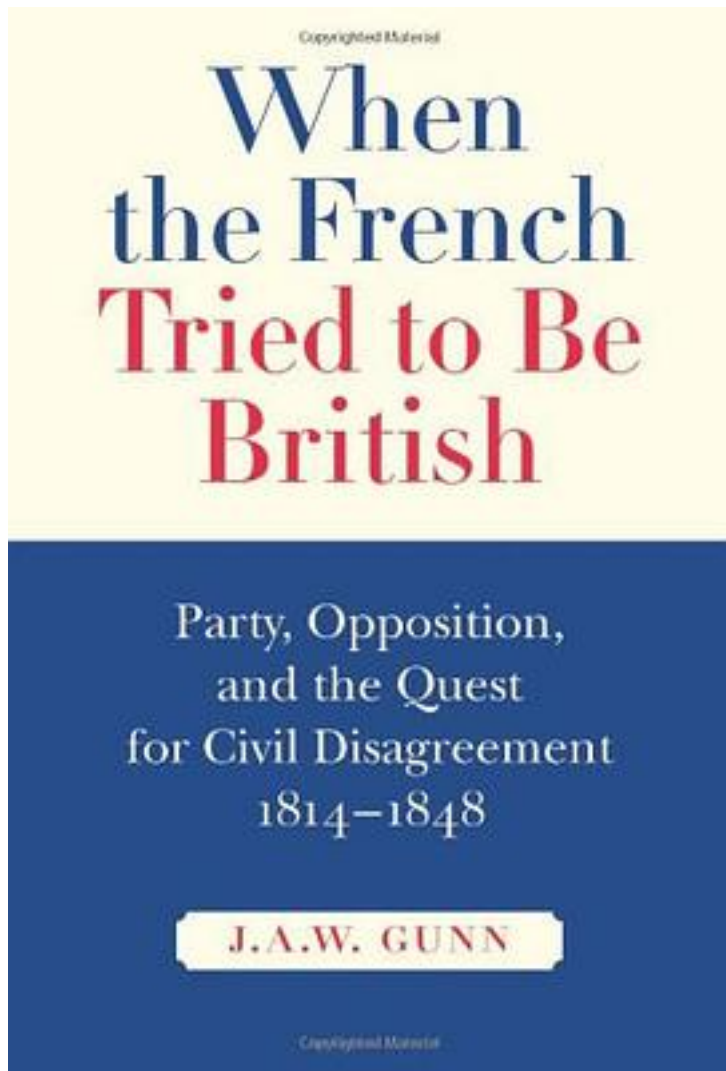


# When the French Tried to be British



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The restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in 1814 was accompanied by the grant of the Charte - a written constitution modelled on what its authors imagined to be the contemporary British practice of parliamentary monarchy. A unique experiment, in effect it meant attempting to implement institutions and practices that had little basis in French history and culture and that, in Britain, had evolved slowly and largely without conscious planning. In "When the French Tried to Be British", J.A.W. Gunn studies the French effort during 1814 to 1848 to adopt the set of common understandings that lent a comparative stability to British government. The institutions of a loyal opposition and disciplined political parties seemed to be implicit in the parliamentary model, but their acceptance foundered on French reluctance to accord legitimacy to political opponents. A sophisticated minority - including such major figures as Chateaubriand, Constant, Mme de Stael, and Guizot - recognized the need for something approaching the British political culture, but the wounds opened by the Revolution could not readily be healed. A more or less complete acceptance of the civil disagreement that was the spirit of the British model had to await the Fifth Republic. To a surprising degree, the French have remained unaware of the struggle in the Restoration and after to make political pluralism respectable. "When the French Tried to Be British" makes a significant contribution to the political and intellectual history of Restoration France and, to a lesser degree, the July Monarchy and offers much food for thought for those attempting similar ventures today.

作者介绍:

目录:

[When the French Tried to be British\\_ 下载链接1](#)

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