DRESDEN

FO 68/68: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 11, Dresden, 4 March 1848

Effects of the French Revolution in Saxony; petition from Leipzig and address by the Dresden common council to the Saxon government

It is difficult, nay almost impossible, to express to Your Lordship the Effect produced on all right minded people by the intelligence of the Revolution which has taken place in France. That a Throne, apparently basised on popular institutions, should be overturned in the short space of two days – and a Sovereign, whose talents are as unrivalled as his moral character is unimpeachable (and surrounded by sons[1] as distinguished as the French Princes), should be forced to fly his country, seems like a dream – but the event itself cannot but inspire a feeling of uneasiness, even of terror.

In this capital, generally, this Revolution has produced distrust towards the French – there are even execrations on them for eternally disturbing the tranquillity of Europe; and the General[2] who commands the Communal (National) Guard here, told me, that he could answer for more than one half as being utterly contrary to such revolutionary opinions, and that he hoped there were many more who agreed with them, although not in the habit of speaking on such matters. When I referred to the disgraceful conduct of the French troops, the General, who is an old and distinguished Officer, became quite excited, and said, that he believed from his soul that the Saxons troops would ever follow and obey their commanding Officers.

I wish I could say as much for Leipzig – but that town has always been the focus of so called liberal opinions – and on the 1st of March, immediately after the arrival of the news of the French Revolution, the Electors called a meeting and drew up a petition[3] to the King, praying for freedom of the Press and for a Representative of the People at the Germanick Confederation. With respect to the first, one

[1] Louis, duc de Nemours, François, prince de Joinville, and Henri, duc d'Aumale.

[2] Adolf Heinrich Ludwig von Schulz.

[3] Petition of 1 March 1848; it was handed over to King Friedrich August II at an audience on 3 March.

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has only to read the secondrate daily newspapers with which Dresden is inundated, to ask oneself – what more freedom can they want?

There is a nominal censure,[4] but when they have, from inadvertence, not forbidden an article, there is no longer any redress – for there is no recovering of damages at law, let them abuse individuals as they may – and these daily Papers are full of attacks on private persons.

As for a Representative of the People in Frankfurt, I cannot understand what is meant. There are Representative Chambers in most of the states composing the Confederation – and they surely can not wish to have a Parliament in that City!

The Electors transmitted their Address to the Leipzig Town Council, and these having unanimously adopted it, a Deputation was chosen for the purpose of presenting it to the King. His Majesty, who received them yesterday, was, I am told, much affected – but answered them in temperate terms, and said, that according to the Constitution, which he as well as they had sworn, the Chambers could alone decide such points as those referred to in their Address.

The greatest uneasiness is felt as to the effect this Revolution may have on other countries, and particularly on Austria. It is significative of the publick opinion, that, for the first three days, not only no banker would at any price buy an Austrian debenture, nor would they even change an Austrian Banknote.

Bohemia is, in fact, the part of that Empire which ought to give the Government most uneasiness, for they are quite ripe for demanding Representative Chambers – and there is now a class of rich Gentry and Manufacturers, who are fitted for placing themselves at the head of a movement of that sort.

I am told that yesterday evening, on the return of the Deputation to Leipzig, there was some rioting – but not of any consequence.

All sorts of reports have been current here – amongst others, that there had been a change of Ministry in England, and that the new Government was headed by Lords Stanhope, Aberdeen, and George Bentinck.

Yesterday there was a meeting held of the Common Council of Dresden, in which it was proposed to present to the King, conjointly with the Town Council, an Address,[5] demanding

Liberty of the Press

Liberty of Religious opinions

[4] Censorship was regulated by the decree of 1836 and the press law of 1844. It was also subject to the rules of the German Confederation.

[5] The address was handed over to the King on 6 March. The common council was made up of citizens' elected representatives. The town council was elected by the common council and was the town's highest authority.

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Liberty of the right of Assembling
Reform of the Elective laws
Representation of all German States at the Confederation
and, for the Constitutional discussion of these points, the summoning of the Diet as soon as possible after the Elections could be made.'

This Address was ably opposed as being only an imitation of Leipzig, and as not coming within the sphere of the duties of the Common Council – and, having been put to the vote, was rejected, by thirty two votes against twenty four. After a long discussion an Address was voted, praying simply for the summoning of the Diet.

According to a semi official Article in the newspapers, this will be granted – and the Chambers will meet in the month of May.

I have the honour of enclosing a copy and translation of His Majesty's answer to the Leipzig Deputation – which is only what they deserved.

It is firm and dignified, and cannot but produce a good effect. It is much more strong than I had been led to expect.[6]

FO 68/68: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 12, Dresden, 7 March 1848

Addresses from Leipzig and Dresden and the King of Saxony's answer; resignation of Falkenstein; proclamation to the Saxons calling upon them to maintain order; military preparations

The rioting at Leipzig (to which I alluded in my last despatch)[7] on the return of the Deputation with His Majesty's first answer, was, as I then remarked, of not much consequence – but a meeting was held on the following day, at which the most inflammatory speeches were made, and a second Address was agreed upon, which was entrusted to another Deputation. The members of it arrived in this capital on Saturday the 4th ulto, and were received by the King, to whom they read the document in which, after speaking of the irritation excited in Leipzig and the dangers which might arise from its continuance, they prayed for some more specifick answer to their requests, or rather (as they themselves had first designated them) demands. I have now the honor of transmitting a copy and translation of His Majesty's second answer, which is still more firm, and even severe – for, at the end, His Majesty declares that he holds the Town of Leipzig responsible for the

[6] Enclosures: Original (*Zweite Extra = Beilage zu No 64 des Dresdner Tageblattes*) and translation: Answer of His Saxon Majesty to the Leipzig deputation.

[7] Cf. preceding dispatch.

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maintenance of legal order against those who may seek to disturb it by illegal measures.[8]

I do not enter into the particulars of the Leipzig meetings, for I am convinced that Your Lordship is furnished with full and able reports of them by Her Majesty's Consul General,[9] who is on the spot.

An Address in the same sense, or intimating the necessity of attending to the wishes of the people (Leipzig having constituted itself into the sole representative of the feelings of the Country), was drawn up in proper and respectful terms by the Rector[10] and Academical Senate of the University – but I have not yet seen His Majesty's answer to it, nor am I yet aware of one having been given. Previous to voting this Address, the Rector called the students together, and in a short, but impressive and beautiful, speech recommended them, happen what may, to do nothing contrary to the laws, or which could create disturbances. He held up to them the example of England where, he said, that in moments of great excitement the laws were respected and said that, as the most enlightened portion of the Saxon Youth, they should be the first to shew the best example.

On the 4th ulto (Saturday) nearly the same Address was submitted to and voted by the Common Council of Dresden, as the one which I had the honor of mentioning in my last number as having been rejected by the Town Council. The Common Council adopted it with only two of three dissentient voices, and voted that it should again be laid before the Town Council.

Addresses in the sense of Leipzig, have been voted by all the middling towns in the neighbourhood of that city – particularly by those on the line of the Bavarian railway, wither agents could be so easily and cheaply sent. The town of Chemnitz, the third in Saxony, and always, as well as Plauen, a focus of Radicalism, has equally sent in a deputation – but as the order for the requisite Elections will be published this week, and the Diet called together in May, the answer to all of these is plain.

An occurrence has taken place which I mention with regret – the Minister of the Interior, M. de Falkenstein, has tendered his resignation to His Majesty, who has accepted it, at a moment which, in my humble opinion, I must consider very inopportune. M. de Falkenstein was for many years Kreis-Director of the City and Circle of Leipzig – an office tantamount to that of Lord Lieutenant in England. He is a man of

[8] Enclosures: Original (*Extra = Beilage zu No 65 des Dresdner Tageblattes*) and translation: Answer of His Saxon Majesty to the second Leipzig deputation; Original and translation: To My Saxons, proclamation of His Saxon Majesty, 6 March 1848.

[9] John Ward.

[10] Ludwig von der Pfordten.

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great cleverness, information, and general talents – but was then too liberal for the present Government, and they took him as Minister of the Interior, by way of correcting his political opinions, replacing him by an excellent and honorable, though not determined man,[11] with whom personally I am very well acquainted. Having partially succeeded with M. de Falkenstein, it is surely a proof of weakness to sacrifice him to the popular outcry of Leipzig at a moment like the present one – and, if publick report be true, because he is stated to have said in the cabinet that it would not do to begin with a shew of firmness, which later they would probably not act up to, if even they could.

The Department is for the present committed to a Doctor Zschinsky, in a subordinate place as Vice President of Appeals here – a man perfectly unknown, but who has had the good sense to refuse the rank of Minister, and to decline keeping the Department longer than is necessary. The greatest fault, in my eyes, which M. de Falkenstein committed was, that he once, whilst in Leipzig, might have arrested the present leader of the mob there, named 'Blum' – having sufficient proofs for his conviction on political charges – and thought to gain him over to the cause of honorable men by letting him off.

Austrian Agents are buying up every horse that they can find, and at high prices, so that it is difficult for this Government to procure those requisite for placing the Saxon Army on the War establishment – and there are loud complaints against the late Minister of war,[12] for having reduced every thing too low for the purpose of pleasing the Diet. His Royal Highness, Prince John, is also buying horses for himself, in case he should be called upon to take the command of the Eighth Division of the Germanick troops.

The soldiers on furlough are all called in – and the 'King's Own', one of the finest and strongest regiments here, leaves Dresden tomorrow, to take up cantonments in villages about twenty five miles from this. The pretext is, to make room in the Barracks for the new comers – but, in fact, they are to be close to the Railroad, so as to be able to act upon Dresden or Leipzig, if required.

I really do not feel the slightest uneasiness as to the tranquillity of this capital. At nine in the Evening of the 5th ulto there was the usual serenade for his Majesty's name day, and not the slightest disturbance, although the crowd was unusually great.

I only hope that the Saxon Government will continue firm, until the Chambers meet – and that they are not relying too much on assurances of the policy to be observed and followed in Prussia, for

[11] Eduard von Broizem.
[12] Gustav von Nostitz-Wallwitz.

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they have already been deceived, and placed in great Embarrassment, on former occasions by that Power.

On Saturday last Austrian banknotes were first accepted and changed (though at a loss) by bankers – but yesterday in the market, many persons refused to take any other notes than those of the Saxon Government. Much temporary Embarrassment was caused by this.

FO 68/68: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 22, Dresden, 17 March 1848

Postponement of the Saxon chambers by the new ministry; influence of Robert Blum on the radical party; disturbances in Dresden; news from Vienna

[...] The first measure of the new Government was to publish an order[13] stating, that as the Ministry was changed and would not be prepared to meet the states at so short a notice and that the principal object, that of the freedom of the Press, had been already granted,[14] the Diet convoked for the 20th inst. was not to be held: it will therefore only meet in Autumn, when the necessary elections have taken place.

This is a very wise measure, for there is so much agitation at the present moment, that the Government might have been impelled to acts, to which, I conscientiously believe, the Ministers[15] just named are utterly disinclined; and when I reflect on the influence which Leipzig has had in the late change, and by whom that influence has been wielded, the Ministry can not be too much on their guard.

I allude to Mr Robert Blum, the soul and leader of the Radical party, who is not even a Saxon by birth, but was born at Cologne from the lowest class. His first employment was cleaning the lamps in the theatres – he then rose to being a waiter, servant, and at last a clerk in Leipzig, where he made himself remarkable by his speeches at a debating Club.[16] A Gentleman[17] known for his Radical principles, but connected by marriage with one of those who then held the first place at Court, was struck with his talents, and lent him a sum of money with which he was enabled to establish in Leipzig as a bookseller, the Government having incautiously allowed the freedom of the Town

[13] Proclamation of 16 March 1848.

[14] The censorship was abolished temporarily by an order of the ministry of the interior to the administration of the districts on 9 March 1848. It was finally abolished by the decree of 23 March.

[15] Members of the cabinet formed on 16 March were Alexander Karl Hermann Braun (minister president), Ludwig von der Pfordten, Robert Georgi, and Graf Albrecht Ernst von Holtzendorff.

[16] *Redeübungsverein*, founded in December 1845.

[17] Forbes is most likely referring to Hermann Gottlob Joseph.

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to be granted to him. The influence he has gained by his oratorical talent, can only be compared with that of the late Mr O'Connell, and he is stated to have said, 'I have raised myself to the pitch that, in the next twelve month, I must either be at the head of everything or in a dungeon.'

During the night of the 15th there was some rioting in this city, but not of any real importance. The mob used nothing but stones – they broke a few panes in the house where M. de Könneritz lives, and all those of the Police Office, where they wanted to liberate some of their comrades. More than forty persons were arrested, and on one a pistol was found – but some of the National Guard and Police were severely wounded by the stones. A worse riot was announced for last night – but measures of precaution were well and wisely taken.

The whole of the National Guard was out, and was joined by not only all the respectable part of the inhabitants, but even by the young Gentlemen of the society. Strong parties patrolled the streets till a late hour, and there was not the slightest disturbance. The inhabitants were so embittered against the rioters, who were either blackguards of the lowest class or strangers, principally from Leipzig, that they would have punished them severely if they had shewn themselves. The troops are withdrawn from the neighbourhood of Leipzig, and I begin to hope that the worst is over.

The news of the late Events in Austria, or rather in Vienna,[18] began to be known Yesterday morning in Dresden, and the astonishment was almost equal to that produced by the French Revolution.

All seemed to have made up their minds that nothing of the sort could occur as long as Prince Metternich lived – and in a few hours, every one of the ancient institutions has been overturned, and the respect and attachment to the Imperial Family forgotten. From my own personal knowledge of Austria, I entertain the greatest fears for Bohemia, and that we shall soon hear of dreadful scenes of pillage and murder there, not against the nobility themselves, but against those employed on their estates. There is even a report current here that the peasantry have burnt and pillaged every thing on Prince Metternich's two estates, Königswart and Platz.

The Viceroy of Bohemia[19] declared from his box, at the theatre in Prague, that Constitutions would be granted to all parts of the Monarchy – and another report here is, that one of the regiments at Vienna positively refused to fire.

[18] Cf. pp. 400–405.
[19] Graf Rudolf Stadion-Warthausen.

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The King of Saxony has written to the King of Prussia, that under the present circumstances, Dresden was not a fit place for holding a congress. Frankfort would seem better adapted to that meeting.[20]

FO 68/68: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 28, Dresden, 29 March 1848

New Saxon ministry formed; proclamation calling for order to be maintained; Prussian provinces wish to return to Saxony

[. . .] The Saxon Ministry is now completely organized. In the Evening Official Gazette[21] of the 25th ulto, Mr Oberländer is named Minister of the Interior, and M. von der Pforten Minister of Publick Instruction and of Foreign Affairs.

Of all the Members of the Government there is therefore only this one individual who may be suspected of violent opinions – and there are persons, not of his party, who assert that his manners have principally given rise to this idea, for that he is a well intentioned and upright man.

The peasantry are beginning to be very turbulent in many parts of Saxony, and have in more than one instance forced landed proprietors, by threats and even personal violence, to give back the money they themselves had paid for redemption of the feudal obligations. A Proclamation,[22] drawn up in forcible, strong terms, and signed by all the Ministers, has been issued, warning their Countrymen of the results to which such acts of violence must lead in a 'sincere Constitutional Monarchy' under a 'noble Sovereign' – that 'the acknowledge conscientiousness of His Majesty, the King, and the honest will of the Ministers afford a sufficient guarantee that all which was promised will be performed.'[23] After pointing out the folly as well as criminality of their Conduct, the proclamation terminates with the assurance that the Government will fulfil its duties towards all.

This being the first publick act since the completion of the Ministry, will be of great use in reconciling many to the individuals composing it, who feared a too great inclination on their part towards democracy and I sincerely believe that, in this country, the worst is past.

At the very beginning of the excitement there was a momentary idea of recalling Prince Albert from Bonn – but M. de Zeschau with

[20] At the invitation of Austria and Prussia, a conference of all German governments was to take place in Dresden at the end of March to advise on a conservative federal reform.

[21] *Dresdner Tageblatt.*

[22] Proclamation of 26 March 1848.

[23] The government programme of 16 March contained the following points: the army to swear allegiance to the constitution, freedom of the press and of assembly, freedom of association, reform of the justice system, electoral reform, and representation of the people in the German Confederation.

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his usual good sense implored the King to keep him out of the way as long as possible, so that His Royal Highness might avoid being forced to give pledges which could but embarrass him hereafter. I have no doubt that in the next Diet a proposition will be brought forward and carried, that Prince Albert shall marry a Protestant Princess, and his children be brought up in the religion of the Country.[24]

In all the Prussian provinces which formerly belonged to Saxony,[25] the inhabitants are walking about with Saxon cockades, and talking openly of their wishes, as well as intention of returning to their ancient Sovereigns, not only on the ground of former times, but of the conduct of his Prussian Majesty.

I grieve to say that the latter Sovereign is no longer respected nor loved – on the contrary, he is spoken of in the most contemptuous terms, and by none more than by his own officers, whose esteem he has forfeited without gaining that of the opposite party. As for his declaration[26] of putting himself at the head of Germany, it is universally ridiculed.

No being can pretend to foresee what may be the future fate of Germany. Austria and Prussia may be said to exist no longer as leading Powers – the former is on the Eve of losing Hungary, Poland, and Italy, who will in all probability declare their independence – whilst Prussia, without her military organisation and with a National Guard, must lose her importance.

I ought to mention that great numbers of Poles have arrived in Dresden, and are travelling either towards Gallicia or Posen.

As a sample of what the liberty of the Press has brought forward, I have the honor of inclosing a copy and translation of a paper concerning the Germanick Confederation.[27]

FO 68/68: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 44, Dresden, 7 June 1848

Proceedings in the Saxon chambers; debates in the revolutionary clubs on a new form of government; resolution to alter duties on sugar; petition for the abolition of the first chamber

The Proceedings in the Saxon Diet have generally speaking not been of sufficient Importance for me to trouble Your Lordship with a Detail

[24] Since 1697 the Royal House of Saxony had been Catholic. The population of Saxony, on the other hand, was overwhelmingly Protestant.

[25] Province of Saxony, formerly the northern part of the Kingdom of Saxony, which fell to Prussia after the division of Saxony in 1815.

[26] For the proclamation *An mein Volk und die deutsche Nation* of 21 March 1848 cf. p. 107.

[27] Enclosures (originals and translation): *An das deutsche Volk*; *An die sogenannte Deutsche Bundesversammlung* (To the German People; To the so-called German Federal Assembly).

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of them, but the Day before yesterday one of the Dresden Deputies, by name Küttner, obtained Permission in the Second Chamber to ask a Question of the Government, respecting a Proposition made in one[28] of the numerous Clubs (in Leipzig) for the Introduction of a Republick, and which had appeared in the publick Newspapers.

This Gentleman declared, that He considered Himself bound by his oath to call the attention of Ministers to the Fact, for the Motion, if it had been really made, came under the Paragraphs 81 and 84 of the Criminal Code and must be regarded as an overt act of High Treason. He therefore requested the Government to state, whether they were informed of the Fact, and what Measures had been adopted in Consequence of it.

The President of the Council, Braun, answered that no official Intelligence of this Motion had yet reached them, although they had heard of it as a Report, but that they were prepared to resist all Trangressions [sic] of the Laws and particularly of the existing Constitution with Energy and the Weapons of the Law: that in a former Proclamation[29] they had called the attention of the Authorities to the repressive Enactments regarding these Clubs, and that it was not their Fault, if these had not done their Duty; but that this Interpellation of the Government will make them take immediate steps for ascertaining the Fact more exactly.

The Minister of the Interior, Oberlaender, observed, that if any Club declared its Intention of introducing a new Form of Government and called upon others for their Assistance in this Design, there could be no Doubt of their criminal Views, and proceeded further to state, that a general Order[30] had been issued that very day to the Police to keep a watchful Eye on these Meetings and to close them if requisite. After some Opposition from the Radical Party, M. Oberlaender read out some Papers of the most seditious character, which emanated from a Club in Leipzig[31] and which came fully under the Head of Treason, and Monsieur Braun declared that whilst the Government admitted the Right of Assemblage, it was equally their Duty to let Justice take its Course.

They then passed to the Order of the Day as to the Duties on Foreign Sugars and Treacle, and the Propositions of the Government

[28] *Leipziger Vaterlandsverein* was founded at the end of March 1848 and grew out of the *Leipziger Redeübungsverein*. Within a short period of time local *Vaterlandsvereine* were founded all over Saxony (among others the one in Dresden mentioned later in this dispatch), and became the platform for Saxony's democratic movement. They were banned after the failed uprising of May 1849 in Dresden.

[29] Cabinet statement of 7 April 1848.

[30] General decree of 5 June 1848.

[31] *Demokratischer Verein Leipzig*.

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were unanimously adopted, 1st not to alter the existing Duties on Cane Sugars, and 2nd to raise the Duty on raw Beetroot Sugar from 1 Thaler per Cwt. to 2 Thalers.

A Petition of one of the principal Clubs in Dresden, called 'Vaterlands Verein', praying for the Abolition of the First Chamber was presented there and laid on the Table, after a Discussion, in which Mr. von der Pforten declared, that the Upper Chamber was an indispensable Part of the Constitution and that the Government would always uphold it unless abolished by constitutional Means, whilst other Members commented justly and very severely on the arrogance and folly of any such Meetings calling themselves the Organs of the Saxon People.

The Government must at last interfere about these Clubs, who meet every Evening, keep the publick Mind in a constant state of Fermentation, and with few Exceptions propagate nothing but the most detestable republican Principles. However the Chambers have supported the Ministers with such large Majorities that these are gaining Confidence every Day and are quite prepared to repel any seditious outbreak by Force. They can now reckon with Certainty on the National Guard, but I cannot say as much for the Line. The Noncommissioned Officers and Soldiers are regular in their attendance on the Clubs, who are doing their best to disorganize them and I fear, with too much success.

An Address from the villages round about this Capital has been presented to the Government: it is signed by several thousand Individuals, and expresses not only their fullest Confidence in the present Ministers, but their firm Determination to uphold them and their Measures, which are calculated to maintain the 'free, constitutional Monarchy': it assures them of their Readiness to assist in putting down any Party, which either under Pretence of Reaction or of introducing Reforms or Changes, have nothing but Anarchy and a Disregard of private Property in View.

FO 68/69: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 64, Dresden, 26 September 1848

Impact in Saxony of proceedings at Frankfurt; new electoral law; Saxon troops ordered to Thuringia

The late dreadful events in Frankfort[32] have outwardly created less sensation here than elsewhere, although the impression is very great upon all classes. That the Radical party has brought on this terrible

[32] Cf. pp. 38–39.

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crisis is not to be denied, and Saxony has furnished eighteen out of the thirty four members who compose it. All well meaning Saxons are heartily ashamed of their Representatives, whilst the others are beginning to foresee that at any future Election a very different set of men will be chosen. This is the reason of their seeming indifference to what must ever be a foul blot on the German name – but the General reprobation must be very strong to induce the 'German Universal Gazette',[33] printed in Leipzig and edited by a man[34] of known liberal opinions, to publish on two successive days strong and bitter leading Articles against the so called 'extreme Left' at Frankfort.

The Saxon Government have great hopes that all this will be favorable to the discussion of the new Law of Election[35] now before the Second Chamber, which in its present shape is a forced concession to the Democratick Party, and which ought to be very much altered before it is passed, and principally respecting the Upper Chamber.

The Kingdom is to be divided into seventy six Electoral districts, each of which elects one member for the Second Chamber – whilst each two districts are to unite and choose one member for the Upper Chamber.

In addition to these thirty eight, ten members are to be elected by special corporations and Bodies; and, whilst the University of Leipzig is only to be represented by one individual, the schoolmasters are to elect three of their number, who, being paid at home at the rate of from £ 18 to £ 30 a year, would find themselves strangely misplaced in the first Chamber.

This is only one of many anomalies – but the Government were glad to preserve an Upper Chamber on any terms.

Orders were issued yesterday for a large body of troops (it is even said, between five and six thousand men) consisting of cavalry infantry and artillery to hold themselves in readiness. They are to march to the Duchy of Altenburg and Principalities of Reuss, where an outbreak is hourly expected. Independent of this Republican Agents are tampering with the troops here, and unfortunately with too much success so that the Ministers are glad to get them out of Dresden.

The parts of this Kingdom which join the Austrian and Bavarian frontiers, called the Voigtland, and which have hitherto been quiet, are now full of secret agents and begin to shew symptoms of turbulence.

[33] *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, founded in 1837 as the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung*; it was the only Saxon newspaper of national importance.

[34] August Kaiser.

[35] The electoral law was enacted on 15 November 1848 and introduced universal and equal suffrage for the second chamber. It replaced the electoral law of 1831.

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At Chemnitz peace has been restored, and a Garrison is to be established there for the future.

Postscript

M. v. der Pfordten has just informed me that the Saxon troops are to march in consequence of orders from Frankfort.[36] The Central Administration will also send a Commissioner with full powers, for the whole of Thuringia, even to the extent of proclaiming martial law. A M. de Schleier is designated for this post[37] – he was once in the Government at Stuttgard. The troops are to march on the 1st of next month.

FO 68/69: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 67, Dresden, 8 October 1848

Conversation with the minister for foreign affairs; his views on the abolition of the Saxon foreign missions

In the course of a conversation yesterday with M. von der Pfordten, His Excellency said he presumed that I had heard of the Circular which had been received from Frankfort, inviting them to recall their Foreign Ministers.[38] I answered that information of it had reached me, and that being already aware of his personal opinion and wishes on this subject; I was anxious to know what the Saxon Government intended to do. He said that they were placed in a very embarrassing position – that Austria and Prussia had refused at once to accede to this proposition, but that, unfortunately for Saxony, Bavaria and Wurtemberg had assented – and that several members of the Diet had already attacked the Government on this point, and had quoted the example of the abovementioned States; that he would take no decided step in the Affair until after the debate on the budget, which would take place in the next (this) week – that they had only funds up to the end of the year, which would oblige them to convoke the Diet in the month of December, and that he would be governed by the Votes. If there was an overwhelming Majority against him on this question, he must give way, although he earnestly impressed upon me that the present state of Affairs, as regards the Central Power, was merely

[36] The basis for the invasion by Saxon troops on 2 October 1848 was an instruction from the imperial government of 9 September issued at the request of the Thuringian governments of Saxe-Meiningen, Saxe-Altenburg and Saxe-Weimar. By the beginning of November the duchies were occupied and the uprisings were brought to an end without bloodshed.

[37] Ludwig von Mühlenfels, not Johannes von Schlayer, became commissioner for Thuringia.

[38] On 20 September 1848 the Frankfurt central government asked the individual states to recall their foreign missions and to leave the imperial legations to represent their interests.

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transitory and provisional, and that he hoped that Her Majesty's Government would under any circumstances view it only in that light.

I observed, that he had always said to me, that if the Central Power were not there, a Republick would be proclaimed throughout Germany – but that I put it to him, whether by such a blind obedience to the Authority at Frankfort, now rested in an Archduke[39] but which might tomorrow be placed in the hands of a private individual, they were not all establishing a Republick de facto – for what now was His Saxon Majesty more than Governor of this province? However unpalatable this truth must have been to him, he was too frank not to admit it – but pleaded in excuse that, at this moment, they had no alternative. He said that I was as well informed, if not better than he could be, of the State of affairs in Thuringia[40] – that Leipzig, Altenburg, and Jena, were all working at a Republick – that it was only in the name of the Central Power that the troops could be made to march, and that even here they had difficulties to contend with. He repeated that he considered every thing with regard to the Central Power as merely provisional, and was convinced that immense alterations must be made in the original plan; that Germany must return to a Confederation something similar to what had been overturned, but where, to a certain degree, a more limited number of larger States would have to represent the interests and decide on measures for the smaller ones; in short that larger States would exercise a sort of Protectorate respecting others, and that, come what may, Saxony would only be governed by Frankfort on the very great questions, such as peace and war.

I asked him if it were true that the German States were to keep their foreign Ministers between each other – he said, Yes, for the present at least – and that France would on no account withdraw her's, nor he hoped Russia. He therefore equally hoped that England, already related to the House of Saxony by ties which it was his ardent wish to draw still closer (he is always alluding to the Marriage of Prince Albert with a Protestant Princess), and also considering the immense disproportion between the two countries, would not hastily adopt any measure in consequence of what might be forced on the Saxon Government under circumstances which must soon be so materially altered – and he concluded by saying, that he begged I would communicate his opinions and wishes to Your Lordship.

The complete change in his language with regard to Frankfort and the Central Power, has astonished my Russian colleague[41] as well as

[39] Archduke Johann.
[40] Cf. n. 36 in this section.
[41] Andrei Andreievitch Schreder.

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myself for not three weeks ago he would not admit the slightest chance of that failure which he now appears to consider as impending.

Since commencing this despatch I have been informed that, if the Lower Chamber should pass any vote against the Saxon foreign Missions, he will merely grant the Ministers a leave of absence, and thus avoid breaking off their foreign relations, until better times.

I cannot conceal from Your Lordship that M. von der Pfordten's head has, until latterly, been full of dreams of aggrandizement for Saxony at the expense of the other Sovereigns of that House[42] – but I have narrowly watched him, and have used every argument to counteract this idea, to which he never once alluded in the conversation of yesterday. He is perhaps getting frightened with regard to Prussia, where every Party unites in the wish to possess the remainder of this Kingdom.

FO 68/69: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 79, Dresden, 15 November 1848

Effect in Dresden of the execution of Robert Blum in Vienna

Although the Intelligence of the Executing of Robert Blum at Vienna[43] had reached this Capital late in the afternoon of the 12th ulto, when I had last the Honour of addressing Your Lordship, I thought it better to wait until I could speak of the Effect which this well merited Punishment has produced. Until this Evening, it was but little known, however a private letter from Vienna, which had reached one of the Newspapers soon published the Fact, and the Effect generally was, that of inspiring Terror, for it is the first Time, that the Sovereign People of Germany has had a Blow in the Person of one of its most violent Representatives. On the 13th ulto. a Motion was made in the Second Chamber by the Deputy Tzschirner, and carried unanimously, 'to request the Government to demand from Monsieur de Könneritz the Saxon Minister at Vienna a Report and Defence of his Conduct in this Affair, and to use every Means to induce the Central Administration to take the most energetick Measures towards obtaining satisfaction for the injured Honour of the German People'. Monsieur de Pfordten defended the Government and stated that as soon as they had received Intelligence of the Imperial Troops having entered Vienna, He had written to the Saxon Minister to protect all his subjects, and again on

[42] Houses of Saxe-Meiningen, Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, and Saxe-Altenburg.

[43] Blum was executed on 9 November 1848.

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the 8th, the Day when it was known that Blum had been arrested, to recommend Him in his double Quality of Saxon Citizen and Frankfort Representative to his particular Care: but that this arrived after the Execution of the Sentence.

The same Motion was made in the Upper Chamber and the first Part of it (whatever many Individuals may have thought) was carried unanimously but the Second rejected, as implying a want of Confidence in the Government. Placards are posted up in all Quarters of the Town, that the Country must adopt his Children and Subscriptions are opened for the Purpose.

It is really disgusting to hear People lamenting over the just Death of a Man whose wonderful Eloquence, perverted to a bad Purpose has been one of the principal Causes of the Loss of so many thousand Lives: the very same Persons almost justified and palliated the horrid murders in Frankfort, Pesth and Vienna.[44]

The Frankfort Deputy Fröbel, who accompanied Blum, was equally condemned to death, but got his Sentence remitted by betraying his Companion and Accomplices. He passed through Dresden Yesterday. On the Evening of the 13th ulto the Mob in Leipzig broke all the Windows at the Austrian Consulate and tearing down the Imperial Arms burned them in the Streets with Shouts and Execrations.

A Number of Poles, who were exiled from the Grand Duchy of Posen, and who the King of Prussia, strange to say, had collected together at Langensalza, near Gotha arrived Yesterday Morning by the Railroad, and insisted on remaining Four and Twenty Hours.

All this is very embarrassing for the Saxon Government: their real Sentiments as to Blum are so well known, that no Individual can believe in their Regret for his Death. However they may be forced by Circumstances to put on the Appearance, and although established in Leipzig (where the Inhabitants have declared that the Anniversary of his Death shall be kept as a day of general mourning) he was not even a Saxon by Birth. This Event has now completed the Rupture between Austria and the Central Administration, and if what the Newspapers state be true, that the Frankfort Commissary, Bassermann, is openly taking the Part of the King of Prussia against His States in Favour of which Addresses are said to be pouring in from all Parts of the Kingdom,[45] there can be as little Prospect of Prussia forming a part of the 'United Germany' and the Frankfort Assembly must soon crumble away through its own Insignificance, as well as on account of the immense Expense to which the several states are put by it.

[44] Forbes is referring to the murders of Lichnowsky, Auerswald, Latour, and Lamberg.

[45] On his mission to Berlin from 7 to 14 November Bassermann unsuccessfully tried to mediate between the Prussian King and the Prussian National Assembly.

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I much fear that this Government will be forced to recall Monsieur de Könneritz from his post as Minister at Vienna: the outcry of the Mob-Majority is general against Him, and though the Ministers must be rejoiced at having got rid of a dangerous Enemy, they will hardly dare to support Him.

Great Apprehensions were entertained last Night, that some hostile Demonstration might be made against the Austrian Minister, but there was not the slightest Disturbance, although all the Clubs held meetings.

FO 68/69: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, Confidential, No 92, Dresden, 19 December 1848

Conversation with von der Pfordten on the state of affairs in Saxony; need for foreign assistance; probability that ministers will resign

I have just seen M. von der Pfordten, with whom I had a long conversation. I found His Excellency very much dispirited. He told me that the Elections, with the exception of the town of Leipzig, were as bad as possible, even much worse than they had feared – that people had reproached Saxony for their Representatives at Frankfort, but that friends had then stated as an excuse for their selection, that these having been named on the old system,[46] of Electors chosen by the people, intimidation might have been used – but now, where direct suffrage had been introduced, they had not only elected Radicals and Republicans, but 'the refuse of these' – that although not born in Saxony, he had almost been adopted as one of them, and could not but be grieved at the disgrace which must attach itself to the name of Saxon – but that the most painful part of it was, that the partisans of the late Government had sided with the Radical Club called 'Vaterlands Verein',[47] for the purpose of overturning the present ministers, and that this was even the case with those of the Nobility who had sufficient courage to take any part at all.

His Excellency said that he need not expatiate on the danger to the Monarchy of such a proceeding, for that experience had already proved the risk – but that all this made it impossible for the Ministers to impose terms on their Colleague M. Oberländer, who, up to this moment, was completely (though perhaps unwillingly) in the hands

[46] The Saxon elections to the Frankfurt National Assembly in April 1848 were held in accordance with the electoral law of 1831. The result was a majority of democratic deputies. For the new electoral law, which was applied to the elections for the Saxon *Landtag* in December, cf. n. 35 in this section.

[47] For the *Vaterlandsverein* cf. n. 28 in this section.

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of the Clubs, and that it can end in nothing else than in demanding the assistance of foreign troops. He said that this was a measure to which he and his colleagues would never lend their hands, for that it would be in direct contradiction to all their avowed principles. He also said that he was perfectly aware of all the intrigues carried on against them from Austria and Prussia and at Court – and that attacked as they were from within and without, it was very possible, although not yet definitively decided on, the Government would resign before the meeting of the Chambers.

I could only express my sincere regret at anything of the sort, as well as my own conviction that a Government formed solely on the former principles could only stand by the support of foreign military. He said he was quite of my opinion, and that the consequences must fall upon the heads of those who had forced it on.

I mentioned to him a report which I had heard, that the Radicals intend refusing to take the usual oath on entering the Diet – he answered that he had not yet heard this, that it was possible – but that it excluded them from the Chambers de facto.

The Government had intended convoking them for the 31st of this month, the taxes being only voted up to the end of this year – but as the elections can hardly be finished in time, they will publish a decree, on their own responsibility, which is provided for by an Article in the Constitution,[48] for levying them until the meeting of the Diet.

He ended the conversation by saying – 'for the last nine months we have, with few exceptions, enforced the law, and Saxony has remained quiet: we must see how long the others can afford to keep a foreign force in the Country, without which all will be Revolution'.

He also informed me that part of the Hanoverian troops in Thuringia, had received orders to march back towards the Elbe, in consequence of the Danes having occupied the island of Alsen.

FO 68/72: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 14, Dresden, 9 March 1849

Proceedings in the Saxon chambers; reception of Dr. Braun

[...] I have not lately alluded the Saxon Chambers, for their proceedings are merely a repetition of their former conduct. The

[48] §88 of the constitution of 4 September 1831 authorised provisional decrees. There was, however, a dispute as to whether this regulation also applied to economic measures.

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members are furious at the choice of the present Ministry,[49] having confidently reckoned upon a Government being selected out of their ranks – a list of which was already formed. They are doing every thing in their power to throw odium on the Ministers, and are so uneasy at the change of the garrison, that one of the leaders[50] lately made a violent speech against Saxony, shewing a blind obedience to the Central Administration.

It is said, that they intend refusing the Saxon contribution to the German fleet, as well as money for the continuation of the publick works, by which last they hope to bring about an insurrection of the working classes. All this is better than the so called moral resistance – and I really begin to hope that a dissolution of the present Diet is approaching. To give Your Lordship an idea of its members, the town of Chemnitz, the third in Saxony, elected for the Second Chamber a man[51] who had sung in the choruses of the theatre and had been turned out for gross misconduct.

On Doctor Braun's return to Plauen after his resignation, the townpeople formed a procession with torches to greet him and, though some of the lowest classes in the crowd gave signs of dissatisfaction, the respectable citizens put them down. However, shortly after the latter had dispersed, the mob collected and broke all the windows of Dr Braun's house – the large stones were so well directed that they fell in numbers on the place where his bed usually stands, and he would have been severely wounded had he not providentially, and by chance, slept in another room.

A placard is posted up to day in all parts of the city, calling the Clubs together to deliberate whether the armed citizens (not the National Guard) should not undertake the different guards here on the departure of the present garrison. This proves their fear either of new troops or of foreigners.

FO 68/72: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 18, Dresden, 12 April 1849

Saxon reaction to the idea that the King of Prussia could become German emperor

The choice of the King of Prussia, by a fraction of the Frankfort Assembly, to the dignity of Emperor of the Germans,[52] has created little

[49] After the resignation of the Braun cabinet on 25 February 1849, Gustav Friedrich Held formed an interim government.

[50] Samuel Erdmann Tzschirner.

[51] Eduard Theodor Jäkel.

[52] Friedrich Wilhelm IV was elected emperor by the Frankfort National Assembly on 28 March 1849.

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or no sensation here. The public, so called, are much more occupied with the meetings of the Diet, and with frequenting the Clubs, than with an event, which must not only influence all Germany but Europe – whilst those who are able to reflect believed from the first that His Majesty could not accept the Imperial crown from the hands of such an assembly, had it even been voted unanimously and not by very little more than one half of the members present. In addition to this, his acceptance was considered here as tantamount to a declaration of war against Austria, who would have considered it as such. At all events his tenure could not have been of long duration, for his election with such a Constitution[53] could only tend to weaken and annihilate the other German sovereigns, as a prelude to his own destruction. This is perfectly understood by the radical party in this kingdom, one of the leaders[54] of which said lately in the Chambers that the republican party in Saxony and the Imperial party at Frankfort were acting in concert for the same result, but that the former was the more honourable from openly avowing its purpose.

The Saxon Government is naturally much embarrassed by this state of affairs, for Austria has too much on her hands to be able to assist them in case of need, and Prussia will certainly not lessen their difficulties.

With respect to the last Prussian Circular,[55] calling upon the German sovereigns to give their opinions upon the late election at Frankfort, I am informed that this Government intend to answer that His Saxon Majesty has hitherto given the most convincing proofs of his willingness to contribute by all means in his power to the Union of Germany, but that he cannot conscientiously approve of the assumption of the Imperial crown by His Prussian Majesty under circumstances like the present which, in face of the opposition, even of the protest, of the southern German Powers must at once divide Germany instead of uniting it, that, consequently, Saxony cannot at present come to any decision respecting the Imperial dignity.

No sensible person in this part of Germany looks to the possibility of a Republic in the southern part of the Empire, nor to more than an ephemeral existence of it in the north; but M. de Beust said at once that if the King of Saxony were to vote for the dignity of Emperor being conferred on any Sovereign, with the present Constitution, it would be, in fact, an abdication of his rights which no honest Saxon would advise. The intrigues carried on in Berlin, even in the most

[53] Cf. n. 81 in Frankfurt section.

[54] Wilhelm Schaffrath.

[55] Circular dispatch of 3 April 1849 from the Prussian foreign minister to the Prussian envoys to the German governments.

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exalted Circle, are well known here, and contribute not a little to the anxiety of these Ministers.

FO 68/72: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 25, Dresden, 3 May 1849

Riots in Dresden; petition by the National Guard to acknowledge the Frankfurt Imperial Constitution

The unhappy weakness of the King of Wurtemberg[56] has shewn the inhabitants of Dresden the line they must pursue to attempt an intimidation of their Sovereign and the capital, I may add Kingdom, is in a state of agitation which one can hardly hope to see terminated without bloodshed.

There was a meeting yesterday of the Clubs and National Guard, at which the most violent speeches were made and resolutions passed. The National Guards voted unanimously that; they were to draw up and present a petition to the King praying him to acknowledge the German Constitution.

2ndly that if he refused (which he has done) they were to decide that His Majesty is not to count upon their support.

3dly that a general parade is to be held tomorrow at which they are to declare their approbation and acknowledgement of the said Constitution.

The King's answer has not yet been published – but there is a placard up on the part of the Town Council calling a meeting this afternoon to consult on the best measures for defending Dresden against the entry of Foreign troops, an allusion to which is contained in His Majesty's answer.

The King is firm, and told them that he had engaged his word of honor not to acknowledge the Constitution unless Prussia did so.

I have been informed that they have taken up the rails near Bautzen in Lusatia to prevent the arrival of the Prussians whilst report says that they are already within four German miles of the Capital in an other direction. Unfortunately this is not the case.

There is a report that perhaps The King will proceed to the fortress of Koenigstein which is not very unlikely. If this occur we shall immediately have a provisional Govt, though it may only last for a few days.

I have already seen the Minister of Foreign Affairs and have told him that I was ready at any moment to repair to the Palace, if His Majesty wished for the Foreign Representatives to be near his person

[56] Wilhelm I accepted the Frankfurt Imperial Constitution on 24 April 1849.

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but M. de Beust said that at present it was not necessary. I will keep this despatch open as long as possible so as to be able to add any thing interesting.

FO 68/72: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 26, Dresden, 7 May 1849

King of Saxony leaves Dresden; insurrection in the capital

Although unable to guess when it will be possible to send off this despatch, I proceed to give Your Lordship some details of the miserable state of this capital for the last few days, and however confident I may be as to the final result, no person whatever can pretend to say when order will be restored.

I hope I may be allowed to state that the Prussian Chargé d'Affaires Baron de Canitz, who is gone over to the Newtown on the North side of the Elbe, sent me word yesterday afternoon that there was no possibility of sending off letters, and that he had experienced the greatest difficulty in procuring a messenger to carry his own to the Prussian frontier. I mention this to account for my silence.

In my preceding desp. of the 3rd of this month, but which could not leave Dresden till the following day, I mentioned that the mob had forced the Arsenal, which was partly incorrect, for they only succeeded in penetrating as far as a workshop where there were very few arms, and from which the troops immediately drove them back. In the evening of the 3rd affairs bore such a menacing aspect and the arrival of the Prussian troops was so uncertain, that His Majesty decided on leaving his capital, and most of the regular issues of the palace being watched (those which they could attain were barricaded with boards and beams by the mob) he passed, accompanied by the Queen[57] and Royal Family, a corridor which communicates with the catholic church from which they got out on the square between the palace and the bridge which was occupied by the troops. The King addressed the latter in the most feeling manner, he thanked them for their devotion and fidelity and assured them that his refusal to acknowledge the German Constitution[58] only proceeded from his firm conviction that it would never contribute to the happiness of this Kingdom. I ought to have mentioned that their departure took place at 4 o'clock in the morning of the 4th. They then went across the bridge on foot, proceeded a short distance up the river and embarked

[57] Maria Leopoldine.
[58] For the Imperial Constitution cf. n. 81 in Frankfurt section.

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on board a steam boat which was in readiness and accompanied by an escort of an hundred men, as well as the three ministers, they reached the fortress of Königstein in safety.

In the mean time the troops consisting of little more than fifteen hundred men continued to occupy the Arsenal and Palace, but every street in their interior of the town leading to the Altmarkt was barricaded, some of them in several places, with a care and science which proved that there were those at the head who had experience in the business. [. . .]

On the morning of the 5th I crossed the Elbe in a boat, for the bridge was occupied by the troops, and saw M. de Beust who, with the Minister of War[59] had returned the preceding evening from Königstein. I found him calm and collected, and his courage is beyond praise. He told me that he neither deluded himself as to the immense responsibility nor his own personal danger, but his sense of duty would carry him through, that His Prussian Majesty had promised them a corps of twelve thousand men in eight days, but that he had sent to say that all would probably be decided before half of that time, and to press that they should send him off all that they could collect, were it only for the moral effect on the public opinion. I am happy to say that the first detachment, five hundred men of the Regiment Alexander,[60] arrived that evening, another Saxon regiment, the 'Leibregiment' came in also, and to a man the troops are animated with a spirit of which every honest Saxon must be proud.

On the 4th Messrs Tzschirner, Heubner and Todt, three of the lowest and greatest radicals in this kingdom, had formed themselves into a Provisional Government and issued two proclamations; the one addressed to the citizens, declaring that the King and his ministers had fled, that the country was in danger, that Dresden had determined to shew the first example and to stand and fall with the German Constitution, that they placed Saxony under the protection of those Governments which had already acknowledged it, that they had called in assistance from all parts of the kingdom, and that they would send flags of truce to the troops calling on them to obey the Provisional Government alone, and conferring the command of their men (not troops) on an officer of the National Guards named Heinze, an adventurer who went to Greece and was in that service for some time; he then asked to be named Saxon consul at Athens with a salary, and when informed that the latter would not be granted, changed his mind. The proclamation closes with the usual phrase 'Now is the time

[59] Bernhard Rabenhorst.

[60] The first Prussian unit to enter Dresden on 5 May was the fusilier battalion of the *Kaiser Alexander* regiment.

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to choose between freedom and slavery', and is not worth sending to your Lordship.

The second proclamation to the soldiers was in the same style and was openly ridiculed by them.[61]

The troops, weak as they were, had gradually occupied all the most important points, and, the light infantry, amongst others the building called the Zwinger where some of the collections are kept, and whose terrace commands the Garden round it as well as the Ostra Allée they could even with their rifles reach the Post Office which was occupied by a large force of the insurgents.

The Govt. had intended merely to act on the defensive until they had force sufficient to carry the town, but yesterday morning soon after day break, the insurgents set fire from behind to the old Opera house, which forms one of the wings of the Zwinger and from which the Riflemen were annoying them by their well directed fire. The building which was old and dry, besides being fitted up with temporary boxes &, burnt like tinder and soon fell in; but luckily there was no wind, else it would have been impossible to prevent a part of the palace catching fire which is close to the Zwinger. This the insurgents attempted to do but were luckily frustrated, and the military became so exasperated that they began to attack different parts of the town.

They succeeded yesterday in clearing the communications between the Arsenal and the place before the Palace, and ended by getting possession of the new market, they have also occupied the Picture Gallery, and I can not but fear that much injury must occur to the treasures of art contained in that building. Today (the 7th) they have equally gained possession of two of the principal entrances into the inner town, but have been obliged to adopt the same means that were used in Paris, that is, when they have got possession of the first house, breaking through from it successively into the others. Here they have broken through into the top stories where the walls are weaker, and I am told that in the Pirna Street there has been a very large loss of life.

They are successively gaining possession of all the leading entrances, and I am hourly expecting that the troops will attack a barricade at an inconsiderable distance from my house. They had intended to place it much nearer, but I went in person and requested that it might be removed on account of one side of my house being so much exposed to the shot. This was immediately granted, and I have never experienced greater civility than since the town has been in insurrection.

[61] In the second proclamation the army was called upon to protect the country along with the provisional government, to form an alliance with the people and to serve the constitution of Saxony and the Frankfurt Imperial Constitution.

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It is said that many more Prussian troops are arrived. I am informed that the Prussian Commandant is killed, also a Colonel Homilius of the Saxon Artillery.

The Prince Adolphus [Wilhelm] of Schwarzburg Rudolstadt and his servant were killed by mistake by the Prussian troops. He lodged in an hotel on the Neumarkt, and was armed for the purpose of defending himself against the insurgents, when a large body of soldiers burst into the room and shot him and his servant without giving him time to say who he was.

Your Lordship's knowledge of the town will at once explain to you that the passage of the bridge being interrupted, there is an almost impossibility of communication with the other side – but I cannot help considering it my duty to remain in my house as long as it is tenable, on account of the great number of British subjects who all inhabit this side of the river.

Postscript, May 8th

Only nineteen men of the soldiers have fallen and fifty wounded. Two Prussian officers are killed. The Commandant of the National Guard (Heinze) has been taken by the military.

Postscript, Wednesday – May 9th, 7 o'clock a.m.

The departure of the post having been yesterday again prevented, I am enabled under this morning's date to inform your Lordship that the military are still gaining ground on every side, and I may now express the hope that quiet will soon be restored, though much blood may possibly yet be shed.

At eleven o'clock last night the troops, both Saxon and Prussian, made a most spirited and vigorous attack simultaneously on several points. At about 4 o'clock the cannon was again heard, and I am now informed that several most important positions have been carried. The Post Office, a large building which was defended by a very numerous and determined body of the insurgents, has been taken, as well as a great barricade in the Wilsdruffer Street, perhaps the strongest in the whole town.

The insurgents are losing courage, and great numbers are leaving the town.

The Provisional Government, Messrs Tzschirner and Todt, have fled – Heubner made his escape in the afternoon of yesterday. In order to protect their lives from their own party, as well as to cloak the infamy and cowardice of their hurried flight, they gave out that they had translated the seat of the Provisional Govt to Freyberg but this had the effect of inducing vast numbers of the insurgents to evacuate the town under the pretence of following and rallying round the Provisional Govt. at Freyberg.

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In all parts of the town already in possession of the troops, notice from the Govt. was posted up at 6 o'clock this morning, proclaiming Martial Law from 6 o'clock this evening for the town of Dresden and all the Country three German miles round the Capital.

May 9th, 11 o'clock a.m.

The insurrection is completely quelled, all resistance has ceased. On the fall of the Post Office and of the principal barricade in the Wilsdruffer Street the whole mass of the insurgents, several thousands in number, abandoned the inner town and fled precipitately. The troops have marched in on every side unopposed, and the whole capital is now in the peaceable possession of the military. Every one in the streets is being forced to work at the destruction of the barricades, and ere the evening not one will be remaining.

Heinze, before alluded to, is a prisoner as well as some of the principal leaders, mostly foreigners. The courage of the troops and their behaviour throughout has been beyond all praise, but it is as yet impossible to ascertain the number of the killed and wounded.

The loss of life on the side of the rebels is said to have been very great, but there are few, if any, prisoners, no quarter having been given to any found arms in hand.

FO 68/72: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, Confidential, No 30, Dresden, 2 June 1849

Conversation with foreign minister on the new constitution promulgated by Prussia, Hanover, and Saxony; question of diplomatic representation of Germany

Baron de Beust asked me the night before last what I thought of the new German constitution, which had been framed at Berlin.[62] I answered His Excellency very frankly that being utterly uninformed of the course of the negotiations, I could only give a partial opinion – but that I could not see how Saxony was much the gainer by it – for that as long as their present law of Election[63] existed there was little or no chance of their having a better Diet than the last. That my personal friends had informed me that the feeling against the King and the Government in the manufacturing districts was growing daily worse, and that relying on the supineness of the Authorities as well as the impunity of political offenders, the inhabitants of those districts would only remain quiet as long as the foreign troops were in Saxony, and that the next Elections for the Diet would be very bad.

[62] Cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.
[63] Cf. n. 35 in this section.

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His Excellency said that he feared and believed that my information was but too correct – but that the Government was not strong enough to alter the law by a Coup d'Etat, and that Austria could give them no support.

I then expressed my surprise at their consenting to make over to Prussia all their rights of Diplomatick representation[64] – adding, that I could not believe it possible that Bavaria would consent to such a measure, where the interests were so different and would eventually have to be treated and discussed at such a distance from Munich; that, admitting the right of the German Powers to choose that one who was to represent them in other Courts, I could hardly imagine that the Great Powers would allow Prussia to dictate to them, and to order them to recall their Missions from the other German Kingdoms, or to submit to their being sent away; that, in the instance of Great Britain, the Royal family was closely allied to one branch of the House of Saxony,[65] and might even hereafter become so with the Royal Saxon House.

M. de Beust said 'I admit all that you say, and you cannot imagine the painful position I was placed in at Berlin – Prussia held the Knife at our throats (on nous a mis le Couteau sur la Gorge) – and it was only by submitting to these conditions that we have their troops. Perhaps Bavaria may gain us some better conditions, for she has not yet consented – but alas! Austria is powerless!'

After some other remarks, he said 'I forgot to tell you that our final acceptation depends on that of Bavaria – we have made this a positive stipulation[66] – which you may write to Lord Palmerston. I cannot speak of it here, for it would be tantamount to saying to Bavaria, refuse.'

This last observation seems to me not to have been made without intention, and I cannot help thinking that His Excellency would be glad if it reached the Bavarian Government.

In a conversation yesterday with the Minister of Finance, Baron de Friesen,[67] he told me without disguise that if Saxony had not submitted 'we must have lost the Prussian troops.' A threat of their withdrawal therefore must have been held out. Surely this is not honorable conduct on the part of the Prussian Cabinet, but I must add that M. de Beust said their greatest embarrassment proceeded from the Hannoverian

[64] In section II §7 of the Union constitution agreed between Prussia, Saxony and Hanover on 28 May 1849 the right to send and receive permanent envoys was transferred from the individual governments to the central authority.

[65] Britain was linked to the house of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha by the Prince Consort, Albert. Queen Victoria's son Alfred was heir apparent to the throne of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

[66] Additional declaration to the protocol of 26 May 1848 by the Saxon plenipotentiary Beust.

[67] Friesen was minister of the interior.

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[sic] Government, who had not only finally accepted, but had been beforehand with every proposition of Prussia.

FO 68/72: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 46, Dresden, 4 October 1849

Forbes' opinions on Germany's internal affairs

I had the Honor of receiving on the 1st of this month, through Her Majesty's Mission in Berlin, Your Lordships Despatch No 10, of the 18th of last September, recommending me Caution as to my language, regarding the future Organization of Germany, lest anything I say, should be interpreted as being the sentiments of Her Majesty's Government. I believe I can with truth assure Your Lordship, that I have been, and am still much on my Guard, and when forced to speak on the subject, I have always stated that any opinions were merely personal. It could not be otherwise after reading Your Lordship's Despatch, addressed to Her Majesty's Minister in Berlin on the 13th of last July,[68] which you were pleased to transmit to me in your Despatch No 7, of the 17th of that month, and which deprecates any active interference on the part of Great Britain in the internal affairs of the Germanick Empire. Besides, it is much easier to speak on what cannot occur, than to speculate on possibilities, for living in the midst of local jealousies, and antipathies of different States, (and the former are the most violent in the Smallest), with an utter deficiency of National feeling in many of the middling ones, as well as the non existence of all those Basis, on which a real constitutional existence can be founded, I must admit that I am every day more unable to form even a guess, as to what is to be the Result of the present excited state of public feeling.

This generally has prevented my venturing a decided opinion on the future Organization of Germany, unless as regards the Treaty signed at Berlin on the 26th of May last,[69] between Prussia, Hanover and Saxony, and there, I must confess, that I have always expressed my conviction from the first, that it never could be carried out in its original shape.

The event has proved that my view of this Treaty was correct, and no where does it seem to be more unpalatable, than to many of the Prussians themselves, a large Portion of whom, though unrepresented

[68] In his despatch No 42 of 5 September 1849 Forbes suggested the failure of the Prussian Union project and questioned Palmerston`s policy as put forward on 13 July 1849. For Palmerston's dispatch to the Earl of Westmorland of 13 July 1849 cf. pp. 11–12.

[69] Cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.

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in the present Chambers, viewed it with dismay, as certain to bring on a Civil War in Germany, which they (and this includes a large Portion of the Higher and lower Nobility) are resolved to prevent by any and every means, in addition to its fusing their Nationality into one great Mass too heated at the present moment to be able to retain for any length of time the impression sought to be made on it. These Classes are also well aware, that the immense Proportion of the Voters, who held back from the late Elections, now repent of having pursued this line of Conduct, and are only waiting for an opportunity to overpower by their numerical Force, the Party now at the head of affairs, so that there is a Feeling of uncertainly and insecurity generally prevalent in Prussia.

Saxony of course feels this, and we are not without anxiety as to the Elections for the approaching Diet, which are to take Place immediately. The Democratic Party are extremely active but are keeping their intrigues as secret as possible: the Conservative Party (who do not deserve the name) give out that they hope the Elections may be extremely bad, for that then, the Diet will be dissolved, and in any extreme case, Prussian aid can be called for.

They do not take into consideration that under present circumstances, Prussian Troops may not arrive in Forty eight hours, and Austrian troops cannot arrive in less: but they thus put forward a Pretext sufficiently specious for themselves alone, for not endangering their Houses and Persons in a popular Contest.

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, Confidential, No 13, Dresden, 15 March 1850

Danger of war in Germany; attitudes towards Prussia; critical state of Saxony in event of war

Being enabled to transmit this Despatch to England by a Friend who proceeds there direct, I cannot refrain from stating to your Lordship my humble opinion, that this part of Germany is in a most dangerous state, and, that from all I can collect, we are probably on the Eve of a War.

The views of the Prussian Government, all tending to the aggrandizement of that Kingdom, are no secret, however they may deny the Fact, a Denial which Monsieur de Beust has been forced to state in one of his late Speeches, but his conviction is exactly the contrary. That Austria can or will allow this, is impossible, and all my private intelligence from Prague and Vienna, whilst deploring their own risk in the present unsettled state of the Empire, speak of it as inadmissible, and that the Army in Bohemia is there for the purpose

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of opposing the Prussian Plans, and of supporting those, who like this Kingdom, are disinclined to commit an act of political suicide.

The Arch Duke Albert said lately to a Friend of one of my Correspondents, that they were only waiting until the Roads were practicable for artillery, and that as soon as this was the Case, they would 'march into Saxony and probably still further'. This Army which at first amounted to nearly 80,000 men, has certainly been much weakened by sickness, but they can still bring 60,000 men into the Field, and (what seems the least credible fact) there is now a very large sum in silver collected in Prague, and lying there ready for the opening of the Campaign. Bohemia would probably remain quiet behind them, for hopes are held out to the Manufacturing Interest there, that there will be Protective Duties laid on, sufficient to exclude us, and one of the Leaders[70] of the Liberal Party in Prague expressed his regret, that it should have come to this.

A year ago in Leipzig, there was a strong Feeling for Prussia, which soon cooled down into indifference; now, the sensible People are all against Prussia, whilst here, no one is in favor of that Power, but the greater part of the Nobility, the most pitiable set I know, and the Republican Party, who counting upon the personal weakness and known instability of that Sovereign, look upon his overthrow as an early consequence of his being placed at the head of the Northern League,[71] and hope to forward their own subversive projects. The fact of His having named Monsieur de Carlowitz to the Post of Commissary at Erfurt,[72] speaks volumes, and has disgusted all honest Saxons. It is out of the question, that Austria can think of marching into Germany unless she is sure of the assistance of Russia, who has an immense Force on the Polish Frontier, and I have before had the Honor of stating to Your Lordship, that the Poles would infinitely prefer, being united under one head, to being divided as now,[73] consequently, the Russians would meet no opposition on that Frontier. If therefore as it is said, that Prussia intends to attack Hanover before the Supreme Tribunal in Erfurt,[74] and to march troops into that Kingdom, we shall have the Austrians immediately here and the Russians in Gallicia and Posen.

I could not help saying to Monsieur de Beust, that the situation of this Kingdom was most critical, that Saxony could not remain as

[70] Not traceable.

[71] For the Erfurt Union cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.

[72] Carlowitz, former Saxon minister of justice, was appointed commissary of the Prussian government to the Erfurt Diet.

[73] Polish territories belonged to Prussia (Duchy of Posen), Austria (Kingdom of Galicia), and Russia (Kingdom of Poland).

[74] Cf. n. 118 in Prussia section.

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she is, and must either be swallowed up, or regain a Part of what she once possessed. He answered, that he perfectly agreed in what I said, but their course was so honest, and their cause so righteous, that he hoped and believed it would finally rise above the false and hollow Plans carried on against his Country.

Let the few next years turn out as they may, there is no cheering Prospect for the Future, for few of the Reigning Sovereigns in Germany, and still less their Heirs, are fitted for either stemming or heading a Revolution, such as is only now beginning.

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 25, Dresden, 13 May 1850

Nostitz named minister at Frankfurt; proceedings in the chambers; ministry refuses to accept Frankfurt Basic Rights

Monsieur de Nostitz Jänckendorff has been named Saxon Plenipotentiary at Frankfort, and left Dresden immediately for that City. He was Saxon Minister there up to the beginning of 1848, and is a man of sound sense and prudence, besides having made himself many friends during his mission. Monsieur de Zeschau, declined the Post, saying that having been a Party to framing the Treaty with Prussia,[75] (however conceived in a very different sense from what that Power seeks now to give it) he did not think he could well represent Saxony for the purpose of virtually abrogating that document. He added he would better serve the interests of his Country by not going there.

The Saxon Diet is still sitting, and disputes as well as discusses, the most immaterial points for the sake of continuing to receive the daily allowances. Nearly two days were lost in debating upon a sum of four hundred Thalers, which were refused on the score of economy, whilst each daily sitting costs the Country, Three hundred and Seventy Five Thalers; and these are the so called Patriots, who, however, are so afraid of a dissolution, that whenever the Public are excluded from the Galleries they pass almost every measure proposed by the Government. The ministers are daily rising in the estimation of every honest Saxon, and on late occasion the President of the Council, Dr Zschinsky, declared in the Chamber, with reference to the 'Constitutional Rights'[76] (the Deutsche Grundrechte), that these having been accepted for Germany, which at present was divided by Prussia into two distinct Parts, the Saxon Government neither could

[75] Three Kings' Alliance of 26 May 1849, cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.
[76] Cf. n. 62 in Frankfurt section.

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nor would consider itself bound to them, and would only act upon such Portions of them, as they deemed to be useful to this Country: One of the Radical members[77] rose, and moved that the words should be taken down and referred to a Committee, which was unanimously voted, but it will lead to nothing; for after having refused the additional Taxes, both Chambers have now granted them.

The only circumstance which prevents Ministers adjourning the Diet, is their not having yet received from it the authorization for a Loan, which is required for the completion of the Railroads &c, and every Day's delay will increase the expense, particularly with the large Loan now negotiating for Prussia.

There is not now the slightest wish in this Country to join that Power, excepting perhaps on the part of some of the Nobility, and these have no influence. The accounts from the Manufacturing Districts are good, for they are very quiet.

The Government have translated and published those Papers reflecting the future Exhibition in London,[78] which I had the Honor of receiving from your Lordship, and have named Doctor Weinlig, Commissary for arranging concerning the Objects to send there from Saxony. He understands English, which will afford more facility in any correspondence on the subject.

The Anniversaries of the Insurrection[79] passed over without the slightest disturbance.

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 31, Dresden, 13 June 1850

Convocation of the second chamber; withdrawal of liberal legislation; position of parties in Saxony

[. . .] The Government has received Loyal Addresses from Leipzig and other Towns, thanking them for the Dissolution of the Diet[80] and for the Decrees and ordinances which have been since published. The Principal of these are: a Decree re-establishing the Punishment of Death (with Reservation of the Right of Mercy of the Crown) for all Crimes, committed after its Date, the 4th of this Month, which formerly incurred the extreme Penalty of the Law. Another, announcing the Secession of Saxony from the Provisional Supreme Tribunal of Arbitration, as established at Erfurt by the Treaty of the

[77] Franz Jakob Wigard.
[78] The Great Exhibition of 1851.
[79] Cf. pp. 287–292.
[80] The chambers, elected in September 1849, were dissolved on 1 June 1850.

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26th May 1849.[81] A Third decree ordains, that henceforward a Copy of every Periodical Work must be transmitted to the Police Authorities and Directions [sic] of the Circles, instead of the Central Government.[82]

The Diet is also convoked for the 1st of next Month, but there are to be no new Elections, the Same Chambers being again called into Existence, which were closed not dissolved in the year 1848.[83] In the First Place this measure is a considerable saving of Time, for new Elections, under any Law, could not be terminated in less than three months, and in the next, it contains (however disputed), a semblance of Legality. Had the Government taken upon themselves to grant a new Electoral Law without consulting the Diet, it might have succeeded as ill as in other neighbouring Countries, and they wish to exhaust every possible Legal means, before advising His Majesty to resort to such a step. It was to be expected, that all this would not meet the approval of a whole Country as divided into Parties as Saxony. That of the pure Conservatives is chiefly confined to the Nobility, who with a few Exceptions are neither very rich nor well educated, but from the exclusive system of marriage, are separated from the other Classes and are objects of Jealousy to them. The Second Class is the most numerous: it consists of the Smaller Landed Proprietors and of those who are either still in Trade or have made their Fortunes by it; they wish to preserve the Independence of their Country and hate the Radicals, but dislike, almost despise, the Nobility, and from a fear of doing too much for these, remain inactive too long: they do not declare themselves in time to prevent a Crisis, which must add to the expenses of the Government as well as to the Taxes, for both of which they are the first to accuse the Ministers.

The Radicals are much less numerous than is generally supposed, but having nothing to lose are the most bold and active in the pursuit of their object, and have some very clever men in their Ranks: they affect to aid the Prussian Party, although they have declared in the most public manner that they hope to bring Germany to a Confederation similar to the United States. The most unaccountable Fact is, that many of the Dresden Shopkeepers who exist by the higher Classes alone, belong to the Radical Party, which includes almost without exception all the Tailors and Shoemakers.

[81] Announcement by the foreign ministry and the ministry of the interior of 4 June 1850. Saxony formally withdrew from the Three Kings' Alliance on 24 May 1850 in a letter to the Prussian government. For the tribunal of arbitration cf. n. 118 in Prussia section.

[82] General decree of the ministry of the interior of 4 June 1850.

[83] Reconvening the second chamber, elected according to the old electoral law of 1831, disregarded the electoral law of 15 November 1848 and was thus a breach of the constitution.

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I still hope that under a strong and bold Government like the present, those who have something to lose will at last see the necessity of uniting against those who have every thing to gain, and that the Diet will meet in sufficient numbers to be able to transact business. Of the Upper Chamber there is no doubt, and Ministers have sanguine hopes, that the Second will also attend; but the Radical Members, of the last and of the future Diet, are actively employed in seeking to persuade the majority to declare themselves incompetent, as the Convocation is illegal.

Up to yesterday, only one Member had sent in his Declaration, but I was informed to day, that one of the most respectable and conservative of the number, fully admitting the necessity of this measure, hesitates as to taking his seat, on account of a want of entire Legality as to its assembling.[84] Can I give your Lordship a stronger Proof of the Pedantry of some of the clever men here?

The Government intend immediately to call in the Substitutes of those members who decline, and as soon as they have passed a new and reasonable Law of Election, as well as a Loan to complete the Railroads &c, then to dissolve this Diet.

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 62, Dresden, 4 November 1850

Saxon Army set on war footing; Saxon position towards German affairs

I ought long since to have acknowledged the Receipt of Your Lordship's Despatch No 27 of the 30th of September, transmitting to me Copies of a Despatch from her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin[85] and of the Protocol drawn up there on the Ratification of the Treaty with Denmark.[86]

I received it on the 7th of October, and had always hoped to be able to add that there was some Prospect of terminating the Rebellion in the Danish Duchies,[87] which would and must be an immediate consequence of some however superficial, Harmony between the two great Powers of Germany.

Although the interests of this Kingdom must naturally incline her to Austria, Saxony has hitherto remained an inactive Spectator of all the Military Preparations making in other German States, and whilst

[84] Forty of the seventy-four Deputies who had belonged to the second chamber in 1848 refused to attend. It is not possible to establish to whom Forbes is referring in his despatch.

[85] Sir Henry Francis Howard.

[86] Treaty of 2 July 1850, cf. n. 176 in Prussia section.

[87] Schleswig and Holstein.

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constant Councils were held, all remained as usual: but yesterday Two Orders were published most unexpectedly, the one recalling all soldiers on Furlough, and calling in the Reserve, – the 2nd stating that Two thousand seven Hundred Horses were required for the Army, appointing different Towns for Horse Fairs (allowing only eight days for completing the number) and terminating with the Threat, that if a sufficient number were not brought in for sale, the Government would be obliged to resort to other measures, and to take them by Force.[88]

Independent of the immense expense to the Country, so many of the Reserve are established in Business, are in the Service of Private Individuals or have obtained small Places on the Railroads &c, (all of which they are now forced to abandon), that there was at first a general outcry against the measure: this was followed by a deep feeling against Prussia, to whose vacillating Policy, the necessity was universally attributed. I confess that I was inclined to suppose that it was adopted in consequence of orders from Frankfort. I therefore waited on M. de Beust, and his Excellency with his usual kind frankness, informed me that the Prussian Minister, Count de Galen, had by order of his Government read him a despatch on Friday last, in which he was instructed to demand a categorical Answer to the Question as to what position Saxony intended to adopt at the present moment, when opinions and interests were so conflicting and involved.

His Excellency answered that every Newspaper could bear witness to the Fact, that Saxony considered herself as bound to the Germanic Diet now sitting in Frankfort, of which she composed a Part, and that her Position was so clear as to require no further explanation: but he begged Count Galen to consider this as merely a Personal answer from him, and that if he required any thing more, he must give it to him in writing, when he would submit it to the Cabinet. Count Galen said that he was not authorised to do so; but has since sent his Secretary of Legation[89] to Berlin, evidently to ask for further Instructions. After relating all this, Monsieur de Beust said to me, that the Prussian Despatch could only be considered in the Light of a Threat, and that pressed as they had been by Austria, and particularly Bavaria, who complained that this Kingdom was not assisting them as she should, there was no choice left, and that however unwillingly and perfectly conscious of the difficulties they would find in the Chambers, the Government had no alternative, but putting their army on a War Establishment. He added that if the news was confirmed of General Radowitz's resignation, the orders would be immediately suspended,

[88] Orders of 2 November 1850; both orders were repealed on 4 November.
[89] Julius Freiherr von Canitz und Dallwitz.

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but as yet we have no certainty of the Fact. I need scarcely say, that these measures have increased the hatred felt here to Prussia, and have converted those who were Friends to that Power.

Some days back, two Orders were published from the War Office, abolishing the German Cockade in the Army, and doing away with that Part of the Oath taken by the Military which mentions the constitution.[90]

All our private accounts represent Berlin as being in a great state of Fermentation, but the Democratic Party there cannot conceal their exultation.

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 74, Dresden, 7 December 1850

Impression made by Great Britain's course in German affairs

I had the honor on the 2nd Ultimo of receiving Your Lordship's despatch No 30, of the 26th of the preceding Month, transmitting to me for my Information and guidance, a Copy of one addressed to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires[91] at Berlin, instructing him to lose no opportunity of stating, that the assertion made by the Democratic Party in Germany, that Prussia would be supported by Great Britain in a War against Austria, was wholly devoid of Foundation. In several of my preceding numbers, I have mentioned the Presence of Prussian Agents in this Kingdom, and their Intrigues against this Sovereign and his Government: and the assertion mentioned above was so openly and so repeatedly made here, that few Persons attached any importance to my personal Expressions of utter disbelief, that Her Majesty's Government would support any Power in a War originating in the Errors of the Power itself, which provoked it, and which could only hope for success through the aid of that Party which in the short space of three Years, had converted one of the finest, richest and most improving Nations of Europe into a Field of fiercely contending Passions, where all that is noble or intelligent, may be said to be fighting for their very existence.

I hope I may be allowed to say, that the receipt of Your Lordship's despatch was a source of sincere pleasure to me: in my preceding number, I had expressed the Hope, that the wise councils of Her Majesty's Government would perhaps avert the horrors of Civil War, and I am firmly convinced that your Lordship's Despatch to

[90] The orders were published on 28 October 1850.
[91] Sir Henry Francis Howard.

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Mr Howard has had a most beneficial influence on that of Prussia, for it must have proved to them the utter hopelessness of a Contest begun, not only in opposition to all Germany, but to all the Great Powers of Europe who could bear upon the Question. At the same time, I cannot refrain from expressing my apprehension that as long as a disarmament has not taken place, the evil is only postponed, for nothing is as unpalatable as the failure of ambitious Plans, without the consolation of feeling that they were founded on any Principle but mere self Interest.

The very Day, that I received the Despatch, which I have now the Honor of acknowledging, I waited on Monsieur de Beust, and communicated it's [sic] inclosure to him, as the best and most authentic contradiction of all the unfounded assertions respecting Great Britain. His Excellency expressed his sincere Pleasure at its contents, and added, that he never could bring Himself to believe them. All private Accounts agree in stating that nothing can exceed the Bitterness still felt, however unfoundedly, in Berlin against Saxony; the Prussians will persist in asserting, that this Kingdom was only saved by their Intervention and assistance; they never seem to ask themselves the Question, had they remained passive Spectators of the Insurrection in Dresden,[92] and allowed it to succeed, how would they have fared at Home?

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 75, Dresden, 7 December 1850

Saxon government's reaction to the result of the conference at Olmütz

I can perceive that this Govt is not satisfied with the Result of the Conference at Ollmütz, they seem to think that Austria has in a manner sacrificed the Independence of the Secondary Powers of Germany, by the addition of Prussia to the alternate presidency of the Germanic Diet.[93]

In a late Conversation with Monsr. de Beust on this subject, I took the liberty of saying to His Excellency; 'Do not for God's sake overlook the advantages of being preserved from the Horrors of War. You must always be in a manner dependent on one of your Powerful Neighbours, therefore pray exert your influence with Bavaria &c, to procure a speedy termination of a Position, which is ruining your Finances, and seek in concert with her and others to invent some

[92] Cf. pp. 287–292.
[93] For the Olmütz Punctation cf. n. 177 in Frankfurt section.

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Form which may save appearances regarding what in your Heart, you must admit to be inevitable to a certain degree.'

I hope that Your Lordship will not disapprove of this advice. I have not yet ascertained the names of the Representatives at the Conferences, for which the day is not yet definitively fixed.[94] Count Alvensleben was talked of for Prussia: there could not be a better choice, and I have known him for many years.

FO 68/76: Francis Reginald Forbes to Viscount Palmerston, No 81, Dresden, 16 December 1850

Approaching conferences in Dresden

The Post of this morning brought me Your Lordships despatch No 33, of the 10th Ultimo, instructing me to take no part in the approaching Conferences[95] about to be held in this Capital, to express no opinions on German Affairs unless instructed so to do, and to collect information as to what is passing here, for the purpose of reporting what I hear to Her Majesty's Government.

I shall strictly conform to Your Lordship's instructions and lose no opportunity of communicating whatever may be going on here.

The Austrian Minister[96] received a Despatch on Saturday announcing that these are to commence on the 23d of this Month, though Monsieur de Beust informed me this morning, that he did not believe this could be the case, and that the opening would take place some days later. If the Prussian Chamber are to re-open on the 3rd of next month, the Day to which they stand adjourned, Monsr de Manteuffel will have nothing more to communicate, than whatever may have been previously arranged between His Government and that of Austria, for unless I have been much misinformed, there will be strong and determined opposition on the part of many of the Secondary Powers. Bavaria, having strained every nerve to assist Austria, cannot consent to be completely thrown again into the background, for the purpose of rendering the Peace more advantageous to her apparently insincere Friend: and she will be followed by Wirtemberg.

Hanover trusts, perhaps too much to having to guard a less extent of Frontier, and relies naturally on the Protection of England, whilst

[94] Cf. following dispatch.

[95] Dresden Conferences of Ministers, 23 December 1850 to 15 May 1851, attended by all members of the German Confederation to discuss the future political and economic organization of Germany.

[96] Franz Seraphim Graf von Kuefstein.

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the strength of this Country lies in her Position, and in the necessity of Austria never allowing it to fall into the Hands of Prussia. That we shall have peace now, is certain, but I cannot refrain from expressing my humble opinion, that it is basised upon a too hollow foundation to be lasting. Every Tie in Germany has been loosened during the last two or three Years, there is but little Respect, and less affection felt towards the Sovereigns, and fear has forced Peace on the one, as the present Force of Circumstances, on the other, whilst the old Jealousy and Rivalry remain in all their Force, accompanied with that distrust, which is but too well founded amongst all. In the lower Classes, the most prevalent and increasing opinion is that of change, and there are endless mischievous spirits at work, persuading them, that the only beneficial change for them, is the overthrow of the Highest and of the Higher. This is a gloomy prospect, and I trust I may be deceived, but such it seems to me.

There is now no doubt that Prince Schwarzenberg will arrive here for the beginning and will be replaced by Count Buol. Monsieur de Pfordten will also come on the part of Bavaria, but Monsieur de Beust, either did not know this morning, or would not mention, who was to accompany him. Monsieur de Manteuffel will be later replaced by Count Alvensleben, and Monsieur de Beust himself will attend on the part of Saxony. Count Buols sister[97] is married to Monsieur de Meyendorff, the Russian minister at Vienna, which affords an easy means of communication.

I am personally acquainted with all, excepting Monsieur de Manteuffel, but if the conferences are to be regarded as secret, I hope that Your Lordship will allow me to add, that the Result of such deliberations is often easier to ascertain at a distance where the Secret is less kept, than on the spot. No exertion will be wanting on my Part, and I ought to have mentioned elsewhere, that having heard that my Austrian and Prussian Colleagues[98] were most anxious about the more exact purport of Your Lordship's Despatch to Lord Westmoreland and Mr Magenis,[99] I took upon myself to communicate its contents to them: they were sure to be informed of it, either from Home or by their Plenipotentiaries about to arrive, and on account of the approaching Conferences, I wished to have the merit of giving them some information.

[97] Sophie von Meyendorff.

[98] Franz Seraphim Graf von Kuefstein and Ferdinand Graf von Galen.

[99] In his letter to Westmorland and Magenis of 3 December 1850 Palmerston referred to Prussian and Austrian plans to bring their non-German territories into the German Confederation. Palmerston stressed that the German Confederation was created as a 'purely German Body' and 'that no important change can properly be made [. . .] without consent of the Powers which were parties of the Vienna Treaty of 1815.'

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