

Unfortunately, this book fits that pattern. The author does a superb job analyzing and summarizing the accomplishments of the Rhine Commission during the period from 1817 to 1880. As he points out, the commission proved to be a remarkable and durable institution that has served the interests of commerce and trade all along the river's route from Switzerland to the Netherlands for some two-hundred years now. However, the Rhine Commission (and this book's author) also completely ignored the negative consequences of the "knowledge regime" that came into being under its tutelage. The commission was never a depository of scientific data and knowledge about rivers in general or even the Rhine in particular. It was an institution with one overarching mission—to turn the Rhine into a shipping canal—and it pursued that goal with unwavering devotion. In doing so, it also pursued an agenda that ended up stripping the Rhine of most of its natural floodplain and biodiversity. It created a faster and straighter stream, to the detriment of fish populations and commercial fishing (most famously the salmon industry); and it stood idly by as the river became excessively polluted, to the detriment of every living thing on its banks.

Despite its title, this book is not really about "Rhine knowledge," but about "Rhine Commission knowledge," a very different thing. A more nuanced study would have examined the factors that created this lopsided "knowledge regime" in the nineteenth century, with an eye to elucidating why the Rhine Commission chose certain pathways instead of others, even when it was clear what negative consequences would ensue. Had the author taken a look at the institution from the perspective of an outsider, he might have produced a better primer for understanding the benefits and pitfalls of knowledge regimes within the context of international institution-building.

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Metternich, the German Question and the Pursuit of Peace, 1840-1848

By Barbora Pásztorová. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. Pp. vii + 184. Cloth \$102.99. ISBN: 978-3110769005.

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Studies dealing with Prince Clemens von Metternich and with German and European diplomacy in the crisis-ridden 1840s are not rare, even in an era that has deemphasized diplomatic and political history. Through engagement with that scholarship and wide archival research, this new monograph, a revised translation of a Czech-language work from 2019, enters the lists in just that field.

Following an initial chapter that sketches Metternich's involvement with the diplomacy surrounding the German Question in the preceding period (from 1813 to 1840), the core of the book concentrates on the years from 1840 to the Revolutions of 1848. A series of six chapters focuses on specific crises or aspects of diplomatic relations involving Austria and other German states, from the combined Rhine and Orient Crises with France between 1839 and 1841 to the civil war in Switzerland in 1847, and including a chapter on economic relations in the era of the Prussian-led German *Zollverein* as well as one on the national and constitutional questions as such in the German lands. By including chapters on the Swiss civil war and the annexation of Cracow in 1846, the book goes beyond a narrow focus on

the German Question, as suggested by the title. Each chapter opens with substantial detailed background and context to the topic at hand and then zeroes in on Metternich's specific involvement as the main driver of Austrian diplomatic relations. In her analyses, Barbora Pásztorová remains fairly close to the work of Robert D. Billinger, Jr. and of Miroslav Šedivý. Though avowedly aligned with revisionist scholarship on Metternich that treats him more favorably as an agent of European peace rather than largely as a repressive reactionary, Pásztorová draws less than one might expect on the works of Wolfram Siemann, particularly in the main chapters on the various crises and on economic and constitutional issues.

The author tends to tell these stories from the Austrian perspective and to accept Metternich's and other Austrian diplomats' assessments of people and trends, but the account avoids excessive one-sidedness by also including views from other capitals within the German Confederation and abroad, above all from the Prussian Foreign Ministry. In this regard, it is important to emphasize that in addition to mining the archives in Vienna and Prague, where the documents relating to Metternich are housed, Pásztorová incorporates material from archives in Berlin, Munich, Dresden, and Schwerin. She also provides information on the state of public opinion on the various questions along the way.

At the center of Pásztorová's analysis lies the argument that Metternich's main aim was to preserve the existing order of the German Confederation, in part due to his belief that Germany's federal organization was necessary to prevent the rise of a united German state under the aegis of a dangerous German nationalism. In addition, Metternich upheld the fundamental importance of the German Confederation, as a purely defensive alliance, to the maintenance of peace and stability in Europe. As Pásztorová makes clear, Metternich harbored the convenient belief that European interests and Austrian interests were much the same. By working with Prussia – but also maintaining its subordinate status – within the framework of the Confederation, Austria could help keep the peace in Europe, both in the sense of relations with other European states and in that of containing the allegedly conspiratorial international forces of liberalism, republicanism, and nationalism. How far that equation of Austrian and European interests was justified, and how much they might have been susceptible to different interpretation by contemporaries, or by historians since, are questions that could have been pursued further. That this conception was Metternich's genuine conviction rather than just diplomatic rhetoric, however, seems on firm ground.

The Metternich of the 1840s as depicted by Pásztorová was a weakened figure, no longer the Coachman of Europe, but still a central player. By the time of the fall of the conservative league in Switzerland in late 1847, however, the author finds “that [Metternich's] influence on events in Europe was practically zero” (130). Pásztorová suggests that Metternich's declining influence followed in part from his fading physical powers in old age, as noted by some observers in Vienna in the years just before the Revolutions of 1848. More generally, she points to the force of rising mass nationalism, the deterioration of Metternich's position within the Habsburg state apparatus in the era of Count Franz Anton von Kolowrat's sway over the State Council under Ferdinand I, and above all the increasingly independent political line pursued by Prussia following the accession of Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1840. While it may downplay the weight of its main protagonist, Pásztorová's study ultimately makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the German Question, on European diplomacy in the 1840s, and, of course, on Metternich's role in both.

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