

anti-Prussian line of Kaunitz or Thugut and the support of Balkan Christians against Ottoman rule. Following Thugut's fall in 1801 the influence of the balance of power theorist Gentz and the young diplomat Metternich came to the fore. Austria did not support the Serbs rising against the Turks in 1804, destined to be the first stage in the recreation of an independent Serbia. Where the *status quo ante* was irrecoverable, as in Germany, Vienna's policy was directed at maintaining as much of her traditional preeminence as possible. This meant thwarting both new aspirations for a more 'national' organisation of Germany and traditional Russo-Prussian or Russo-French power deals liable to entrench the influence of flanking states in the German centre of the continent. But this runs ahead: in the first instance Napoleon's humiliating hegemony had to be challenged and overturned. The prospects for this in the first post-1809 years seemed slim. As France's ally, Austria had to participate militarily in Napoleon's grandiose anti-Russian expedition of 1812. Meanwhile the German national movement, against which Austria (much less so Prussia) now shut her face, was growing apace among patriotic notables and the student *Burschenschaften*. Yet in these years Metternich, who had moved from the Paris embassy to take over foreign affairs in the Vienna Chancellery in 1809, made the reputation he never subsequently allowed Europe to forget. Skillfully taking advantage of Napoleon's Russian failure he positioned Austria first as intermediary between the French and the other powers, then as a neutral mediator and finally as an armed one, till aligning her openly with the fifth anti-French coalition of 1813-15, all the while without provoking Napoleon into a preemptive strike. Under Field Marshal Karl Schwarzenberg Austrian troops joined Russia and Prussia to inflict Napoleon's first major defeat at the battle of Leipzig in October 1813; eventually three hundred thousand were under arms. The other two powers' alliance at Kalisch in February that year risked enabling the Russian presence in central Europe which Metternich feared, but he was confident enough to go along with it so as to draw the Russians west against the French, while expecting to frustrate their ambitions in Poland later. The claim to have tipped the scales against Napoleon gave Austria, however, high prestige in the coalition and laid the basis for Metternich's conservative influence in the post-war era. Indeed, historians have often called it after him.

This exaggerated the underlying strength of Austria's position in 1815. The empire that had seemed on the verge of extinction in the mid-eighteenth century took too complacent a view of its European

role into the nineteenth; its victory proved a Pyrrhic one. Its best military leader, the Archduke Karl, a man with a more pressing sense of the Monarchy's underlying weaknesses and more nuanced attitude to the French Revolution than Metternich's, had been definitively sidelined by Austria's escape. His pessimism about opposing the spirit of the age had no doubt influenced his preference for avoiding war with France, but his offensive military strategy and his reforms as war minister were innovative: the development of military medicine and archives, the reduction of life-long military service to 14 years, the abolition of the harshest punishments in new regulations of 1807. The common soldier came under consideration for the first time. But flogging was retained and Karl's endeavours to abolish sale of commissions failed, while inflation-hit pay remained at Maria Theresian levels. The army that emerged from the Napoleonic wars was hardly equipped to underwrite an Austrian paramilitary in Europe. Besides, the issue in 1811 of a new paper currency at a nominal value one-fifth that of the paper money withdrawn ... effectively a forced devaluation by 80% ... showed that the Monarchy had not overcome her endemic financial problems. War-induced inflation had swelled the volume of paper notes in circulation from 35 million forins in 1795 to 337 million in 1802 and 1060 million by 1811.

The peace terms of the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) reflected, anyway, only a qualified victory for Metternich. They endorsed his support of dynastic legitimacy in France and Italy, and put in place of the defunct Holy Roman Empire a toothless enough body, a German Confederation' (the *Bund*) of 39 states with a Diet at Frankfurt, under Austrian presidency. But he was unable to prevent the advance of Russia into central Europe through the creation of the Congress Kingdom of Poland under the Tsar, or the compensation of Prussia for this by the acquisition of half of Saxony. The definitive exchange of Austrian possessions in the Netherlands and south-west Germany for the northern Italian provinces of Lombardy-Venetia created a territorially united monarchy for the first time. But it was also a less German one just at the point when Prussia was strengthening her German credentials by taking over the Rhineland.

Prince Clemens von Metternich (1773-1859) was, next to Emperor Francis, the most important political figure in the Empire from the settlement of 1815 to the revolution of 1848. Arguments that as Chancellor (from 1824 State Chancellor) his influence was largely confined to foreign policy overlook the interlinkage of domestic and foreign policy in a polity several of whose constituent peoples