1848

The Year of Revolutions

Edited by
Peter H. Wilson

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1848

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2006 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
1848 : the year of revolutions. - (The international
library of essays on political history)
1. Europe - History - 1848-1849
I. Wilson, Peter H. (Peter Hamish)
940.2'84

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
1848 : the year of revolutions / edited by Peter H. Wilson.
p. cm. - (International library of essays on political history)
ISBN 0-7546-2569-9 (alk. paper)
1. Europe–History–1848-1849. 2. Europe–Politics and government–1815-1871. I.
Wilson, Peter H. (Peter Hamish) II. Series.

D387.A155 2006
940.2'84–dc22

2005057000

ISBN 13: 9780754625698 (hbk)

Contents

Acknowledgements

The editor and publishers wish to thank the following for permission to use copyright material.

Albion for the essay: Henry Weisser (1981), 'Chartism in 1848: Reflections on a Non-Revolution', *Albion*, **13**, pp. 12–26.

Brill Academic Publishers for the essays: Donald J. Mattheisen (1979), 'Liberal Constitutionalism in the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848: An Inquiry Based on Roll-Call Analysis', *Central European History*, **12**, pp. 124–42; Stanley Zucker (1980), 'German Women and the Revolution of 1848: Kathinka Zitz-Halein and the Humania Association', *Central European History*, **13**, pp. 237–54.

Cambridge University Press for the essays: Paul Ginsborg (1974), 'Peasants and Revolutionaries in Venice and the Veneto, 1848', *Historical Journal*, **17**, 503–50. Copyright © 1974 Cambridge University Press; Carola Lipp and Lothar Krempel (2001), 'Petitions and the Social Context of Political Mobilization in the Revolution of 1848/49: A Microhistorical Actor-Centred Network Analysis', *International Review of Social History*, **46**, pp. 151–69. Copyright © 2001 International Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, published by Cambridge University Press; Karl H. Wegert (1991), 'Contention with Civility: The State and Social Control in the German Southwest, 1760–1850', *Historical Journal*, **34**, pp. 349–69. Copyright © 1991 Cambridge University Press; Alan J. Reinerman (1991), 'The Failure of Popular Counter-Revolution in Risorgimento Italy: The Case of the Centurions, 1831–1847', *Historical Journal*, **34**, pp. 21–41. Copyright © 1991 Cambridge University Press; Roger Price (1982), 'Techniques of Repression: The Control of Popular Protest in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France', *Historical Journal*, **25**, pp. 859–87. Copyright © 1982 Cambridge University Press.

East European Quarterly for the essay: George Handlery (1972), 'Revolutionary Organization in the Context of Backwardness: Hungary's 1848', *East European Quarterly*, **6**, pp. 44–61.

Hodder Arnold for the essays: Matthias Schulz (2003), 'A Balancing Act: Domestic Pressures and International Systemic Constraints in the Foreign Policies of the Great Powers, 1848–1851', *German History*, **21**, pp. 319–46; James M. Brophy (2004), 'Violence Between Civilians and State Authorities in the Prussian Rhineland, 1830–1846', *German History*, **22**, pp. 1–35.

Oxford University Press for the essays: Jonathan Sperber (1992), 'Festivals of National Unity in the German Revolution of 1848–1849', *Past and Present*, **136**, pp. 114–38; Miles Taylor (2000), 'The 1848 Revolutions and the British Empire', *Past and Present*, **166**, pp. 146–80.

Sage Publications for the essays: Guy Thomson (2001), 'Garibaldi and the Legacy of the Revolutions of 1848 in Southern Spain', *European History Quarterly*, **31**, 353–96. Copyright © 2001 Sage Publications; Daniel R. Headrick (1976), 'Spain and the Revolutions of 1848', *European Studies Review*, **6**, pp. 197–223.

Taylor and Francis for the essays: Pamela Pilbeam (1993), 'The Insurrectionary Tradition in France 1835–48', *Modern and Contemporary France*, **1**, pp. 253–64; Alf Lüdtke (1979), 'The Role of State Violence in the Period of Transition to Industrial Capitalism: The Example of Prussia from 1815 to 1848', *Social History*, **4**, pp. 175–221; Timothy Baycroft (1998), 'Commemorations of the Revolution of 1848 and the Second Republic', *Modern and Contemporary France*, **6**, pp. 155–68.

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Series Preface

This Series focuses on key episodes and issues in political history and does so by bringing together essays selected from journals that exhibit careful analysis of political history. The volumes, each of which is edited by an expert in the field, cover crucial time periods and geographical areas, particularly Europe and the USA. Each volume represents the editor's selection of seminal essays on political history in his particular area of expertise, while an introduction presents an overview of the issues in the area, together with comments on the background and significance of the essays chosen.

The strength and nature of political beliefs reflect, to a great extent, the degree to which ideologies provide a sense of identity, value and purpose to both individuals and the community. Like all important questions about recent and modern society, this is one that can be answered in a different way by commentators and by readers. Secular ideologies over the last 250 years tended to rely on the notion of progress and the desire of humans to improve their condition, and thus rejected the Christian lapsardian view of human existence with its emphasis on sin and humankind's fallible nature. Although they varied in the political, economic, social and cultural analyses and prescriptions, such ideologies shared a belief that it is possible, and necessary, to improve the human condition and that such a goal gives meaning to politics and society. In short, reform was seen as an end in itself and progress as something attainable.

There was only limited support for continuity and stability, as opposed to reform, as public goals. For an institution or government to pledge itself to inaction would have been extraordinary. Instead, as with Islamic and Christian fundamentalism, conservative politics were propounded primarily in terms of a return to an earlier situation (true or mythical), and thus as reform through reaction, against a perception of the present, rather than as a static maintenance of the present. Commitment to change rested on prudential considerations, especially the need to modernise in order to compete successfully on the international scene, but also on powerful ideological currents. Reform, as a means and goal, was the foremost secular ideology and one that was shared by governments with very different political outlooks. There is no sign that this will change. However, across the world, reform meant very different attitudes and policies and focused on both improving and abandoning the past. This was true not only of domestic policies but also of those abroad, both foreign and colonial policy. Thus, reform could entail the development of empires and also their dissolution. Like 'freedom', 'liberty' and 'justice', 'reform' was a value-laden term. It could mean both more and less government intervention and this helped to contribute to controversy.

Politics was not only a matter of ideologies and government initiatives. As volumes in this series indicate, it is also important to consider the extent and consequences of popular participation in politics, the nature of accountability and the conception of the public: from corporatism to individualism.

Any selection of what to include is difficult. The editors in this Series have done an excellent job and it has been a great pleasure working with them.

JEREMY BLACK
Series Editor
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Introduction

The protest and unrest of 1848 constitutes a 'Year of Revolution' throughout much of Europe that had repercussions throughout the globe. Even those countries like Britain, Spain and Russia that escaped serious disturbances, were involved diplomatically or militarily, as well as affected by new ideas, often spread by refugees fleeing reaction elsewhere. The events were related by many participants explicitly to earlier European revolutions, notably those in France of 1789 and 1830, leading those on the left to present 1848 as the culmination of an 'age of revolution'(Hobsbawm, 1962; Rudé, 1964).[1]

Revolution was certainly widely predicted before 1848 and observers believed it would not be restricted to one country. Most expected revolution in France, Belgium and Britain, and doubted that the Germans would do more than theorize, while the Habsburg monarchy and Italy would remain quiet in the presence of strong garrisons. In fact, revolution began in Palermo, in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, on 12 January 1848 and spread to other parts of Italy within two months. Most read the events through the memory of those of 1789 and only felt that a 'European' revolution was underway once protests in France toppled the Orleanist monarchy in February.[2] Serious unrest had engulfed large parts of Prussia, the German Confederation and the Austrian Habsburg monarchy by mid-summer, while events in Italy finally forced the pope to flee Rome in November. The rapid spread created a very different pattern from that of 1789 when revolution had been firmly centred on France, especially Paris. The presence of Vienna, Berlin and Rome alongside the French capital as revolutionary centres furthered the impression of a pan-European phenomenon.

European revolutionaries were united by broadly similar aims. Demands for written constitutions were at the centre of all protests, and most drew inspiration from a common set of precedents: the 1812 liberal constitution in Spain, the 1814 French Constitutional Charter and the 1815 Federal Act of the German Confederation. The failure of the conservative governments to fulfil the hopes raised by such documents had fuelled resentment over the following three decades (Church, 1983; Jardin/Tudesq, 1983; Berkley, 1932).[3] Revolutionaries demanded an end to royal or princely prerogatives, or at least their constitutional restraint. Representative institutions were to be established, or expanded and the franchise extended to

* I would like to thank my colleagues Peter Waldron and Mike Turner for their advice.

1 The influential writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have contributed to this: Marx, *Class Struggles in France* and his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis-Napoleon*; Engels, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*. See also the comparative perspectives in Porter/Teich, 1986, and the good short overview in Price, 1988.

2 The literature on France is extensive and generally good. For the background see Collingham, 1988. All aspects are covered by Price, 1975a. The Second Republic and the subsequent repression are covered by Agulhon, 1983; Calman, 1980; de Luna, 1969; Merriman 1978; Price, 1972. Contemporary accounts include Berlioz, 1960; Price, 1975b. For an example of French influence see Canevali, 1985.

3 For the ability to discuss change prior to 1848 see Collins, 1959; Green, 2001.

encompass a broader section of adult male property owners. National assemblies were to be created in those countries where these did not exist, notably within the German Confederation, but also Italy. Armies were to be reformed, or even replaced entirely by militias under elected officers. Freedom of assembly and of the press were to be proclaimed. Full equality before the law was to be established and safeguarded through trial by jury. Finally, careers were to be thrown open to talent, especially in public institutions.[4] These demands were expressed in broadly similar language, as revolutionaries of one country borrowed slogans from another, with French examples generally predominating. Foreign activists were invited to address meetings, while volunteers rushed to defend the oppressed in other parts of Europe.

Expressions of unity and solidarity masked deep divisions between revolutionaries along national, regional, social and ideological lines preventing general agreement on the precise definition of the common broad demands. This source of weakness has led many historians to see the revolutionaries as utopian romantics doomed to failure (Namier, 1946/1992; Robertson, 1952; Rath, 1957; Sigmann, 1973).[5] Others stressed the bourgeois character of the leadership and their failure to mobilize or retain working class support, as well as their timidity in embracing radical change. The end of the Cold War encouraged a move away from class analysis as the primary explanation for the revolutionaries' defeat by 1849. Research since 1991 has shifted attention from the leadership and the activities of radical socialists in the cities, to examine events in the provinces and countryside (Sperber, 1994; Siemann, 1998; Evans/ Pogge v Strandmann, 2000). The picture that is now emerging is one of deep rooted resistance to change and a widespread lack of enthusiasm for socialist goals. European monarchs could draw on considerable passive loyalty and benefited from a conservative backlash fuelled by alarmist reports of revolutionary violence.[6] The work presented here reflects these trends so far as they have appeared in the Anglophone academic journal literature. Material has also been selected to indicate the pan-European spread of the revolution and its wider influence, as well as to illustrate other key areas of research.

The revolutionaries' demands indicate their faith in political reform as a panacea for the complex underlying problems wrought by structural changes in European economy and society.[7] The population of most countries had been growing at an accelerating rate since the late eighteenth century, at a time when economic activity was increasingly market-orientated. The result was widespread pauperization and underemployment, causing a crisis in the pre-industrial crafts. Technological change also encouraged proletarianization that spread to both town and country (Koditschek, 1990; Neufeld, 1989; Aminzade, 1981; Bezucha, 1974; Scott, 1988).[8] Change fuelled anxiety that expressed itself in a desire to return to a past utopia and lashed out at traditional targets like Jews and other minorities (Harris, 1994; Mosse/Paucker/

4 For the formulation of these demands and their links to socialism, see Kamenka/Smith 1979; Johnson, 1974; Hammen, 1969; O'Boyle, 1961; Spitzer, 1957; Wright, 1958. Other discussions of intellectuals and demands for change include O'Boyle, 1970; Eyck, 1959; Sheehan, 2nd ed., 1995; 1st 1978; Lovett, 1982; Smith, 1994. From a postmodernist perspective see Ranchière, 1989.

5 Other older general works include Anderson and Anderson, 1967; Langer, 1969; Lougee, 1972.

6 Important studies of conservatism include Berdahl, 1988; Coppa, 1990. For the strength of popular religion in this period see Berenson, 1984; Bigler, 1972; Sperber, 1984.

7 For these see Abel, 1980; Blum, 1978; Good, 1984; Lévy-Leboyer/ Bourguigon, 1990; Lis, 1986; Price, 1983; Slicher van Bath, 1963.

8 See also the works by Sewell Jr., 1980, 1985, 1974.

Rürup, 1981). Matters were worsened by crop failure, famine and inflation between 1845 and 1847 that also stirred rural protest (Bergman, 1967; Gailus, 1994; Tilly, 1970–1; Agulhon, 1982). Combined with the urban problems, these difficulties exposed the ineffectiveness of established government. Paternalist welfare, protectionism and limited intervention seemed incapable of mastering difficulties that appeared to be worsening.[9] The situation encouraged the conviction that all would be well once constitutional reform swept away the barriers to fairer, more effective government.

National sentiment underpinned this belief in central Europe and Italy that remained divided into numerous small states, often under dynasties that were widely considered unwelcome alien impositions. The myth of the unredeemed nation added force to revolutionary demands within the German Confederation, Habsburg Monarchy and Italy, but nationalism was present even in nominally united countries in the association of radical reform with national renewal.[10] Like the political demands, however, nationalism could prove a divisive force, because there was little agreement on who constituted each nation, or where its boundaries should be.[11] Activists hoped for German and Italian national revolutions, but in practice the movement fragmented along the lines of the existing states and provinces such as Baden, the Rhineland, Schleswig-Holstein, Venice, Naples and Rome. This reflected the relative strength of existing political arrangements, despite the failure of the governing elite to address very real socio-economic problems. Europe remained a continent of dynastic states.

In Chapter 1, Matthias Schulz investigates the relative role of domestic and external factors in the response of Europe's great powers to the revolution and its aftermath. Britain and Russia waited on the sidelines to see whether France would export its revolution as it had done in 1792. Events in France proved self-contained, removing the danger of international war (Jennings, 1974; Sked, 1979). Constitutional reform of the German Confederation had the potential to transform the relatively loose federal structure into something capable of a more assertive international stance. As with France, events proved otherwise as reform stalled at national level, while reaction quickened in the component states.[12] Britain and Russia intervened diplomatically to defuse the Confederation's war with Denmark over Schleswig Holstein (Carr, 1963; Hjelholt, 1971; Mosse, 1958).[13] The situation in the Habsburg monarchy was far more serious, because the nationalist aspirations of its component territories threatened the

9 This has led some historians to interpret the 1848 revolutions through a theory of social or political modernization, explaining government collapse through a disjunction between state and economic development: Stearns, 1974; Gillis, 1971 and from a comparative perspective: Gillis, 1969.

10 See generally Breuilly, 1982; Hroch, 1985. For individual countries see Schulze, 1991; Griffith, 1975; Tyler, 1990; Banac, 1983; Deme, 1984; Florescu, 1967; Haas, 1968–9; Himka, 1988; Hitchins, in Winters/Held, 1975; Hitchins, 1977; Kozik, 1986; Loewenheim, in Brock/Skilling, 1972; Magocsi, 1978; Pech, 1976; Vucinich, 1967.

11 Nationalism could also be a conservative force: Mosse, 1975.

12 The best overview of events in the German Confederation is Siemann's book (Siemann, 1998). For other general accounts see Blackbourn, 1997; Hahn, 2001; Hamerow, 1957; Randers-Pehrson, 1999; Sheehan, 1989; Stadelmann, 1978. Events in Prussia are covered by Orr Jr., 1980, and the works of Barclay, 1995, in Dwyer, 2001, in Jones/Retallack, 1993. See also the historiographical review Mattheisen, 1983.

13 For Austro–Prussian tension see Sondhaus, 1991, and the essays by Austensen, 1984, 1980, 1991.

stability of the Vienna Settlement that had served as the basis for all European relations since 1815.[14] The danger of a liberal Hungary and its expansionist version of Magyar nationalism helped prompt Russian military intervention (Roberts, 1991; Rock, 1970–1). By contrast, in Italy the Habsburg monarchy proved capable of crushing attempts by Sardinia to promote national and reformist causes by force of arms in 1848–9.[15]

Schulz stresses that all governments, including revolutionary ones like the French and Hungarian, were forced by internal and external pressures to steer a middle course in their dealings with other powers, as they attempted to satisfy domestic demands for change without provoking unwelcome foreign intervention. Moreover, those countries that largely escaped unrest, still had to decide whether to recognize the new governments. The cautious approach adopted by Europe's major powers served to dampen enthusiasm for radical change. Neither liberal Britain nor autocratic Russia recognized the revolutionary Roman Republic of December 1848. The absence of war between the great powers belied the underlying shift in international relations. Although it produced no major boundary changes, the revolution fatally weakened the Vienna Settlement, opening questions about the future shape of the continent that were only resolved by war between 1859 and 1871.

Miles Taylor (Chapter 2), draws attention to the wider imperial dimension to the European events, presenting 1848 as a 'crisis of empire' affecting not only the Habsburgs and Romanovs, but also France and especially Britain. The standard explanation for the absence of the British 1848 revolution stresses the success of the governments of the 1840s in dampening discontent by reducing the tax burden on the poor, as well as the loyalty of the middle classes and the effectiveness of the police and justice system in crushing Chartists and Fenians (Saville, 1987; Thompson, 1984; Weisser, 1971). Taylor argues this explanation only works when placed in its imperial context. The empire provided a safety valve, allowing the home government to exile agitators, draw on external resources to relieve the budget and shift the cost of free trade onto colonial producers. These policies kept Britain relatively quiet, but at the cost of major discontent within the colonies, especially in newly acquired areas like the Punjab.

Henry Weisser (Chapter 3), offers further insight into the British experience in his discussion of Chartist and Fenian attitudes to continental events. Despite expressions of international solidarity, most Chartists shared middle class prejudices of British superiority and faith in a distinctive national development that made revolution unnecessary. Spain also escaped revolution, though it appeared to share the characteristics that contributed to violent upheaval elsewhere. In Chapter 4, Daniel R. Headrick addresses this paradox by widening the customary focus from Madrid to look at events in the provinces. General Ramón María Narváez acted swiftly before the Spanish conspirators even made their first move, and was able to present his government as saving national honour from evil foreign powers and corrupt sedition. Perhaps more fundamentally, Spain lacked a substantial disaffected middle class that sought change.[16]

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14 For the revolutions of 1848–9 in the Habsburg Monarchy see Beller, 1996; Fejtö, 1948; Sked, 1989. For aspirant nationalism in parts of the monarchy see Bodea, 1970; Florescu, 1976–7; Orton, 1975; Pech, 1969; Polisensky, 1980.

15 The Habsburg military response is analysed by Sked, 1979. The international dimension to revolution in Italy is covered in Coppa, 1992; Hearder, 1983; 1994. Though dated, Berkeley, 1936, and vol III, 1940 still provides useful diplomatic and military detail.

16 See also Esdaile, 2000.

The Roman Revolution of November 1848 represented the opposite end of the political spectrum. By forcing the pope to flee, the revolutionaries toppled a chief representative of the old regime and challenged the theocratic basis of the Papal States. Harry Hearder (Chapter 5), explores these events, drawing attention to Rome's complex position within wider Italian politics. The Republic's failure to secure international recognition undermined its legitimacy and led to its demise.[17] The Hungarian revolutionaries overcame this problem only to fall at another hurdle. In Chapter 6, George Handlery argues that the presence of existing national representative institutions provided the Hungarian liberals with a path to legitimate government once they achieved a majority in the diet by March 1848. While they were comparatively successful in fostering acceptance within the country, the need to remain within the existing framework compromised their defence against Russian intervention. Emergency military and fiscal measures were perceived as unconstitutional by many Hungarians who no longer regarded the new government as their legitimate authority (Deak, 1979; Deme, 1976; Kosáry, 1986; Janos, 1982). Donald J. Mattheisen (Chapter 7), examines the Frankfurt Parliament that convened in the German Confederation as an expression of the desires for national unity and liberal reform, but ultimately failed to overcome widespread resistance to change. Only a minority of the deputies embraced radical causes, while the liberalism of the rest was partial at best and most preferred the existing princely governments.[18]

Events were characterized by rapid escalation due largely to improved communications, both within and between countries. Rail and steam transport, the regular press and the electric telegraph all assisted in the spread of revolutionary ideas and action. Many governments conceded initial demands for constitutions in February and March 1848. In the case of Denmark and the Netherlands this was sufficient to defuse tension and prevent violent protest.[19] However, in the case of Rome and many other states, concessions only prompted further demands, especially when these had been granted elsewhere. Governments suffered a double crisis of confidence: the governed lost faith in their rulers, and the governors no longer believed in themselves. Metternich provided the counter-point to Narváez: already losing confidence prior to February 1848, he quickly gave up and fled Vienna after the initial unrest there in March.

The rapidity of events raises the question of political mobilization. Pamela Pilbeam (Chapter 8), identifies an 'insurrectionary tradition' in France that encouraged people to take to the streets. The failure of previous governments to control protests in the 1790s and 1830s suggested the state was vulnerable to direct action. The stability of Guizot's conservative cabinet 1840–8 discouraged hope that change could come through the existing parliamentary process. Reformers turned away from open actions like the banquet campaign and embraced conspiracies intended to topple the government through popular action (Baughman, 1959; Higonnet, 1969).[20] Paul Ginsborg (Chapter 9), tackles the question how such conspirators

17 See also Woolf, 1979.

18 See also from a conservative perspective Eyck, 1968. The deputies were divided over the national question: Vick, 2002.

19 Some material on the Danish debate in Clemmensen, in Sevaldsen/Bjorke/Bjorn, 2003.

20 Political mobilization is well covered for France, even if the focus tends to be on Paris and the major centres: Amman, 1975; Clark, 1982; Gould, 1995; Stewart-McDougall, 1984; Traugott, 1985. For the countryside see Margadent, 1979; McPhee, 1992; and with a general look across the century Weber, 1982.

could mobilize wider support. He challenges the view that only the Hungarian liberals were able to forge alliances with peasants, and argues that the Venetian revolutionaries rallied support by abolishing taxes that hit the poor. Contrary to the expectations of the Habsburg commander, Marshal Radetzky, the Venetian peasants did not side with church and state. However, the Venetian revolutionaries failed to convert this passive sympathy into active support for their cause and were ultimately defeated.[21]

In Chapter 10, Carola Lipp and Lothar Krempel shift the perspective to look at grass-roots mobilization. The Frankfurt Parliament received 17,000 petitions from three million people. Lipp and Krempel go beyond an examination of the demands to investigate the political, social and cultural networks that produce some of these petitions, suggesting that politicization began well before 1848. James Brophy's study of violence in the Prussian province of the Rhineland (Chapter 11), also reveals patterns of behaviour that were to prove significant in 1848. The violence with which public officials responded to civil demands fostered a broad anti-statist alliance between bourgeoisie and workers. It also politicized soldiers and led to demands that the army be reformed as a citizens' militia.[22] Brophy identifies a common language of liberty trees, revolutionary songs and other media that transcended social boundaries. Chapter 12 is Jonathan Sperber's brilliant case study of the festivals of 'unity and freedom' which offers a further example from the same region. His piece is important for directing attention beyond the Frankfurt Parliament to other levels of the debate on national identity. The festivals provided Rhinelanders with 'a festive discourse of the nation', similar to that in France 1787–99, but with specific German elements like the black-red-gold flag and the rifle associations (*Schützenvereine*).[23]

The presence of a common language does not necessarily entail that all who use it share the same views. While considerable attention has been paid to social distinctions amongst European revolutionaries, research on gender differences has scarcely started.[24] Stanley Zucker in Chapter 13, explores one aspect through the example of the Humania Association in Mainz that provided welfare to insurgents' families, as well as public lectures and education programmes. Female participation still adhered to the early nineteenth century ideal of domesticity. Though the Humania closed in the wake of counter-revolution, it served as a precedent in the revival of German feminism in the 1860s.

Studies of counter revolution tend to stress its repressive dimension. Alf Lüdkte's article (Chapter 14), summarizes the findings of his substantial monograph on Prussian state, police and society 1815–50, arguing that government repression militarized attitudes as well as the organization of policing (A. Lüdtke, 1989).[25] In Chapter 15, Karl Wegert offers a contrasting view, emphasizing the 'civility' of many governments, especially those of the smaller states in the German Confederation that continued the enlightened absolutist tradition of responding to complaints by legal redress and limited reform. He argues that the radicals' difficulty in

21 See also Ginsborg, 1979 that in fact ranges beyond Venice to other parts of Italy.

22 On the question of military reform see Lee, 1989; Canevali, 1985.

23 Events in the Rhineland are the subject of Sperber's monograph, 1991. In contrast to France, German political mobilization is poorly covered in English apart from the rather unsatisfactory Noyes, 1966.

24 The revolutions are generally subsumed into other aspects of gender history: Frevert, 1989; Moses, 1984; Prelinger, 1976; Robertson, 1982.

25 See also Davis, 1988; Goldstein, 1983; Forstenzer, 1981; Merriman, 1978.

sustaining political mobilization stemmed from their inability to comprehend the essentially conservative character of popular demands.[26] Alan J. Reinerman (Chapter 16), looks at political mobilization from the conservatives' perspective in his study of the papacy's attempts to tap resistance to Italian unification. Cardinal Bernetti set up a loyalist paramilitary organization called the Centurions after the 1831 revolution. The Centurions' unruly behaviour and extra-legal violence undermined the legitimacy of papal rule and compelled Cardinal Lambruschini to disband them in 1847, depriving the regime of the means to mobilize conservative support when unrest broke out the following year. By contrast, France's repressive apparatus remained intact, despite the replacement of the monarchy by a republic. Roger Price (Chapter 17), argues that these forces played a role in crushing the more radical elements in the revolution. Other factors proved more significant, however, in the longer term reduction of violence in state–society relations. The 1848 revolution hit states that were still struggling to overcome localism and establish a truly national bureaucratic network. The official response to the problems that triggered the revolution improved slowly with better communications, the spread of education and the modernization of markets.[27]

Violent counter revolution was most pronounced in the Habsburg Monarchy where the army saved the dynasty by defeating Italian and Hungarian revolutions. Nonetheless, the events proved traumatic as Istvan Deak's study of the officer corps indicates in Chapter 18. Revolution divided the army and led to civil war. Though few officers rejected the dynasty completely, all faced profound moral and ideological dilemmas. Ultimately, the force of tradition and dynastic loyalty proved stronger than national or political sympathies. Serious problems developed in Hungary, however, where the clash between the Hungarian and imperial governments created a conflict of loyalties. General Jelacic disobeyed government orders because he felt they were not in the emperor's true interests[28]

Outright repression could prove counter productive, even where it achieved its aim of smothering revolutionary activity. Comparatively timorous suggestions for mild reform in Russia prompted ruthless repression, mass arrests, intensified censorship, the restriction of university education and the abandonment of a tentative reform programme. The country remained quiet and the tsar was able to intervene in Hungary, but the failure to respond positively alienated the intelligentsia and left Russia backward and ill-prepared to meet the challenge of the Crimean War that broke out in 1853 (Lincoln, 1973; Roosevelt, 1986; Saunders, in Evans/Pogge v Strandmann, 2000; Seddon, 1985).

Repression drove many people into exile, especially to Britain and Switzerland, but also to Belgium and the Netherlands. Most did not settle, but moved on to the United States and Latin America, or were allowed to return home later. Migration not only blunted repression by removing the agitators, it also alleviated the underlying problem of overpopulation. Recent work has done much to demonstrate the impact of this largely German and Hungarian-speaking diaspora, especially in North America, as well as establish the role of 1848 in Irish–American links (Heideki, 2002; Levine, 1992: Roberts/Howe, in Evans/Pogge v Strandmann, 2000;

26 These arguments are extended in Wegert, 1992. See also Lee, 1980; Werner, 1975.

27 See also Price, 1983. Liebman, 1980 also stresses the effectiveness of pre-emptive strategies. For the French military and revolution see O'Brien, 1975; Porch, 1974.

28 See the further discussion in Deák, 1990, and the two studies by Rothenberg, 1976 and 1965.

Rohrs, 1994; Spencer, 1977; Thomson, 2001; Tolzmann, 1998).[29] However, the example of revolutionaries like Garibaldi and Kossuth inspired further calls for change within Europe, notably in Spain as illustrated in Chapter 19 by Guy Thomson (Kiernan, 1966).

However, the general view of 1848 is one of failure. German historiography has long blamed the revolutionaries for that country's later ills, whether it be a conservative critique of a failure to secure national unity, or a progressive lament at 1848 as a lost opportunity to liberalize a semi-feudal political structure. Although 1848 now features prominently in the German museum of freedom in Rastatt, there is often a sense that such official commemoration is motivated by a search to find an acceptable democratic past to legitimize the post-war Federal Republic. In France, commemoration of 1848 has been overshadowed by the Paris Commune of 1871 that, in Timothy Baycroft's words (Chapter 20), provided the left with 'better martyrs'.[30]

Nonetheless, 1848 made a real difference in European history. Radical governments proved transitory, but some of their key reforms remained in place. The remnants of western European feudalism disappeared for good, as in the case of the jurisdiction of the mediated princes in Germany, while serfdom was dismantled across central and much of eastern Europe. In the short term reaction reduced freedoms of speech and association, retarding the causes so dear to the revolutionaries' hearts. In the longer term, however, governments became more responsive to popular pressures. The state became more sophisticated, moving to diverse forms of non-violent policing, as well as wider social programmes intended to lessen the adverse effects of industrialization and urbanization. Moreover, the experience of mass mobilization meant that while political emancipation might be slowed, it could not be reversed. Openly critical groups were closed, but others continued and were soon joined by other parties and associations whose ideas were disseminated by mass-circulation press. Socialism may not have attracted wide support in 1848, but Marx and Engels had given it a powerful new language.

The brittle confidence that characterized elite attitudes in 1848 was replaced in time by a more mature reflection that new forms of political emancipation and activity did not necessarily threaten the state, but could even strengthen it. Russia's defeat in the Crimean War provided one good example of the failure to reform. The wars of national unification between 1859 and 1871 stimulated this trend towards a broader civil society. The liberals' distaste for violence and the mob that had been so evident in 1848, now made them acceptable allies of moderate conservatives and secured support for reforms in Germany, France, Britain and elsewhere. European states were strengthened prior to the still more rapid and far-reaching pressures of industrialization and urbanization that swept the continent in the last third of the nineteenth century. Liberalism's alliance with the state sharpened the distinction between reform and revolution, refining the language of the latter and associating it more closely with socialist goals.

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29 For a neglected aspect of the international impact of European revolutionary ideas see Müller, 1999. The Irish–American links are explored in two articles by Belchem, 1994 and 1995.

30 See generally Gildea, in Evans/Pogge v Strandmann, 2000.

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Part I
International Dimension

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[1]

A Balancing Act: Domestic Pressures and International Systemic Constraints in the Foreign Policies of the Great Powers, 1848–1851

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When the debate on the 'primacy of foreign policy'[1] is stripped of its ideological dimension relating to the 'interpretative hegemony' of either political or social history, it may permit insights into the relative impact that different historical conditions and forces have on foreign policy. Among those factors there are, for example, the political system under which a government operates, economic pressure groups, public opinion, geopolitics, and international behavioural, procedural and legal norms. Hence, domestic and foreign policy are intertwined. For the purposes of the following analysis, I presume that state interests are defined with respect to both a state's social and economic conditions, and its international environment. The latter implies that decision-makers are bound into a more or less rigid framework of obligations and duties towards other states, and that their opinions are shaped within a particular diplomatic and strategic culture which is a product of their country's role and experience in a given states system. If we accept these hypotheses, the 'primacy of foreign policy'—in general, the subordination of domestic arrangements to foreign policy considerations—can mean various things. It can describe a government's preoccupation with the stabilization of a favourable international system, or the pursuit of amoral policies with a view to enhancing the state's power. This definition allows for the possibility that a government considers it wise to sustain the international system even when this entails challenging

[1] See the general discussion of the concept by Brendan Simms in this issue. For some twists and turns in the German historiographical debate see Gerhard Th. Mollin, 'Internationale Beziehungen als Gegenstand der deutschen Neuzeit-Historiographie seit dem 18. Jahrhundert. Eine Traditionskritik in Grundzügen und Beispielen', in Wilfried Loth and Jürgen Osterhammel (eds.), *Internationale Geschichte, Themen—Ergebnisse—Aussichten* (Munich, 2000), pp. 3–30; Eckart Conze, 'Zwischen Staatenwelt und Gesellschaftswelt, Die gesellschaftliche Dimension internationaler Geschichte', in: *ibid.*, pp. 117–40, esp. pp. 119–23. See for the beginnings of the debate Eckart Kehr, *Der Primat der Innenpolitik*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Berlin, 1965); Klaus Hildebrand, 'Geschichte oder "Gesellschaftsgeschichte"? Die Notwendigkeit einer politischen Geschichtsschreibung von den internationalen Beziehungen', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 223 (1976), pp. 328–57; Gilbert Ziebura, 'Die Rolle der Sozialwissenschaften in der westdeutschen Historiographie der internationalen Beziehungen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 16 (1990), pp. 79–103.

or repressing domestic forces. On the other hand, the primacy of foreign policy breaks down most clearly when a weak government—for example during a revolutionary situation in which extraordinary pressure is exercised by the people—succumbs to the call of domestic forces for a self-defeating policy, which this might provoke an international disturbance with potentially negative consequences for the existence of the state.

This essay discusses the extraordinary domestic pressures exerted upon the foreign policies of the Prussian and Austrian governments during the 1848 revolutions in the German Confederation and their aftermath, which includes the subsequent dealings with the German question until 1851.[2] It tries to establish whether the foreign policies of the Great Powers in and outside of Germany were more determined by domestic forces—such as nationalism—and ideological considerations such as the preference to support a country with a parliamentary political system, or by the international system's norms and pressures weighing on decision-makers. Given the breadth of this topic, we shall focus on a few crucial episodes and sketch out the chief political strategies developed to deal with the German question in the light of recent research, printed documents and archival sources.[3] First, I shall reflect briefly on the primacy of

[2] The international dimensions of the 1848 revolutions stood for a long time in the shadow of the preoccupation with revolutionary movements, revolutionaries, programmes, class issues, the composition of parliaments, and street fighting, amongst other issues. Recent studies addressing foreign policy during this era are notably Wolf D. Gruner, 'Die europäischen Mächte und die deutsche Frage 1848–1850', in Gunther May (ed.), *Die Erfurter Union und das Erfurter Unionsparlament 1850* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna, 2000), pp. 271–305; Matthias Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert der Großmächte als Sicherheitsrat, Normen und Praxis plurilateraler Konfliktlösung im 19. Jahrhundert (1815–1852)', 2 vols. (Habilschrift, Universität Rostock, 2001, publication envisaged for 2003); Schulz, 'Die gescheiterten Revolutionen und das europäische Staatensystem 1848–1851', in Heiner Timmermann (ed.), *1848, Revolution in Europa. Verlauf, politische Programme, Folgen und Wirkungen* (Berlin, 1999), pp. 111–34; Schulz, 'Verhaltensnormen und Konfliktlösung in der Krise des europäischen Staatensystems 1848–1851. Die Außenpolitik Friedrich Wilhelm IV.', in Wolf D. Gruner and Markus Völkel (eds.), *Jubiläumsjahre—Historische Erinnerungen—Historische Forschung, Festgabe für Kersten Krüger zum 60. Geburtstag* (Rostock, 1999), pp. 45–76; Hans-Henning Hahn, 'Internationale Beziehungen und europäische Revolution. Das europäische Staatensystem in der Revolution von 1848' (Habilschrift, Universität Köln, 1986); Hahn, 'Die Revolutionen von 1848 als Strukturkrise des europäischen Staatensystems', in Peter Krüger (ed.), *Das europäische Staatensystem im Wandel. Strukturelle Bedingungen und bewegende Kräfte seit der Frühen Neuzeit* (Munich, 1996), pp. 131–52; George Billy, *Palmerston's Foreign Policy, 1848* (New York, 1993); Günther Gillessen, *Lord Palmerston und die Einigung Deutschlands, Die englische Politik von der Paulskirche bis zu den Dresdener Konferenzen 1848–1851* (Lübeck, 1961); Lawrence C. Jennings, *France and Europe in 1848. A Study of French Foreign Affairs in Time of Crisis* (Oxford, 1973). For a larger overview see Werner E. Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question 1848–1871, with Special Reference to England and Russia* (Cambridge, 1958); and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongreß zur Pariser Konferenz: England, die deutsche Frage und das Mächtesystem 1815–1856* (Göttingen, 1991).

[3] Besides the secondary literature, I have used files from the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA), Vienna, the Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Paris (AMAE), which are particularly instructive because they show the lack of impact of the February revolution on foreign policy, and from the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem. However, there is so much—and often neglected—printed material, old and new, available, that I have mostly relied on printed matters for Prussia and the Confederation. See primarily Karl

foreign policy in the German Confederation, and on the tension between domestic pressures and the international system, which influenced foreign policy in the decades since the Vienna Congress of 1815. The main body of the essay discusses the foreign policies pursued by the Great Powers in the historical constellation of 1848–51, including the revolutions in the Confederation in 1848 and the Prussian Union policy, the Schleswig-Holstein question, and, perhaps most interestingly, the Austrian bid for power in 1850/1.

* * *

The 'primacy of foreign policy', it has been argued, was the guiding principle in the policies pursued by German states from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.[4] Simms suggests that the main reason for the primacy of foreign policy was the geopolitical 'sandwich' position of the German states between France and Russia, especially the precarious situation of the smaller German states bordering on France, which was considered the chief disturber of European peace in early-nineteenth-century Europe. During the Wars of Liberation, Germany's re-establishment as a player in European politics depended on British, Russian and Austrian support.[5] At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, it was decided that the geopolitical exposure of the German states required the creation of a German Confederation to provide for their security.[6] The Confederation was supposed to restore the European 'balance of power' by tying both Prussian and Austrian power to the defence of Germany, however, without establishing a centralized government that would enable Germany to disturb the peace. Therefore the Confederation assumed the character of a loose association for purely defensive purposes. In addition, the juxtaposition of Aus-

Haehnchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe: Ungedrucktes aus dem Nachlaß König Friedrich Wilhelms IV.* (Leipzig, 1930); Josef [Maria] von Radowitz, *Nachgelassene Briefe und Aufzeichnungen zur Geschichte der Jahre 1848–1853*, ed. Walter Möhring (Osnabrück, 1967 [1922]); Lothar Gall (ed.), *Quellen zur Geschichte des deutschen Bundes, Abt. III: 1850–1866*, vol. 1: *Die Dresdener Konferenz und die Wiederherstellung des deutschen Bundes 1850/51*, compiled by Jürgen Müller (Munich, 1996); Ernst Rudolf Huber (ed.), *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, vol. 1: *1803–1850* and vol. 2: *1851–1900* (Stuttgart, 1986); Otto Freiherr von Manteuffel, *Unter Friedrich Wilhelm IV.: Denkwürdigkeiten des Ministerpräsidenten Otto Freiherr von Manteuffel*, ed. Heinrich von Poschinger, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1901); Carl F. Vitzhum von Eckstädt, *Berlin und Wien in den Jahren 1845–1852* (Stuttgart, 1886). In addition, the edited correspondence of Russian Foreign Minister Count von Nesselrode, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, and the *Letters of Queen Victoria* have been used. The availability of several new studies on Britain's policies in and around 1848 has permitted me to neglect British archives. For further references, see below and Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', chapter on the 1848 revolutions and aftermath, pp. 145–323.

[4] Brendan Simms, *The Struggle for Mastery in Germany, 1779–1850* (Basingstoke and London, 1998), pp. 1–7.

[5] See Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 450–508.

[6] See on the negotiations *ibid.*, pp. 538–47; on the security policy of the Confederation, Jürgen Angelow, *Von Wien nach Königgrätz. Die Sicherheitspolitik des Deutschen Bundes im europäischen Gleichgewicht 1815–1866* (Munich, 1996).

tria and Prussia within the Confederation, and the existence of the so-called 'Third Germany' consisting of the smaller and middle-sized states, was designed to maintain a balance *within* Germany.[7] Finally, while Austria sacrificed its western European possessions in the southern Netherlands in return for a strengthened influence over the Italian peninsula and the Balkans, Prussia was given the Rhine Province and Westphalia in order to strengthen Prussia's Great Power status and make it the main defender of Germany against France. Taken together, these changes constituted what Simms describes as the 'geopolitical revolution' of the Vienna territorial settlement.[8] In consequence, Prussia, a thoroughly eastern European power in the eighteenth century, had shifted its centre of gravity to the west, assumed essential military functions for the defence of the west and the east of Germany, and become the main exponent of the primacy of foreign (and security) policy.

However, geopolitical and security considerations were not the only factors contributing to the primacy of foreign policy among the Great Powers in nineteenth-century European politics. Most importantly, the 'Concert of Europe' established at the Congress of Aachen[9] in 1818 framed the diplomatic culture of the five Great Powers, and continued to shape their foreign policies during and after the revolutions of 1848. Following Aachen, the Concert of Europe operated as a kind of security council and developed behavioural, procedural and legal norms—such as restraint, moderation, cooperation through traditional and conference diplomacy, the maintenance of the *status quo* and the balance of power—that made their imprint on European diplomacy for the major part of the nineteenth century.[10] It is against this background that the foreign policies of the Great Powers during the revolutions of 1848 must be regarded. The new element that came into play was the rise of popular nationalism. Obviously, the rising German nationalist movement exerted pressure on Prussian foreign policy, and revolutionary nationalism was also the chief problem of Austria, although in quite different ways. Thus, during the revolutionary era the two German Great Powers were forced into a balancing act between domestic forces and considerations, and international systemic pressures. Looking at the other three Great Powers, though, I hold the view that, contrary to the

[7] Crucial to this is Wolf D. Gruner, 'Was There a Reformed Balance of Power System or Cooperative Great Power Hegemony?', *American Historical Review*, 97 (1992), pp. 725–32; Gruner, 'Großbritannien, der Deutsche Bund und die Struktur des europäischen Friedens im frühen 19. Jahrhundert 1815–1822', 2 vols. (Habilschrift Ludwig-Maximillians-Universität München, 1979); on the larger picture Gruner, *Die deutsche Frage in Europa 1800–1990* (Munich, 1992).

[8] Simms, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 105f.

[9] See, on the building of the Concert from Chaumont (1814) to Aachen (1818), the substantial literature on Allied diplomacy in this period, Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', pp. 50–63.

[10] See, on the operation of the Concert from 1814/18 until 1852, and the evolving rules and norms, *ibid.*, pp. 64–323, 378–447. In my 'Habilschrift', I go beyond the systemic power-politics analysis of Schroeder, and try to reconstruct the normative ideas and procedural aspects shaping Concert diplomacy.

Schroeder thesis of the demise of the Concert of Europe beginning in 1848,[11] the Concert norm of restraint and Concert practices of conflict resolution prevailed throughout the revolutionary and immediate post-revolutionary crisis, as did the primacy of foreign policy. Ideological or other domestic considerations played only a secondary role.

* * *

The German Confederation of 1815 had given the German nation a loose, protective umbrella, and it initially commanded a wide degree of acceptance. But soon national liberal demands for constitutions in the German states, while heeded in some of the southern states, were stifled by Austria and Prussia, through the tightening of censorship and the reaffirmation of the 'monarchical principle'. Tensions between popular sentiments and conservative governments increased. In 1834, Prussia responded to liberal demands for a nation-wide market by establishing the *Zollverein*, which sped up the economic integration and modernization of Germany, while Austria, which would not accede to the customs union, fell behind. Liberal and national ideas, which had made their first appearance during the Prussian Reform Era, now gained further ground among Prussian military and diplomatic élites. Foreign Minister Karl von Canitz, the Prussian ambassador in London Leopold von Bunsen, and King Friedrich Wilhelm IV's adviser and friend Josef Maria von Radowitz, became advocates of a more dynamic, 'German' foreign policy with a view to strengthening the leadership of Prussia and the political, strategic and commercial ties, in particular railway connections, between the German states.[12] However, while German popular opinion broadly shifted towards liberal nationalism, the romantic, pietist, unmilitaristic Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV thought of kingship as a divine gift and rejected liberal constitutionalism.[13] He regarded the preservation of peace as a Christian's European duty. Influenced by his

[11] See Schroeder, *Transformation*, pp. 796–804. Although '1848' figures in the title of his book, Schroeder does not analyse diplomacy during the revolutionary years; Schroeder, *Austria, Britain and the Crimean War. The Destruction of the European Concert* (Ithaca and London, 1972). Compare, for a discussion of the Concert's continuity in the second half of the nineteenth century, Winfried Baumgart, *Europäisches Konzert und nationale Bewegungen 1830–1878* (Handbuch der Geschichte der Internationalen Beziehungen, 6, Paderborn, 1999), pp. 153–65.

[12] See Simms, *Struggle for Mastery*, pp. 166–72; Walter Bußmann, *Zwischen Preußen und Deutschland. Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Eine Biographie* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 210, 240, 273–339.

[13] On Friedrich Wilhelm and his spiritual world see *ibid.*, and Peter Krüger, 'Europäisch-christliche Ordnung als Antwort auf die Krise des Staatensystems in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts', in Peter Krüger and Julius H. Schoeps in cooperation with Irene Diekmann (eds.), *Der verkannte Monarch: Friedrich Wilhelm IV. in seiner* Zeit (Potsdam, 1997); as well as David E. Barclay, *Frederick William IV and the Prussian Monarchy, 1840–1861* (Oxford, 1995).

former teacher and his father's Foreign Minister Friedrich Ancillon, he tried to maintain the traditional solidarity of the Great Powers, in particular between Berlin and Vienna, practised since the Vienna Congress.[14] The national revolutionary movement put him in an awkward position.

The revolutions in the German Confederation combined demands for political participation and constitutional government with those for the national integration of the German states. Therefore they had not only a domestic emancipatory aspect, but also an *inter-state* dimension by putting into question the independence of the individual German states, threatening them with mediatization. Demands for national unification also implied competition for leadership in the unification process. Finally, the surge of nationalism had an *international* dimension, as the competing nationalisms of Germans, Danes, Italians, Poles and the Habsburg nationalities collided with the established territorial order, and potentially threatened the balance of power in central Europe. First, nationalism threatened the very existence of the multinational Habsburg Empire. Second, German nationalism threatened to oust the Habsburg monarchy from Germany. Third, many territorial conflicts loomed on the horizon: whether Dutch Luxemburg and Limburg, Czech Bohemia, German-Italian South Tyrol, Alsace, the Baltic provinces of Russia, or even the entire Habsburg Empire would become a part of united Germany or not was more or less controversially discussed by the revolutionary National Assembly in Frankfurt in 1848–9. Even before the delegates assembled, Prussia was driven into war with Denmark in competition over the status of Schleswig-Holstein, and Austria found itself in war with Sardinia-Piedmont over its northern Italian possessions. Foreign policy assumed a more dynamic character, sometimes in a revolutionary, sometimes counter-revolutionary fashion. Following the decision by the Frankfurt assembly at the end of 1848 to opt for the *kleindeutsche Lösung*—a 'little' Germany without the Habsburg monarchy—the Prussian–Austrian antagonism over hegemony in Germany moved towards centre stage of the German question. A conflict between two Great Powers in Europe appeared possible, even probable at times, thus adding fuel to the question of German unity.

But a general war in Europe was successfully prevented, and the territorial order remained unchanged. The explosive charge inherent in German nationalism during the crisis lasting from of 1848 to 1851, when the Conference of Dresden restored the defunct German Confederation, was successfully defused. So when and how did the Great Powers interfere in the respective crises? How did Prussia and Austria react to the domestic and international pressures as they pursued their respective policies regarding the international aspects of the German question?

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[14] For more details see Schulz, 'Verhaltensnormen und Konfliktlösung', pp. 52–63.

The initial response of the Great Powers to the revolutions of 1848 was to consider military intervention.[15] But in every single case—the revolutions[16] in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Schleswig-Holstein, and the dealings of the revolutionary German provisional government in Frankfurt—the decision taken by the Great Powers was not to interfere in the debate about the form of government in another state, but to intervene only if the foreign policy pursued by a government threatened to undermine the international system, its territorial basis, or the balance of power.[17] Thus Lord Castlereagh's doctrine of non-intervention in domestic affairs was re-affirmed.[18] Hence, when the news of the French revolution arrived in Potsdam, the King of Prussia recommended wishing France 'all the best', and refraining from interference in its domestic affairs.[19] He contemplated the option of the four Great Powers' recognizing jointly the revolutionary government in France and decided 'not to take any aggressive steps and not to mix himself in the domestic affairs of France, provided that it refrains from any hostile or revolutionary attitude against its neighbours'.[20] It was not only fearfulness that made the Prussian King adhere to the notions of monarchical solidarity, moderation and the conference method as a means of resolving disputes, but also long-standing conviction.[21] A memorandum by Russian Foreign Minister Nesselrode drafted on 9 March struck the same note while showing more readiness to act if there were French aggression.[22] Likewise, in a declaration by the Austrian Emperor, attached to a circular of the Vienna government, the notion of non-interference was upheld, as long as international treaties and the Austrian and German borders remained inviolate.[23] While the four Great Powers agreed upon a policy of non-intervention, they

[15] On the Concert's differentiated practice of, and debate about, intervention, see Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', pp. 64–323, 378–447. For Austria's and Prussia's stance on intervention, see Harald Müller, *Im Widerstreit zwischen Interventionsstrategie und Anpassungszwang. Die Außenpolitik Österreichs und Preußens zwischen dem Wiener Kongreß 1814/15 und der Februarrevolution 1848*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1990).

[16] The causes of the revolutions have been discussed in their European context—for example by Wolfram Siemann, *Die deutsche Revolution 1848/49* (Frankfurt/Main, 1985), pp. 17–57, esp. pp. 39–57, as well as in the numerous publications released around the 150th anniversary in 1998, for example Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *1848: Die ungewollte Revolution* (Frankfurt, 1998), pp. 68–103.

[17] Cf. for the French Revolution Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', pp. 147f, 150–4; for the revolutions in Schleswig-Holstein and Germany see *ibid.*, pp. 211–73, 292–8.

[18] Compare the debate between Metternich and Castlereagh, in which Metternich prevailed only in the short term: Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', pp. 65–80, 378–406.

[19] King of Prussia to Queen Victoria, 27 Feb. 1848: Arthur C. Benson and Viscount Esher (eds.), *Letters of Queen Victoria. A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the Years 1837 and 1861*, 3 vols. (London, 1908), vol. 2, pp. 150–2, 151.

[20] '[D]e ne faire aucune démarche aggressive et de ne pas se mêler dans des affaires intérieures de la France, pourvu qu'elle s'abstienne de tout débordement hostile ou révolutionnaire vers ses voisins'. Canitz to Bunsen, 29 Feb. 1848, cited in Hahn, 'Internationale Beziehungen', p. 98 (transl. MS).

[21] See Schulz, 'Verhaltensnormen und Konfliktlösung', *passim*.

[22] Nesselrode to Chreptowitsch, 9 March 1848: Comte A. Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers du Chancelier Comte de Nesselrode, 1760–1865*, 11 vols. (Paris, 1904–11), vol. 9, p. 70.

[23] HHStA, PA I/1097 [Zirkulare 1848–1850]: Attachment to Circular, Vienna, 10 March 1848.

did not agree on a defensive alliance, because of British reservations. Palmerston feared that an alliance might be interpreted as a provocation by the French government, or encourage counter-revolutionary action among the conservative powers. Once the doctrine of non-intervention in domestic affairs was firmly accepted, it was followed throughout the revolutionary year and during later crises. Indeed, after the March revolutions had occurred in Vienna and Berlin, the French revolutionary government followed the principle of non-intervention despite some domestic agitation to do the contrary: French Foreign Minister Lamartine expressly refused the request of Polish, Irish and German nationalists for support.[24] In this way, the inter-state system was insulated—as much as possible—from the instability of the domestic situation in the monarchies struck by revolution. An automatic transmission of domestic crisis into a crisis of the international system was thus prevented. What was *not* suppressed, however, was the *transnational dissemination* of the revolutionary virus to other countries. And since some of the nationalist movements had conflicting aims, what the Great Powers had to deal with were those nationalisms which put borders and territories into question. As for the national issues menacing inter-state order, from now on mediation was used, pressures were mobilized, and norms invoked in order to localize the conflicts and prevent the outbreak of a general war.

* * *

The non-German Great Powers respected the principle of non-intervention with regard to constitutional developments within the German states, but reserved to themselves the right to recognize any change in the organization of Germany as a whole,[25] as the latter would be tantamount to a revision of the Treaty for the German Confederation which had been incorporated into the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna. The Great Powers were primarily interested in the external border of Germany and the balance of power, both essential normative aspects of the international system established in Vienna.[26]

Great Britain generally favoured the re-organization of Germany under lib-

[24] For a different interpretation see James Chastain, *The Liberator of Sovereign Peoples. French Foreign Policy 1848* (Athens, Ohio, 1988). More in line with my view is Lawrence C. Jennings, *France and Europe in 1848. A Study of French Foreign Affairs in Time of Crisis* (Oxford, 1973). The Sicilian rebels who were recognized by France and Britain as warring parties were an exception. AMAE/MD/Naples 177: Sur la Médiation Anglo-Française en Sicile (probably from Jan. 1849), as well as Rayneval to Drouyn de Lhuys, 4 Jan. 1849, Rayneval to Drouyn de Lhuys, 21 Jan. 1849, Drouyn de Lhuys to Rayneval, 15 Feb. 1849.

[25] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 12 Aug. 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 144.

[26] For British attitudes towards the revolutions in Germany, see Billy, *Palmerston's Foreign Policy*; Gillessen, *Lord Palmerston*; for French attitudes Martin Stauch, *Im Schatten der Heiligen Allianz: Frankreichs Preußenpolitik von 1848 bis 1857* (Frankfurt, 1996); William J. Orr Jr, 'La France et la Révolution Allemande de 1848–1849', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 93 (1979), pp. 300–30; Orr, 'Louis Napoléon et la Question Allemande (1849–1850)', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 95 (1981), pp. 171–212.

eral Prussian leadership, and hoped to gain a liberal Germany as an ally against autocratic Russia.[27] Palmerston greeted a closer union of the German states in March 1848 as 'productive of additional Security of the Balance of Power in Europe'.[28] When Friedrich Wilhelm proclaimed his leadership in the movement for national unity,[29] the British Foreign Minister instructed the ambassador to the German Confederation in a private letter, 'we wish you to support [—] as far as you properly can without any direct or unfitting interference [—] any plan which has for its object to consolidate Germany and give it more unity and political vigour'.[30] While the British attitude comes as no surprise, the consolidation of German unity under Prussian leadership also appealed to Russia initially, namely with a view to containing France, and allowing Austria to regain control in Italy.[31] A temporary territorial modification, namely the integration of the Eastern Prussian provinces into the German Confederation accepted by the old Federal Diet in June 1848, which was designed to bring Prussia in its entirety into the Confederation's security area, passed almost without a reaction by the Great Powers. There was only one weak protest by France that gave way to benign acceptance in August 1848.[32]

However, the Great Powers refused to recognize the provisional German government based in Frankfurt.[33] The attitude of the Powers mattered, because the recognition of the so-called 'Provisional Central Power' would have formally sanctioned the movement towards unity. Like St Petersburg, the British government disapproved of the provisional central government because of the latter's uncompromising attitude in the Schleswig-Holstein question.[34] The Paulskirche demanded the incorporation of Schleswig-Holstein into Germany and made the conclusion of an armistice extremely difficult in the summer of 1848.[35] As long as it did not clearly opt for peace, Palmerston refused to recognize the Frankfurt government not because of its more or less revolutionary origins, but because it called for an uncompromising, nationalistic foreign pol-

[27] Memorandum of Palmerston to Prince Albert, 16 Sept. 1847: Th. Martin, *The Life of H. R. H. the Prince Consort* (London, 1875), vol. 1, pp. 447ff.

[28] Cited in Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongreß*, p. 78; see also pp. 84f.

[29] 'Proklamation des Königs über die deutsche Politik Preußens', 21 March 1848: Huber (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 1, p. 448.

[30] Palmerston to Strangways, 23 March 1848, cited in Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, p. 16.

[31] The Emperor encouraged the Prussian King 'tout ce qu'il y a de force en Allemagne autour de vous; là où l'on ne vous écoute pas, faites parler la Diète et soyez sa force exécutive; si la Diète est morte, sachez vous en passer et aggissez de votre propre arbitre.' Nicholas to Friedrich Wilhelm, 7 March 1848: Karl Haenchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe 1848: Ungedrucktes aus dem Nachlaß König Friedrich Wilhelms IV. von Preußen* (Leipzig, 1930), pp. 34f.

[32] Alexander Scharff, *Die europäischen Großmächte und die deutsche Revolution* (Leipzig, 1942), pp. 28f.

[33] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 12 Aug. 1848; Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 19 Aug. 1848; and Nesselrode to Chreptowitsch, 2 Sept. 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 143, 151f and 159f.

[34] Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, p. 22.

[35] See below.

icy, and refused to heed councils, rules and warnings.[36] The expansionist ideas that prevailed in the Frankfurt assembly represented a threat to peace in Europe.

In the spring of 1849, Prussia broke with the Frankfurt assembly by rejecting its constitution, and tried to seize the initiative in the German question with its so-called 'Union policy' designed to bring about German unification by, and with the consent of, the princes and the city-states. Palmerston then resumed his support of Prussia, as the Union policy seemed to facilitate a compromise between German unity, Prussian leadership in foreign policy, and the autonomy of the individual states.[37] Furthermore, Prussia, with only 17 million inhabitants, was by far the smallest of the Great Powers and—thanks to its position in the Rhineland—the only one that could defend Germany.[38]

> It appears therefore to Her Majesty's Government, that if Germany is to be organized upon a principle of intimate union, such an organisation can be effected only under the leadership of Prussia, and it is most desirable for the working out of such a scheme, that Prussia should disarm the jealousies and allay the fears of the smaller Sovereignties by respecting their political existence, and not by exacting from them any sacrifice which would be incompatible therewith.[39]

The establishment of Prussian pre-eminence in a liberal Germany would have had many advantages for Europe from a British point of view. Because of Austria's nationality problems and Russian intervention in Hungary, Palmerston thought Austria unfit to continue to exercise—or resume—a leadership role in Germany.[40] Therefore, while ruling out a Great German Empire encompassing the entire Habsburg monarchy, he supported a purely defensive alliance between a Prussian-led Germany and Austria with a view to compensating Austria for the loss of influence in Germany.[41] This would allow Vienna to focus on its nationality problems and re-emerge as a Great Power in Europe, effectively curtailing Russian influence in the Balkans.[42]

Russian sympathies, on the other hand, gradually tilted towards the Austrian side. When conservatives regained supremacy in Austria in the autumn of 1848, ideological considerations and British support of Prussia were instrumental in the definition of the Russian attitude. The Prussian Union policy was rejected for its compromise with the national movement.[43] Nesselrode regarded this policy as a 'democratic project' that resembled too much that of Frankfurt and

[36] Palmerston to Earl of Westmorland, 13 July 1848: Kenneth Bourne and Cameron Watt (eds.), *British Documents of Foreign Affairs. Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* (*BDFA*) (London, 1983ff), Part I/F, vol. 18, pp. 1–7, here p. 3.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] See Schulz, 'Verhaltensnormen und Konfliktlösung', p. 67.

[39] Palmerston to Cowley (private), 22 Nov. 1850, quoted in Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongreß*, p. 133.

[40] Palmerston to Earl of Westmorland, 13 July 1849: *BDFA*, Part I/F, vol. 18, pp. 4f.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[42] Palmerston, 21 July 1849: *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, vol. 107, p. 814. Palmerston to Earl of Westmorland, 13 July 1849: *BDFA*, Part I/F, vol. 18, p. 6f.

[43] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 4 April 1850: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 297f.

could fire radical aspirations.[44] Frightened by a potential spillover of the persistent revolutionary virus into Poland, Nesselrode claimed on weak grounds that Prussia was violating the Treaty of the German Confederation.[45] As long as the Union policy was based upon the consent of the German states involved, this argument could hardly prevail. Russian interference in the German question came very close to breaking with the principle of non-intervention. Russia clearly sided now with reaction, at that point represented by Austria, in an effort to counterbalance British support for a liberal Germany.[46]

In short, while domestic and ideological considerations, based upon the preferred parliamentarian or authoritarian system, influenced the attitudes of Britain and Russia respectively, the essential fact remains that they were heeded only when they coincided with the balance of power. The case of France is even more striking, as there was, apart from a few declarations made to placate the masses, practically no tendency to follow an ideological, revolutionary foreign policy.[47]

* * *

The proclamation on German policy made by Friedrich Wilhelm on 21 March 1848, in which he laid claim to the leadership of the national movement, can be interpreted as a move to defend his throne, threatened by the Berlin revolution of 18 March, and as an attempt to harmonize the principle of monarchical sovereignty with German unity. In the King's revolutionary liberal government, the Foreign Minister Heinrich Freiherr von Arnim-Suckow came close to embarking on a revolutionary foreign policy in spring 1848. Most visibly, in an attempt to promote Western support for Prussian leadership in the unification of Germany and to forge an ideological alliance with the western liberal powers, Arnim-Suckow demanded the liberation of Poland and thus risked a war of liberation with Russia. The Western governments were alarmed. Arnim-Suckow's policy would have torn apart the territorial basis and behavioural norms of the international system. But only 'les misérables ou les fous' would have attacked Russia in 1848.[48] Friedrich Wilhelm refused to follow his Foreign Minister, and both France and Britain rejected the Prussian Minister's calls for support.[49] On the contrary, Britain's Lord Palmerston warned Prussia of

[44] '[Œ]uvre démocratique', Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 22 May 1849: *ibid.*, pp. 239f.

[45] Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongreß*, p. 124.

[46] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 13 Feb. 1849; also Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 22 May 1849; Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 23 May 1849: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 217f, 240, 241f.

[47] Cf., on Lamartine's declarations and his overtures for British support, Hahn, 'Internationale Beziehungen', pp. 69–89.

[48] Nicholas to Friedrich Wilhelm, 14 July 1848: Haenchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe*, pp. 125f.

[49] Arnim to Friedrich Wilhelm, 2 April 1848: *ibid.*, pp. 62f; Hahn, 'Internationale Beziehungen', pp. 223–6; Baumgart, *Europäisches Konzert und nationale Bewegung*, pp. 322–4; Siemann, *Die deutsche Revolution*, pp. 149f.

provocative attitudes, and recommended moderation.[50] Russia, being without ideological partners among the Great Powers after the revolutions in Berlin and Vienna, mobilized troops in Poland and looked simultaneously for entente with Britain and even revolutionary France in order to restrain Prussia and Germany.[51] Nesselrode's warning to Prussia to stick to reason and not embark on a 'Hegelian' power policy appealed to Friedrich Wilhelm's sense of Christian piety.[52] When the first Polish revolts turned against German domination, the sympathy of the German national movement quickly waned, and the Russo-German crisis was over.[53]

The Schleswig-Holstein question, on the other hand, would occupy the Great Powers for almost four years. It was triggered by the rise of conflicting national movements in Denmark and Germany, but its origin was rooted in the pattern of mixed national settlement in Schleswig and the complex legal and territorial status of the two duchies, which were united by international agreement, and ruled by the King of Denmark in his capacity as Prince of the two duchies.[54] Holstein was part of the Confederation, Schleswig was not; Holstein was populated by German speakers, Schleswig had a mixed population. While Denmark was moving towards constitutionalization,[55] the Danish nationalists pressured their King to separate Schleswig from Holstein and incorporate it into the Danish monarchy. The Holsteiners and the German Schleswigers protested, claiming that the succession in the two duchies must remain the same, that Holstein and Schleswig had to be eternally united, and that their autonomy must be respected. They called upon the German Confederation for support. The conflict assumed an international character immediately, and consequently the Great Powers were involved from the very beginning to the end, Prussia as partner in the conflict on the German side, Britain and Russia, and to a lesser degree France, as mediating powers.[56] The Habsburg monarchy became involved only in later stages, after it had defeated its internal and external enemies.

Friedrich Wilhelm took sides early, recognized the Holsteiners' interpretation of the law of succession and threatened with military counter-measures should

[50] Hahn, 'Internationale Beziehungen', pp. 250–2.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 254–61.

[52] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 6 and 11 April 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 79, 80–3. Nesselrode actually referred to the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and his philosophy of state and power, *ibid.*

[53] Nesselrode to Chreptowitsch, 19 April 1848: *ibid.*, p. 84.

[54] It is not possible here to explain the origins and nature of this conflict in detail, which would be a substantial undertaking. I have done so elsewhere, and refer to the literature on the subject. Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', pp. 211–72; William Carr, *Schleswig-Holstein, 1815–1848: A Study in National Conflict* (Manchester, 1963), pp. 321f; Keith A. P. Sandiford, *Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question, 1848–1864: A Study in Diplomacy, Politics, and Public Opinion* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1975), pp. 20–3.

[55] See Michael Bregnsbo, 'Dänemark und 1848: Systemwechsel, Bürgerkrieg und Konsensus-Tradition', in Timmermann (ed.), *1848: Revolution in Europa*, pp. 153–65.

[56] Carr, *Schleswig-Holstein*, pp. 265–98; Randolf Oberschmidt, *Rußland und die schleswig-holsteinische Frage 1838–1853* (Frankfurt, 1997), pp. 80–272; Schulz, 'Das Europäische Konzert als Sicherheitsrat', pp. 211–73.

the Danes invade Schleswig.[57] The Danes claimed the Duchies were separate entities and in any case belonged to the Danish crown, thus rejecting any foreign intervention. But this interpretation was at odds with the international treaties regarding the Duchies, and the laws of succession reigning there, which differed from the succession in Denmark. Apparently the 'revolutionary' Prussian Foreign Minister Arnim-Suckow suggested that the conflict be resolved by negotiation and with Britain as mediating power.[58] As Prussia and Denmark embarked on a head-on collision, and occupied Schleswig and Holstein, respectively, the Danish government called upon Russia and Britain, the two most interested powers in the North and Baltic Seas, for mediation.[59]

The course of the belligerent activities, armistices, peace negotiations, and the tedious mediation process cannot be sketched out here in detail. A combination of mediation, isolation of the different problems, and pressure exerted at the right moment especially by Russia, Britain and Sweden resulted in the modification of the legal status of Schleswig short of its incorporation into Denmark, as well as an agreement on the succession, in the second London Protocol of 8 May 1852. What we must examine with a view to the central question is whether Prussia was more inclined to follow the nationalistic sentiments of the Frankfurt parliament, or the rules of the European states system. Of course, one might argue here that, even if it followed the Paulskirche, this would not imply a primacy of domestic policy, but rather the pursuit of a different, more aggressive foreign policy. It appears to this author, though, that a break with the Concert tradition of moderation would signal the monarchy's succumbing to domestic pressures. At any rate, the record appears mixed. Prussia and the German Confederation demanded only the restoration of the legal *status quo* before the Danish occupation of Schleswig,[60] but they went as far as recognizing the rebellious provisional government of Holstein, and offered Schleswig membership in the German Confederation, which pleased the nationalistic mood in Germany.[61] The British government was unsure about the legal situation and partly followed the Prussian interpretation without taking sides openly. The Danish suggestion that the Powers had guaranteed, in a treaty of 1720, the unity of the entire Danish monarchy including the Duchies was rejected by Britain, and while public opinion sided with the Danes, Queen Victoria supported the German view that the Danish King had violated the

[57] King Friedrich Wilhelm to Herzog Christian Aug. von Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augenburg, 24 March 1848: Huber (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 1, pp. 593f.

[58] Freiherr von Arnim(-Suckow) to Friedrich Wilhelm, 2 and 3 April 1848; same to same, 7 April 1848; same to same, 12 May 1848: Haenchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe*, pp. 62–4, 66–8, 95.

[59] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 11 April 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 80–3.

[60] 'Bundesbeschluß über das Eingreifen im Bundesland Holstein', 4 April 1848: Huber (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 1, p. 595; Friedrich Wilhelm to Tsarina Alexandra Feodorowna, 21 April 1848: Haenchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe*, pp. 81ff, quote p. 82.

[61] 'Bundesbeschluß', 12 April 1848: Huber (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 1, p. 595; Arnim to Westmorland, 19 April 1848: *BDFA*, Part I/F, vol. 17, p. 8.

rights of the Duchies and tried to circumvent the laws of succession by annexing Schleswig.[62]

As the revolutions began to shatter long-held convictions, Vienna and St Petersburg contemplated the idea of resolving the crisis pragmatically by a partition of Schleswig according to the principle of nationality:[63] 'Let us', Nesselrode suggested, '... unite with the Confederation the population which speaks German, and leave those people with Denmark who speak Danish'.[64] Since the principle of nationality was not yet recognized as a basis of international law, the Russian suggestion amounted to a revolutionary concession from above and signalled a profound pragmatism, if not the gradual acceptance of the principle in international law. Britain admitted the principle, while suggesting that areas with mixed populations should be given to Denmark.[65] Ironically though, all parties involved rejected the compromise. 'Everybody', Nesselrode wrote to the Russian ambassador in Prussia, Count Meyendorff, 'wants to keep the entire Schleswig. The idea of a partition is rejected by both Germany and Denmark, and even the German population of Schleswig will not hear of it.'[66] Schleswig, the main bone of contention, became a symbol of both the Danish and the German national movements, both ignoring that settlements there were mixed.[67]

The conflict was exacerbated by a resolution of the National Assembly of 9 June 1848, which demanded the creation of a German navy and the inclusion of Schleswig into the future German Reich.[68] The restoration of the legal *status quo ante* was lost from sight, a revolutionary war of annexation loomed, if Prussia, whose troops were to do most of the fighting, would heed the call. Prussia continued to signal moderation, but Britain and Russia now feared the destruction of the balance of power in the Baltic.[69] While both tried to restrain

[62] Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 21 June 1849: Benson and Esher (eds.), *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 223. Compare on the legal background 'Memorandum of the Engagements of Great Britain and other Powers towards Denmark, relative to the Sovereignty of the Duchy of Schleswig' [authored by L. Hertslet], 6 April 1848, *BDFA*, Part I/F, vol. 17, p. 4.

[63] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 8 May 1848; Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 22 June 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 92–4, 118f.

[64] 'Faire avec le Schleswig ce qu'on a fait avec Posen, réunir à la Confédération germanique ce qui parle allemand et laisser au Danemark ce qui parle danois. Ce serait même une concession de notre part, mais nous nous y prêterions volontiers pour sortir de cette crise.' Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 8 May 1848: *ibid.*, pp. 92f. (transl. MS).

[65] Palmerston to Bloomffield, 19 May 1848, quoted in H. C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston* (London, 1936), p. 9. Scharff argues the suggestion came from Britain, but this seems incorrect. Alexander Scharff, 'Das Erste Londoner Protokoll', in Scharff, *Schleswig-Holstein in der deutschen und nordeuropäischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1969), p. 194.

[66] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 16 June 1848; Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 110.

[67] Mosse, The *European Powers and the German Question*, p. 20; Oberschmidt, *Rußland*, p. 105.

[68] Alexander Scharff, 'Schleswig-Holsteins Erhebung im Spiegel französischer Akten', in Scharff, *Schleswig-Holstein*, pp. 121–43, Siemann, *Die deutsche Revolution*, pp. 154f; Eberhard Meier, *Die außenpolitischen Ideen der Achtundvierziger* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 142–9.

[69] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 22 June 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 118.

the parties to the conflict,[70] Friedrich Wilhelm in June 1848 began to distance himself from the agitation and even went so far as to request Russian support for a break with Frankfurt.[71] Following Meyendorff's encouragement, the Prussian King dismissed his ambitious, 'peace-disturbing' Foreign Minister on 20 June.[72] Letters and initiatives by the Prussian King in this phase reassured the mediating powers that Prussia had no interest in Schleswig-Holstein and only demanded restoration of the *status quo ante*.[73] To Nesselrode's surprise, the Prussian government did not insist on incorporating Schleswig into the German Confederation or any succeeding federation and, consequently, both London and St. Petersburg gave up the plan for the division of the duchy.[74] Shortly thereafter, on 26 August, Prussia and Denmark signed an armistice at Malmö, and the Prussian King ratified it on 30 September in both his name and the name of the German Confederation.

While Russian pressure on Prussia, including threats of war,[75] was certainly a factor contributing to the King's acquiescence, the Prussian alienation from the German National Assembly's radicalism also played a role. Prussia fought a conflict on two sides, with Frankfurt and with Denmark. A letter from the Prussian Foreign Office to Gustav Droysen, member of the centre-oriented Casino party in the Paulskirche illustrates the legalistic and restrained position taken by Berlin.[76] The author, Legation Secretary Heinrich Abeken, stressed that the armistice was necessary to maintain European peace. The assembly, he continued, should follow the traditions of 'moderation and prudence' established in the European states system. He requested Droysen to counter nationalistic attacks against the Berlin government, and warned that the exuberant nationalism endangered the peace in Europe. Prussia would do better 'not ... to seek the applause of the Paulskirche ... but to ask what is good, reasonable, and just'. Danish legal rights and the European situation had to be considered. On the whole, the representatives of the Paulskirche failed to foresee that their

[70] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 1 July 1848: *ibid.*, pp. 123f.

[71] Friedrich Wilhelm to Nicholas, 21 June 1848: Georg F. von Martens, *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités, Conventions et Autres Transactions Remarquables* (*NRGT*) (Göttingen, 1875–6), vol. 8, pp. 373f; and Willy Andreas, 'Der Briefwechsel König Friedrich Wilhelms IV. von Preußen und des Zaren Nikolaus I. von Rußland in den Jahren 1848–1850', *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preußischen Geschichte*, 43 (1930), pp. 129–66, here 132f; Friedrich Wilhelm to Alexandra Feodorowna, 22 June 1848: Haenchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe*, p. 113.

[72] Quoted in Baumgart, *Europäisches Konzert und nationale Bewegungen*, p. 324; Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongreß*, pp. 79f; Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 22 June 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 119.

[73] See Friedrich Wilhelm to Nicholas, 21 June 1848: *NRGT*, vol. 8, pp. 373f; Friedrich Wilhelm to Alexandra Feodorowna, 22 June 1848: Haehnchen (ed.), *Revolutionsbriefe*, p. 113.

[74] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 1 July 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 124; cf. Oberschmidt, *Rußland*, p. 111.

[75] Nesselrode to Chreptowitsch, 2 Sept. 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 160.

[76] Abeken to Droysen, 16 July 1848: Hans Fenske (ed.), *Quellen zur Revolution in Deutschland 1848/1849* (Darmstadt, 1995), pp. 129–37. The letter was approved emphatically by Hans Graf Bülow, Under-Secretary of State in the Prussian Foreign Office.

nationalistic, imperialistic euphoria would raise the German cause above the legitimate concerns of other nations.[77] They rejected the notion that the Vienna settlement had had a stabilizing, peace-sustaining effect, and refused to acknowledge that the Concert of Europe had taken a quite pragmatic approach with respect to Greek and Belgian independence in the late 1820s and 1830s. Instead, in the eyes of liberal nationalists like Droysen, the Concert was equated with the repressive, anti-revolutionary policies of the Habsburg monarchy in the Italian principalities, and Russia in Poland, respectively.[78]

By contrast, Abeken complained that the National Assembly had 'lost touch with reality ... it listens only to itself and could not care less about whether the rest of Germany follows or not'.[79] This reflected adequately the view of the non-German Great Powers. The French Foreign Minister Bastide, far from supporting the radical German nationalists, was concerned to maintain an understanding with the British and Russian governments, irrespective of their different forms of government, with a view to maintaining international stability.[80] Nesselrode claimed that the 'stupide assemblée' was a threat to Europe and foresaw correctly that Russia would recognize revolutionary France earlier than a revolutionary German central government (which Russia never recognized).[81]

The National Assembly refused to heed Prussia's warnings and calls for moderation. So the King negotiated and signed the armistice without the parliament's consent, thereby provoking a storm of indignation, and talk of betrayal, in German public opinion. Initially, the assembly rejected the armistice, forcing the provisional government to step down. Two weeks later, it revoked its earlier decisions and grudgingly accepted the armistice. Prussia had prevailed in the conflict with the revolution, and preserved the idea of a European peace order. Nesselrode lauded the courage of the Prussian cabinet in signing the armistice, and engaged in preparing peace negotiations.[82]

When from the spring of 1849 onwards Prussia launched its Union policy, and thus actively competed with Austria for leadership in Germany, it exposed itself anew to the criticism of the German nationalists in the Schleswig-Holstein question, which had not yet been resolved, owing to the intransigence of the

[77] Siemann, *Die deutsche Revolution*, pp. 149–52; see further Günter Wollstein, *Das 'Großdeutschland' der Paulskirche, Nationale Ziele in der bürgerlichen Revolution 1848/49* (Düsseldorf, 1977).

[78] Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe. A Study in German and British International Theory, 1815–1914* (London, 1970), pp. 55–8, 62–72; Johann Gustav Droysen, 'Die politische Stellung Preußens', in Droysen, *Politische Schriften*, ed. Francis Gilbert (Munich, 1933), pp. 50f; again Droysen, 'Denkschrift, die deutschen Angelegenheiten im Monat April 1848 betreffend (1848)', in *ibid.*, pp. 122f.

[79] Abeken to Droysen: Fenske (ed.), *Quellen zur Revolution*, p. 133.

[80] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 19 Aug. 1848: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, pp. 152f.

[81] Nesselrode to Chreptowitsch, 2 Sept. 1848; Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 21 Feb. 1849: *ibid.*, pp. 159f, 221.

[82] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 8th Sept. 1848: *ibid.*, pp. 164f, quote on p. 165.

Danish, the Schleswig-Holsteiners, and the German federal authorities. Neither Prussia nor Austria wanted to make concessions, which would compromise them with the national movement.[83] The question of the Duchies and Prusso-Austrian rivalry over German leadership mutually complicated each other.[84] The Prussian Foreign Minister von Schleinitz suggested that Denmark should guarantee the unity of the two Duchies if Prussia agreed to collaborate in a new agreement on the question of succession.[85] While the Danes rejected this suggestion, and the Tsar threatened with a blockade of Prussian ports in February 1850,[86] Berlin also had to acknowledge the violent opposition of the German population in the Duchies to separation.[87] In the end, Prussia gave in to pressure from Russia, Sweden and Britain, and renounced the attempt to negotiate a status acceptable for the German population in the two Duchies. Denmark did not achieve the annexation of Schleswig, but neither did Prussia prevent the separation of the two Duchies. The Great Powers, rather than insisting upon the restoration of the *status quo ante*, sought a pragmatic solution of the conflict and the maintenance of the balance of power.[88] Since the Schleswig-Holsteiners themselves could not find a compromise, the agreements were concluded without the consent of the peoples. 'Kings, emperors, princes were represented at that meeting' in London, as Cobden would say later, 'but the people had not the slightest voice or right in the matter'.[89] Indeed, the national conflict lingered on into the fifties, and broke out again when Denmark annexed Schleswig in 1863.[90] Yet for the moment, war had been successfully localized, a revolutionary war of annexation was prevented, the Duchies' status and succession regulated in the London Protocols, and peace restored.

As pointed out, Prussia's foreign policy was massively exposed to pressures from both the nationalist movement and the Great Powers interested in the Schleswig-Holstein question. Especially in the three months following the revolution, and after the launching of its Union policy, Prussian foreign policy walked a tightrope trying to balance these forces. In the summer of 1848, the

[83] See, for the provisional arrangements carried through by Prussia and Austria, HHStA, PA II/105, 'Zusammenstellung der wichtigsten Aktenstücke in der deutschen Frage seit der Übereinkunft vom 30. Sept. 1849 bis zu den Dresdener Conferenzen mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und Preußen', compiled by Louis Baron von Kübeck, roughly 600 handwritten pages and some printed documents; a small selection of pertinent documents is published in Huber (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 1, pp. 534–84.

[84] Oberschmidt, *Rußland*, p. 286.

[85] Holger Hjelholt, *British Mediation in the Danish–German Conflict 1848–1850*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1966) , vol. 2, pp. 145f, 158f. Prussia also tried to obtain Holstein's entry into the Union.

[86] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 28 Feb. 1850: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 9, p. 290.

[87] Oberschmidt, *Rußland*, p. 181.

[88] Scharff, *Schleswig-Holsteins Erhebung*, p. 142.

[89] Cobden, 5 July 1864: Richard Cobden, *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden*, ed. John Bright and J. E. Thorold Rogers (London, 1870), vol. 2, pp. 341f.

[90] On the development of the crisis in the fifties see Sandiford, *Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question*, pp. 34–66, and the archival files in AMAE/MD Denmark 12, 13, 14, 15.

Prussian leadership, and especially the Foreign Office, felt that the traditions and pressures of the international system obliged it to antagonize the revolutionary national movement. After seizing the initiative for German unification in 1849, the Prussian government continued to search for compromise, but never gave the German nationalists full backing over the Schleswig-Holstein issue.

* * *

The major initiative which caused the intervention of the European powers, and notably a French threat of war, was not the Prussian Union policy launched in April 1849, but the Austrian bid for power, which slumbered from late 1848 and moved to the centre only in 1850/1. Since the Frankfurt assembly had opted for the *kleindeutsche Lösung* excluding Austria, the idea of an alliance between Austria and a German federation was ventilated in discussions in the provisional central government, as well as in Prussia, to make Austria malleable.[91] Austria's Felix Prince Schwarzenberg, Foreign Minister as well as Prime Minister, however, opposed these proposals and concocted a plan to strengthen massively the position of the Habsburg monarchy in central Europe.[92] The plan had two components, the centralization of power within the Habsburg monarchy, and the 'foundation of a great, united, powerful' Germany including the entire Habsburg monarchy.[93] Schwarzenberg rejected the exclusion of Austria from Germany, and initially also any compromise along the lines of the old German Confederation, to which only Austria's German and Bohemian possessions had belonged. The Austrian Empire wanted power through unity, explained Schwarzenberg in a memorandum to Archduke John, the head of the provisional German central government.[94] Accordingly, the entire monarchy should join Germany and 'give it its full strength'. Schwarzenberg hoped to found a huge confederation with comprehensive powers for economic and defence matters.[95] The defensive capacity should be such that Germany as a whole would inspire awe (*ehrfurchtgebietend*) in foreign coun-

[91] For Heinrich von Gagern's suggestions see Stephan Lippert, *Felix Fürst Schwarzenberg. Eine politische Biographie* (Munich, 1998), p. 276; for Prussia's approval see Graf Bülow (Count Brandenburg's foreign policy plenipotentiary) to Bernstorff, 20 Dec. 1848: Fenske (ed.), *Quellen zur Revolution*, pp. 240f.

[92] Compare Lippert, *Schwarzenberg*, pp. 267–83, esp. pp. 269–76; and Lawrence Sondhaus, 'Schwarzenberg, Austria and the German Question, 1848–1851', *International History Review*, 12 (1991), pp. 1–20.

[93] 'Errichtung eines großen einigen mächtigen Deutschlands [*sic*: MS]'; 'Memorandum über die Behandlung der deutschen Angelegenheiten', 13 Dec. 1848: Ernst Hoor (ed.), *Erzherzog Johann von Österreich als Reichsverweser: der unveröffentlichte Briefwechsel mit Felix Fürst zu Schwarzenberg aus den Jahren 1848 und 1849* (Vienna, 1981), pp. 47–51.

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[95] *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

tries. The plan was to be prepared and executed in absolute secrecy.[96] In the Austrian Council of Ministers, Schwarzenberg declared that, while the German states could form a closer union amongst themselves, the existing Confederation should be strengthened, and Austria should uphold the right to join it in its entirety.[97] At the end of the year, Prince Schwarzenberg sent the concept of a 'Siebzig-Millionen-Reich' to Buol-Schauenstein, the Austrian Ambassador to Russia. Prussia and Austria would have only one vote each in an Executive Council composed of six votes, the others being exercised by the middle-sized and small states of the Confederation.[98]

The political implications of the Austrian plan were far-reaching. While Prussian influence was to be diluted, the German character of the German Confederation would be dissolved, and the Confederation would become a multinational league with massive defensive (or aggressive) capacities. Austria would be able to use Germany's might for the defence of its rebellious possessions. As Schwarzenberg's opening statement for the Dresden Conference later confirmed, the entry of the whole monarchy into the Confederation and a strengthened central power of Germany should 'build a dam against the floods of revolution and protect the monarchical principle'.[99] The plan, obviously inspired at the same time by the domestic difficulties of the Habsburg monarchy and the struggle for leadership with Prussia, went far beyond the 'Great German' ideas of the National Assembly in Frankfurt, in which only those parts of the Habsburg monarchy which already had been part of the Holy Roman Empire would have become part of a German Empire. The Austrian designs with their conservative, repressive character threatened the balance of power and would stifle liberal tendencies in central Europe. They would also threaten the balance in Germany, as the Habsburg monarchy with its 38 million inhabitants would have an absolute demographic superiority over the rest of Germany's roughly 32 million inhabitants. Moreover, the point at which the plan emerged somewhat contradicts Austensen's thesis that it was a response to Prussia's Union policy, begun only in April 1849.[100] It seems more likely

[96] 'Es ist klar, daß um den Zweck nicht zu verfehlen und statt der Erreichung desselben entschiedene Gefahren in das Leben zu rufen, Vorkehrungen zu Bewerkstelligung jenes Einverständnisses in tiefster Stille und mit einem Geheimnisse (von welchem insbesondere die Zentralgewalt und ihre Organe nicht auszuschließen wären) getroffen werden müssen. Die Wege der gewöhnlichen Kommunikation von Kabinett zu Kabinett werden zu diesem Behufe verlassen werden, und von Fall zu Fall, und von Ort zu Ort wird die Behandlungsweise des Geschäftes eine verschiedene sein müssen.' See *ibid.*, p. 50.

[97] 'Österreichisches Ministerratsprotokoll', 12 Dec. 1848: Fenske (ed.), *Quellen zur Revolution*, pp. 199f; see Scharff, *Die europäischen Großmächte*, pp. 98f.

[98] Schwarzenberg to Buol, 31 Dec. 1848: Fenske (ed.), *Quellen zur Revolution*, pp. 248–50.

[99] Quoted in Hans J. Schoeps, *Von Olmütz nach Dresden 1850/51. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Reformen am Deutschen Bund. Darstellung und Dokumente* (Cologne and Berlin, 1972), p. 56; and in Lippert, *Schwarzenberg*, p. 348.

[100] For more on this thesis see Schulz, 'Verhaltensnormen und Konfliktlösung', pp. 64f. For the opposite view see Roy A. Austensen, 'Metternich, Austria, and the German Question, 1848–1851', *International History Review*, 13 (1991), pp. 21–37.

that the Austrian plans were an attempt to counter the trend towards the *kleindeutsche Lösung* preferred by the Frankfurt assembly.[101]

While the British and French governments apparently got wind of the plan, and had strong reservations about it,[102] the Austrian government nonetheless took it up again when its domestic enemies had been crushed, and when it had received the support of Russia. In November 1850, the British government asked for detailed information about the plan.

> We ought to have some elucidation of the project in which Austria and Prussia seem to concur [Prussia did not; see below: MS] for the admission of Hungary, Croatia, and Galicia, into the German Confederation .... this pact would seem to imply that Bavarian or Prussian troops may be called upon to put down constitutional resistance in Hungary, and Hungarian troops to repress insurrections on the Rhine, further that the whole mass might, in the name of the Confederation, be employed against France or Belgium. This is a serious matter. I come now to the inference I wish to draw, which is that we ought to concert with France our policy in these Continental affairs. She is interested in preventing the encroachments of Russia and the erection of a new Austro-German State, inconsistent with the balance of power in Europe.[103]

Prime Minister Lord Russell equally refused to accept, let alone recognize, a central European Great Empire 'not confined to the German race', which could intervene *ad libitum* from Cologne to Budapest.[104] His standpoint was ideologically as well as geopolitically motivated, as a conservative multinational Empire keeping the people down in central Europe was not an attractive partner for the liberal British statesman, and would shift the ideological balance in Europe in favour of conservatism. Without even knowing that the Italian possessions were supposed to be a part of this Empire, Palmerston and Russell rejected the idea of an expansion of the borders of the German Confederation by incorporating additional lands of the Austrian monarchy.[105] Again, the East Prussian provinces, which had been integrated into the Confederation in 1848, did not enter into the picture. On the contrary, Palmerston continued to support a moderate extension of Prussian power in Germany by peaceful means.[106]

[101] 'Depesche des k. k. österreichischen Ministerpräsidenten an den k. k. Bevollmächtigten bei der provisorischen Zentralgewalt'. 4 Feb. 1849: Hoor (ed.), *Erzherzog Johann*, pp. 55–8, here p. 56.

[102] 'Immediatbericht Wendlands an König Maximilian II. von Bayern', 19 Dec. 1848: Fenske (ed.), *Quellen zur Revolution*, pp. 239f., see also Stauch, *Im Schatten der Heiligen Allianz*, pp. 92f.

[103] Russell to Palmerston, 18 Nov. 1850: George P. Gooch (ed.), *Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell 1840–1878* (London, 1925), vol. 2, pp. 33f.

[104] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[105] Holbraad, *Concert of Europe*, p. 141; Gillessen, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 139.

[106] 'I think it would be a very good thing for Europe if Prussia could be strengthened by the absorption of the Saxon Duchies and the Hessian little States; but if those small sovereigns will not give up we cannot make them do so': Lord Palmerston to Lord Russell, 11th Nov. 1850: Gooch (ed.), *Correspondence of Lord John Russell*, vol. 2, p. 33.

France by and large shared this attitude. Paris seemed to be neutral, sometimes even positive about an extension of Prussian power in Germany,[107] whereas it rejected the Schwarzenberg plan as a violation of the balance of power.[108] The French government regarded the entry of the entire Habsburg monarchy into the German Confederation as an international problem.[109] In the summer of 1849 Foreign Minister de Tocqueville demanded that the reorganization of Germany remain within the limits of the German Confederation, and postulated that the Parties to the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna had a right to interfere in the German question.[110] President Louis Napoleon's attitude to the Austrian plan took a sharper edge. He expressly stated that the principle of non-interference would not hold if a massive territorial enlargement of the Confederation were to take place, which would allow the Confederation to act militarily over wide stretches of land, and thus endanger the European balance of power and French security interests.[111] He viewed the plan as a step towards the establishment of a conservative bloc led by Russia.

The Austro-Prussian conflict for hegemony was attenuated in autumn 1850 during the well-known meeting between Schwarzenberg and Manteuffel at Olomouc. Here, Prussia renounced its Union policy, and the Austrian government agreed to a public conference of the German states—not the European Great Powers—on the German question. Prussia now only demanded parity in German affairs. Schwarzenberg, however, was not inclined to concede it. Instead, he resumed his push for the inclusion of the entire Habsburg monarchy in an attempt to re-gain Austria's leadership role and improve its domestic security. Theoretically, a deal could have been struck—formal parity for entry—but it did not materialize.

The Great Powers did not interfere in the debate on Germany's constitution, but continued to consider the borders of a re-organized Germany a matter of European law, and of the balance of power. When the conference convened at Dresden in December 1850,[112] the British government officially expressed reservations towards the entry of the entire Austrian monarchy into the Confederation. As a part of the European peace order, the Confederation must not be changed without the consent or against the will of the Parties to the Final Act of Vienna.[113] Almost simultaneously, at the beginning of 1851, the French

[107] Stauch, *Im Schatten der Heiligen Allianz*, pp. 88–90.

[108] *Ibid.*, pp. 92–103; Scharff, *Die europäischen Großmächte*, p. 275.

[109] See Stauch, *Im Schatten der Heiligen Allianz*, pp. 92–103.

[110] AMAE/MD, France 740: Circular by Tocqueville, 28 Aug. 1849.

[111] See William Echard, *Napoleon III and the Concert of Europe* (Baton Rouge and London, 1983), pp. 22f; Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, pp. 41f.

[112] For details of the diplomatic negotiations between Schwarzenberg and Buol, and Manteuffel and Alvensleben, on the Dresden Conference see Lippert, *Schwarzenberg*, pp. 347–66.

[113] '[N]o important change can properly be made in the character and composition of the Confederation without the consent and concurrence of the Powers who were Parties to the Vienna treaty of 1815': Palmerston to Westmorland, 3 Dec. 1850, quoted in Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, pp. 40f.

government made its legal objections known.[114] When Vienna remained unimpressed, Paris made known on February 23 that it would resist Austrian designs, and go to war over the issue.[115] Berlin could be sure now that the Western powers were opposed to the Schwarzenberg plan.

But even now, Vienna did not back down. Contrary to Austensen's thesis, that Schwarzenberg had not pursued his project seriously, well-placed observers knew that it had been pursued in secret and with tenacity for a considerable time. Schwarzenberg, as mentioned above, had already stated in his memorandum of 13 December 1848 that all preparations for, and discussions about, this plan, including those involving different governments, should be pursued in absolute secrecy. The normal paths of communication were by-passed.[116] Notwithstanding the secrecy, a letter from Nesselrode to Meyendorff provides evidence for how seriously the Austrian government took this design: 'I never quite understood the reasons why Schwarzenberg has held on [to the plan: MS] so tenaciously. We have given our consent more in order to please him rather than by conviction that this was necessary.'[117] Owing to the secrecy surrounding the discussions, it is not clear whether the Western powers realized only gradually that, additionally, the Italian possessions of the Habsburg monarchy would be integrated into the German Confederation, so that Vienna could hope for German backing to crush any future Italian uprising. Yet at the beginning of March, the French government took the nationality aspect as ground for a new diplomatic offensive and notified the most important of its ambassadors in Europe that it rejected the Austrian designs for legal reasons, for balance of power reasons, and for reasons of nationality: the German Confederation had been organized for the security of Germany, not for the security of the Italian or other non-German possessions of the Habsburgs.[118] London did the same on 7 March, reproaching the Austrian government in a formal note for its designs.[119] The Prussian Prime Minister Manteuffel, who received a copy

[114] Echard, *Napoleon III*, p. 23.

[115] AMAE/MD, France 740: Brenier to LaCour, 23 Feb. 1851; Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 16 March 1851: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 10, pp. 30–5, p. 34. Paris also informed the Prussian Ambassador Count Hatzfeldt about the threat. Scharff, *Die europäischen Großmächte*, p. 288.

[116] That there are little traces of the plan in the Vienna archives apparently had to do with the secrecy surrounding the plan. See again Austrian memorandum from 13 Dec. 1848: Hoor (ed.), *Erzherzog Johann*, p. 50 and footnotes 95, 98 therein. But compare Roy A. Austensen, 'Felix Schwarzenberg, "Realpolitiker" or Metternichian? The Evidence of the Dresden Conference', *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 30 (1977), pp. 97–118.

[117] 'je ne me suis jamais bien rendu compte des raisons pour lesquelles Schwarzenberg *y tenait si fort*. Nous y avons consenti plus par le désir de lui être agréable que par la conviction de la nécessité absolue': Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 16 March 1851: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 10, pp. 30–5, p. 34 (emphasis added by MS).

[118] AMAE/MD, France 740: Circular by Brenier, 3 March 1850.

[119] Palmerston to Magenis, 7 March 1850, mentioned in Gillessen, *Lord Palmerston*, pp. 139f.

of the British note to Schwarzenberg, made clear that the project was pursued solely by Austria.[120]

Now St Petersburg held the keys to the balance. Surprisingly, Vienna's plans for a central European bloc were accepted there with equanimity.[121] When in the course of the Dresden Conference the majority of German states, as well as Britain and France, made their objections clear, Nesselrode gradually withdrew his support.[122] Meyendorff and Nesselrode at first tried to convince the Austrian government that the nationality problems in the Habsburg monarchy would merely be aggravated, if a parliament were established in which Hungarians, Croats and Slovaks would sit next to a majority of Germans: 'It is certain that both the domestic and the external situation [of the Habsburg monarchy: MS] would be extraordinarily complicated [by such a move: MS]'.[123] But what Nesselrode disliked even more was that the aggressive Austrian designs brought about a close Franco-British understanding. He pressured Schwarzenberg to take into account the warnings of the Western powers.[124] On 12 April the Russian government once more made clear that it would not have gone to war with France for Schwarzenberg's designs. It also made clear that if the conferences had been held in secret, the Austrian project would not have leaked so easily and, possibly, a *fait accompli* could have been presented to the Western powers:

> In our view, the blame is to be placed on both sides: on Prussia, because it absolutely wanted open conferences, and on Austria, because it pushed for, and insisted, on the entry of all its possessions into the Confederation, as if this were a *conditio sine qua non*. This is what has complicated extraordinarily the situation not only for Germany, but also [the Habsburg monarchy's] relations with France and Britain. If it [the entry of the entire Habsburg monarchy] leads to a war with France, I doubt that the Emperor [of Russia] would draw the sword in order to support that cause. It would be appropriate that Schwarzenberg be made aware of this at the next occasion.[125]

The fact that Prussia agreed to return to the old Confederation allowed Russia to achieve an ideologically agreeable objective without risking a war, or, in Gillessen's words, 'to remain conservative without paying the price of

[120] *Ibid.*, pp. 142f.

[121] Mosse, *The European Powers and the German Question*, pp. 26f.

[122] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 16 March 1851: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 10, pp. 30–5, p. 34.

[123] 'Il est sûr qu'elle complique singulièrement la situation intérieure et extérieure': *ibid.*, p. 35 (transl. MS).

[124] *Ibid*, and Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 25 March 1851: *ibid.*, vol. 10, pp. 35–8, p. 36.

[125] 'À nos yeux, les torts ... sont des deux côtés: en Prusse, pour avoir voulu, à toute force, les conférences libres, et en Autriche, pour avoir mis en avant et insisté, presque comme condition *sine qua non*, sur l'entrée de toutes ses possessions dans la Confédération. Par là, elle a singulièrement compliqué non seulement les affaires d'Allemagne, mais encore ses relations avec la France et l'Angleterre .... Si elle devait amener la guerre avec la France, je doute que l'Empereur eût voulu tirer l'épée pour soutenir cette cause. Il n'y aurait peut-être pas de mal à le faire sentir à Schwarzenberg, si l'occasion s'en présentait': *ibid.*, and Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 12 April 1851: *ibid.*, vol. 10, pp. 35–8, p. 36 (transl. MS); and cf. Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 12 April 1851: *ibid.*, vol. 10, pp. 39–44, p. 40.

increased Austrian power in the Balkans'.[126] Although Vienna had no support among the Great Powers for its plan, discussions continued. Prince Metternich, from his Brussels exile, entrusted his son Richard with a memorandum for Baron Hübner, the Austrian ambassador in Paris, with a view to bringing Vienna's policy back on course.[127] Presenting the arguments for and against an entry of the entire monarchy into the Confederation, Metternich in fact opposed it. Among the chief grounds against it he claimed that Austria, when fully integrated into the Confederation, would possibly be absorbed or curtailed in its political freedom by the latter, and be hampered in the exercise of its functions as a European power. Austria could only continue to exercise these functions, and remain sufficiently independent, as long as it had territories outside the Confederation. Metternich quite clearly thought that Schwarzenberg's policies were out of line with the European traditions he himself represented.

Since the disquiet in Paris and in London continued even after the end of the Dresden Conference, there can be little doubt that the Austrian government had perhaps postponed, but not yet given up, the plan, and that discussions were continued among the diplomats of the restored Confederation. As a result, the British government presented a formal protest to the President of the new Federal Diet, Count Thun, on 9 July.[128]

> Her Majesty's Government are of the opinion that such an arrangement could not, consistently with due regard to the public law of Europe, be carried into execution without the consent of all the Powers who were parties to the treaties of Vienna, by which the German Confederation was constituted, and by which the territories that were to compose it were defined.[129]

London argued further, its quiet acceptance of the inclusion of East Prussian territories in 1848 notwithstanding, that the inclusion of Austrian and Prussian territories as yet outside the Confederation would amount to essential modifications of the territorial order, a disturbance of the balance of power, and a threat to the 'interests of Europe'.[130] The national character of the Confederation should be preserved. Obviously the protest was directed chiefly against the Austrian ambitions, the conservative character of Austrian hegemony, and the incorporation of non-German territories.

The Federal Diet formally rejected the note as a presumptuous interference in domestic affairs,[131] referring to the earlier doctrine of non-intervention in

[126] Gillessen, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 147 (transl. MS).

[127] HHStA, PA XL/277m, NL Buol-Schauenstein (Korrespondenzen, Instruktionen, Denkschriften): Prince Metternich, 'Memorandum für Baron Hübner: Der Eintritt des gesammten [*sic*] Oesterreichischen Reiches in den Deutschen Bund', Brussels, May 1851.

[128] Lord Cowley to the President of the Federal Diet (Count Thun), 9 July 1851: *BDFA*, Part I/F, vol. 18, pp. 7f; 'Protokoll der 16. Sitzung des Bundestages', 17 July 1851: *ibid.*, p. 11.

[129] Cowley to Thun, 9 July 1851: *ibid.*, pp. 7f.

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 8; and Tallenay to Graf Thun, 19 July 1851: *ibid.*, pp. 13f.

[131] 'Protokoll der 16. Sitzung des Bundestages', 17 July 1851: *ibid.*, Part I/F, p. 11.

constitutional affairs proclaimed by the Diet on 18 September 1834.[132] Palmerston, however, upheld the British note of protest, because, as he saw it, the incorporation of non-German territories into the Confederation had nothing to do with domestic constitutional affairs, but was a matter of the European public law.[133] By mid-August, when the French ambassador was newly accredited at the Federal Diet in Frankfurt, he was charged by Foreign Minister Jules Baroche with immediately presenting a protest note following *exactly* Palmerston's lines—a delicate warning.[134]

* * *

Throughout the revolution and its aftermath, the non-German Great Powers respected the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of Germany, and they did not prevent the German states from embarking on constitutional reform. From the perspective of France, Russia and Britain, the constitutional reform of Germany did not automatically challenge the international system. The British government hoped, first, that the German states would be able to pursue liberal constitutional reforms without violating international agreements, and later supported the moderate Prussian Union policy.[135] The Russian government repeated that the details of the constitutional organization of Germany were a German affair, but that the basic principle of Prusso-Austrian cooperation should be maintained, and held the view that the establishment of a central power with the consent of all German states was difficult, if not impossible.[136] In the end the German states themselves failed to bring about a closer federation, because of the Prusso-Austrian conflict and the reluctance of some of the middle-sized states to surrender sovereign rights.

Ideological preferences entered the picture somewhat in the Russian government's preference for a conservative, Austrian-led Germany, and in the British preference for a liberal, Prussian-led Germany. But these preferences did not prevail when the balance of power was imperilled. In the Schleswig-Holstein question Britain and Russia cooperated harmoniously in the mediation of the conflict. Concerning the Austrian bid for power, Russia in the end persuaded Austria to heed the warnings of Paris and London. Hence, the Great Powers followed essentially a pragmatic balance of power policy based upon the *ius publicum Europeum*. Most strikingly, of course, France was cautious enough

[132] Resolution of the Federal Diet, 18 Sept. 1834: Huber (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 1, pp. 153f; also in *BDFA*, Part I/F, vol. 18, pp. 11f.

[133] Palmerston to Cowley, 13 Sept. 1851: *ibid.*, p. 14. The issue in 1834 was the occupation of the city of Frankfurt by Prussian and Austrian troops. The troops were sent in to repress the free expression of political views.

[134] AMAE/MD, France 740: Circular by French Foreign Minister Jules Baroche, 14 Aug. 1851.

[135] Russell to King Leopold of Belgium, 5 Dec. 1850; Palmerston to Russell, 7 Dec. 1850: Gooch (ed.), *Correspondence of Lord John Russell*, vol. 2, pp. 39f, 41.

[136] Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 25 March 1851: Nesselrode (ed.), *Lettres et Papiers*, vol. 10, p. 37.

to resist domestic pressures for a revolutionary policy in 1848, and instead rejected the idea of supporting revolution elsewhere. In practice, France, too, followed the traditions of the Concert.

Austrian foreign policy was influenced by three principal considerations. First, the Austrian government feared that domestic nationality problems within the monarchy would re-ignite at any time, and felt that a strengthened security arrangement between the monarchy and the Confederation was necessary to crush the rebellious nationalities whenever they stirred. Second, the struggle with Prussia over leadership in Germany brought Vienna to the point where it tried to regain its leading role by pushing for the integration of the entire monarchy into the Confederation. Third, Vienna had to face the sympathy of the Western powers, especially Britain, for a *kleindeutsche Lösung*, and the pressure exerted by the Great Powers to prevent the Schwarzenberg plan. The policy of the Habsburg monarchy with respect to the German question was thus a balancing act between domestic problems, political ambition, and international pressures. In that sense, it is similar to the Prussian foreign policy pursued in the Schleswig-Holstein affair, where domestic pressure (nationalism), a mixture of placating domestic forces and political ambition as embodied in the Union policy, and international pressures were also the main factors. In the cases analysed, the pressures and norms of the Great Power system prevailed, localized the conflicts, and prevented the outbreak of general war.

There are some differences between the Austrian and Prussian cases, however. Despite the relative weakness of the Prussian government in the face of the national movement from 1848 to 1851, and its inclination to embrace the national idea in an attempt to regain popular legitimacy, Prussia did not embark on a truly revolutionary and nationalistic policy because of the constraints imposed by the international system, and felt by its leaders, notably the King himself. Faced with revolution, Friedrich Wilhelm clung desperately to the ways of Concert diplomacy, while seeking to rescue the Prussian monarchy by compromising with national liberal demands. As we have seen, in February 1848 Prussian diplomacy was still highly influenced by the ideas of the Concert of Europe, and in the summer it opted for restraint and cooperation. The Prussian diplomat Abeken tried to persuade the National Assembly that moderation and rational compromise were necessary in the Schleswig-Holstein question, and stressed that foreign affairs must not be dominated by nationalistic fever and parliamentary pressure. This coolness towards the national movement was facilitated by the traditions of *Kabinettspolitik*, the power of the executive under a monarchical system. With the Union policy, the outlook changed somewhat as Prussia pursued a policy of peaceful change with the double objective of placating the domestic nationalist movement, consolidating the monarchy and increasing its own power in Germany. It was encouraged to do so by Britain, and tolerated by France, and did not encounter resistance in the international system except from Russia for ideological reasons. Friedrich Wilhelm chal-

lenged the leadership of Austria in Germany, but, contrary to the Schwarzenberg plan, not the European balance of power.

The Habsburg monarchy, for obvious reasons, refused to compromise with nationalism. Because of its nationality problems Austria faced such tremendous domestic difficulties that its leadership felt it had to restore *and strengthen* its hegemony in Germany and central Europe by seeking to unite the entire Habsburg monarchy with the German Confederation in order to counter future challenges with force. Only formal protests of the Western powers and the threat of war frustrated Austria's policy. Domestic causes, rather than diplomatic culture or geopolitical reasons, were pivotal for the Habsburg monarchy's attempted transformation of the European and German balance of power in 1850/1.

As this study has shown, diplomats might be removed from domestic concerns even in the case of extreme domestic pressure, but more often, foreign policy was a balancing act between domestic pressures on the one hand, and pressures exerted by the international state system, on the other. The international system between 1848 and 1851 was strong enough to restrain the ambitions of individual players and popular nationalism. Although some ideological influences on foreign policy have been unearthed, a pragmatic concern with the balance of power guided foreign policy. The primacy of foreign policy prevailed in France, Britain and Russia, and, to a lesser degree, also in Prussia. Under different circumstances, notably the Crimean War, the European system was to be less successful, and without the established diplomatic culture and practice of the Concert of Europe, the revolutions of 1848 might have resulted in general war.

Abstract

During the revolutions of 1848 and their aftermath, the governments of France, Austria and Prussia, respectively, were exposed to extraordinary pressure from a variety of nationalist movements with fundamentally different agendas. They had difficult choices to make as to whether they let their foreign policies be determined by domestic concerns or heed the rules of the international system—it was hardly possible to do both. As a result they performed a 'balancing act' on a tight rope: a wrong step could cause their fall, either because they would be overthrown by their own people, or they would risk war with other Great Powers. Those not affected by a revolution in 1848, i.e. conservative Russia and progressive Britain, had to opt either for backing countries with political tendencies similar to their own, or for simply upholding the balance of power and international rules. The author concludes that the 'primacy of foreign policy'—within this context more precisely the primacy of the international system's rules and the balance of power—helps to understand the actual foreign policies of

four of the five Great Powers during the European crisis of 1848–51. Austria's government, the one country trying to overthrow the balance of power and change the nature of the system, was effectively checked. The rules of the post-1815 international system were still an efficacious tool for disciplining states.

[2]

THE 1848 REVOLUTIONS AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Miles Taylor

In 1848, not for the first time in its history, Britain failed to go the way of the rest of Europe. While barricades went up and dynasties tottered across the continent — from Palermo to Potsdam, from Paris to Prague — the British constitution remained intact. On the British mainland, Chartism revived briefly, but fizzled out amid the debacle of the Kennington Common meeting and the forged signatures of the monster petition of 10 April. In Ireland, despite widespread agrarian discontent following the Famine, the insurgency led by William Smith O'Brien collapsed farcically in a field of cabbages in Tipperary. Britain ended 1848 much as it had begun it — easing gradually into free trade, prosperity and mid-Victorian equipoise under the benign tutelage of a Whig aristocracy. And while, in the aftermath of 1848, more liberal constitutions were granted by many regimes across Europe, major reforms in both Britain and Ireland were effectively resisted for another generation. Not until the late 1860s did Britain see the sort of constitutional change which, directly and indirectly, was the legacy of 1848 in Europe. Both to contemporaries and to posterity, in other words, 1848 was the year in which British peculiarity seemed to be underlined once again.[1]

What happens to this well-known picture of Britain in 1848 if our focus is widened to take in the British empire? For what is striking, yet often overlooked, about some of the European revolutions of 1848 is the extent to which they were precipitated by problems of imperial overload. Some of the European powers, such as Austria, were well-established empires, others such as France or Russia were states whose very recent history had been one of creeping annexation or colonization — France in Algeria,

[1] F. B. Smith, 'The View from Britain I: Tumults Abroad, Stability at Home', in Eugene Kamenka and F. B. Smith (eds.), *Intellectuals and Revolution: Socialism and the Experience of 1848* (London, 1979), 118; L. B. Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals* (London, 1946), 1; Priscilla Robertson, *Revolutions of 1848: A Social History* (Princeton, 1952), 405; Peter Stearns, *The Revolutions of 1848* (London, 1974), 1–2.

and Russia with her occupation of Poland and forced Jewish conscription. Some of the bloodiest episodes in France in 1848 through to 1851 were perceived to have involved the military lately returned from Algeria, while in Russia the tsarist authorities took immediate steps to quell discontent in 1848 by declaring martial law in the recently annexed western provinces.[2] In other parts of Europe in 1848, the older monarchical and imperial powers fought off the challenge of liberal nationalism: for example, the forces of the Prussian monarchy in Silesia, Schleswig–Holstein and Saxony; Austria in Hungary, as well as in Lombardy and the Veneto in northern Italy; and Bourbon Naples, using its Swiss Guard, in Sicily.[3] In these parts of Europe liberal nationalist movements were spurred on by their hatred of an alien military presence, and, in some cases, an alien religious faith. Several of the 1848 revolutions not only took place within multiple-kingdoms or imperial states, they were also triggered by the financial crises besetting imperial treasuries trying to cope with territorial overload. In Austria and Prussia it was the attempt to raise new taxes to finance the military infrastructure which was the immediate cause of the food riots and republican risings in 1848.[4] Pressure on military resources also brought on sporadic disaffection among conscripts and organized resistance among officers — as with the Petrashevtsy conspiracy in Russia and the two army regiments involved in the Madrid insurrection of May 1848.[5] In these ways the 1848 upheavals in Europe were in some

[2] Charles André Julien, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine: la conquête et les débuts de la colonisation (1827–71)* (Paris, 1964), ch. 5; Frederick A. de Luna, *The French Republic under Cavaignac, 1848* (Princeton, 1969), 169; W. Bruce Lincoln, 'Russia and the European Revolutions of 1848', *History Today*, xxiii (Jan. 1973).

[3] Veit Valentin, *1848: Chapters in German History* (London, 1940), ch. 2; Alan Sked, *The Survival of the Habsburg Empire: Radetzky, the Imperial Army and the Class War, 1848* (London, 1979); Paul Ginsborg, *Daniele Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848–49* (Cambridge, 1979); G. F. H. and J. Berkeley, *Italy in the Making, 1846–9*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1936–40), iii, chs. 3, 15; Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848–1851* (Cambridge, 1994), ch. 2.

[4] Josef Polisensky, *Aristocrats and the Crowd in the Revolutionary Year 1848: A Contribution to the History of Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Austria* (Albany, 1980), 83–4; Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848–9* (Princeton, 1991), 143–4; Istvan Deak, 'Destruction, Revolution or Reform? Hungary on the Eve of 1848', *Austro-Hungarian Yearbook*, xii (1976–7), 5–6. In general, see Sperber, *European Revolutions*, 105–11.

[5] J. H. Seddon, *The Petrashevtsy: A Study of the Russian Revolutionaries of 1848* (Manchester, 1985); Clara Lida, 'La república democrática y social de 1848 y sus ecos el mundo hispánico', in E. Posada-Carbó (ed.), *1848 beyond Europe* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Clara Lida for allowing me to consult her work. For 1848 in Spain in general, see Daniel R. Headrick, 'Spain and the Revolutions of 1848', *European*

(cont. on p. 148)

cases a crisis of empire, as much as they were an outbreak of revolution.

Looked at in this imperial perspective, to ask why no revolution took place in Britain and Ireland in 1848 is therefore to ask the wrong question. In 1848 Britain (excluding India) was an imperial power of similar size in terms of population to Russia (excluding Poland), and in terms of ethnic mix and military resources to Austria. Since the beginning of the 1840s, like France and Russia, Britain had upped a gear in the process of territorial acquisition — annexing Hong Kong in the Far East (1843), Labuan in Indonesia (1846), Natal (1843) and the Orange River (1848) in South Africa, Gambia (1843) on the west coast of Africa, Afghanistan (1842) and, of course, in India, Sind (1843) and the Punjab (1846–9), in addition to a series of smaller princely states such as Satara (1848) and Sambalpur (1849).[6] And as in the case of Austria and Russia, most of this recent expansion of the British empire was triggered by the need to secure existing frontiers and pacify internal dissent, rather than by the drive for new markets. This logic of the 'garrison state' brought its own dangers, especially in India and southern Africa, where over-reliance on multi-ethnic peasant armies and constant recourse to unpopular local taxation bred discontent.[7] As a result, by mid-century, British colonial military expenditure was reaching a record high, despite the ongoing drive at home to recover from the legacy of Hanoverian fiscal excess and reduce the tax burden as much as possible.[8]

(n. 5 cont.)
Studies Rev., vi (1976). On the nationality problems besetting the Habsburg armies, see Sked, *Survival of the Habsburg Empire*, 52–4.

[6] On this phase of empire, see John P. Halstead, *The Second British Empire: Trade, Philanthropy and Good Government, 1820–90* (Westport, Conn., 1983). On annexation policy in India, see M. A. Rahim, *Lord Dalhousie's Administration of the Conquered and Annexed States* (Delhi, 1963); S. N. Prasad, *Paramountcy under Dalhousie* (Delhi, 1964).

[7] C. A. Bayly, 'The First Age of Global Imperialism, c.1760–1830', *Jl Imperial and Commonwealth Hist.*, xxvi (1998); Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in India, 1819–1835* (London, 1995); M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798–1850* (Oxford, 1980), 584–5.

[8] In 1847 colonial military expenditure stood at £2.93m out of a total expenditure on army and ordnance of £9.1m; by 1853 it had risen to £3.53m out of a total expenditure of £9.5m: *Accounts Relating to Colonial Expenditure*, Parliamentary Papers (hereafter PP), 1849 [224], xxxiv, 8; *Returns Relating to Military Forces (Colonies)*, PP, 1859, sess. 2 [114], xvii, 2; B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1988), 588. For the drive to reduce the fiscal–military state at home, see Philip Harling and Peter Mandler, 'From "Fiscal Military" State to Laissez-Faire State, 1760–1850', *Jl Brit. Studies*, xxxii (1993); Philip Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The*

(cont. on p. 149)

Furthermore, not unlike the various European imperial powers, Britain's empire was ruled more by force than by consent. With the exception of Canada and New South Wales, few of Britain's dependencies possessed elective legislative assemblies in 1848. Most were Crown colonies, presided over by a governor, who traditionally was a military man and very often a veteran of the Napoleonic wars. Outside of the white settlement colonies, press freedom and trial by jury were for the most part untried, and the capital code extended much further than in Britain, where it had been all but abolished except for murder by the 1840s.[9] At home, Britain may well have been further down the road of commercial and constitutional progress. In the empire, however, it was a different story. On paper at least, some of the ingredients which were to produce such a volatile situation on the European continent in the late 1840s — civil disabilities, fiscal crisis and an overstretched, alien military presence — were also at work within the British imperial world.

At the same time, unlike those of her continental rivals, Britain's empire was neither close nor contiguous. With the exception of a handful of possessions in the Mediterranean, the British empire appeared to be so far removed from the European theatre as to be unaffected by the upheavals of 1848. Although the advent of the steamship had brought the four corners of the world somewhat closer — 'Halifax [Nova Scotia] is now almost as near as Inverness was a century ago', observed the prime minister Lord John Russell in 1849[10] — intercontinental communication was still limited. The telegraphic system was largely confined to industrial and urban northern Europe, and shipping companies lacked the commercial incentive to bring in the reduc-

(*n. 8 cont.*)

Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779–1846 (Oxford, 1996). For the imperial dimension, see Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 244–5; Patrick K. O'Brien, 'The Security of the Realm and the Growth of the Economy, 1688–1914', in Peter Clarke and Clive Trebilcock (eds.), *Understanding Decline: Perceptions and Realities of British Economic Performance* (Cambridge, 1997), 65.

[9] *Return Showing how far Crimes, for which Capital Punishments have been Abolished in this Country, are still Capitally Punishable in the Colonies and Dependencies of Great Britain*, PP, 1850 [69], xxxvi.

[10] Russell to Grey, 19 Aug. 1849: Durham University Library, 3rd Earl Grey Papers (hereafter Durham Univ. Lib., Grey Papers), 122/4; cf. 'Cosmopolite', *Free Trade and No Colonies: A Letter Addressed to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell* (London, 1848), 16–17; R. M. Martin, *British Possessions in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australasia Connected with England by the Indian and Australia Mail Steam Packet Company* (London, 1847), 57.