russia’s eastward expansion and, as a result, prompted the most emphatic calls for an alliance of Europe’s civilized states during the Crimean War. Thus, Wolfgang Menzel’s assessment of the eastern crisis in 1854 strongly resonated with the vocabulary that had already been employed to conjure the Panslavist threat:

In case of a victory, Russia would no longer speak the amicable language. [...] It is self-evident that through the Turkish conquest the barbarism of the Russian will wantonly thrive and even more scrubbily turn the beard aloft, more grimly bare its half-beastly teeth. In the Turkish provinces abounding with men, the Russian host would reinforce itself with half devils that seem predestined to cudgel the pride of civilization from our limbs and to stable their horses in our classrooms.

If, on the other hand, the Romanic and Germanic powers of the West through joint and firm cooperation impede this new barbarian migration with which the Russians are threatening us: Then such a victory of the higher and noble races over the lower, of civilisation over barbarism, of law over force, and of the occidental churches over the dull faith of the popps will appear wholly natural, and it will be just as pleasing as if one were to recover from a heavy, paralyzing, and numbing illness.

Tellingly, Menzel juxtaposes the ‘higher and noble races’ of the West to the ‘lower’ races of the Russian East: The Russian is beastly and unaccustomed to the higher attainments of civilization and religion. He moves as part of a barbarian horde, comparable to a fatal disease. The West, in contrast, is governed by reason and the rule of law, and therefore obliged to unite to defend these principles against the onslaught of Eastern barbarism.

93 Jakob P. Fallmerayer, “Deutschland und die orientalische Frage (1855),” 117.
Menzel’s vision succinctly integrated the disparate fears of the Russian menace and the
Slavic yoke which had emerged in Germany in the course of the nineteenth century. The
author thus concisely summarized the semantic implications of east-west dichotomy as it
took form in the mind of Germans during the 1840s and 1850s.

REIMAGINING THE PAST

With the Crimean War, a century and a half of close cultural and political relations between
Russia and the German lands drew to a close. The era brought an abrupt end to the Holy
Alliance which, but a few years earlier, the three eastern courts had solemnly reaffirmed
after conjointly striking down the revolutions of 1848/49. Although an official annulment
of the alliance never occurred, its fate was sealed in 1854: The Austrian Emperor, in an
effort to de-escalate the conflict on the Crimea, threatened to join the allied war effort lest
Russia retreat from the Danubian Principalities which it had occupied earlier that year. At
this, the Russian Emperor took personal offence, and he was further angered by Prussia’s
explicit intention to maintain her neutrality in the affair. This was the breaking point for the
union of the three eastern courts. Thus, the French Emperor Napoleon III “had attained his
paramount objective” in the altercation.95 The Crimean War dissolved the Holy Alliance
and, by extension, the order of Europe which had been instated in 1815, above all to
contain French ambition.96 Now, Napoleon could “dictate the provisions of the Treaty of
Paris” and seek to expand his influence in European affairs, maybe even establish French
hegemony on the continent.97 Austria, in contrast, emerged severely weakened from the
conflict, due mainly to its government’s failure to take resolute action in the war. After a
prolonged period of indecision, the emperor’s decision not to join the effort on the Russian
side estranged him from his most important ally in the concert of Europe. At the same time,
Austria’s hesitation to overtly align with the western powers led to its exclusion from the
peace negotiations and subsequent marginalisation in international affairs. To be sure, State
Secretary Karl Ferdinand von Buol-Schauenstein (1797-1856) hoped for a future

---

95 Helmut Rumpler, 1804-1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa, 369.
96 See above, p. 172.
97 Ibid.
rapprochement with France and Britain. In fact, he was “sufficiently naive to believe to have succeeded in substituting the ‘System Metternich’ with a ‘System Buol,’ and to have founded the peace of Europe through an alliance with the liberal Western powers, rather than through the solidarity of the conservative Eastern powers.”\textsuperscript{98} This, however, quickly proved a fallacy. In fact, “the Crimean War was the turning point in European power politics which necessarily prompted decline of Austria.”\textsuperscript{99}

The position of Prussia, in contrast, was far more favourable. Due to the strict neutrality it had maintained throughout the war, the Prussian government “could indeed hope that Russia would in time recognize this service of the Hohenzollern state.”\textsuperscript{100} An alliance with Russia, however, no longer was a cornerstone of Prussian foreign policy, for “the Crimean War had altered the face of Europe: The West had won, the East had lost, and if there was a hegemonic power on the continent, it was no longer Russia, but France.”\textsuperscript{101}

Consequently, Prussian leaders sought to initiate a rapprochement with the French Empire, rather than renew the alliance with the Russian tsar. This change in attitude tellingly corresponded to popular calls for a Western alliance of the Romano-Germanic nations of Europe. Moreover, it bore witness to a highly remarkable about-turn of official Prussian policy, for now it was even possible to consider “Bonapartist France as a potential ally in a future altercation with Austria.”\textsuperscript{102} Leopold von Gerlach (1790-1861), the leading figure in Prussian foreign affairs during the latter years of the Holy Alliance, would have certainly considered this sacrilege. The future strong man of Prussia Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), in contrast, regarded this scenario a possible “imperative of reason of state.”\textsuperscript{103} Thus, as forty years earlier in the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic era, official Prussian policy once more corresponded to popular opinion. Both the government and the people now subscribed to the idea of a Western European alliance.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Winkler, \textit{Der lange Weg nach Westen}, 1: 135.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 136.
\item \textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The momentous significance of this shift can be assessed by considering that it even led to a fundamental reappraisal of German history which reflected the nation’s new, ‘Western’ self-understanding. The shared cultural heritage with Britain and in particular France was accentuated, while German-Russian relations were marginalised and, at times, even grossly falsified. This held particularly true for the era of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which had in fact witnessed the closest political and intellectual rapprochement between the two nations. Already in the 1840s, memories of the Coalition Wars deeply troubled German liberals who thought it shameful that Germans had the Russian despot to thank for their freedom. Franz Schuselka, for one, declared that “more ignominious than French suzerainty is the notion that Russia in fact liberated us from this rule, that Russia called itself and continues to call itself the deliverer of Germany, that the Cossacks appeared to us the Apostles of freedom, and that Russia was permitted to guarantee the rebirth of Germany.”104 This was a most remarkable inversion. During the War of the Sixth Coalition, even Ernst Moritz Arndt, one of the forefathers of German liberalism, had celebrated Tsar Alexander I as the rightful arbiter of peace in Europe.105 In contrast, Schuselka now condemned the Russian Emperor for his “arrogant conduct towards Germany, making every German want to cry bloody tears of shame and anger.”106 Increasingly, the memory of the Russo-German alliance during the era of Napoleon met with open rejection.

As the Crimean War approached, the memory of Russia’s decisive victory over Napoleon’s Grande Armée was no longer simply rejected. Rather, it in fact became a contested memory. Already in 1849 the historian Wilhelm Stricker (1815-1891) sought to re-imagine the War of the Sixth Coalition as a predominantly German effort, and tellingly spoke of Russia’s “participation in the German wars against Napoleon.”107 Similarly, the author of the treatise on Russia and Prussia commended “Russia’s loyal contribution in those years,” and assured that “no-one would deny the important part Emperor Alexander

104 Schuselka, Die Orientalische, das ist Russische Frage, 42.
105 See above, p. 110.
106 Ibid.
played in conducting the war.”\textsuperscript{108} However, the author also insists that “if Russia had lacked the great national strength of Prussia in the fight against Napoleon, undoubtedly the Emperor Napoleon would have soon initiated a new war, and Russia would have been too exhausted to meet the challenge.”\textsuperscript{109} And Wolfgang Menzel, too, questioned whether “Germany and Prussia in particular should be forever indebted and obliged to Russia.”\textsuperscript{110} In his eyes, Austria, Prussia, and Russia had mutually assisted each other. Moreover, he asserted, “had Austria and Prussia in the spring of 1813 remained on the side of Napoleon, Russia would have surely been defeated and conquered in a new campaign.”\textsuperscript{111} Menzel therefore concluded that Russia in fact “had Prussia and Austria to thank for its deliverance from Napoleon.”\textsuperscript{112} Thus, national chauvinism obscured the historically warranted achievements of the Russian Empire. Henceforth, Eastern Russia was even to be excluded from the Western European past.

Those instances, however, in which the Russian Empire seemed to have most strikingly expounded its barbarian nature were emphasized and brought to the foreground. This particularly applied to the memory of the Polish Partitions. Originally, the three successive partitions in 1772, 1793, and 1795 had served as a means to mediate Prussian, Austrian, and Russian territorial ambitions, and moreover, laid the foundation for the close alliance of the three eastern courts.\textsuperscript{113} This memory, too, Germans emphatically challenged by the middle of the nineteenth century. From now on, Russia was portrayed as the sole aggressor, while “Prussia and Austria,” Wolfgang Menzel for example argued, “had been coaxed to partake in the politically ill-advised Partition of Poland.”\textsuperscript{114} Another author even asserted that Prussia’s participation in the Partition was but a defensive measure. “To inhibit Russia’s advance into Posen and Gnesen,” he argued, “Prussia was left with no other choice than to assert her suzerainty over the closest Polish territories.”\textsuperscript{115} In this manner, the Russian-German past was slowly but surely rewritten in accordance with the parameters of

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Menzel, Die Aufgabe Preußens 1854, 12.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} See above, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{115} Preußen und Rußland, 21–23.
the new east-west dichotomy. “One glance on the history of the past hundred years,” the author of *Prussia and Russia* claimed, “reveals that the relationship on the side of Russia was by far more often malicious than amicable.”¹¹⁶ Thus, the rise of the modern east-west dichotomy affected not only the geopolitical reality, but even the historical consciousness. As Germans consolidated their identity as a ‘Western’ nation, the Russo-German past was neutralized with biased countermemories, as if not to threaten the integrity of the new self-understanding. Soon, these new narratives were canonized and accepted into the cultural memory of Germans. By the time World War I began, they had already become hegemonic. As Troy Paddock points out, even though “at the outbreak of the war the German government did not have any official propaganda organization at its disposal to try to sway public opinion,” the German press demonstrated remarkable unity “in its depiction of Russia and its analysis of Russian motives.”¹¹⁷

The fact that German newspapers provided a clear and coherent depiction of Russia and Russian motives without a central office coordinating propaganda suggests that there was a definite image or perception of Russia in Germany before the war broke out, and certainly before the Ober Ost officials could coordinate a propaganda effort. Russia was an autocratic, barbaric, artificial, backward, and Asiatic empire that hoped to quell domestic unrest with foreign policy triumphs. A combination of misunderstanding and animosity toward Germany, fuelled by pan-Slavic nationalism, led to the outbreak of hostilities between the two nations.¹¹⁸

The rise of the Russian menace, the imagined threat of the Slavic yoke, and fear of the Panslavist movement had not only fundamentally divided the European continent at the middle of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the intellectual east-west rift, as it emerged in the aftermath of the Crimean War, helped prepare the great political and military conflicts of the following 150 years.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.
¹¹⁸ Ibid.
IX. Conclusion

As Larry Wolff correctly indicates, the modern east-west dichotomy was above all conceived to consolidate the self-image of the ‘West’ as an inherently superior culture. The process, however, was far more drawn out and contingent on many more factors than Wolff allows for. To begin with, Russia, as part of Europe’s east, was not ‘discovered’ by Enlightenment philosophers at the close of the eighteenth century. Already two generations earlier, it had made a forceful appearance on the continent, as Tsar Peter I founded an empire that became a strong contender for power in the concert of Europe. By the time Voltaire, Rousseau, and Herder were theorizing about Russian civilization, Catherine the Great had led her state to become one of the dominant forces in the European balance of power. Consequently, Russia was not only treated with condescension, although in the eighteenth century Europe’s east indeed lagged behind the west with regard to its socio-political and economic development. Nevertheless, Russia’s remarkable advancements spurred the European imagination, and soon the tsardom was perceived as a realm of near-infinite potential. As a result, thinkers and statesmen of the Enlightenment did not adopt an exclusively colonial attitude towards the Russian other, as Wolff assumes. Rather, notions of Russia’s political and intellectual inferiority competed with the hope that it may become a key agent in the further advancement of European civilization.

The image of Russia became further nuanced with the rise of distinct civil societies on the European continent. Hitherto, international relations had been a predominantly dynastic affair of Europe’s ruling houses. The intellectual endeavours of the *philosophes* in this regard had also been an ‘aristocratic’ enterprise: Considerations of Russia’s place
IX. Conclusion

within the European community were largely articulated in terms of the philosophy of history, while the ideas and ideals of the population at large were of no interest. This changed as the bourgeoisie came to dominate public discourse, and as international relations were increasingly considered in socio-political, rather than dynastic terms. Thus, particularly in the course and aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, highly distinct images of Russia emerged on the European continent, each specific to a distinct national and/or intellectual agenda. Consequently, even Germans were divided in their assessment of the Russian Empire. On the one hand, following the Vienna Peace Settlement in 1815, a majority of Germans hopefully looked to the Russian tsar who had delivered the continent from twenty years of revolution and warfare. A liberal minority, however, rejected the influence Alexander I had seemingly gained over German affairs by invoking the Holy Alliance. For the latter group, Russia appeared to be the main antagonist to its visions of liberal reform and national unification. As dissatisfaction with the conservatism of the Holy Alliance grew, more and more Germans subscribed to this idea, until it enjoyed common currency in the middle of the nineteenth century. By then, it had become possible to ascribe almost all of the shortcomings of German society to the influence of the Russian tsar. At the same time, an intellectual rapprochement with France and Britain was envisioned which once more would bring liberty and prosperity to the German lands. These intellectual developments significantly contributed to the emergence of the modern east-west dichotomy in German society. The proliferation of racist doctrines gave further meaning to this antagonism: For Germans, the rise of modern racism fully consummated the divide between Europe’s western cultures and Russia’s eastern barbarism.

The paramount finding of this study then is this: The modern east-west dichotomy already at its inception held not only colonial implications. It was not simply, as Wolff intimates, another kind of ‘Orientalism,’ an attempt to dominate Russia or, by extension, the East intellectually. Rather, the divide between east and west evolved from a permanent process of negotiation between the German self and the Russian other. Throughout the rise of German civil society, the intellectual encounter with the Russian Empire expounded problems of social and political identity, thus enabling a critical appraisal of these notions. In the words of Homi Bhabha: The confrontation opened an interstitial space where ideas of
nationness and self-hood could be articulated. Undoubtedly, it would have been intriguing to juxtapose the German experience of this process with concurrent developments in Russia. Unfortunately, necessary constraints on the scope of this dissertation precluded such a commendable extension. Therefore, my main intention has been to elucidate a seemingly marginal, but ultimately highly significant aspect of the history of modern German identity. I am convinced, for example, that this study will help better understand how it was possible for the German and Austrian governments to mobilize public opinion against Russia in the time leading up to the First World War; that it provides further insight into why the Nazi’s idea of a Slavic aggressor looming in the east so strongly resonated with the German public; and that it makes more relatable the immediate popularization of iron-curtain-rhetoric in the aftermath of World War II. Considering the evidence presented in this study, I believe it becomes clear that the notion of a barbarian threat from the east has time and again captured the German imagination because it evolved concurrently to and was, in fact, inextricably linked to core processes in the formation of German civil society. Particularly in the course of the nineteenth century, it was distinction from the Russian other that made meaningful Germany’s ‘western’ identity. In the end, the central ideas of this identity, the notions of national self-determination and liberal governance, had been consolidated by contrasting them to Russia’s ‘eastern’ barbarism. Therefore, the Russian-European antagonism has been, and continues to be, a significant fixture of the German self-understanding.
Bibliography


Bassermann, Friedrich D. *Deutschland und Rußland*. Mannheim: Heinrich Hoff, 1839.


Berman, Russell A. *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.


———Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark: Interspersed with Historical Relations and Political Inquiries. 3 vols. Dublin: S. Price, 1784.


“Custine’s Rußland.” *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, July 5, 1843.


*Deutsche Antwort auf die orientalische Frage*. Heidelberg: Akademische Anstalt für Literatur und Kunst, 1854.


“Die russische Literatur und ihre gegenwärtigen Richtungen.” *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, May 1, 1840.


“Etwas über Karamsin’s Geschichte des russischen Reichs.” *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, June 8, 1827.


Fontenelle, Bernard de. *The Northern Worthies; Or, the lives of Peter the Great, Father of his Country, and Emperor of all Russia. And of His Illustrious Empress Catharine, the late Czарina*. London: E. Morey, 1730.


Gutzkow, Karl. “H. Koenigs literarische Bilder aus Rußland.” Telegraph für Deutschland, no. 17 (1838): 130–133.


———“Göttingen.” Literarisches Wochenblatt, 1819.


“La Russie en 1839 par le marquis de Custine.” Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung, December 12, 1843.


———. *The State of Russia, under the Present Czar: In relation to the several great and remarkable Things he has done, as to his Naval Preparations, the Regulating his Army, the Reforming his People, and Improvement of his Country*. London: Tooke, 1716.


———. “Napoleons letzter Aufenthalt in Moskau (Beschluß).” *Deutsche Blätter*, June 23, 1814.


Raspe, Rudolf E. *Baron Munchausen’s Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia: Humbly Dedicated and Recommended to Country Gentlemen; and, if they please, to be repeated as their own, after a hunt, at horse races, in watering-places, and other such polite assemblies; round the bottle and fire-side*. Oxford: M Smith, 1786.


Schulz, W. “Das eine, was Deutschland nottut.” Allgemeine Politische Annalen, 1831.


Spahn, Adolph T. “Peter der Große und Alexander der Menschen Freund.” Zeitung für die elegante Welt, April 1, 1814.


Strahlenberg, Philipp J. *An historic GEO-geographical description of the North and Eastern parts of Europe and Asia, more particularly of Russia, Siberia and Great Tartary*. London: W. Innys and R. Manby, 1738.


V. S. Deutschland und die orientalische Frage. Nürnberg: J. A. Stein, 1855.


Weber, Friedrich C. Das Veränderte Russland, in welchem die ietzige Verfassung des Geist- und Welitlichen Regiments; der Kriegs-Staat zu Lande und zu Wasser; Die Begebenheiten des Czarewitzen, und was sich sonst merckwürdiges in Russland zugetragen, nebst verschiedenen andern bissher unbekandten Nachrichten in einem biss 1720 gehenden Journal vorgestellt werden, mit einer accuraten Land-Carte und Kupferstichen versehen. 3 vols. Franckfurt: Nicolaus Förster, 1721.

The Present State of Russia: Being an account of the government of that country both civil and ecclesiastical; of the Czar’s forces by sea and land, the regulation of his finances, the several methods he made use of to civilize his people and improve the country, his transactions with several eastern princes, and what happened most remarkable at his court, particularly in relation to the late Czarewitz, from the Year 1714, to 1720, the whole being the journal of a foreign minister who resided in Russia at that time. With a description of Petersbourg and Cronslot, and several other pieces relating to the affairs of Russia. London: W. Taylor, 1723.


