H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXIV-23

Contents

"Searching for Peace: Stella Ghervas and Her Book's Critics."

Over the past years, I have introduced several H-Diplo forums as well as writing other contributions to this scholarly forum. But none has required greater mental exertion than this current debate. The critiques are long and dense, and the book under discussion is challenging and ambitious, and while the critics have treated it fairly, they have also raised many substantive questions. Stella Ghervas's response has been very helpful in further clarifying and making precise her arguments. In what follows I will try to outline the argument of the book and the thrust of the responses. I cannot do justice to the detailed observations but will try to suggest what the author was attempting and to highlight some of the issues that the critics believe still remain.

Among other well deserved laurels, *Conquering Peace* recently won the 2023 University of Notre Dame's Laura Shannon Prize in Contemporary European Studies, (awarded every other year by the Nanovic Institute to a book of history or the social sciences). It is an inspiring study, but not without its paradoxes. Ghervas's book elegantly counterposes some of the European peace settlements, all of which promised the restoration of peace after major wars—Utrecht, Vienna, Versailles, and Yalta—and their underlying "principles" with the contemporary theories of international relations that they appeared to incorporate, build upon, and whose further elaboration they encouraged. It is an ambitious effort to fuse diplomatic and intellectual developments, thus a history of both theory and practice. Ghervas summons up a truly extensive rollcall of the intellectuals, both renowned and obscure, who contributed to discussions of war and peace and the nature of international politics. As the commentators note, she brings a thorough familiarity with Slavic Europe into the discussion. Not only treaties are analyzed; Ghervas discusses the institutional structures that followed the compacts—the balance of power, the Congress system, the League of Nations, the European Union—and that sought to make permanent the renewed efforts. It is this repeated attempt to end wars underway and prevent new ones that the author calls conquering peace. It is a conquest always renewed but never permanent—somewhat like Samuel Johnson said of marriage: the triumph of hope over experience.

The commentators all agree that Ghervas is boldly attempting to identify and nail down an elusive theme—the developing "spirit of peace." As Matthijs Lok explains, Ghervas's spirit of peace "supersedes the role of individual politicians, diplomats, or the specific legal formulations of the peace treaties": it arises from "deeper social and cultural movements." But he regrets that the concept of spirit "is somewhat opaque and not sufficiently explained," and he reminds us that she focuses on Europe and not the colonized world. Ghervas responds that her use of spirit refers to a sort of common aspiration, not a transcendent Hegelian *Geist*: "Hence, the term *spirit*, as used in *Conquering Peace*, is a conceptual handle by which I grasp a group of individuals collectively, with their respective positions in time and space, as well as their goals and rationale for action." Fair enough as a clarification, but one might still wonder whether the peacemakers were seeking the common good when they negotiated for their countries' respective advantage. Was Metternich seeking a general pacification of Europe at the Congress of Vienna and after or the preservation of his sovereign's *acquis* in the Germanies, Poland, and Italy?[1] In effect, to preempt this implication, Ghervas has also sharply separated the search for peace from the search for security, both in her response below and in the conclusion to her book. Peace transcends security, and she argues that it is more than the mere absence of war. This is a position that historians and theorists and statesmen can debate forever: must the lion lie down with the lamb, or is it enough that he be restrained from eating the gentler creature?

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[1] The late Paul W. Schroeder seems to have evolved in his view over his career. In *Metternich's Diplomacy at its Zenith*, 1820-1823 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), he depicted the chancellor as an Austrian tactician; in his magisterial *Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), he describes a genuine European learning experience after 1812.

The author starts with the Treaties of Utrecht, which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession. No longer preoccupied primarily by religious conflict, but by French King Louis XIV's decades-long expansionism, the 1713 settlement allowed the Spanish throne to pass to a Bourbon candidate, though excluding the French monarch from holding both crowns. In return the Austrian Habsburgs succeeded to hitherto Spanish Flanders, Milan, and Naples (although twenty years later, Spanish Bourbons would take over Naples). The dukes of Savoy and of Prussia each wrested the title of king as side payments during the conflict; Britain extracted the monopoly of the slave trade to Spanish America as well as Gibraltar. As Ghervas elaborates, the settlement explicitly followed the principle of the balance of power identified by the Tory mercantilist publicist, Charles Davenant and many others.

Ghervas does not treat the Seven Years War as one of her axial conflicts, perhaps because it produced a status quo peace on the continent (what Germans identify as the *Hubertusberger Friede* between Austria, Prussia, and Saxony) even while the related Peace of Paris radically changed the colonial division of spoils as Britain essentially ousted France from Canada and India. She also treats the Westphalian settlement more as prelude than the first of her detailed studies. Ghervas admits that 1648 closed an earlier era characterized by religious ideology and limited Austrian Habsburg ambitions; she sees a German peace, but it can be argued that the Westphalian treaties reconstructed confederal empire in Central Europe as a condition for a broader equilibrium which lasted into the nineteenth century. As Ghervas understands, and as Beatrice Heuser's comment below emphasizes, the cliched notion that the treaties established Westphalian or absolute sovereignty for the German territories of Central Europe was a misreading. Rather, as the historian Andreas Osiander has insisted (and Voltaire's quip about the Holy Roman Empire notwithstanding), they were woven into a confederative Christian fabric that supposedly restrained their willfulness and even religious options.[2] For a century and a half the sponginess in the middle of Europe—which was preserved in part to keep confessional differences arising out of the Reformation from destroying any sort of comity—partially restrained the greed and belligerence of the dynastic entities both within and surrounding the Holy Roman Empire and let smaller units survive. This balance, too, it might be argued, provided a pre-Enlightenment, still religiously infused impulse to the spirit of peace. It put a positive spin on the recognition that a time-out on fratricide was necessary for social and economic reconstruction.

Heuser also reminds us that schemes for pacifying Europe have medieval roots, and she points out that it took thirteen years of warfare to arrive at Utrecht; and, even then, the prolongation of conflict between Sweden and Russia lasted until 1721 to produce another settlement, while renewed war for the balance broke out in the War of the Austrian succession as an ambitious Prussia and recovering France sought to take advantage of the tensions raised by the inner vulnerabilities of the Holy Roman Empire.

Dina Gusejnova's very acute and wide-ranging comment valuably discusses Ghervas in the context of recent international-relations theory and history. She points out the author's kinship with the late Paul Schroeder, whose magisterial history of European international politics from 1763 to 1848 also emphasized that the idea of the balance of power was far more an incentive for war than for durable peace. Instead, peace depended on a concerted learning experience, such as the opponents of Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte finally figured out after 1812 and the periodic consultations of the Congress system after 1815.

One might suggest further that the "spirit of peace" really depended on having less developed territories within reach into which the great powers could expand, whether originally the colonies across the Atlantic, or

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[2] Beatrice Heuser rightly cites Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), and Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations and the Westphalian Myth," *International Organization* 55:2 (2001): 251–287. Osiander's work might best be described as historically informed international relations theory. The *States System* sought "to investigate the role of consensus in the international politics of Europe," (12, but see 7-11 and chap. 2 on Westphalia), and lamented the exclusive emphasis on conflict and war. Although focusing on negotiations and not on intellectual history, the arguments are largely congruent with Ghervas's.

the border lands of Eastern Europe, recaptured from the retreating Turks after 1697, or muscled into as with the partitions of Poland, or by the late nineteenth century the African interior and the North American West. This was Carl Schmitt's insight in *Der Nomos der Erde*: modern international law emerged from the Europeans' effort to avoid quarrels over empire.[3] It is telling that the treaties which dealt with the "Eastern Question" and the Ottoman domains, whether at the Congress of Paris in 1856 and the Congress of Berlin in 1878, or the Conference of Berlin that partitioned the Congo basin, or even the "unequal treaties" at China's expense, find briefer consideration. The author subordinates them in her overall structure. Such a "realist" or neo-Machiavellian interpretation of peace is precisely what Ghervas wishes to argue against.

It is this stance that Boyd van Dijk objects to when he approaches the work from a non-European perspective. He challenges the concept of enduring peace when so much of the world is excluded. Like Viki Birchfield he also asks "what counts for peacetime? Is there 'peace' where official hostilities are absent but relations of oppression and domination continue to exist?" And he suggests that international law and the United Nations (citing the recent works describing the UN as an effort to prolong empire) amounted to an effort to preserve racial and even gender hierarchies.

Vicki Birchfield seems to be the commentator most puzzled by the defects she finds: When it came to the spirit of Geneva after 1919, which drew on President Woodrow Wilson's concepts for the League, how can it be termed a European idea? And when it comes to the European Union, the omission of Jean Monnet, inspirer and then president of the High Authority of its predecessor, the European Coal and Steel Authority, is surprising. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is the agent who makes possible a transformation from a state of non-war (what John Gaddis also called the long peace[4]) to perhaps real peace—although in light of Russian President Vladimir Putin's "special military operation," that happy interval is now in danger once again. Nonetheless Birchfield closes by saluting Ghervas's "brilliant work and an invaluable contribution to debates about the sources of war and the fragility of peace in Europe." I would agree—but this was not the upbeat contribution that Ghervas sought to make.

It is clear that Ghervas's book is based on a vision of Europe as civilization. Its institutions disappoint; its aspirations inspire. The author had a Russian and East European education followed by study and teaching in Geneva and now in Britain: her personal trajectory's post-national European experience is matched by her convictions. She devotes major attention to what she calls the Postwar European Spirit and the European construction that began in 1950, admitting however, that it arose from the failure of the Spirit of Yalta (278). As Birchfield writes, Gorbachev earns Ghervas's special admiration for trying to overcome the division of Europe, and she implies that the European Union, although arising out of the East-West split of the 1940s, and Gorbachev's "common European home" were both important chapters in the conquest of peace. It is a framing, I think, that captures the hopes of the European Union and of 1989—a monument in a sense to Gorbachev's "common European house," and European Commission president Jacques Delors's patient work to deepen and enlarge Europe. But it is a spirit that was breathing its last by the early twenty-first century (331); the spirit of Enlarged Europe was never able to revive the Postwar European Spirit (334), and the ending of the book surrenders, I think, to wistfulness.

Gusejnova in particular acknowledges the virtues of the author's attention to Eastern Europe and demonstrates her own familiarity with the literature focused on the region. She raises profound questions, however: do we still need an account that critiques realism? "Many of the more recent political and intellectual histories of Europe have moved beyond the principle of reason of state." (Ghervas's rejoinder insists that this is less the case than her critic thinks.) Conversely, she asks, doesn't Ghervas's idea of compromise as peace tend to make any agreement a virtuous achievement. Wouldn't Munich and the Hitler-

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[3] Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des jus publicum Europeaum* (Cologne: Greven, 1950).

[4] John Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987)—a conceptualization that has also proved controversial.

Stalin Pact amount to cases of "conquering peace?" (Again, Ghervas has dissents, whether satisfactorily or not must be left to readers.) Gusejnova also remains skeptical about the nod to Montesquieu and she asks whether Montesquieu's notion of fear and terror as the principle behind despotism might not have its analogue in international relations: that is fear of war, not the irenic spirit of peace is the force behind the institution of peace regimes.

To conclude, I would point out that in many respects Ghervas's rich history shares with many contemporary scholars a commitment to what I think of as writing history in the subjunctive—an effort to certify as historically significant idealistic interventions, whether for peace institutions, human rights, or global economic justice. I love using the subjunctive when I converse; it has sadly almost disappeared in English but persists in the Romance languages and in German and for all the differences in usage allows the speaker a certain distancing from the factuality of the proposition reported. I am less certain about its role in reconstructing the past. The Abbé Saint-Pierre, Immanuel Kant, such statesmen as Gunnar Myrdal and Willy Brandt, the proponents of a New International Economic Order, the contributors to the journal *Humanity*, have all insisted on the significance of aspirations that seem so often disappointing in their results. Of course, the ideas and hopes should be historicized—that is an undeniable merit—but the significance to assign to them must remain subjective—another adjective to pair with subjunctive. Shelley thought that poets were unacknowledged legislators of the world; it would be nice if someday the historians of our better nature prove to have envisioned institutions that have triumphed in fact as well as aspiration. I am not excluding the possibility—Steven Pinker has made an arguable case for a diminution of violence over the centuries even if critics fault him as smug and insensitive.[5] As Zhou Enlai allegedly said about the impact of the French Revolution, it's too early to tell. Stella Ghervas at least has provided a luminous account of one of the most enduring aspirations.

Participants:

Stella Ghervas is Professor of Russian History at Newcastle University. She is the author or editor of six books, among them *Réinventer la tradition: Alexandre Stourdza et l'Europe de la Sainte-Alliance* (Honoré Champion, 2008); *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Enlightenment*, co-ed. with David Armitage (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); and *Conquering Peace: From the Enlightenment to the European Union* (Harvard University Press, 2021), which won the 2023 Laura Shannon Prize. She is now working on a new book, *Calming the Waters? A New History of the Black Sea*, and on an anthology of essential texts on peace from the Antiquity to the present day.

Charles S. Maier is Leverett Saltonstall Research Professor of History at Harvard University. His most recent book, *The Project-State and its Rivals: A New History of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, will be issued by Harvard University Press in spring 2023.

Vicki L. Birchfield is Professor in The Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology and co-director of the Center for European and Transatlantic Studies, a Jean Monnet Center of Excellence. Her publications include *Income Inequality in Capitalist Democracies: The Interplay of Values and Institutions* (The University of Pennsylvania State Press, 2008) and *Triangular Diplomacy among the United States, the European Union, and the Russian Federation: Responses to the Crisis in Ukraine*, co-edited with Alasdair Young (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Her current research focuses on the EU as a global actor and EU-US relations.

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[5] Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined* (New York: Viking, 2011).

Boyd van Dijk is a McKenzie Fellow at the University of Melbourne. His work focuses on the history of modern Europe and global (legal) politics.

Dina Gusejnova is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International History at the London School of Economics. She is the author of *European Elites and Ideas of Empire, 1917-57* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), which puts the Europeanist thought of German-speaking celebrity intellectuals Coudenhove-Kalergi in the broader social and intellectual of Europe's fading empires. She is also the editor of *Cosmopolitanism in Conflict: Imperial Encounters from the Seven Years' War to the Cold War* (Palgrave, 2018). Her current research concentrates on the circulation of ideas of citizenship and nationality between Britain and the Continent during the Second World War.

Beatrice Heuser holds the chair in International Relations at the University of Glasgow. Her research interests include war, strategy, and peace in international relations. She is the author of *Brexit in History: Sovereignty or a European Union?* (London: Hurst, 2019), and of many works on strategy. Her most recent publication is *War: A Genealogy of Western Ideas and Practices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

Matthijs Lok is an assistant professor (*universitair docent*) of Modern European History at the European Studies Department of the University of Amsterdam. He specialises in the comparative political, cultural, and intellectual history of modern Europe in a global context since the 18th century, with particular interests in topics on the intersection of history, politics, philosophy, and memory. He coedited *Cosmopolitan Conservatisms: Countering Revolution in Transnational networks, Ideas and Movements (c. 1700-1930)* with Friedemann Pestel and Juliette Reboul (Brill, 2021) *The Politics of Moderation in Modern European History* with Ido de Haan (Palgrave, 2019).

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Review by Vicki L. Birchfield, Georgia Institute of Technology

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In *Conquering Peace: From Enlightenment to the European Union*, Stella Ghervas has crafted a fascinating and richly textured historical narrative tracing the idea of "lasting peace" in Europe and holding firm from start to finish to the maxim: "peace is for the strong; war is for the weak" (28, 374). For proponents of the conception of the European Union as a peace project,[6] this is an encouraging and propitious addition to current debates about the future of Europe as European citizens and leaders are engaged in a year-long, deliberative process addressing this existential question amidst on-going crises and rising geopolitical tensions.[7] As the title conveys, the book begins with the Enlightenment and ends with the establishment of the European Union, but somewhat like the Magritte painting *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*, this is not a book about European integration and the European Union (EU), nor does it advance an interpretation of the EU as the best incarnation so far of a lasting peace. Such ambiguity is either the true genius or the cardinal weakness of this weighty, complex, and somewhat opaque book. Its subject matter is exceedingly well-ploughed ground and there are other recent entries tackling (at least peripherally) the same big questions such as Shane Weller's *The Idea of Europe: A Critical History,* Luuk van Middelaar's *Alarums & Excursions*, or the collected volume *Imaginez la Paix en Europe.[8]* War and peace and their meaning in Europe are after all not subjects for complacent minds or the faint of heart. So, what exactly is the core argument and is there something original in the main takeaway of this challenging but rewarding read?

Two statements in the introductory chapter clarify the motivations and framing questions of the study. First, Ghervas states that the book traces the history from the early eighteenth century to current times of a "profound and troubling question: How is it possible to prevent future wars while guaranteeing the liberties of all states?" (4). Further, she adds a normatively tinged, yet ostensibly empirical dimension to her query: "*Conquering Peace* seeks to explore the hypothesis that perpetual peace might be a more effective alternative to force, and the corollary that striving for peace can itself be a means to avoid war" (17). Ghervas is a well-established scholar and prize-winning author[9] whose discipline is history, though one does not have the impression the book is intended for a narrow, academic audience of historians. Reading the book from the lens of a political scientist and specialist on the European Union, it is readily apparent that the book is not designed with this particular academic audience in mind either as there are practically no references to contemporary debates in EU studies and the book's account of the historical origins of the European Union, while excellent, offers no original insights.[10] Nor does the book engage with recent International Relations

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[6] For example, see Vicki L. Birchfield, Alasdair R. Young and John Krige, "European Integration as a Peace Project," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19:1 (January 2017): 3-12, https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148116685274.

[7] For more details on the initiative jointly launched by the Commission, Parliament and Council, but intended to be bottom-up, citizen and civil-society-led process, see https://futureu.europa.eu/pages/about.

[8] Shane Wellers, *The Idea of Europe: A Critical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021); Luuk van Middelaar, *Alarums & Excursions: Improvising Politics on the European Stage* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2019); Jean-Luc Liez and Thomas Nicklas, *Imaginez la Paix en Europe: de la Pax Romana à l'Union Européenne* (Reims: Presse Universitaire de Reims, 2017).

[9] Ghervas won the Guizot Prize from the Académie Française for her book *Réinventer la tradition: Alexandre Stourdza et l'Europe de la Sainte-Alliance* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008)

[10] For instance familiarity with scholarship in either European Union Studies or the much broader and more interdisciplinary European Studies would seem to require at least passing references to some of the most critical debates as they relate to the identity of the EU and its role in international politics such as Andrew Moravcsik's seminal, *A Choice for Europe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), Desmond Dinan's *Europe Recast* (place of publication: Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004) or Craig Parson's *A Certain Idea of Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). More directly pertinent to the EU's capacity to provide peace, are works such as Jolyon Howorth's *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014) and Michael E. Smith's *Europe's Common Security and Defence Policy: Capacity-Building, Experiential Learning, and Institutional Change*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

scholarship, a central terrain for studies of war and peace.[11] In some ways, the work could be best described as a history of ideas since the main object of the study is understanding the origins and evolution of the meaning of perpetual or lasting peace. Yet, the book is much more ambitious than that, as Ghervas's exploration of the hypothesis stated above illustrates. Ghervas makes a normative argument in her statement that "peace is for the strong, war is for the weak," (28, 374) and the book's methodological strategy is to substantiate such a claim through the examination of five specific historical cases of conflict and peacemaking over a period of three centuries.

Before tackling this colossal subject, Ghervas introduces two concepts that are central to the development of her argument: first is what she refers to as *spirits* stemming from "the French *esprit*, as in *esprit de corps*" (6) and representing the "various attempts by political leaders and political opinions to commune metaphorically with that ideal of perpetual peace" (6). A corollary to this ideational *fil conducteur* is a second concept that she calls the "engineering of peace" (8)—a notion meant to capture the experiments at the end of each continental war that sought to build on past experiences and apply lessons learned from previous treaty negotiations. The titles of each of the chapters represent these cases or periodizations where Ghervas traces both the "spirits" and the "engineering" aspects of the aftermath of war and the process of peacemaking and settlement: the foundational enlightened spirit of peace with the Treaty of Utrecht (1713); the Spirit of Vienna (1815); the Spirit of Geneva (1919); the Postwar European spirit (1945); and finally, the Spirit of Enlarged Europe (1989). These historical case studies do not lend themselves to easy summary but one of the most admirable features of this work is the manner in which the author holds the reader's rapt attention while weaving a fairly esoteric narrative describing the philosophical substance behind the ideals of perpetual peace as it evolved across three centuries and shaped each period of peacemaking and diplomatic negotiations following Europe's internecine wars.

What Ghervas aims to show is how ideas about peace form the core foundation of the very idea of Europe. Somewhat paradoxically, she claims the ideal of peace and the goal of unification of this region so riven with perpetual conflict and war are inextricably linked. A different and perhaps clearer formulation is whether the goal of unification was achieved by force and domination or the peaceful coexistence of free states. The doctrine of perpetual peace she so brilliantly exposes and references throughout the book was first articulated by the eighteenth-century Frenchman, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, then developed further by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*The Social Contract* 1762) and Immanuel Kant (*Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* 1795), and continuously fuelled debates among enlightenment philosophers and shaped the thinking of monarchs, diplomats, and political leaders crystallizing into an ideational contest between alternative models of international order: the balance of power versus perpetual peace. In addition to the fine-grained historical details of the events (conflicts, wars, peace negotiations, and treaty-making) as well as fascinating insights into the main protagonists of each period, Ghervas masterfully demonstrates the continuity of the struggle between what she calls the Ancients and the Moderns. For example, the spirit of Utrecht and its accompanying engineered peace that sought to prevent "universal monarchy" (28 and 60) was brought to a close with the rise of Napoléon Bonaparte, who pursued the Ancient or Roman form of "hegemonic peace" through conquest and empire (88).

Following the Congress of Vienna, a new era was ushered in a period in which the great powers erred more on the side of complex multilateralism and what the author calls the "balance of diplomacy" (58-59). Governed by a growing consensus that the balance of power was actually a mechanism better left for times of war, the engineered peace that accompanied the spirit of Vienna brought as many states as possible to the table. At the center of four concentric circles of treaty signatories were the Allied powers—Britain, Russia,

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[11] Such an omission is understandable as the author is a historian, not an International Relations (IR) scholar. Nonetheless, an acknowledgment that the book's subject matter has also long animated IR debates would have added resonance here as would a cursory nod to any number of classic IR works such as Maurice Vaïsse's *Relations internationales depuis 1945* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990) or Kenneth Waltz's *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954) for example.

Austria, and Prussia—who resolved to disavow the balance of power principle and formed for the first time in modern history a pan-European peace alliance that prevented warfare for nearly four decades. Ghervas labels this a deliberate process of political engineering replete with technical commissions to redraw the map of Europe and the establishment of institutions for regular meetings and discussions of common interests that, although aristocratic and hierarchical, included other powers such as Portugal, Spain, and Sweden and even the defeated, post-Napoleonic France.

Ghervas highlights how this inclusivity reinforced a perception of Europe as an actual political community marking a paradigm shift that was further strengthened through the willingness of the great powers to place Protestantism, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy on equal footing. This latter innovation essentially "overturned the mystical alliance of the emperor and the pope, the foundation of the old political order of Europe" and would open the way to a "wholly secularized European political system" (116). Ghervas attributes great credit for this development to Russian Tsar Alexander I's deft diplomacy, which served his undeniable political agenda to undermine the pope's sphere of influence. In contrast to well-known stories about the key figures such Britain's Viscount Castlereagh and Austria's Prince Klemens von Metternich, her emphasis on the role of Alexander I seems an important historiographical contribution. One of the key strengths of Ghervas's chapter on the spirit of Vienna is the amazing scope of her analysis while accompanied by stylized details on the roles of individuals and the contrast between their personalities and thinking. For example, she describes Metternich as more rational than the spiritually oriented Alexander I while also highlighting that both men had read and were influenced by Saint-Pierre's *Plan of Perpetual Peace*.[12]

An interesting dimension of the erudition characteristic of Ghervas's work is her attention to language. For instance, she discusses how Metternich's use of the term "equilibrium" has been confused with the idea of the balance of power even though it was intended as quite the opposite, being more in tune with views on perpetual peace as evidenced by the use of terms such a "federative bond" and general union to describe the new political order that was being fashioned (120). Earlier the author also traces the meaning behind the word "peace" in a fascinating discussion of an entry in Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* which she translates to such marvelous effect that this reader was motivated to read the full text from the original eighteenth-century manuscript (63). War was essentially depicted as a "disease of the body politic" and the nobility a "pathogenic organ" in its quest to expand its patrimonial possessions (64). The way Ghervas weaves intriguing vignettes about the sources and the semantics surrounding the power of ideas related to the quest for peace and societal wholeness in Europe is one of the most pleasurable rewards of reading such a complex if sometimes circuitous "history book" as she calls it (3). The book is also chock-full of surprising historical anecdotes such as the brief discussion of Baroness Germaine de Staël's whirlwind tour of European capitals in defense of common European interests and against the imperial vision of Napoléon Bonaparte (122-123).

Another achievement of the book is the way in which Ghervas marshals and hones in on key evidence for her argument while also displaying an amazing range and depth of knowledge of the societies, individuals, and events of the three centuries she examines. In the chapter on the spirit of Vienna, for example, she also discusses the vision and ideas of Victor Hugo (130-131), the decline of the Ottoman Empire (135-138), the significance of the Crimean War (140-141), and the return of the balance of power principle (146). She also closes the chapter with commentary on the Berlin Conference, remarking that France and Britain along with other powers "peacefully competed in the 'Scramble for Africa'; that is by waging war on African peoples" (146). She argues that the emergence of racialism as a justification for imperial expansion marked a "regression in the history of peace" (147), but disappointingly the point is not further developed.

One weakness and rare omission in an otherwise very dense chapter is the absence of a discussion of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Since this conflict is so central to the story of Franco-German rivalry and

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[12] L'abbé Charles Castel de Saint-Pierre, *Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe*. (Utrecht: Antoine Shouten, 1713) https://francearchives.fr/fr/pages_histoire/39302

the eventual reconciliation that formed the cornerstone of post-war European construction and the creation of what would become the European Union, this is a significant oversight. When it is referenced obliquely in the beginning of the following chapter, Ghervas refers to the proclamation of the "Second German Empire" (148) in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. While the symbolism of that event and the choice of venue both then and in 1919 are hugely significant, this underplays the fact that 1871 marked the declaration of the first unified German Empire as the victory of Prussia over France in this short but devastating and fateful war permitted the consolidation of the German state. The First German Reich is essentially Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire, which was as much French as Prussian or German. So while the use of 'second empire' is technically accurate (as the Nazi regime's moniker as the Third Reich also makes clear), it is a critical to underscore the supposed First Reich does not have much meaning in terms of a true German state much less an empire. The pattern of peace settlement that ensued offers another justification for including more discussion of the war of 1870-71. The Treaty of Frankfurt that brought the war to official close was indeed called a peace treaty but it imposed severe indemnities against France (as the Treaty of Versailles would do later to Germany) and included the annexation of a sizeable portion of her territory, Alsace-Lorraine. Thus, the seeds for the next war inevitably took root. Count Otto von Bismarck's strategy and the defeat of Napoleon III did, however, bring French hegemony on the continent to a final close and thus an analysis of this conflict and accompanying treaty, while perhaps not a "spirit" unto itself, nonetheless warranted more attention.

In the next two chapters which deal with the end of both the First and Second World Wars, Ghervas enters much more familiar territory to those who are not specialists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Her chapter on the spirit of Geneva is the most puzzling chapter of the entire book. While it offers a captivating and well-informed discussion of what happened during the seven long months of negotiations in Paris, the main focus in terms of her thesis about the distinctiveness of the European idea of lasting peace is in this case distinctly non-European—President Woodrow Wilson. If Wilson had been deeply influenced by European Enlightenment thought or notions of perpetual peace, the coherence of the argument could potentially still hold, but Ghervas shows that this was not the case. Asserting that some historians link Wilsonian liberal internationalism to Kantian ideals, Ghervas argues that there are no explicit references to substantiate this association. Instead, she argues that Wilson's speech to the US Congress might be considered his "Fifteenth Point" (172) as it expressed his insistence that the true mechanism for enduring peace was the recognition of equality of all peoples and the rejection of the goal of mastery. This American statesman's vision seems to be incongruent with the author's notion of the "provincialization" (372) of Europe, i.e. the claim that the ideas and goals around perpetual peace and their relation to the unification of Europe originated within and are specific to European thought and diplomatic practices.

Moreover, the discussion of Wilson's contribution to the fundaments of peace overlooks the related aspect of the book's thesis, the unification of Europe. Such a critique does not take away from the extraordinary depth of analysis in this chapter, but the omission is perplexing, particularly in light of the book's immensely interesting account of the ideas of such European figures as Count Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi (197-200) who typically receives only one or two sentences in most textbook accounts of the intellectual antecedents of the EU. But the real puzzle of the chapter is that there is no mention of Jean Monnet, who served as the deputy secretary-general of the League of the Nations and would later become one of the key architects of the construction of the European Communities. While Ghervas discusses Monnet cursorily in the next chapter, a section on the crucial link to his experience with the League could have strengthened her argument about the "engineering of peace." It was precisely Monnet's lessons learned while at the League that shaped his conviction that the perennial threat to peace was nationalism and as such the principle of sovereignty had to be radically reimagined.[13]

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[13] See Pascal Fontaine's *Jean Monnet, A Grand Design for Europe*, (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1988)

What Ghervas accomplishes in these two chapters is to effectively challenge some common myths about both the League of Nations and the United Nations, asserting that the former "was an ambitious and innovative machinery of peace" (217) and the latter a system of peace within a global system of war, a directorial system where the great powers called the shots (228). Neither of these two chapters is fully put to the greater service and integrity of the book's broader argument as articulated at the outset. The focus on Woodrow Wilson as the progenitor of the League's ideational foundation and the fact that his vision for peace emanated outside of the European philosophical and diplomatic tradition seems to be in slight contradiction to the core thesis anchoring her study. More attention to the critical role Monnet played and how he transformed what he learned from the flaws of the League into a vision undergirding the "Postwar European Spirit" could have strengthened the development of her ideas about the 'provincialization of Europe' for example. Although Ghervas mentions that Monnet played an indispensable (253-254) role in implementing the ingenious ideas of Robert Schuman, former prime minister and foreign minister of France and a key architect of the European Coal and Steel Community, she mostly attributes this approach to 'engineering peace' to Schuman. As she rightly notes, this approach "overturned the most fundamental assumption underlying the hundreds of perpetual peace plans since the early eighteenth century" (254) yet ultimately underplays its ideational significance.

For instance, Ghervas argues that the label of Founding Fathers of Europe, honoring the likes of Schuman and Konrad Adenauer is problematic and misleading in that it suggests "a teleological fallacy—that there was some destiny or grand design that all Europeans would inherit and carry forward" (258), which in her view was not the case. Ghervas holds that "what distinguished the Postwar Spirit was the absence of a grand plan and, in its place, only a set of aims carried out by a desperate few political leaders, who felt compelled to reconstruct Europe after the devastation of World War II" (258). This statement is baffling and seems to undermine Ghervas's argument noted above. It is also inconsistent with the foregoing discussion of the radical nature of both the new spirit and the engineering aspects of the Schuman Plan and the trajectory of European integration that ensued over the decades. However, Ghervas argues that such successes were only partial because they sat in the midst of a "global system of war," which sums up her negative assessment of the United Nations that did little to mitigate the violence of the Cold War. Thorough discussions of the impact of the Marshall Plan and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the account of the political failure of the European Defense Community and tensions between French President Charles de Gaulle's vision for Europe versus that of Atlanticism illustrate the author's sceptical vision of the construction of the European project as one of lasting peace. Ultimately, the key takeaway of the chapter on the Postwar European Spirit might best be summed up by her quip that there was not a single day of peace from 1945 to 1989, which foreshadows the final act in the "theatrical dialogue" (as she calls it in the introduction to the book): the "Spirit of Enlarged Europe," the real hero of which is Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev.

In recounting the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism, the Helsinki Final Act, events in Hungary, the revolution in Romania and much more including the Maastricht Treaty and formal naming of the European Union that paved the way for the enlarged Europe, this chapter demonstrates that perspective is everything. Echoing the arguments of Ivan Krastev in his recent book,[14] Ghervas highlights the perceptions of Eastern Europeans and their experience of what she calls the Fifty Years' War (1939-1989), underscoring the brutalization and oppression under both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. As noted earlier, this book is clearly not intended to be about the European Union per se. Ghervas does not mention any of the EU intergovernmental conferences and treaties that grappled with the impending enlargement at the end of the Cold War and after the reunification of Germany that brought in twelve new and very diverse countries. Instead, the emphasis falls elsewhere, beginning with the courage and the implicit peacemaking that Gorbachev achieved through his doctrine of perestroika and later his conception of a "common European

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[14] Ivan Krastev, *After Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021).

home."[15] The chapter concludes by highlighting that "from Gorbachev's Peace Prize in 1990 to the EU's Peace Prize in 2012, the Spirit of Enlarged Europe thus came full circle" (346).

This is an important story that has been told many times before. Nonetheless, its inclusion here bolsters Ghervas's characterization of the "Enlarged European Spirit" as "the driving force behind the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War in Europe" (342). The book essentially side-lines the EU with the statement that "Mikhail Gorbachev played the role of a Tutelary figure for the continent in 1989, not unlike Alexander I in 1815 and Woodrow Wilson in 1919" (343). In this chapter and in the conclusion, Ghervas takes criticizes the colossal Brussels bureaucracy and at one point even ridicules the EU for operating with twenty-four official languages "when even the global United Nations is able to function with only six" (360). Such comments belie the complex essence of the EU, for which respect for cultural and linguistic diversity of its member states is intrinsic to its existence above all else as a values-based, diverse transnational political community. These may be trivial comments but they reveal a perspective on the European Union that is out of step with those who defend it as something unique in modern political history and an aberration from past experimentations in peacemaking and European interstate relations.

Ghervas further describes the current enlarged EU as more jumbled than united (346) and while few would argue this point when referencing the multitude of recent poorly manged crises, from the financial and sovereign debt debacle of 2010-2012 to the refugee and migrant tragedy that peaked in 2015 to Brexit the following year, the EU still hangs together. Yet for Ghervas the EU experiment is merely a part of the journey and far from the final destination of lasting peace. An alternative view is that despite its imperfections, the EU has shown remarkable resilience and has secured peace amongst its members for over seven decades, which is longer than most of the spirits of engineered peace that preceded it.[16] Perhaps like a Magritte painting, seeing the EU as a peace project is a matter of perspective. This is not to argue that the EU is the incarnation of lasting peace in all of Europe but it is to insist that EU member-states will not resort to violence and war against each other matter no matter their differences. In this light, the EU surely embodies the maxim which Ghervas says informs her whole argument that 'peace is for the strong' (28). Tragically, we see its opposite—'war is for the weak'—now being played out by one of the EU's biggest neighbors. Russia's war on Ukraine renders Ghervas's brilliant work in *Conquering Peace* all the more compelling as an invaluable contribution to debates about the sources of war and the fragility of peace in Europe.

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[15] Gorbachev articulated this conception during his address to the Council of Europe on July 6, 1989. https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/address_given_by_mikhail_gorbachev_to_the_council_of_europe_6_july_1989-en-4c021687-98f9-4727-9e8b-836e0bc1f6fb.html

[16] Birchfield, Young, and Krige, "European Integration as a Peace Project." See also Gideon Rachman's "The EU's stability will again confound its critics," *The Financial Times*, April 12, 2021; John McCormick's *The European Superpower* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Review by Boyd van Dijk, University of Melbourne

In writing a three-century-long European history of the "Sirits of Peace" (9), Stella Ghervas has set herself an almost impossible task. Focusing on the period from the Treaty of Utrecht to the post-1989 democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe, she has written a breathtakingly ambitious and bold history of European attempts to create peace on the continent.

Conquering Peace is centered around a progressive Hegelian narrative of metaphorical "spirits" representing a collection of political opinions and leaders who helped to create what she calls "lasting [European] peace and prosperity" (3-6). The author examines five epochs of European ordering in the wake of major upheavals that were shaped by clashes between continental empires, from Louis XIV's bid for European dominance, the Napoleonic Wars, the First World War, the making of the post-1945 Allied order, to the long Cold War in Europe. As a diplomatic historian, Ghervas is less interested in pacifist and other radical thinkers championing the cause of peace than those statespersons who promoted statist projects of proclaimed European unity.[17] She frames this story of European state ordering as a "theatrical dialogue in five acts" that focuses on the continent's different forms of "resistance to empires" while trying to keep new internecine European wars out (3).

The focus of my remarks will be concentrated around three issues: the book's discussion of the connections between empire, race, and international law in modern Europe; Ghervas's engagement with Cold War historiography; and the question of the distinction between war and peace. Taking the latter as the starting point for my analysis, the issue of distinguishing between peace and wartime is one of the most fascinating and elusive phenomena in international history.[18] What counts for "peacetime"? Is there 'peace' where official hostilities are absent but relations of oppression and domination continue to exist? How should we understand periods of European interstate peacemaking in relation to simultaneous colonial violence and/or the oppression of minorities on the continent? And to what extent were European engineers of peace ever truly aiming at achieving the goal of "perpetual peace," as Ghervas suggests in her engaging book (11–17)?

The author's remarks that the founders of the League of Nations "entertained the ambition to make future war impossible" inspired me to return to the international organization's history (11). She skillfully incorporates the findings of recent historiographical scholarship to challenge the myth that the League should be considered a failure (152, 217). Ghervas combines that with a special focus on the different interwar projects that condemned interstate war as a means of foreign policy such as the League's Covenant, the "Spirit of Locarno," or the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact. This reminded me of an older debate involving the paradoxes and unintended consequences of the interwar outlawry movement, with its creation of new opportunities for waging wars in all but name.[19]

Prohibiting aggressive warfare led to the virtual disappearance of declarations of war and stripped armed conflicts of their legal character in relation to the laws of war. As other scholars have shown, powerful states, particularly those in Europe, were the main beneficiaries of these legal ambiguities.[20] In many ways, they used the idea of conquering peace through international law as a weapon to further their own interests and visions. Among other things, they would wage war covertly or frame their violence either as policing operations or as wars of self-defense in support of allied states or oppressed minorities. This has unintentionally led to the

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[17] For a counterpoint to this, see Petra Goedde, *The Politics of Peace: A Global Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[18] See Mary Dudziak, *War Time: An Idea, its History, its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[19] Nicholas Mulder, "The Rise and Fall of Euro-American Inter-State War," *Humanity* (2019): 133–153.

[20] Tanisha Fazal, *Wars of Law: Unintended Consequences in the Regulation of Armed Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

inflation of the language of policing and self-defense as illustrated by recent controversies over the wars in Gaza, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Syria, for instance.

The author's characterization of the League's successor—the United Nations (UN)—as a "peace organization" raises a more profound question with regard to the history of European peacemaking (229). As international historians have argued before, presenting the UN as an inherently "peaceful" organization is not without its own historical complications.[21] In fact, we know that the UN was born as a wartime alliance and that its leading members were not afraid to sanction the use of (nuclear) bombing of civilians despite having only recently championed the cause of human rights as part of the UN Charter. The same goes for the League's history. The organization's Covenant tolerated wars of self-defense and saw the highly indiscriminate weapon of sanctions as a crucial weapon in the struggle for imperial peace.[22] Neither did the League's minority treaties and the Mandate system (which is surprisingly absent in the book) say much about the rights for subalterns to revolt against this oppressive liberal imperial system.

This brings me to my second point regarding the book's discussion of the connections between empire, race, and law in modern European history. The reader is introduced to an uplifting story of how Europe re-civilized itself over several centuries.[23] But they are not always consistently exposed to recent trends in the histories of race, gender,[24] and even of empire. The author invokes "Europe's resistance to empire" as if the latter broke down mainly because of the former's agency, and claims that "most empires collapsed" due to the metropoles' increasing unwillingness to pay for their upkeep (17–18). Yet where the subaltern is in this story? The reader gets to know remarkably little about their active contributions to the effort of abolishing formal empire, whether in Europe or in the imperial hinterlands, to use an outdated analytical distinction.

If this is a study of the demise of European empires and the ways of establishing peace in the wake of major upheavals, as the author claims (18), then I wonder where some of the important historiological insights regarding this topic and the characterization of empire have ended up. If there in fact circulated a "Spirit of Geneva" in the interwar period, what did Ethiopian and Arab nationalists make of this? What can we learn about Europe's history from Eurafrican thinkers such as Léopold Senghor, who promoted federalist ideas to reorient the continent's position in the world in the turbulent years after 1945?[25] What happens if we shift our lens away from the metropole to tell a more provincial story about European peacemaking in the world? How do racial hierarchies and exclusionary citizenship regimes fit in these Eurocentric designs for 'lasting peace'? And what to make of the numerous references to the female body and the gendered effects of peacemaking in all of these historical narratives? These questions are of course not original, let alone new. But I felt that the book—despite of its absorbing prose—did not always sufficiently engage with those recent trends in the relevant historiographies.

The book's narrative structure could have been framed in more rigorous terms as well. With the "Spirits of Peace," it invokes a set of metaphors that creates confusion rather than analytical insights and obscures the empirical character of the book's claims. Defined as historical "avatars of an abstract ideal of peace" and a certain "Idea of Europe" (6), the "Spirits of Peace" suggest a binary and/or determinative Hegelian history of 'progress' that contradicts the narrative's avowed emphasis on counter-teleological contingencies. With regard to the Allied partition of Europe after 1945, the Cold War, and the European unifications, Ghervas writes that the "unexpected vicissitudes of the Spirit of Yalta helped shape the Postwar European Spirit" (226),

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[21] Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[22] Mulder, "The Rise and Fall of Euro-American Inter-State War."

[23] Paul Betts, *Ruin and Renewal: Civilizing Europe After World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2020).

[24] I could not find a single reference to gender despite numerous allusions to the female body.

[25] Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

which raises more questions than it answers about the fascinating history of the connections between European sovereignty, nationalism, hegemony, and ordering in the second half of the twentieth century.

In particular, the book's final chapters present a puzzling story of the Cold War. The Soviet Union is often presented as the main culprit behind the conflict's outbreak and course. Among other things, it is blamed for the outbreak of the Greek Civil War—despite the Yugoslav Josip Tito's primary involvement in this (244), and the impact of Soviet expansionism is presented as one of the most important, if not the most important factor, for explaining the Cold War's outbreak (244). At the same time, Ghervas characterizes the Truman Administration as proto-peacenik (242) and the Marshal Plan as "a genuine doctrine of peace" (239). This is a surprising reading of early Cold War history—and especially in light of the emerging Cold War killing fields.[26] In addition, I felt that presented certain phenomena could have been presented differently by avoiding language such as "balkanization" (164, 202, etc.).

To be sure, I am the last to argue that Soviet expansionism played no role in the onset of the Cold War, or that we should be soft on Soviet leader Jozef Stalin's paranoia and extreme violence. My point is, rather, that we need to engage with a recent and rich scholarship placing these elements into context and highlighting the different elements that created stability on the continent while unleashing mass violence in the Cold War killing fields outside of Europe.[27] Indeed, Cold War historians have done great work in producing a rich historiography of the early and late Cold War presenting a more subtle and balanced image of Soviet and US approaches to ordering Europe, the deeper origins of the Cold War predating the post-Yalta period, and how all that shaped the process of European unification.[28]

To conclude, Ghervas's book presents an appealing story of important intellectual and political trends in the history of modern Europe in order to analyze the elusive though crucial phenomenon of peacemaking. One of the strengths of this work is that it presents a long and extremely bold history of European ordering while connecting it with a detailed reading of important primary sources. The author deserves credit for pointing out the tensions, paradoxes, and unresolved issues in this history of making Europe a less violent place. Yet those same contingencies and contradictions raise unanswered questions about the book's deterministic reading of that history, its broader theoretical assumptions of history's evolution, and the lessons that can be drawn from recent historiographical insights to provincialize Europe.

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[26] Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields: Rethinking the Long Peace* (New York: Harper, 2018).

[27] Chamberlin, *The Cold War's Killing Fields*.

[28] Melvyn Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Stella Ghervas presents a history of Europe as a continent whose true identity is revealed in the balance of sovereignties rather than in the flaunting of hegemony associated with any single power. This is a political and intellectual history of alliances and compromises coming out of deals made between very different sorts of political regimes. The period under consideration comprises a range of historical junctures when major treaties were signed between, or concerning the fate of, major European powers, reaching from the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, a major inter-imperial conflict, to the aftermath of the Cold War.

This is a story about the intellectual atmosphere in which different European Great Powers and, eventually, also the United States, made deals and compromises to secure different kinds of peace in Europe. The organisation of the book takes its cue from three major peace treaties which reflect different "spirits" of Europe: the Peace of Utrecht, the Peace of Vienna, and the Peace of Versailles, as well as the treaties of Allied military occupation signed at the Potsdam Conference and documents related to the dissolution of the USSR. Once the circumstances of each treaty are outlined, Ghervas proceeds to reconstruct how, in the aftermath of the Second World War, European as well as United States political leaders conceived of managing peace in Europe before and after the Cold War. The resulting story involves empires and post-revolutionary nations, Warsaw Pact countries and NATO states, and Eastern and Western European sources and historiographies. In the later twentieth century, the account takes the reader through the landmarks of the early European Economic Community (EEC), the founding and enlargement of the European Union (EU) and the national and international agreements and treaties that were signed after the collapse of the Soviet bloc as well as the states caught in between such as Yugoslavia. This narrative avoids a possible triumphalist account of European history but stops short of asserting arguments on periodization that would for example consider the present as an era "After Europe."[29] It comes closest, in fact, to Paul W. Schroeder's critical engagement of nineteenth-century conceptions of balancing powers with Henry Kissinger's anachronistic interpretation of the post-Napoleonic Congress system (119).[30]

While this characterization of Europe as a deal-making continent may not surprise historians of international relations or political theorists—all fields in which the idea of Europe as a continent championing the balance of power has been prominent since the 1970s—in the context of historical writings on Europe it stands out as more unusual.[31] To reconstruct the scope of Ghervas's intervention in several historiographical orthodoxies requires quite a deep dive into them—hence Ghervas's own apparatus of footnotes, which takes up about a fifth of the book. Sweeping accounts of European political history usually have a focus on a single major power, reflected in titles such as the "Old Regime" or the "Rise of the West."[32] The twentieth-century historiography on Europe is additionally split into East and West, with Western European history reflecting the story of peace and democracy, and accounts of Central, Southern, and Eastern Europe dealing with

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[29] Ivan Krastev, *After Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

[30] Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), as criticised by Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[31] On balance of power in international relations and in political theory as outcomes of foreign or domestic developments, respectively, see, for instance, John A. Hall, *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). Historians have focused less on this line of argument, but the major exception here was the work of the German historian Otto Hintze, a student of nationalist historian Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954), who had articulated the idea of balance of power as a trait of the European regimes in a critique of his own mentor's work as early as 1906. Otto Hintze, "Military Organization and the Organization of the State," (1906) in *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze,* ed. Felix Gilbert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[32] To name just two examples, T.C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660—1789* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006); Brendan Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy, 1453 to the Present* (London: Penguin Books, 2014).

histories of deviant dictatorships or otherwise corrupt regimes.[33] Ghervas explains that her understanding of political systems that are worthy of consideration as peacemakers is grounded in Montesquieu's ostensible withholding of personal preferences towards monarchies or republics, as long as they refrained from wars of conquest, which became manifest in conflicts such as the War of Polish Succession (62)—even though, arguably, Montesquieu's contrast of the nation of Europeans with the despotic empires of Asia might also support the opposite conclusion.[34] As he put it, "[t]he spirit of monarchy is war and enlargement of dominion: peace and moderation is the spirit of a republic."[35] In fact, this normatively neutral understanding of political regimes probably comes closest to Paul Kennedy´s broad definition of a "great power."[36]

Ghervas's account also provides an unexpected angle of vision onto the history of European integration and of Europe as an idea. Many studies in political and intellectual history which address the continent as a whole tend to focus on a single unifying moment of crisis which shapes the narrative, such as a single World War or Revolution.[37] As for intellectual historians of Europe as an idea, in the past, these have either looked at modern utopian or older Christian ideas of Europe, usually starting in late Antiquity and going up to the time of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, or examined the institutional and bureaucratic history of the EU.[38] Ghervas examines a period that is at the same time shorter than the intellectual and longer than the institutional genealogies of Europe. In its selection of thinkers and diplomats that are profiled, her book is also geographically less centred on Western Europe.

Conquering Peace, in sum, goes against the grain of the above-mentioned established trends. As a political history, it connects Eastern and Central European history, giving equal attention to autocracies and constitutional monarchies, democracies, and some totalitarian regimes (with the notable exception of National Socialism). It covers in greater detail, for instance, the Russian perspective on the Holy Alliance, the peace of Trianon, and the fallout of 1989 for Soviet and Eastern European leaders, as well as British and American interventions in European peacemaking. As an intellectual history, it does focus on crises as moments when ideas of Europe emerge, and includes nods to theoretical works on revolutions as crises, such as that of Reinhart Koselleck.[39] However, unlike other studies of European crises, Ghervas eschews a focus on any single moment but works her way through successive post-conflict situations which gave rise to political treaties shaping European political relations.

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[33] Cf. William Hardy McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of the Human Community: With a Retrospective Essay.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Most recently, Martin Conway, *Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945-1968* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020); Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2000).

[34] The reference is to Montesquieu's critique of universal monarchy in *Réflexions sur la monarchie universelle en Europe* (1724).

[35] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws,* vol. I, ch. II, transl. Thomas Nugent (Dublin: McKenzie and Moore, 1792), 129.

[36] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500-2000* (London: Fontana Press, 1989).

[37] On this observation, see Stuart Woolf, "Europe and Its Historians," *Contemporary European History* 12:3 (2003): 323–37. He was referring particularly to Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de l' Europe* (Paris: Alcan, 1936). For more recent classics, see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Vintage Books, 2010); Douglas Moggach and Gareth Stedman Jones, eds., *The 1848 Revolutions and European Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). See also Christopher Clark, "After 1848: The European Revolution in Government," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 22* (2012): 171-197, doi:10.1017/S0080440112000114.

[38] Denys Hay, *Europe: The Emergence of an Idea*, revised ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Publications, 1968); Anthony Pagden, *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[39] Louis Bergeron, François Furet, and Reinhart Koselleck*, Das Zeitalter der europäischen Revolution 1780–1848* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1973).

One of the areas where Ghervas breaks new ground is in her expansion of the basic matter, geographical, documentary, and polemical, that is considered self-evidently relevant to the study of Europe at large. The Anglophone and Francophone debates on all this often speak past each other on these subjects, and engage even less with the literature coming out of other linguistic and institutional traditions. Ghervas connects to historiographical debates from Eastern European as well as French contexts, while principally still addressing the largely Anglophone historiography on Europe. The book not only enters into dialogue with authors such as Dominic Lieven, Tony Judt, Richard Overy, and Andrew Moravcsik, but also brings in a range of historians whose names are not widely known in Anglophone contexts. These include Russian historian Yuri Afanasiev, the person once hailed by the *New York Times* as the Soviet "historian who repudiated communism," but whose real intervention, as Ghervas rightly emphasizes, was to bring into wider public focus in post-Soviet Russia that the USSR had been in collusion with Nazi Germany between 1939 and 1941, a radical break from the Soviet patriotic consensus; literary scholars Andrei Zorin and Maria Maiofis, who wrote about Russian perspectives on post-Napoleonic ideologies of Europe; Ljubo Boban, the Croatian historian who examined the end of the First World War and the constitution of the National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs; Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, the Romanian political scientist; Fred C. Abrahams, the historian of modern Albania; Elie Barnavi, the Israeli political historian; and Eckart Conze, the German social and political historian.[40] Ghervas goes back to sources such as the history of international treaties by the Baltic German Russian subject Friedrikh Martens, published in French in Göttingen between 1817 and 1841 (394n79) and the work of Alexandre Stourdzha, the Russian diplomat of Romanian origin who made a career in the Age of Revolutions (109-113). She weaves in close readings of major speeches by Soviet leaders Nikita Khrushchev (292), Yuri Andropov (284-286), Mikhail Gorbachev (294-298), and other Soviet political leaders where most other historians might have stopped at the writings of Kissinger and President Ronald Reagan; as well as sources in Croatian and Romanian, and a number of other languages.

"Peace is for the strong; war is for the weak" (374): much of this argument, loosely derived from Montesquieu, amounts to a critique of a certain prevailing version of realism, inspired by Hans Morgenthau and an Anglo-American tradition which read European history as a sequence of successful bids for sovereignty or hegemony.[41] Ghervas's story is directed against a once dominant view in the discipline of International Relations, according to which the Peace of Westphalia appeared as a hallmark of progress leading from imperial hegemony to more popular forms of European sovereignty capable of multilateral

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[40] Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011); Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe 1939-1945* (London: Allen Lane, 2013); Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (London New York: Routledge, 2015). On Afanasiev, see "Yuri N. Afanasiev, Historian Who Repudiated Communism, Dies at 81," *New York Times*, 2 October 2010, and for his own writings, Yuri Afanasiev, "Drugaia voina: istoriia i pamiat' [The other war: history and memory]," in *Drugaia voina: 1939-1945* [The other war, 1939-1945], ed. Afanasiev (Moscow: RGGU, 1996), 15-31; Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla . . . Russkaia literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v poslednei treti XVIII— pervoi treti XIX veka* [Feeding the double-headed eagle: Russian literature and state ideology in the last third of the 18th—first third of the 19th centuries] (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001); Maria Mayofis, "After the Napoleonic Wars: Reading Perpetual Peace in the Russian Empire," in Dina Gusejnova (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism in Conflict: Imperial Encounters from the Seven Year's War to the Cold War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 85-110; Ljubo Boban, "Kada je i kako nastala Država Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba," [When and how the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was formed] *Radovi* 26:1 (1993): 187–198; Alina Mungiu- Pippidi, *Romanii dupa '89: istoria unei neintelegeri* [The Romanians after '89: the history of a misunderstanding] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1995); Fred S. Abrahams, *Modern Albania: From Dictatorship to Democracy in Europe* (New York: New York Press, 2015); Elie Barnavi, *L'Europe frigide: réflexions sur un projet inachevé* (Brussels: André Versaille, 2008); Eckart Conze, "Sicherheit als Kultur: Überlegungen zu einer „modernen Politikgeschichte" der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte 53* (2005): 357-380.

[41] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).

cooperation.[42] This aspect of the argument becomes much clearer if one considers this book as a follow-up to a volume which Ghervas recently co-edited with David Armitage, *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Enlightenment*.[43] Unlike Ghervas's present book, this collected volume is narrower in focus but somewhat clearer when it comes to this side of the argument. In the monograph, Ghervas quickly moves beyond this older model of viewing European history since the early modern period as a history of successful hegemonies. Instead, she argues, the main spirit of European history is the constant reinvention of some notion of a "balance of power" for the sake of peace (34-35 and 350).

The critique of classical genealogies of sovereignty might be well taken, as is Ghervas's successful move away from shallow clichés regarding East and West. I did wonder, however, to what extent, in this instance, the argument against realism is pertinent. How many historians in this day and age are really still researching the history of Europe in the spirit of Morgenthau or Carl von Clausewitz? Many of the more recent political and intellectual histories of Europe have moved beyond the principle of reasons of state. Conversely, recent major studies of sovereignty have altogether decoupled their historical analysis of the concept of sovereignty from any determining narrative about European identity.[44] Even in IR, the Peace of Westphalia has moved out of focus since the early twenty-first century.[45] As for the rhetorical aspects of the argument about strength in compromise, I also wonder to what extent the way it is presented conveys an indefensibly idealist and, given that it comes from a liberal perspective, too easily self-serving understanding of the idea of peace. For instance, wouldn't agreements such as the Munich Agreement of 1938 or, perhaps more cynically, the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, amount to a valid case of "conquering peace"? Sergei Lavrov, Russia's current minister of defence, would certainly think so, as would Britain's "guilty men" of the 1930s.[46] These landmark deals with more recent European despots, however uncomfortable they may be in retrospect, are discussed *sotto voce*, if it all, raising the question of the extent to which the selected case studies represent more the spirit of a twenty-first century Guizot than a more sceptical and critical alternative which, I think, European historiography might need more of.[47]

Towards the end of the narrative I asked myself in what sense the "conquerors of peace" here were necessarily European, and how successfully the Europeans really have been at establishing peace. For the Treaty of Potsdam, the US was certainly one of the most important actors. To think further along the lines charted by Ghervas, it would be good to see in more historical detail how the legal spirit of European peacemaking changed when non-Europeans start making peace in Europe, for instance, with the role of the US in post-World War I Europe or in international (Western European, Russian, and American) involvement in Yugoslavia, the Middle East, or Afghanistan, or how differently Europeans made peace outside their own continent when it comes to the choice between maintaining colonial hegemony or changing regimes. Not all the treaties which have an effect on European identity were really treaties of peace. One could argue about this, of course, but in my view, agreements such as the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 have less to do with peace and stability, which the Treaty does provide for too, and more with economic integration through the introduction of the euro and other financial mechanisms. Put differently, the Treaties of Utrecht and of

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[42] Cf. James Rosenau Rosenau and Ernst-Otto Czempiel eds., *Governance Without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gene M. Lyons and Michael Mastanduno, *Beyond Westphalia? State Sovereignty* and *International Intervention* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

[43] Stella Ghervas and David Armitage, ed., *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Enlightenment (1648-1815)* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

[44] To name just one example, see Dieter Grimm, *Sovereignty: The Origin and Future of a Political and Legal Concept*, trans. Belinda Cooper (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[45] Today, critiques of Westphalianism as eurocentric are more common than defences. See, for instance, Turan Kayaoglu, "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review,* 12 (2010), 193-217.

[46] I am referring to the classic by the anonymous collective Cato, *Guilty Men* (London: Gollancz, 1940).

[47] François Guizot, *Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe: Depuis la chute de l'empire romain jusqu'à la Révolution française* (Paris: Didier, 1828); also, the *Cambridge Modern History,* 13 vols, edited by Lord Acton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902-11).

Vienna, which set the scene for the whole book, also provide material for an ideal type that subsequent history cannot quite match: there is a core story there of balancing powers and defeating a common enemy such as Napoléon Bonaparte, who was simultaneously an influential lawgiver for many Europeans. This model is hard to match in subsequent periods, no matter how often someone like French President Emmanuel Macron might invoke the polyvalent significance of Napoléon in Europe today.

Because Ghervas is addressing multiple historiographical fields and traditions at once, but the book abounds in metaphors. In my view, these tend to overshadow the historical material instead of offering guidance through it. Whether the account of European peacemaking is a "theatrical dialogue in five acts that portrays Europe's resistance to empires while trying to keep free of armed conflicts" (3), or a gravitational history of stars and planets (as indicated by Tiepolo in his famous fresco, discussed in the introduction and then later in the book), the quick succession of metaphors makes it occasionally difficult to follow the main argument at each historic juncture. If this represented a mere disagreement over stylistic choices, it would be hardly worth mentioning, but it leads on to a more conceptual uncertainty. Just as I was unconvinced about the summary of Montesquieu's own argument regarding the value of different regimes, I was never quite sure whether Ghervas's use of Montesquieu's concept of the "spirit" of the laws arising from different European treaties reflected a serious appropriation of his category or merely an allusion.[48] If, for Montesquieu, the "spirit" is not only the climate in which a legal system emerges but also the motive guaranteeing forms of loyalty specific to each regime, then what is the spirit of Europe in this story? Is it love, as in the love of virtue or honour, or is it fear, as in the fear of a ruler? Montesquieu distinguished between tranquillity and peace, arguing that "fear is the principle of despotic government, its end is tranquillity: but tranquillity cannot be called a peace; no, it is only the silence of those towns which the enemy is ready to invade."[49] Could the spirit behind the European treaties be the product of a different kind of fear, the fear of war as the ultimate emotional 'ruler' of people's fortunes? This might explain the resulting side-effect which many observe about popular passions in Europe, or rather, a general lack of these. Perhaps this apathy of the Europeans towards Europe as an idea is the product of the fact that fear itself is not a strong enough power to bind people, because it fails to generate positive feelings of attachment or loyalty to strange bureaucratic institutions like the European Commission. Today, as the very centre of Europe is reeling from the brutal Russian invasion of Ukraine, which had left even the most pessimistic and 'realistic' Kremlinologists speechless, many of the questions provoked by this book still remain at large.

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[48] Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des lois* (Geneva: Barrilot & Fils, 1748).

[49] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Vol. I, Bk V, Ch. 14, 58.

Review by Beatrice Heuser, University of Glasgow

This is a magisterial work on the quest for peace through the reform of inter-state relations. Beginning roughly with the end of the Thirty Years' War, Stella Ghervas's narrative works its way forward to the creation of the European Communities, which represent the admittedly very imperfect, but so far best answer to the challenge of how one can pacify relations between the states of Europe so that conflicts of interest can be settled peacefully.

Replies to this challenge were developed over centuries. The first was perhaps the attempt by Pope Urban II in 1095 to beat two birds with one stone when he called upon the knights of Europe to undertake an "armed pilgrimage" (a.k.a. crusade) to the Holy Land to free the Christians there from Muslim oppression, at the same time hoping to divert said knights' bellicose culture away from Christian lands.[50] This indirect approach to pacifying Europe was taken up by Pierre Dubois, a counsellor to King Philip IV of France, in the first decade of the fourteenth century: he proposed the launching of a crusade so that the princes of Europe would, as was prescribed during crusades, keep the peace among themselves. This had not always worked in practice, so Dubois recommended the convocation of a general council, presided over by the Pope, to resolve disputes among the sovereign princes of Europe.[51] Many other proposals of the sort were made subsequently, from Bohemian King George Podiebrad to Henri IV of France's trusted minister the Duke of Sully, picking up in frequency in the seventeenth century where they included proposals of the Quaker and founder of the eponymous American State, William Penn.[52]

Particularly famous are the proposals of the Abbé Charles Iréné de Saint Pierre, who himself took part in the peace negotiations to end the Spanish War of Succession 1701-1714, which was ended by the Peace Treaties of Utrecht, Rastatt, and Baden in 1713-1714. Among these, the Treaties of Utrecht are the more important, and at the same time quite exceptional: the monarchs involved agreed to what Ghervas rightly describes as "a series of compromises," as it was a peace "without winners or losers" (39).

In this context, Ghervas deals deftly with two myths—myths in the sense of false perceptions of reality. One is that the quest for a balance of powers brings peace. This notion has two main roots, although there must have been some interconnection between the two. One goes back further than the period at the heart of Ghervas's study. The assumption that the powers that be somehow counterbalanced and checked each other can be found in the political thought of Lorenzo de' Medici (r. 1469–1492), who aspired to be, himself, the *ago della bilancia* ('the tongue of the balance') on the scales.[53] This evoked the odd idea that the tongue had some powers over the whole, rather than being merely the mechanical indicator of where the balance stood. Apart from Lorenzo, the Republic of Venice and certain popes also sought to have this power, as did some princes and kings, including Henry VIII of England.[54] An articulation of the workings of a *counter*-balancing mechanism between the States of Europe as a force for good is perhaps first found in the writing of the Burgundian diplomat Philippe de Commynes, who, in the last years of the fifteenth century, argued that God in his wisdom had created such a mechanism to check the ambitions of the various princes and dynasties.[55]

The other root is the notion that *domestic* politics will be better if there is a system of mutual checks and balances between the powers *within* a state, an idea that gained force in particular in England after Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell's revolutionary Commonwealth had come to an end and the monarchy had been

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[50] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

[51] Bruno Arcidiacono: *Cinq types de paix: Une histoire des plans de pacification perpétuelle (XVIIe—XXe siècles)* (Paris: PUF, 2011), 206-212.

[52] Ardidiacno, *Cinq types de paix*.

[53] Beatrice Heuser, *Brexit in History: Sovereignty vs. European Union* (London: Hurst, 2019), 76.

[54] Heuser, *Brexit in History*, 76.

[55] Heuser, *Brexit in History*, 74f.

re-established but limited formally by the powers of Parliament. Ghervas rightly points to the importance of Charles Davenant's *Essay on the Ballance of Power* of 1701 that articulated this concept (36). But what has worked well in a domestic setting, both in England/the United Kingdom and the United States and other polities descended from this English model, is not a recipe for powers unless they are also bound together within a larger structure in which the resort to violence is structurally impossible or at least very difficult, as within a state (or now the European Union). Between states, however, calling for the re-establishment of a (lost) balance of powers, even in the sincere belief that the endstate would be a state of peace, meant a call to war forcibly to redress the current imbalance, as nothing else could push back a power that had grown beyond its neighbours' ability to counterbalance it peacefully (38).

This rule is confirmed even by the pacific spirit in which two of the Utrecht Peace Agreements of 1713 used the term "balance of powers": at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, all sides made some concessions in the spirit of establishing such a balance between them. But it was a thirteen-year war alone that could bring forth this spirit. It lasted only until the death of the monarch who had been perceived, previously, as the main expansionist threat to Europe by his peers—Louis XIV of France. Having involved his realm in wars since his adolescence, Louis had been accused of aiming to establish a universal monarchy, and had successively lined up all the other princes of Europe against him. In old age, he had tired of war and on his deathbed in 1715 he advised his heir to desist from following his example. [56] But the set of bilateral peace treaties agreed at Utrecht did not put an end to the Great Northern War, which raged simultaneously, and also involved Utrecht signatories, namely the United Kingdom and Prussia (44). Nor did the spirit of Utrecht stop Louis XIV's heir from joining in the ensuing war of succession, this time over Austria and the Holy Roman Empire: another war fought for the sake of a balance of powers (34-39).

The other myth which Ghervas exposes and disposes with is that of a Westphalian System, so beloved of theorists of International Relations who do not care about historical facts. As Andreas Osiander has already shown in his brilliant works, this misunderstanding went back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who had opined, wrongly, that the pacification of the Holy Roman Empire in 1648 lent itself indirectly to making all of Europe more stable[57]—wrongly, as for example the Franco-Spanish wars and other succession wars of Louis XIV continued with few pauses until 1713, also affecting the Habsburg possessions to the North and East of France. So to be clear, as Osiander and Ghervas and others have shown, the Westphalian Treaties of October 1648 ended a civil war within the Holy Roman Empire, in which two outside powers had intervened massively: France and Sweden.[58] Curiously, these two powers were then made the guarantors of this internal peace settlement, which spelled out the relationship between the Emperor and the component parts of the Empire, some of which were headed by dukes, some by archbishops, some by counts, some being city-states.

In the two Westphalian Treaties, the sub-entities committed to settling all disagreements among themselves or with the Emperor peacefully, if necessary referring them to the imperial court of justice, as behooves the components of any state, indeed, as defines the State as the Leviathan that guarantees peace within and defence without. The components of the Empire very much continued to be just that—components with certain powers, that kept each other and the Emperor mutually in checks and balances, just as the aristocrats and parliament in England kept a check on the monarch after the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660. They had more rights locally than, say, the county of Yorkshire or Staffordshire within England, but they were absolutely not 'sovereign states' with no authority but God above their rulers. It is thus with hilarity at first, and increasing irritation and then frustration in the following hundreds of times that one reads references in

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[56] François Bluche, *Louis XIV* (Paris : Fayard, 1986), 890.

[57] Andreas Osiander, *The States System of Europe, 1640-1990: Peacemaking and the Conditions of International Stability* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), and Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth," *International Organization* 55:2 (2001): 251-287.

[58] Heinz Duchhardt, ed., *Der Westfälische Friede: Diplomatie-politische Zäsur-kulturelles Umfeld-Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014); Matthias Zimmer, "Das Westfälische System: Mythos oder Wirklichkeit?" *Moderne, Staat und Internationale Politik* (2008): 37-53.

the international relations literature and of course all student essays to a 'Westphalian System' of supposedly sovereign and equal States in Europe. In its crassest form, we find the myth perpetuated on Wikipedia: "Westphalian sovereignty, or state sovereignty, is a principle in international law that each state has exclusive sovereignty over its territory. The principle underlies the modern international system of sovereign states and is enshrined in the United Nations Charter."[59] One can only hope that Ghervas's book adds to the drip, drip, drip of historical writings that seek to explode this aberrant misinterpretation of historical facts.

Ghervas's own expertise lies mainly in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and it is here that her book excels. It builds on her own previous extensive research and publications on relevant subjects such as Enlightenment thinking about peace, the multiple meanings of balance of powers, and peace congresses,[60] and her chapters covering these periods stand on solid foundations. Outside her own centuries of expertise, we find Ghervas's book a little less sure-footed; thus she buys into the myth of a division of the world between Americans and Soviets at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, a myth that was created by French General Charles de Gaulle who, at the head of the newly reconstituted French government, had not been invited. De Gaulle had rightly sensed that some agreement on spheres of influence had been made behind his back and over the heads of especially of the Europeans, between the Soviet Union on one hand and a power in the West. But he had got the Western player wrong: it was British Prime Minister Wintson Churchill with his nineteenth-century views of the world who had agreed this with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin on his visit to Moscow at the end of 1944, not President Franklin D. Roosevelt with his commitment to bringing freedom and democracy to the whole world.[61] Allowing a totalitarian system such as Stalin's to command a sphere of influence would have been incompatible with Roosevelt's values.

Ghervas draws on an impressive array of works in English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Russian. The one regret is perhaps that, as a professor of Russian Studies, she does not use more Russian material, or try to tease out what might be a particular Russian take on peace and on the inter-state orders of the last few centuries. While it is quite possible that Russian historians have not tackled the subject much in the years since the fall of Communism, there must have been Soviet historians writing about this period, and there must be a proud Russian narrative of the Tsars Alexander I and Alexander III as peacemakers and key drivers behind the establishment of limitations on war and the creation of the Concert of Europe and congresses bringing together the great powers in an attempt to settle conflicts peacefully. It would have been fascinating to see how this meshes (or not) with current Russian ambitions to assert Russia's status of great power. Is this a glorious period to which Putin's Russia harks back?

Ghervas's concluding argument that the quest for security (now, of state members of the EU) detracts from the quest for peace and might lead to war is not altogether convincing. As she so ably demonstrates, any system building on the joint surrender of a part of one's independence and sovereignty, above all the ability and right to go to war with each other, presupposes also the surrender of any ambitions of territorial expansion and hegemonial ambitions. A group of states that can agree on this can still have neighbouring states harbouring such offensive ambitions, and there, good old deterrence is the best recipe for peace, rather than the call for a war to rebalance the respective states' powers. "Mixing the terms 'security' and 'peace'" is thus less a "semantic contradiction" (365), than the description of the state of peace that has been achieved

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[59] Wikipedia, "Westphalian Sovereignty," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westphalian_sovereignty, accessed on 17 Aug. 2021.

[60] Stella Ghervas, "Balance of Power vs. Perpetual Peace: Paradigms of European Order from Utrecht to Vienna, 1713–1815," *The International History Review* 39:3 (2017): 404-425; Ghervas, "From the Balance of Power to a Balance of Diplomacy? Peace and Security in the Vienna Settlement," in Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan, and Brian Vick, eds., *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the new European security culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 95-113.

[61] Reiner Markowitz, "Yalta: The Myth of the Division of the World," in Cyril Buffet and Beatrice Heuser, eds., *Haunted by History: Myths in International Relations* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1998), 80-91; Geoffrey Roberts: "Anglo-Russian Seminar on Churchill and Stalin," Foreign and Commonwealth Office London, March 2002.

within the EU on the one hand, and of what can be the aim for relations with states outside the Union on the other. One can live in peace only with states which are status quo powers. Ghervas is right, however, in pointing to the security dilemma inherent in deterrence: my deterrent posture can be interpreted by you as a threat, and can in any case be presented as such by your government to your electorate.

In all, this work presents the impressive result of extensive research. It makes an important contribution to our understanding of the long quest for peace between states in the West, and must be taken into account in all future research agendas on the subject. It will have a long shelf-life as one would expect of such a publication with such a prestigious academic publisher.

Review by Matthijs Lok, University of Amsterdam

Stella Ghervas's *Conquering Peace* is a bold attempt to analyze modern European history from the perspective of various attempts to 'engineer' a pan-European peace since the eighteenth century. This study builds on her earlier work on the Congress of Vienna and the post-Napoleonic international order, in particular her widely acclaimed French book on Alexandre de Stourdza, a diplomat in the service of Tsar Alexander.[62]

Conquering Peace forms part of a new trend in intellectual and political history that moves away from micro-studies, and focuses on longer term development of a concept.[63] Ghervas's work fits very well in the serial contextualisation approach pioneered by Harvard historian David Armitage, which endeavours to study the *longue-durée* changing meaning of concepts at specific nodal points in time.[64]

This study, furthermore, combines the various approaches of political, cultural, and intellectual history as well as international relations. Ghervas clearly demonstrates that the processes of war and peace, and international relations in general, can only be studied from a larger cultural context. Her positive view of the achievements of Utrecht and Vienna, and the Holy Alliance of the European kings, make her a pioneer in the current scholarly reassessment of the enlightened order that was constructed after Napoleon, which includes scholars such as Beatrice de Graaf, Brian Vicks, Glenda Sluga, and Isaac Nakhimovsky.[65]

The book is structured around five chapters, each of which describe a different European peace, followed by a general conclusion which deals with the most recent past. The journey starts in the eighteenth century with the Peace of Utrecht of 1713, which Ghervas credits with being the first modern European peace to the detriment of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. A second chapter discusses the Peace of Vienna of 1815 that was brokered among allies that defeated Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte. The book's third stop is the Peace of Paris that followed the First World War in 1919. The last two moments to be diagnosed are the construction of Europe after 1945 and the enlargement of the European Union after 1989 as a result of the fall of Communism and the German reunification.

For Ghervas, the lens through which she analyzes these various moments of peacemaking is that of the "spirit of peace" (5-9). The spirit of peace supersedes the roles of individual politicians, diplomats, or the specific legal formulations of the peace treaties. For Ghervas, peace is not the work of individual politicians, who can do no more than manage the 'deeper' social and cultural movements arising from below: in this light, the task of political leaders is "to channel these energetic surges from below" (351). Her focus on the peace spirit allows her to study these moments of peacemaking from various angles, combining the study of individuals with more abstract ideas and institutions. This multifaceted approach is in my view one of the great strengths of this magnum opus.

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[62] Stella Ghervas, *Réinventer la tradition: Alexandre Stourdza et l'Europe de la Sainte-Alliance* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), English edition forthcoming with Cambridge University Press; Ghervas and David Armitage, eds., *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Enlightenment, 1648-1815* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

[63] See for instance Annelien de Dijn, *Freedom: An Unruly History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), which discusses the history of the concept of freedom from Antiquity to the present.

[64] For example, David Armitage, *Civil Wars: A History in Ideas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017).

[65] Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014); Beatrice A. de Graaf, I. de Haan, and Brian Vick, eds., *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); De Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon: How Europe became Secure after 1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Glenda Sluga, *The Invention of International Order: Remaking Europe after Napoleon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021); and Isaac Nakhimovsky, *A World Reformed: Liberalism, the Holy Alliance, and the Problems of Global Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

Ghervas's book is an important work for historians and contemporary Europeanists alike. To begin with, one of the great merits of the book is that it examines the project of European integration from a longer historical lens. The European project is often regarded by myopic historians of European integration as the result of circumstances specific to the twentieth century, thus ignoring the longer cultural and historical traditions and roots that continued to shape twentieth-century developments. Very rarely can we find research on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the nineteenth-century international order, and the twentieth-century project of European integration brought together in one comprehensive study.

Another strength of the book is that Ghervas devotes ample attention not only to Western Europe and America, but to the contribution of Central, Central-Eastern, and Eastern Europe as well, echoing her current position of professor of Russian history at the Newcastle University (UK). One of the book's absolute European heroes is Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev, who in her view is an exponent of the European peace tradition and to a large extent responsible for the spirit of enlarged Europe after 1989. A final merit is its overall positive, although not uncritical, attitude towards Europe and the European peace attempts. This book clearly diverges from most other historical descriptions of European history integration, often written by British authors, which usually underscore the cynical and darker agendas lurking below the lofty ideals.[66] Ghervas paints European history in a more positive light for a change, without omitting the darker parts.

A book of this scope, however, by necessity contains also weaknesses and problematic aspects. The use of the concept of "spirit" is somewhat opaque and not sufficiently explained. It is certainly true that contemporaries at various historical moments themselves often spoke of the "spirit of peace" and the concept cannot be considered an anachronism. Yet at times, Ghervas speaks about these "atmospheric" spirits (18) as if they have real personality with feelings, instincts, fears, and disappointment: for instance, she writes of the Postwar European Spirit that it "was already dying of weariness and old age" (342). A clearer and operational definition of the meaning of a spirit would have been welcome.

Moreover, the focus on peace spirits overemphasizes the unity and homogeneity of the peace projects. Ghervas could have devoted more time to the power relations underlying the engineering of peace as well as the conflicting visions of what war and peace meant for various groups of people. Ghervas often makes insufficiently clear that 'peace' is often also a very oppressive, violent, and imperial project. Even the 'moderate' peace imposed by the Allied armies on occupied France as early as 1815-1818, for instance, was viewed very differently from the French, British, and Prussian perspectives.[67] Instead, the book seems to adopt a view akin to that of the 2012 Noble Peace Prize committee, which presented the European Union as the product of an unbroken European peace tradition "over six decades."[68]

Furthermore, the focus on intra-European development and Eastern European perspectives leads to a relative neglect of the crucial extra-European and imperial worlds. Non-state actors such as the Church and pressure groups are also largely ignored, whereas recent work by Brian Vick, for instance, has underscored the importance of religion as well as nationalism for the peacemakers of Vienna in 1815, themes which are neglected here.[69]

A final concern is that Ghervas does not sufficiently explain the exact relation between these five "spirits of peace" divided in time. Some questions therefore remain unanswered: Do we truly see the same spirit of

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[66] Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999); Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Penguin, 1999); and Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945* (London: Penguin 2005).

[67] See for instance De Graaf, *Fighting Terror after Napoleon*, and Christine Haynes, *Our Friends the Enemies: The Occupation of France after Napoleon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2018).

[68] Nobel Peace Prize Committee, "The Nobel Peace Prize for 2012," press Release, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2012/press-release/

[69] Vick, *Congress of Vienna*, 153-192.

peace reappearing in different periods, autonomous from the agency of politicians and diplomats? Or, as seems more likely, is the idea of European peace a political and cultural tradition that is constantly being renewed and, above all, reinvented for different agendas? I would have liked to have read more in detail and in a systematic manner how the various peacemakers made use of past experiences of peacemaking, both as a model to follow or as failure to avoid. To what extent did diplomatic memories also hinder and shape the consequent attempts to build a European peace?

These criticisms notwithstanding, I recommend this awe inspiring and ambitious work for historians, diplomats, legal scholars, and Europeanists alike.

Response by Stella Ghervas, Newcastle University

Historians tend to consider their published work a testament for posterity. Yet those who are most likely to read and judge it belong to the here and now. I would like to start by thanking Vicki L. Birchfield, Boyd van Dijk, Dina Gusejnova, Beatrice Heuser, and Matthijs Lok for their participation in the roundtable on *Conquering Peace*, Charles S. Maier for writing the introduction, and Damien Mahiet for organizing the symposium.[70] I am grateful for the generous comments and insightful remarks by the five reviewers, which I will endeavor to answer as fully as possible.

Peace has long been regarded as less glamorous than war.[71] It might therefore seem paradoxical that I devoted a whole book, *Conquering Peace*, to understanding why and how the term "peace" had become so prominent in European political discourse. To overcome the prejudice against peace, I aimed to trace the genealogy of this crucial and multifaceted political concept over the *longue durée*, to see how reflections on peace and peacemaking over the centuries materialized in treaties concluded in the aftermath of great wars, which were fought to avert the threat of pan-continental empire in Europe. I was particularly concerned with answering why only a voluntary unification of all states could alleviate the fear of continental empires and new wars. Uniting diverse nations with distinct traditions, languages, and customs was never a self-evident proposition, especially because it clashed with the late-nineteenth century concept of the nation-state (as a fully sovereign entity). It remains controversial today. Indeed, one should refrain from considering the European Union as the natural outcome of some 'manifest destiny,' that is to say a pre-ordained process of convergence. To evoke Leo Tolstoy's simile of the 'storm-tossed sea of events,' Europe's history over the *longue durée* has been so violent and erratic, and so often at the mercy of new wars, that it would be safer for a historian to consider (as a fundamental heuristic hypothesis) that it has no purpose or direction whatsoever.

Nonetheless, I explore in my book the continuity of an idea envisioned for centuries by both individuals and groups—that of "perpetual peace" (*paix perpétuelle*; *ewiger Friede*) or what we would now term 'lasting' peace. It is remarkable that this idea, pursued and applied generation after generation, became a tradition or a lore that eventually influenced the course of events in Europe, and achieved peacefully what no empire had managed in recent times: the unification of the continent (however limited in its scope) under a single banner. How that notion evolved over time was tied up with the practical matter of preventing future wars while guaranteeing the liberties of all states (4). *Conquering Peace* examined how thinkers and statesmen have attempted to square that circle over three centuries. I deliberately introduced the term "engineering of peace," to emphasize the contest of human will against the "mindless elements" of European history.

Addressing my primary question led me on a decade-long effort to write a new history of Europe seen through the lens of peacemakers rather than warmakers. The result is broad-ranging chronologically (from the late seventeenth century to the present day), geographically (an enlarged Europe, from the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains), and disciplinarily (bridging theory and practice, ideas and political experience, intellectual history and international history). This is happily reflected by the diverse expertise of the reviewers' backgrounds: political science and European studies (Birchfield), history of political thought (Gusejnova),

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[70] I also thank Diane N. Labrosse and Damien Mahiet for the final edits of this forum.

[71] Political scientists and scholars of International Relations have contributed extensively to the topic; yet little has been written on the history of peace in Europe until very recently. Among the latest publications by historians, see Bruno Arcidiacono, *Cinq types de paix: Une histoire des plans de pacification perpétuelle, XVIIe– XXe siècles* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2011), though not focusing specifically on Europe, he explored a significant part of the European peace literature; Jean-Pierre Bois, *La paix: Histoire politique et militaire, 1435–1878* (Paris: Perrin, 2012); Bo Stråth, *Europe's Utopias of Peace: 1815, 1919, 1951* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Petra Goedde, *The Politics of Peace: A Global Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); *Paradoxes of Peace in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Thomas Hippler and Miloš Vec (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); and the series *A Cultural History of Peace*, general ed. Ronald Edsforth (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 6 vols.

International Relations and strategic studies (Heuser), and political and intellectual history (Lok) to the history of international law (van Dijk).

The reviewers all highlight key aspects from the perspective of their own specialties, geographical focuses, time frames, and languages. Most of their comments deal with *emphasis*. Understandably, they occasionally offer contradictory comments, such as when Birchfield argues that Mikhail Gorbachev receives considerable coverage in Chapter 5, whereas Gusejnova wishes that more space had been devoted to that period of Soviet history. Similarly, van Dijk experienced some "puzzlement" at the account of the end of the Cold War, which is presented from the viewpoint of the states in the Eastern bloc. Indeed, one of the main aims of this book is to stress that Europe is not limited to the France-Germany-Britain troika or to 'the West,' but also includes those peoples from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe who directly experienced the effects of Communist dominance. This is what I describe in the book under the heading of "Enlarged Europe."

The kaleidoscope of views expressed by the reviewers encourages me to think that the book attained its goal of speaking to a wide range of subdisciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and hopefully beyond, to educated audiences and decision-makers. I attempted to strike a happy balance between those specialties while exploring sources from over a dozen languages, including non-Western European languages, in order to establish a meaningful wide-angle view across Europe. Wishes that some aspect or other had been covered in greater detail might be blamed on the 'flattening effect' of that lens.

Throughout the writing of the book, my choices were necessarily guided by my aims: each of the five moments of European history chosen for the book occurred after a major continental war and were marked by the impending threat of a pan-European empire: the bid of French king Louis XIV for European hegemony (1701–1714); Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte and the French Empire (1799–1815); the German Empires in World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939–1945); and the Soviet dominance over half of Europe during the Cold War in the decades before 1991. This periodization illustrates how the aim of peace fostered the political idea of Europe (and its corollary of unification) over the *longue durée*, long before the European Union came into being, and even before the age of nation-states. It also shows how the evolution of the idea of Europe—cultural, economic, and institutional—shaped the concept of peace. Seen from this perspective, the contemporary EU is merely the latest—and perhaps not the last—of several attempts to achieve the "Idea of Europe" as an arena of political peace (5).

The book also analyzes some common terminological misconceptions about war and peace. As witnessed in Russia's current war against Ukraine, the debate is liable to turn into a semantic jumble when vocabulary is misused: when terms belonging to the field of war are used in a context of peace (as with "balance of power"), and vice-versa (as when a conquering army is presented as performing a "peacekeeping mission" in a country it has invaded).[72] It is thus essential to answer accurately the question of what we really mean by peace and war.

To start with, I will address a key concept of *Conquering Peace*, which is commented on by all five reviewers, namely that of "spirit," a Spirit of Peace, which is a structuring principle for the book. Birchfield and Lok both wish for some clarification of its definition; Gusejnova sees a parallel with the sense of the term as used in Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des Lois* (1748), while van Dijk evokes the understanding that Hegel inherited from the latter with his *Zeitgeist*. The sense in which the *philosophe* understood the word "spirit" might be closer to the meaning provided by the *Dictionary of the French Academy*: "The inner meaning of a text, the essential

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[72] "Putin Orders Russian Forces to 'Perform Peacekeeping Functions' in Eastern Ukraine's Breakaway Regions," Reuters, February 22, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-orders-russian-peacekeepers-eastern-ukraines-two-breakaway-regions-2022-02-21/, accessed on September 30, 2022.

inspiration that characterizes a work, a doctrine."[73] It goes without saying that Montesquieu did give a wider social dimension to that *inspiration*; indeed, the monarchies, tyrannies, or republics that he described were political bodies, after all.[74]

By contrast, the definition of "spirit" (*esprit*) that I provide in the introduction is objective: it designates "a group of individuals; a social phenomenon that brings forward a certain idea or ideal [of peace]" (6). The social reality of a spirit (of peace) as used in my book is circumscribed by the participating individuals, as well as their avowed aim and the form of their interactions; it is explained by its members and is a summation of them. Sometimes a Spirit of Peace is concentrated geographically (as in the Spirit of Geneva after World War I),[75] or at least has a recognized center; sometimes it is diffused in space. In time, its lifespan can be as short as two decades, or even just a couple of years. It will not outlast its members, or the will of its members to perpetuate it.

The Spirit of Vienna thus materialized within a definite timespan (the years 1814-23) and locale (the Austrian capital). On that occasion, a core group of individuals (rulers and their attendants, diplomats, high state officers) congregated with the clearly stated purpose of re-establishing a new political order in Europe; all diplomatic as well as social activities, including the famous dancing parties Vienna witnessed at the time, were subordinated to that overarching goal.[76]

Hence, the term *spirit*, as used in *Conquering Peace*, is a conceptual handle by which I grasp a group of individuals collectively, with their respective positions in time and space, as well as their goals and rationale for action. Contrary to Montesquieu, who stated that "*cet esprit gouverne pour eux*" ("that spirit governs for them")[77] as if it transcended its members and aided (or impeded) their action, a clear corollary of the definition I use is that 'the individual members collectively govern the spirit of their own group.' That should also mark the distinction with Hegel's notion of *Geist*. In sum, a Spirit of Peace as I intend it is not an abstract principle at all, but a practical tool.

Next, a legitimate question is how to approach peace in Europe, without also treating in detail the dubious relationship between European powers and colonization. Gusejovna notes that several European powers were at the same time perpetrators and victims of warlike imperialism, while Lok mentions that peace could be a "very oppressive, violent, and imperial project." In this regard, van Dijk rightly insisted that the notion of peace had often been manipulated so as to mask domineering intentions. I fully agree with these comments.

I covered this issue of semantic ambiguity in the introduction, where I write, "the term peace, which is also a euphemism for death and the afterlife in most European languages, has always lent itself to puns, misinterpretations, and cynical corruptions" (12)—specifically mentioning the oppressive use of the word "pacification" in a colonial context. In Chapter 3, I refer to the Conference of Berlin (1884-1885) as a typical

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[73] "Sens profond d'un texte, inspiration essentielle qui caractérise une œuvre, une doctrine." "Esprit," in *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 9th ed. (1986–).

[74] Céline Spector, "Esprit general," in *Dictionnaire Montesquieu*, http://dictionnaire-montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/fr/article/1376474276/fr/, accessed on September 30, 2022.

[75] The Swiss writer Robert de Traz popularized the term *Spirit of Geneva* with his book of the same title (*L'Esprit de Genève*, Paris: B. Grasset, 1929).

[76] See Stella Ghervas, *Réinventer la tradition: Alexandre Stourdza et l'Europe de la Sainte-Alliance* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008); Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013); Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Beatrice de Graaf, *Tegen de terreur. Hoe Europa veilig werd na Napoleon* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2018); Glenda Sluga, *The Invention of International Order: Remaking Europe after Napoleon* (Princeton: Princeton Universtiy Press, 2021).

[77] Montesquieu, *De la politique* (*Traité de devoirs*, 1725), in *Montesquieu. Bibliothèque & éditions*, ed. Catherine Volpilhac-Auger, 2021, http://montesquieu.huma-num.fr/editions/genres-divers/de-la-politique/lire, accessed on September 26, 2022.

example of the breakdown of the ideas of peace, as they became perverted by ideologies of racial superiority (146). As a scholar who has worked for two decades on the history of peace and peacemaking in Europe from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century, I had already had the opportunity to cover this issue in works published elsewhere, notably in my co-edited volume *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Enlightenment*, and in a dozen articles. I specifically addressed the question of colonial peace in my chapter "Definitions of Peace," which covers the period 1815-1920.[78]

Simply stated, the subject of *Conquering Peace* is peace *in* Europe, not peace emanating *from* Europe. I tried to counter a bias in the demand that any survey of events in Europe must necessarily also cover the rest of the world. The question at hand is the struggle against a specific form of tyranny, the pan-European empire (or, expressed in traditional terms, a universal monarchy). It is a different phenomenon (geographically, and in its forms and manifestations) from the European overseas colonial empire.[79] I attempted to avoid the illusion that the European experience could be automatically transposed elsewhere, which is still a failing of so many European and American studies. This "eurocentrism" thrives, paradoxically, even in post-colonial studies, since exposing the abuses of European colonial powers comes down to emphasizing their historical significance.[80] One should remember that long before a club of powers exerted imperialist violence against peoples overseas, they had fed their appetite for self-aggrandizement against the vast majority of their own European neighbors, by crushing, colonizing, or assimilating them.[81]

It was thus my explicit intention to "provincialize Europe" (to use Dipesh Chakrabarty's term)[82] by refraining from presenting European mores and habits as a yardstick for all humanity. Every people or culture may have their own deep cultural interpretation of what the ceremony of "making peace" means, be it an individual becoming whole again, a family reunited, a group of nations coming together as one, or humanity at peace (372-373).

By emphasizing the struggles against attempts to establish continental hegemony in Europe, I thus focus on Europeans' reflections on the destructive consequences of military violence on themselves: how it feels to have one's life and possessions threatened, to lose one's statehood, or to be enslaved. Nevertheless, if achieving an imperial peace became undesirable in Europe after the Peace of Utrecht (1713), it was a question of time before a colonial peace would follow the same fate, an issue Immanuel Kant had already broached in his essay "Toward Perpetual Peace" (1795).[83] I discuss in Chapter 4 how the dire experience of Nazi occupation in Europe during World War II—particularly in the Netherlands—changed Europeans' perspective on the legitimacy of continuing colonial occupations overseas (262-264).

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[78] Stella Ghervas and David Armitage, eds., *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020); Stella Ghervas, "Definitions of Peace," in *A Cultural History of Peace in the Age of Empire*, ed. Ingrid Sharp (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 24–31.

[79] See *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900*, ed. Saliha Belmessous (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Oliver Eberl, "The Paradox of Peace with 'Savage' and 'Barbarian' Peoples," in *Paradoxes of Peace in Nineteenth Century Europe*, ed. Hippler and Vec, 219–237.

[80] See notably Martti Koskenniemi, "Histories of International Law: Dealing with Eurocentrism," *Rechtsgeschichte: Zeitschrift des Max-Planck-Instituts für europäische Rechtsgeschichte*, 19, 2011, 152–176; Lauren Benton, "The Legal Logic of Wars of Conquest: Truces and Betrayal in the Early Modern World," *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*, 28, 2018, 425–448.

[81] For more on this point, see "Conquérir la paix, une conversation avec Stella Ghervas," *Le Grand Continent*, interview conducted by Baptiste Roger-Lacan, September 17, 2021, https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2021/09/17/conquerir-la-paix-une-conversation-avec-stella-ghervas/, accessed on November 23, 2022.

[82] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[83] Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf* (1795).

Another question which is addressed prominently by the reviewers concerns which great wars, and which Peace Spirits, should have been included as episodes in my narrative. Birchfeld's point that the Franco-German war of 1870 played a considerable role in the course of European history is well made, especially considering that the emergence of the Second Reich profoundly altered the military balance of power in Europe; furthermore, France's defeat and occupation, as well as its loss of territory, played a role in the Franco-German antagonism that would later flare up in World War I. This war appears, as she points out, as a backwards reference at the start of Chapter 4, with a comment on the opening speech of the Paris Conference given in Versailles' Hall of Mirrors, which referred to the proclamation of the German empire in 1871.

The answer is that every selected episode in *Conquering Peace* had to satisfy two criteria: to occur after a major continental war *and* after the bid of a European power for pan-European hegemony (215). While France's defeat and Napoleon III's abdication were certainly an upheaval, the Franco-Prussian War was a localized conflict and its immediate consequences on the political formation of Europe were, all things considered, limited. Whereas the proclamation of the Reich was a symbolically significant event, German unification was itself a more or less consensual aggregation within a federation under the leadership of Prussia, which maintained each member-state substantially intact. Indeed, the events of previous years (Prussia's leadership in the North-German Federation and Austria's defeat at the battle of Sadowa in 1866) had shown it was only a question of time before unification became a reality. Nor was it—yet—a forceful bid for pan-European hegemony; that circumstance would materialize more than four decades later, in 1914 with imperial Germany, and once again in 1939, with the Nazi regime.

I used the same formal criterion to discard the many wars that marred the eighteenth century, notably the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years' War, and the Revolutionary Wars. That is despite the fact that each of these conflicts would have lent itself to an interesting discussion of how the military balance of power in Europe changed markedly and how this change ultimately favored the line of Plans of Perpetual Peace inaugurated by the French diplomat and author Abbé de Saint-Pierre in 1713, which would ultimately become "mainstream" by 1815 (49-50).

Another important question, raised by van Dijk, concerns the contemporary world order and the role of the United Nations. It is indeed important here to distinguish the purpose of the United Nations as formulated in Article 1 of its Charter ("international peace and security"), from the fact that this international organization was born as the wartime military alliance against the Axis powers. The process that led it to become the peace organization as founded in San Francisco in 1945 is not surprising: that a military coalition turned into a postwar peace alliance, is a recurring pattern that had already been observed both in 1815 and in 1919.[84]

The true oddity is what the UN became after its launch, in the context of the Cold War. I devote significant space to the fact that the unanimity rule imposed on the Security Council (often labelled as "the right of veto") prevented the UN from operating as a "machinery of peace," giving Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's exceptional leverage and impunity in its occupation of Central and Eastern Europe; indeed, the UN accepted the Soviet Union as a *bona fide* member of its directorial council. The granting of legitimacy to a totalitarian state raises serious moral questions, in view of the fact that World War II had brought evidence of the cruelty and cynicism of both the Nazi and Soviet regimes, and the League of Nations had never afforded tolerance to them (the USSR had been dishonorably discharged from the League in December 1939, after its aggression against Finland, [208]).

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[84] Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

In the second half of the twentieth century, and still today, a small circle of great powers (namely the US, Russia and China) has benefitted from *de facto* exemption from Article 1 of the Charter ("the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace"). Furthermore, these countries have exerted their power to censor criticism of their actions by the international community, by vetoing resolutions of the Security Council, and occasionally barring the General Assembly from convening (as happened in 1956 after Soviet tanks entered Budapest, 215). This conflict of interest by key states entrusted with safeguarding peace is reminiscent of how Austria, Prussia, and Russia suppressed demands for political representation after the Congress of Vienna, during the period known as the 'Reaction,' and of the violations committed by all members of the Council of the League between 1919 and 1939 (which I compare, for their collective guilt, to the main characters in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, [210]). After the sobering experience of the two World Wars, it was disingenuous to trust that the great powers would abandon their ingrained habits, inherited from the imperial and colonial eras.

Hence, one of the takeaways of *Conquering Peace* is that the establishment of a Security Council over the UN, whose members were afforded the right to neutralize each other as well as the organization itself, was a design failure in the engineering of peace, and a deviation from the "tradition of peace" (228). Congruent with the observations by Abbé de Saint-Pierre in 1713 in his *Plan of Perpetual Peace*, the institutional anarchy in the international community could only be corrected by the emergence of a bipolar world based on the balance of power between two military alliances (NATO and the Warsaw Pact). The European unification project started in the 1950s was what I called "a Western System of Peace within a Global System of War" (277). Calling that situation "peace" was a stretch of the imagination, particularly for the Germans on both sides of the Inner Border, who lived side-by-side with garrisons in a constant state of high alert.

To use the terms coined by Saint-Pierre, the Cold War was an "armed truce" on a global scale, perpetually on the edge of nuclear war (52); the international community lived in a "system of war."[85] In the context of what I term the Fifty Years' War (the succession of World War II and the Cold War from 1939 to 1989), Central and Eastern Europe had not known one day of true peace. By contrast, the Autumn of the Peoples of 1989, favored by last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's foreign policy, inaugurated a new unitary conformation of Europe where the factor of military balance of power was abolished in favor of a joint governance of the continent (somewhat reminiscent of that of 1815), albeit only for a short period (300).

It may well be that affording a privileged role to a select club of great powers in the international order (as in 1815, 1919 and 1945) has been more conducive to perpetual war (regular military aggressions against sovereign states) over the last three centuries, than to peace.[86] The true role of a world peace organization should be to act as a powerful assembly that protects a few hegemonic states against their own warlike penchants. As I put it in the book's conclusion: "the core function of any peace system should be to prevent the great powers at the top of the pyramid from declaring war on each other, through economic or military means" (362).

A last question concerns the distinction between the vocabulary of peace and the vocabulary of war. Heuser asked whether mixing the terms "security" and "peace" could be less a "semantic contradiction" than a necessity. Her remark seems to refute at once Gusejnova's assertion that academia has been moving away from "the principle of reasons of state" in social sciences and in International Relations. While I wish this were right, that evolution is still far from mainstream: I cannot help but notice that Cold War era *Realpolitik* is still very much part of the curricula of international relations and social sciences in both the United States and Russia, and that it is still the mainstay of those two countries' foreign policy. In this regard, the terms

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[85] Abbé de Saint-Pierre, *Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe*, 2 vols. (Utrecht: A. Schouten, 1713), "Premier discours," 22 and 37.

[86] On a recent interpretation of this subject, see Samuel Moyn, *Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021).

"balance of power" and [international] "security" both belong semantically and practically to the vocabulary of war. Indeed, most preparations to create or maintain a balance of power have traditionally consisted of buying military equipment and maintaining standing armies. Historically, the Treaty of Chaumont (1814), which reconfirmed the military coalition to fight until Napoleon's eventual defeat, invoked the aim of "re-establishing a just balance of power" in Europe.[87] Invoking the term "security" today, in the context of international relations is in practice an admission that there is mutual lack of trust within the international community, especially between members of the UN Security Council. While establishing a balance of power may fulfill expediency maxims such as *si vis pacem para bellum* ("'if you want peace prepare for war'") and *ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem* ("with the sword, he seeks tranquil peace in freedom"), it is only a temporary solution, which aims at militarily containing a potentially aggressive state because no settlement treaty has been obtained, much less a peace alliance.

Furthermore (and to reiterate Saint-Pierre's core argument), peace cannot be defined simply in a Hobbesian manner as an "absence of fighting." Obvious modern counterexamples would be situations such as in Cyprus and Korea that are defined by a buffer-zone with barbed wires, minefields, and armed troops on both sides. My argument is essentially the same one that Kant made in "Toward Perpetual Peace" when introducing his "definitive articles": namely, that "although there is perhaps no open hostility, yet there is a constant threatening that an outbreak may occur." This is a state of war, and "Thus, the state of peace must be *established*."[88] As a case in point, the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (signed in 1990, forty-five years after the general surrender of the Wehrmacht) eventually settled the territorial issues that had led to the outbreak of World War II and reaffirmed the declaration that "only peace will emanate from German soil" (Article 2). In the absence of such a settlement, it is hard to conceive how the most basic conditions for lasting peace could have been established between Germany and its neighboring states, namely Czechoslovakia and Poland; and how the victorious powers of 1945 could have allowed for German reunification.

That is why terms such as balance of power and security do not belong in the same semantic field as peace (in its fullest sense of lasting peace, which must be built upon trust between former enemies and maintained through law). They can coexist with it only as a short-term remedy. The concept of peace takes its full meaning only in the absence of mutual fears of aggression or annexation. The two quantities of security and balance of power do not constitute, by themselves, a recipe for how peace will be achieved, in the event the planned military operations are successfully concluded. Peace is a state of health of the international community.[89] Hence the motto: "peace is for the strong; war is for the weak" (374).

In retrospect, the association of the two terms "peace" and "security" in the UN Charter must be understood in its historical context, since that text was redacted in June 1945, before Japan was defeated, and therefore against a background of open warfare. This juxtaposition was, however, reinforced and solidified by the announcement of the Truman doctrine in 1947. The rise of political realism in US academia in the 1950s stemmed from a recognition that the efforts of the US government to establish lasting peace after World War II within the framework of the United Nations had failed; actively preparing for war against the Soviet Union was the only open avenue left for US foreign policy. In sum, adjoining the two terms "peace" and "security"

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[87] "Traité d'alliance entre l'Autriche, la Russie, la Grande-Brétagne et la Prusse, conclu à Chaumont le 1 Mars 1814," in *Nouveau Recueil de Traités d'Alliance, de Paix, de Trêve, de Neutralité . . . des Puissances et États de l'Europe*, ed. Geo[rg] Fréd. de Martens, 16 vols. (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1817–1841), vol. 1, 684. For more on this point, see *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture*, ed. Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan, and Brian Vick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[88] Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 98.

[89] On the metaphor of war as a disease of the "body politic," or (in contemporary terms) of the international community, see "Paix," in *Encyclopédie*, ou *Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, 17 vols. (Paris: Briasson, 1751–1765), vol. 11, 768.

is not only problematic, but may be wishful thinking. There cannot conceivably be lasting peace as long as there are security concerns.

Lasting peace can only be established by patiently seeking it: through peace settlements; international law and institutions; reconciliation; "concrete achievements that bring about a de facto solidarity" (to use French statesman Robert Schuman's terms from 1950);[90] and the establishment of peace alliances based on mutual trust. The gradual overcoming of earlier antagonisms between Germany and France through the European unification process constitutes a good precedent for the foundation for genuine lasting peace, as opposed to a pseudo-state of peace relying on the balance of power between mutually antagonistic powers.

I end these remarks by thanking my reviewers again for their engaging and provocative reactions to my book and by expressing my gratitude to H-Diplo for convening this stimulating roundtable. I wrapped up *Conquering Peace* by predicting that it would stimulate debate over the true meaning of a state of peace as distinct from a state of war, and terms such as balance of power or security. I also stated, at the time of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, that the danger that an "amnesia of past wars" in the global community could lead to new conflicts.[91] Sadly, my misgivings about the solidity of peace on the eastern fringes of Europe in the absence of settlement treaties were confirmed by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine: to date, that conflict has amply confirmed my conclusion that war is for the weak, peace for the strong. In light of this struggle, the debate on peace has become only more pressing and urgent. This exchange with my critics in such challenging times has been more about refining my ideas, than about controversy or contention. I shall be lucky indeed if future readers will treat my book *Conquering Peace* with the care and attention they have given to it.

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[90] Robert Schuman, "Declaration of 9 May 1950."

[91] Stella Ghervas, Schuman Lecture 2017 "Europe's Pursuit of Peace: Past, Present and Future," Studium Generale, Maastricht University, May 9, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CsVujp1_-s&t=7s, accessed November 23, 2022.