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Ballare col nemico?

Reazioni all'espansione francese in Europa  
tra entusiasmo e resistenza (1792-1815)

Mit dem Feind tanzen?

Reaktionen auf die französische Expansion in Europa  
zwischen Begeisterung und Protest (1792-1815)

a cura di/hrsg. von

Cecilia Nubola - Andreas Würgler

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Trento, 24-25 gennaio 2008

Atti del convegno «Dancing with the Enemy? Cultural and Social Relations in Cities Occupied by French Troops (1792-1815) / Danser avec l'ennemi? Relations culturelles et sociales dans les villes occupées par des troupes françaises (1792-1815)»

Lyon, 27-30 agosto 2008

BALLARE

col nemico? : Reazioni all'espansione francese in Europa tra entusiasmo e resistenza : (1792-1815) = Mit dem Feind tanzen? : Reaktionen auf die französische Expansion in Europa zwischen Begeisterung und Protest : (1792-1815) / a cura di = hrsg. von Cecilia Nubola, Andreas Würigler - Bologna : Il mulino ; Berlin : Duncker & Humblot, 2010. - 306 p. ; 24 cm. - (Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento. Contributi ; 23 = Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient. Beiträge ; 23)

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## Preface

The roots of this book lie in two conferences. The first one, entitled «Far fronte alla rivoluzione. Reazioni e risposte all'espansione francese in Europa 1792-1815 / Im Angesicht der Revolution. Reaktionen auf die französische Expansion 1792-1815», took place in Trento (Italy) at the Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Centro per gli studi storici italo-germanici, on January 24 and 25, 2008. The conference presented the results of the FBK-Isig research project «Forme della comunicazione politica nell'Europa della prima età moderna (secoli XV-XVIII)» under the scientific coordination of Cecilia Nubola (FBK-Isig) and Andreas Würgler (Historisches Institut, Universität Bern). The second event, entitled «Dancing with the Enemy? Cultural and Social Relations in Cities Occupied by French Troops (1792-1815) / Danser avec l'ennemi? Relations culturelles et sociales dans les villes occupées par des troupes françaises (1792-1815)», was Session S04 of the 9th International Conference on Urban History organized by the European Association for Urban History (EAUH) in Lyon (France) on August 27-30, 2008, under the scientific coordination of Andreas Würgler.



## Sommario/Inhalt

Dancing with the Enemy? Introduction, by <i>Andreas Würgler</i>	p.	9
Il volto della Rivoluzione: Milano di fronte all'invasione francese (1796-1799), di <i>Laura Gagliardi</i>		23
La società milanese nell'età rivoluzionaria: resistenze e mutamenti, di <i>Vittorio Criscuolo</i>		35
«È morta la Repubblica e l'uguaglianza è gita». Voci dal Piemonte in rivoluzione, di <i>Gian Paolo Romagnani</i>		47
«S'appropriier les mœurs, les habitudes, et la langue françaises». Le théâtre et l'impérialisme culturel français à Mayence et Turin (1798-1814), par <i>Rahul Markovits</i>		65
Suppliche, proclami, reclami: i patrioti romani negli anni della Rivoluzione, di <i>Marina Formica</i>		81
I democratici svizzeri e la «Grande Nation»: petizioni e comunicazione politica alla vigilia della Rivoluzione del 1798, di <i>Danièle Tosato-Rigo</i>		121
Wer hat Angst vor wem? Kulturelle, soziale und nationale Muster in den Beziehungen zwischen Stadtbevölkerungen und Besatzungsarmeen (Schweiz und Deutschland 1792-1815), von <i>Andreas Würgler</i>		141
Zwischen Konservatismus und Revolution. Die Bürgerprozesse in der Reichsstadt Esslingen am Neckar gegen Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, von <i>Alexander Schlaak</i>		165
		7

Gli eserciti francesi a Trento (1796-1801). Cronache e diari, di <i>Cecilia Nubola</i>	p.	195
Beschwerden als Legitimationen. Zur kommunikativen Funktion von Gravamina während des Tiroler Aufstandes von 1809, von <i>Martin P. Schennach</i>		215
Spectacles of 1809: Napoleonic, Russian, and Austrian Troops in Lemberg, by <i>Markian Prokopovych</i>		241
«Mes nuits avec l'ennemi». L'hébergement des troupes et l'oc- cupation française de la ville de Porto de mars à mai 1809, par <i>Jorge Martins Ribeiro</i>		255
The Toulon Ball in the Neutral City of Copenhagen 1794. The Story of a Cancellation, by <i>Ulrik Langen</i>		269
The French Occupation and the Transformation of the Dutch Public Sphere (1795-1813), by <i>Thomas Poell</i>		283



# Dancing with the Enemy? Introduction

by *Andreas Würgler*

The French Revolution in 1789 was for most Europeans at first a media event such as had never been seen before. As practically never until then, not even with regard to the American Revolution, the events of summer 1789 were reported across Europe in all the available media of that time<sup>1</sup>. In public opinion, influenced by the rationalist bourgeois class, the revolution was applauded not only in the German-speaking areas, at least until the outbreak of the September Massacres in 1792 and the execution of Louis XVI in January 1793. Peasants and artisans felt stimulated to emulate the reports from France, for example as in Saxony, but also in Silesia, Mecklenburg, Hohenlohe, or in the Rhineland. They copied individual elements of the revolutionary rhetoric and symbols for their own revolts and protest actions. The artisans and peasants around Lake Zurich in Switzerland during 1794/95, the burghers of Cologne, Aachen, Trier, Coblenz or Boppard, and in many other places<sup>2</sup>. In Belgium,

*Translated by Joy Avery*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H.-J. LÜSEBRINK - R. REICHARDT, *Die Bastille. Zur Symbolgeschichte von Herrschaft und Freiheit*, Frankfurt a.M. 1990; H. BÖNING (ed.), *Französische Revolution und deutsche Öffentlichkeit. Wandlungen in Presse und Alltagskultur am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Deutsche Presseforschung, 28), München et al. 1992; C. DANELZIK-BRÜGGEMANN - R. REICHARDT (eds), *Bildgedächtnis eines welthistorischen Ereignisses. Die Tableaux historiques de la Révolution française*, Göttingen 2001; A. WÜRLER, *Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 85), München 2009, p. 114, 130 f. This contribution developed during my project «Bitten im Wandel. Umbrucherfahrungen und Interessenartikulation in der städtischen Gesellschaft Berns um 1800», which was financed by the Schweizerischen Nationalfonds zur Förderung wissenschaftlicher Forschung and carried out at the Institute of History of the University of Bern ([http://www.hist.unibe.ch/content/forschungsprojekte/bitten\\_im\\_wandel/index\\_ger.html](http://www.hist.unibe.ch/content/forschungsprojekte/bitten_im_wandel/index_ger.html)).

<sup>2</sup> H.-U. WEHLER, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 1, München 1987, p. 355 f., 357; H. BERDING (ed.), *Soziale Unruhen in Deutschland während der französischen Revolution* (Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Sonderheft, 12), Göttingen 1988; J. KOCKA, *Weder Stand noch Klasse. Unterschichten um 1800*, Berlin 1990; A. WÜRLER, *Unruhen und Öffentlichkeit. Städtische und ländliche Protestbewegungen im 18. Jahrhundert* (Frühneuzeit-Forschungen, 1), Tübingen 1995, pp. 280-288; R. GRABER, *Die Zeit des Teilens. Volksbewegungen und Volksunruhen auf der Zürcher Landschaft 1794-1804*, Zürich 2003; L. CHOCOMELI, *Jako-*

depending on the region – Brabant, Flanders, Liege – three completely different variations of copy-cat revolutions developed<sup>3</sup>.

#### I. REACTIONS TO EXPANSION: ON CONSORTING WITH THE ENEMY

After the spring of 1792, however, the first regions of Europe experienced the French Revolution from a different aspect, namely that of expansion: until 1815 civil populations in all of Europe (with the exception of England and Scandinavia) witnessed the French Revolution in the form of the Revolutionary and later the Napoleonic wars. What for some people was, or should have been, a long-awaited act of liberation, still others underwent in a state of indifference, whilst others suffered harsh deprivation. How these deprivations were experienced depended not only on the French soldiers, but also the soldiers and civil populations of the conquered regions, because the occupiers and the occupied had to learn to live with each other.

Dancing with somebody, to take up the metaphor used in the title, means, at least in the world of traditional standard dance, getting quite close to one's partner and trying to harmonize movements with each other, at least for a limited time. Whether the dance is followed by others, whether the short harmony is extended or not, depends amongst other things on whether the dance partners communicate with each other, and of course, also on how well or badly the dance turns out. Dancing together does not necessarily have to be in the form of a popular couple dance. One of the typical revolutionary symbols, taken everywhere by the French soldiers and their officers and commissioners, was the tree of liberty, around which, normally during its erection, the population spontaneously and the occupying forces officially danced together in groups, at least, this is the impression given by illustrations<sup>4</sup>. In this way, judging how many of the civil population were dancing beside or with the French soldiers,

*biner und Jakobinismus in der Schweiz. Wirken und Ideologie einer radikalrevolutionären Minderheit 1789-1803*, Bern et al. 2006.

<sup>3</sup> H. CARL, *Religion and the Experience of War: A Comparative Approach to Belgium, the Netherlands and the Rhineland*, in A. FORREST - K. HAGEMANN - J. RENDALL (eds), *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians. Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820*, Basingstoke 2009, pp. 222-242, here p. 224.

<sup>4</sup> W. EBERT, *Der frohe Tanz der Gleichheit. Der Freiheitsbaum in der Schweiz 1798-1802*, Zürich 1996; A. FANKHAUSER, *Helvetik (1798-1803)*, in A. HOLENSTEIN et al. (eds), *Berns goldene Zeit*, Bern 2008, pp. 531-540, here p. 532, Ill. 488.

the degree of enthusiasm for, or of resentment towards the revolution became evident. And so, the metaphorical question «Dancing with the Enemy?» is trying to position the nuances of an open situation within a picture, which could be the key to the analysis of social and cultural relations between city populations and the occupying forces during the French Revolutionary and the Napoleonic wars of expansion 1792-1815. Two symposia<sup>5</sup> were dedicated to such meetings between French troops and the civil populations affected by the occupation resulting from the expansion phase of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, which posed similar, but differently-nuanced questions, with the intention of trying new approaches to this epoch. It soon became clear that the black and white representations provided by national historiographs in the style of friend-or-foe pattern, could no longer stand up under the more detailed examination of concrete situations and constellations of day-to-day life.

## II. THE CULTURE OF COMMEMORATION AND STATE OF THE ART

The period of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars has been increasingly researched in recent years – apparently as a functional result of the 200-year anniversary memorial days and exhibitions which were to a large degree accompanied by political solemnities and popular festivities: the Helvetic Republic 1798<sup>6</sup> and the Napoleonic Act of Mediation 1803<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the preface.

<sup>6</sup> ALLGEMEINE GESCHICHTSFORSCHENDE GESELLSCHAFT DER SCHWEIZ (ed.), *Die Schweiz 1798-1998: Staat, Gesellschaft, Politik*, 4 vols., Zürich 1998; C. SIMON - A. SCHLUCHTER (eds), *Dossier Helvetik*, 5 vols, Basel 1995-2000; B. MEIER et al. (eds), *Revolution im Aargau: Umsturz, Aufbruch, Widerstand 1798-1803*, Aarau 1997; F. FLOUCK et al. (eds), *De l'ours à la cocarde: régime bernois et révolution en pays de Vaud (1536-1798)*, Lausanne 1998; A. TANNER (ed.), *Geschichte(n) für die Zukunft? Vom Umgang mit Geschichte(n) im Jubiläumsjahr 1998* (Itinera, 23), Zürich 1999.

<sup>7</sup> V. MONNIER (ed.), *Bonaparte et la Suisse. Les travaux préparatoires de l'Acte de Médiation de 1803*, Genève 2002; A. DUFOUR - T. HANISCH - V. MONNIER (eds), *Bonaparte, la Suisse et l'Europe. Actes du Colloque européen d'histoire constitutionnelle pour le bicentenaire de l'Acte de Médiation (1803-2003)*, Genève - Zürich - Basel 2003; F. PANZERA - E. SALVI - D. TOSATO-RIGO (eds), *Creare un nuovo cantone all'epoca delle rivoluzioni. Ticino e Vaud nell'Europa napoleonica 1798-1815 / Créer un nouveau canton à l'ère des Révolutions. Tessin et Vaud dans l'Europe napoléonienne 1798-1815*, Prahins 2004; M. TURCHETTI (ed.), *La Suisse de la Médiation dans l'Europe napoléonienne (1803-1814) / Die Schweiz unter der Mediationsakte in Napoleons Europa (1803-1814)*, Fribourg 2005.

for Switzerland, the secularization 1803<sup>8</sup> and the end of the Holy Roman Empire 1806 most importantly for Germany and Austria<sup>9</sup>. 1809 is noteworthy for being the year of national uprisings in Spain, Portugal, parts of Italy and of Austria (Tyrol)<sup>10</sup>; further memorable dates on the «Commemoration Calendar» are 1812 (invasion of Russia), 1813 (Battle of Leipzig), and 1815 (The Hundred Days, Waterloo, the Congress of Vienna)<sup>11</sup>. However, the question of concrete experiences of civilians

<sup>8</sup> P. BLICKLE - R. SCHLÖGL (eds), *Die Säkularisation im Prozess der Säkularisierung Europas* (Oberschwaben – Geschichte und Kultur, 13) Pfendorf 2005; H. KLUETING (ed.), *200 Jahre Reichsdeputationshauptschluss. Säkularisation, Mediatisierung und Modernisierung zwischen Altem Reich und neuer Staatlichkeit*, Münster 2005; R.A. MÜLLER - H. FLACHENECKER - R. KAMMERL (eds), *Das Ende der kleinen Reichsstädte 1803 im süd-deutschen Raum* (Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte, Reihe B/Beiheft 27), München 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. W. BURGDORF, *Ein Weltbild verliert seine Welt. Der Untergang des Alten Reiches und die Generation 1806* (Bibliothek Altes Reich, 2), München 2006; E. BROCKHOFF et al. (eds), *Die Kaisermacher: Frankfurt am Main und die Goldene Bulle, 1356-1806*, 2 vols, Frankfurt a.M. 2006; K. HERBERS - H. NEUHAUS, *Das Heilige Römische Reich. Schauplätze einer tausendjährigen Geschichte (843-1806)*, Köln - Weimar - Wien 2006; H. SCHILLING - W. HEUN - J. GÖTZMANN (eds), *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation 962-1806. Altes Reich und neue Staaten 1495-1806, Essays* (29th exhibition of the European Council in Berlin and Magdeburg), Dresden 2006; H. OTTOMEYER - J. GÖTZMANN - A. REISS (eds), *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation 962-1806. Altes Reich und neue Staaten 1495-1806, Catalogue* (29th exhibition of the European Council in Berlin and Magdeburg), Dresden 2006; C. ROLL - M. SCHNETTGER (eds), *Epochenjahr 1806? Das Ende des Alten Reichs in zeitgenössischen Perspektiven und Deutungen* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für europäische Geschichte Mainz, 76), Mainz 2008; H.-W. HAHN - A. KLINGER - G. SCHMIDT (eds), *Das Jahr 1806 im europäischen Kontext. Balance, Hegemonie und politische Kulturen*, Köln 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also the diverse, popular and political scientific commemoration activities in Tyrol [http://www.tirol.info/page.cfm?vpath=tirol/tirol\\_im\\_ueberblick/1809\\_2009](http://www.tirol.info/page.cfm?vpath=tirol/tirol_im_ueberblick/1809_2009) (2.6.2009).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. conferences: «Napoleonische Expansionspolitik. Okkupation oder Integration?» / «La politica di espansione della Francia napoleonica. Occupazione o integrazione?» / «La politique d'expansion napoléonienne. Occupation ou intégration?» (Napoleonic expansion politics: occupation or integration?), German Historical Institute in Rome, org. by Guido Braun, Gabriele Clemens, Lutz Klinkhammer, Alexander Koller; «The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: New Approaches and Future Research Questions», Potsdam, Nov. 2004, org. by Karen Hagemann and Beatrice Hauser; «Krieg und Umbruch um 1800. Das französisch dominierte Mitteleuropa auf dem Weg in eine neue Zeit» (War and change around 1800. French dominated Central Europe on the road to a new era), Tübingen March 2004. Cf. conference publication: U. PLANERT (ed.), *Krieg und Umbruch in Mitteleuropa um 1800. Erfahrungsgeschichte(n) auf dem Weg in eine neue Zeit* (Krieg in der Geschichte, 44), Paderborn inter alia 2009; «Fremdherrschaft und Freiheit. Das Königreich Westphalen als napoleonischer 'Modellstaat'», Series of lectures in Kassel, Cf. conference publication: J. FLEMMING - D. KRAUSE-VILMAR (eds), *Fremdherrschaft und Freiheit. Das Königreich Westphalen als Napoleonischer Modellstaat*, Kassel 2009.

with the occupying forces – and vice versa – has remained relatively unexamined in comparison. Only lately have representatives of recent military history turned to this topic<sup>12</sup>.

Research of this subject for the period of 1792-1815 comes across various problems, which we will discuss here in abbreviated form. Firstly, this period, as short as it is, falls into different epochs according to traditional classification in historical terms: the history of early modern times up to approximately 1800<sup>13</sup>. Also, French research is divided into very specialized branches, studying either the «Revolution», or the «Empire», or Napoleon<sup>14</sup>. Secondly, the historiography of events during these years alone requires a European approach, as the expansion of the Empire or even the zones under French influence from Lisbon to Moscow, from Ragusa (Dubrovnik) to Hamburg implies that a purely national approach is even more in danger of coming under suspicion of being deficient with regard to other epochs and topics. Thirdly, the European dimension results in the requirements for the researchers becoming too diverse, even if only as a question of the different languages to learn, which would be necessary in order to include all the sources and literature in all of the various fields<sup>15</sup>. Fourthly, the historiography written during and about this period is still influenced by controversial national resentment, by liberal or conservative convictions, and by clerical and secular attitudes, which make an impartial examination of different phenomena difficult. A further problem is the question of the complexity of the state of research. It has been impossible for some time to have an overview of all the books, let alone papers, which include the name «Napoleon» in their title: according to an estimation carried out in 2003, it must

<sup>12</sup> U. PLANERT, *Der Mythos vom Befreiungskrieg. Frankreichs Kriege und der deutsche Süden: Alltag – Wahrnehmung, Deutung 1792-1841*, Paderborn 2007; A. FORREST - K. HAGEMANN - J. RENDALL (eds), *Soldiers*; U. PLANERT, *Einleitung: Krieg und Umbruch um 1800*, in U. PLANERT (ed.), *Krieg und Umbruch*, p. 15 f.

<sup>13</sup> For Germany, the end of the Empire in 1806 is considered epochal, in France the French revolution of 1789 separates the *histoire moderne* from the *histoire contemporaine* and in Switzerland it is the Helvetic Revolution of 1798. The same goes for Italy (*prima età moderna - età moderna*) and the Anglo-Saxon countries (*Early Modern / Modern*).

<sup>14</sup> U. PLANERT, *Einleitung: Krieg und Umbruch um 1800*, in U. PLANERT (ed.), *Krieg und Umbruch*, pp. 11-16.

<sup>15</sup> It was not only Romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese), but also Germanic (German, English, Dutch) and Slavic (Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croat, etc.).

already then have been around 220,000<sup>16</sup>. One result of this is that the Anglo-Saxon literature can, in line with the current working conditions (book markets, purchasing policies of libraries, number of available online journals) take on a hegemonic stance, particularly when discussing supra- or transnational themes. Because of this, it has proved to be empirically the case that some geographical and/or language zones, which are not easily expressed in English, hardly appear at all in this historiographic Europe or are even completely overlooked; for example the Netherlands or Switzerland, but also often Germany beyond Prussia or the Rhineland.

For some years now, in different research sites studying this epoch, there has been a re-interpretation of history, which demonstrates conspicuous parallels for different countries – Germany and Austria, Spain and Italy. If in 19th-century Germany in particular the national Borussians (such as Heinrich von Treitschke), but also the southern German liberals (such as Karl von Rotteck) interpreted resistance movements against the French troops as wars which served to increase national identities<sup>17</sup> – they were known as «national wars of liberation» –, more recent research supports the already<sup>18</sup> expressed doubts surrounding these interpretations. These more recent works with regard to Prussia<sup>19</sup>, western<sup>20</sup> and southern Germany<sup>21</sup>, or also to individual cities such as Hamburg<sup>22</sup> are increasingly approaching the line of the prevailing state of research<sup>23</sup>. Whilst for example in

<sup>16</sup> A. GRAB, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, Basingstoke - New York 2003, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Note in U. PLANERT, *Mythos*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>18</sup> H.-U. WEHLER, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, p. 525.

<sup>19</sup> K. HAGEMANN, 'Männlicher Muth und Deutsche Ehre'. *Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preußens*, Paderborn et al. 2002.

<sup>20</sup> G. DETHLEFS - A. OWZAR - G. WEISS (eds), *Modell und Wirklichkeit. Politik, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Großherzogtum Berg und im Königreich Westphalen 1806-1813*, Paderborn 2008; V. VELTZKE (ed.), *Napoleon. Trikolore und Kaiseradler über Rhein und Weser*, Köln et al. 2007; B. SEVERIN-BARBOUTIE, *Französische Herrschaftspolitik und Modernisierung. Verwaltungs- und Verfassungsreformen im Großherzogtum Berg (1806-1813)*, München 2008; J. FLEMMING - D. KRAUSE-VILMAR (eds), *Fremdherrschaft und Freiheit*.

<sup>21</sup> U. PLANERT, *Mythos*.

<sup>22</sup> K. AASLESTAD, *Place and Politics. Local Identity, Civic Culture, and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era*, Leiden - Boston MA 2005.

<sup>23</sup> H. CARL, *Der Mythos des Befreiungskrieges. Die 'martialische Nation' im Zeitalter der Revolutions- und Befreiungskriege 1792-1815*, in D. LANGEWIESCHE - G. SCHMIDT (eds), *Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*,

Germany, Italy, and Switzerland a part of the population in cities and towns, and some of the dissatisfied peasants welcomed the arrival of the French troops in the hopes of their «liberation», this feeling sooner or later turned to the opposite, to the extent of protest, as they now no longer experienced the revolution as emancipation, but as occupation<sup>24</sup>. In the first instance, and this must be emphasized, the antipathy did not follow national patterns; it was more or less heterogeneous, as confirmed in the latest comparative contributions<sup>25</sup>. There were several reasons for this. On the one hand, it is obvious that the population did not only suffer under the French troops, they also found it just as unpleasant to have to cater for and house their own. On the other hand, before 1813 and also after this date, modern-style nationalism did not yet exist. Loyalties were rather along local, regional, dynastic, or religious lines<sup>26</sup>.

Even if apostrophized in German historiography of the 19th and 20th centuries as «national war of liberty», the years 1813-1814 were not seen by contemporaries as a «German», but much more as a «European» war of liberty from the French hegemony. From the perspective of the civil population the «wars of liberty», as they were later called, took an even greater toll than the Napoleonic wars: southern Germany became the central area for congregation and marching through of armies, which once again had to be fed and accommodated. And these armies were more numerous than previously. Animal epidemics and – in the winter of 1813/14 – typhoid fever had devastating effects. For this reason, the change of sides on behalf of the states of the southern German Rheinisch Federation after Napoleon's retreat, meaning the switch of allegiance to the «national» line, was not seen in a positive light, but as the cause of new war expenses<sup>27</sup>.

München 2000, pp. 62-83; A. FAHRMEIR, *Centralisation versus Particularism in the 'Third Germany'*, in M. ROWE (ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe. State-formation in an Age of Upheaval, c. 1800-1815*, Basingstoke 2003, pp. 107-120, here p. 117: «The experience of Napoleonic domination thus did not give rise to a large movement in favor of national unification in Germany»; R. PRÖVE, *Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte, 77), München 2006, pp. 60-61.

<sup>24</sup> U. PLANERT, *Mythos*, p. 643. Cf. contributions by V. Criscuolo, L. Gagliardi, M. Formica and A. Würzler in this volume.

<sup>25</sup> A. FORREST - K. HAGEMANN - J. RENDALL, *Nations in Arms – People at War*, in A. FORREST - K. HAGEMANN - J. RENDALL (eds), *Soldiers*, pp. 1-19, here p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> U. PLANERT, *Mythos*, p. 644.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 657 f.

Similar revisions can be seen with regard to the Tyrolean uprising and the Spanish guerilla fighting, which were no longer national uprisings against the French domination, which was seen as being foreign in national and political terms, but much more as disparate self-defense actions with different, but not nationalistic aims. Because of this, they will be discussed below in connection with the topic of protest and resistance.

This re-interpretation from a German national war to a European war of liberation or rather from the ideological to the existential interpretation also reflects the increasing European perspective in research regarding this epoch<sup>28</sup>. Book titles including the words «Napoleon» and «Europe» have existed since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in the last 10 or 20 years, they have multiplied significantly<sup>29</sup>. This research is being carried out on a decidedly international front – so to speak in the tradition of research on the French revolution. In this respect, if the Napoleonic campaigns did not unite Europe, they have at least united historians. The shift away from national or even nationalistic interpretations makes way for increased sensibility towards other disavowals regarding this epoch, because the reactions and resistance could also have been social, religious or other, but need not necessarily have had national motivations.

<sup>28</sup> Summarized in C.S. ESDAILE, *Popular Resistance to the Napoleonic Empire*, in P.G. DWYER (ed.), *Napoleon and Europe*, Harlow 2001, pp. 136-152, here p. 152: «As for any sense of modern nationalism, this was non-existent»; P.G. DWYER - A. FORREST, *Napoleon and his Empire: Some Issues and Perspectives*, in P. G. DWYER - A. FORREST (eds), *Napoleon and his Empire 1804-1814*, Basingstoke 2007, pp. 1-15, here p. 8: »Historians of the period, today, would concede that the nationalist reaction to French occupation in Italy, Germany, and even Spain was greatly exaggerated by nineteenth-century historians«.

<sup>29</sup> Examples: S. WOOLF, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe*, New York 1991; M. BROERS, *Europe Under Napoleon 1799-1815*, London - New York 1996; P.G. DWYER (ed.), *Napoleon and Europe*, Harlow 2001; J.-C. MARTIN (ed.), *Napoléon et l'Europe. Colloque de la Roche-sur-Yon*, Rennes 2002; A. GRAB, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, Basingstoke - New York 2003; M. ROWE (ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe*; M. TURCHETTI (ed.), *La Suisse de la Médiation dans l'Europe napoléonienne (1803-1814). Die Schweiz unter der Mediationsakte in Napoleons Europa (1803-1814)*, Fribourg 2005; T. LENTZ (ed.), *Napoléon et l'Europe. Regards sur une politique. Actes du colloque organisé par la direction des Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères et la Fondation Napoléon 18 et 19 novembre 2004*, Paris 2005; M. GEORGE - A. RUDOLPH (eds), *Napoleons langer Schatten über Europa*, Dettelbach 2008; F.C. SCHNEID, *Napoleon's Conquest of Europe. The War of the Third Coalition*, Westport CT 2005.



### III. PROTEST AND RESISTANCE

Acts of protest, resistance, and revolt against the French armies did take place, but were rather the exception than the rule. Collective and open resistance of a long-term nature normally only happened when it had support from outside (such as from Austria in Tyrol).

In Switzerland, for example, the militarily more developed (reformed) cantons were not amongst those whose resistance was stronger, it was the smaller, Catholic mountain areas. This was on the one hand because the subjects of the larger city-states Zurich and Bern were no longer loyal to the authorities and as a sign of the times, according to the example set by the French, they demanded more freedom. Although this did not result in comprehensive sympathy for revolutionary France, it did lead to a certain feeling of refractoriness toward the old masters. In the Catholic pre-Alpine areas however, which were mostly organized as sovereign communal democracies, the population was far more integrated into political decision-making processes and could not imagine what the new French order of things could give them in terms of additional freedoms<sup>30</sup>. These areas therefore showed bitter resistance towards the invasion because they were egged on by the local clergy, who had not only already branded the revolution as being atheistic, but also had taken up active relations with the Austrian military. Not least because the Austrian troops promised by the clergy did not appear, they paid dearly for their refractoriness: approximately 5% of the inhabitants of Nidwalden died in the revolt of September 9<sup>th</sup> and the ensuing massacres, which spared neither priests, women nor children<sup>31</sup>.

These observations can be seen in parallel with the later results of other forms of protest against Napoleon in different parts of Europe. Although Napoleon himself expected that sooner or later there must be resistance to the occupation everywhere, there were surprisingly few uprisings. In the literature on this subject, practically only the introduction of guerilla

<sup>30</sup> Unterwalden had originally attempted to present himself as an old friend of the French Republic in M. VON STÜRLER (ed.), *Actenstücke zur Geschichte der französischen Invasion in die Schweiz im Jahre 1798*, 3rd part, in «Archiv für Schweizerische Geschichte», 16, 1868, pp. 179-420, here p. 212 (March 9, 1798).

<sup>31</sup> D. ENGELBERTS - L. VOGEL - C. MOSER, *Widerstand gegen die Helvetik 1798*, Au 1998, pp. 32-54; HISTORISCHER VEREIN NIDWALDEN (ed.), *Nidwalden 1798. Geschichte und Überlieferung*, Stans 1998; E. GODEL, «Nur das Kreuz ist der wahre Freiheitsbaum». *Gottlosigkeit, Häresie und Landesverrat: Die helvetische Revolution als Bedrohung des christlichen Glaubens in der Zentralschweiz*, in U. PLANERT (ed.), *Krieg und Umbruch*, pp. 219-241.

activities in Spain and Calabria (Naples) and the uprising in Tyrol are mentioned.

Military historians have pointed out that large-scale armed rebellions against the French invasion and occupation could only take place where the concentration of French troops was relatively thin: for example, in Spain, which could never be completely controlled, or in Tyrol – where incidentally, it wasn't so much the French troops as the Bavarians, allies of the French, who were fought against<sup>32</sup>. In contrast, resistance operations in southern Germany or northern Italy had little chance as a result of the strong presence of the French units<sup>33</sup>. The Swiss resistance also learned this to their woe<sup>34</sup>. A further factor was also the actual, promised or hoped-for assistance from outside. The Tyroleans received Austrian assistance, the population of central Switzerland hoped for Austrian assistance, the Spanish, Portuguese, and Calabrians hoped for help from English reinforcements<sup>35</sup>.

And so in recent works, talk of the national war of liberty against Napoleon 1808-1813 has become more and more accepted as a myth. They have shown, for example, in Spain that the much-regarded guerilla fighting, the asymmetrical form of doing battle between a «civil population» on the one side and an «army» on the other, was less animated by patriotism and nationalism (or Bourbon loyalism) than by hunger, poverty, despair, and dependence. Seen in this light, the guerillas were nothing more than deserters, who, because there was no alternative, turned to banditry and tried collectively to quell their hunger. This interpretation also points to the observation that only very few guerilla groups or local «juntas», as the spontaneously created civil protection groups were called, ever followed the fleeing French troops outside their own district. They were not interested in the expulsion of invaders from Spain, but more in having access to resources in their own sector<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> C.J. ESDAILE, *Patriots, Partisans and Land Pirates in Retrospect*, in C.J. ESDAILE (ed.), *Popular Resistance in the French Wars. Patriots, Partisans and Land Pirates*, Basingstoke 2005, pp. 1-24, here p. 5 f.

<sup>33</sup> C.J. ESDAILE, *Patriots*, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> D. ENGELBERTS - L. VOGEL - C. MOSER, *Widerstand*, pp. 26-54.

<sup>35</sup> C.J. ESDAILE, *Patriots*, pp. 6-7; D. ENGELBERTS - L. VOGEL - C. MOSER, *Widerstand*, p. 32 f.

<sup>36</sup> C.J. ESDAILE, *Popular Resistance in Napoleonic Europe: Issues and Perspectives*, in C.J. ESDAILE (ed.), *Popular Resistance in the French Wars*, pp. 201-224, here pp. 214, 218-221. «Far from being a genuinely popular movement enthused by the determination to fight for

Neither was the famous Tyrolean uprising under the leadership of Andreas Hofer only a spontaneous and national popular uprising. Much more it was the case of Austrian politicians consciously making use of existing resentments against the occupiers to egg the population on with targeted actions<sup>37</sup>.

Whilst therefore open resistance against the invaders remained very limited also as a result of the poor chance of success, the usual individual avoidance strategies can be observed, such as hiding, fleeing, giving false information, targeted deceptions, or avoidance of military service (marriage, emigration, hiding, illness, self-mutilation, etc.)

One of the commonest strategies was making use of the power of making a request. Even the invaders were the potential addressees of letters of request, supplication, and petitions, in which individuals, collectives, but also whole villages and towns requested favorable treatment<sup>38</sup> or cessation of the plundering<sup>39</sup>. Some delinquents left over from the Ancien Régime even hoped under the new government to be released from prison<sup>40</sup>.

God, king and fatherland, the guerrillas appear as a much more conventional phenomenon: men were not inspired to fight by the new force of patriotism, but rather driven to fight by the old ones of poverty, hunger, despair and the voice of authority», p. 220. Cf. C.J. ESDAILE, *Popular Resistance to the Napoleonic Empire*, pp. 145-148; A. GRAB, *Napoleon*.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. contribution by M. Schennach in this volume.

<sup>38</sup> Thus also the small town of Burgdorf near Bern on March 6th, 1798, or one day after the capitulation by the Republic of Bern, in a pleading letter: «Dem Bürger Generalen über die in Bern liegenden französischen Truppen»: «Grossmüthige Nation! Das kleine und ohnmächtige Völklein der Stadt Burgdorf, das seit einiger Zeit von seiner Regierung gleichsam verlassen ist, wirft sich der siegreichen französischen Republik zu Füssen, und bittet, unschuldig an allen Zerwürfnissen zwischen der grossen Nation und seiner bisherigen Regierung, um edle Schonung, um grossmüthige Sicherheit der Personen, des Eigenthums und der Religion. Nach dem einhelligen Schlusse der zu diesem Ende versammelten Bürgerschaft. Gegeben den 6. März 1798, Secretariat dieser Stadt». This pleading letter is printed in M. VON STÜRLER (ed.), *Actenstücke zur Geschichte der französischen Invasion*, p. 182 f. Cf. *ibidem*, p. 203 (Höchstetten), p. 204 (Zofingen).

<sup>39</sup> «Les plaintes et demandes respectueuses suivantes: 1) sûreté des personnes et des propriétés tant en cille qu'à la campagne et cessation du pillage qui encore la nuit dernière a eu lieu à l'entour de la ville du côté de Thoune et même en ville, d'une manière extrêmement affligeante», C. Frisching, président du gouvernement provisoire et populaire, [au général Brune], Berne le 7 Mars 1798, *ibidem*, p. 192 f.

<sup>40</sup> Examples from the four parishes of Höchstetten, to General Brune, [Bern, around March 8th, 1798], Request for four victims of the Ancien Régime, *ibidem*, p. 202 f. Cf. pleading letter from Schönweitz June 30, 1798 with reference to a decree issued by the French Directorate in Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv, Bern, B 222, pp. 63-66.

By means of the establishment of satellite republics such as the Helvetic Republic in Switzerland or so-called «allied» states such as under the Rheinish Federation (1806), not only new targets for protests came into being<sup>41</sup>, but also new addresses to send pleading letters<sup>42</sup>. Now it was not only a question of being spared from the burden of the occupation – although this subject remains uppermost –, but also of the concrete formation of the new order, of the implementation for example of the new Helvetic constitution, which established the completely reformed, centralistic and uniform system in a Switzerland which, as Napoleon was to formulate five years later, was «intended by Nature herself to become a federal state»<sup>43</sup>.

#### IV. EUROPEAN REACTIONS – ON THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

Even if one only looks at the reactions to French expansion in many parts of Europe as discussed in this book, it becomes clear that these reactions could take place on very different levels and be very different in their nature.

Whilst patriots in the Netherlands (T. Poell), in Switzerland (D. Tosato-Rigo), in Rome (M. Formica) or Milan (V. Criscuolo, L. Gagliardi) just as for example Jewish circles in Piedmont (G.P. Romagnani) hoped for the breakthrough of revolutionary ideas as a result of the arrival of the French, the burghers of Trent proved to be immune to revolutionary

<sup>41</sup> Cf. R. GRABER, *Die Zeit des Teilens*, pp. 54-62. Also: C. LAFONTANT, *La résistance à la Révolution de 1798 dans le Jura vaudois* (Bibliothèque Historique Vaudoise, 96), Lausanne 1989; S. GUZZI, *Logiche della rivolta rurale. Insurrezioni contro la Repubblica Elvetica nel Ticino meridionale*, Bologna 1994; C. SIMON (ed.), *Widerstand und Proteste zur Zeit der Helvetik* (Dossier Helvetik / Dossier Helvétique, 4), Basel 1998; D. ENGELBERTS - L. VOGEL - C. MOSER, *Widerstand*; F. JEQUIER et al. (eds), *Le Canton de Vaud de la tutelle à l'indépendance (1798-1815). Regards nouveaux sur l'économie et les finances, les Bourla-Papey et la contre-révolution* (Etudes & Enquêtes, 30), Lausanne 2003; L. VOGEL, *Gegen Herren, Ketzler und Franzosen: der Menzinger «Hirtenhemmli»-Aufstand vom April 1799: eine Fallstudie* (Clio Lucernensis, 9), Zürich 2004.

<sup>42</sup> A. WÜRGLER, *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität zwischen Ancien Régime und Helvetischer Republik am Beispiel der Bittschriften*, in D. SCHLÄPPI (ed.), *Umbruch und Beständigkeit. Kontinuitäten in der Helvetischen Revolution von 1798*, Basel 2009, pp. 49-64, here p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> As in the preamble of the «Vermittlungsakte des Ersten Consuls der fränkischen Republik» [Determining act of the First Consul of the French Republic] of February 19, 1803, which also represented as a «Mediationsakte» [Act of mediation] the constitution of the Swiss Confederation of 1803 until 1813/14, H. NABHOLZ - P. KLÄUI (eds), *Quellenbuch zur Verfassungsgeschichte der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft und der Kantone von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Aarau 1947<sup>3</sup>, p. 185.