

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

**BRITISH ENVOYS TO GERMANY**  
**1816–1866**

**VOLUME II: 1830–1847**

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

**BRITISH ENVOYS TO GERMANY  
1816–1866**

**VOLUME II: 1830–1847**

edited by

MARKUS MÖSSLANG, SABINE FREITAG  
and PETER WENDE

CAMDEN FIFTH SERIES

Volume 21

**CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS**

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

2002

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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 10111-4211, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

© Royal Historical Society 2002

First published 2002

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

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for*

ISBN 0 521 81868 0 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 2002 subscription price (which includes postage but not VAT is £63 (US\$102 in the USA, Canada and Mexico) and includes Camden Fifth Series, volumes 19, 20 and 21 (published in July and December) and Transactions Sixth Series, volume 12 (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*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**CONTENTS**

Acknowledgements (Peter Wende) .....	vii
Introduction .....	ix
Editorial principles and technical details .....	xxii
Reports: Diet of the German Confederation (Frankfurt) .....	3
Prussia (Berlin).....	111
Hanover.....	249
Saxony (Dresden) .....	289
Württemberg (Stuttgart).....	345
Bavaria (Munich).....	405
Austria (Vienna) .....	487
Annotated index of names .....	533
Subject index.....	593

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For a number of reasons it is a great pleasure for me to present the second volume of the series 'British Envoys to Germany' only two years after the appearance of the first. And this is due to the unflagging enthusiasm of the persons engaged in the project and the unwavering support of the institutions involved.

As, at the same time, this is the last volume to which I had the chance to add my personal share of advice and work, I am especially grateful to my successor, Professor Hagen Schulze, for not only allowing the project to be continued but even planning to extend its range.

The editors would not have been able to complete their work without the support of the British Public Record Office and thus my thanks go to its Keeper, Sara Tyacke, and her staff as well as to the Royal Historical Society for again allowing this volume to be published as part of the Camden Series.

Many people contributed to the considerable workload involved in the preparation of this volume: Andreas Fahrmeir was the first to sift through the mass of reports from the early 1830s; Hilary Canavan took over the task of checking the final transcripts against the originals; Stefan Petzold and Eva Maria Hundsnurscher meticulously researched details for the annotations and Annika Mombauer this time prepared the index.

Again the editors are indebted to Angela Davies and Jane Rafferty who provided the English translations whenever necessary.

Finally, I still remember numerous sessions with my co-editors, Sabine Freitag and Markus Mösßlang, when – confronted with a huge mass of source material – we discussed the criteria for selecting those reports to be published. My last word of gratitude is to both of them whose dedication to the project has been characterized by indefatigable efficiency and untiring care.

Frankfurt am Main, June 2002

Peter Wende

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

The reports of British envoys in Germany from 1830 to 1847 which have been selected for inclusion in this volume convey a changed and more dynamic picture of the states of the German Confederation and of British policy for Germany than the first volume of this edition (1816-1829). One reason is that this period was much more turbulent and eventful in the states of the German Confederation than the 1820s had been. Another is that the policies of the Foreign Office itself had changed. Two political events in the German Confederation were mainly responsible for Britain abandoning the foreign policy restraint which it had previously practised. The first was the passing of the Six Articles by the Federal Diet in 1832 in reaction to the revolutionary unrest which had been precipitated in Germany by the revolution of July 1830 in Paris, and which culminated in the Hambach Festival two years later. The second event was the occupation of Frankfurt by federal troops after the Storming of the Frankfurt Guard House in 1833. Both measures provoked the British Foreign Office to express objections directly in the form of circular dispatches and verbal notes.

The British Foreign Secretary, Palmerston, had been shaped by the experience of domestic reform under the Whig administration in the early 1830s. He did not consider the anti-liberal policies initiated by Austria, but also supported by Prussia, as an adequate means of calming down the tense political situation in Germany. On the contrary, he feared that these policies would exacerbate the tensions, and perhaps encourage people in the constitutional states, who feared that their established rights would now be curtailed, to turn more strongly towards France. He even believed that French intervention was possible. For reasons of security, Palmerston was greatly interested in maintaining the federal structures intact as a crucial guarantee for the internal stability of Germany. He believed that a stable German Confederation as a buffer zone between France and Russia would have a positive impact on the balance of the European system of states as a whole.

Palmerston's views were not changed by the reports submitted by some of his accredited diplomats in the German Confederation, who attempted to defend the Confederation's policies in the context of the existing situation. Unlike Frederick Lamb, who had been British ambassador to Vienna since 1831, and had initially supported the line taken by the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich, defending the Confederation's repressive measures, the British Foreign Secretary wrote

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

in a private letter: 'I am afraid Metternich is going to play the Devil in Germany with his Six Resolutions for the Diet. If he tries to carry them & succeeds, he will set all the Constitutional Sovereigns by the Ears with their Subjects, & then he will march in so many thousand Austrian Policemen to keep order, but this system cannot last, & must break down under him; and whenever it does there will be a crash [...]. Now I see no reason why Mett.[ernich] should sally forth like another Mahomet with the Koran of Vienna in one hand and martial law in the other, to dragoon all Europe into passive submission [...]. Divide et imperia should be the maxims of government in these Times. Separate by reasonable Concessions the moderate from the exaggerated, content the former by fair concessions and get them to assist in resisting the insatiable Demands of the latter. This is the only way to govern nowadays [...]. But this German Plan frightens me.'

In recommending the principle of *divide et imperia*, Palmerston was, in his foreign policy, advocating a course that had proved to be highly effective domestically at precisely the same time – namely, defusing a critical situation at home by calculated flexibility and granting concessions in time; in short, avoiding revolution by conceding reform. His recommendation for the German Confederation was to encourage and secure reforms at home by limiting the exercise of autocratic power and strengthening the constitutional element. In achieving a balance between the interests of rulers and ruled, which Palmerston regarded as necessary, it was important that constitutions which had already been introduced in individual states of the German Confederation should not be repealed or substantially cut back. Palmerston saw the passing of the Six Articles in 1832 as an instance of the Confederation exceeding its powers and infringing the sovereignty of individual states. This, he believed, would not only exacerbate the quarrel between the Confederation and the constitutional states, but also make conflict inevitable between the rulers of constitutional states and their people.

The British envoy to the German Confederation in Frankfurt, Sir Thomas Cartwright, also believed that repressive policies could encourage political radicalization. Although, like Palmerston, basically conservative in his political opinions, Cartwright felt his opinions had been vindicated after the Storming of the Frankfurt Guard House in April 1833. He saw the incident as a direct attack on the German Confederation, and regarded it as a failure of the politics of repression practised since the passing of the Six Articles: 'We have now had

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Palmerston to Frederick Lamb, Private, Foreign Office, London, 30 June 1832, quoted in Günther Heydemann, *Konstitution gegen Revolution: Die britische Deutschland- und Italiapolitik 1815-1848*, Publications of the German Historical Institute London, 36 (Göttingen and Zürich, 1995), p. 228.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

xi

speaking evidence that the Decrees of the Diet of last year, which were to have suppressed all political irritation and which according to the language of the Members of the Diet had indeed restored tranquillity, have been no remedy at all. They have in many States augmented the ranks of the enemies of the Governments. They have in some of the Representative Chambers increased the existing spirit of hostility to the Government[.] [...] The measures of the Diet therefore have failed in their effect[.]<sup>2</sup>

Even if the Storming of the Frankfurt Guard House had been the act only of a few radical fanatics, the event itself was a revealing of the extent to which Germany had been radicalized. The deputies to the Federal Diet felt threatened, and inadequately protected by the state's forces for order, yet the immediate occupation of the city by federal troops, ordered by the Federal Diet, represented a formal legal infringement of the Federal Act of 1815. As the Free City of Frankfurt had not, itself, at any point asked the Confederation for help, the Confederation's intervention lacked legal legitimacy.

Not immediately, but only after the conflict between the Frankfurt Senate and the Federal Diet had escalated again, Palmerston intervened, arguing that to maintain the independence 'even of the smallest State of Europe' was in Britain's interests.<sup>3</sup> Once again, different interpretations of the rights and duties of the German Confederation and its member states lay at the heart of the quarrel about the legality of the measures taken by the Confederation. The Confederation, argued Palmerston, could not interfere arbitrarily with the sovereign rights of individual states. In this case, as in his criticism of the passing of the Six Articles, Palmerston derived Britain's right to object from the guarantee undertaken by the European Great Powers in 1815. In the British view – and the French government expressed a similar one through its envoy to the German Confederation – the powers that had signed the Treaties of Vienna had undertaken to guarantee the sovereignty and autonomy of the German states. But as in the autumn of 1832, the Confederation, and, in particular, the Austrian and Prussian government, rejected this. On 18 September 1834, the Federal Diet deprived the powers that had signed the Act of the Vienna Congress of 1815 of the right to guarantee the independence of federal states and the right to monitor the resolutions of the Confederation. The relevant resolution evoked the following cynical commentary from Cartwright: 'This document is a most extraordinary production, and is more

<sup>2</sup> FO 30/43: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 54, Confidential, Frankfurt, 20 April 1833.

<sup>3</sup> FO 30/48: To Thomas Cartwright, Foreign Office, No. 24, London, 15 May 1834 (draft); not included in this volume.



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

remarkable for its abuse and a display of rancorous feeling than of argument and reason [...]. There is but little argument in it, and what little there is, is all distorted.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the British envoys in Frankfurt were not permitted to see the Federal Diet's confidential minutes was a measure of how unwanted Britain's interference was. They obtained information about the contents only by co-operating with the Hanoverian envoys to the Federal Diet, as the Britons had no legal right to this information. And in 1834 a similar thing happened again at the Vienna Conferences. Here too, strict confidentiality excluded any official flow of information, which meant that the British diplomats were able to obtain information about the negotiations and resolutions of the Vienna Conferences only informally. Yet the difficulty of obtaining information did not prevent the diplomats from clearly expressing their own assessment of the political situation. Thus, all British envoys harboured considerable doubts that the articles agreed upon confidentially in Vienna and passed as a number of laws in October and November 1834 by the Federal Diet in Frankfurt would be efficiently translated into reality. Ralph Abercromby, accredited to the Prussian court in Berlin, summed up the scepticism of all the British envoys: 'So many decrees and regulations have already been issued by the Diet, for the internal regulation of Germany, and for its preservation against the Contamination of Revolutionary Principles, – all of which nearly have proved ineffectual from the impossibility of fully executing them, that it is by no means improbable that a similar fate may attend the results of the late deliberations of Vienna.'<sup>5</sup> The fact that they criticized the politics of the German Confederation, however, by no means meant that the British envoys therefore automatically supported the radical democratic forces in the German Confederation. Their idea of a politically moderate preservation or restoration of orderly conditions – still dictated by an elitist claim to leadership – involved a controlled liberalization of conditions, for example, by the German chambers changing their functions to become legislative rather than advisory organs. This would involve a limited redistribution of political power in favour of broader sections of the population, and included the view that subversive forces had to be dealt with firmly. Thus, the envoy John Ralph Milbanke had initially attributed the spread of the revolutionary mood in Germany in September 1830 mainly to the lack of decisive measures taken by the individual German states. '[T]he rapid progress', he reported to London, 'which it has made, is to be mainly attributed to the absence

<sup>4</sup> FO 30/53: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 111, Frankfurt, 1 October 1834.

<sup>5</sup> FO 64/196: Ralph Abercromby to Viscount Palmerston, No. 1, Berlin, 2 July 1834.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

xiii

of energetick measures on the part of most of the Governments where it has manifested itself.<sup>6</sup>

Despite such clear statements, Palmerston did not allow the reports of his envoys to influence him unduly in a political sense. In any case, the question of how much real influence the envoys had on the foreign policy of their home country cannot be answered unequivocally. Palmerston received quite different reports from the various German states concerning the situation in the German Confederation. While Lord Erskine in Munich, and the otherwise conservative Sir Thomas Cartwright in Frankfurt sharply criticized the infringement of the sovereign rights of the constitutional states, Palmerston's close friend Frederick Lamb in Vienna and Lord Minto in Berlin initially defended the Confederation's actions, and emphasized the radical tendencies of the conspiracies which made a harsh response necessary. The envoys' reports confirm once again how much their reportage depended on where they were accredited, for they were still bound by the rule that said their first concern should be to make the motives and interests of their respective host governments clear and comprehensible, while exercising restraint in expressing their personal opinions. Palmerston, whose main goal was to secure British interests, pursued his course without letting the assessments of his diplomats confuse him; indeed, he sometimes diametrically opposed their views.

British diplomats observed and described the process of transformation that was taking place at different speeds in the various German states more clearly and perceptively than most German contemporaries, in particular, the force that emanated from the latent fear of revolution that was present during the *Vormärz* period. This fear of revolution, a perceptible 'sensitivity', takes many different shapes in the reports. Reports about excesses, unrest and protests (in Hesse-Kassel, Hesse-Darmstadt, Brunswick, Dresden, Karlsruhe, Hanau, Schwerin, Hanover, Bavaria, and the Rhineland Palatinate, among others) can be found throughout all the years covered in the present volume, but are especially frequent in the period after the revolution of July 1830 in Paris, and again from the mid 1840s. After the Rhine crisis of 1840, political consciousness becomes noticeably more nationalized. Further, the envoys' reports demonstrate that individual conflicts were noted and discussed far beyond the borders of the individual German states. The crises of the years after 1830 were diverse in political, economic and social terms, and their character was thus assessed very differently by the British envoys. Sometimes economic factors, such as rising prices

<sup>6</sup> FO 30/32: John Ralph Milbanke to Earl of Aberdeen, No. 25, Frankfurt, 29 September 1830.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

for bread and beer in consequence of bad harvests, were seen as setting them off; at other times, the inappropriate raising of taxes was seen as responsible; at times, unrest was explained by specific local conditions; at others, just a few confused fanatics seemed to be at work; sometimes, with a glance at the student population, the education system was blamed; at other times the inappropriate authoritarian leadership style of certain small German princes was seen as having provoked a popular oppositional movement, which was prepared to extend the struggle to a bureaucracy unwilling to reform. Most envoys avoided monocausal explanations, and thus clearly distanced themselves from the official pronouncements in Germany, in particular of Austria and Prussia, which, as a rule, assumed far-reaching conspiracies and targeted campaigns, and tended to see every incident as a sign of imminent revolution. George William Chad, in any case, was of the opinion 'that these accounts, if not entirely false, are much exaggerated'.<sup>7</sup> Sir John Ralph Milbanke, too, was personally convinced 'that in many cases the accounts are much exaggerated', but did not dispute that 'it would be useless to deny that a very strong revolutionary spirit appears at this moment to pervade many of [the German States]'.<sup>8</sup> Precisely because the envoys were aware of the diversity of causes for the unrest and revolts, they did not see intervention by the Confederation, whether military, with the aid of federal troops, or legislative, through the passing of repressive resolutions, as an appropriate means to create permanent peace and order. In their eyes, permanent success could be achieved only by addressing the underlying causes through reform, for example, by decreasing the tax burden, introducing constitutions, or making further constitutional concessions.

Well versed, from their experience at home, in the conditions and rules governing a constitutional monarchy, the British envoys proved to be particularly astute in describing the real conflict at the heart of the German Confederation. This was the outcome of struggles between the supporters of constitutional reform and the defenders of autocratic rule. Two zones of conflict were thus created. The first concerned the influence of the Federal Diet on the internal conditions of the constitutional states, and the second related to tensions between the territorial princes and the diets in the constitutional states, which, as a rule, had the people on their side. The British observers were well aware of the possible consequences of the constitutional struggles: '[M]atters can only terminate in the total overthrow of one of the two

<sup>7</sup> FO 30/31: George William Chad to Earl of Aberdeen, No. 47, Frankfurt, 11 September 1830.

<sup>8</sup> FO 30/32: John Ralph Milbanke to Earl of Aberdeen, No. 25, Frankfurt, 29 September 1830.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

xv

Systems: either the Absolute System will come out of this struggle triumphant, overturning every thing opposed to it, or its Antagonists will gain a solid footing and the Diet lose its paramount Authority.<sup>99</sup>

The conflict between the German Confederation and the constitutional states was crucially shaped by the Great Powers, Austria and Prussia. The politics of both states were diametrically opposed to developments in those German states in which the drive towards constitutionalism had been given an extra boost by the revolution of July 1830 in France. The two Great Powers were able to influence the internal politics of individual states through the Federal Diet, and they intervened on constitutional questions in particular. In several cases, the rights of the Confederation conflicted with those of individual states, for example, in connection with the highly contentious issue of press censorship, which soon became a symbol for the repressive policies of the Confederation as a whole. Thus the envoys often mention these disputes in their reports, not least also because its Personal Union with the Kingdom of Hanover, meant that Britain was directly involved in the constitutional struggles of the incipient *Vormärz*, precipitated by the Revolution of July 1830 in Paris. William IV's moderate policies and the granting of a constitution in 1833 initially calmed down the domestic situation in the Kingdom of Hanover. However, when Ernst August came to the throne in 1837, his decidedly anti-constitutional policies gave rise to new constitutional struggles which British diplomats and London were actively involved in settling.

Prussia also paid great attention to the open question of a constitution for the whole state. Since Friedrich Wilhelm III had promised a constitution in May 1815, the internal discussion about convoking a parliament for the whole of Prussia had not stopped. On Friedrich Wilhelm IV's accession in 1840, this became one of the topics dominating Prussian domestic politics. In 1847, when the issue of financing a railway to East Prussia suddenly made convoking an assembly to represent the whole state an urgent matter, Prussia was one of only four German states, including Austria, which did not yet have a constitution for the whole state.

The reports of the British envoys on constitutional realities in the individual constitutional states were much more specific than the diplomatic reports on the constitutional situation in Prussia, which was largely dictated by matters of principle until 1847. Accounts of the periodic diets and assemblies of the Estates frequently mention conflicts with princely governments. There is no doubt that the British diplomats were especially interested in developments in the constitutional states.

<sup>99</sup> FO 30/45: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 54. Confidential, Frankfurt, 20 April 1833.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The smaller German states were coming to grips with a political system that was not so different from Britain's. In many constitutional states – and especially in those which had early gained a constitution, such as Baden, Bavaria and Württemberg – the people had become so accustomed to their constitutional arrangements that it seemed quite impossible that the rights of the chambers should be curtailed. Their work had long become a fixed component of the everyday political life of the German Confederation, and British diplomats were convinced that their further development could not be blocked by power political means, especially as most of the diets had managed to acquire more and more rights. Monarchy as the sole principle legitimizing political rule had thus been considerably restricted. And as reports of events in Hesse-Kassel, Brunswick, and Hanover, where there was less and less will to accept a traditional autocratic style of rule show, the monarchical principle had also forfeited significance among the people of constitutional states. Yet given the chance to push the conflict so far that the Federal Diet was provoked into intervening, most people, as Cartwright reported in 1833 about the conflict in Hesse-Kassel, chose to put their own home in order in order to prevent external interference: 'The Government is dissatisfied with the States, and the States are displeased with the Government. [...] [B]ut both the Government and the States feel that it is their common interest to avoid any act which through its consequences may call down upon them the interference of the Diet, and they therefore refrain from carrying their hostility to too great an extent.'<sup>10</sup>

Whereas the debates in the Federal Diet reflected the attitudes of the individual governments, debates in the diets reflected the mood in the territories. There, an effective liberal opposition could make its voice heard through a number of talented deputies, some of whom were extremely popular. All the envoys distinguished in their reports between the 'revolutionary party', which, in their opinion, was not influential, mostly worked outside parliament, and aimed for the total overthrow of existing conditions, and progressive liberal forces 'among the really respectable Classes',<sup>11</sup> whose supporters were often to be found in the second chambers of the diets. But the British envoys found it extraordinarily difficult to describe the admittedly highly diverse elements of German liberalism more precisely. One reason was that the social composition of the German liberal reform movement clearly differed from that of its aristocratically tinged Whig counterpart in

<sup>10</sup> FO 30/45: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 176, Frankfurt, 19 December 1833.

<sup>11</sup> FO 30/38: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 73, Frankfurt, 25 June 1832.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

xvii

Britain. In Germany, its members were drawn predominantly from the academic intelligentsia; they were professors, writers, reformed civil servants, journalists, and lawyers. German liberalism was largely a bourgeois movement. This also applied to its radical republican variant, whose representatives were also to be found in the diets, and did not restrict their political agitation to the oppositional press which was so highly regarded by the British envoys. Nor could they be subsumed under the rather vaguely named 'revolutionary party'. But an understanding of nuances and details among most British envoys did not go further than this. With the menacing image of Chartism at home before them, British observers saw the subversive 'revolutionary party' in the German Confederation as an indefinable force 'from below'. In any case, it was something whose spread had to be stopped at all costs because it represented a latent anarchist threat to established conditions. For most British envoys, who had attentively followed the conflicts of the 1830s, it came as no surprise that similar conflicts, which had never been satisfactorily resolved, flared up again in the 1840s, aggravated by social unrest and economic crises. This time the crucial debates took place in the diets of the several constitutional states, not in the Federal Diet. In the constitutional states, growing self-confidence led to a determination not to allow Austrian or Prussian objections to curtail their rights, and even in Prussia demands for a constitution for the whole state, as has already been mentioned, became increasingly loud. In general, the government's unpopular measures hit a more sensitized public which, for its part, did not hesitate to criticize. The escalating political conflict, which some envoys had predicted in the 1830s and which was increasingly feared in the 1840s, was to become a reality in the revolutions of 1848-1849.

The trading policies of the German states and the creation of the German Customs Union (*Zollverein*) were observed and described quite separately from developments in domestic politics. Dispatches on economic issues also play a prominent part in this second volume of the planned series. The rapid succession of agreements which Prussia concluded with Hesse-Darmstadt, Bavaria, Württemberg, and the Central German Trade Association caused consternation in Britain. Yet neither Britain nor Austria could do anything effective to prevent the foundation of the German Customs Union in 1833 - it officially came into being on 1 January 1834. The envoys' reports are strikingly unanimous in suggesting that Prussia stood to gain most, perhaps not so much in economic as in political terms. Thus Thomas Cartwright in Frankfurt pointed out, as early as 1836, that 'the Customs Union gives the real power in Germany to Prussia. Every thing tends to prove that assertion, and if no unforeseen event, such as a war in Germany

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

## INTRODUCTION

should occur, which in the confusion which it would bring with it would break up the Union, I am fully persuaded that all great questions affecting the peace, prosperity and mutual interests of Germany will in point of fact be henceforward decided at Berlin and not at Vienna.<sup>12</sup> Although Britain had grave reservations in respect of trade policy, for most of the envoys a stronger Prussia as a buffer zone in the middle of Europe was not unwelcome. Lord Minto in Berlin believed that Prussia, as the weakest European Great Power, had no extra-territorial ambitions: 'Prussia, unlike Russia and Austria, has no external objects of ambition beyond the frontiers of Germany; whatever encroachments she may contemplate, are within these limits, and she is very conscious that amongst the Great European States her power is purely defensive.'<sup>13</sup> As Prussia's purposeful and systematic development of the Customs Union also involved expanding its influence in the German Confederation at Austria's expense, the British side hoped that Prussia might display a greater readiness for compromise at home. If Prussia wanted as many states as possible to join the future Customs Union, it could not jeopardize this goal by pursuing decidedly anti-liberal policies. Austria's attempts to persuade Bavaria and Württemberg to join its side on matters of customs policy had failed; Prussia would have to practise more restraint than Austria in imposing unpopular measures: 'Prussia [...] is very loath to involve herself too openly in transactions which may have a detrimental influence on her grand project, and she is well aware that by taking too deep or forward a part, or appearing too ostensibly as a Principal in any coercive measures directed against the constitutional States, or the liberal System, she might bring upon her the hostility of the liberal Leaders in the Chambers of those States with whom she wishes to form this close commercial connexion [...]. It is then self-interest which makes Prussia so backward in entering fully into the Austrian views for the present, rather than a repugnance to interfere against the Liberals.'<sup>14</sup>

Britain did not, at first, perceive Prussia's expansion via the Customs Union as a political threat. Yet, in economic and trade terms, it had serious misgivings because the path Prussia had embarked upon with the Customs Union was quite clearly contrary to British economic interests. Britain feared the loss of its dominant position as an exporter to Germany. Opinions differed about the extent of the impact on the British economy; none of the envoys could make definitive projections.

<sup>12</sup> FO 30/61: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 36, Frankfurt, 14 May 1836.

<sup>13</sup> FO 64/190: Lord Minto to Viscount Palmerston, No. 88, Berlin, 18 December 1833, not included in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> FO 30/35: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 143, Confidential, Frankfurt, 23 November 1831.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

xix

What Britain's attitude should be was not clear. Thus an attempt was initially made to keep the Free City of Frankfurt, an important centre for foreign trade, out of the Customs Union by means of a treaty with Britain.<sup>15</sup> Soon thereafter, however, the opinion gained currency that Frankfurt's entry to the Customs Union was entirely compatible with British interests.<sup>16</sup> Once Britain had agreed to abrogate the trade treaty concluded in 1832, Frankfurt joined the Customs Union in 1836.

An economically backward Austria also had to submit to Prussia's trade policy ambitions. Although the Austrian government and Metternich, in particular, tended to see things differently, for most British diplomats Prussia's rise and increase in power was combined with a simultaneous Austrian decline and a decrease of influence within the German Confederation. Having criticized Austria's pioneering role in the passing of the Six Articles, many envoys now could not understand its passive behaviour in allowing Prussia to expand. 'The influence of Austria', Thomas Cartwright reported to the Foreign Office only two years after the establishment of the Customs Union, 'may be considered to be already undermined and it is perfectly immaterial to Prussia what endeavours she may make now to resume the ascendancy she was formerly wont to exercise in Germany. The Prussian System has already been carried too far to allow of a Collision with Austria upon the subject [occupation of Frankfurt] leading to any other result than the discomfiture of the latter and hastening the Crisis which must inevitably sooner or latter ensue.'<sup>17</sup>

In this context, it is obvious that over time, a number of envoys expressed the conjecture that in the short or long term, Austria would withdraw from the German Confederation. As matters pertaining to each state were discussed in its respective diet, the Federal Diet in Frankfurt became less important anyway. Thus, in 1846 William Fox-Strangways reported to the Foreign Office from Frankfurt that the Federal Diet had not assembled 'literally from the total absence of business. The gradual decline of business before the Diet, and the growing insignificance of that Body, are becoming subjects of general remark. Many reasons may be assigned for this decline: the inattention of Austria to any but the greatest questions in Germany; the increasing activity of Prussia; the very frequent declarations of its own incompetency which the Diet does not shrink from giving when questions of

<sup>15</sup> Cf. FO 30/35: To Thomas Cartwright, Foreign Office, No. 9, London, 25 November 1831 (draft); FO 30/37: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 2, Frankfurt, 6 January 1832; not included in this volume.

<sup>16</sup> FO 30/50: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 51, Frankfurt, 12 April 1834; not included in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> FO 30/61: Thomas Cartwright to Viscount Palmerston, No. 36, Frankfurt, 14 May 1836.



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

even small difficulty are referred to it; the growing tendency to confer on, and to treat all the great matters in which Germany is interested, at other places than Francfort; and above all the unwillingness to enforce Decrees of the Diet on any Member of the Confederation who may be inclined to resist them, are causes in themselves quite sufficient to account for the diminishing importance and utility of this August Body.’<sup>18</sup>

Prussia was clearly taking the lead in the struggle for economic supremacy in Germany, but forces were not so clearly distributed when it came to religious policy. Bavaria, in particular, with its Catholic, conservative government, toed the Austrian line. The Kingdom of Saxony, where a Catholic ruling house confronted a predominantly Protestant population, was in a special position. Given this background, it is not surprising that religious questions were particularly significant in Saxony. Controversies concerning religious policy fill much space in the correspondence of all the British envoys accredited in the state of the German Confederation.

British diplomats, sensitized by the Irish Question, were always aware that religion could not be separated from politics. The debate on mixed marriages in the late 1830s can be seen as a precursor of the *Kulturkampf*, the struggle which broke out between state and church in the 1870s. Many British diplomats regarded the Prussian government’s suspension from office of the Archbishop of Cologne as a serious political mistake. This step had been provoked by the argument concerning how children of marriages between Catholics and Protestants were to be brought up. Considering the Catholic population in the Rhine provinces and the Catholic states in the German Confederation, the envoys concurred in the view that Prussia had thereby done itself a disservice and unnecessarily damaged its reputation.

The close connection between religion and politics in the years before 1848 was also clearly revealed in other developments. The movement for religious renewal in the 1840s, the rise of religious sects, and especially the phenomenon of the *Deutschkatholiken* (German Catholics) reveal how much the process of social transformation extended to religious life in the first half of the nineteenth century. The German Catholics’ declaration of independence from church and state institutions made church and state leaders fear for their authority. Francis George Molyneux saw them as a religious movement of world historical significance: ‘Many well informed persons indeed consider it as the fore-runner of great religious changes, and as the

<sup>18</sup> FO 30/95: William Thomas Horner Fox-Strangways to Earl of Aberdeen, No. 13, Frankfurt, 17 February 1846.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## INTRODUCTION

xxi

commencement of an Epoch hardly inferior in magnitude to the Reformation itself.<sup>19</sup>

British envoys were also interested in many other subjects, often from motives related to their own domestic political concerns. Some of their reports on social legislation or penal reform, railway building or state encouragement of industry were in response to questions from the Foreign Office. The number of reports on the cholera epidemic that threatened Germany and the whole of Europe during the 1830s is striking. The frequency with which the cholera is mentioned in the British reports contrasts with the reassuring tone of the official pronouncements by German governments. The class-conscious British diplomats were particularly annoyed by the fact that the epidemic swept through all social classes, and was not restricted to the poorer sections of the population, who lived in unhygienic conditions. The death from cholera of the philosopher Hegel was immediately mentioned in the British reports as the most prominent example. Unfortunately, space does not permit the inclusion in this volume of many of the vivid reports of conditions in numerous towns and regions in the German Confederation. The same applies to reports on the state of agriculture, and accounts of general conditions in the economy and society of individual states. The envoys' reports leave no doubt that most German states had to deal with considerable economic and social problems during early industrialization. The depiction of social questions was not a priority in diplomatic dispatches, which were dominated by the politics of the German Confederation, the domestic politics of individual German states, and general foreign policy aspects, which are treated in passing in the present volume. Yet the picture of Germany between 1830 and 1847 which the reports of British envoys convey reflects the complexity and heterogeneity of the states within the German Confederation. Thus while these envoys' reports can be read as a prehistory to the 1848 revolution, they also testify to the significance of the years 1830 to 1847 as an important period of German history in its own right.

<sup>19</sup> FO 30/91: Francis George Molyneux to Earl of Aberdeen, No. 30, Frankfurt, 9 June 1845.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xxii

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

## EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

This second volume comprises a selection of official reports sent by the British envoys in Germany to the Foreign Office between 1830 and 1847. Since there was far more original material in the Public Record Office than for the years covered by the first volume (1816-1829) the selection process had to be even more rigorous. Due to limited space there are also more omissions in the texts selected than in the first volume. In general, however, the editorial principles in the first volume have been retained (cf. vol. 1, xviii-xxi).

From 1838 onwards the six familiar legations were joined by the new legation of Hanover. Until 1837 Hanover had a chancellery in London headed by a minister with cabinet rank, which dealt with all affairs directly on the spot. This chancellery was disbanded when the personal union between England and Hanover ended with the death of William IV in 1837. It was not until then, when Ernst August had come to power in Hanover, that a British legation was established and continued to exist until 1866. A selection of its correspondence has been included in the second volume.

The correspondence of the British consulate for the Hansa towns of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck is not included, even though this consulate, based in Hamburg, acquired legation status after 1837 and retained it until relations were broken off in 1870. Even after this change in status the correspondence remained essentially that of a consulate, for two reasons. Firstly, there was no change in personnel: Consul-General Henry Canning, who had been in office since 1823, continued to be in charge after 1837 until he handed over to Sir George Floyd Hodges in 1841. Secondly, Britain's relations with the Hansa towns were mainly economic rather than political, and were therefore very different from the relations maintained with the individual German states via envoys at the courts. Had reports from Hamburg been included, this would have altered the character of the reports considered for this volume, even though certain reports from the Hamburg legation are not without interest, for example those by Sir George Floyd Hodges on the great fire in Hamburg in 1842.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. FO 33/92: Sir George Floyd Hodges to Earl of Aberdeen, unnumbered, Hamburg, 6 May 1842; FO 33/92: Sir George Floyd Hodges to Earl of Aberdeen, No. 7, 10 May 1842; neither of these despatches included in this volume.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-81868-1 - British Envoys to Germany 1816-1866, Volume II: 1830-1847

Edited by Markus Mosslang, Sabine Freitag and Peter Wende

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

xxiii

The reports by the British envoys to the states of the German Confederation are not always confined to one particular state as envoys were often accredited to several courts at the same time and therefore had to report on events in different states. It should be borne in mind that from 1836 onwards the envoys accredited to the Württemberg court at Stuttgart were simultaneously accredited to the Grand Duchy of Baden. From the 1840s onwards the British envoys to the Prussian court in Berlin were also accredited to Anhalt-Dessau, Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The envoys to Saxony with residence in 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 in Frankfurt were simultaneously accredited to Hesse-Kassel, Hesse-Darmstadt and the Duchy of Nassau.