AUSTRIA

(VIENNA)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

VIENNA

FO 7/390: Arthur Charles Magenis to Viscount Palmerston, No 95, Vienna, 20 May 1851

Results of the Dresden Conferences

Prince Schwarzenberg returned on the Evening of the 18th Instant from Dresden, where he presided at the closing of the Conferences of the German Powers on the 15th.[1] His Highness, as I am informed, made a very conciliatory speech on that occasion, and was followed by the Prussian Prime Minister Baron Manteuffel who is reported to have spoken with much less tact.

The Dresden Conferences appear to have led to a far less result than might have been expected from five months negociation; they prove, however, the extreme difficulty of coming to an understanding on the questions discussed there by parties whose views are so divergent, a difficulty which the absence of any common pressing danger, and the discrepancy of views of the two great German Powers has tended to increase.

Five points, – the result of the labours of the various committees of the Conferences, were submitted to the assembled Plenipotentiaries which, if accepted, were to have been transmitted to Frankfort to be passed as Federal Laws by the Diet.

These points were:

1. Diminution of the time allowed to receive fresh Instructions,[2] and the maintenance of two fifths of the military contingent in readiness.
2. The substitution of a majority of two thirds instead of an unanimity of votes in the Diet in certain organick Regulations of a common interest, with the exception however of what may be termed organick Laws ("Grundgesetze") and questions concerning commerce.
3. Reform of the Federal Constitution, and annulling of the declaration of Rights ("Grundrechte") passed by the National Assembly.[3]

[1]For the Dresden Conferences see n. 1 in Saxony section.

[2]In order to shorten the procedure of voting at the Federal Diet, a time limit of two weeks (when applicable) was agreed. Prior to this, the standing orders of the Federal Diet allowed the minister plenipotentiaries six to eight weeks to receive instructions.

[3]For the *Grundrechte* see n. 1 in Württemberg section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

4. An agreement for the promotion of Commerce and Traffick.
5. The establishment of a Federal Tribunal.

Of the above proposals the first alone passed unanimously, (with the exception of the Dutch Plenipotentiary[4] who was without Instructions), and will be in consequence sent to Frankfort to be passed as a Federal Law.

Austria voted for the four first proposals and against the last: while Prussia voted for the first alone, and against all the others. The resolution which has passed will place always at the orders of the Diet two fifths of the contingent of any State of the Confederation, and will certainly tend to give the Diet much greater Power. Prince Schwarzenberg professed, at least, to be satisfied with the result of the Dresden Conferences which has attained that end.

FO 7/391A: Arthur Charles Magenis to Viscount Palmerston, No 160, Vienna, 27 August 1851

Imperial repeal of ministerial responsibility; public condition of Austria; unworkability of 1849 constitution; gains from 1848 revolution

The Official Vienna Gazette[5] of yesterday Morning contained the copies of four Imperial Rescripts addressed to the Prime Minister Prince Schwarzenberg, and the President of the Council of the Empire Baron Kübeck, relieving the Ministers from all responsibility to any political authority whatsoever, except to the Monarch and the Throne; modifying in consequence, the Statutes of the Council of the Empire,[6] which in the words of the Rescript, "from henceforward is to be regarded alone as My Council, and as the Council of the Throne;" and finally, as a consequence of the Imperial Resolution respecting the Ministerial Responsibility, stating that His Imperial Majesty "finds it as necessary as it is urgent to take the question of the existence and the possibility of carrying out the constitution of March 4th 1849 into mature and thorough consideration."[7]

[4]Jonkheer Friedrich van Scherff.

[5]*Wiener Zeitung*.

[6]According to the statutes of 13 April 1851, the *Reichsrat* was an advisory council to the monarch and the council of ministers. It was appointed by the emperor and consisted initially of eight members (including two Hungarians), all of whom were high-ranking bureaucrats. Its first sitting took place on 22 April 1851.

[7]The constitution of 4 March 1849, which replaced the constitution of 25 April 1848, laid down the legal unity of the German and non-German parts of the empire in an indivisible and indissoluble hereditary monarchy, and provided for a two-chamber parliament. Emperor Franz Joseph did not wait for the final statement of the cabinet and annulled the constitution by the Sylvester Patent of 31 December 1851.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

I have the honour to transmit herewith in original and translation copies of these most important documents, as well as the leading Article of the Vienna Gazette which contained them, and which though it appeared in the non-official part of that Paper, certainly emanates from the Government, and may be looked upon as the Ministerial development of the Imperial Rescripts.[8]

These latter, as Your Lordship will observe, are dated Schönbrunn the 20th of August, two days after His Imperial Majesty had attained his 21st year, though they were only published six days later. This delay appears to have arisen from the desire that they might be published in the capitals of all the Provinces simultaneously, and officers attached to the Staff of the Emperor were sent with copies of the rescripts to the various Stattholders, and I understand they were published in the Capitals of all the Provinces yesterday.

I understand that Prince Schwarzenberg has addressed a circular to the Austrian missions on the subject of these Rescripts, in which it is stated that Austria was not ripe for a Constitutional form of Government. His Highness has, I know, declared that the strongest measures would be employed to repress any movement. I forebore entering into any discussion with Him on the subject, and He merely stated, in alluding to what had been done "la vérité avant tout."[9]

The political course which The Emperor and His Ministers have entered on, – for it amounts to a total Repeal of the Constitutional form of Government, which existed it is true only on paper, and in virtue of promises made by His Imperial Majesty on the advice and counsel of these same Ministers, – and the hardly concealed intention of returning to absolute Government appears to me to be of such importance, that I have detained the Messenger until this Evening, in order to give Your Lordship information of 24 hours later date. The Messenger will, I reckon, still arrive at Berlin in time to deliver my despatches to Lord Bloomfield's Messenger to Hamburg, though I shall be prevented sending my despatches under flying seal to his Lordship.

Nothing of importance has, however, occurred in this capital since the publication of these "ordonnances." They are regarded with peculiar satisfaction by most of the Austrian Nobility with whom I have spoken, who have never ceased to regret the times before March 1848. The Austrian Nobility generally are most ready to serve their Emperor in the army and to courageously risk their lives on the field of Battle, but they take a very slight part in the civil Government of the

[8]Enclosures: extract from *Wiener Zeitung*, 26 August 1851 (original and translation), including three *Kabinettsschreiben* from Franz Joseph to Schwarzenberg, and one *Kabinettsschreiben* from Franz Joseph to Kübeck, all dated 20 August 1851. The leading article was published in the section *Nichamtlicher Teil*.

[9]'Truth before all'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Country, and they stood aloof with few exceptions, whether it arose from unwillingness or incapacity from all participation in the events which took place in 1848 and 1849. Their approval of what has been done was consequently to be expected.

To judge the effect produced on the monied and commercial classes, from the quotations of the Exchange of yesterday, there would appear to be little alarm among them, for there was no material variation in the value of publick securities.

It has long and generally been felt that the Constitution of 1849, which it must be observed was the work of the present Ministers, was an impossibility, so that it's repeal has not produced perhaps as great a sensation as might be supposed, the more so as the last of the Imperial Rescripts is very ambiguous in it's expressions as to what may be substituted in it's place. The Door is not then closed to hope for the future. The military and police Force too here and elsewhere is so great that no one ventures to express an opinion of dissatisfaction, and there is consequently an apparent apathy, which in my opinion the Government will materially deceive itself, if it should regard as either indifference or approbation. If – as I believe – the constitution of 1849 is to be replaced by as close a return to what existed before 1848 as possible, I can hardly doubt that publick dissatisfaction will be vastly increased, and that although it may not find a means for the present of making itself known, the first moment of Austrian weakness, or of publick commotion in Europe will be taken advantage of. Should such a crisis occur, mere promises must fail to satisfy publick opinion.

The advantages which the publick have gained by the Revolution of 1848 may be briefly enumerated, as far as I know. They are, abolition of forced labour; the establishment of a very defective system of communal Laws, but which may be altered and improved; a Publick Press not quite as fettered as it was, but very far from free; the establishment of Jury and of oral instead of written Testimony in criminal, and in some cases of civil Judicative; and the periodical publication of the Publick Income and Expenditure, without any guarantee as far as I know for their accuracy, or any controul over the Publick Expenditure.

FO 7/405: Earl of Westmorland to Earl of Malmesbury, No 229, Vienna, 31 October 1852

Refusal of the emperor to send delegation of officers to Wellington's funeral in London

I had the honour of reporting to Your Lordship in my Despatch No 228 what took place on my first interview with Count Buol, upon the Wish

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

expressed by Her Majesty's Government that Austrian Officers and Privates belonging to the Regiment of which the late Duke Wellington was Colonel, should be deputed to attend his Funeral and also that the Austrian Government would decide in what way they would prefer that the Baton of Marshal, belonging to the late Duke should be borne in the procession.[10]

At my next interview with Count Buol I learnt from him, upon this subject that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor adhered to the decision he had already taken before the wishes of Her Majesty [*sic*] Government were submitted to him. Count Buol stated that His Majesty would be very unwilling for many reasons to send a Detachment of Officers and soldiers to take part in any ceremony in a foreign Country, and upon this occasion, he felt that, although convinced of the regard and consideration which would be shewn by the British Nation to any Deputation from his Army which might be sent to do honor to the Duke of Wellington's memory, yet, considering the number of Hungarians and Italians in open and declared hostility to his Government, who were congregated in London, he could not but apprehend that some of them might seize the opportunity of insulting his troops, which the British Government would be unable to prevent. Count Buol said that he concurred with His Majesty in this apprehension, more particularly on account of the many instances which had occurred, from the attack on Marshal Haynau[11] (which was never punished) to the ovations in favor of Kossuth, all of which he looked upon as originating with the Refugees, and from whom he could not persuade himself, any Austrian Uniforms in London would be safe from insult, and if any such should take place, he knew the Emperor would never forgive himself for having exposed any individual in his Army to such an affront. Count Buol stated therefore, that he had received the Emperor's orders to explain these grounds of his decision to Count Colloredo, but at the same time to direct that Minister to assure Her Majesty's Government of his deep regret that he could not, with that confidence which was required upon such an occasion, give this additional proof of his respect and esteem for the Duke and of his Sympathy with the feeling which had been evinced by the British nation upon the Loss they had sustained.

I stated, in reply to Count Buol that I was quite convinced all these apprehensions were entirely groundless, that he might rely upon it, the

[10]From 1818, the Duke of Wellington held the rank of an imperial field marshal and was colonel-in-chief of the Austrian infantry regiment No. 42.

[11]On 4 September 1850, during a visit to England, General Haynau – who had been involved in the suppression of the Hungarian revolution and was notorious for his brutality – was attacked by indignant workers at a London brewery.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

attitude of the British People would be such on this occasion, that no foreigner would venture to put himself in opposition to it, and that I was quite certain that only the enemies of Austria would rejoice at the absence of her Officers and soldiers, and that all those persons, who felt the respect that was due to so ancient an ally, would be grieved at it. I therefore called upon Count Buol, before he obeyed the Emperor's orders by writing to Count Colloredo, to lay before His Majesty the arguments I had made use of, and the assurances I had given him.

Count Buol promised me, he would report to the Emperor all I had said upon the subject; he afterwards however informed me, that His Majesty could not change the decision he had taken, and that he had expressed the more regret, because he felt great confidence in the convictions I had expressed, but his objections to a measure which was contrary to the usages of his Army, and which (after the marked demonstrations of Respect for the Duke of Wellington's memory which he had given and which his Army throughout his Dominions had participated in) was not required, obliged him to adhere to the decision he had come to.

Count Buol then informed me that he was occupied in writing the Despatch to Count Colloredo and that he would transmit to me a copy of it.

In closing the Despatch, I beg to express to Your Lordship the extreme regret which I have felt at the decision which has thus been come to and to assure You that I have omitted no arguments or exertion to arrive at a different conclusion.

FO 7/417: Earl of Westmorland to Earl of Clarendon, No 130, Vienna, 24 March 1853

Tension between Britain and Austria over press reports and the activities of revolutionaries in London

I brought before Count Buol the substance of Your Lordship's conversation with Count Colloredo relating to the two despatches from that Minister with respect to the Refugees in England.

Count Buol is glad to learn that Your Lordship was satisfied with the general tone and character of the despatches, and particularly as they were exempt from all official complaint or remonstrance on the subject of the Refugees, but upon my mentioning that you had remarked upon the tone of the German Press against England, Count Buol said "but only observe what is the tone of the English journals against us." I then mentioned Your Lordship's remarks upon the contraul [*sic*] which the Governments of Germany have over their Press, and he replied that Censorship before publication does not

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

exist in Germany and the transgressions of the Press can only be punished by suppression, fines &c, which would be inflicted if Foreign Sovereigns or Governments were improperly attacked, but in face of the violent abuse daily heaped on Austria by the English Press, how can retorts be prevented? He feels that it is impossible to regulate the polemics between the two Presses; He regrets this, and he hopes the good sense of the Editors on both sides would see that it could lead to no advantage to either party. He particularly alluded to a most violent article which had appeared against England in a Munich paper,[12] and stated that it had been seized by order of his Government before it had been distributed in Austria, and so far the circulation of such an article had been prevented.

Count Buol remarked, upon your Lordship's enquiry of Count Colloredo as to whether any documents had been found or if any proof existed of the notorious fact that orders for assassination and insurrection came direct from the Central Committee in London,[13] and your statement that if any such did exist it was important that Her Majesty's Government should have congnisance [*sic*] of them, that plenty of these proofs existed and he had already stated to Count Colloredo that if Her Majesty's Government determined to institute a Legal Process against the conspirators in England, the Austrian Government would afford them every information they might require, and that if they would send a confidential person to point out the nature of any evidence which might be desired, every assistance would be afforded him.

Count Buol remarked, upon the allusion your Lordship had made to the policy of the measure taken by the present Emperor Napoleon of publishing the proclamations of the French Refugees in the Moniteur,[14] that you did not seem to be aware that the proclamations of Kossuth and Mazzini,[15] although most atrocious, were only one of the many modes by which the conspirators in London further their guilty projects; that it was their constant action with the Revolutionists abroad and with their secret societies, the regulation of all their plans, the application of their Loans, and the central organisation proceeding from the London committees which constituted their guilt towards

[12]Most probably the *Neue Münchener Zeitung*, which published an anti-British article on the Refugee Question on 17 March 1853.

[13]European Central Democratic Committee, founded at the initiative of Giuseppe Mazzini in June 1850.

[14]On 15 November 1852, the official French newspaper, *Le Moniteur*, published a manifesto of the society *La Révolution*, the appeal *Au peuple* (co-authored by Victor Hugo), and the manifesto *Seigneuret* of the *Comité révolutionnaire socialiste*.

[15]See n. 26 in Saxony section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Austria and rendered them a cause of continual menace and danger, not to the State, but to the loyal subjects whom they sacrificed and the unfortunate dupes whom they were able to mislead. When I mentioned your Lordship's remarks upon the severe acts of the Austrian Government towards the emigrants from Lombardy and the natives of the Canton of Tessin,[16] Count Buol stated that these were measures most repugnant to His Government but were forced upon them by the constant conspiracy against them which had its chief support from the refugees in England. He therefore called upon the British Government to curb the license of these people and he quoted the speeches of Mr. Canning and others in the House of Commons on the third reading of the alien bill in 1818 and in 1824,[17] in which he had defended the provisions of that Bill with the greatest eloquence, as necessary to save England from the reproach of being the centre from which the peace and tranquillity of other Nations were constantly to be menaced.

FO 7/438: Earl of Westmorland to Earl of Clarendon, No 445, Vienna, 29 November 1854

Attempts to acquire sheepskin jackets to supply troops in the Crimea

On the receipt of your Lordship's telegraphic dispatch of the 22nd instant, instructing me to employ agents to purchase twenty thousand Sheepskin-coats for Her Majesty's troops in the Crimea, I immediately set on foot enquiries as to the mode in which this commission might most expeditiously be executed. I found that it could not possibly be effected in Vienna, and that the best chance of success would be secured by sending agents to Pesth and to Prague. Mr. Morier, by my directions proceeded accordingly to Pesth, having previously placed himself in communication with a mercantile house in Vienna whose agents were dispatched into Bohemia to purchase as many of the articles required as were to be found in that Kingdom. On the 21st instant Mr. Morier reported to me from Pesth that, owing to the peculiar circumstances connected with the production and sale of the articles in question, great difficulties lay in the way of speedily procuring the quantity required. The supply in demand for each district is manufactured in the district itself and this not in wholesale quantities by large capitalists, but on a very small scale by hand labor in the different villages and townships. Your Lordship will perceive from this statement the difficulty of speedily collecting a large quantity

[16]Ticino (see n. 20 in Hamburg section).

[17]Debates of 8 June 1818 and 12 April 1824 respectively, when the continuation of the 1793 Aliens Act, which included the right to deport unwanted aliens, was passed by the House of Commons.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of these articles and when it is added that the fairs, at which the great bulk of them is sold, fall in October and early in November, it appears that no more unfortunate period of the year than the present could have been chosen for the proposed operation.

Under the circumstances Mr. Morier found that the only chance of executing the commission with which I had charged him was to send agents without loss of an hour into the different villages throughout the country, with ready-money to purchase as many of the articles as were still to be had, and for this purpose to draw upon a Vienna banker[18] (and I guaranteed his draft) for 20,000 Florins. To promote the operation which he had set on foot, and to enable the agents in Bohemia and Moravia to effect purchases, I have been obliged this day to draw a bill upon Your Lordship for £5,000 at three months date. By the means thus adopted I am in hopes that a considerable quantity of these articles may be purchased before the 15th of next month, the date which I have fixed for their delivery to Vienna, and which your Lordship has approved in your telegraphic Despatch to me of the 26th instant. I found that it would be absolutely impossible to get even a small part of the quantity desired by an earlier date.

I am in communication with Mr. Raven for procuring the means of transport for these goods from Trieste to the Crimea, and from his latest advices I have reason to hope that sure and speedy conveyance for them will be provided by the middle of next month. I fear that the expenses attending the whole operation will be very considerable, but I feel that the humane object for which the outlay is made will justify whatever disbursements may be found necessary to ensure its speedy attainment, and your Lordship has sanctioned my entertaining this sentiment by the instruction in your telegraphic Despatch of the 26th "to disregard the cost and to look only to expedition."

Mr. Morier has shown great zeal in endeavouring to execute the commission with which I entrusted him, and I have every reason to hope that his praiseworthy effort will meet with considerable success.

I enclose copies of the telegraphic Despatches which I have addressed to your Lordship on this subject in the course of the week.

FO 7/452: Earl of Westmorland to Earl of Clarendon, No 60, Vienna, 7 February 1855

Federal army to be placed on a partial war footing

The report which has been made by the military commission at Frankfort upon the proposition which had been submitted by the

[18]Name not traceable.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Austrian Government to the Diet will already be known to Your Lordship; it differs from the proposal of the Austrian Government.[19] Count Buol does not however hesitate to acknowledge an important gain to the general cause of the alliance in the step which has been taken. The proportion of the whole force of Germany for active operations (which must naturally require some considerable time) will place it in a position more rapidly to take the field, whenever an order to that effect is obtained, than if only half that force was now called out: the disadvantage of the present measure is that it will require future negociation to obtain that order, but Count Buol believes that if a real necessity should arise the general feeling of the States of Germany would be in its favor. Count Buol hopes the Diet will agree to the Austrian proposition which has been addressed to it, that a Commander in Chief of the Federal Army should be named; he acknowledges however at present that no great wish is shewn by that body to adopt this measure, nevertheless he will not desist from recommending that some decision should be come to with regard to it. Count Buol stated that from the general reports he had received from the Austrian Missions accredited to the different Courts of Germany, he had been satisfied that the Prussian Government had done all in their power to give an unfavorable interpretation to the late instructions which he had addressed to those Missions[20] and to the intentions of the Imperial Government, but that he had observed with satisfaction that the strongest desire had been manifested by the greatest part of the Governments of Central Germany not to detach themselves from the policy of Austria.

FO 7/457: Henry George Elliot to Earl of Clarendon, No 85, Vienna, 29 August 1855

Russian warnings to Austria

I have reason to believe that Prince Gortschakoff is continually endeavouring to impress upon Count Buol the danger to the rest of Europe which will result from the too close alliance of England and France, and to point out that the true interests of Austria should

[19]For the Austrian motion to place the federal army on a war footing see n. 23 in Frankfurt section. In the sitting of the combined military and oriental committees of 22 January 1855, the Austrian envoy to the Federal Diet moved to mobilize at least half of the contingent and to appoint a commander-in-chief.

[20]Circular dispatch, Buol to the Austrian missions in Germany, 14 January 1855.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

prevent her from doing anything which may advance the alarming preponderance of these two Powers.

That some impression may have been produced by Prince Gortschakoff's arguments seems very probable, though it has certainly not been of the nature desired by him; for to a Power like Austria so habitually addicted to allying itself to the strongest side, all representations of the strength of the Allies serve as a warning to avail the danger there would be to her in separating from them.

FO 7/460: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, No 30, Vienna, 17 December 1855

Observations on the Concordat

Your Lordship may possibly have observed that I have refrained from expressing any opinion upon some of the subjects with which public attention in Germany is at present the most occupied.

The omission is not accidental. The short time which I have passed here has been so fully occupied that upon many of the subjects to which I allude the opinions which I could offer to Your Lordship would be little worthy of your attention.

A person who is well versed in German affairs and who is certainly little friendly to Austria and Her system expresses to me his conviction that the Emperor's conduct in agreeing to a concordat[21] which would have been so hateful to most of his predecessors on the imperial throne is to be found in the necessity for making provision for the interests of religion – religion as he conceives being nearly extinct amongst the laity of Germany, and not in an healthy state as regards the Clergy themselves.

With this idea, my informant conceives the Emperor to have resorted to those means which might have suggested themselves in the early stages of a religion which it is desired to introduce and cultivate.

This explanation does not satisfy me, and I rather incline to the belief that the Imperial feeling is explained in the account given by Sir Alexander Malet in the despatch, of which a copy is contained

[21]The Concordat of 18 August 1855 guaranteed the Catholic Church far-reaching rights throughout the Austrian Empire, including in the fields of marriage law, censorship, elementary and secondary education, and the administration of Church property.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in Your Lordship's despatch of the 11th instant marked No. 17, of a conversation which he had held with Count Rechberg.[22]

In the difficulty of governing the Italian Provinces of Italy[23] [*sic*] – in the supposed expediency of blending spiritual with temporal authority, is probably to be sought the motive of the dangerous expedient to which the Austrian Government have lent themselves, and in so doing I cannot doubt but that they have added a potent cause of embarrassment to the difficulties which already pressed upon them.

No advantage will be gained as regards Italy, while with respect to Germany the great majority of the laity and no inconsiderable number of the clergy themselves will resent an attempt to revive powers of which it was hardly to be expected that the 19th century would find the See of Rome in possession.

FO 7/480: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, Private and Confidential, No 52, Vienna, 22 January 1856

Russian acceptance of Austrian propositions; public enthusiasm in Austria; dismay at the pro-Russian German courts; conversation between Gorchakov and Buol

The manner in which the news of the Russian acceptance of the propositions of the Austrian Cabinet[24] has been received by various Parties at Vienna, would (if accurately recorded) form a curious Page of contemporary History.

By the Austrian Cabinet it has been hailed as an ample compensation for short but very intense anxiety; those persons who had been the least backward in condemning Count Buol's rash policy (for so it was deemed) being as full of excitation as the rest at a result which, in the universal opinion, liberates Austria from all further demands upon her exertions.

The feeling is not less universal among the public, and was unequivocally expressed upon the Emperor's first appearance at the Theatre after the news has arrived of the timely acceptance by Russia. His Imperial Majesty was received upon that occasion with an enthusiasm which could hardly have been excused, had he been returning from a glorious Campaign.

[22]In his dispatch No 138 to Clarendon of 3 December 1855 (not included in this volume), Malet reported from Frankfurt that, according to Rechberg, the Concordat had been taken 'solely with reference to the Italian Provinces', adding that 'there were no other means of governing them', owing to the opposition of the clergy to the Austrian government.

[23]Lombardy-Venetia.

[24]See n. 27 in Frankfurt section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Of the Russian satellites, for such in part, are the Representatives of some of the German Courts, it is not well to speak; their position having become embarrassing, or, to use the more appropriate epithet, ridiculous. Heathens in their political worship, they have been filled with dismay at the abasement of their Idol, and are in danger of falling into political unbelief. Their language had been that the last counter-propositions of Russia[25] were the extreme effort of magnanimity exerted in the cause of Peace, that more could not be asked, still less expected, that to require more argued an ignorance of public feeling in Russia which was notoriously such that even supposing the Emperor Alexander was so bent upon peace as to be ready to make further sacrifices for it's attainment[,] He would not be able to give effect to his wishes in opposition to the excited feelings of his Country.

This very foolish sort of language was held by some of my German Colleagues at the very moment that Russia's answer (telegraphed to guard against accidents both by Count Nesselrode and Count V. Esterhazy) had actually reached the Foreign Office.

On the preceding day, I had undertaken the unprofitable task of endeavouring to counteract the opinions which one of the Diplomatists above alluded to was expressing, and I did so by remarking, first, that as a matter of fact I believed the public feeling in Russia to be the very reverse of what had been described, that I had reason to believe that peace, at almost any price, was the paramount wish of the Country, and secondly, that I had seen enough of Russia to have ascertained that what was called public opinion was a very convenient instrument, a thing to be put forward as a powerful obstacle when the Sovereign objected to any particular course but which was utterly disregarded if it stood in the way of the Sovereign's good pleasure.

It was manifest that my opinions were held to be both prejudiced and absurd, and so they may have continued to be thought till the following day the 16th Instant.

As for the Prussian Mission, their objections to the pertinacious demand of an unconditional acceptance was as strong as could be that of an orthodox Russian.

This continued up to the arrival of Count Nesselrode's telegraphic despatch, when a great change became observable. From that moment, as appeared from the language of those Gentlemen it was

[25]In his dispatch of 5 January 1856 to Prince Gorchakov, the Russian foreign minister, Nesselrode, accepted the Austrian proposition of 16 December 1855, with the exception of the terms relating to the cession of South Bessarabia and the allies' right to ask for special conditions.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the friendly advice of the King of Prussia which alone determined the Emperor Alexander upon an unconditional surrender.

I should, however, be wanting in candour were I to undervalue the efforts of His Prussian Majesty, as far as it is in my power to ascertain the truth, these efforts were more strenuous than he had led his Allies to expect and were carried to the extent of his powers, and as I believe, beyond the extent of his Instructions by the Prussian Envoy at St. Petersburg.[26]

It remains for me to speak of the Russian Mission at Vienna. Their position is [*sic*] become very embarrassing and as for Prince Gorchakoff it is not easy to understand how he can remain at his present Post after that very indiscreet and excited language which he held during the late crisis.

Had he confined his remarks to the policy of the Austrian Government, all might be ascribed to diplomatic zeal and ardour, but as he talked freely of the disgrace which Russia would incur were She to adopt the Austrian Propositions, it would be anomalous that he should remain the exponent of a Policy which he has condemned by anticipation.

It is true that Prince Gorchakoff acquainted Count Buol some days ago that he was about to be named Minister of Foreign Affairs, but there are some persons who consider the announcement a little premature, who imagine that the Prince may have mistaken a contingent Summons to St. Petersburg for a promise of a portfolio, and the impending portfolio for the particular one which has so long been held by Count Nesselrode.

Were the Russian Emperor intent upon continuing the War, he might be supposed likely to call to his counsels a man recommended by his name, his violence, and his orthodoxy; all these cease, however, to be recommendations, if, worn out by an unequal struggle, Russia is really intent upon bringing it to a peaceful conclusion, unless, indeed, it is judged politic that a strictly Russian name should be affixed to a Treaty not very honourable to Russia.

Some there are, who in their assumed acuteness are apt to overlook the truth when lying palpably before them, and these are disposed to imagine that the Russian Mission were all along prepared for the final decision of their Government. Such, I am convinced, is not the case. In Russia, certainly no Russian Employé, places himself by anticipation in contradiction to the fiat of his Government. While it may then be said that the whole of the Russian Mission had formed a false estimate of the views of their Master, none was more taken by surprize than

[26]On 28 December 1855, Karl Freiherr von Werther was instructed to act on behalf of peace.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

General Stackelberg, who having left St Petersburg some days before an unconditional acceptance had been resolved upon, could hardly be brought to credit the intelligence which, upon his arrival here, he found to have just reached Prince Gorchakoff by telegraph.

As my despatch is a confidential one, I may take the opportunity of recording the conversation which passed between Prince Gorchakoff and Count Buol on the 15th Instant, and which was altogether the more striking from the Prince having been previously at the pains of declaring very openly that he felt obliged to break off all communication with a Minister who had acted such a part as Count Buol. In pursuance of this resolution, he called upon him twice on the morning of the 15th Instant, and not finding him at home, returned at 9 o'clock at night, when again he met with the same answer. He took his place, accordingly, in the ante-room, waited patiently till Count Buol returned and then followed him into his study where after stating that he was likely to be Count Nesselrode's Successor, he spoke with his habitual indiscretion of the "Politique de vengeance"[27] which it was not improbable Russia might be expected to pursue.

To this Count Buol replied coldly and sarcastically that for his part he was not a believer in that sort of policy, which might indeed be acted upon at certain moments, but could never be systematically carried out. No, Count Buol said, Russia will not be long vindictive. If you are fortunate enough to obtain a peace, you will have wounds to heal, roads to repair, banks and manufactories to establish and in these domestic occupations your energies may be long very usefully employed.

These details, trivial as some of them, may appear, will make Your Lordship to judge correctly of the relations which exist between the Russian Mission and the Austrian Government. Knowing that Austria is accustomed to lean upon some Ally and seeing that the Russian Alliance will not be available for some time Your Lordship will at once foresee to what quarter she is likely to look for support.

I will take the opportunity for apprizing Your Lordship of the determining cause (according to Count Buol's opinion) of the acceptance by Russia of the terms which have been lately offered her.

The acceptance, said Count Buol, as I learn in the strictest confidence, is owing, not to Count Esterhazy's efforts, not to the representation of the King of Prussia, but simply to the belief which Russia entertains of England being resolved upon pushing the war with vigour, and the expectation that acceptance may be followed

[27] 'Policy of revenge'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

by dissentions among the Allied Powers. It is safer to speak of past than of coming events, to record than to predict. I venture, however, to remark to Your Lordship that Austria after a strong and very unusual effort will in all probability be keen to exert all her diplomacy towards the peaceful enjoyment of the advantages which she has secured for Herself, that she will endeavour to efface the recollection of the forward part which she played during 21 days, and that whilst Her demeanour towards France will be that of confiding friendship, her bearing towards Russia and Prussia will be that of apologetic conciliation.

FO 7/486: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, No 391, Vienna, 5 June 1856

Liberalization and material development of Austria

Like every paper which I have seen from his pen, Mr. Consul General Ward's despatch, of which a copy was enclosed in Your Lordship's despatch No. 207 of the 27th Ultimo, appears to me well deserving of attention.

It was not in my power to concur in the opinions expressed by Mr. Ward some months ago respecting the Austrian Concordat,[28] but I agree heartily in part of the observations made in his communication of the 22nd Ultimo.

He is perfectly correct I think in assuming that none of the Powers have gained so much as Austria by the issue of the late war,[29] and I venture to add that it is her own fault that she has not been a greater gainer.

Those persons who consider the Austrian Government the thoroughly despotic, immoveable machine that it continued to be during successive reigns, that it was even under the liberally despotic reign of Joseph II, take I am convinced a very false estimate of the changes which have taken place here, and of those further changes which I am satisfied will gradually and at no distant period be effected.

A considerable relaxation of the laws which bear upon the Press has taken place,[30] great improvement in the state of the finances has been effected, extensive encouragement to trade and industry has

[28] See n. 21 in this section.
[29] Crimean War, 1853–1856.
[30] Press ordinance (*Pressordnung*), decreed by imperial patent on 27 May 1852.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

been given, great progress in carrying out a well devised system of internal communication has been witnessed, the shipping interests of the country, have been attended to, and with regard to the Tariff I can only say that I shall be much disappointed if in a short time the Austrian commercial system be not at least as liberal as that of the "Zollverein."

True it is that Austria has committed the great fault of entering into most unfortunate engagements with Rome, but in despite of this error, for which the decoy of religion and the habits of the priesthood offer an excuse which would have been much more solid if the connection of one extreme had not been attended by a lapse into its contrary fault, so it is that modern Austria is actually, and still more is in progress of becoming a much more liberal state than could have been expected at the time of the Emperor Francis the First, that if her system be not that of England as little is it any longer the system of Russia.

In their various ways Count Buol, Baron Bach, and M. de Bruck are all liberal Ministers – liberal, that is, for men brought up in the ideas which till within the last 8 years prevailed in Austria. Always keeping the Concordat out of sight, these persons have done much for the improvement of their country and as will before long be seen, more will be effected by them.

The points upon which I venture to insist are that Austria is "better than her reputation", better than she makes herself out to be. That the Austria of 1856 is a totally different country from the Austria of 1816 and the following 30 years, and that it is a want of perception of the course which she ought to follow, which prevents her reaping to full advantage of her improved and improving condition.

She has got rid of her Russian nimbus, and the means of her delivery would ensure her against a recurrence of the evil. She has entered into engagements with England[31] which are of the greatest importance to her, and did she but understand the full value of that alliance, and take means for rendering it intimate and cordial, my full belief is that few years would elapse before the country would become one of the most prosperous in Europe.

No Foreign Government even after the lesson afforded by the concluding passage of King Louis Philippe's reign appears to appreciate duly the importance of enjoying the good public opinion of England, and if I do not err that favourable opinion Austria might

[31] Treaty of Paris of 30 March 1856 (see n. 28 in Frankfurt section) and treaty of 15 April 1856, which renewed the alliance between Austria, Britain, and France to maintain the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

obtain, over and above all her other advantages, if she only possessed a truer instinct of her safety and of her best interests.

FO 7/491: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, No 770, Vienna, 30 September 1856

Judith und Holofernes*; remarks on religion and censorship*

A very extraordinary Piece called "Judith and Holofernes" of which I did not happen to have heard, but which appears to have had a long run here, continues to form the great attraction of one of the leading Theatres of Vienna.[32]

The play, as the name indicates, is taken from Scripture, and is made the vehicle for more blasphemy and obscenity than was introduced into any of the pieces upon Holy Subjects travestied which brought disgrace upon the French Stage at the time of the first Empire.

Judith and Holofernes, as I understand, was first represented during the year 1848, and at that time contained a number of strong political allusions. These have since been carefully expunged but all the ribaldry and blasphemy being retained, the play, as I before stated, draws great crowds to the theatre at which it is constantly given. Not having any pretention to set myself up as a censor morum, and being of opinion that the simplest course with respect to a licencious play or an improper book is not to visit the one or to read the other, I should not have adverted to the subject but for the sake of making an observation upon it.

It has been stated over and over again that the Concordat[33] was concluded upon religious grounds; and religious motives have been assigned for throwing every possible difficulty in the way of the marriages of Catholics with Protestants, for preventing the Army from partaking of broth on Fridays, and for prohibiting husbands and wives when of different creeds from resting after death in a common enclosure, and yet religion sits by with closed eyes and folded arms while a play is nightly acted which turns the very Word of God into ridicule, and which contains filth and contamination in every sentence – and this takes place in the Residence of Apostolic Majesty[34] under the eye of Two Princes of the Church,[35] and at the place where sixty

[32] *Judith und Holofernes* by Johann Nestroy (debut performance March 1848 at the *Carltheater*, where it was restaged in 1856).

[33] See n. 21 in this section.

[34] Title of the Austrian emperor as King of Hungary.

[35] Cardinal von Rauscher and the nuncio, Antonio Saverio De Luca.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Cardinals and Bishops lately assembled to deliberate upon the means of promoting religion.[36]

It might have been expected that a respect for the commonest decencies of life, that the ordinary care for the morality of a large community would have suggested the suppression of a piece which from it's grossness forms a public scandal, but if these considerations were of no weight, it might at all events have been remembered that it was impolitic to furnish the proof of the Concordat being a mere political device, introduced under the plea of solicitude for religion.

Thus then the case stands – The same theatre which is interdicted from allowing the character of a dignitary of the Church to be brought upon the stage, is permitted to represent obscene parodies of the Stories of Holy Writ. "Punch"[37] from the impropriety of its political observations is excluded by the Censorship from the Austrian Dominions, and the same Censorship allows a Vienna Audience to derive their Knowledge of the Old Testament from Judith and Holofernes as given at the Karl Theatre.

FO 7/510: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, Confidential, No 72, Vienna, 28 January 1857

Austrian isolation in Europe and waning position in Confederation; Austria's unpopular Russian policy

I take some blame to myself for having failed to lay more stress upon the position of isolation, I believe, unprecedented in which the Austrian Empire now finds itself. Whether the circumstance is to be rejoiced at, as many would hold, or to be deplored, as I am prone to consider it, is a matter of appreciation, but as to the fact little doubt is, I think, to be entertained.

While France looks coldly upon an Ally whose friendship but very lately appeared to be considered of such value, and while Russia has passed from the cordiality of the closest alliance to feelings of the most open and avowed hatred, this Country has become an object of almost as great dislike to Prussia as to Sardinia. The King of Naples,[38] withal, although obliged from political motives to keep up the appearances of close alliance being personally as ill disposed towards the Austrian

[36] Vienna episcopal conference, 6 April–17 June 1856.
[37] *Punch*, satirical weekly magazine, established in London in 1841.
[38] Ferdinando II.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

system as the liberal Party, which he prosecutes so assiduously, can be.[39]

But, it may be said that Austria possesses a great element of strength by constituting the basis of German unity, that She is the Planet round which the minor States of the Confederation revolve.

This, I apprehend to be true of the past, but not to be at all applicable to the situation of the moment, and it is to this particular point as constituting a great political change to which I am desirous of attracting Your Lordship's attention. The times are little distant when the voice of Austria was all powerful in the Confederation, when upon every question not immediately regarding their own individual interests the opinion expressed by the Cabinet of Vienna was an instruction to the small Courts of Baden, the Hesses and Nassau, an instruction too which was readily acted upon.

How then to account for the alteration which has taken place in these relations? How can it have happened that the expression of a wish on the part of Austria instead of carrying Her object as but a very few years or months since would have been the case, is now rather a signal for a disposition on the part of the minor Governments of Germany to act in a contrary sense?

I am disposed, as Your Lordship will have collected from preceding despatches, to attribute the change to the hostile policy created throughout Germany by the resolution adopted by slow degrees by Austria of emancipating Herself from the Russian Alliance or Protectorate, but, as the explanation is of a nature to be very unacceptable to Governments which desire to keep up a character of independence, theirs is widely different.

I have conversed with various Germans upon the subject, and the opinion which I more generally hear expressed is that there can be no sympathy felt for a Government which has placed itself in some measure under the authority of Rome, and of Rome represented more especially by the Jesuits.[40]

This may be the correct explanation, but I am not disposed as to consider it. Were it so, the alienation to which I am alluding would obviously be stronger in a Protestant Country like Hesse Cassel than in a Catholic Country like Bavaria, whereas the feeling is as perceptible in the one as in the other.

[39]While France and Britain had pressed the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies for internal reforms and suspended their diplomatic relations in October 1856, Austria maintained a passive and conciliatory policy. Austria's policy of non-interference was motivated by the difficulties in Austrian-ruled Lombardy-Venetia and Piedmont-Sardinia's territorial ambitions.

[40]For the Concordat see n. 21 in this section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

One of my diplomatic Colleagues and not one of the least observant is of opinion that the unpopularity under which the Austrian Government is labouring in Germany is attributable to the unconciliatory measures of Count Buol, and the tone of authority or supremacy which he is stated to assume in treating of German affairs.

This version, however, for my part, I am equally unwilling to accept, as, whatever fault may be found with Count Buol's tone or deportment these are probably very much what they were two years ago, when Austria still enjoyed that preponderance in the Councils of Germany which I conceive Her to have forfeited.

I will go further, and will venture to remark that this explanation confirms my own notion.

The real cause of the mistrust or dislike now felt throughout Germany of the Austrian Government is the policy which after laborious calculation they adopted of severing their interests from those of Russia and the real grounds of anger with Count Buol are not his haughtiness of manner or his brevity of speech, but the circumstance of him being the Author of the policy which has deprived the German Powers of that powerful Protector to whom so many among their number had accustomed themselves to look up.

In the course of the conversations which, with a view to settling my opinion, I have held with various persons upon the subject on which I am addressing Your Lordship, I have fallen, I believe, upon the trace of some former negociation or understanding between the Kings of Prussia and Wurtemberg, the particulars of which it might be interesting to ascertain. My informant, although unable, or professing to be so, to give me any particulars, asserts that some fifteen years ago these two Sovereigns were desirous of obtaining a more prominent political position, and that they had conceived the plan of realizing their idea by means of a religious association.[41] It is hardly necessary to remark that the foregathering of Vienna and Rome is well calculated to give consistency to what may have been a loosely sketched plan.

But to return to Austria; It is not, I fear to be denied that Her relations with Sardinia and Prussia are as little friendly as possible, and that short of their being broken off altogether, they cannot well be in a worse condition than they are with Russia. When to this are added an embarrassed financial condition, ill humour among the Aristocracy who find themselves deprived of their privileges, ill humor among those classes which desire a more liberal form of Government, discontent in Hungary and Bohemia which though not incurable has reached considerable proportions, and discontent in the Italian

[41] Seymour most probably refers to the joint Prussian and Württemberg attempts of the years 1843–1846 to unify the Evangelical Church in Germany.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Provinces[42] which is probably irremediable. When all these causes for anxiety are considered, it must, I think, be held that the Austrian Empire is in that position which may readily become one of great jeopardy, and that, looking only to the excited feelings which still prevail in Russia, a fresh European crisis may suddenly arise which may prove most trying even to the usual good fortune of the House of Habsburg.

To those who are disposed to view such a contingency with satisfaction I would only address one enquiry.

When the Power of Austria is thoroughly broken, where is to be found that Barrier which can preserve the Eastern Civilization of Europe against a fresh irruption of the Barbarism of the North?

FO 7/512: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, No 187, Vienna, 25 February 1857

Voyage of the Novara*; liberalization in Austria*

As Your Lordship is aware the Austrian Frigate "Novarra"[43] in pursuance of a suggestion of the Archduke Maximilian is about to be dispatched upon a voyage of circumnavigation.

The voyage being undertaken in great measure with a view to the interests of general knowledge she will carry out with her various artists and men of science and is likely to make a long absence.

A circumstance connected with the intended voyage had been mentioned to me which at once appears very honorable to its projector and indicative of the course, which perhaps slowly, but at all events certainly will be followed by the Austrian Government.

It is this that the Archduke has empowered the scientific men above alluded to place themselves in communication with the leading Journals of Germany, England, and France, and through this medium to keep the European public informed of everything of interest which may be observed during the voyage.

I have ventured on more than one occasion to state to Your Lordship my conviction that causes are in operation which must lead to greater publicity and consequently to greater liberty of the Press than ever has existed in this country and the fact which I am now noticing comes in support of the opinion.

[42]Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia.

[43]SMS *Novara* began her circumnavigation of the globe on 30 April 1857 from Trieste, returning on 26 August 1859.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

A considerable freedom of public writing, as Your Lordship has had an opportunity of judging from various extracts of newspapers forwarded to you, exists already in this country and unless I much mistake the signs of the times, that liberty is gradually upon the increase.

Whether the amount of freedom will ever obtain the proportions which it has attained in England may reasonably be doubted, but looking at the state of Austrian society now and calling to mind what it was 10 years ago I have no hesitation in asserting that a comparison between England before and England after the Reform Bill[44] would give but a faint idea of the changes which mark Austria as governed by Prince Metternich and the Austria of the present day.

In the times to which I refer the Press was under such trammels that it could hardly be said to have an existence – the freedom enjoyed now is at least equal to that which prevails in France; in those days all the important posts in the State were occupied by members of the High Aristocracy. At present the greatest families of the Empire are unrepresented in the council and in the diplomatic ranks and almost every post of importance is filled by men who whatever their other recommendations may be cannot put forth that of old descent and noble connection.

These circumstances appear to me deserving the attention of those who judging by times not far removed from the present are prone to consider Austria to be a country immoveable in its Laws, its customs, and its prejudices.

FO 7/526: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Clarendon, No 1126, Vienna, 8 November 1857

Passport system in Austria

With reference to my Despatch No 1115 of the 4th Instant, and to a subject upon which I hope not to have again to trouble Your Lordship, I would remark that as regards foreigners the English public would learn probably with surprise that the Passport system which now prevails in Austria is considerably less irksome than that which till very lately obtained in our own Country.

But a very few years since, the Foreigner landing in England was obliged not only to exhibit his Passport but, as well as I recollect, to give it up for the time. He was then directed to present himself at the Alien Office in London, and it was only after the formalities which

[44]Representation of the People Act, 7 June 1832.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

he had there to undergo that the permission to reside in the Country was granted to him.[45]

In Austria since the late reform the Traveller, as I have already had the Honor of stating, is called upon to shew his Passport upon his crossing the Frontier and has then no further occasion for it until he again passes the Frontier upon his departure. Even this formality appears to be occasionally dispensed with, as is to be seen from the circumstance of Mr. Morier having lately made a journey of many hundreds of miles through the distant provinces of Austria, in the course of which, although he frequently crossed and recrossed the Frontier, he was never called upon to exhibit his Passport.

I lay great stress upon the example set by Austria, for this reason, that Foreign Governments have been in the habit of considering that precautions which may be safely neglected in Insular England are absolutely requisite for the safety of Continental States.

We have now witnessed in a vast country occupying the Centre of Europe the modification, if not the suppression, of a system which is the terror of honest men and the object of derision of the practised rogue; whilst, as far as I am aware, not any one evil consequence has counterbalanced the good results which have attended this reform.

When despotic Austria advances there will be no excuse for the Constitutional States of Europe if they should persist in lagging behind.

FO 7/540: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Malmesbury, No 199, Vienna, 3 March 1858

Reaction to British Conspiracy to Murder Bill; Refugee Question

I can hardly call to mind any transactions which have excited the same degree of interest upon the Continent as the questions which have arisen out of the Bill lately presented to Parliament.[46]

[45]Seymour refers to the period before 1836, as the Aliens Office had been closed following the 1836 Registration of Aliens Act. In Austria, the new passport system had been introduced by imperial decree on 9 February 1857.

[46]The Conspiracy to Murder Bill was introduced to Parliament on 8 February 1858 and covered offences both in England and abroad, as a response to Continental demands following the assassination attempt on the French emperor in January 1858, which had been plotted by Felice Orsini in England. The defeat of the bill led to the resignation of Palmerston's government and the formation of a new minority Conservative administration under the Earl of Derby on 20/21 February.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The intelligence from China and India,[47] nay such German questions as those relating to Commercial difficulties, to the Navigation of the Danube, and to Holstein, appear to have lost all attraction for the Public in comparison with the reports received daily from England.

The result of the late Parliamentary struggle is of course variously judged according to men's party connexions, or personal opinions and predilections, but apart from all considerations of the kind one great result has I think been obtained.

Hitherto it has been supposed on the Continent that nothing but a reluctance on the part of the English Government to encounter a question which might be productive of some difficulty has stood in the way of an alteration of the Law as regarding Aliens,[48] and no one object would have been more likely to engage Continental Governments in a combined attempt than the desire that such a measure should be pressed upon the adoption of England.

The question is now better understood and I am willing to believe that the danger is past of seeing restrictive measures urged upon an English Government by a combination of Foreign States.

That, however, which I should grieve to see conceded by England at the summons of the whole Continent I should, I am free to confess, very gladly witness were the Law as regarding the restraint to be exercised upon Foreigners to be reinforced as a purely English measure resorted to from an exclusive regard to English interests.

It appears to me that there is nothing which a Country should preserve more jealously in its own keeping than the care of its own Foreign relations, and I cannot but fear that these may be compromised at any moment by the abuse of the large measure of hospitality which Foreigners of every description meet with in England.

The danger, which at all times has been great, increases in proportion as the severity of the Laws in France and the severe pressure exercised by France over neighbouring states tend to increase the numbers of those who seek refuge in our Country and among whom are known to be those who are prone to forget that the hospitality which they enjoy has its obligations as well as its privileges.

I am aware of the unpopularity of the opinion which I am venturing to submit to Your Lordship, but it has been confirmed by so many

[47]Seymour most probably refers to news being reported from the Sepoy Uprising in India (1857–1859) and the Second Opium War between China and an Anglo-French force (1856–1860).

[48]From 1850 there were no laws to prevent foreigners settling in Britain or empowering the authorities to expel aliens.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

years of consideration that I should hardly feel to be acting with honesty were I to refrain from its expression.

Nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since Mazzini and a certain number of his associates repaired to England to establish themselves as professional Revolutionists,[49] the Head of the Party publishing, at the same time, his creed according to which, as there is an incompatibility between Sovereigns and Peoples, the First must be removed if the condition of the Second were ever to be amended.

I thought at the time, and ventured to say so, that some restraint, actual or contingent, ought to be exercised over men who profess these doctrines and who give proof of their readiness to act upon them, and I can only say that what was then strong opinion has become settled conviction. The conviction is indeed so inveterate that I entertain no doubt as to the adoption at a period more or less remote of such measures as will make every Foreigner who seeks an Asylum in England aware that the condition upon which English hospitality is extended to him is that of his not making our Country the ground from which attacks upon Foreign Governments or attempts upon Foreign Sovereigns are to proceed.

FO 7/542: George Hamilton Seymour to Earl of Malmesbury, Confidential, No 288, Vienna, 31 March 1858

Austria's international isolation and domestic problems

Before quitting Vienna, I am very desirous of calling Your Lordship's attention to the political condition of this Country, as regards foreign relations. It is such I think as to be deserving as well of the sympathy as the interest of Her Majesty's Government.

At no period of the term which has elapsed since the conclusion of the great French Wars, has this Country stood so completely alone, at none excepting during the troubled times of 1848 was it threatened with more internal dissention and yet withal never was its bearing towards other states more dignified than at present.

As long as the so termed Holy Alliance[50] subsisted, the independence of Austria was a vain word, it was probably still more so when as the Holy Alliance became virtually extinct, Austria accustomed herself to lean exclusively upon Her Northern Ally.

When it became necessary that this connexion, which, although a heavy chain, was likewise a firm support, should be given up,[51]

[49]Mazzini settled in London in January 1837.

[50]See n. 68 in Prussia section.

[51]On 2 December 1854, Austria formed an alliance with Britain and France, pledging to support the Four Points to end the Crimean War.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Austria, wholly unaccustomed to stand alone gave some indications of intending to throw Herself into the arms of France, and this possibly might have occurred, had Her advances been met with more cordiality and steadiness, and had it not since become apparent that a Russian intimacy had more charms for the Emperor Napoleon than the close alliance which this Country, contrary to its habits, seemed to press upon him.

For a short period the Imperial Government appeared to be painfully conscious of the isolated position in which it found itself, but, encouraged by the friendly voice of England, it soon assumed a firm and dignified attitude, and is, I believe, prepared under an honest and patriotic Minister,[52] to meet single handed if needs be, any difficulties by which it may be assailed.

To a Country like this, accustomed to the closest political alliances, the trial may be severe, but if happily got over, it is one which can hardly fail to strengthen its independence and to elevate it's character.

That the position however is critical cannot, I think, be disputed, the hostility of Russia being patent and avowed, every act of France manifesting tendencies which are any thing [*sic*] but favourable to its nominal Ally and the feelings of the Prussian Cabinet being such as to render it at least doubtful what course would be taken by that Government were the embarrassments of Austria to be what they might readily become.

Nor is this all, for clouded as are the foreign prospects of Austria, the view of her internal condition is of a nature to give still more reason for anxiety.

In Hungary, besides that the wounds received by national feeling are unhealed, distress prevails to such an extent that a very general inability to pay the taxes is observed among those who have nothing but their Hungarian property to depend upon.

In the Lombard-Venitian [*sic*] Provinces the public spirit may be judged of by the fact of the Murderer Orsini[53] being seen to receive the honors paid to a sainted Martyr, while the slave population is acted upon by the agitation which Prince Daniel and the Patrons of Prince Daniel are favouring in the Herzogovine, Servia and other States nearly bordering upon Austria.[54]

The Catalogue of Austrian embarrassments would not be complete were I not to allude to financial difficulties, and it may be sufficient to

[52] Ferdinand Graf von Buol-Schauenstein.

[53] See n. 46 in this section.

[54] Danilo I, Prince of Montenegro, advocated the independence of Montenegro from the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire and the readjustment of the frontiers with the neighbouring Turkish provinces.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

state that the yearly deficit in the revenue cannot be taken as less than sixty five millions of florins.

Before concluding this imperfect but I believe correct sketch of a position of considerable embarrassment, there are three points which I am very desirous of submitting to Your Lordship's consideration.

First, that the unflinching, unvarying, foreign policy which Austria is pursuing in despite of all the difficulties external and internal by which she is beset shews that she well understands and is prepared correctly to discharge the duties of a First rate Power.

Secondly, that the embarrassments of Austria, far from being a subject of congratulation for England are, on the contrary to be deplored as diminishing Her means of resisting those encroachments which, under all circumstances, an English Government would be bound to oppose.

And thirdly, that the internal measures pursued by this Government within the last two or three years, and more especially in regard to the treatment of the Italian Provinces[55] are such as to shew that a course of improvement has been entered upon which makes the Country more than ever deserving of the good will, support, and, encouragement of Her Majesty's Government.

That alterations in the condition of the Country were greatly needed no reasonable men can deny; that much remains to be effected I am not disposed to question, but I will venture to affirm that in no state in Europe has the progressive movement of the last two years been as strongly marked and as unexceptionally beneficent as in Austria.

FO 7/549: Julian Fane to Earl of Malmesbury, Secret and Confidential, No 130, Vienna, 7 October 1858

Comparison of state of liberal parties in Austria and Prussia; disaffection in Lombardy-Venetia and Hungary; assessment of the imperial government

The political agitation which has recently been produced in Prussia by the discussion of the Question of the Regency[56] has brought out very prominently the fact that in that country the party called indiscriminately the "Liberal" and the "Constitutional" party preserves its organization, and possesses elements of strength and of combination which invest it with considerable power in the State. This party may be said to represent in Prussia the product of the

[55]Seymour refers to the conciliatory policy in Lombardy-Venetia from 1856, where Franz Joseph had lifted the sequester of 1853, granted amnesty to political offenders, and installed Archduke Maximilian as civil governor-general (in March 1857).

[56]See n. 58 in Prussia section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

revolution of 1848, the practical residue of that period of political agitation consisting in the assembly elected by popular forms which holds its sessions at Berlin.[57]

In Austria the consideration of the recent political movement in Prussia tends very forcible [*sic*] to the discouragement of those who desire to discover in the Empire some remnant of the moderate Constitutional doctrines which, entirely distinct from the violent ideas of unpractical demagogues, might have survived that period of political excitement. Now it is a fact, which I think is important to record, that the great political commotion of 1848 has left scarcely a trace behind it in Austria. There is throughout the Empire no form of popular representation, and what may be termed the "Constitutional Party" has altogether ceased to exist. That the leaders of that party still cherish the doctrines which they formerly preached is not to be doubted, but the action of the Government has so effectually checked the dissemination of their ideas and so completely stifled their political influence, that they may be said to be practically suppressed. They exist no doubt as solitary and isolated advocates of a more liberal system, and any movement of great public interest might reunite in a moment the disheartened and scattered representatives of a Constitutional policy. But at the present time they are wholly powerless and without consideration in the state, and even the most sanguine of them despair of influencing in the slightest degree the action of the Imperial Government.

On the other hand the notorious disaffection which exists in the Lombardo-Venetian Kingdom, and the sullen discontent which still pervades both the magnates and the population of Hungary, have, and must have, a certain influence on the Imperial Government. I doubt, however, whether the unconcealed hostility of their Italian subjects, or the more suppressed discontent of the Magyar population, are invested with sufficient importance by the Imperial Government. In both provinces they rely upon their formidable military force to suppress any indication of dissatisfaction, and they seem to care little about conciliating the good will of those whose actions they feel able to coerce.

The policy of the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian,[58] which appears to be animated by a spirit of tolerance, and by the desire to win the good opinion of the Italians, is greatly sneered at by the representatives of official opinion in this capital, and it is even hinted that in the very highest quarters His Imperial Highness's proceedings are not

[57]Fane refers to the Prussian chamber of deputies, which was elected according to a three-class franchise imposed on 30 May 1849.

[58]See n. 55 in this section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

looked upon with any great complacency. A certain desire to captivate those he governs by theatrical displays, and the endeavour to win popularity by prodigal expenditure, are among the faults attributed to His Imperial Highness by the criticism of subordinate officials in Vienna.

As regards public opinion upon these Questions it may be said not to exist, or rather to find no expression. The public Journals are allowed great liberty, not to say license, in deprecating the policy of Foreign States whose opinions do not happen to coincide with those of the Imperial Government, but no discussion on the internal condition of the Empire would be tolerated, and the knowledge of this fact restrains the public press from any attempt to venture on ground which they know to be forbidden.

It would appear from the foregoing considerations that the conduct of the Imperial Government is influenced neither by the action of any political party, nor by the full exercise of the criticism of the Press, nor to any appreciable extent by the avowed disaffection of some of its subjects, and it may therefore be of interest to ascertain under what influences the Imperial Government is conducted.

The Emperor himself is known to be a man of good judgment, and of great firmness of character, and the influence exercised over His Majesty by His Ministers is tempered by the fact that he will never sign a decree, the details of which he has not fully mastered, and the tendency of which he does not fully approve.

In all matters relating to Foreign Affairs Count Buol is His Majesty's Chief adviser, and it is needless for me to expatiate on the character of a Statesman with whose opinions and policy Your Lordship is familiar. His Excellency is said to lack originality and fertility of mind, and to be dependent upon subordinate members of the Imperial Foreign Office for the initiatory ideas to found a system of policy, but of his ingenuity in advocating the views which he may have adopted from others, and of the perfect integrity and uprightness of his character I have never heard a doubt expressed.

Baron Bach, the Minister of the Interior, rose by the revolution of 1848, and while his former Colleagues accuse him of tergiversation, he as strictly affirms that it is the opinions of his friends, and not his own, that have undergone a change. He is generally recognized as a man of great capacity and although he is accused of unfair bias against the Hungarians and of entertaining contracted and illiberal ideas of a Home-policy, it is admitted that his administrative abilities are remarkable and that his influence with the Emperor is very great.

Baron Bruck, the Minister of Finance, who has also risen from the subordinate ranks of Society, is reputed to be one of the ablest members

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of the Government, and it is generally believed that the clearness of his conceptions and his fertility of resource will, if anything can, extricate Austria from her present financial embarrassments.

I have thus briefly alluded to the character of those Statesmen under whose influence, subject to the sanction of the Emperor, the temporal Government of Austria is conducted, and I would observe in conclusion that, while the affairs of the Empire appear likely to be practically well-administered, there seems little probability of any change in the actual policy of Austria, both as regards internal and external affairs, being effected under the present Administration.

FO 7/569: Lord Augustus Loftus to Earl of Malmesbury, No 409, Vienna, 12 May 1859

Austrian request to mobilize federal army; Prussia's vacillating policy; anti-French feeling throughout Germany; foreign threats and danger of disunity

I have the honor to forward to Your Lordship herewith in original with a translation by Mr. Dillon, copy of a circular Despatch addressed by Count Buol to the Austrian Representatives at the German Courts, to acquaint them with the declaration which Count Rechberg had been instructed by his Government to make to the Diet notifying the rupture of relations with France, and to invite their support of a resolution to be submitted to the Diet for the mobilisation of the Federal army.[59]

From the line which Prussia has produced it may be easily imagined that the Circular on the part of Austria will not be favorably viewed by the Prussian Cabinet, and it is announced that at the same moment Prussia has likewise addressed a circular Despatch[60] to Her German Confederates in a contrary sense exhorting them to a moderate and conciliatory course.

In duly appreciating the attitude hitherto maintained by the Prussian Cabinet, dictated alike by a laudable desire to avert if possible the miseries of War, and by that impartial Spirit which appertains to a mediating Power, yet I cannot conceal from Your Lordship that the moment has now arrived when the public opinion of Germany looks to a more decided line of action on the part of the Prussian Cabinet, and when it is thought that a vacillating and doubtful Policy on Her

[59]Enclosures: circular dispatch by Buol to the Austrian representatives at the German courts, dated Vienna, 28 April 1859 (original and translation). For Rechberg's declaration of 2 May 1859 see n. 57 in Frankfurt section.

[60]Schleinitz to the Prussian missions in Germany, 29 April 1859.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

part will be attended with serious dangers both as regards Prussia herself, and the interests of Germany at large.

I have on a previous occasion remarked to Your Lordship that the public opinion of Germany, which has unmistakeably manifested a strong feeling of distrust and hostility to France, has not originated with the Sovereigns of the Governments, but has issued from the ranks of the people, and has made itself heard through the various Representative Chambers of the German States. With the public opinion is largely associated a feeling of nationality, which in many respects, although under a different garb, represents the same sentiment as that which evoked in 1848–9, a general cry for German unity.

At the present time there exists generally throughout Germany including Prussia, a feeling that Germany will sooner or later be exposed to the invasion of France, and the painful reminiscences of former times, and the sad experiences which the German Nation then underwent naturally excite a wish on their part to avoid a recurrence of similar miseries and disasters.

The attempts making both on the part of France and of Russia to produce disunion in Germany are too patent to escape observation. It is obvious both to the Governments and to the Nation that the object of France is to neutralize Prussia, and the German States in Her approaching struggle with Austria, and it is no less evident that Russia is seeking by menace to hold back Prussia and Germany from taking any overt step for the protection of the German Territory.

It does not appertain to me to discuss whether the dangers of a future invasion by France are real or not, but it suffices to state that the fears it invokes are fully participated in by all the German States. One and all are arming and are making great military preparations, and it may therefore be presumed that these vast experiences would not be incurred if these fears were not founded.

There are two considerations of vital importance connected with this judgment which I venture to submit to Your Lordship. First: the dangers which may possibly menace Germany from an external enemy be it either France or Russia or both and Secondly: The dangers which may menace Germany from within by disunion and want of common action of the Governments themselves.

From the reports which I receive from all Quarters and from all parts, there exists an universal feeling that in face of a common danger all Germany must hold together for their common and mutual safety. In this respect Austria is viewed not as a Great Power, but as a member of the Confederation. If Austria should be weakened and reduced by France, it is felt that not only would it be a weakness and reduction of the material strength of the Confederation itself, but it is feared

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

that a similar process of reducing Prussia would be later resorted to, as History has proved, and thus the Two Great Military Powers of Germany in lieu of holding to each other against a common enemy, would be vanquished in detail, and Germany would thus be deprived of Her independence and Her future might. This reasoning does not emanate from me; it is the expression of a firm conviction which at present pervades the minds of all Germans, and which I hear recorded from all sides.

But the second consideration to which I have referred is one of no less magnitude, namely the danger which may menace the German Confederation from within by disunion among its several Members.

On this point I am free to confess to Your Lordship that I have been somewhat surprised at the alarming reports which have reached me during the last few days, and more especially since the publication of the Manifesto of the Emperor of the French.[61]

The public opinion in Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, Hanover, Hesse Darmstadt, and even in the Rhenish Provinces of Prussia has assumed a tone of violence, and ardour against France, which their respective Governments with a due sense of their own safety cannot ignore.

In Bavaria I have learnt from an undoubted source, that threats are held out in public of dethroning The King and of recalling King Louis if His Majesty should not consent to an energetic action in support of Austria against France. In Wurtemberg indications have been given of resuming the cry which was raised in 1848 for a national Parliament, and for German unity. I am told that in the Rhenish Provinces, the feeling both among the army and the people is unanimous against France.

My German Colleagues one and all have expressed to me their opinion that it would no longer be safe for the Governments to attempt to restrain the popular feeling from fear of producing internal disorders.

Great feeling of discontent is generally expressed against the policy of Prussia. At this moment Prussia holds a powerful and commanding position, and the German Nation looks to Her to fulfil Her high calling. Never perhaps had Prussia so favorable an opportunity of acquiring an ascendant [*sic*] in Germany. The spirit of the German Nation is roused. Any attempt to repress it will only tend the more to inflame it, and may produce other results more dangerous than those

[61]War Manifesto of 3 May 1859, in which Napoleon III declared that Italy should be free from the Alps to the Adriatic.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

which it is sought to mitigate. Prussia may now lead and controul the movement. If She fails to do so she will be later dragged in its wake.

FO 7/574: Julian Fane to Lord John Russell, No 36, Vienna, 8 August 1859

Ministerial crisis; retirement of Bach; entry of Rechberg into the cabinet and his views on internal reform

A Ministerial crisis of no ordinary importance to the interests of the Empire engrosses at this moment the attention of The Emperor and His Cabinet.

The first fact to be noted is that Baron Bach retires from the Post of Minister of The Interior.[62] While those who are inimical to this Minister impute to his influence the adoption of all the most unpopular measures which have been passed during the last few years, his friends assert that his views have constantly been thwarted and his legislation mutilated by the council of the Empire,[63] which reckons among its members many of his personal enemies. Men of all opinions, however, unite in regarding his retirement from his present post as indispensable, because no measures of reform would be received with favour which should be inaugurated under the auspices of a name which has become so unpopular. I have reason to know, however, that Baron Bach quits office high in the favour of the Emperor, and that an official post, either at home or abroad, will be provided for him.

The appointment of his successor is a question which causes considerable embarrassment, and which has not yet been definitely resolved.

The entry of Count Rechberg into the Cabinet has been productive of important results, and has had no small share in causing the Ministerial Crisis which has now occurred. Count Buol, from his first assumption of Office, announced that, as he did not profess to understand questions concerning the internal administration of the Empire, he should in no way interfere with them, and upon this principle he consistently acted. His successor[64] has formally declared that he believes that no Government can be strong which is not united, and that he cannot continue to hold office, unless his colleagues

[62] Bach was dismissed on 21 August 1859.

[63] For the *Reichsrat* of 1851 see n. 6 in this section.

[64] Rechberg assumed office as foreign minister and president of the council of ministers on 17 May 1859.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

are men whose opinions upon all important subjects shall coincide generally with his own.

It may therefore be of interest to state what the opinions of Count Rechberg are on matters which affect the internal administration of the Empire. He condemns the policy of Baron Bach in two particulars. His first error he conceives to be the concession of undue power to the Priesthood;[65] his second, the expansion of the purely bureaucratic system of Government. The great object to be aimed at is, in his opinion, the gradual education of the people to render them capable of self Government. He denies the possibility of at once introducing a system of self Government, because the necessary elements do not, at present, exist. He condemns altogether the system of centralized administrative Government. Centralization of a political character is necessary to the maintenance of the Empire, but all effort at uniformity of organic legislation he holds to be fruitless, and therefore unwise. The convocation of the Provincial States[66] he considers to be practically impossible, because they belonged to a system which the Revolution of 1848 abolished, and for which no substitute has been yet provided. A new system is now required, and Count Rechberg believes that it cannot be imposed, but must be educed gradually from the existing state of things.

Such, in broad outline, are the principles upon which Count Rechberg believes that the regeneration of the Empire may proceed: and their adoption by the Emperor is likely to be attended by more than one change in the constitution of the Imperial Cabinet. They will lead naturally to curtailment of Priestly Power, reduction of the number of Government Employés, distinct organic Legislation, and to such measures as shall seem best calculated to familiarise the people with the principles and practise of self government.

It would appear as if the recent war[67] were about to produce in Austria results analogous to those which in Russia followed the termination of the Crimean War. The treaty of Paris[68] was scarcely concluded before the Russian Cabinet, composed of new elements, inaugurated a new system, the first fruits of which were the adoption of a more liberal commercial policy, the gradual emancipation of the serfs,[69] and the effort to develop the material resources of the Empire.

[65]Fane refers to the Concordat of 1855 (see n. 21 in this section).

[66]Assemblies of estates (*Landstände*) existed in the Habsburg crown lands from the late Middle Ages until 1848. Provincial diets were reintroduced in 1861.

[67]Second War of Italian Independence (April–July 1859).

[68]Treaty of Paris, 1856 (see n. 28 in Frankfurt section).

[69]The emancipation of the Russian serfs was initiated with the imperial rescript of 20 November 1857, which emancipated and provided land to serfs in Lithuania in exchange

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In Austria, since the commencement of the late war, one Cabinet Minister has resigned his post, and another is about to do so. A new system is not only contemplated, but decided upon, the first fruits of which may be looked for even before the formal conclusion of the Treaty of Peace.

FO 7/589: Lord Augustus Loftus to Lord John Russell, No 8, Vienna, 5 January 1860

Abolition of guild and trade privileges

I have the Honor to forward to Your Lordship herewith in original with a Translation by Lord Edward St Maur an Imperial Edict for the future regulation of "Guilds and Trades" in the Austrian Empire.[70]

This new Law, I am informed, has been long prepared and anxiously expected by the nation, by whom it has been now received with the greatest satisfaction.

By this Law are now abolished all the restrictions which have so grievously retarded the advancement of wealth and industry, and which have stifled the development of commercial energy.

So great were the difficulties and annoyances caused by the system hitherto pursued with regard to all branches of Trade that it may be considered to have amounted in fact to a monopoly, the depressing effect of which was felt in every branch of industry.

It not only served to deaden and crush the rising ingenuity and activity of the artisan but by it's exclusive privileges, it has tended to thwart all healthy competition and to arrest the useful application of scientific improvements and inventions.

The wholesome changes introduced by the present Edict cannot fail to be productive of the greatest benefit, and will prove of equal advantage to all the Trading Classes: By removing the barriers which have hitherto obstructed the paths of industry, a spirit of enterprise and energy will no doubt be awakened, which will give fresh impetus to Trade, and stimulate the commercial and trading classes to increased exertion and activity. It is by these wise and judicious Reforms that the wealth and prosperity of the Empire will be

for a long series of annual payments. The Act of Emancipation, freeing serfs on private land, was not passed until 1861, and serfs on state land were only emancipated in 1866.

[70] Enclosure: extract entitled *Amtlicher Theil, Kaiserliches Patent vom 20 Dezember 1859* (original and translation).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

best promoted and their concomitants, contentment and happiness, assured.

FO 7/596: Julian Fane to Lord John Russell, No 42, Vienna, 16 August 1860

Rumours and public apprehension over state of Austria; difficulties of government

Several of the Ministers as well as many members of the Reichsrath[71] having been called upon to attend the recent ceremonies at Salzburg,[72] the meetings of the Budget Committee have been suspended for some days. Up to the close of their last sitting the questions which had been discussed related strictly to matters appertaining to the Budget. It is known, therefore that no understanding can as yet have been established between the Government and the party whose views are represented by Count Szechen,[73] and the hope has consequently been abandoned that any announcement, founded upon such understanding, will be made public on the 18th instant. That day, it is expected, will pass without any sign on the part of the Government, and the unavoidable interruption which has occurred in the sittings of the Committee is held sufficient to explain the official silence in which it is now anticipated that the anniversary of the Emperor's birthday will be suffered to pass.

As indications of the anxiety and distrust which at present agitate the public mind, I should state that rumours of a most alarming character are daily circulated in Vienna and are no sooner exploded than they are replaced by others of a not less sinister nature. On a single morning at the commencement of the week, the following four reports were diligently propagated and for some hours devoutly believed. 1st that an insurrection had taken place at Pest; 2nd that the Reichsrath had been dissolved; 3rd that large bodies of troops were to proceed immediately to Venetia; 4th that the Government was about to declare war against Sardinia. Under the influence of these reports the Exchange presented all the features of a commercial panic; the price of Government stocks rapidly declined, Bank and Railway shares fell 4 per cent within an hour, and the rates of exchange on

[71] On 5 March 1860, the *Reichsrat* of 1851 (see n. 6 in this section) was enlarged by forty-eight to sixty extraordinary members; it was opened on 30 May. In addition to its advisory role (particularly for important bills), its central task was to report on the budget.

[72] On 12 August, the railway from Vienna to Munich was officially opened at Salzburg.

[73] The federal and anti-liberal coalition of the higher nobility of Austria and Hungary.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

foreign countries [*sic*] marked a further depreciation of the national currency. The fact is remarkable that when such reports as those I have mentioned have received due official contradiction, and are no longer credited, the money-market exhibits but slight symptoms of regaining a healthy tone. I apprehend that such reports are but the indication of a morbid feeling of anxiety which pervades the public, and that their contradiction is powerless to affect the fear and distrust of which they are only the symptoms. These feelings of apprehension are founded upon the knowledge of the immense difficulties with which the Government have to contend, and upon the suspicion that they will be unable successfully to cope with them. The general public, who manifest a spirit of great fairness in estimating the proportions of the present crisis, acknowledge that the Government is beset on all sides by difficulties of the gravest character. If, on the one hand, they yield the full measure of concessions demanded by each province, the Empire, it is admitted, will shortly become a mere Confederation of associated States which will not be long held together. If, on the other hand, they fail to conciliate the good will of the populations of the several States, they will have to renew the attempt of coercing a disaffected people, which will lead in all probability to deplorable results. To find and follow the golden mean between these two extremes is the delicate and difficult task imposed upon Government, and the public entertain grave doubts as to their competency to execute it. Such doubts, I believe, underlie that peculiar feeling of vague despondency and fear which stimulates at once the invention of alarming reports and begets the morbid credulity which alone renders their propagation possible.

FO 7/606: Julian Fane to Lord John Russell, No 51, Vienna, 17 January 1861

Public discontent and unrest amongst the nationalities; observations on state of government and financial measures; need for liberal constitution for the whole empire

The political agitation which has been growing throughout the Empire during the last few months has attained to such dimensions as render it impossible to regard the excited state of public feeling which it manifests, without the most serious apprehension. I purpose to submit to Your Lordship, in a brief review, the present condition of affairs in the different Crown-Lands, and to shew how difficult, if still possible, must be the task of satisfying the individual ambition and the conflicting interests of the separate states, without entailing the actual dismemberment of the Empire.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Hungary, demanding, unanimously, the restitution of the Constitution of 1848,[74] and, incidentally, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Country and the embodiment of the National Guard; conducting her municipal elections amid violent disorders; electing to several of her municipal Councils Kossuth, Klapka, and the leaders of 1848; in all instances protesting against, and in some resisting, a large portion of Imperial taxation, can only be described as on the verge of revolution. Gallicia and Bohemia, jealous of Hungary, emulate her hostility to the central Government, and are endeavouring like her to attain to practical independence.

In the capital, public discontent is rife and clamorous; the liberal journals keenly criticise the Government, and the Government in return prosecute them at Law; the municipal elections are so popular that they have been attended by crowds who listened, among other speeches, to harangues upon Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality; the consequence of which has been that non-electors have been forbidden to attend the meetings,[75] and the Electors themselves have been invited to confine their oratory to the business of their Committees. The great body of the middle classes believe only in the efficacy of a Constitutional Government to remedy the evils political and financial of the State, and public feeling generally is agitated, and angry and suspicious. Venetia is attached to the Empire by the force of military compression alone; while of the other Provinces there is not one in which dissatisfaction with the actual system of Government does not exist to a greater or less degree.

Now it is obvious that to deal successfully with a political crisis fraught with so much danger, the Government aspires to be strong and to be generally trusted. It is necessary therefore to enquire how far this is the case. I must, in the first place, admit, and it is with great pain that I do so, that the report mentioned in a dispatch of Mr. Murray's regarding the personal unpopularity of the Emperor is not to be gainsaid. With regards to Count Rechberg, I think that he is more liberal than his reputation, and with regard to Monsieur de Schmerling that his reputation is more liberal than he, but there can be no doubt that the former is highly unpopular, and that the popularity of the latter has greatly diminished since the publication

[74]Hungarian constitution of 11 April 1848. It was replaced by the imperial constitution imposed on 4 March 1849, which put Hungary on an equal footing with the other crown lands (this was repealed by the patent of 31 December 1851). In October 1860, the constitutional diploma (*Oktoberdiplom*, see n. 80 in this section) restored the pre-1848 constitutional system based around the *comitatus* (county).

[75]This measure was enacted on 10 January 1861.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of his electoral Law.[76] Considering the fiscal embarrassments of the State, it is obviously of great moment that the Finance Minister should inspire confidence in his ability. Monsieur de Plener, however, is responsible for two measures[77] which, while they have tended to destroy the credit of the State at a moment when more than at any other credit is synonymous with money, have affected the market in a manner precisely opposite to that in which they were intended to act upon it. But it appears that the forced circulation of Austrian Banknotes in Venetia, and the payment in paper of the interest on the national Loan, are not the only measures by which public confidence is to be tried. The government has already commenced negociations with some of the leading Bankers of Vienna for raising a loan of from 25 to 35 millions of florins by subscription. The amount is small, but the dissatisfaction caused by the measure will be great; because, although the Loan will be effected subject to the approval of the Reichsrath, for its issue will be in direct contravention to the spirit at least of the Emperor's declaration, that to the public debt should not be encreased without the previous sanction of that Body.[78] But I have said enough to indicate the amount of public confidence inspired by the leading members of the government, and I gladly hasten over this personal part of my theme.

The next question to be considered is a hypothetical one. If the government were strong and popular, what should they do? Let them call a constitutional assembly to make a moderately liberal constitution for the whole Empire. But Hungary it is replied, would scout the proposal of sending deputies to such an Assembly; Transylvania would certainly do the same, while Gallicia and Bohemia would in all probability follow their example; and an Assembly deprived of the component elements which it should derive from those dependencies of the Crown would be altogether without authority or power.

What other course, then, could be followed? Let there be given to each Province its own Chambers, its own autonomy, and practical independence, as regards its own affairs, of the central government at Vienna. But the Empire would then become a mere federation of States, and would such a federation be likely to hold together for a year? No. Then the dismemberment of the Empire is a mere question of time? To which the popular reply is . . . Yes.

[76]Ministerial decree on franchise and eligibility of the deputies for the *Landtage* of 5 January 1861. With the exception of public and military officers and priests, the franchise system for the provincial diets was based on property and the payment of direct taxes. As such, only a fraction of the population was entitled to vote.

[77]Imperial ordinances of 27 December 1860.

[78]Imperial resolution of 17 July 1860, which was affirmed by the constitutional diploma of 20 October 1860 (see n. 80 in this section). For the *Reichsrat* of 1860 see n. 71 in this section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Now I have given the above replies because they serve to shew to what a pass the Empire has come in popular estimation, which probably greatly underrates the effect and importance of its dissolution, but I do not share the convictions which such replies express. I believe that at this moment the Empire, of which the component parts all tend to disintegration, may be not inaccurately compared to a physical body of which the principle of gravity should be suddenly cancelled at its centre. But I think that, although they are at this moment inoperative, the forces of cohesion still exist, and may be evoked in the empire, and it is for this reason that I differ from those who regard its dissolution as inevitable. It appears to me that if a representative Assembly elected direct from the People by a moderate franchise were summoned to meet at Vienna for the purpose of framing a Constitution for the whole Empire (with the exception of the Dependencies of the Hungarian Crown, which might remain united to Austria by the personal ties of a common sovereignty), such strong reasons might be given to the various Provinces for taking part in it as would without doubt secure their coöperation [*sic*].

It might be shewn, in the first place, that the Assembly would meet without any foregone conclusions, and that therefore the Representatives of each Province might expect that their own views would be as likely as any other to be adopted. In the second place, I think it might easily be demonstrated that the practical effects of the dismemberment of the Empire would be so pregnant of evil to its separate parts, that the Great body of the people in each Province would perceive that their material interests, as well as their whole political importance were involved in the maintenance of Austria as a Great Power in Europe. To inculcate such ideas, and to dispel with delicacy the Provincial vanity which is at the root of the present desires for disunion, would no doubt demand great powers of judgement and tact, while all the skill of a consummate statesman would find fit employment in directing the labours of a Constituent Assembly to the successful reconstruction of the Empire. But I do not think that the task is by any means of a superhuman character, and therefore I see no reasons for believing in the impossibility of its accomplishment in Austria.

There may be said to be some analogy at this moment between the Empire and that magnificent spiral-tower which has for so long crowned the beauty of its metropolitan Cathedral. Some months ago, the pinnacle of St Stephens was found to be in an unsound state. The delicate work of its demolition was at once undertaken; stone by stone of its traceried architecture was carefully removed, and the graceful structure has at last wholly disappeared. The work of its re-erection is now commencing. It will take long to build what it has required

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

but a comparatively short time to demolish. It is not to be expected, from their apparent instability, that the present government in their corporate capacity will witness the termination of that architectural labour; nor is it probably that they will see, under their own auspices, the golden cross of completion cap the pinnacle of a reconstructed Empire.

FO 7/610: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Lord John Russell, No 254, Vienna, 16 May 1861

Debates in Reichsrat *over response to imperial speech; divisions between 'centralist' and 'federalist' parties*

The Debate on the Address to be presented to His Majesty in reply to the Imperial Speech[79] took place in the lower Chamber of the Reichsrath on the 11th instant, and lasted eight hours. The chief significance attaching to it lies in the occasion which it furnished to the "Centralist" and "Federalist" parties to disclose their differences of opinion, and to measure their relative numerical strength.

I have the honor to enclose herewith a general Report of the Debate, together with an Abstract in translation by Mssrs Dillon, Kennedy and Dering of the Speeches delivered, and I will endeavour in this place to lay before Your Lordship such information as may tend to elucidate the technical character of the amendments moved, and the principles upon which they were supported or opposed by the contending parties.

The draft of Address, copy of which I have already forwarded to Your Lordship in my Despatch No 245 of the 10th instant, was drawn up by a select Committee, and on its being submitted for consideration to the whole House, the object of the Federalist party, chiefly composed of the Representatives of Bohemia and Gallicia, was to introduce into it passages deprecating the adoption of a centralised legislation for the whole Empire. The general view entertained by the movers of the amendments is that the greatest latitude, consistent with the maintenance of the Unity of the Empire, should be granted to the legislative functions of the Diet in each Province, and that the central controul exercised at Vienna over the self-government of the different Crown-Lands should be of a limited character. The Federalists did not propose to give formal and accurate expression to these views in

[79]Imperial speech from the throne at the opening of the *Reichsrat*, 1 May 1861. The new parliamentary *Reichsrat* (which replaced the imperial council of 1860; see n. 71 in this section) was established by the Fundamental Law for the Representation of the Empire (*Grundgesetz über die Reichsvertretung*) and constitution of 26 February 1861. It consisted of a house of deputies, whose members were elected by the provincial diets, and an upper chamber.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Address, but to indicate them by the insertion of phrases which, although apparently of no great intrinsic value, were of considerable significance when moved by their party as amendments to the original draft of the Address. I may illustrate my meaning by examining two of the amendments brought forward.

In the original Draft of the Address the members of the Reichsrath are termed "Deputies", and Count Clam moved that the word should be cancelled and replaced by the term "Delegates from the Diets." The object of the amendment was to imply that the proper seat of representation for each Province was in its own Diet, and that the members of the Reichsrath were to be considered as Envoys from the Provincial Assemblies, and not as the Representatives of the Provincial Communities. A second amendment, emanating from the same party proposed to insert in the Address a passage approving the principles enunciated in the Diploma of the 20th of October, as contradistinguished from those embodied in the Constitution of the 26th February, the latter being pronounced to be of a too centralistic character.[80] Both these amendments, which indicate the tendency of all those brought forward by the Federalists, were rejected, and the relative strength of the two parties was tried at the conclusion of the Debate, when the original Draft of the Address was adopted by an absolute majority of 127; the Federalist party, 48 in number, abstaining altogether from the division. The latter, however, while loudly proclaiming their dissatisfaction at some passages in the Address, consented to accompany their colleagues in presenting it to the Emperor. His Majesty returned a brief reply, copy and translation of which by Mr Barrington I have the honor to annex.[81]

It was observable in the course of the Debate that the Federalists insisted on the importance of their amendments not only because they involved a great principle, but because by recognizing the autonomy and individual rights of the separate Crown-Lands, they were of a nature to conciliate the Hungarians, and induce them to send Representatives to the Reichsrath. The German party, on the other hand, manifested very little regard for the susceptibilities of other

[80]The constitutional diploma of 20 October 1860 (*Oktoberdiplom*), which provided for a federal organization of the empire and reintroduced the provincial diets, was not implemented (apart from in Hungary, where the pre-1848 constitution was restored). By contrast, the imperial constitution of 1861 provided for a two-house parliament (*Reichsrat*) with legislative functions, and restricted the competences of the provincial diets to matters expressly prescribed in the provincial statutes (*Landesordnungen*). The emperor reserved his right to veto any decisions of the respective representative bodies on both the provincial and the imperial levels.

[81]The address of the house of deputies of the *Reichsrat* as voted on 11 May was presented to Franz Joseph on 14 May 1861.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Nationalities, for, in advocating a system of centralistic legislation as necessary to the Unity of the State, they boldly asserted the superiority of the German element in the Empire, and attributed that Superiority to the higher grade of civilisation, and the greater degree of moral and intellectual culture to which the Teutonic race had attained. These sentiments were loudly cheered by the majority of the Chamber, and resented by strong cries of expostulation on the part of the Federalists, who, at one moment, appeared inclined to withdraw in a body from the Assembly. Altogether the debate was of a very strong character, and although the angry feelings which it excited have abated to some extent, sufficient evidence has been given that the Government will experience considerable difficulty in managing the Lower Chamber of the Reichsrath even with its present imperfect composition. A very loyal Spirit was, however, manifested by the Assembly, all the members rising collectively in the course of the Debate to cheer an allusion made to the services of the Army, and to re-echo the blessing invoked on The Emperor at the conclusion of the Address.

The Lower Chamber met again yesterday, and transacted business, of which I enclose a Report together with a Précis in translation by Mr. Dillon, and then adjourned until the 27th of this month.[82]

FO 7/613: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 519, Vienna, 26 September 1861

Conversation with Rechberg on proposed constitutional changes; British interest in Austrian stability and prosperity

At my last interview with Count Rechberg, His Excellency asked me if I had read an article in the "Presse"[83] newspaper of Sunday suggesting a revision of the Constitution in consequence of the refusal of Hungary and other non-German portions of the Empire to send Deputies to the Reichsrath.[84]

I replied that I had read it with satisfaction and had been surprised to find such opinions in the "Presse" as that journal had always been the advocate of a centralising system.

[82]Enclosures: article from *Wiener Zeitung*, 12 May 1861, entitled 'Herrenhaus, Sitzung vom 11. Mai' (original and English précis); copy of emperor's answer to the lower house, no date (original and translation).

[83]*Die Presse* (established 1848).

[84]In addition to the Hungarian diet (opened on 2 April), the diet of Croatia-Slavonia also rejected the election of deputies for the *Reichsrat*. Deputies for Istria and Transylvania were elected on 26 September 1861 and 20 October 1863 respectively. For the *Reichsrat* and the patent of 26 February 1861 see nn. 71 and 80 in this section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

His Excellency then said that he was very glad to see the question of modifying the Patent of the 26th of February before the public, and that he hoped this article of the "Presse" would have good results. His Excellency went on to say, begging that I would consider his remarks to be made in confidence, that the Government were now convinced the Constitution would not work in its present Shape and also that it was impossible for the Emperor to make the requisite alterations, what therefore was wanting must come from the Reichsrath, and he trusted public opinion would come to the aid of the Government and facilitate an arrangement which would satisfy the different Nationalities. He added that the Government would endeavour to bring about reconciliation with the Hungarians, but as he said before, the arrangement must come from below and not from above, and that time would be necessary to effect the object in view.

I congratulated Count Rechberg on the good intentions of the Government but told him that though such an important change as he shadowed forth could not be effected in a minute, time was most valuable and none should be lost. The world, I said, was now at peace, and England would certainly do all in her power to prevent its being disturbed, but with all the danger around, it would be unwise to waste an hour in settling the energies of the Government at work to bring about the desired changes. I added that England took a lively interest in the prosperity of Austria and would rejoice to see a system devised that would satisfy the different Races, consolidate and strengthen the Empire, and prevent its dismemberment – a danger with which it was seriously menaced.

Count Rechberg replied that the good will of England was essential to them in their difficulties and that he hoped Austria might count on it. She alone can be of real service to us, he said, and if England will speak the word and declare that Austria shall not be attacked, he should fear nothing from other nations and time would be allowed for her internal development. I rejoined that until public opinion in England became more favourable to Austria, the Government would make no such promises, Austria would be judged by her acts and that I trusted the changes, which he led me to expect here at hand would be a sure stepping stone to a better appreciation of the future of the Austrian Empire.

I inclose for Your Lordship's information an article from the Ministerial "Donau Zeitung" in original and précis by Mr Barrington in connection with this subject.[85]

[85] *Donauzeitung*, published from 1860 to 1862 in Vienna. Enclosure: extract from the *Donauzeitung* of 24 September 1861, entitled 'Verfassungsrevision' (original and English précis).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

FO 7/633: Julian Fane to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 19, Vienna, 17 July 1862

Readiness of Austria to join the Zollverein*; liberalization of Austrian trade policy; public support for these measures*

In my dispatch No 5, of the 10th Instant, I had the honour of submitting to Your Lordship an interpellation addressed to Count Rechberg in both Houses of the Reichsrath, enquiring whether the Imperial Government deemed it expedient that Austria should join the Zollverein, and, if so, what steps they had taken to attain that end.[86]

I have now the honor to forward herewith to Your Lordship, in original and translation by Mr. Barrington, the answer returned to the interpellation by Count Rechberg in the Reichsrath on the 14th Instant, in which His Excellency informed the House that the Imperial Government, (as reported in my telegram to Your Lordship of the 11th Inst) had already addressed to the German Courts a Communication[87] expressing the readiness of Austria to enter unconditionally into the Zollverein, that is to say, to adopt, unless charged by common desire, all the existing arrangements and tariffs of the Commercial League as regards both manufactures and raw merchandise of every description, reserving only the rights of Government on Articles of Monopoly (Tobacco and Salt) and on those subject to excise dues. Count Rechberg proceeded to say that, if the Imperial Government succeed in their aim, which he defines to be the fusion of the Commercial interests of Austria with those of Germany, it will be their desire to establish commerce between the Austro-German League and Foreign Countries upon progressive, but cautious, principles, which will promote the development of international trade with due regard to the interests of domestic industry.

Count Rechberg concluded by saying that he could not communicate to the House the documents to which he had alluded, as they referred to pending negociations. The indiscretion of the Press, however, enables me to submit them to Your Lordship herewith in original together with a general précis of their contents, by Lord Sudley and Mr Barrington.[88]

[86]The interpellations of both houses were dated 8 July 1862.

[87]Rechberg to the Austrian envoys at the German courts, 10 July 1862.

[88]Enclosures: newspaper article entitled 'Sitzung des Herrenhauses vom 14. Juli' (original and translation); article from *Donauzeitung* entitled 'Actenstücke über die Zolleinigung Oesterreichs und des Zollvereins', dated 10 July 1862 (original and English translation).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The measure which has been thus taken by the Imperial Government will appear, when considered from various points of view, to be of a very singular, and very important, character. It bears on its front the impress of a liberal policy; it embodies in its design a resistance to the freedom of trade. In as far as it breaks down the barriers which have hitherto isolated Austria, it is a step on the path of Commercial progress; in as far as it aims at circumscribing the Prusso-French Treaty,[89] it is a veto on the advance of Germany in that direction. It is at once a revolution of Tariffs, and a Commercial Coup d'êtat. Austria becomes liberal in order that she may deal a blow at the liberty of trade.

For it cannot be doubted that this sudden resolution of Austria to abandon her old prejudices (or, more correctly perhaps, her old tariffs) is due to the fact that she perceives in the opposition which has been offered by Germany to the Prusso-French Treaty an opportunity for securing to herself advantages both of a political and commercial value. Since the conclusion of that Treaty Austria has not ceased to assail it. She has protested against it herself, and she has urged the other German States to reject it. She has found apt pupils among her Confederates, and she has at last thought that the moment for action was come. Her present appeal may be said to be addressed exclusively to those German Governments who oppose the Treaty with France, and may be thus epitomized: – 'Austria is willing to accept your tariffs, and the commercial legislation which you wish to preserve: Associate yourselves to her, and be saved from your dread of the Treaty with France.'

A favourable response to this appeal would entail a dissolution of the Zollverein, and a reconstruction of part of its elements into a great Commercial League with Austria at its head.

Prussia will naturally offer an energetic opposition to this move on the part of Austria, and the subject will serve to embitter the bad relations which already subsist between the two Powers. It will form, indeed, but another phase of the great controversy which is being waged in Germany between Austria, supported by the majority of the Governments, on one side, and Prussia, supported by the majority of the People, on the other.

I presume that the measure now taken by the Imperial Government may suspend for a time any action on their part in reference to the Treaty of Commerce with Her Majesty's Government.[90]

[89]For the Franco-Prussian Commercial Treaty of 2 August 1862, see n. 88 in Frankfurt section.

[90]The treaty of commerce between Great Britain and Austria had been under consideration since 1860. It was finally signed on 16 December 1865.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Count Rechberg, however, as Your Lordship will perceive, pointedly referred to more liberal arrangements with Foreign Governments, in addressing the Reichsrath, and His Excellency called my attention to this portion of his Speech, in allusion to his often expressed desire to ameliorate the Commercial relations between Great Britain and Austria.

I should not close my report to Your Lordship on this subject without referring to the judgement passed by Public Opinion on the measure adopted by the Imperial Government. It may be said that all classes have, with true instinct, seized upon the real significance of the measure, by recognizing in it a political manoeuvre, for the execution of which it has been necessary to expose to some danger Commercial interests which have hitherto been studiously pampered.

The result is that the Political Classes, with Dr Giskra, and a hundred and twelve members of the Lower House at their head, heartily approve, and will support, the policy of the Government, and the general Public participate in their views. On the other hand, the Commercial Classes, who are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of protection, and especially the manufacturers, whose interests are directly threatened, are decidedly opposed to the measure. But even their opposition is essentially modified by the political importance which is recognized to be the real characteristic of the policy of the Government. It may, then, be said that the Public approve the tactics of the Government, inasmuch as they are devised with a view of placing Austria politically and Commercially at the Head of Germany.

FO 7/637: Julian Fane to Earl Russell, No 163, Vienna, 11 September 1862

Conferences on federal reform at Vienna; antagonistic policies of Austria and Prussia; role of smaller states; Prussia as liberal force in Germany

The receipt of Your Lordship's dispatch No 43 of the 27th ultimo which, with reference to the conferences on Federal Reform, recently held at Vienna,[91] gives expression to the opinion that it would be well to adjourn any further consideration of the subject till Austria and

[91] Conferences between Austria and the envoys to Vienna of Bavaria, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, Saxony, and Württemberg, were held on 7 July and 10 August 1862. As a minimal consensus on federal reform, it was agreed to convoke an assembly of delegates of the German *Landtage* at the Federal Diet to participate in the deliberations on the projected federal laws on civil actions and obligation. It was also resolved to establish a federal court. Corresponding motions were submitted to the Federal Diet on 14 August 1862, which referred the proposals to committees for further examination.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Prussia can agree upon terms to be proposed to the Diet, has afforded me an occasion of renewing my conversation with Count Rechberg on the question of the relations now subsisting between Austria and Prussia. His Excellency, however, did little more than reiterate the opinion he had already expressed to me on this topic, that so long as Prussia in seeking her own self aggrandisement in the Confederation by a policy judged antagonistic to Austrian interests, there can be no hope of establishing amicable relations between the two Powers. There is the less need for me to repeat here Count Rechberg's general observations on this topic, as His Excellency informs me that he has embodied his opinions in a dispatch to Count Apponyi which will be communicated to Your Lordship.[92]

It will not have escaped Your Lordship's attention that Count Rechberg, in his conversation with me, reported in my despatch No 139 of the 28th Ultimo, while receiving in the best spirit the offer of Her Majesty's Government to use their good offices in seeking to dissipate the misunderstandings which have arisen between Austria and Prussia, evinced no desire that such friendly intervention should be employed. I am inclined to think that this disinclination to encourage any mediatory action rests partly on the conviction expressed by Count Rechberg that it could lead to no practical result, but still more on the persuasion that the moment is opportune for Austria to prosecute the quarrel under conditions the most favourable to herself. The friends of Austria have persuaded her that She never held so high a position in the Confederation as that which she at present occupies, and that now, if ever, is the time for discrediting the influence, paralysing the schemes, and detaching the wavering allies of Prussia. The chief instigators to this policy of antagonism are the smaller states of Germany, who recognise in the proposal of Prussia to place herself at the head of a Federation of states,[93] of which She would herself assume the Sovereign functions of military command at home, and diplomatic representation abroad, a plan which would commence by reducing the Sovereigns of the smaller states to the position of Provincial Prefects, and would ultimately lead to the absorption of their dominions into the kingdom of Prussia. Their grounds for asserting that Austria is now eminently qualified to champion their cause is, that she enters the lists, no longer as the

[92] In a confidential dispatch to Apponyi sent on 28 August 1862, Rechberg stated that Prussia was the main barrier to peace and harmony in Germany: whereas Austria was simply attempting to maintain the status quo and her own existing position, Prussia was aggressively using force to provoke crises and gain a sole preponderance in Germany.

[93] Fane refers to the Prussian plan for a smaller union excluding Austria as put forward in Bernstorff's dispatch of 20 December 1861 to the Prussian envoy to Dresden.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

representative of absolutist ideas, which have hitherto alienated from her all popular Sympathy, but as a Constitutional Power, and a convert to the doctrines of commercial Reform. The policy pursued by Austria since the commencement of the present year proves that She has not been deaf to the suggestions of her Federal Allies, but has zealously accepted the mission which they have assigned to her. Her Tactics, sagaciously conceived, have not been unskilfully executed, and there is no denying that, for the moment, she enjoys a quasi-triumph over her great rival in the Confederation. Her first manoeuvre was the dispatch to Berlin of the identic note, which served to reveal in the first brush of battle the strength and unanimity of her allied forces. The retort made by Prussia[94] served to render the coalition against her more compact by increasing the fears of its less powerful members. The second move of Austria, and it was prepared with a secrecy rare in modern days, consisted in the declaration that her ancient commercial system was exploded, and that she was prepared to join the Zollverein.[95] In the controversy which ensued (and which still prevails) on this subject, Austria has had the skill to place her adversary in the invidious position of refusing to give effect by negociations to the stipulations of a Treaty Article.[96] The declaration of Austria was quickly followed by blow upon blow in the same direction, as Bavaria, Wurtemburg, and Hanover recorded their rejection of the Treaty negociated by Prussia, on their behalf, with France.[97] The next combined movement of the Coalition was to assemble in Conference at Vienna to deliberate on federal reform, and the last defeat which they inflicted on Prussia consisted in their transmitting to Frankfort a project of reform which the Diet, despite the opposition of Prussia, adopted for consideration. In the meantime, no opportunity has been lost of popularizing Austria in Germany. At the great rifle match gathering of Frankfort[98] voices were not wanting to vindicate the self respect of Austria, nor to proclaim her German sympathies. The same sentiments were repeatedly announced in the highest quarters

[94]In a dispatch from von Werther, Prussian envoy to Vienna, sent to Rechberg on 14 February, Prussia disapproved of the collective step against her plan for federal reform and rejected the invitation to a conference. This was also stated in communications to the other senders of the identical notes of 2 February 1862 (see n. 76 in Württemberg section).

[95]Fane refers to Rechberg's dispatch to the Austrian envoys at the German courts, 10 July 1862 (see previous dispatch).

[96]For Article 25 of the Austro-Prussian treaty of 19 February 1853 see n. 79 in Hanover section.

[97]Bavaria and Württemberg declined to join the Franco-Prussian Commercial Treaty of 2 August 1862 (see n. 88 in Frankfurt section) on 8 and 11 August. On 16 August, Hanover made her acceptance conditional on the approval of all member states of the *Zollverein*, thus indirectly rejecting the treaty as well.

[98]See pp. 69–70.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

during the presence of the German Jurists at Vienna,[99] and they have lately found their most emphatic expression in the speech of M. de Schmerling, at Salzburg,[100] who defined the Federal Aspirations of Austria to consist in a Reform for the general Weal of Germany, and not for the behalf of any single Power, – in the construction of a Confederation with several centres of attraction, and not one which should gravitate solely in Berlin.

The foregoing recapitulation of events will serve to illustrate the grounds upon which the smaller German States consider the moment opportune for pitting Austria against her rival in the Confederation. The justice of their conclusion appears to me to depend entirely on the sort of leadership, and the kind of reform, to which the People of Germany aspire. If they wish, for instance, to follow the example of the most enlightened Nations of Europe, by adopting the principles and practice of free trade, they must not follow Austria who has only adopted a tariff[101] more liberal than her own, in order to prevent the adoption of one still more liberal by the rest of Germany. Do they, again, attach importance to representative institutions, they will not care to countenance Austria's plan of federal reform which proposes to constitute a Parliament of Delegates in the place of a Parliament of Representatives. Prussia, in a word, is, and will remain, the exponent of the principles of political liberty and commercial freedom in the Confederation, and she loses nothing of that character because her Adversaries, adopting the badge of a pseudo-liberalism, have effected a clever combination against her. That combination is not likely to be permanent, except on the inadmissible hypothesis that the Germans at least are averse to true national development, and, in that case, it would be far better that it had never been formed.

I apprehend that Austria and her Allies do not contemplate any further action at Vienna until the Diet has pronounced upon the Project of Reform submitted to it. In view of the continued opposition of Prussia to that project, it is probable that the Vienna Conference will reassemble to declare that the States represented in it, acting on precedents to be found in the history of the Confederation, will adopt the reforms projected amongst themselves, leaving the other members of the Bund to adhere to them, or not, at their pleasure.

[99]Third German *Juristentag* at Vienna, 25–28 August 1862.

[100]Schmerling gave his speech at the concluding day of the seventh meeting of German artists (*Deutsche Künstler-Versammlung*, 2–6 September 1862).

[101]Law of 17 August 1862, which abolished all transit duties.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

FO 7/655: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl Russell, No 408, Vienna, 20 August 1863

Congress of German princes at Frankfurt; remarks on consequences for Austrian position in Germany and Europe

I infer from the language held by members of the Imperial Foreign Office that the negotiations at Frankfort have not yet progressed sufficiently far to justify speculation upon their probable results.[102] The reply returned to the inaugural address of the Emperor by the King of Bavaria[103] is regarded as marked by caution and reserve, and if any inference were drawn from it it would be that the project of reform submitted by Austria had not met with a very warm reception. But the King is supposed to be less well disposed to the views of Austria than his Government, and it is conjectured that his action at Frankfurt will reflect less of personal opinion than his speech. It is as yet unknown what reply the King of Prussia will return to the collective invitation addressed to him by the Sovereigns to join them in conference at Frankfort.[104] The opinion of official persons here is that on the receipt of His Majesty's reply, whether it be acquiescent or negative, the business of the Congress will really commence, and that the success or failure of the Austrian project will be speedily ascertained. This opinion is apparently based on a conviction that the scheme is not susceptible of much modification, and that if it be not immediately accepted it will be discussed only to be rejected.

There are indications which warrant the belief that the future foreign policy of Austria will be shaped by the course of events at Frankfort. Austria is engaged there in making her great effort to assume the acknowledged leadership of Germany, and if she fail in the attempt at a moment which circumstances have rendered singularly propitious to her, at a moment when her great rival is eclipsed and she is conspicuous in the councils of Europe, when her fame as a Constitutional Power is growing and that of Prussia is on the wane – it is scarcely possible that she can hope to renew the attempt with better success at any future time. She will more probably turn her thought from supremacy in Germany to the work of welding her present empire into a more compact mass with a view perhaps to the future extension of her Eastern frontiers. Success at Frankfort on the other hand, will make her strong in Germany but weak in Hungary,

[102]For the Frankfurt congress of German princes (*Fürstentag*), which was opened by the Austrian emperor on 17 August 1863, see pp. 74–76.

[103]On 17 August 1863.

[104]Collective letter to the King of Prussia, 17 August 1863; it was delivered at Baden-Baden on 19 August. Wilhelm I declined the invitation on the following day.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and will give her power in central Europe at the expense of her oriental ambition.

The negotiations at Frankfort are therefore watched with the bravest interest by those who perceive that Austrian statesmen are feeling their ground there to determine the objects of their future policy. It is impossible to converse with official men here without remarking the ambitious views which they entertain of the destiny of Austria. Their only doubt appears to be as to the direction which that destiny will take, and they consider that this doubt will be resolved at Frankfort.

FO 7/657: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 630, Vienna, 24 December 1863

Course of Austria and Prussia against Denmark; disagreements with smaller states over role of Federal Diet

With reference to the Telegram recorded in my Despatch No 625 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that the project, suggested from Berlin a few days ago, that Denmark should be called on to revoke or suspend the Constitution of the 18th of November as far as Sleswig is concerned, and that in default thereof Prussia and Austria would consider themselves absolved from the Treaty of London, appears to have crossed on the Road a project of Count Rechberg to the effect that the Diet of Frankfort should address the Danish Government, and not Austria and Prussia, and I hear that this idea has been favorably received at Berlin.[105]

The unfortunate state of the diplomatic relations of Austria and Prussia with Denmark at this moment increases the difficulty of all communication and yet it is not easy to understand, when they are in a minority in the Diet of Frankfort, that they should seek that channel for making their demands. Both Governments, I may observe, feel intense alarm at the progress which the Spirit of democratic revolution is making, and the union of the Small German Courts for the purpose of working out the Succession in Holstein in opposition to the known feelings of the two Great Powers is producing serious confusion and has a most unfortunate influence on the action of the Austrian Government.

[105]The Prussian proposal reached Rechberg on 21 December. The Austro-Prussian deliberations led to their motion at the Federal Diet of 28 December 1863 (see n. 93 in Hamburg section). For the Danish constitution of 18 November 1863 see n. 93 in Hanover section; for the London Protocol see n. 97 in Frankfurt section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The Bavarian Court, which has usually been disposed to receive inspiration as to its political proceedings from Vienna, has completely emancipated itself, and Count Rechberg informed me yesterday that The King is entirely in the hands of the democratic party and will support, right or wrong, the claims put forward by the Prince of Augustenburg,[106] and presses violently for an immediate decision on the subject by the Diet of Frankfort before the New Year. All this Count Rechberg says is the result of popular pressure and the influence of some of the King of Bavaria's irresponsible Advisers, and if this state of things exists at one of the larger German Courts, what will it not be at others where the influence of Government is even less powerful?

It is under this State of things that Count Rechberg feels anxious, as it were, to paralyse the action of the Frankfort Diet before that Assembly shall have taken another false step and still further compromised itself in the question of the Danish Succession by having the affair transferred to a Conference composed of the Representatives of the Powers who signed the Treaty of the 8th of May 1852, with the addition of one from the German Confederation.

By removing the present active discussion from Frankfort Count Rechberg is hopeful that means will be found of discussing the question with some degree of calmness, a result which he despairs of, so long as it is kept on its present ground.

He has heard with the greatest satisfaction that Your Lordship had no objection to Conferences on the Sleswig-Holstein Affair being held at Paris; and, if this were settled, he would desire them to be opened as soon as it were possible in order that the question of the Duchies might at once assume an European character, for it was impossible any longer to confine it within German limits.

FO 7/671: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 398, Vienna, 30 June 1864

Conversation with Rechberg on Schleswig-Holstein Question; discussion of London Conference; Austrian views on the war

I called on Count Rechberg today when he asked me if I had received any detailed account of Your Lordship's speech in the House of Lords on communicating the Protocols of the late Conference respecting the affairs of Denmark,[107] for according to the Telegraphic reports

[106] See n. 97 in Frankfurt section.

[107] Earl Russell presented the results of the London Conference (see n. 106 in Hanover section) to the House of Lords on 27 June 1864.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of what passed on that occasion a statement appeared to have been made by Your Lordship that the Allies had that morning given the assurance that they would not push hostilities beyond the frontiers of Sleswig: this, he observed, must have been a misapprehension of the communication for the allies were already in possession of a large portion of Jutland.[108] Then he said that the Telegraph had also reported that an observation had been made by Your Lordship that such assurances could not be depended upon. I replied that the English Newspapers had not yet reached me and that I could not therefore say what they contained. That the first assertion must be erroneous as Your Lordship would certainly have stated in the House of Lords the exact tenor of the verbal communications which had been so recently made by Count Apponyi.[109] That with regard to the assurances which have been given from time to time and during the last six months of Her Majesty's Government as to the moderate views entertained by the Cabinet of Vienna regarding the war with Denmark, I must observe with regret, that these assurances have not always been realized.

We were told that there was no intention of carrying the war into Jutland, and very soon after that assurance was given a great portion of that Danish province was taken possession of as a material guarantee for German Vessels captured at Sea.

We were told that the Integrity of the Danish Monarchy and the Treaty of London[110] would be maintained, and what chance is there of either these objects being attained?

Count Rechberg replied that the Austrian Government entered the Conference with an anxious desire to maintain both these points; they had been the bases of his policy and he was grieved at their abandonment, for he then thought and still thinks that they were in the true interests of Austria. He had most sincerely desired a dynastic Union of the Duchies with Denmark as the best solution of the question at issue and hoped some arrangement would soon be made to put an end to the present state of hostilities.

He then expressed his deep regret at the ill-feeling which was growing up in England against Austria; it was her interest, and he thought that of England also, that a good understanding should exist between the two countries.

[108] See n. 103 in Frankfurt section and n. 105 in Hanover section.

[109] Bloomfield refers to Apponyi's declaration at the last sitting of the London Conference on 25 June 1864. In his speech in the Lords on 27 June, Russell interpreted this declaration as showing that Austria and Prussia had 'no intention of carrying on hostilities with the view of obtaining possession of any territory beyond the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein' and had no further designs on Danish territory.

[110] For the London Protocol of 1852 see n. 97 in Frankfurt section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

I told him that to regain confidence he must follow out a policy in the Danish Question which would not be in exact conformity with the aspirations of the Berlin Cabinet: let him hold this original programme, that announced before the war commenced, and a better state of things would be established.[111] He said he could not separate from Prussia or act independently of her; he had to consider the position of Austria in Germany as well as in Europe and if Austria now withdrew from common action with Prussia She might as well retire altogether from the Confederation; Prussia would surely turn the altered state of things to her immediate advantage, and he himself must consider their present alliance as more likely to be advantageous to the general interests of Europe than a rupture would be.

I rejoined that if Austria had been able to restrain the impulses from Berlin we might perhaps hope for a better termination of the conflict, but what was the real position of things? Austria wished to moderate and restrain the military action of Prussia, She was unable to do so, and by not choosing to separate from her She encouraged her in further spoliations of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Count Rechberg then went on to recapitulate all the wrong doings of Denmark, her last proceedings in the Conference, her refusal to agree to the armistice that had been proposed &c.[112]

To this I replied that Denmark had consented to give up Holstein to Germany and a part of Sleswig to the line of the Schlei, but that all this would not satisfy Germany and so the Conference broke up.

His Excellency sought to impress on me during this conversation his anxious desire that no estrangement between the two Powers should result from what has lately occurred, and sought further to explain the conduct of Austria as a necessity flowing from her interests in Germany which he hoped would yet be understood and appreciated by Her Majesty's Government.

I endeavoured today to gain some further insight into the intended military operations of the Allies and to obtain an assurance that he would not be pushed across the little Belt with Fünen;[113] he would give no assurance, and he evidently feels uncertain as to the point at which Prussia may be disposed to stop.

[111]Bloomfield most probably refers to the Austrian plan to grant Denmark a guarantee of the integrity of her territory (including the duchies), notwithstanding a possible Austro-Prussian occupation of Schleswig. In early January 1864, Austria endorsed the Prussian policy to give such a guarantee only if Denmark gave way and repealed the joint constitution for Denmark and Schleswig of November 1863.

[112]Denmark agreed only to a temporary suspension of hostilities; it expired on 26 June. In the sitting of the London Conference on 18 June 1864, Denmark made an armistice dependent on the settlement of the question of the frontier in Schleswig.

[113]Island of Funen (Fyn).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Austria has certainly no desire to prolong the war a single day unnecessarily, but she has no power to arrest the will of her ardent and ambitious Ally, and may be expected to follow, as she has done heretofore, in the course that will be decided on by the Cabinet of Berlin.

FO 7/685: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl Russell, Confidential, No 163, Vienna, 9 August 1865

Deliberations at Gastein; future of the Elbe Duchies; Austrian difficulties and desire to avoid war

With reference to my Despatch No 161 of the 5th Instant, I have the honor to inform Your Lordship that Count Blome returned yesterday to Gastein.[114]

Count Mensdorff has just stated to me that the impression made on Count Blome by his last conversations with The King of Prussia and Monsieur de Bismarck gave him reason to hope that it might be yet possible to arrive at some sort of a temporary arrangement by which, time at all events would be gained, and Count Blome had now received full instructions and been vested with powers to treat with Monsieur de Bismarck with a view to establish a clearer and better understanding on the question of the Co-Sovereignty of the Elbe-Duchies, whilst the main object of his mission was to try and remove all danger of an immediate complication which threatened not only the peace of Germany, but of Europe.

Count Mensdorff has not informed me of the nature of Count Blome's instructions, but he said that the Austrian Government would be ready to make every concession to Prussia that was compatible with their honour, he sincerely trusted this Mission would be attended with success, for it never was more essential for Austria to avoid a war than at the present time. The Army was in its usual good condition, but the Finances required the greatest watching, there were no available funds, the Treasury was empty and all the energies of the Government must be directed to place in order the Revenues and Resources of the Empire.

Your Lordship may judge from the foregoing that much as the Emperor of Austria may feel himself injured by the late proceedings

[114]At Gastein on 10 August 1865, Blome submitted to the Prussian king the proposition to provisionally divide the administration of the duchies between Austria (Holstein) and Prussia (Schleswig), while adhering to their joint supremacy. For the Gastein Convention see n. 116 in Württemberg section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of the Prussian Government,[115] his present advisers do not consider they would be justified in recommending the adoption of a policy that would involve the Empire in incalculable expense at a moment too when She finds great difficulty in raising money for any purpose whatever.

The object of the Imperial Government then appears to be to define the principle on which the existing provisional arrangement for the joint administration of the Elbe-Duchies shall be maintained, and they will be disposed to accept the best terms they can obtain.

The position of the Imperial Government is a most painful one, the decision they have taken is a tacit acknowledgement of their inability to grapple with or counteract the overbearing policy of their German Rival, who is taking every advantage of the internal difficulties of the Empire, to carry out his ambitious policy and refuses to show common consideration for the just claims of a Power with whom a close alliance existed only a few short months ago. Under present circumstances however the decision taken by the Imperial Government is perhaps the only wise one; the danger of a rupture will be averted, and time will be gained to allow of fresh negotiations.

FO 7/686: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl Russell, No 213, Vienna, 28 September 1865

Public views of the imperial manifesto; feelings that government is acting in an unconstitutional manner; dissatisfaction in Hungary

The Imperial Manifesto[116] has on the whole been less severely criticized than might have been anticipated, considering its conductors belong chiefly to the German Party in the Empire whose susceptibilities it was most likely to wound. This result is to be attributed partly to the fact that the Government have taken pains to conciliate the Press both

[115] Bloomfield refers to the Prussian ultimatum to Austria of 21 July 1865, which called for measures to be taken to restore order in the duchies against the Augustenburg party, as a prerequisite of any future settlement of the dispute over the sovereignty of the duchies. In the case of Austrian non-compliance, Prussia announced her intention to proceed on her own.

[116] The imperial patent of 20 September 1865 suspended the Law for the Representation of the Empire of February 1861, which provided the legal basis for the *Reichsrat* (see nn. 71 and 80 in this section), and announced the negotiation of a new constitution with the representatives of the Hungarian crown. In the manifesto of the same day, Franz Joseph announced that the results of these deliberations were to be submitted to the 'legal representatives' (the members of the provincial diets) of the other parts of the Austrian Empire before the final decision was made.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

at home and abroad, and partly to the fears openly avowed by one Journal[117] that uncompromising hostility to a Government which has not hesitated partially to suspend the constitution, might prove a work of considerable danger. There is, however, a very strong feeling among the public that the action of the Government is highly censurable as being not only unconstitutional, but precisely of that arbitrary character which is calculated to destroy all confidence in the efficacy and dignity of Constitutional Law. There is this striking inconsistency in the attitude assumed by the Government – that while on the one hand it is conceding the demands of the Hungarians that changes of Government should only be assented through the medium of their ancient constitutional organs, it maintains as regards the rest of the Empire the right to suspend the action of those organs at its pleasure. In a word the legal rights of one portion of the population are restored to them by a measure which violates the legal rights of the other – so that the doctrine of constitutional legality is at once affirmed and denied by the same act.

It is asked why, if the Government wished to proceed constitutionally, they did not summon the Reichsrath and the Hungarian Diet simultaneously and allow each Body to elect a committee of their own members who might meet to discuss the changes in the constitution which would satisfy their respective demands. To this it is answered that the Government would probably have been unable to command a majority in the Reichsrath to carry their proposal, and that the same proposal might have been rejected by the Diet – a reply which leaves the question of principle entirely untouched.

There appears, however, to be a feeling underlying this criticism of the Imperial policy, that as the affairs of the State had come to a dead lock owing to the dissatisfaction of Hungary, the effort made to remove that dissatisfaction ought to be indulgently considered, and that if the Government succeed in attaining this desired result, the method they have pursued with that object will not be too critically scanned. There is truth in this view inasmuch as the present action of the Government to restore harmony among the dissident populations of the State may be regarded as the forlorn hope of Austria, which will either make or mar the destinies of the Empire, and the desire that it may succeed appears on the whole to be stronger than the mistrust inspired by the means through which success is sought.

[117]Most probably *Das Fremdenblatt* (established 1846) of 22 September 1865.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

FO 7/705: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl of Clarendon, Confidential, No 119, Vienna, 22 March 1866

Prospect of war between Austria and Prussia

The same uncertainty continues as to the chances of an arrangement between Austria and Prussia as I reported last week.

No communications have passed between Berlin and Vienna except a request from here for Information whether the Prussian Government still hold to the convention of Gastein, which has been answered in the affirmative[118] and a demand from Berlin for the extradition of Mr. May which has been referred to the Supreme Tribunal in Holstein.[119] There has been no official communication to the Austrian Government of the Proclamation issued by the King of Prussia on the 11th Instant authorizing the arrest and punishment of any persons who may attempt to subvert the Rights of Sovereignty of the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria in Sleswig and in Holstein, and I need scarcely say that this proceeding is here considered ungracious and provocative, but the Austrian Government have lately been treated by that of Prussia with so little consideration that it has caused no surprise, and I am told that the only remark which Count Mensdorff has made to Baron Werther on the subject is that Austria will now consider herself quite free to act as she may think best in the administration of Holstein.

The newspapers of Austria and Prussia would lead one to expect that War was inevitable between the two countries, but I do not apprehend that either Government has come to any thing approaching to a serious decision, and as far as Austria is concerned, I have reason to believe that the only steps she has taken are to order officers on Leave to return to their Regiments, and to send a few more Troops into Bohemia.[120] The men on furlough have not been ordered to join their Regiments and not a horse has been brought, but the whole Austrian Army will no doubt be placed without delay in the

[118]In view of the rumours about Prussian armaments, Károlyi, the Austrian envoy to Berlin, was instructed by telegram on 16 March to inquire whether Prussia intended to break the Gastein Convention of 1865 (see n. 116 in Württemberg section) by force. On the same day Bismarck answered unequivocally with 'No'.

[119]The demand of the Berlin supreme court (*Kammergericht*) for the extradition of the Prussian journalist Martin May from Holstein (see n. 165 in Prussia section) was rejected by the magistrate's court of Altona on 14 February 1866. While Prussia repeated the request in a dispatch of 6 March, Austria, the administrative power of Holstein, insisted that the issue was a purely legal question between the two courts and rejected any diplomatic interference.

[120]Troops from Hungary and other Austrian provinces were ordered to Bohemia on 15 March.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

most convenient positions for any further advance or concentration that may be deemed advisable.

As Prussia no longer makes any concealment of her intention ultimately to annex the Duchies of Holstein and Sleswig, the Austrian Government have been in correspondence with Bavaria and their other German Allies as to the necessity of making a communication to the Diet, but I do not learn that they have received satisfactory replies, and I believe that the smaller states will all hold back and refuse to compromise themselves until Austria declares her intentions and policy; they do not consider her at present to be serious; the course she intends to pursue with regard to the Diet must however soon be known.

FO 7/708: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Earl of Clarendon, Confidential, No 411, Vienna, 5 July 1866

Reports of Battle of Königgrätz; assessment of General Benedek; Prussian military superiority over Austria

The Telegrams I have sent Your Lordship contain nearly all the news which had arrived up to yesterday from the Northern Army.[121]

The intelligence was so unexpected, and the defeat so complete, that it has caused general consternation and dismay; and as a matter of course the fault is attributed to the incompetency of the Commander in Chief and his staff, and also to the conduct of some of the Generals commanding the Army Corps. Count Mensdorff, as Your Lordship has been informed, was immediately sent to the Head Quarters to report on the true condition of the Army, and, with the Emperor's authority, if he should think fit to exercise it, to order General Benedek to Vienna; but nothing more on the subject is known.

Your Lordship will have observed by my correspondence that the Imperial Government appeared to be totally ignorant of General Benedek's plans; they placed implicit confidence in him, leaving to him the entire direction of the Army, and no person, not even it is believed the Emperor, was cognizant of the plan he had settled for the campaign. He was the officer selected for the command on account of his popularity with the army generally, and especially with the men, for whose wants and comforts he was considered to have been thoughtful. He had acquired a good Reputation in Italy where he had

[121] The Battle of Königgrätz of 3 July 1866 led to Prussia's decisive victory in the Austro-Prussian War. The battle involved around 500,000 troops, with the Austrians losing 45,000 men and Prussia 10,000.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

shown much intelligence when in command of an Army Corps;[122] but it is evident he was not equal to direct the operations of the large Force which had been confided to him. I may observe too that so many of the former disasters, which have befallen the Austrian Arms, have been attributed to the selection of the Commanders from the Aristocratic Classes, that it was determined to try one from the middle Ranks of life.[123]

The result would show that though Austria may possess the finest materials for the formation and equipment of an Army, its commanders and organisation are so defective that her brave soldiers have fallen by thousands in the contest with a higher disciplined and more scientific army.

The Prussian needle gun has no doubt proved itself an admirable weapon, and it appears also to have been especially available against the Austrian Infantry which has always relied on the Bayonet for the destruction of its enemy rather than on the effects of the good Rifle with which it is armed.

The Prussian army is computed to have taken the field with a superiority in numbers of 80,000 over that of Austria; and as the losses of the latter in the battles which took place previously to the decisive one between Königsgrätz and Josephstadt were much greater than those of the Prussian Army,[124] Austria must have fought the last battle under the disadvantage of still greater comparative inferiority in numbers than at the beginning, and her losses have been so enormous that it is computed she can not bring together more than one hundred and fifty thousand men.

The Commissariat and Medical Departments are reported to have been very defective and the soldiers are said to have marched, in some instances for 24 hours, without nourishment.

It is impossible at this moment to give Your Lordship any further explanation of the fearful disaster which has happened to the Austrian Empire; but I may observe that much blame is attributed to the want of discipline amongst the generals commanding the different Army Corps who appear more or less not to have strictly followed their orders, nor to have taken up the position assigned to them at the proper time, all which points will form the subjects for a Court of Enquiry; but in the mean time the injury is done.

[122] Benedek distinguished himself in the First (1848–1849) and Second (1859) Wars of Italian Independence.

[123] Benedek was the son of a provincial doctor.

[124] Between 27 June 1866, when the first battle of the Austro-Prussian War took place, and the time of the writing of this dispatch, there were a total of ten engagements between Austrian and Prussian troops.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

There is a great discontent amongst the population, but nothing at this moment indicating a disturbance. If unfortunately this should be the case, there are hardly sufficient Troops in their garrison to maintain order.

Sick and wounded arrive daily from the Army, and the Hospitals are nearly all filled. The Emperor and Empress are unremitting in their visits to these establishments, and everything that could be done is done at Vienna to relieve the sufferings of the poor officers and soldiers. The Lists of the officers, killed[,] wounded and missing have not yet been received and this only adds to the anxiety of the Relatives, and Vienna at this minute presents a most sad picture of woe, misery and despair.

The silver and valuables at the Bank have been removed, I understand to Hungary.

FO 7/709: Lord John Arthur Douglas Bloomfield to Lord Stanley, No 31, Vienna, 24 July 1866

Preliminaries of peace treaty; exclusion of Austria from the Bund; devastations in Bohemia

Some news as to the negotiation of the preliminaries of peace was expected this morning, but I have just inquired at the Foreign Department, and nothing whatever has arrived. Count Mensdorff was with the Emperor when I called, but I saw the Under Secretary of State[125] who gave me the above assurances and I regret being unable to send Your Lordship by the present Messenger any more detailed information respecting the important negotiations at Nicolsburg.

There seems however very little doubt that peace will result from them as Austria accepts the exclusion from the Bund, and is ready to agree to any reasonable sacrifices that may be demanded of her.[126]

Baron von der Pfordten, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the King of Bavaria has just left Vienna for the Prussian Headquarters in order to take part in the negotiations and Friday next the present truce will be converted into an Armistice for six weeks and the preliminaries agreed upon.

A very serious difficulty for the Austrian Government will be furnishing the requisitions for the Prussian Army, for the country has been wantonly and completely devastated wherever it has approached, and the peasantry have lost everything they possessed. Horses have been everywhere seized for war purposes, and cattle and provisions

[125]Otto Freiherr Rivalier von Meysenbug.

[126]For the preliminary Peace of Nikolsburg see n. 174 in Prussia section.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press

taken and nowhere paid for except when required for the use of the King and Crown Prince[127] and their Staff. In fact the system of living on the country, and levying contributions on the towns, has been carried on by the Prussian Army to the same extent as during the Schleswig Holstein war to the utter ruin of the inhabitants.

Moravia and Bohemia when freed from the Prussians will be left a vast desert, and it may be asked how these provinces, formerly rich and wealthy, will be again able to pay the public imports.

Fortunately the present harvest promises well in Hungary and in other parts of the Empire, but the supplies from there will be insufficient to meet the deficiencies in those Provinces where the war has raged.

[127]Friedrich Wilhelm.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960116310000199 Published online by Cambridge University Press