BRITISH ENVOYS TO GERMANY 1816–1866

VOLUME 1: 1816–1829

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edited by

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CAMDEN FIFTH SERIES
Volume 15

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

FOR THE ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE LONDON

2000

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 1011–4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

First published 2000

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 521 79066 2 hardback

SUBSCRIPTIONS. The serial publications of the Royal Historical Society, *Royal Historical Society Transactions* (ISSN 0080–4401) and Camden Fifth Series (ISSN 0960–1163) volumes may be purchased together on annual subscription. The 2000 subscription price (which includes postage but not VAT) is £60 (US$99 in the USA, Canada and Mexico) and includes Camden Fifth Series, volumes 15 and 16 (published in July and December) and Transactions Sixth Series, volume 10 (published in December). Japanese prices are available from Kinokuniya Company Ltd, P.O. Box 55, Chitose, Tokyo 156, Japan. EU subscribers (outside the UK) who are not registered for VAT should add VAT at their country's rate. VAT registered subscribers should provide their VAT registration number. Prices include delivery by air.

Subscription orders, which must be accompanied by payment, may be sent to a bookseller, subscription agent or direct to the publisher: Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK; or in the USA, Canada and Mexico; Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, 110 Midland Avenue, Port Chester, NY 10573–4930, USA.

SINGLE VOLUMES AND BACK VOLUMES. A list of Royal Historical Society volumes available from Cambridge University Press may be obtained from the Humanities Marketing Department at the address above.

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by Butler & Tanner Ltd, Frome and London

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the foundation of the German Historical Institute in London more than twenty years ago 'the edition of sources', among other tasks and topics, was put on its agenda. However, not until 1994 did the Institute undertake to edit a selection of the British ambassadorial reports from Germany during the period 1816 to 1866. The editors hope that this edition will shed new light on official British perceptions of German states and German affairs in the decisive period of political transition from the German Federation to the German Empire, and thereby contribute to the history of nineteenth century British-German relations.

The fact that we are now in a position to present the first of a series of four volumes is due to the help and generosity of many people. In the first place I should like to thank the Keeper of the British Public Record Office, Ms Sara Tyacke, for permission to print the text chosen from the vast collection of Foreign Office reports, and I very much appreciate the advice and support given throughout by the staff of the Public Record Office. At the same time I wish to express my gratitude to the Royal Historical Society, and here especially to its President, Peter Marshall, and its Literary Director, David Eastwood, for the interest they took in the project and for their generous support in agreeing to organise the publication as a joint venture – I cannot think of a better place for this edition than the Camden Series. As far as the selection, preparation and annotation of the documents is concerned I am grateful to Dr Marita Baumgarten and Dr Andrea Hopp for their assistance and contributions, as well as Dr Anika Mombauer who scrupulously checked the transcripts against the originals. When annotations had to be translated into English we could always rely on Dr Angela Davies and Jane Rafferty. Above all, however, I am indebted to Dr Sabine Freitag who carried the bulk of the workload with never-failing enthusiasm. This book is actually her book.

London, February 2000

Peter Wende

INTRODUCTION

I

In the first half of the nineteenth century the political relations between Britain and the German states relied mainly on their diplomatic services. Since foreign matters were rarely brought into the British Parliament's sessions or discussed publicly in the newspapers of that time, foreign policy was carried out as a kind of *Kabinettspolitik* by just a few people. Diplomacy was regarded as a matter between court and court, and the diplomatic despatches written by a small social élite for a small group of aristocratic policy-makers in London were, therefore, never intended to be published or to shape public opinion. Their reports were meant to furnish the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and sometimes the Treasury Department or the Board of Trade, with relevant information about the policies being pursued by the governments to which the envoys were accredited, in so far as these policies affected British interests.

The very first international agreement regulating diplomatic agencies was signed at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Influenced by the new geopolitical constellations British missions to the German states had been confirmed or newly established in all the larger kingdoms of the German Confederation (Prussia, Saxony, Württemberg, and Bavaria), and at the German Diet (*Bundestag*) in Frankfurt-on-Main. These missions were also responsible for reporting on political matters in the minor states of the German Confederation. The British Envoy to the Württemberg Court and resident of Stuttgart, for example, was obliged to report about the affairs of nearby Grand Duchy of Baden as well. From the 1840s onwards the British envoys to the Prussian Court at Berlin were simultaneously accredited to Anhalt-Dessau, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Mecklenburg-Strelitz; the envoys to Saxony with residence at Dresden were simultaneously accredited to Saxe-Altenburg, Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Saxe-Meiningen, and Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach; and the envoys to the German Confederation with its permanent representative diet assembled at Frankfurt were simultaneously accredited to Hesse-Kassel, Hesse-Darmstadt and the Duchy of Nassau.

While the mission for the Hanseatic Towns in Hamburg was downgraded into a consulate in 1824, a new mission had to be established in Hanover in consequence of the separation of the Crowns following the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837. Although London never regarded the German missions as key positions like Paris or Vienna and despite pressure from the Treasury Department and economically

minded Members of Parliament who were concerned about the high expenses of the diplomatic service, missions were never closed before 1866. However, after the creation of the North German Confederation, the missions in Frankfurt and Hanover were closed down. But since Prussia had become more and more important, the second-class mission in Berlin had been upgraded to the rank of an embassy (ambassadorial status=first-class mission) in 1862.

The process of accrediting envoys required the English monarch to write an official letter to the monarch of the country in which a British mission had been established. As a rule, the envoy presented his credentials, plus a French translation as demanded by the diplomatic practice of the day, during an audience with the monarch. At the Diet in Frankfurt, it was sufficient to submit these documents. The French translation was then read out during a meeting of the Diet. If members had no objections, the envoy was officially accredited by the members of the Confederation, and his credentials were filed in the Confederation's archives. The envoy was informed of his accreditation by the president of the *Bundestag*. When an English monarch died, all envoys and ambassadors had to receive new credentials from the new monarch to confirm their status.[1]

[1] When the Prince Regent became George IV, for example, he had to reconfirm the position of Frederick Lamb as Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Diet of the German Confederation in Frankfurt, although he had written the same letter three years previously (1817) in the name of, and on behalf of, his Majesty, his father George III. (cf. DB 1/5 George III to The Most Serene Sovereign Princes and Free Towns composing the Germanic Confederation, signed George PR, countersigned Castlereagh, *Bundesarchiv, Außenstelle* Frankfurt-on-Main). The following letter presenting Lamb's credentials, is an example of the form taken by such documents:
To The Most Serene Sovereign Princes and Free Towns composing the Germanic Confederation 6 March 1820
George The Fourth, by the Grace of God, King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, King of Hanover & & & To the Most Serene Sovereign Princes and Free Towns composing the Germanic Confederation, Sendeth Greeting! Having nothing more at Heart than to cultivate and improve the Friendship and good Understanding so happily subsisting between the British and German Nations, we lose no time in accrediting to You Our Trusty and well beloved The Honourable Frederick Lamb, as Our Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, whose Communications will be made to You through the medium of the Federative Diet assembled at Francfort. From the Experience we have had of M^r. Lamb's Talents and Fidelity in Our Service, We doubt not he will fulfil the Mission confided to him to our perfect Satisfaction, and that he will omit nothing to merit Your Esteem and Confidence. – We therefore request You will give entire Credence to all that he shall communicate to You in Our name, through the medium of the Federative Diet, especially when he shall assure You of the warm Interest We shall always take in Your Welfare and Prosperity, and in the Maintenance of Your Constitution as established by the General Treaty of the Congress of Vienna. And so We recommend You, Most Serene Sovereign Princes and Free Towns composing the Germanic Confederation, to the Protection of The Almighty. – Given at Carlton Palace, the Sixth day of March, in the Year of Our Lord

If an envoy was given another posting or recalled to London, the procedure with his letter of recall was the same as with his accreditation. Even a temporary absence from his post[2] and the appointment of a deputy for this period had to be approved by the Foreign Office in London, and the relevant German officials had to be informed, usually the Minister for the Foreign Affairs in the German government in question, or the President of the *Bundestag*. Accreditation as a foreign envoy was associated with certain privileges. These included immunity for the mission and its employees, the right to import foreign, usually English, goods duty-free,[3] and dispensation from paying local taxes, such as rates, and road and bridge tolls when envoys were travelling to or from London.

Envoys usually dealt with every kind of routine contact between the British government and the governments of the German states – for example the delivery of congratulations for a royal wedding or on the birth of a royal child, or of condolences on the death of a monarch or a member of the royal family. More important than these representative duties was the writing and sending of despatches to the Foreign Office in London. The instructions issued by the Foreign Office on behalf of the King or Queen emphasized what was expected of the envoys in particular. When, for example, the Earl of Clanwilliam was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Prussian Court, the instructions from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, George Canning, urged the envoy 'to obtain a knowledge of the Temper and Inclinations of His Prussian Majesty, and of His opinions on the several public points which may occasionally arise' as well as of 'the characters of the several Ministers employed by him, and to ascertain the different degrees of Credit which they may respectively enjoy'.

Furthermore Clanwilliam was asked to 'procure the best information

One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty, and in the First Year of Our Reign.–
signed George R.
countersigned Castlereagh

[2] Cf. FO 82/20: Lord Erskine to George Canning, Separate, Stuttgart, 19 April 1827: 'I take the liberty of submitting to you that as my late Journey to England was undertaken on public business viz. That of taking my place in the House of Lords upon the meeting of the new Parliament, having previously obtained His Majesty's leave for that purpose you will not perhaps consider it inconsistent with the rules and regulations of His Majesty's Government that my travelling expenses should be defrayed,...'

[3] When, for example, a duty was imposed on the wine of John Philipp Morier brought from England to Saxony he complainted about it to Viscount Castlereagh, asking permission to appeal to the Saxon Government 'not to obtain an unlimited permission to import [wine] during my mission, but to strengthen my claim to receive duty free, the baggage and wine which I had brought with me'; cf. FO 68/19: John Philipp Morier to Viscount Castlereagh, No 8, Dresden, 14 May 1816.

respecting the several Parties or Divisions which at present exist, or may hereafter arise in Prussia', and he was encouraged to 'spare no pains for ascerting the Views and Intentions of any such Parties, whether as they may relate to any proposed Innovations or Reforms, or Changes of any sort in the internal Government or Constitution of the Kingdom, or to its Foreign Policy, and especially so far as they may seem calculated to produce any alteration in the relations of Prussia towards Austria, Russia, or France, or in its connection with this Country'. The Foreign Office expected Clanwilliam to 'penetrate into the Councils of The King of Prussia ... to discover any Overtures that may be made'.

Of special interest were reports concerning the finances of the Prussian state. London required information on 'the ordinary Expences of the Prussian Government, of the particulars of the amount and state of the Revenue' and any 'Resources and Powers which His Prussian Majesty may have for levying any, and what, extraordinary Supplies'. Further, London was interested in an exact 'account ... of the Countries under the Dominion of The King of Prussia' and the military condition of all Prussian 'Fortifications, the present state of their defence, as also of the number and condition of the Prussian Forces.' Information on the 'state and nature of the Commerce', the conditions of the 'manufactures', and particularly of 'the state of Population' were also required, and Clanwilliam was finally encouraged to 'assist and countenance Our Subjects trading to any of the Dominions of The King of Prussia'.[4]

Between the lines was the assumption that the more an envoy was able to make himself known to the most important political decision-makers, the ruling families, and everybody engaged in politics in the state to which they were accredited, the better would he be able to do his job and serve the interests of his own country. Conversations between envoys and German politicians certainly had a central role in the transmission of information. Yet information-gathering was not limited to this method. Reading the daily newspapers was also an everyday duty for diplomats. Lord Erskine, the British envoy in Stuttgart, for example, subscribed to seven daily papers, both regional and trans-regional, and a good deal of the information that he transmitted in his reports to the Foreign Office was drawn from them.[5]

[4] FO 65 / 136: Draft of HM's General Instructions to The Earl of Clanwilliam, as HM's Envoy Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Berlin, 26 May 1823, signed George Canning.

[5] Cf. FO 82/18: Rechnung der Zeitungs=Expedition des Königl. Haupt=Postamtes Stuttgart über die an die königlich Grosbrittanische hochpreisl. Gesandschaft im Laufe des 2. halben Jahres 1825 zu liefernden Zeitungen (Schwäbischer Merkur, Neccar Zeitung, Allgemeine Zeitung, Journal de Francfort, Constitutional, Galignanis Messenger, L'Etoile).

The British monarch and the Foreign Office maintained a network of couriers which ensured that envoy's reports were delivered regularly. Ordinary communications, such as news of births or weddings, were often entrusted to the normal postal service. If there was any chance that reports could be opened and read by unauthorized third parties, the reports were written in a code which was changed regularly. Private individuals, too, such as English businessmen and merchants, or relatives and friends of the British envoys and consuls, were frequently asked to carry reports. Their services in this regard are often mentioned in the reports.

The unreformed diplomatic service in the first half of the nineteenth century typically maintained what were known as 'family embassies', consisting of the ambassador or envoy, his family, and a few young men working as secretaries or clerks in the mission's office.[6] Appointments on every level relied heavily on a patronage system, and powerful connections were necessary for success. Frederick Lamb, for example, who had been appointed Minister to Bavaria in 1815 and to the German Confederation in Frankfurt in 1817, and Ambassador to Austria in 1831, was the younger brother of the 2nd Viscount Melbourne, the later Prime Minister, and his sister was married to Lord Palmerston. Lamb was a close friend of both Castlereagh and Canning, but it was Palmerston in particular who took an interest in Lamb's career and his promotion to ambassadorial status. Increasing professionalization after 1853 involving compulsory entrance examinations meant that the civil service offered careers more open to talent, including commoners.

Ambassadors and envoys were predominantly aristocratic and saw themselves as representatives of the ruling upper class. They shared the same social background as England's first political élite of the early nineteenth century. However, it must be remembered that diplomacy was not really a popular profession. For the most part, it was undertaken in the hope of securing the reward of a good job at home. Diplomatic posts did not enjoy as high a reputation as positions in the civil service

[6] Cf. for example FO 366/525 Miscellaneous Papers (contains information on salaries, allowances, missions' expenditure on proper translations, English chaplains etc.). Most of these young men working at the missions were not adequately paid by the Foreign Office and had to rely heavily on their own wealth. Cf. extract of a letter from the Foreign Office to the Treasury dated February 19, 1821: 'that in order to provide a suitable succession of diplomatick Servants, properly qualified to discharge the functions of Secretary of Embassy and of Secretary of Legation, His Majesty intends to nominate from time to time to such of the Ambassadors or Envoys as the exigency of the Service may point out, one or at most two attaches to be domesticated in his family, and in the receipt of a small Allowances from the Public, not necessarily equal to their expenses, but in compensation for their Services.'

at home, especially as promotion often took longer than fifteen years to achieve.

II

It is nothing new that diplomatic despatches are highly subjective. Every single despatch, every piece of information delivered by an envoy depended on his personal talent and intelligence, his social abilities, his political rationality, his interest in the matter, and not least on his personal ambition as well as on his political affiliations and the generation to which he belonged. Another important factor which influenced his writings was the nature of his personal relationship with the Foreign Office clerks, and whether he was well connected and protected by the Foreign Office employees at home, or, as it was the case with the commoner George Rose, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Berlin, whether he had to fight for recognition at home by expressing more aristocratic and conservative views on German affairs than his well-connected aristocratic colleagues.

Diplomatic representatives were required neither to like nor to dislike the countries to which they were accredited. They simply had to deliver the required information. But, naturally, every diplomat takes a whole set of ideas and predispositions abroad with him. It should also be borne in mind that in official correspondence envoys were not allowed to criticize unreservedly the policy of those governments to which they were accredited. Their primary function was to pass on information and this is why we often find their comments somewhat restrained or even cautious. Thus it is necessary to 'read between the lines'. Sometimes the same event (for example, Kotzebue's murder in 1819) is interpreted completely differently by various envoys depending on whether they were reporting from an autocratic or a constitutional state, or, for example, from the Diet of the German Confederation in Frankfurt (*Bundestag*).

All these circumstances determined the quality and sometimes even the quantity of the despatches and explain the great diversity among them. It was not always possible to send to the missions well-qualified men like Frederick Lamb or Stratford Canning, who could be expected to carry out their duties in an exemplary manner. The Foreign Office sometimes had to appoint less talented envoys because nobody else was

available, even if they could not speak German.[7] Because their instructions were expressed in such general terms, envoys had great freedom in finding subjects upon which to report. High politics was just one part; descriptions on the land and the people, and reports on developments in industry and commerce were also valuable and necessary. Sometimes the envoy needed a little imagination to fulfil his duties. The British envoy to Saxony, John Philip Morier, for example, could not find anything of political interest to report. He was so bored with the everyday routine of the mission's office that he decided to write a history of Saxony after the battle of Jena in 1806, when British diplomatic relations with Saxony had ceased. Morier's intention was 'to fill up the chasm'. Chapter by chapter the Foreign Office in London received a lesson in recent Saxon history.[8]

First and foremost, however, the reader of this edition receives exactly what the Foreign Office was sent by the envoys, according to its instructions: details about the character and mentality of the rulers of the various states to which the envoys were accredited; answers to the following questions: who were their advisers, did factions and splintergroups exist, how great or small was the extent of their political influence. The Foreign Office also asked for information about intrigues, internal tensions, planned interference with the constitution or reform attempts of any sort. It received all this information. Yet reports about 'high politics' – as in this volume too – form only part of the picture. Reports about 'people and places', about the development of trade and industry and about the financial position of the different states, for example about the fiscal system and possible future tax reforms, also played a considerable role. The Foreign Office proved to be just as interested in the financial position of the various states as in the state of the army and military establishments.

The great diversity of missions within the German Confederation offers the reader a pluralistic perception of German affairs seen through the eyes of several British diplomats. It is obvious that the reports are not able to convey anything that could be called 'a British image of

[7] In general the missions had to spend considerable sums on translations; cf. FO 82/22: Edward Cromwell Disbrowe to The Earl of Aberdeen, no number, Stuttgart, 30 June 1829: 'I have had much difficulty in obtaining proper translations, and in finding a person capable of reducing the calculation into English money and I can only assure your Lordship that, as far as I can learn the remuneration does not exceed the price paid by Booksellers and Editors in this place for similar work. A portion of it was translated by Mr. Hall His Majesty's Secretary of Legation and a portion by myself but it found impossible to finish the work satisfactorily without further assistance.'

[8] FO 68/22: John Philipp Morier to Viscount Castlereagh, No 8, 9 March 1819; No 14, 20 April 1819; No 15, 27 April 1819; No 16, 6 May 1918; No 17, 11 May 1819; not included in this volume.

Germany' as a whole. Although the envoys were a relatively homogeneous social group with similar family backgrounds their different characters and political views were too varied to create a homogeneous image of nineteenth-century Germany.

The edition also provides insights into the activities of British diplomats in the German states over a long period of time. It shows how information was transferred from one country to another (including practical details such as when messengers, couriers, or private individuals were used), it demonstrates the networks linking envoys and ambassadors and it reveals the sources of their information, from personal contacts in the highest government circles to unofficial, and sometimes even banned, literature. Certain peculiarities of the diplomatic service are also revealed, for example in reports dealing with the question of whether the servants of British envoys (e.g. in Württemberg) could be called up for military service (questions of immunity etc.),[9] or the dispute over the language in which British envoys should address their enquiries to a German ministry.[10]

It is difficult to find a common denominator for the contents of the reports. Purely descriptive reports of events alternate with those which express agreement, disagreement, criticism or incomprehension, albeit fairly guardedly. The attitude of the British envoy in Berlin, George Rose, who for far too long entertained the totally unrealistic hope that a constitution would be introduced in Prussia, is a good example of this.[11] Economic developments attracted a strikingly high level of interest. The superiority of English products at German fairs (for example in Leipzig) was noted with satisfaction.[12] Conversely the Foreign Office's (or Board of Trade's) anxiety and nervousness about the founding of the German Customs Union is reflected in the wealth of detailed reports from all envoys. This topic dominates, in particular, the last section of the first volume, i.e. the years between 1827 and 1829. The envoys are frequently asked for their assessments and to reply to the question of whether 'British interests were threatened'. The creation of new consulates in this period is always preceded by differentiated reports on the extent of Britain's economic relations with the region in question. Consulates, missions and embassies are involved in compiling these reports. Britain's political reticence on the continent since the

[9] Cf. despatches FO 82/10: No. 10 (21 March 1818), p. 318ff.; no number (28 April 1818), p. 320f.; FO 64/133: No. 3 (26 October 1822), p. 185ff. in this volume.

[10] Cf. despatches FO 64/147: No. 6 (10 October 1826), p. 215f.; No. 20 (26 November 1826), p. 218f.; FO 64/150: Private & Confidential (17 March 1827), p. 221f. in this volume.

[11] Cf. despatch FO 64/120, No. 113 (3 November 1819), p. 120f. in this volume.

[12] Cf. despatch FO 68/20: No. 20 (21 October 1817), p. 388 in this volume.

Napoleonic Wars does not appear to have diminished or called into question its economic *continental commitment*.

As regards the inter-relation between the Foreign Office enquiries and the information provided by the envoys something quite fundamental becomes clear: in the first half of the nineteenth century the Foreign Office did not consider the German embassies as key political institutions for determining British foreign policy, as they did, for example, Paris (as source of information on the Iberian Peninsular and Africa) or Vienna (as source of information on events in Hungary, Italy, Greece, Balkans, and the Porte). The Foreign Office, and the Home Department of the Board of Trade, made use of the German embassies in a different way: as a sort of think-tank, as a source of ideas for issues affecting British domestic, economic and social policy. It seems quite clear that in many cases there was a discernible connection between German events and affairs inside Britain. The information delivered by the envoys was used for different purposes at home. The Foreign Office's interest in all religious matters in the German states was motivated by the discussion of Catholic emancipation in Britain. Reports on the position of the Catholic Church in the Prussian Provinces and its relationship with the Protestant Kingdom therefore provided useful information.[13] The long and detailed reports from Berlin on the cholera epidemic which had spread from Eastern Europe provided the officials responsible in London with information on the extent and severity of a disease which was on its way to the British Isles.[14] Although they had advance information, however, the local authorities were not able to establish effective measures to limit the spread of the epidemic. Statistical material on criminal offences in German cities, explicitly required by the Foreign Office, was used by the Home Office as empirical data during discussions on the establishment of a Metropolitan Police Force in London which finally took place in 1829.[15] On the other hand envoys' reports on industrial and commercial developments in the German states were often transferred to the Board of Trade.

[13] Cf. despatch FO 64/107: No. 3 (12 January 1817), p. 68ff. in this volume.
[14] Forthcoming in volume II.
[15] Cf. despatches FO 64/146: No. 4 (24 January 1826), p. 209f.; No. 25 (8 April 1826), p. 210 in this volume.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

The sources for this edition, which covers the period from 1816 until 1829, are all Foreign Office documents held at the Public Record Office in Kew. The publication consists of official reports by British envoys in Germany to the Foreign Office and, where the context requires it, despatches containing instructions or inquiries from the Foreign Office to British embassies and missions in Germany. The following missions are included: Austria (Vienna), Bavaria (Munich), Diet of the German Confederation (*Bundestag* in Frankfurt), Prussia (Berlin), Saxony (Dresden), Württemberg (Stuttgart), and Hanover from 1837. So much material is available that any attempt to produce a comprehensive publication would not be cost-effective. The edition is therefore selective and presents the main positions taken on the political, economic, military, and social issues of the day in the German states.

A few remarks about the general principles of selection are necessary. There is no such thing as objective, value-free choice. Every selection which historians make among a large group of sources is influenced by various factors, both conscious and unconscious. Historians' awareness of the current state of research and the present-day debate influences the choices they make as much as their personal preference or research interests. The sources themselves, however, can also affect the contents of the edition if, for example, it proves to be the case that particular historical events figure much more prominently in the reportage than was to be expected. The detailed reports on the founding of the German Customs Union in the late 1820s, and reports about the cholera epidemics of the 1830s are examples. The editors have attempted to do justice both to present-day research interests and to the thematic emphases in the reports themselves. The inclusion of reports on well-known themes and events makes it possible to convey an image of nineteenth-century Germany drawn from English sources, while the inclusion of new or unexpected topics which turn up with surprising frequency in the sources themselves allows common historical views to be corrected or re-assessed.

This selection can reflect only to a limited extent the processes by which the envoys' reports were constructed. Envoys' reports were never complete; a topic or event was rarely exhausted in a single missive. Rather, these reports often read like a novel published in serial form

because additional information could only be added bit by bit, as it became available to the envoy. Here the constraints imposed by having to make a selection are most clearly visible.

Non-German themes that are mentioned in the reports are included only where they cast some light on the situation inside the German states (for example, news of the Spanish military revolt at the Berlin court, which reflects on Prussia as a state in which the military played a special part). Anglo-German connections, by contrast, are included as completely as possible. In many cases, extracts from newspaper articles, or copies or translations of these articles, were appended to the reports. Most of these are not reprinted in this edition, but reference is made to them in the footnotes.

The decision to publish only the envoys' official despatches and not their private letters needs to be explained. It can be argued that more 'authentic' or more 'relevant' information is found in the informal, private correspondence which every Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs maintained with the envoys, especially with those to whom he was personally close. In these private letters things could be said in a more informal and direct way than in the official despatches, which were cast in a highly standardized language. Private letters contain intimate details which do not belong in an official dispatch. In private letters envoys felt freer to express their own private views, or even to indulge in speculation. Private letters could therefore provide an important supplement to, commentary on, or explanation of official public despatches. Castlereagh, for example, made no distinction between private and official letters in his correspondence. As a result, many of his private letters are found in the Foreign Office records, bound with the official despatches. Canning first made a distinction between private letters and official despatches, and published some of the official despatches for political purposes. Palmerston followed in Canning's footsteps. Nevertheless, as Raymond Jones put it in his brilliant study on the British diplomatic service: 'Almost everyone is agreed that private correspondence was never used as a substitute for official despatches.'[1] The really important information was never delivered only in private letters, but had to appear first in the official correspondence. Although private letters, and the third category of sources relevant to Anglo-German relations in the nineteenth century, consulate correspondence, contain valuable information, the editors have decided to limit this edition to the official reports as a relatively homogeneous type of source material.

Within each single mission the documentation is ordered along

[1] Raymond A. Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service*, 1815–1916 (Gerrards Cross, 1983), p. 121.

strictly chronological lines. The principles of transcription were to reproduce individual reports as completely as possible, both to maintain the authentic appearance of the sources, and in order not to anticipate any particular interpretation by providing heavily edited readings selected thematically. Nevertheless, the principle of completeness obviously could not be binding in all cases, and where it was justified, omissions were made. Omissions are marked thus: [...]. Omitted throughout without being marked are the standard greetings used at the beginnings and ends of letters. As a rule, a text critical commentary is unnecessary because this edition is based on fair copies. Only rarely did the writer make corrections after the fair copy had been made. This was more often the case in Foreign Office despatches to envoys, which were sometimes revised at the last minute. As a rule, this transcription is based on the final, revised version. These drafts are identical to the originals sent to the envoys. Footnotes give the record reference to where the originals can be found in the Public Record Office.

Despatches from the envoys were usually written by the secretary to the mission, sometimes by the envoy himself. This produced a lack of uniformity in the headings, which have generally been standardized for the purposes of this edition. The headings contain this information in the following order: the call mark of the document in the Public Record Office in Kew, that is, files of the Foreign Office (FO), with a number indicating the particular state in which the document originated (e.g., 68 for Saxony), and then the number of the volume in which the particular dispatch is bound. After this we find the names of the sender and the addressee, the number of the report[2] (except for letters marked 'secret' or 'confidential', which are frequently unnumbered and do not form part of the official correspondence), the place where it was written, and, finally, the date of the report. In the case of Foreign Office

[2] It was necessary to number the dispatches to ensure that no individual one was lost and unnoticed if it never reached London. Envoys were required to sent annual statistics of all despatches which had left the mission to London.
Cf. FO 8/22: Edward Cromwell Disbrowe to Earl of Aberdeen, Separate, Stuttgart, 1 January 1829:
'In obedience to the Circular Instructions dated Foreign Office May 6 1825 I have the honor to inform Your Lordship that in the year 1828 it appears that Lord Erskine addressed to the Foreign Office 11 Dispatches (up to the 8th February) two which bear the No 7 by mistake, one gives the number of Dispatches for the year 1827 and one forwards the Extraordinary Expences of this Mission.- Total 11. Dispatches and one letter to Mr Backhouse.
Mr Hall during the period he was Chargé d'Affaires addressed 15 numbered Dispatches and 4 Separates to the office.- Total 19.
And from the period of my arrival until the 31st December inclusive, I had the honor of addressing 18th numbered Dispatches, and one Separate.'

despatches to the envoys, the details of provenance are followed by the name of the envoy preceding the usual details such as number, and place and date of issue.

The beginnings of encoded passages are marked: [code]. The ends of the encoded passages are indicated by: [code ends]. If the despatch ends encoded, no indication is made. The version deciphered by the Foreign Office and marked over the columns of figures is reproduced here. Marks made by the office, and marginal comments added as the documents were processed, are mentioned only when they have a bearing on the content.

The standardized heading is followed by a brief summary of the dispatch, printed in italics. Emphases in the original (underlining) and abbreviations etc. are retained in the version reproduced here. Contemporary spelling and punctuation are also retained, even where they differ from current conventions. Obvious orthographic errors, however, were silently corrected.

The sometimes very different contemporary spellings of names and place-names are also retained. Identifying the people named in the reports posed a significant problem. Often people are mentioned only indirectly (i.e. 'the Minister of Baden at the Court'), or their names are not given in full. Obvious orthographic errors in the writing of names were sometimes the result of oral transmission of information. Envoys mostly wrote down names as they sounded, and this was not always the correct form. Where names appear in their correct form in the reports, biographical details can be found by referring directly to the annotated name index at the end of the volume. If the name is wrong, or written incorrectly, the correct version is given in a footnote, and this can then be looked up in the annotated index of names. People referred to indirectly, and who cannot be identified from the immediate context of the document, are also named in the footnotes. An exception is made for the great European rulers. The full name of the Emperor of Russia or Austria, or of 'His Majesty the King of Prussia', is not given in the footnotes. The annotated index of names uses the authentic German spellings for inhabitants of the German Confederation. The anglicized form of names, which is often used in the reports, is listed in the name index with a cross-reference to the German name as it appears in the annotated name index, where biographical details can be found. The subject index at the end of this volume facilitates the identification of specific themes or aspects in the reports. The footnotes to the reports explain incidents and contexts, knowledge of which is often assumed in the reports.