HANOVER

FO 34/53: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 21, Hanover, 24 March 1848

Change in public affairs; petitions for reforms; proclamation by the King announcing concessions; formation of a new ministry; declaration of the principles of the new ministry

A very few days have effected here, as in other parts of Germany, a wonderful change in public affairs, showing that a Sovereign, who had prided Himself through a long life upon his consistency in opposing all progress and concessions to popular will, has been unable to stem the torrent, whilst the work which He had been labouring for eleven years, successfully as He had imagined, to consolidate, has been swept away at once.

I had hoped that the Reforms which the People had a legitimate right to look for would have been obtained in a more regular and constitutional way through the medium of Parliamentary discussion, but external events, outrunning all calculation, have urged on this quiet and contented, because prosperous People, to irregular means of expressing their will and of peremptorily demanding its fulfilment, for fear of being taunted as loiterers in the race; Indeed as the desire for Reform, running with electric rapidity throughout Germany, penetrated at once all the non-conducting principles which surrounded the Government of Vienna, and struck down the Genius of Conservatism[1] who had so long presided there, it can surprise no one that this Government, the faithful follower of Austria, should have succumbed beneath the shock.

It may be interesting to recapitulate shortly the events of the last few days. I informed Your Lordship on the 15th Inst, that Petitions for various Reforms and concessions were pouring in from all parts of the country, but that the King had refused to receive the Bearers of them.

On the 15th His Majesty issued a Proclamation[2] in which He said, that press of business prevented His receiving and answering the Deputations; that He knew that His Subjects were urged by Strangers to make these demonstrations; with several phrases about his anxiety for their welfare, and his readiness to spill the last drop of his blood for

[1] Clemens Wenzel Fürst von Metternich.

[2] Proclamation of 14 March 1848, printed in the *Hannoversche Zeitung*, 15 March 1848.

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them. On the 17th the Magistrates and Burghers of this city piqued by the probably true accusation of external influence being the motive of the Petitions, and also by the evasive way in which, as they thought, it was intended to cajole them with fine words, proceeded to the Palace accompanied by crowds of People with fresh Petitions requiring more categorical answers; answers which were given by word of mouth, whilst those which were subsequently published officially were not sufficiently explicit.[3]

This excited the Public so much against the King's Advisers that they were obliged to retire, and they will be succeeded by an Administration now in progress of formation of completely liberal opinions. The King then issued a Proclamation[4] more precisely announcing the concessions He could and would at once make, and those which he would recommend to the favourable consideration of the States; thus doing all that could be done by a Constitutional Sovereign desirous of consulting the wishes of His Subjects.

It is impossible to predict whether the People will, in such times of excitement, be satisfied with what they have thus gained in no very regular manner, and will quietly wait for further successes by means of those who are supposed to represent them.

Moreover I am sorry to say that reports are current of an intention to come from all parts of the Country the day after the meeting of the States,[5] with the view of intimidating the Chambers, and even, as some say, of endeavouring to get rid of the first Chamber altogether; a proceeding which would inevitably lead to serious disorders. Should these ill intentioned Strangers come here with any such projects they would meet with a determined resistance from the Burghers who are being organized and armed to the number of about 3000, and who are animated with the best spirit.[6]

I regret to have to state that cases of outrage and devastation, upon the part of the Peasantry, against Landlords and their Properties, in different parts of the Country, have been constantly occurring during the last few days, and detachments of Cavalry have been sent to repress these disorders.

[3] The King's reply to the address by the magistrates and burghers was initially communicated to the masses assembled in the *Schloßplatz* on 17 March. It was published on the following day.

[4] Proclamation of 20 March 1848, in which Ernst August guaranteed, in addition to the abolition of censorship, public sessions of the assembly of the estates, the right to assemble, an amnesty for political prisoners, and a revision of the constitution.

[5] The assembly of the estates was to meet on 28 March 1848.

[6] On 24 March 1848 the war ministry issued 3,000 weapons to the Hanoverian citizens' militia.

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It has been thought advisable to contradict Reports which were becoming current that the King was about to abdicate. The fear of His taking such as step might however have the good effect of rallying round the Government all who work to uphold Royal Authority; for, whilst respect is felt for His Majesty's Age, experience and firmness of character, the Crown Prince,[7] I am sorry to say, enjoys neither consideration nor popularity to make amends for the Infirmity which would render the task of governing very difficult, at least in such times as the present.

Since writing the above the new Ministry has been formed as follows – Count Bennigsen (son of the Commander in Chief of the Russian Army in 1812 and of a Polish Lady[8]) Minister for Foreign Affairs, a man who is highly respected for his character and independent principles. – General Prott Minister for War, functions which he filled under the former regime. Doctor Stuve, a Lawyer, Burgomaster and Member for Osnabruck, the most constant and inveterate opponent of the King in his successful struggle to overthrow the Constitution of 1833,[9] Minister of the Interior. Mr. Braun, Counsellor of the Cabinet – Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs – Mr. Lehzen, a Member of the Schatz Collegium, Minister of Finance. Mr. de During a Lawyer, Member of the Court of Appeal at Celle, Minister of Justice. He and Count Bennigsen being the only Individuals amongst them of Noble birth.

They have published a Programme, in which, after stating the concessions already agreed upon by the King, which I have before reported, they declare the principles upon which they are prepared to act under the sanction both of the King and of the Crown Prince, and which are as follows.[10]

The adoption of measures for the Union of Germany and for a popular Representation at the Diet – various Reforms in the administration of Justice. Publicity and oral Pleadings in Civil and Criminal Causes, and trial by Jury in the latter. Greater independence of the Communes or Parishes, and abolition of all exemptions from Parish Rates. A common Municipal Law for the whole Kingdom, upon Principles adverse to the influence of the central Authority. In which measures they engage to use all their influence to obtain the sanction of the States which are to assemble on the 28th Inst.

[7] Georg.

[8] Graf Levin von Bennigsen and Katarzyna Helena von Bennigsen.

[9] The constitution of 1833 was repealed by Ernst August in a *coup d'état* on 1 November 1837.

[10] Programme of the Bennigsen government, published 22 March 1848.

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FO 34/53: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 30, Hanover, 13 April 1848

Remarks on ultra-liberal movement and democratic spirit; elections to Frankfurt National Assembly; abolition of the privileges of the nobility passed by first chamber; constitution of a people's assembly; demands that Hanoverian troops immediately march into Holstein

As the movement which is now agitating Germany proceeds so rapidly, I think it right to keep Her Majesty's Government constantly informed of that part of it which comes under my own immediate notice; and in so doing upon the present occasion I am sorry to have to report, that even in this Country pernicious Example and Foreign Emissaries have raised up a Democratic spirit which threatens to dictate to the Government and to upset all Existing Institutions which do not harmonize with that spirit.

Indeed if I may be permitted a remark upon that which is not in my own immediate province, one cannot be surprised at the boldness of the People or the weakness of the Government in any one particular portion of Germany, when the former, sees the complete success of the self-constituted Parliament at Frankfort, and the latter can, alone, do no more than lament that Fifty men,[11] who have no possible right to call themselves the Representatives of Germany, issue their Decrees and dictate their will to almost as many Millions of their Countrymen, in spite, but with the extorted sanction, of the Representatives of the Governments who still call themselves the Germanic Diet.

Thus, by their decision, backed by the Fiat of the Diet, Elections upon the principle of universal Suffrage are to return a German Parliament to meet at Frankfort on the 1st May.[12] The Duke of Brunswick has already issued a Proclamation[13] ordering these Elections to take place. One to the same effect from the King of Hanover will appear this day;[14] but it seems to be physically impossible that they can be completed in time; and further time has been solicited from their Masters at Frankfort. If this be not accorded an immense advantage will be given to the Ultra Liberals who preponderate in the Countries nearest to Frankfort, and in the Towns throughout Germany, and it is not difficult to predict what will be the nature of a Constituent Assembly elected under such circumstances, and at such a moment of general Excitement, and also of the Constitution which will proceed from it.

[11] Committee of Fifty, cf. n. 11 in Frankfurt section.

[12] The legal basis of the elections was provided by the federal resolutions of 30 March and 7 April 1848.

[13] Order by Duke Wilhelm of 4 April 1848.

[14] Royal order of 14 April 1848.

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Count Bennigsen laments much that the Cabinet of Berlin should so immediately have cancelled the appointment by the Prussian Diet of Representatives to the Constituent Assembly and have adopted the popular Elections,[15] as he says, that, had Prussia set the example, Hanover would have followed it; but it is quite clear that no aid to stem the torrent can be expected from that quarter. Indeed all those who ought to govern Germany seem to be paralysed, and full Sway is given to the People.

The hopes which I expressed in my despatch No 29 that the First Chamber would make a stand against the encroachments of the Second upon the Privileges of the Nobility, have been falsified. Courage has failed them also, and it is not difficult to predict that this will not induce forbearance upon the part of their adversaries, and that the days of the First Chamber, as a part of the Legislature, are numbered.

In the first instance, the First Chamber amended the Paragraph in the Address relating to their Privileges; the Second peremptorily rejected the Amendment; a Conference between the Two Chambers for the purpose of coming to an Agreement was fruitless. The Second declared that, unless, within a given very limited time, their Address was adopted, they would separate and go home. The First yielded, and voted the Address against a Minority of Twelve.[16]

Last night a great Crowd, calling itself the People's Assembly,[17] met in a large Room to arrange their Rules and Days for meeting weekly. A Deputation from a similar association[18] established at Brunswic assured the Meeting that the Duke of Brunswic was ready to despatch his Troops at once to avenge upon the Danes the defeat of their brethren in Schleswig, and urged them to send instantly to this Government, and to insist upon the Hanoverian Troops crossing the Elbe. A Deputation was accordingly sent for this purpose, and, upon returning, reported that they had found the Ministers in Council at The Palace, and that orders would be immediately sent to General Halkett to enter Holstein,[19] and if necessary even Schleswig; thus giving the Meeting reason to suppose that their Representations had caused

[15] Cf. pp. 116–117.

[16] On 8 April the second chamber voted to dissolve the first chamber and to abolish aristocratic privileges. After the first chamber's controversial agreement in the sitting on 11 April 1848, the government published a programme of changes to the constitution, namely, the abolition of all exemptions from state and communal dues, and the introduction of uniform legal procedures.

[17] This refers to the *Kondeputierten*, representatives of individual towns, communes, and corporations from the whole of Hanover, who had assembled in the capital. At a meeting on 31 March 1848, the Co-Deputies had given themselves the name *Volksverordnete*.

[18] *Vaterländischer Verein*, founded on 27 March 1848.

[19] The King issued the order on 12 April, that is, before receiving the deputation. The Hanoverian troops participated in the Danish–German war as part of the 10th federal corps.

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this Decision, and that it was a fresh triumph of the Popular Will whilst in fact the measure had been previously resolved upon by the Government.

FO 34/53: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 38, Hanover, 21 April 1848

Reassembly of the Co-Deputies for the purpose of watching the proceedings of the chambers; statement by the members of the second chamber of what has been done; public feeling improving

The anticipation which I expressed in my despatch No 35 has been fulfilled by the adjournment of the States until the 8th May.[20]

The Co-Deputies, as they call themselves, who, as I also mentioned in that Despatch, had re-assembled from all parts of the Country for the purpose of watching and hastening the proceedings of the Chambers, and even of coercing them by a species of intimidation Voted Addresses (in which their wants and their complaints were embodied) to The King and also to the Ministers. His Majesty refused altogether to receive it; those who, as a Deputation, took it to the Ministers were received singly and were soundly rated for the illegality of their Proceedings.[21] In the meantime came the arrest of Weinhagen[22] as mentioned in my despatch No 35. As he was one of the most active amongst these Co-Deputies and is now under a serious charge of Rebellion, and as the Public Feeling in the Capital has been very much excited against them in consequence, I cannot help hoping that the same impression will be made on the Provinces, and that these Individuals will be less forward, when the States re-assemble, in their attempts to interfere with the regular course of the Legislature. To assist this reaction in the Public Mind, and to prove to the Country the falsehood of the accusation put forth by these Co-Deputies as to the dilatoriness of the Chambers, a Statement[23] of what has been done since they were opened has been published, with the Signatures of almost all the Members of the Second Chamber, by which the friends of Progress will certainly find that they have no right to complain.

[20] The assembly of the estates was suspended on 18 April in order first to allow the constitutional commission to consult about further procedure, and, second, to permit the Hanoverian elections to the Frankfurt National Assembly to take place.

[21] The Co-Deputies (cf. n. 17 in this section) met in Hanover on 17 April 1848 for another meeting. The ministers Stüve and Lehzen received a deputation of the Co-Deputies calling for an electoral law to be passed. All of the Deputies' demands were rejected.

[22] The lawyer Friedrich Weinhagen was arrested on 17 April on a charge of inciting a disturbance of the peace.

[23] Manifesto of the members of the second chamber, 18 April 1848.

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It states that the present Administration only formed on the 22nd March,[24] might fairly have asked for time to prepare their measures, but had nevertheless not put off the Meeting of the States fixed for the 28th. That, as a Preliminary to reforms, a Law has been passed enabling the States to alter the Constitution by a simple majority instead of by unanimity as was before appointed.[25] Another for regulating the Arming of the People– A very wise one for imposing on Parishes the cost of damage done to Property in popular tumults. A very liberal one for the regulation of the Press– That, besides these, a variety of other Laws have been read a First time; that an Address to the King has been carried, in spite of the opposition of the First Chamber, and in which important Principles as regards the Privileges of the Nobility have been laid down;[26] That an immense Number of Petitions have been received and considered; That Regulations had been made for the Elections to the German Parliament; That the question of Schleswig Holstein has been discussed (a credit of 600000 Dollars was voted for the Expenses of the Expedition to that Country)[27] That Committees had been appointed for examining the Budget: For discussing the alterations expedient to be made in the Constitution, and in the Laws of Election &c &c &c.

In short, if the Country is not satisfied with such an Exposé of the result of Three Weeks Work, it will be more unreasonable than I imagine it can be, even in these times of so much excitement. I am sure that nothing but the most uninterrupted diligence upon the part of the Ministers could have accomplished what they have performed.

On the whole, the state of things is much more satisfactory than it was a short time ago. A very good moral effect has been produced by the firmness of the Government in the Hildesheim affair[28] (of which the States signify their unanimous approval) especially since the re-establishment of order in that Town and the imprisonment of Weinhagen has been followed up by the arrest of about thirty others who were the Coadjutors or the Dupes of that Demagogue there, where he himself is already very much at a discount in public

[24] Cf. p. 229.

[25] Law of 10 April 1848; it revoked §180 of the constitutional law of 6 August 1840. The interior ministry's announcements, referred to in the following, concerning the setting up of citizens' militias and the law on compensation for damage caused by popular tumults, were both dated 16 April 1848. Censorship was abolished on 18 March; a new press law was passed on 27 April 1848.

[26] Cf. n. 16 in this section.

[27] For Hanover's involvement in the Danish–German war cf. n. 19 in this section.

[28] The Hildesheim revolt of 17–18 April was triggered off by Weinhagen's arrest. Once the Hanoverian troops were deployed, the rebels surrendered without offering further resistance.

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opinion. Amongst those taken up are the Printer and Distributor[29] of some abominable attempts to tamper with the Military, whose fidelity however there is every reason to believe is entirely unshaken.

A Loyal Address has been sent to the King from Osnabruck which heretofore had been the Head Quarters of opposition to the Government, thanking His Majesty for the Reforms which were in progress.

Permission to return to Göttingen has been granted to the seven Professors[30] whose removal upon the King's accession caused so much sensation in Germany, and all the Privileges which were then taken away from that University have been restored to it.

FO 34/53: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 55, Hanover, 1 June 1848

Disturbances in Hanover; effects of a new regulation of trades; deputation to Stüve; reaction of the ministry; remarks on Stüve's position

This Town has, considering the circumstances of the times, been remarkably quiet, until within the last few days, when it has been the scene of considerable excitement, and of a little rioting.

During last Session of the States a Law for a new Regulation of Trades and Handycrafts was passed after much discussion and was to come into force on the 1st July next.[31] Its effect would be to encourage the industry of the Country in general at the expense of the strict Monopolies hitherto enjoyed by the Guilds in the Towns. Yielding to the clamour, which, in times of excitement especially, the Inhabitants of Towns are sure to raise above those of the Country, when their Interests are supposed to be concerned, the present Government had, immediately after they were installed expressed their intention of revising so much of that Law as was said to be objectionable; and the Chambers have been occupied about this matter.

Their Proceedings, however, were supposed to be too dilatory, and it was doubtless considered by the turbulent and ill disposed to be a good opportunity for making a Demonstration. A Meeting[32] was called on the 29th ultimo to consider the matter at which the Editor

[29] Not traceable.

[30] The so-called Göttingen Seven were dismissed from their posts in December 1837 because of their protest against King Ernst August's revocation of the 1833 constitution.

[31] The new law regulating trades and handicrafts was passed by the first chamber on 26 May 1848.

[32] Meeting at the *Schützenhof* in Hanover, chaired by Wilhelm Rumann.

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of a violent Newspaper[33] was conspicuous. A Deputation, numerously attended, waited upon Mr. Stuve with the resolutions of this Assembly, which had for their object the immediate Suspension of the Law above alluded to, and that Minister went with the Crowd to Count Bennigsen's House to consult with him upon the matter; when they both most firmly refused to concede to the popular demand otherwise than by the Constitutional means afforded by the Chambers. The consequence of this was the breaking of their windows and of those of the Director of the City Magistracy[34] before the Burgher Guard could disperse the mob. The next day the House where the States assemble was surrounded by a Crowd, which however was kept in order by the Burgher Guard; but I am sorry to say that, although the Ministers shewed so much firmness in presence of the Mob, they proposed most of the changes in the obnoxious Law which had been so roughly demanded the night before. That night, although the Guard patrolled the streets, the Windows of some Bakers, suspected of using false weights, were broken. Last night the streets were thronged by Boys and others hooting and hissing, but I do not hear that any other excesses were committed, although I suppose they were anticipated as the Magistrates requested to have the assistance of the Military who were kept in readiness, whilst the Burgher Guard cleared the streets. Some of the latter have been injured severely by Stones. I do not anticipate anything serious in this way here, although foreign Emissaries are doubtless turning the local excitement to account; amongst other reasons for the purpose of upsetting M. Stuve, who is the object of much animadversion throughout Germany in consequence of his Speech against the Proceedings at Frankfort which I reported in my despatch No 49.[35]

He is abused also in the Newspapers for persevering in making Laws and Regulations for the future Government of the Country by means of States elected under a Constitution[36] against which he had so strenuously protested when out of power, instead of dissolving them and convoking a Constituent Assembly.

Should the Two Chambers disagree seriously upon the Constitution of the First, or upon any other important measure that cry would doubtless gain strength.

[33] Wilhelm Schröder, editor of the *Hannoversches Volksblatt*, founded in 1840.

[34] Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Evers.

[35] In a speech to the Hanoverian assembly of the estates on 29 May Stüve declared that instructions had been sent to the Hanoverian minister at Frankfurt to be firm in upholding the authority of the Federal Diet.

[36] Constitutional law of 6 August 1840.

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FO 34/54: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 71, Hanover, 24 July 1848

Effects produced by the declaration of the Hanoverian ministry and the resolution of the National Assembly at Frankfurt; question of recognizing Archduke Johann as Vicar of the Empire; remarks on central power

Before troubling your Lordship again upon the subject of the declaration made by the Hanoverian Ministry in the name of The King to the Chambers just before their Prorogation of which I forwarded a Translation in my despatch No 66, I have been waiting to see the effect which it would produce in this Country.[37]

More than a fortnight having now elapsed and the menacing and unmeasured terms in which that Act had been commented upon in the National Assembly at Frankfort having now been considered here in all its hearings; I can state that while this Government are calmly and determinately awaiting the results of the somewhat independent line of Action, as regards their obligations to the Central Power of Germany, which they have marked out for themselves the people are for the most part very passive upon the Subject.

In this, and in some of the other Towns, there have been Meetings, not however numerously or (with the Exception of that at Göttingen) respectably attended, at which Addresses have been voted to the National Assembly at Frankfort condemnatory of this proceeding of the Government and expressive of their determination to uphold, at all risks, German Unity, and the Central Power which has been established.

I do not think however that in general the Hanoverians would be disposed to risk the loss of their King and their Independence for the sake of these objects; at any rate a very considerable portion, probably a Majority, of them would not. Those, however, of the middle classes holding such opinions are either too timid or too apathetic to make any demonstration of the sort; and the Nobility are far too unpopular to make it advisable for them to put themselves forward upon the occasion. This activity of the opponents and passiveness of the Friends of the Government at this juncture will, of course, encourage attacks from Frankfort, more especially as almost all the Hanoverian Deputies sided with the rest of the Assembly in their last attack,[38] neither will it be taken into account that those Deputies were elected in a moment of

[37] In a letter to the Hanoverian assembly of the estates of 7 July 1848 the ministry recognized Archduke Johann as Vicar of the Empire. However, Ernst August threatened to resign if all the rights of the Vicar were unconditionally accepted.

[38] On 14 July 1848 the Frankfurt National Assembly resolved to call on Hanover to recognize the Frankfurt central power.

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excitement, and are executing their functions where from all accounts it is Excessive, and when the exercise of free judgement and action is difficult.

There appears to be every probability that this Matter coupled with the late decision of the National Assembly as to the formal recognition by all German Troops, of the Vicar of the Empire as their Chief, and as to the Obligation to wear the National Colours will bring things to a Crisis in the North of Germany.[39] Two days ago I heard The King Himself declare that He would never allow his Troops to wear those Colours except when acting in the Field in concert with other German Troops; the Duke of Brunswic has lately expressed himself to me strongly against the idea of his Troops acknowledging the Arch Duke John in the form which will be required; and I understand there is a strong feeling upon the subject in Prussia, and more especially in the Army there.

In short, German Sovereigns are beginning to feel what hard Taskmasters they have imposed upon themselves by having allowed a selfelected Committee of Fifty[40] to dictate to Germany the Election, by Universal Suffrage, of a Constituent Assembly whose tendencies must naturally be Republican, and which may continue to sit until the impracticability of the task it has undertaken shall be apparent, or some Cromwell shall dispense with its attendance.

As to the so-called Central Power,[41] that of course can be annihilated as easily as it was created by the Assembly; nor can it be wondered at that German Sovereigns should at length see the inexpediency of bowing before a Puppet (although an Arch Duke) of which M. Gagern and company hold the strings.

Whether their subjects will support them in an opposition to the Republic in disguise which is threatening to overwhelm them remains to be seen; but I cannot help thinking that the experiment is likely to be tried in this part of Germany, and that a Civil War will be the consequence. This being my opinion and as Hanover will have given the first example of opposition to the deeplaid scheme of Revolution which appears to be in progress I hope I shall be excused for having gone beyond my more immediate Province in the remarks which I have hazarded above.

[39] A general instruction from the imperial war minister, dated 16 July, to the war ministers of the individual states ordered all military units to parade on 6 August 1848. At the same time it was to be announced that the Vicar of the Empire, Archduke Johann, had assumed the supreme command.

[40] Cf. n. 11 in Frankfurt section.

[41] Imperial government under Archduke Johann.

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FO 34/54: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 88, Hanover, 21 September 1848

Review of the conduct of the Hanoverian government in relation to the rest of Germany and the proceedings at Frankfurt; Hanover has set an example of resistance to the revolutionary mania

As not only had all the Hanoverian Troops quitted Schleswig and Holstein in virtue of the Armistice in Malmö,[42] but also the National Assembly at Frankfort had rescinded their Vote[43] condemnatory of that Armistice before I had the honor of receiving Your Lordship's despatch No 33 I have, of course, abstained from implying any doubt of the observance of that Armistice by the Hanoverian Government by executing Instructions which could only be contingent upon the existence of such a doubt.

Whilst mentioning this I venture in justice to the Hanoverian Government, shortly to recapitulate their proceedings, as connected with the rest of Germany, during the last few eventful months, as I think I can shew that they have, on more than one occasion, set an example, which, had it been followed by others who have more physical power, might have averted many of the evils which already affect their common Country, and might have diminished the dangers which threaten it.

When, soon after the movement in Germany began, the first demands for concessions were made, The King very judiciously endeavoured to put off some of those which were the most dangerous or impracticable by replying to the Addresses which were sent to him on the subject; that as to German Unity, it had always been his object to render the Diet more effectual for that purpose; and that his efforts would be still more directed to that end; that as to a common German Parliament he could not consent to it, inasmuch as it could hardly be compatible with the Security and Rights of the different Sovereignties of Germany; He objected to the Institution (which, is, in fact, so dangerous) of a Burgher or National Guard as not being required, and as interfering with the Industry and Occupation of the People. However, the Example of resistance not being followed by other Sovereigns, and the movement proceeding unchecked, in every particular, in other parts of Germany which encouraged and multiplied the Revolutionists in this Country, the Ministry here also was changed, and all the points at first objected to were conceded.

I am assured, that when, to the everlasting disgrace of all the constituted authorities in Germany, Fifty selfelected Representatives of

[42] Cf. n. 16 in Hanse Towns section.
[43] Cf. n. 39 in Frankfurt section.

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the Country,[44] as they called themselves, dictated from Frankfort how the future destinies of their Great Fatherland were to be regulated, the Hanoverian Representatives at the Diet[45] endeavoured to raise an opposition against them. If they did not it was not for want of warning on my part to all those with whom I spoke, that then or never (at least without protracted civil strife) was the time for the Governments of Germany to endeavour to stem the Revolutionary Torrent. But at that time the attention of all Northern Germany was most inopportunely occupied with their untoward attack upon Denmark;[46] that of Prussia also with the fixed idea that She and Her Ruling Dynasty would be at the Head of remodelled Germany.

The Fifty therefore proceeding unchecked in their revolutionary Career decreed through the Medium of the suicidal and moribund Diet the Election of a National Assembly the mode of regulating the Election being left, in some measure, to the different Governments. At this stage, the Hanoverian Government endeavoured to make a stand, and had they been backed up, and imitated, as at first they had hoped, by Prussia, would have sent Hanoverian Representatives to the National Assembly elected from amongst the Members of the States of the Kingdom by the Members themselves, and not, as eventually was the case, by universal suffrage, from amongst the whole Population.

The Hanoverian Recognition of the Vicar of the Empire,[47] and of the Laws for defining the Attributes of the Central Power was accompanied by reservations which however, as all other Sovereigns and Governments gave way, were subsequently withdrawn. The ill-judged pretention of the Empire's Minister of War[48] as he was called to dictate to the Hanoverian Army has never been fully attended to, which cannot, I believe, be said of any other German Powers except Austria and Prussia, who have special reasons for not obeying German dictation in such matters. The intimation which The King has given that He will abdicate rather than submit to anything from the Central Power incompatible with his honor, or with his various duties as Sovereign, although by the Revolutionists this may be considered as an empty threat, or one which they may desire to see executed, has not, I think been without effect in manifesting to Germany the Danger to which the present movement is exposing the cause of Monarchy.

At any rate, as it appears to me, Hanover has, to the best of its means, set an Example of resistance to the Revolutionary mania; and

[44] Cf. n. 11 in Frankfurt section.
[45] Ernst August von Lenthe and Friedrich Hermann Albert Freiherr von Wangenheim.
[46] Cf. n. 17 in Frankfurt section.
[47] Cf. n. 37 in this section.
[48] Eduard von Peucker.

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had it been followed perhaps we might not now have to witness the Farce, intermingled with Tragic scenes such as has lately been played at Frankfort,[49] nor be apprehending renewed outbreaks and anarchy in the principal Capitals of Germany; still less be looking after the Phantom of German Unity which, if it resolves itself at all into a substance will probably be in a Republican shape; but which will, more likely, dissolve into complete disunion.

FO 34/56: George Edgcumbe to Viscount Palmerston, No 7, Hanover, 25 January 1849

Elections in Hanover; meeting at Hanover in favour of the imperial government and publication of the Frankfurt Basic Rights; riots at Hildesheim

The Elections[50] in this kingdom are nearly terminated, and it is feared that altogether they are not very favorable to the Government. Mr Rumann formerly chief Magistrate of this town, and much disliked by the King, and Mr Gödeke a person of literary acquirement and strong liberal opinions have been elected for the town of Hanover. The Minister of the Interior Mr Stuve was likewise a candidate he has been returned however for Osnabruck.

In consequence of the determination of the Government not to publish the fundamental laws issued by the Government at Francfort,[51] the democratic party here got up a procession on the 21st Instant, the day on which these laws were to come into execution, composed of some of the Trade Corporations, and after parading the town the laws were read at the Market Place by an individual of the name of Callin a teacher at one of the schools; they were in hopes that Mr Godeke the newly elected member for this town would have attended, but neither he or any of the respectable inhabitants took any part in the proceedings. The meeting passed off without the slightest signs of enthusiasm or disturbance. The same ceremony was observed at Hildesheim. These laws have been published at Oldenburg and Brunswick by their respective Governments.[52]

[49] Cf. pp. 38–39.

[50] The elections took place in January 1849. The new assembly of the estates was opened on 1 February 1849.

[51] In a dispatch, dated 17 December 1848, to the Hanoverian plenipotentiary to the central power at Frankfurt, and in a letter of 10 February 1849 to the assembly of the estates, the Hanoverian government refused to recognize the Frankfurt Basic Rights (cf. n. 62 in Frankfurt section).

[52] In Oldenbourg the Frankfurt Basic Rights were published in the law gazette of 9 January 1849. Brunswick recognized them without publication.

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The Minister from Brunswick at Francfort has declared by order of his Government that they wish the King of Prussia elected as Emperor of Germany.[53]

A Quarrel took place on Sunday night at a ball in Hildesheim between some of the inhabitants and the Military.[54] 24 of the townspeople were wounded, two of whom are not expected to recover. Half a squadron of Cavalry and some Infantry have been sent there this morning, but merely as a measure of precaution the town being perfectly quiet.

FO 34/56: George Edgcumbe to Viscount Palmerston, No 15, Hanover, 14 March 1849

King's determination to retain his present ministers; the government's views on the Frankfurt Basic Rights

I have the honor to inform Your Lordship that in consequence of the entire failure of every attempt at forming a ministry the King has at length decided on requiring the present Ministry to remain in office.[55]

The Ministers yesterday in consequence declared to the states, their determination to accede to His Majesty's wishes and laid before the Chambers the Kings letter desiring them to do so.

His Majesty declares in this letter, that the Ministers having given in their resignation he applied to the proposer[56] of the motion in favour of the Fundamental Laws[57] in the second Chamber to lay before him a Programme stating his ideas as to the line of conduct to be pursued by a New Ministry, to which application he received no answer which justified him in changing his present advisers, and His Majesty adds that it being impossible for the country to continue without a ministry he could not accept their resignations and from love of his country and real patriotic feeling he must request them to retain their places and begged them at the same time to announce this resolution to the Chambers. In doing which the Ministers said that they considered it still more incumbent on them to accede to the demand of His Majesty since to all appearances, in a short time

[53] Note from Brunswick's plenipotentiary at Frankfurt, Friedrich Liebe, of 19 January 1849.

[54] The incident described here took place in Hildesheim on 23 January during festivities to celebrate the coming into force of the Frankfurt Basic Rights.

[55] Bennigsen's ministry had submitted its resignation on 18 February 1849; it was rejected by the King on 10 March 1849.

[56] Friedrich Lang.

[57] Cf. n. 62 in Frankfurt section.

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events might take place which would render the formation of any other Ministry in the present wavering state of public affairs an utter impossibility.

This Government have already made known their views[58] respecting the fundamental laws to the Cabinet at Berlin and have now likewise empowered their Plenipotentiary at Francfort[59] to see if no satisfactory modification of these laws can be obtained from the Central Government.

Mr Freudenteul [sic] a violent radical and Member of the 2d Chamber demanded yesterday of Mr Stuve if it was with the acquiescence of the Ministry that the King had sent the decoration of Hanover[60] to Prince Windisgraetz and Baron Jellazich expressing at the same time his horror that His Majesty should have conferred such honors upon persons so ill disposed to the German cause and accessory to the death of Robert Blum.[61] Mr Stuve declared as I stated in my despatch No 13 that in this instance His Majesty had acted without consulting his Ministers on the subject.

It is very generally supposed that the King will dissolve the 2d Chamber; by the new Constitution[62] His Majesty has not the power to dissolve the first.

FO 34/56: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 12, Hanover, 14 June 1849

Hanoverian project for a German constitution; Hanover's reserve towards Erfurt Union; jealousy of Prussian influence

Count Bennigsen has communicated to me to day the Hanoverian Project[63] for a German Constitution which as mentioned in my despatch No 8 was so unceremoniously set aside by General Radowitz;

[58] Note to the Prussian foreign minister, 4 February 1849.

[59] Declaration of the Hanoverian plenipotentiary at Frankfurt, Ernst August von Lenthe, to the imperial government concerning the draft of a German national constitution, 7 March 1849.

[60] Order of the Guelphs.

[61] Blum was executed on 9 November 1848 in Vienna.

[62] The constitution of 1840 was revised by the law of 5 September 1848.

[63] At the conferences held on 17–27 May in Berlin, Hanover advocated a German constitution that gave Austria the option of 'honourably' joining the federal state. In contrast to the Prussian draft, the individual states were to have more influence on legislation and central government.

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together with this a very voluminous explanatory memoir from the Hanoverian Plenipotentiaries[64] in the late negotiations at Berlin.

I have not had time to read these documents still less to have them translated but Count Bennigsen tells me that they will be transmitted to Count Kielmansegge for the purpose of being communicated to Your Lordship.

Count Bennigsen promises to communicate to me the reserves under which Hanover has provisionally engaged herself in this matter of a German Constitution towards Prussia and Saxony which it will be interesting to be made acquainted with as it would appear that by an unreserved adhesion to the proposal of Prussia, the reigning Princes in other German States would be at once deprived of all real Sovereignty, and that the semblance of it would be likely soon to follow; in short that it would be the Zollverein[65] acted over again, only that it would be a political instead of a fiscal union, into which Prussia would gradually draw their less powerful neighbours.

The General feeling amongst those in authority here appears to be, that the proposed Constitution will come to nothing, and that thus at any rate the Hanoverian Sovereignty will not be endangered whilst by having manifested a desire to cooperate for German Unity with other Governments, this Government thinks it has succeeded in quieting the public mind here, and at the same time Hanoverian jealousy of Prussian influence has been reawakened by the evidence which has been given of the necessity of sacrificing so much of their National independence as well as material interests for the benefit and aggrandisement of an obnoxious neighbour.

They also think a great point has been gained in the present emergency against the Revolutionary Party by the Offensive and Defensive Alliance[66] of the three Powers which has however been wisely limited to one year.

Meetings of the radical party are taking place here and at Bremen[67] and Stade[68] with the view of keeping up public excitement in opposition to the Government, but Count Bennigsen does not seem to think them of any consequence.

[64] Memorandum by Johann Carl Bertram Stüve and Friedrich Hermann Albert Freiherr von Wangenheim, 1 June 1849.

[65] Customs Union.

[66] Three Kings' Alliance, 26 May 1849; cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.

[67] Meetings convened by the central committee of the *Volksvereine* (people's associations) on 12 and 13 June in Bremen.

[68] *Stader Gemeindetag* (communal meeting), 7 June 1849.

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FO 34/57: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 20, Hanover, 12 July 1849

Hanoverian ministers' address to the people explains their policy; Hanover's commitment to the Prussian Union; preponderant influence of Prussia

The Hanoverian Ministers have published an Address[69] to the People explanatory of their policy during the last few months. This I consider to be a sort of preparation for the Convocation of a new Diet, which probably will not be much longer delayed.

They speak in this document of the great sacrifices which the King has shewn so much alacrity to make for German Unity; which has been especially proved by his union with the Crowns of Prussia and Saxony, of which the Berlin project of a Constitution has been the result;[70] a project which, they declare their conviction, affords the basis upon which the Unity may be founded; whilst the Court of Arbitration[71] established at Erfurt will be a guarantee for public Rights. They express their satisfaction at the peace and tranquillity which have prevailed in this portion of Germany during the last year as compared with others. They invite the people to cooperate with them in the work of giving life to the Berlin Constitution by electing fitting representatives for the all important Imperial Assembly which is to be convoked. But above all things they warn them against any unlawful proceedings calculated to disturb the public peace in this Country, which they declare their determination to preserve by all possible means.

They more particularly allude to the endeavours which have been made to compel the Government to acknowledge the Frankfort constitution.[72] This they declare to have no force in this country; consequently that persistence in those endeavours would be treasonable. They explain why they had withheld their sanction from that act, why they had deemed it expedient to dissolve the last second chamber which had insisted upon an adhesion to that act, and they hold out the expectation of summoning a new Diet as soon as circumstances will allow of it.

I have briefly given the substance of this document, principally in order to shew that the Ministers, at least, have sincerely adopted the scheme which has lately been propounded at Berlin for effecting German Unity. The people of this country also, although slow to move, are beginning to give signs of approbation of that scheme; the most

[69] Declaration of the Hanoverian government, 9 July 1849.
[70] Cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.
[71] Cf. n. 118 in Prussia section.
[72] For the Imperial Constitution cf. n. 81 in Frankfurt section.

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significant proof of which is a Document[73] which has been published with the signatures of all the principal people at Celle, including almost every member of the High Court of Appeal, and the public functionaries as well as individuals of all ranks and professions in which; adhesion to the Berlin project of Constitution is most urgently recommended.

I am very much deceived however if the Court Party is sincerely desirous that anything should result from the measures which emanated from the late negotiations between the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, and Hanover, except the maintenance or reestablishment of public tranquillity, and the overthrow of the revolutionary Party; in short gaining time, until, as it is hoped, Austria, relieved from her present embarrassments, will be able to throw Her weight into the scale of German Politics against the now preponderating influence of Prussia, by which she will reassume at least an equal power with, and prevent the exclusively predominating influence of, the latter. I have heard many insinuations of this nature. But I think the game, at best, is a very uncertain one. If attempted to be played out, a rupture with the present Ministry would be inevitable; in all probability with the country also, which, as shewn by the Celle Address above alluded to, is becoming more and more committed to the Berlin Constitution; whilst Prussia, as well as the other German States, which will probably by degrees join her, will not easily allow so important a portion of Germany as Hanover to get her head out of the noose, which has been so artfully woven for her; notwithstanding her Reserve[74] respecting the adhesion of Austria upon which some few in this country reckon for the means of escape from the supremacy of Prussia.

I cannot help thinking that Prussia is in the way of obtaining a long cherished object, and that the die is cast which may eventually make Hanover the loser of her independent Sovereignty, and Position and that she will become politically and commercially a portion of a north German Union.

I regretted that the armistice should not have been agreed to, in time to have prevented the late useless effusion of blood near Fredericia,[75] and it is even insinuated that Danish authorities should not have provoked it, when they ought, it is said by some, to have known that a peaceful solution of the quarrel was so near at hand.

[73] Pamphlet: *Was sollen wir tun?* (What shall we do?), published by the counsellors of the High Court of Appeal and counsellors of justice in Celle.

[74] In the memoranda of 27 May and 1 June 1849, Hanover insisted that membership of the Erfurt Union should be possible for Austria as well.

[75] On 6 July 1849 the besieging Prussian and Schleswig-Holstein troops were driven back by the Danish army near Frederica. For the armistice of 10 July 1849 cf. n. 107 in Frankfurt section.

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None however can deny that it has been those who began the war, who have suffered the most at its close.

FO 34/57: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 38, Hanover, 6 September 1849

Recapitulation of German affairs and remarks on the actual state and reorganization of Germany

I have had the honor of receiving Your Lordship's Despatch No 4; and in consequence of the encouragement which it gives me to express my views as to the actual state and to the reorganisation of Germany, I shall venture to trouble Your Lordship with a few further remarks on those most interesting subjects; prefacing them by a succinct recapitulation of those circumstances which have produced the former and rendered the latter nuisance.

The causes which gave such an extraordinary impulse last year in Germany to the revolutionary spirit awakened in France are too obvious to need being detailed, for, the determined resistance to all Reform in Austria; the tardy and incomplete concession of it in Prussia; and the reactionary views of most of the smaller German States were matters of such general notoriety that no one could have been surprised that the People should have seized the opportunity for extorting concessions from their rulers; or that ambitious Lawyers, and imaginative Professors should have profited by it to advance themselves and their ideas by turning the minds and aspirations of excited Germans towards a closer Union of the component parts of their great Fatherland.

It may not however have been equally obvious to all as it has been to me (for few, in Germany at least, were calm and unprejudiced observers of what was passing or of what was likely to ensue therefrom) that that great object was unattainable without far greater sacrifices on the part both of Princes and of subjects than were anticipated by most of the Actors in the interesting movement, except by those amongst them who felt indifferent as to the means, however extreme, which might have to be resorted to.

I take the liberty of stating I have never had but one opinion as to the impracticability of permanently uniting Germany under one Hereditary Sovereign with a Representative Constitution without a previous and entire subversion of the existing order of things brought about by a Civil War, and probably without passing through the preliminary Phasis of a Republic.

For even if matters were brought so far as to have a National Assembly with an Emperor or other Monarchical Head of a United Germany, I much question whether that Assembly could long coexist with the local Assemblies in the different States. A double set of

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competent Legislators would not be easily found; neither would the people, in the long run, like to pay for them.

Then again a distaste for Monarchy might be engendered throughout Germany, by the expenses incurred for a number of Courts (where the Pageantry of Sovereignty would be kept up without any of the reality) which might, and probably would lead to an entire absorption of the separate Sovereignties into the Central Power, or to the entire temporary overthrow of Monarchy in Germany.

Never indeed had a great people a fairer prospect of attaining the dazzling object of their wishes, without under going the dire calamities which, as I have above stated, I anticipated must be the prelude to their success. Not a voice, not an arm, was raised in opposition to their demands. Every Prince, every Government appeared to be paralysed; all idea of resisting the popular clamour to have been abandoned. Sovereigns abdicated; Ministers fled or resigned; Local concessions so extensive as to be in my idea incompatible with Monarchy and with Order were at once made in all parts of Germany, not excepting this, where the Champion[76] of so called Conservatism reigned. As the climax of all a Constituent Assembly met at Frankfort having been elected by universal suffrage, under the sanction of all the different Sovereigns, but really according to the mandate of a self elected preliminary assembly.[77]

A Provisional Head[78] of the so called Empire was chosen and in due time a Constitution for it was framed; but then the bubble burst. The Sovereign[79] to whom the permanent Headship was offered, declined a post which would have given him very little real power, and would have brought him into open collision with many of his brother Sovereigns who had at length recovered from their panic.

Thus failed the attempt of the People, by Pacific means, to establish German Unity. The event proved that they were not prepared to pursue their object by violent means. The salutary example of France caused Revolutions in a Republican Sense to be at a discount; whilst, on the other hand, Prussia rousing herself from her lethargy buckled on the 'sword of Germany' an example eagerly followed by other states which were anxious for her to give it, and revolt was easily put down upon the isolated points where it had shewn itself.

The public mind had however been so much excited by the idea of Unity and by the supposed near approach which had been made to a realization of it, that it was necessary for the Government to do

[76] Clemens Wenzel Fürst von Metternich.
[77] Cf. n. 11 in Frankfurt section.
[78] Archduke Johann.
[79] Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

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something for the furtherance of it. Besides which Prussia was not inclined to give up easily that long cherished object of her ambition 'the consolidation of Germany under her supremacy' of which the Zollverein[80] had been the foundation stone, and which in a measure had been so lately within her grasp by the offer made to the King of an Imperial Crown. Accordingly the conferences of Berlin took place and in them were concocted a Project of a new Constitution and a temporary offensive and defensive League between Prussia, Saxony, and Hanover; to which, as might have been expected, most of the minor powers of Germany have conditionally acceded.[81]

Great points have been gained by this Union of Governments. The revolutionary Party has been daunted and order has been restored; by which, breathing time has been obtained for consulting about future measures. But as it appears to me German Unity has not been the least advanced; but on the contrary the difficulty of reconciling conflicting interests, and of amalgamating the different parts into one great whole have become more apparent.

In the first place, if the Berlin Project, on the one hand, be carried out; and on the other hand the Constitution of Kremsier[82] be persisted in no Austrian Possession can any longer form a component part of a German Empire; and it is to be apprehended that the long smothered jealousies of the two powers which late events seem ready to fan into a flame will render an accommodation between them by mutual concessions of their respective pretensions extremely difficult; more especially now that Austria has escaped from the pressing dangers which diverted her attention from her German Interests.

In the next place it is evident that although many of the Powers of Germany have, yielding to a pressing necessity, joined Prussia in a project for uniting Germany under a Constitution; and have conceded to her a conditional supremacy, none have done so cordially; none without reservations which they expect will eventually save them from a course tending immediately to deprive them of much, and probably, eventually, of all of their Sovereign Independence; and this for the Aggrandisement of a State which to all is more or less an object of fear or of jealousy.

It is not indeed unlikely that the preliminary step towards bringing into activity the Project of Constitution adopted May 26 at Berlin will never be taken: and that no Assembly of Confederate States will, as arranged, meet at Erfurt;[83] because, even in those states which have

[80] Customs Union.
[81] Cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.
[82] Cf. n. 75 in Austria section.
[83] For the Erfurt Diet cf. notes 148 and 156 in Prussia section.

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adopted the project, the local assemblies have (as in Oldenburg)[84] already refused their sanction; and the same is not unlikely to take place here.

Then again, if the Assembly should meet at Erfurth, and should adopt the Berlin project, its labours may, and probably will, be in vain; because the definitive acceptance of it by Hanover and Saxony is contingent upon Austria and the other Southern powers becoming parties to it, which, as has been endeavoured to be shewn, is hardly possible as regards the former; is little likely as regards so considerable a power and one so proud of its long maintained independent existence as Bavaria; and impossible as regards Wurtemburg, so long as the King holds to his memorable declaration of never submitting himself to the supremacy of a Hohenzollern.

As the difficulties become more and more apparent of effecting the fond and patriotic aspirations, which last year blinded Germans in all parts of their widely extended territory to their real and material interests; and the vision of a one and closely united Germany appears to be fading away, the thoughts of those interests must naturally again become uppermost. Thus, for instance, in addition to the deep rooted dislike which Hanoverians, with hardly an exception, bear towards Prussia, their objections to increase the Power and Influence of their already formidable neighbour must assuredly be increased by the reflexion that the price which they will have to pay for a partial Union of Germany under Prussian Supremacy will be increase of Taxation to meet deficiency of Revenue consequent upon the removal of River and Transit Dues, accompanied by an enhanced value of articles of consumption which will be the necessary consequence of their absorption into commercial Union which has a much higher Tariff upon Foreign Produce than that existing in their own country.

Then again, the memory of the war in Denmark,[85] into which they were drawn for any interest but their own, will not encourage them to unite their fortunes too closely (except at least for the attainment of such an object as a real German Unity) with those Germans who from their geographical position have not been so directly the victims of those hostile proceedings which have been so detrimental to the character, as well as to the fortunes, of the Nation which undertook them.

To this point then are the struggles for effecting German Unity brought. The Northern and Central States, nominally united under

[84] On 1 September 1849 the Oldenburg *Landtag* voted against its membership of the Erfurt Union. Thereupon the *Landtag* was dissolved, and Oldenburg joined on 10 September by grand ducal decree.

[85] Cf. n. 17 in Frankfurt section.

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the lead of Prussia in an endeavour to consolidate their Union at least, by obtaining the popular sanction for a Constitution for their General Government, have been invited to send Deputies to a general Assembly where a Project for that purpose is to be discussed. If it comes together it is doubtful how far the project will prove acceptable. If it does not, of course the scheme falls to the ground.

On the other hand Austria, Bavaria, and Wurtemburg are standing aloof, and have probably come to a good understanding amongst themselves, and perhaps even with other German Powers not ostensibly united with them, but which have really a far greater predilection for Austrian than for Prussian Supremacy.

At the same time the only so called Power which has been recognised by the whole of Germany still maintains its ground. The Vicar of the Empire has returned to Frankfort and is surrounded by his Ministers; whilst the Prince of Prussia,[86] the Representative, as it may be said, of that part of Germany which no longer recognise the authority of the Archduke John is rendering military honors to His Imperial Highness, with troops, whose presence is perhaps not overwelcome at the so called seat of Government. Little likelihood that German Unity will come out of all this Medley! It appears to me it will be a great calamity for other countries besides Germany, if, on the contrary, greater disunion should be the consequence, and that the best chance of avoiding it will be the reconstruction, for the purpose of consulting about further arrangements, of some such body as the late Diet, to which Austria, Bavaria and Wurtemburg might be induced to send representatives. Of such a body the Council of Administration (Verwaltungs Rath)[87] now sitting at Berlin might be the nucleus, and to them might be added a certain number of Delegates from the different Parliaments, for the purpose of being at hand to communicate the wishes of their respective Constituents.

FO 34/57: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 47, Hanover, 4 October 1849

Remarks on future organization of Germany

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's Despatch No 6, inclosing copies of communications between Your Lordship and Her Majesty's Minister at Dresden respecting the future organisation of Germany[.]

Mr Forbes is quite right in supposing that the public feeling in this country has no leaning towards such an organisation as would increase

[86] Wilhelm.
[87] Cf. n. 136 in Prussia section.

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the power of Prussia to the detriment of the inferior sovereignties and States, unless at last a real German Unity were to be the recompense for such a sacrifice. In fact I believe the desire for Unity itself to be weaker in this country than in any other part of Germany; because although carried away for a time by the enthusiasm of a revolutionary movement, by having their judgments blinded by the outpourings of a suddenly liberated Press; and by the unrestrained oratory of public meetings, the majority of this people are too well aware of the advantages which they derive from their independent situation and from their peculiarly happy geographical position to be anxious to resign them for ideal benefits, now that they have had time and opportunity for reflexion. But having repeatedly written in this sense to Your Lordship, I shall not trouble you further upon this subject except in reference to an address[88] which as I reported in my No[89] was issued from Celle very numerously and respectably signed, urging the expediency of supporting the Government in adhering to the measures adopted in Berlin May 26th for the future organisation of Germany.[90] This originated with persons in the public employment, and it has been the only demonstration of the sort worth mentioning.

I believe it has not been followed up or imitated because it was pretty soon ascertained, that the ministers and still more the Court were not cordially desirous of giving effect to the Union of the three Kings.

As Austria and Prussia have now as it appears come to an understanding as to a provisional arrangement of a central Power, and as Bavaria and Wurtemburg have decidedly declined adhesion to the Berlin Project for reorganising Germany[91] (circumstances which make it so probable that that project will like others which have preceded it for the same purpose fall to the ground) the desire of upholding it in this country has of course still further diminished.

FO 34/57: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 61, Hanover, 30 November 1849

Hanoverian reaction to decision by Council of Administration of the Erfurt Union to hold elections; hostile feelings towards Prussia

Count Bennigsen has expressed himself to me, in bitter terms, respecting the assumption of sovereignty over this country, as he denotes it, on the part of the administrative council at Berlin, by the decision of that body, that the Election for the 'Reichstag' are to

[88] Cf. n. 73 in this section.
[89] No 38, 6 September 1849.
[90] For the Three Kings' Alliance cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.
[91] Note from the Württemberg ministry to the Prussian minister president, 26 September 1849, and declaration of the Bavarian government, 8 September 1849.

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take place in all the states composing the League of May last.[92] As this decision, of course, will not be backed by this Government; and as public feeling here is so strongly against any scheme calculated as this incomplete German League is supposed to be, for the exclusive benefit and aggrandizement of Prussia it will necessarily fall to the ground as relates to Hanover, whatever may be its fate elsewhere.

The angry feeling upon this subject has naturally been aggravated by a declaration[93] lately made to the Brunswick Chambers by the leading minister Baron Schleinitz (the brother of the Prussian minister for Foreign Affairs) that whether Hanover does, or does not send Representatives to the 'Reichstag', it will be equally bound by the decisions of that Assembly; and that Prussia and her Confederates would have the right, as they also have the power, to compel obedience, to which threatened force, it is quite clear Hanover would, alone, yield in case matters should be pushed to extremities.

How may it be asked can anything like a close Union be expected amongst states having such sentiments as I have described, Prussia and Hanover, and Hanover and Brunswick to have for each other respectively (and of which I believe there are many other parallel cases in Germany) so long as there remains to the smaller ones anything of individual sovereignty and independent action? [. . .]

FO 34/60: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 20, Hanover, 25 February 1850

Bennigsen's mission to Vienna; policy of Hanover with regard to the Erfurt Union and the German question

Count Bennigsen set off, unexpectedly, for Vienna yesterday for the purpose of personally explaining to the Austrian Government the position of Hanover as regards the questions which have lately been in debate amongst certain German Courts respecting the reorganisation of Germany.

I understand it has not been willingly, but at the particular desire of the King, that the Count has undertaken this Mission. Indeed the position of this Country, at the present conjunctive, is a difficult one; and to explain it, satisfactorily, to those Powers whose Alliance she has been catching at with one hand whilst she holds off from it with the other, will not be less so.

[92] Cf. n. 148 in Prussia section.
[93] Declaration of 21 November 1849.

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Going back to the Treaty of May 26 last[94] which has brought this Government into their present straight, it will be sufficient briefly to relate that it was entered into without due consideration of the consequences which it would entail, because, in the first place, it was then thought of vital importance to secure the cordial cooperation and if necessary assistance of Prussia in putting down Revolutionary spirit with the strong hand; Because M Stuve the principal Hanoverian Negotiator, although a clever man was unused to the transaction of business upon so large a theatre, to the practises of diplomacy, and to the cajoleries of exalted Personages having an object in gaining him over to their views; Because, lastly, this Government flattered themselves that by the Reserves[95] appended to the Treaty in question means were secured to them of backing out of it before any mischief or difficulties could accrue to them from Engagements which, as was affirmed, need, at most, only be temporary.

Prussia, with the usual adroitness of her policy, took care not to let slip this opportunity of engaging that German State which had hitherto most thwarted her views on Germany in a course which, if it did not at once and irrevocably involve her in a Confederacy of which Prussia would be the Head, and eventually must inevitably be the Mistress, would render it an object of increased mistrust, suspicion and jealousy to other parts of Germany which had envied the independent position it had hitherto been enabled to maintain, and thus would facilitate the accomplishment of any ulterior views which Prussia might have respecting it.

As might have been expected when Hanover, comparatively unassailed by the Revolutionary Movement, had thus allied Herself with Prussia for present safety and for the future reorganization of Germany, all the Minor States, finding themselves utterly powerless, in face of the movement which was agitating all more or less, eagerly enrolled themselves under the same Standard.

This altogether opened the eyes of this Government to the imminent risk they were running of making Hanover more or less a Dependency of Prussia instead of being a component part of one Great Germany.

They soon came to an understanding with Saxony a Confederate equally averse to being a tool for Prussian aggrandizement, and with Austria, then again beginning to turn her attention to German Affairs, and bent upon opposing, by all means, that aggrandizement.

Then ensued the disputes in the Administrative Council at Berlin, the refusal of Hanover and Saxony to cause Elections to take place for a 'Reichstag'; the Appeal of the Hanoverian and Saxon

[94] Cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.
[95] Cf. n. 74 in this section.

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Plenipotentiaries to the Reserves appended to the Treaty of May 26, the contemptuous reception of that Appeal by the Council, and the retirement of the above mentioned Plenipotentiaries from the Council.[96]

The Government flattered themselves that after this defection of her principal Confederates, and in the face of the insuperable difficulties of building up an united Germany upon such a Basis, Prussia would not proceed to urge on Elections for the Reichstag; but they must surely have forgotten that Prussia may have other objects than the Union of the whole of Germany under one Head, and that She has on more than one occasion in Her History increased her Power and Extent by perseveringly facing greater difficulties than those which now beset Her.

The Elections however proceeded, and Hanover finds Herself estranged even from Oldenburg, which had hitherto been her closest Ally, whilst the breach between Her and Brunswic has been widened by the Military Convention[97] by which (in the face as it would appear of anterior engagements) the latter has bound itself to the Car of Prussia.

I hope I shall be excused for having troubled Your Lordship with this recapitulation of German Matters in which this Country has taken part during the last few Months, as I consider it to be a fitting Preface to my attempt to explain the actual position of this Country as regards the rest of Germany.

It appears to be anything but a comfortable one for I think I shall be able to shew that She will find herself with few, if any friends, amongst States of cognate Race.

When Mr de Pfordten's scheme[98] was started, namely for the four Minor German Kingdoms to profound in conjunction with Austria a plan for the reorganization of Germany, great hesitation was shewn on the part of this Government about giving in to it, upon the pretext of their being still bound by their League with Prussia, which League, however, they were at the same time doing all they could to nullify. Their objections being at length surmounted and negotiations having been opened at Munich, the Imperial and the four Royal Governments agreed, as I understand, upon a Project for the organization of Germany; but Hanover could not be persuaded to unite with the four other Powers so far as to bind herself to join with them in urging its acceptance upon the Prussian Government.

[96] Cf. n. 144 in Prussia section.

[97] The military convention of 1 December 1849, concluded between Prussia and Brunswick, regulated the incorporation of the Brunswick contingent of federal troops into the Prussian army.

[98] Four Kings' Alliance of 27 February 1850, cf. n. 85 in Bavaria section.

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At this conjuncture Baron Knesebeck the Hanoverian Chargé d'Affairs at Munich came here for definitive Instructions, and was, as I understand, the bearer of a Letter[99] from the King of Bavaria to the King of Hanover in which the latter was entreated to go the whole length desired by the four other Monarchs.

The King was in the first place fully disposed to agree to this request; but, being at issue upon the subject with his Ministers who threatened to resign, His Majesty at length yielded, and Baron Knesebeck was sent back with an unfavourable answer, so that it is probable that the Austrian Bavarian Saxon and Wurtemburg Plenipotentiaries[100] will sign an agreement without him.

Thus Hanover will find herself completely isolated in Germany, having stopped short of what is required of Her by the Southern Powers, and having at the same time thrown down the gauntlet as it were to the Northern Confederates. For the same day, I believe, on which Baron Knesebeck set off for Munich, Instructions were sent to Count Knyphausen, the Hanoverian Minister at Berlin, to renounce in the name of his Government the League of May 26, 1849.[101]

This I conclude is the result of a sort of compromise between the King and his Ministers for the refusal of the latter to give into the whole Munich scheme. It was in fact high time to cease to play fast and loose with an agreement which, as it appears, it was never intended to adhere faithfully to; but the entire raising of the mask will probably excite much angry feeling on the part of Prussia and her Confederates, whilst the four Southern Courts will not be much better pleased at being left in the lurch at the last moment.

As I set out by saying the position of Hanover at present is anything but an enviable one. She committed herself last year to a League incompatible with the preservation, in the long run, of Her Independence; whilst, from her geographical position, She is afraid of committing herself entirely with Allies, who, if things were to come to extremities, would hardly be able to preserve her from Military Occupation, at least, by Neighbours to whom such an operation would, as in former times, not be distasteful.

In short she would fain, I believe, if possible retain a neutral position, in case the efforts which have been making for nearly two years to unite Germany more closely should have, as is not altogether impossible, the diametrically opposite result of a sort of civil war, amongst the German States.

[99] Maximilian II to Ernst August, 12 February 1850.

[100] The plenipotentiaries were Thun-Hohenstein, Pfordten, Hohenthal-Knauthain, and Degenfeld-Schonburg.

[101] Hanover formally withdrew on the basis of a decree of 21 February 1850.

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FO 34/60: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 57, Hanover, 7 June 1850

Celebration of the King's birthday; reactionary spirit at the court; ministers not satisfied with their position

Yesterday the King celebrated his Eightieth Birthday, with a Pomp which had been laid aside at this Court since the events of 1848, a circumstance to which I should not have deemed it worth while to draw Your Lordship's attention, but for its being another indication of the reactionary spirit which is daily upon the increase at this Court; a spirit which is encouraged by the fact of little else been heard or read there except in praise of the determined stand which, as it is pretended, the King alone of all the Sovereigns, of Germany, at least, has opposed to the Revolutionary torrent of the last two years. Forgetful as the Flatterers must be that a new Constitution based as it is upon almost universal Suffrage, and embodying unlimited Liberty of the Press and public meeting and association, has been forced upon His Majesty's acceptance in lieu of that which after a long struggle He had so lately imposed upon His Subjects;[102] and unmindful of two of His principal Ministers,[103] and his Representative[104] at Franckfort having been for so many years of His Reign objects of suspicion and even of persecution on account of their political opinions.

Disregarding also the fact of His having maintained the independent position in Germany, upon which He plumes Himself so much, at the cost of a somewhat doubtful observance of good faith towards His Allies of the three Kings League.[105]

But His Majesty has seldom opportunities of learning the real state of things, not having for eight weeks, as I understand, seen any of His Ministers except Count Bennigsen, until two days ago when M. Stuve had an interview with His Majesty at which, as is supposed, a good deal of angry altercation took place. In short it is evident that the Ministers are not satisfied with their position, and that the King would be well inclined to dispense with their services if He could see His way towards obtaining a reactionary Cabinet; but, at present, I do not think the Country is ripe for bearing one.

Amongst several Princes who were present at the Fête yesterday were the King's Step Sons, Prince Frederic of Prussia, and Prince Alexander of Solms, who is in the Prussian Service; and they, as well as a Deputation from His Majesty's Prussian Regiment, were ordered

[102] Cf. n. 62 in this section.
[103] Alexander Levin Graf von Bennigsen and Johann Carl Bertram Stüve.
[104] Friedrich Hermann Albert Freiherr von Wangenheim.
[105] For the Erfurt Union cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.

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to attend. A proof that the King of Prussia is now better disposed towards the King than at the military Anniversary[106] when to the surprise of everybody no notice of the event was taken at Berlin.

FO 34/61: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 87, Hanover, 25 August 1850

King's dislike of his present ministers

I have from time to time, during the last six months, reported to Your Lordship the want of cordiality subsisting between the King and his Ministers which dates, ostensibly at least; from the period when the Munich Project[107] for the reconstitution of Germany was in agitation; and when the Ministers shewed less disposition than the King to incline to the views of the Austrian and Bavarian Cabinets upon the questions which were then under discussion amongst the German Courts not belonging to the Prussian Union.[108]

The Hanoverian Chambers however were then sitting, M. Stuve was almost indispensable in them as the Organ of Government, so the King yielded and the Storm passed over.

His Majesty's distaste for his advisers did not, however, decrease; and from time to time rumours of a positive split between them were current; but, as I had anticipated, and as I have stated in my Reports to Your Lordship, so long as the session of the States continued no positive steps were taken to effect a change of Ministry.

Now however the case is altered; the influence in the Chambers of Mr. Stuve, who has become an object of positive personal dislike to the King, is not at present required; His Majesty finds, when it is too late, that the measures of his Ministry have had a democratic and somewhat levelling tendency, that in spite of the flatteries of those who immediately surround Him, He has yielded as much as any other Sovereign to the popular movement of the past two years; He hears from various quarters, what he willingly listens to, that the moment for reaction is arrived, and there is no doubt that He is leaving no stone unturned to form a Ministry, more or less, in that sense.

It is still very doubtful however whether He will be able to succeed, as those whom He has hitherto applied to, to help to form another Administration have not encouraged the idea, and I doubt whether a change can be effected so soon as many seem to imagine.

[106] Ernst August had joined the Hanoverian army on 17 March 1790.
[107] Cf. n. 85 in Bavaria section.
[108] For the Erfurt Union cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.

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FO 34/61: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 103, Hanover, 5 November 1850

Circumstances of the recent change of ministers; character of new ministers; Count Kielmansegg sent to Vienna on a special mission

The circumstances attending the late change of Ministers being somewhat curious I shall trouble Your Lordship with a recapitulation of them as succinct as possible, and I shall shew by a short notice respecting the Members composing the new Cabinet[109] that, although the change has been long in contemplation and difficult to effect, it has after all been merely one of Persons and not of system or Policy.

As soon as Austria, relieved from her more pressing difficulties, was able to turn her attention to German Affairs, the Court and Aristocratic Party here thought that the time for Reaction was come, and did all they could to indispose the King against his Ministers as being too democratically inclined. The effects of this soon became apparent in a constantly increasing coolness on the part of His Majesty towards His ostensible Advisers. But so long as the Parliament was assembled it was considered unsafe to break with them. The Session however being at an end, and various Laws which had been voted by the Chambers; after having been laid before them by the Ministers with (of course) the consent of the King, having been submitted to His Majesty for His Sanction, previously to being promulgated, He declared that He would not give His assent to what He did not thoroughly understand. After considerable discussion between the King and the Ministers, the latter at length yielded so far as to allow that the Laws in question[110] should be examined by a Committee of the King's own appointment, who were to report to His Majesty upon them. The King from that time hardly ever saw his Ministers; said openly that He had been deceived by them as to the Laws in question, which He now found were of too democratic a tendency; and when they insisted upon carrying out retrenchments in the Military expenditure, which had been decided upon by the Chambers, matters came to a Crisis.[111] This was about two months ago, but their Resignations, which they then tendered, were not accepted in consequence of the inability to find Successors for them.

[109] After the Bennigsen ministry resigned, Freiherr von Münchhausen took over the government on 28 October 1850.

[110] This refers to the *Organisationsgesetze*, laws concerning the organization of the administration, the regions, the rural communes, the municipal statutes, the water supply, religion, the education system, and the administration of justice.

[111] When the chambers rejected the budget, the ministers asked for a vote of confidence on 26 June 1850.

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In the mean time, Hanover having joined the Engere Bund,[112] and the Policy of the Court having become more decidedly and exclusively Austrian, the Hanoverian Representative at Franckfort[113] thought that he might safely go beyond his official Instructions, and signed together with his Colleagues of the Engere Bund the Declaration of September 21. respecting Hesse Cassel.[114] For the purpose of explaining this proceeding he was immediately summoned hither; but although the Ministers expressed their utmost dissatisfaction with it, the King treated him with the greatest distinction, which naturally induced them to tender again their resignations, and this ended at length in the formation of the new Cabinet. Your Lordship will see however by the following description of the Members of the new Administration, that the King's views will have gained no more support, the Aristocracy no greater weight in the Royal Councils, whilst in the Chambers the Government will have against it, the great influence of Count Bennigsen and M. Stuve, who have been personally offended.

The President of the Council, Baron Munchausen, is popular, and is considered to be a perfectly upright man; but his having been, at his outset in public life, a personal friend of, and closely allied with Count Bennigsen in his opposition to the Government, which aided the present King in overthrowing the Constitution granted by William the fourth.[115] This opposition also having continued till after his marriage with the Daughter of Countess Grote,[116] when he became a sort of private Secretary to the King and latterly a medium of communication between His Majesty and His Ministers, will not add weight to him in public opinion, now that he has supplanted his former friend and associate.

M. Lindemann is the personal and political friend of his Predecessor in the Ministry of the Interior M. Stuve, has been President of the Second Chamber in the last two Sessions; and is considered an able man with liberal opinions.

M. Rössing Minister of Justice is a learned jurist, who, as a Member of the Committee appointed as above mentioned for the examination of the Laws which required the King's sanction, has declared in favor of and will probably see carried out the Laws for the better regulation of Justice which were passed under the auspices of his Predecessor.

[112] For the *Engerer Rat* and the Federal Diet reconvened on 2 September cf. notes 112 and 163 in Frankfurt section.

[113] Johann Hermann Detmold.

[114] Bligh refers to the federal resolution of 21 September 1850. Cf. n. 160 in Frankfurt section.

[115] Cf. n. 9 in this section.

[116] Doraline von Münchhausen.

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General Jacobi Minister of War is possessed of considerable perspicacity both military and administrative; his tendencies are liberal and his character decided.

M. Meyer Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs has always been considered to be a Partisan of M. Stuve. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been offered to and declined by Count Kielmansegge Minister in London, and by Baron Stockhausen Minister in Paris, and if another arrangement could be made for that Department Baron Munchausen would probably take that of Finance which is provisionally held by M. Lindemann.

It is curious as shewing amongst other things, how little the policy of the present Ministry is likely to differ from that of the last, that the first act of Baron Munchausen was to summon from Vienna Count Platen the Chargé d'Affaires there, whose recal [sic] was one of the conditions of retaining office, insisted upon by the late Ministry, which most enraged the King against them. Count Edward Kielmansegge has been sent to Vienna upon a Special Mission to endeavour to explain to the satisfaction of the Austrian Cabinet, the objections felt equally by this Ministry, as by the last to fulfilling the Engagements under which Hanover agreed upon certain stipulated conditions (to which the Austrian Cabinet subscribed) to contribute a specified number of Troops in case of being called upon for the occupation of the Electorate of Hesse.[117]

Should Count Kielmansegge succeed in his mission it is understood that he will remain at Vienna as Minister from this Court.

FO 34/61: John Duncan Bligh to Viscount Palmerston, No 141, Hanover, 27 December 1850

Remarks on King of Hanover's conduct toward popular movements in the last three years

Amongst the many remarkable Circumstances, which have attended the Movement of the last three Years in Germany, nothing has appeared more incomprehensible to me than the Reputation, which the King of Hanover has so generally acquired, of having been a Pattern to all his Brother Sovereigns, of almost unbending Resistance to that Movement. I have heard this so repeatedly, and from such different Quarters, that had I not been a close Observer of various Instances of a contrary Tendency in His Majesty's Proceedings, I must have supposed, as the World in general must suppose, that, what is so generally affirmed, must be true. Being convinced, however, of the

[117] For the federal intervention in Electoral Hesse cf. n. 170 in Frankfurt section.

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contrary, I trust I may be excused for putting on Record, and troubling Your Lordship with, the Reasons for this Conviction.

I must preface my Remarks, by shortly recapitulating some of the Circumstances of the King's Reign. Its Commencement was signalized by His Repudiation of the Constitution, which He found in Existence, and by the Substitution of another framed under His immediate Auspices; which, under specious Forms, contained so many Contradictions, that the Guarantees for the Liberty and popular Influence in the Government, which it professed to secure, were little more than nominal.[118] In spite of an obstinate but ill organized Opposition, it became the fundamental Law, for which Success His Majesty acquired a great Reputation for Firmness of Character, but I verily believe, had the Experiment been tried upon a larger Theatre, and farther removed from Prussian Bayonets, that it would have failed. No liberal Measures were sanctioned by the representative Bodies elected under the new System. A most stringent and even barbarous Game Law[119] was passed; whilst those who had opposed the King's Measures were treated, as suspected persons.

In the mean time, the Nobility, a Class never popular in this Country, on account of their Pride and Pretensions, were made even less so, than ever, by the exclusive Favour, with which they were treated by the Court. To instance which, No one whose Name had not the prefix of Von, could hold a Commission in the Guards, or, if not in the public Service, be admitted to the Royal Presence, on public Occasions.

Then came the Events of 1848, and all was, at once, changed, as quickly as it had been in any other German State; but the Contrast must be considered as more striking here, where Resistance to the popular Will had, up to that Time, been the most decided.

It is true no Blood was shed in the Streets of Hanover, as had been the Case in those of Berlin, Dresden, and other German Towns; and for the best of Reasons; because, except on one Occasion,[120] when a Mob broke some Windows, and a few Cavalry dispersed it, the Military were never brought face to face with the People.

But the Revolution was effected by Violence, here, as elsewhere in Germany. A large Concourse of people assembled in front of the Palace on the 17th March 1848, the Military having been consigned

[118] Bligh refers to the constitution of 26 September 1833, which was repealed on 1 November 1837, and the constitution of 6 August 1840, which was revised by the law of 5 September 1848.

[119] Law on the punishment of poaching, 17 July 1840.

[120] Cf. p. 235.

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to their Barracks, when Baron Münchhausen (the present Prime Minister) issued forth, and, in the Name of the King, promised to grant everything, that was demanded. On the following Day the Ministers resigned. Amongst their Successors were Count Bennigsen, who, because he had been in Opposition, had, during the King's Reign, been looked upon with the greatest Mistrust, and had been, all but entirely, excluded from Court – M. Stuve, who, because he had stood by the Constitution, repudiated by the King, had been for Years under the surveillance of the Police, and had been prevented from taking his Seat in the States, as Member for Osnabrück.

I myself heard the King emphatically declare, that nothing would induce him to permit his Troops to wear the German Tricolor; a very few Weeks afterwards, I myself saw them being nailed to the Hanoverian Standards, and from thence forward the Soldiers wore the National Cockade.[121]

One of the first Measures of the States was to vote for and to obtain the Royal Sanction for the Publicity of their Debates, a Measure, which the King had repeatedly declared, he never would allow. Perfect Liberty of the Press – Unrestrained Right of Meeting were at once authorized. The Chambers voted a new Constitution, as liberal as any existing in Germany; the Electoral Law was based almost on universal Suffrage.[122] All feudal Rights, and all Rights belonging to the Nobility were abolished.[123] Not a Finger was held up to avert from that Class the popular Dislike, which had been so much excited against it by the immoderate Favor, which had been shewn to it, so that the first Chamber disappeared from the Scene, as one exclusively noble, almost without a Struggle; and that, which took its place is almost lower in the Scale of Society, and more democratic in its tendencies than the Second Chamber. The King's favorite Game Law soon fell to the Ground; and was replaced by one giving the Right to Chase to all who have a certain small Portion of Land.[124] During all these Events and Circumstances, the King never shewed any Symptom of Resistance, except, upon one or two Occasions, by intimating, that He might be driven to abdicate, if the popular Encroachments were pushed too far; but, as has been proved, they never went beyond His Majesty's Endurance.

[121] On 12 August 1848 Hanoverian troops were ordered to wear the German colours.

[122] The electoral law was included in the revised constitution of 5 September 1848.

[123] Cf. n. 16 in this section.

[124] A law of 25 August 1848 replaced the law on the punishment of poaching of 8 September 1840. The hunting law was passed on 29 July 1850.

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From time to time, especially during the last Session, a Variety of Laws, more or less of democratic Tendency, were passed by the States, when the King thinking, as must be supposed, that the Moment was come for making a Stand, refused to give his Consent to them; and for that, and other Reasons, quarrelled with His Ministers. What was the Consequence? After much trouble another Ministry was formed; but it has pursued, in almost every Particular, the same Policy as the preceding. Almost all the Laws in Question have subsequently received the Royal Assent; and the King has even given up his favorite Point about the Cavalry, to which I have adverted in a former Despatch.[125]

With regard to external Policy, Hanover, it is true, has been one of the main Obstacles to the Establishment of Prussian Supremacy in Germany, which was aimed at, by the Berlin Treaty of May, 1849.[126] But she obtained the Means of being so, by becoming a Party to that Treaty; by then using her Influence to induce others to join it, having had, from the first, no Intention of adhering to it longer than the immediate Necessity of the Case might require; and by deserting it, as soon as Prussia incautiously gave her the Opportunity of doing so. But this is a Course of Action, for which no Government or Head of a State can rightly claim Credit for Firmness of Purpose, or legitimate Opposition to popular Encroachments. This, I think, I can safely affirm, that no Government, in Germany, would accord it in the present Instance; and that Hanover has not succeeded, in inspiring any of them with Confidence, by her Dealings with them during the late Eventful Times.

I do not presume to say, that, under the difficult Circumstances of their Position, the King and His Government could, in many Particulars, have pursued a different Course from that, which I have sketched out, as having been theirs; but, as a faithful Chronicler of Matters, passing under my Eyes, I have ventured to give my Reasons for withholding my Assent to the Credit for undeviating Resistance to the revolutionary Movement, which is, so generally, assigned to the Sovereign.

I shall be excused for having so often brought forward, in a Despatch, the name of so exalted a Personage, by the Fact of His having ever shewn a Disposition to act up, as far as possible, to the Principle of governing, as well as reigning.

[125] After Münchhausen assumed office, the military budget was redistributed in favour of other types of weapons. The cavalry, which had previously received the principal share of the military budget because of Ernst August's support, suffered considerable losses.

[126] For the Three Kings' Alliance cf. n. 115 in Prussia section.

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