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ARTICLE

Metternich's Peace Management, 1840–48: Anachronism or Vision?

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Abstract

Austrian chancellor Metternich's Europeanism is often disputed. It has been claimed that he strove only to strengthen Austrian power within the German Confederation and to establish Austrian hegemony in Central Europe, with European interests and the Concert of only secondary concern. The objective of this article is to analyze Metternich's opinions and acts during selected European crises and events between 1840 and 1848, arguing that his approach to resolving them or dealing with their consequences shows that during this period his primary objective was to maintain European peace. He wanted to achieve this by demonstrating the moral consensus of, ideally, all the great powers by abating tense nationalist sentiments, calling for the observance of international agreements and the respect of rights, adopting preventive measures, and warning against or drawing attention to possible negative consequences of the crises for peace in Europe. Metternich's attempt at preserving European peace at all costs was mainly a result of his personal experience of revolution and almost a quarter century of warfare with France. By the 1840s, however, Metternich's style of peace management was rejected as anachronistic, resulting in several military conflicts in subsequent years. Considering the events of the last century that led to European integration, however, his Europeanism deserves a more forgiving evaluation.

Introduction

Prince Clemens Wenzel Lothar Nepomuk von Metternich-Winneburg, who held the roles of foreign minister of the Austrian Empire from 1809 and chancellor from 1821, is undoubtedly one of the most important figures of the first half of the nineteenth century. It is therefore no surprise that many books and studies have been written about both his political career and personal life. Scholars have primarily focused on Metternich's rivalry with Napoleon Bonaparte or his involvement in European congresses. This historiographic emphasis seems to derive from a consensus that this period coincided with the peak of Metternich's power, a power that dissipated over subsequent years to the point that by the end of his political career he had essentially no influence over European matters. In general, historians of the nineteenth century do not express as much interest in the so-called Pre-March period as they do in those it preceded or followed. This is evidenced by the small number of published sources for the period 1815 to 1848. Metternich's biographers and historians, in their emphasis on the apex of Metternich's influence, have generally focused on the first half of the nineteenth century, leaving the 1840s relatively understudied—specifically the period following the outbreak of the Rhine Crisis in 1840 until the March revolution in Vienna in 1848. The importance of this period of just less than nine years, however, should not be underestimated.[1]

Between 1840 and 1848, several fundamental events and political crises threatened Europe's lasting peace and forced Metternich, as chancellor of one of the great powers, to respond. These were the

[1]To date, Heinrich Ritter von Srbik's *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch* (2 vols., Munich, 1925) is the most comprehensive biography of Metternich. Many other biographies and studies of Metternich's policies followed, often primarily based on Srbik's work or documents in Metternich's estate. For a detailed discussion of older Metternich research see Helmut Rumpler, "Der 'Stratege und Visionär' an der Zeitenwende vom Ancien Régime zur Moderne. Anmerkungen zur neuen Metternich-Biographie von Wolfram Siemann," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 125 (2017): 165–76, esp. 165–69.

Rhine Crisis, the escalation of the Schleswig-Holstein question, the Cracow uprising, and civil war in Switzerland. These crises, however, were not the only matters that Metternich encountered at that time. German nationalism had grown into a mass movement that could no longer be ignored. The idea of collective security fell by the wayside, as seen during the Rhine Crisis, when an increasing number of people refused to entrust their security to the written law, turning instead to the use of brute force.[2]

Metternich represented a certain way of behaving—moderate, calm, reconciliatory—and he used a distinct method to resolve European crises and conflicts. His objective was to keep peace in Europe, whatever the cost. To this end, he often made use of the German Confederation's defensive nature as one of the cornerstones of the 1815 Vienna peace settlement. But by the 1840s, a time of rising mass nationalism, Metternich's peace management appeared anachronistic to many, out of line with —or even against—the modern age. A new generation of rulers and statesmen emerged, men such as Adolphe Thiers, Henry John Temple, and 3rd Viscount Palmerston, men who more often favored the use of force instead of law and who had dominant imperialist tendencies. Metternich's peace management was eventually rejected, resulting in several military conflicts in subsequent years. But was Metternich's favored method of resolving crises and disagreements between European powers really a poor one? He often declared of himself: "In a hundred years, historians will judge me entirely differently to those who come into contact with me today."[3] The course of a hundred years of European history after his death has proven him correct. The logical outcome of two world wars was European integration. Thus, looking at the events of the last century, Metternich's peace management seems more understandable, and it deserves a more forgiving evaluation.

Metternich is one of those political figures with whom many clichés are still associated. American historians Enno E. Kraehe, Robert D. Billinger Jr.,[4] and Alan J. Reinerman;[5] British professor Alan Sked;[6] German historian Wolfram Siemann;[7] and Czech historian Miroslav

[2]On the question of the German national movement and nationalism see Otto Dann, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland, 1770–1990* (Munich, 1992); Jörg Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus, 1770–1840* (Frankfurt, 1998); Hagen Schulze, *Der Weg zum Nationalstaat: die deutsche Nationalbewegung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung* (Munich, 1997).

[3]Franz Herre, *Metternich* (Prague, 1996), 320.

[4]Kraehe and Billinger look at Metternich's German policy, with the former initially focusing on the period of Metternich's rivalry with Napoleon and subsequently on negotiations at the Congress of Vienna. Billinger to some extent follows Kraehe, concluding that the key to understanding Metternich's solution to the German question is his socially conservative mindset, in which monarchs and aristocrats maintained sanity in the world and ensured the peace and security that their subjects demanded. According to Billinger, Metternich was primarily concerned about Austria's peace and security, but he felt that his philosophy applied in general. See Enno E. Kraehe, *Metternich's German Policy*, vol. 1, *The Contest with Napoleon, 1799–1814* (Princeton, 1963) and vol. 2, *The Congress of Vienna, 1814–15* (Princeton, 1984); and Robert D. Billinger Jr., *Metternich and the German Question: States' Rights and Federal Duties, 1820–1834* (Newark, DE, 1991). See also Billinger's work on the Rhine Crisis, "They Sing the Best Songs Badly: Metternich, Frederick William IV, and the German Confederation during the War Scare of 1840–1841," in *Deutscher Bund und deutsche Frage, 1815–1866*, ed. Helmut Rumpler (Munich, 1990), 94–113. Here, he analyzes the positions of Metternich and Frederick William IV on German nationalism and compares their vision of Germany's future against the background of the war scare of 1840.

[5]Reinerman gives a thorough analysis of Metternich's policy toward the Papal States between 1809 and 1838, noting Metternich's efforts to reform the temporal side of the papacy to transform it into a reasonably efficient government in the hope of stemming demands for revolutionary political innovations. Alan J. Reinerman, *Austria and the Papacy in the Age of Metternich*, vol. 1, *Between Conflict and Cooperation, 1809–1830* (Washington, DC, 1979) and vol. 2, *Revolution and Reaction, 1830–1838* (Washington, DC, 1989).

[6]Sked attempts to dispel numerous myths linked to the Metternich era, challenging the traditional interpretation that Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century was at the mercy of forces that Metternich could neither understand nor control. He declares that if historians have dismissed Metternich's fears as unfounded and have instead chosen to interpret him as a reactionary, unable to grasp the impact of the progressive forces of history alongside the rise of the new capitalist middle class, then it is they who in fact have fallen prey to illusions. Alan Sked, *Metternich and Austria: An Evaluation* (New York, 2008).

[7]In Metternich's latest biography, *Metternich: Strategist and Visionary*, Wolfram Siemann divides the prince's life into seven phases that shaped his experience and influenced his later acts. Siemann criticizes earlier biographies for not taking these into account and for limiting their research to published sources from Metternich's estate or from Heinrich Srbik's book. Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Stratege und Visionär. Eine Biografie* (Munich, 2016; in English translation *Metternich: Strategist and Visionary*, Cambridge, MA, 2019).

Šedivý[8] are among those who have endeavored in their books to take a fresh look at the traditional black-and-white perception of the Austrian chancellor and his political acts. While excellent studies, however, these largely neglect the period between 1840 and 1848.[9] And though many books and articles have been written on the European crises of the 1840s, they do not, in large part, reflect on Metternich's role.[10] This article makes use of the investigations of these historians, aiming to build on them and add the period 1840–48 to them. It is primarily based on archival material held by the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna (specifically in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv), the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich, and the Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden. Also utilized are the records in Metternich's estate, collected and published by his son Richard, specifically the sixth and seventh volumes of *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren*.[11]

In analyzing Metternich's approach to resolving and mitigating the selected European crises, this article demonstrates that during the period under study Metternich was primarily concerned with preventing the eruption of armed conflict in Europe. To this end, he made use of the German Confederation and endeavored to demonstrate moral consensus—ideally among all the great powers—by abating tense nationalist sentiments, appealing for the observance of international agreements and respect of the law, undertaking preventive measures, or warning about and drawing attention to possible negative consequences of the crises for peace in Europe. Metternich's desire for European peace is also evidenced in the fact that, despite his awareness of its weaknesses, he considered how to ensure the endurance of the Vienna peace settlement. All this counters the arguments of historians—particularly those who define themselves against some of Heinrich Srbik's[12] claims—who contend that Metternich sought only to consolidate Austrian power and secure Austrian hegemony in Central Europe.

[8]The author of several monographs of extraordinary importance and many papers on Metternich, Miroslav Šedivý takes some account of the 1840s in his research. Of particular relevance are *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question* (Plzeň, 2013), in which Šedivý puts forward an exhaustive analysis of Metternich's policy regarding the Eastern question, and *Crisis among the Great Powers: The Concert of Europe and the Eastern Question* (New York, 2017), in which he examines the Rhine Crisis, a topic he also addresses in "The Austrian Empire, German Nationalism and the Rhine Crisis of 1840," *Austrian History Yearbook* 47 (2016): 15–36 and "Metternich and the Rhine Crisis (1840)," *Prague Papers on History of International Relations* 10 (2006): 65–92. Šedivý concludes that the Rhine Crisis exposed the principal deficiencies of the European state system and the general distrust of the behavior of the European Concert during the Pre-March period; the origin, course, and manner by which the crisis was settled proved that the conduct of the great powers was characterized by little respect for legal norms and scant willingness to create new ones that would limit their often self-serving conduct. According to Šedivý, a careful historian of the Rhine Crisis and international relations of its era cannot avoid the impression that it was not the Ottoman Empire but the European state system that was crumbling. It is important to stress, however, that Šedivý ends his research in 1840 or 1841.

[9]German historian Harald Müller focuses somewhat on Austrian foreign policy during the 1840s, though he does so in relation to Prussian policy, in his study *Im Widerstreit von Interventionsstrategie und Anpassungszwang: Die Aussenpolitik Österreichs und Preussens zwischen dem Wiener Kongress 1814/15 und der Februarrevolution 1848* (Berlin, 1990). His work is markedly influenced, however, by the author's political sentiments when he claims that the core foreign policy principle that arose from Austria and Prussia's ties to the leadership of the monarchist alliance system and the Holy Alliance was to stand against Europe's social development from a feudal to a civil society using all available means and methods. Rather than political history and international relations, Müller is interested in the social and economic aspect of the foreign policy of both great powers, with his main focus on Prussia.

[10]An exception here is Alfred Regele's unpublished dissertation, in which the author primarily focuses on the circumstances of Cracow's incorporation into the Danube Monarchy and its customs system. Despite his engagement with this period of Metternich's influence, his scope disregards the larger foreign policy circumstances of the affair. Alfred Regele, "Die Einverleibung des Freistaates Krakau 1846" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1951).

[11]Richard Metternich-Winneburg, ed., *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren*, 8 vols. (Vienna, 1881–84).

[12]They disagree, for example, with Srbik's opinion that Metternich was an earnest and intelligible thinker who rose above specific Austrian problems and became a great statesman and a "good European." Srbik's biography has long been considered canonical. Information taken from his work is treated as authoritative even when unequivocally refuted by more recent research. Siemann points out that Srbik overly relied on personal memoirs and used archival documents rather randomly, influencing his judgment of Metternich and leading to contradictions in his biography. Siemann also argues that Srbik's picture of Metternich is affected by his ideological prejudices. Srbik's work, therefore, should be approached with skepticism. Siemann, *Metternich: Strategе und Visionär*, 21–30.

Two such scholars are the German historian Matthias Schulz and the American historian Paul W. Schroeder. Looking at international relations,[13] Schulz claims that Metternich primarily considered Austrian interests and his own ideological convictions, only taking treaties and the European Concert into account when he could rely on Austrian interests being sanctioned by the Concert members. Further, Schulz contends that Metternich's stylization as a "Great European" and his followers as "Metternichians" is based on an uncritical interpretation of Metternich's rhetoric on his values. Especially with respect to Austria's annexation of Cracow—something he considers the most obvious infringement of law within the European state system since the Congress of Vienna—Schulz argues that Metternich prioritized his antirevolutionary ideology over international law, treaty commitments, and the territorial status quo.[14] This should be challenged, however, in that Schulz's knowledge of historical realities is more than limited, and many core works are missing from his book. Furthermore, until the mid-nineteenth century, the only primary sources he makes use of are published diplomatic protocols, which reveal to him the outcome of negotiations between powers, while leaving the underlying reasons for their decisions obscured.

In his book *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820–1823*, Schroeder, too, questions Metternich's stylization as a "European." Using archival documents held by the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna—for the period in question only—he comes to rather definitive conclusions when he claims that while Metternich's perspective was European, it is a different matter to claim that his policies during the period were also European, and this means that his main objectives were to preserve the great powers' unity and to support European principles and institutions toward a European confederation.[15]

The Rhine Crisis

Metternich's actions during the Rhine Crisis exemplify his peace management and diplomatic skills. The Rhine Crisis arose in relation to the Ottoman Empire's Near Eastern Crisis of 1839–41, which became a matter of European diplomacy when, on 27 July 1839, the great powers committed themselves to protecting the integrity of the sultan's empire against the challenge of the Egyptian governor Muhammad Ali Pasha. The outcome of negotiations on the Eastern question in London, in which France, sympathetic to Muhammad Ali Pasha, refused to participate, was the Convention for the Pacification of the Levant, signed by representatives of Austria, Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and the Ottoman Empire on 15 July 1840.

When French prime minister Adolphe Thiers found out about the London Convention, he was unable to disguise his surprise and agitation. The French public was also incensed, perceiving France's exclusion as an affront. Warmongering articles began to appear in French journals, as did citations of a speech given by Duke Paul de Noailles to the Chamber of Deputies in February of that year in which the duke demanded compensation on the Rhine instead of in the Levant if the Ottoman Empire was destroyed and its territory divided among the great powers. Calls emerged to avenge Waterloo and annul the Second Peace of Paris of 1815, in which France had lost its border at the Rhine. Neither Thiers nor Louis Philippe could ignore these sentiments. As such, they agreed to strongly oppose the London Convention and even threaten war to force its signatories to make concessions. Thus, the Rhine Crisis came into being.

Metternich believed the crisis in the Near East could not be resolved without France's involvement. He considered the signed document a provisional compromise until general agreement could be achieved between all the great powers. The Austrian chancellor's interest in ensuring the Concert continued to operate is also evidenced by the fact that, until July 1841, the main objectives of his diplomacy were to reach a compromise, take France out of isolation, and resecure the operation of the

[13]On nineteenth-century international relations, for example: Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory, 1815–1914* (New York, 1971); Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (Oxford, 1994); Gerry Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereigns in the International Legal Order* (Cambridge, 2004); Francis R. Bridge and Roger Bullen, *The Great Powers and the European States System, 1814–1914* (Harlow, 2005).

[14]Matthias Schulz, *Normen und Praxis: das Europäische Konzert der Großmächten* (Munich, 2009), 589–90 and 626.

[15]Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820–1823* (Austin, 1962), 251.

Concert.[16] Alan Sked speculates that Metternich may have blackmailed the French king into a peaceful solution of the Rhine Crisis, basing this claim on a December 1842 letter in which the British ambassador in Vienna, Sir Robert Gordon, suggests to his brother, the British foreign secretary, that peace had been preserved in 1840 because Metternich possessed compromising evidence against Louis Philippe. There is, however, no other evidence for this claim.[17]

Although the French fomentation of revolutionary movements and threats to invade northern Italy concerned Metternich, he endeavored to demonstrate to the French court that it had no enemies. As such, the Austrian government was to refrain from any military steps—even defensive ones. He insisted that it was essential to avoid any kind of obvious armament, as this would surely provoke war. Further, Austria was not to take part in the enforcement measures adopted against Muhammad Ali.[18]

The Austrian chancellor feared an escalation of tensions between the French and Germans, and he made strenuous efforts to prevent France's provocation by the German states.[19] As such, the German Confederation was to remain inactive, making use of its defensive nature to preserve European peace. He justified the Confederation's lack of involvement in negotiations in London by noting its geographical distance from the Turko-Egyptian conflict and its mission to act as a promoter of general peace, something that predetermined its central position in the European state system.[20] Additionally, military steps to protect the Confederation were to be undertaken with caution and without provocative declarations, denying the French government any incentive or pretext for military action. Metternich endeavored to convince the Parisian cabinet that "Germany in particular does not want war, asks nothing of no one, intends to live in peace and enjoy the enormous developments which the long period of peace has allowed."[21]

However, the prince did not want to give France the impression that the German Confederation was impotent; so, he added:

> If so far the German Confederation has not undertaken steps to ask the French cabinet to clarify mutual positions, this was on the advice of the two leading German courts, who consider it important not to hide from the French cabinet that should things not change very shortly such that the necessary guarantee of moral and material security is not given, then these two courts shall no longer be able to prevent measures whose adoption the Confederation considers necessary for its own security.[22]

Metternich was aware that the German rulers and their ministers were nervous about his tactic of inaction. For this reason, on 7 October 1840 he proposed the convening of a European conference in one of the smaller German cities, likely Wiesbaden, to prevent conflict turning into war in Europe. Prussia welcomed the proposal, but it met opposition from Great Britain and Russia, which insisted on the enforcement of the provisions of the London Convention.[23]

Metternich realized that France's threats could not go unanswered, but he continued to act in line with his conviction that any provocation of France was to be avoided. He thus concluded that the

[16]Šedivý, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, 802–3; Šedivý, "Metternich and the Rhine Crisis (1840)," 66 and 70–73; Wolf D. Gruner, "Der Deutsche Bund, die deutschen Verfassungstaaten und die Rheinkrise von 1840," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 53 (1990): 51–78, at 65; Heinrich Lutz, *Zwischen Habsburg und Preussen: Deutschland, 1815–1866* (Berlin, 1998), 200–1.

[17]Sked, *Metternich and Austria*, 96–98.

[18]Lerchenfeld-Aham to Ludwig I of Bavaria, Vienna, 17 Oct. 1840, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BHStA), Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten (MA), Wien, 2409; Maltzan to Werther, Vienna, 8 Aug. 1840, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK), HA III, Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten I (HA III, MdA I), 6033.

[19]Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 23 Oct. 1840, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 6:462.

[20]Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 24 Nov. 1840, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 6:468 and 471; Maltzan to Werther, Vienna, 13 Feb. 1841, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6034; Šedivý, *Crisis among the Great Powers*, 152.

[21]Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 24 Nov. 1840, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA), Staatenabteilungen (StAbt), Frankreich Dipl. Korr., 319.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Šedivý, *Crisis among the Great Powers*, 133; Guillaume de Bertier Sauvigny, *Metternich: Staatsmann und Diplomat für Österreich und den Frieden* (Gernsbach, 1988), 486.

German Confederation, as France's immediate neighbor, finding itself in a state of concern and threatened by its armament, must ask for an explanation from the French government regarding its intentions. This matter was to be directed toward the Parisian cabinet by Austria and Prussia alone. The German Confederation was to hold back in this regard and continue to urge all member states to keep the peace. Metternich attempted to convince the French foreign minister, François Pierre Guillaume Guizot, to put an immediate end to its armament, but to no avail.[24] Yet he did not cease in his efforts, and through the Austrian ambassador in Paris, Count Anton von Apponyi, endeavored to convince the French minister of the absence of any threat and the German Confederation's desire for peace, while also warning him of the Confederation's readiness to act immediately should France act belligerently.[25]

In the end, the Rhine Crisis concluded without a single shot fired, and it might thus appear to be somewhat of a "storm in a teacup" for European diplomacy. But its consequences should not be underestimated. It allowed Metternich to demonstrate once again the advantages of a loosely connected and purely defensive German Confederation for European peace: "Located between the Great Powers, it keeps the balance as guardian of general peace, which it supports through both material and moral force. During the Eastern Crisis, it was able to occupy the place determined by its geographical position and the nature of its organization."[26]

This perspective on the German Confederation is in stark contrast to the arguments of German historian Thomas Nipperdey, who holds the opinion that the Confederation was nothing more than a tool of restoration, an opponent to the liberal and nationalist spirit of the era, and that its significance with respect to maintaining European peace was mainly in that the balance within Germany neutralized potential German ambitions for power.[27] Schroeder went even further when he declared that it is difficult to find European principles or federal forms of government in the institutions that Metternich set up, and that their purpose was not a European confederation but rather only to strengthen Austrian hegemony within Central Europe and prevent German or Italian unification or federation.[28] Metternich's project of the league to preserve peace in Europe, which he presented in August 1840 at Königswart, can be presented as an argument against this claim.

As a result of the absurd situation in which the Near Eastern conflict threatened peace across the European continent, Metternich concluded that more comprehensive measures than the 1815 treaties were required. This led him to the idea of creating a more binding system of collective security, a league with clearly defined rights and obligations for its members. The Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Karl Ludwig von Ficquelmont, and British ambassador Sir Frederick James Lamb, the Lord Beauvale, were actively involved in arranging this project.[29] According to Beauvale, adoption of Metternich's proposal

> would effect a change in the public law of Europe conceived in the spirit of peace, and having for its object the prevention of those interruptions to the public tranquility which have recurred at intervals up to the present time. Its direction however would be exclusively against aggression from without, neither interfering with the independence of nations nor with their efforts for internal improvement.[30]

[24]Lerchenfeld-Aham to Ludwig I of Bavaria, Vienna, 8 Nov. 1840, BHStA, MA, Wien, 2409; Metternich to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 9 Oct. 1840, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 6:468 and 470; Metternich to Erberg, Vienna, 19 Dec. 1840, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 6:482–83.

[25]Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 4 Jan. 1841, HHStA, StAbt, Frankreich Dipl. Korr., 322.

[26]Pechlin to Krabbe-Carisius, Frankfurt a. M., 3 Sept. 1841, Rigsarkivet, Departementet for de Udenlandske Anliggender, Frankfurt a. M. 1471.

[27]Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1800–1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich, 1983), 356 and 362. More on the revisionist view of the German Confederation and its significance in the history of Germany in Wolf D. Gruner, *Der Deutsche Bund 1815–1866* (Munich, 2012). See also the new research in the context of the extensive edition project "Quellen zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bundes" launched by the Historical Commission at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences.

[28]Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy*, 255.

[29]Šedivý, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, 808.

[30]Relevant documents from the National Archives in London, specifically Beauvale's report from Königswart of 29 Aug. 1840 with the attached league project and Ficquelmont's memorandum, were published in 1930 by American historian Frederick

The project of the league comprised six articles. The first bound its members to settle disputes in a peaceful manner—an article to which Prince Metternich gave his full assent, recognizing in it the inevitable basis of the whole proceeding. According to the second article, if a dispute were to arise, it should be settled at a conference; if such a conciliatory approach was to fail, then the third article bound all league members to defend with all available means any country or countries that had been attacked. The fourth article clearly stated that the obligations defined in article 3 also applied when the aggressor was a member country of the league. The fifth article clarified that the great powers were to intervene by aiding an attacked state—even when such help was not requested—if the attack threatened the peace in other parts of Europe. The sixth and final article ruled that all countries were entitled to join the league, but in doing so they also acknowledged the privileged position of the great powers, which were to take the lead in the diplomatic discussions and military actions detailed in the previous articles.[31]

The German Confederation evidently served as inspiration for the creation of the league, through which the prince aimed to secure the same obligations for other European states that the German rulers had within the Confederation. In a certain sense, the league's obligations were even broader. Beauvale aptly observed that Metternich's objective was to use the German Confederation to "lay the foundations of a general system of peace, whose purpose would be to engender confidence through the whole of Europe [in the power of the law]."[32]

According to Šedivý, comparing the league to the Holy Alliance, as German historian Irmline Veit-Brause does, is a mistake. In Šedivý's opinion, the difference between them was clear, as the league was more of a practical security measure that attempted to strengthen the peaceful coexistence of European countries. Metternich spoke of his project as being material and practical, in contrast to the Holy Alliance, which was moral. In the end, however, the league fell by the wayside when Palmerston refused to approve it, considering it unnecessary.[33]

The league was Metternich's response to the declining faith in the idea of collective security, as expressed during the Rhine Crisis. An increasing number of people desired peace but simultaneously refused to entrust their security to the written law, a result of systematic breaches of international law since at least the 1830s, including the French occupation of Ancona in 1832 and the Sulphur Crisis of 1840. This led many to come to the conviction that if breaches of international law were to go unchecked, then there was nothing to be done but to believe in brute force. Facing the French threat during the Rhine Crisis, the idea began to spread among Germans that sufficient resources needed to be acquired to create effective armed forces. These were to be secured through reform of the Federal War Constitution, the creation of a German navy, and the acquisition of colonies in the Balkans and overseas. Metternich was not against improving the Confederation's striking power, as Schroeder claims, and even supported it to the extent that was necessary and acceptable for Europe to achieve peace. He was also prepared to modify the Federal War Constitution, but he disagreed with the proposals for reform of the Prussian war party because they would lead to a major increase in the Confederation's military forces, which Metternich believed would destabilize the fragile structure of the European state system.[34]

Stanley Rodkey. Beauvale to Palmerston, Königswart, 29 Aug. 1840, The National Archives, London (TNA), Foreign Office (FO) 7/291; Frederick Stanley Rodkey, "Suggestions during the Crisis of 1840 for a 'League' to Preserve Peace," *American Historical Review* 35, no. 2 (1930): 308–16, at 310.

[31]Rodkey, "Suggestions during the Crisis of 1840," 312–13.

[32]Miroslav Šedivý, "Projekt ligy k zachování míru v Evropě (1840): Svatá, nebo Severoatlantická aliance," in *Moderní Evropan první poloviny 19. století: k životnímu jubileu profesora Dušana Uhlíře*, ed. Marian Hochel (Prague, 2019), 287–301, at 299–300.

[33]Irmline Veit-Brause, *Die deutsch-französische Krise von 1840: Studien zur deutschen Einheitsbewebung* (Cologne, 1967), 44–45; Šedivý, *Metternich, the Great Powers and the Eastern Question*, 808–9; Palmerston to Beauvale, London, 23 Oct. 1840, TNA, FO 7/289; Rodkey, "Suggestions during the Crisis of 1840," 308.

[34]Šedivý, *Crisis among the Great Powers*, 172; Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 749: "Meanwhile he avoided anything provocative of France and let Prussia's proposals for a genuine federal military reorganisation run aground. It was a typical Metternichian victory. Austria's interests were protected, peace was preserved, and a potential crisis was defused; but the fundamental problem (in this case, making the Bund a more effective instrument of Germany's defence without endangering its neighbours or upsetting the delicate German equilibrium) was not solved or even confronted."

German nationalists saw colonies not only as a means to achieve economic prosperity but also to ensure security. In Germany the colonial debate was linked to fears of Great Britain's trading and naval superiority, while fears of Russian expansion on the Balkan peninsula led to the genesis of the idea of a German Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*), which aimed to secure political and economic influence from the Danube to the Black Sea.[35] War writers generally considered economist Friedrich List as the earliest prophet of *Mitteleuropa*. His work *Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie* (The national system of political economy) attracted great attention when it appeared in 1841. In it, he introduced the idea of a nation-state unified through a community of cultural and political institutions and based on an economy balanced between agriculture and industry, with an integrated modern transport system. List predicted that the nation-state would face problems with a growing population. He concluded that the German state's future lay within the continent: it was there that it should find its "colony." In 1842, List examined the prospects of German emigration to Southeast Central Europe. The network of railway lines and canals integrated within the Danube waterways could provide the framework for a German-Hungarian economic zone expanding to the southeast from the North and Baltic seas. List believed that Hungary was a buffer against Nordic dominance and Germany's key to Turkey and the entire Levant and Orient; if Austria wanted to be a power, then it was only possible in alliance with Hungary, he claimed to Metternich at one audience. The prince did not accept the project, however, believing that List's nationalism was as unacceptable for Austria as the nationalist liberalism of the *Burschenschaften*.[36] Austrian ruling elites, including Metternich, did not share the German nationalists' colonial aspirations due to their prevailing conviction that economic interests were an insufficient reason for launching a colonial policy. Austria chose a different path, one that involved peaceful, not imperialist, penetration of foreign markets. The role of a kind of Austrian colony was to be met by the Balkan peninsula, without any need for its direct control. In response to German fears of Russia controlling the Danube, Metternich opened negotiations with the tsar in early 1839 regarding the free navigation of the river, concluding the matter with a treaty on 25 July 1840.[37]

The Schleswig-Holstein Question

With respect to the Rhine Crisis, the nationalists argued in favor of a unified nation-state because they believed that it would be better able to defend the interests of the German nation. Considering its security, they argued that it was necessary to create a state with defensible borders. In particular, the northern border had to be secured against invasion from the sea, while free navigation of the Baltic led more Germans to take an interest in the future of the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. For Germans, these provinces of the Danish king represented a strategically positioned region linking the Baltic and North seas.

The presence of ethnic Germans and Holstein's membership in the German Confederation allowed nationalists to describe both duchies as German territory and claim they were entitled to become a part of the German nation-state.[38] An 1841 article published in *Allgemeine Zeitung* titled "Das Königreich Dänemark als deutscher Bundesstaat" (The Kingdom of Denmark as a German federal state),

[35]Miroslav Šedivý, "Od Vídeňského kongresu k první světové válce: kontinuita versus diskontinuita dějin mezinárodních vztahů dlouhého 19. století," *Dvacáté století*, no. 2 (2018): 24–43, at 37; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism in Germany: Expansionism and Nationalism, 1848–1884* (New York, 2008), 27–42; Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* (Paderborn, 2012), 19–24; Dirk van Laak, *Über alles in der Welt: Deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 2005), 51–55.

[36]Henry Cord Meyer, *Mitteleuropa in German Thought and Action, 1815–1945* (The Hague, 1955), 12; Franz Joseph Grobauer, *Ein Kämpfer für Europa: Metternich* (Vienna, 1961), 276; Helmut Rumpler, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa: Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie* (Vienna, 2005), 206–7.

[37]Miroslav Šedivý, "Rakouské císařství a kolonialismus v době předbřeznové," *Historický obzor* 25, no. 1–2 (2014): 16–21, at 20–21; Miroslav Šedivý, "From Hostility to Cooperation? Austria, Russia and the Danubian Principalities, 1829–1840," *Slavonic & East European Review* 89, no. 4 (2011): 630–61, at 657.

[38]William Carr, *Schleswig-Holstein, 1815–1848: A Study in National Conflict* (Manchester, 1963), 109; Alexa Geisthövel, *Eigentümlichkeit und Macht: deutscher Nationalismus 1830–1851: der Fall Schleswig-Holstein* (Stuttgart, 2003), 166–67.

suggested, in accordance with List's proposal outlined in *Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie*, a plan for an admiral state (*Admiralstaat*). The article declared that Denmark, too small on its own to be a strong power, wanted to join the German Confederation to enjoy mutual benefits, to which the Danes could contribute their urgently needed fleet, ports, and seafarers.[39] In connection with the publication of the article titled "Deutschland, das Meer und Dänemark" (Germany, the sea, and Denmark), the German nationalists claimed that Denmark was no longer worth maintaining as an independent power: sooner or later it would have to seek its defense from the German Confederation—and join it.[40]

In response to the aspiration of the German nationalists, however, many Danes concerned about the integrity of their kingdom began to seek solidarity with the Nordic countries through Scandinavism, a movement that aimed to achieve an alliance, or even confederation, between Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—and possibly Finland—to create an empire that would be able to withstand the expansionist appetites of Germany and Russia. Many Danes also began to aspire to an "Eider" policy that focused on integrating Schleswig into the Danish state, allowing the secession of Holstein and possibly leaving it to the German Confederation.[41]

The fervent nationalist sentiment among Danes and Germans revived a militant nationalism that eventually escalated into military conflict in 1848 and again in 1864—a situation Metternich endeavored with all his might to avoid. He opposed both the ideas of Denmark joining the German Confederation and Schleswig's incorporation into the Danish Kingdom, developments that would threaten European peace. Neither could he risk Schleswig and Holstein leaving Denmark and leading to a consolidation of Prussian power in northern Germany, as this would result in a disturbance to the balance of power not only within the German Confederation but also within the European state system.[42] He believed that only preserving the integrity of the state could protect the Danish Kingdom from losing its political independence and from pressure for Scandinavian political union.[43]

It was the escalation of the Schleswig-Holstein question in connection with the publication of the Open Letter, issued by the Danish king Christian VIII on 8 July 1846, that provided Metternich with another opportunity to demonstrate his policy of reconciliation and peace. The letter stated that hereditary succession, according to the Royal Law applied in Schleswig, allowed female succession. There was a strong response from the Holstein estates and German nationalists.[44]

Metternich's approach to the Schleswig-Holstein question is clear evidence of his respect for the law and his effort to secure the moral agreement of the great powers. In his opinion, to achieve a satisfactory outcome it was essential that the great powers agree on joint principles and objectives, with consensus between Austria and Prussia paramount because both had direct interest in the affair. The prince acknowledged the right of the Danish king to undertake measures regarding the rights of succession in both duchies, but he warned that the applicable laws had to be respected. Metternich considered the entire affair a Danish domestic matter, and as such it was not for foreign powers that had no rights regarding succession in the duchies to intervene by prematurely recognizing the succession rights of one or the other party.[45] With respect to the wave of nationalist fervor that the Open Letter had aroused, he declared that the only entities entitled to make a pronouncement on the matter were, first of all, those who were legally involved; secondly, the German great powers, Austria and Prussia; and, thirdly, the Federal Diet in Frankfurt am Main.

[39]Geisthövel, *Eigentümlichkeit und Macht*, 168–69; Woyna to Metternich, Copenhagen, 29 Aug. 1841, HHStA, StAbt, Dänemark, 109.

[40]"Deutschland, das Meer und Dänemark," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift*, Erstes Heft (Stuttgart, Tübingen, 1842): 227–58; Woyna to Metternich, Copenhagen, 21 Mar. 1842, HHStA, StAbt, Dänemark, 109.

[41]Geisthövel, *Eigentümlichkeit und Macht*, 169; Steefel, *The Schleswig-Holstein Question*, 5–6.

[42]Srbik, *Metternich*, 2:109.

[43]Metternich to Canitz, Königswart, 22 Aug. 1846, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:256–59; Metternich to Vrints-Berberich, Vienna, 27 Jun. 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:445–47.

[44]Steefel, *The Schleswig-Holstein Question*, 5–8.

[45]Metternich to Handel, Königswart, 7 Aug. 1846, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:252–54.

Metternich realized that the Open Letter as yet represented neither a coup nor a breach of the rights of agnates: it was merely the declaration of intent, and only in the future would either the royal law be breached or a settlement be achieved.[46] To avoid disputes over the Danish throne and preserve the integrity of the Danish state, in the end he was unwilling to submit even to German legal entitlements or the political interests of Denmark and the wishes of Christian VIII. With his permission, the Federal Diet in Frankfurt am Main expressed on 17 September 1846 its confidential expectation that in the final determination of succession, the Danish king would respect the rights of all—especially those of the German Confederation, the agnates entitled to inheritance, and the Holstein Assembly of Estates.[47]

It is evident from the above that Metternich sought to resolve the matter peacefully: he warned of the necessity of observing the law and he endeavored to prevent an escalation into armed conflict by calming fervent German and Danish nationalist passions. He failed in his efforts, however; his peace management was rejected, and militant nationalism came again to the fore. While Metternich was being forced to give up his role because of the revolution that afflicted Vienna, Denmark saw an escalation of the situation when the Eider-Danish party took power and on 21 March 1848 ordered Schleswig's incorporation into the Kingdom of Denmark. The outcome was an armed conflict between Denmark, on one side, and Austria and Prussia, on the other, resulting in Danish victory at the end of the 1840s.

The Annexation of Cracow

One of the pillars upon which Metternich built his European policy was an almost dogmatic adherence to the binding nature—one might even say the sanctity—of treaties. Yet, it was he who breached the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna of 1815. On 6 November 1846, Austria announced the annexation of the Free City of Cracow. Schulz is of the opinion that Metternich placed antirevolutionary ideology above international law, treaty obligations, and the territorial status quo, and in so doing demonstrated that his principles did not run parallel to international law, which he made use of only to obscure Austria's power: he only took account of agreements and the Concert when he was able to rely on the sanction of Austrian interests by the Concert members. Schulz also claims that the clear abuse of power by the Eastern powers during the Cracow crisis undermined the authority of the collective acts of the great powers.[48] He, however, ignores the fact that abuse of power by the stronger state had occurred previously, specifically during the French occupation of Ancona and the Anglo-Neapolitan Sulphur Crisis. Thus, Metternich was far from the first to commit a breach of international law, although he did not understand his actions as such himself.

The sixteen-year experience of the existence of the free city, during which time it became the focus of continuous plots against the protecting powers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, was used as justification for the annexation. The pinnacle of this had been the February 1846 uprising. Restoration of its previous status, destroyed by "enemies of European order and peace,"[49] therefore appeared impossible. Another motivating factor for Metternich was the tsar, who declared that if Austria did not incorporate Cracow into the Habsburg monarchy, then he would take the initiative and annex it himself.[50]

Following his signing of the 6 November protocol, Metternich remained sitting at his desk deep in thought, his head in his hands for some considerable time. It had been one of the toughest decisions he had made over his long political career.[51] He justified his approach by saying that the Final Act had meant to secure peace, not create the focus of unrest that Cracow undoubtedly became. He also made

[46]Metternich to Canitz, Königswart, 22. Aug. 1846, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:256–59.
[47]Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:264.
[48]Schulz, *Normen und Praxis*, 132, 144, and 589–90.
[49]Radosław Paweł Żurawski vel Grajewski, *Ognisko permanentnej insurekcji: powstanie 1846 roku i likwidacja Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej w "dyplomacji" Hotelu Lambert wobec mocarstw europejskich, 1846–1847* (Cracow, 2018), 182.
[50]Lutz, *Zwischen Habsburg und Preussen*, 307.
[51]Arthur Herman, *Metternich* (New York, 1932), 239.

the case that the existence of Cracow was guaranteed by the three Eastern powers who had agreed upon it; the agreement they signed had then been incorporated into the Final Act, but this did not mean that the other great powers had taken on the guarantee over Cracow. For this reason, Metternich rejected the involvement of the Concert.[52] The claim contained in the British and French protest against Austria's annexation of Cracow, that the three powers had overstepped their rights by breaching the Final Act, thereby undermining its validity, was unfounded according to the prince, and it had no other effect than arousing a fuss.[53]

Civil War in Switzerland

That Metternich sought the preservation of peace in Europe above all is evidenced in his approach to resolving the volatile situation in the Swiss Confederation. Here, conservative Catholic cantons were pitted against the liberal and radical Protestant cantons over differing opinions on the reform of the Federal Treaty. According to the prince, the Swiss Confederation was critical to European peace, its geographical position making it a conduit for revolutionary figures and ideas between France, Germany, and Italy.[54] He accused Swiss radicals, who sought a coup, of being responsible for threatening peace in Europe. The only possible means to stop these forces, in his opinion, was intervention in Swiss domestic affairs. As with Cracow, Metternich justified this idea by claiming that in Vienna in 1815 the great powers had guaranteed the integrity and inviolability of Switzerland under a constitution embodying a federal principle. He believed that the Swiss could change their constitution should they wish to, but the signatory powers also had the right to investigate the proposed changes and ensure that the federative idea remained intact. If, however, the constitution were changed to transform the nature of the state from a loose confederacy into a federal state, the powers reserved the right to decide whether the new constitution deserved their continued benevolence and Switzerland the guarantee of its neutrality.[55] Metternich believed that withdrawing from the Federal Treaty would be the greatest misfortune for the Swiss nation, and he warned that it would only result in disagreement and conflict among the Swiss, culminating in general anarchy and the dissolution of the Swiss political body. Further, he held that the religious unrest in the Swiss Confederation had not begun with the Jesuits being called upon to lead seminaries in Lucerne—a matter of foresight—but rather with the closure of the monasteries in Aargau, which involved a breach of cantonal rights.[56] At every step, however, the prince was handicapped by identifying the conservatism of the *Sonderbund* with its tolerance for the Jesuits. He regretted the rising suspicions that he supported the *Sonderbund* merely because it was comprised of Catholic cantons, believing instead that it represented the forces of order against chaos and revolution. Furthermore, he saw the growing power of the democrats and centralists as a threat to the European order.[57]

Regarding the escalating situation, Metternich declared that it was only a matter of time before a fire would break out across Switzerland. Should these events catch Europe unprepared, he believed, then either concessions would have to be made or the overthrow of political and social order in Switzerland permitted and the consequences faced. Here, he was convinced that it was most important to demonstrate complete moral consensus between the great powers, followed by the vocal expression of agreement between Switzerland's two neighboring states: France and Austria.[58] Metternich considered

[52]Metternich's memorandum of 6 Nov. 1846, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:276–88; Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 4 Jan. 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:354.

[53]Metternich to Trauttmansdorff and Colloredo-Wallsee, Vienna, 29 Nov. 1846, HHStA, Staatskanzlei (StK), Preussen, 191; Metternich to Apponyi, confidential writing, Vienna, 4 Jan. 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:356.

[54]Joachim Remak, *A Very Civil War: The Swiss Sonderbund War of 1847* (Boulder, CO, 1993), 14 and 20.

[55]Herman, *Metternich*, 240; Müller, *Im Widerstreit von Interventionsstrategie und Anpassungszwang*, 557–62.

[56]Metternich to Bombelles, Vienna, 24 Feb. 1841, HHStA, StAbt, Frankreich Dipl. Korr., 322; Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 24 Jan. 1845, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 188.

[57]Herman, *Metternich*, 240–41; David A. Ward, *1848: The Fall of Metternich and the Year of Revolution* (London, 1970), 101.

[58]Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 3 July 1845, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 187; Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 19 Feb. 1845, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 187; Kast to Metternich, Carlsruhe, 21 Feb. 1845, HHStA, StK, Baden Dipl Korr, 43;

cooperation with France essential, justifying it by stating that "any unilateral action by one of the powers bordering Switzerland, rather than extinguishing the smoldering fire would merely add fuel to the flames, because such action would serve as evidence to the radicals that Austria and France do not agree on the way to resolve Swiss affairs."[59]

Rather than military assistance, the prince expected diplomatic support from the Parisian cabinet. He realized that while Louis Philippe and Guizot were conservative, the French people were essentially liberal. Thus, any intervention could provoke an alliance between French and Swiss radicals, triggering a revolutionary spark that could ultimately lead to Europe-wide war. The domestic perspective and regard for Great Britain did not permit Louis Philippe to be involved in a threatening note. The cabinet in London insisted on the principle of nonintervention. The value of Switzerland's independence and neutrality for Palmerston's system was in its designated role as a buffer state between Austria and France. As such, he was stubbornly against their attempted interference in Swiss domestic affairs. It was in the interests of British foreign policy to support liberal movements around the world, and Palmerston came out as a protector of liberals in Switzerland too. His motive, however, was more likely related to the British economy, the success of which required peace in Europe and which any armed intervention by Austria and France could easily damage.[60] Metternich was disappointed by the failure of his plan; he argued that the moral intervention of the powers could have prevented the escalation of the situation.[61]

By June 1847, Metternich no longer believed that Switzerland could be protected, and he saw the last chance in the timely intervention of four continental great powers, which would take place before a "decree of the Diet [in Bern] irrevocably connects the cause of the entire Confederation with the cause of radicalism."[62] The great powers were to jointly declare that they would not tolerate breaches of cantonal sovereignty and the disturbance of Switzerland's current state of material peace. Metternich deliberately excluded Great Britain from the list of signatory powers, doubting seriously its willingness to be involved in such a joint action. He considered the British government's insufficient activity a regrettable error. Nevertheless, he continued to entertain the idea of whether Great Britain could be brought on board for a joint approach toward the Swiss Confederation.[63]

Regarding his intentions of how to deal with the fraught situation in Switzerland and France's position therein, Metternich declared:

> In the current phase of the affair, of primary importance for us are the interests of peace and the preservation of the legal and material status quo. We had thought that upon mutual agreement the powers would unanimously, expressly, and sufficiently protect these interests that they undertook to guard from any damage. France has refused to add its name to a declaration of this type. The goals we have just defined thus cannot be achieved.[64]

This suggests that Metternich strove to preserve peace and the legal and material status quo, and that he wanted to use the European Concert to achieve this objective. While he suspected that Great Britain and France would decline any joint enterprise against Switzerland, one cannot deny that he at least attempted to get them involved. Palmerston was primarily focused on his country's economic interests;

Metternich to Philippsberg, Vienna, 7 May 1846, HHStA, Gesandtschaftsarchiv (GsA), Bern, 38; Metternich to Dietrichstein, Vienna, 28 Oct. 1846, HHStA, GsA, Bern, 38.

[59]Metternich to Ugarte, Vienna, 2 Feb. 1845, HHStA, StK, Württemberg, 37.

[60]Herman, *Metternich*, 241; Hans Rieben, *Prinzipiengrundlage und Diplomatie in Metternichs Europapolitik: 1815–1848* (Aarau, 1942), 166; Edgar Bonjour, *Geschichte der Schweizerischen Neutralität: Vier Jahrhunderte Eidgenössischer Aussenpolitik*, vol. 1 (Basel, 1970), 193–95.

[61]Canitz to Bülow, Vienna, 19 Mar. 1845, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6037/1; Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 20 May 1845, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 188; Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 3 July 1845, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 188.

[62]Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 7 June 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:449; Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 10 June 1847 HHStA, StK, Preussen, 194.

[63]Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 7 June 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:449.

[64]Metternich to Kaisersfeld, Vienna, 1 July 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:456.

Guizot had to take account of the liberal disposition of the French people, who sympathized with the liberal and radical Swiss. To the French foreign minister's proposal that upon the outbreak of civil war, Austria would first intervene in Switzerland alone, to be followed by France, Metternich declared that this was an obvious repetition of Ancona. This he could not allow because then the radicals might interpret this approach from France as a hostile act against Austria, leading to France finding itself in the role of protector of Switzerland, and Austria in the role of suppressor of freedom.[65]

In the end, it was Guizot who decided to initiate a joint diplomatic intervention from the great powers, something Metternich had fruitlessly sought since 1845. On 7–8 November 1847, he sent a note to London, Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg in which he justified the right of the great powers to intervene in Swiss affairs, in that it was they who had guaranteed Switzerland's neutrality at the Congress of Vienna—exactly what Metternich had been trying to convince his diplomatic partners of from the very beginning. Guizot proposed, among other things, that representatives of the two quarrelling Swiss parties be invited to a conference of the great powers to settle political matters. Metternich thought the proposal was insufficient. Furthermore, he questioned the viability of a joint approach from Great Britain and the continental great powers.[66] He was not wrong. Palmerston's rejection of the proposal was more a reflection of his defeat in the Affair of the Spanish Marriages. He firmly asserted the principle of nonintervention. Even so, London and Paris continued to collaborate on the wording of identical notes from the great powers to Switzerland.

Agreement was finally reached on a unanimous note that was to be addressed to the Swiss Federal Diet in Bern on 30 November. At the last moment, Great Britain withdrew, upsetting the other powers greatly. By then, however, the note was irrelevant because there was no more *Sonderbund* war council to contact, with the civil war already over. In the end, the Swiss Federal Diet merely thanked them for their offer of mediation but said that there was nothing more to mediate. The main reason that the note arrived so late was Palmerston's delay. Metternich had made a fatal error when he decided to exploit the disagreements between Great Britain and France over the Affair of the Spanish Marriages. He had been convinced that Great Britain would not be a problem because it was isolated, and it would probably be impossible to get it on board for the planned threatening note. As such, he was ready to decide without the cabinet in London. He was so focused on Louis Philippe and Guizot that he disregarded Palmerston. Yet the idea that Great Britain would not take an interest in events on the continent, or that it would let itself be isolated, proved erroneous.[67]

Not even following the *Sonderbund*'s defeat, however, did Metternich give up in his efforts.[68] He proposed that a conference of authorized representatives be organized by France for the five courts in Neuchâtel to reflect on the current state of the Swiss Confederation from a European perspective. The conference was, among other matters, to demand the vacation of cantons still occupied by federal forces. Should the Swiss Federal Diet be reluctant to meet their demands, the great powers should declare the Confederation dissolved and suspend all diplomatic relations with it. He also recommended simultaneous intervention from the European powers, with Ticino to be occupied by Austrian forces, Bâle-Campagne by the German Confederation, Bernese Jura by France, and Geneva by Sardinia.[69] In the end, the prince's only achievement was a joint note, addressed to the Swiss Federal Diet on 18 January 1848, in which France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia demanded that the Federal Treaty be respected, the sovereignty of all twenty-two cantons be preserved, the principle of unanimity in implementing changes to the Federal Treaty be observed, and that federal troops retreat under threat of

[65]Metternich to Kaisersfeld, Vienna, 1 July 1847, HHStA, GsA, Bern, 38; Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 3 July 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:462.

[66]Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 18 Nov. 1847, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6037/3; Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 12 Nov. 1847, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 194.

[67]Bonjour, *Geschichte der Schweizerischen Neutralität*, 1:199–201; Lutz, *Zwischen Habsburg und Preussen*, 312; Remak, *A Very Civil War*, 156; Rieben, *Prinzipiengrundlage und Diplomatie in Metternichs Europapolitik*, 166.

[68]Metternich to Apponyi, Vienna, 29 Nov. 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:498; Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 29 Nov. 1847 HHStA, StK, Preussen, 194.

[69]Metternich to Colloredo, Vienna, 15 Dec. 1847, Metternich-Winneburg, *Papieren*, 7:511–17.

intervention. The Swiss government roundly rejected the note, stressing the neutrality and independence of both individual cantons and the Swiss Confederation.[70]

Metternich was restrained regarding the possible involvement of the German Confederation in Swiss affairs. He again pointed out its purely defensive nature and that it was not a force that would be involved in conferences or political congresses. In the end, however, he came to share the opinion of the cabinet in Berlin that it would be a good idea to allow the German Confederation to take an appropriate position toward Switzerland. In his opinion, the Confederation could not act naturally as a congress power, but it could act as a neighboring state protecting its territory. Although debate of Swiss affairs began in Frankfurt am Main, the course of events in the Swiss civil war prevented it from making any progress.[71] The *Sonderbund*'s defeat humbled Metternich and dealt a fatal blow to Austria because it became one of the contributing factors for the 1848 outbreak of revolution in Italy and Germany.[72]

Conclusion

When Prussian king Frederick William IV died in 1840, Metternich remained one of the last of a generation of rulers and statesmen who had taken an active part in creating and maintaining the Vienna peace settlement.[73] His personal experience of the horror and suffering of the revolutionary regime in France and the subsequent Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had led him to the conviction that revolution must be fought at all costs and to one's last breath. He was therefore resolute against the Polish revolutionaries and Swiss radicals and in the end agreed to Austria's annexation of Cracow, which, like Switzerland, conservatives considered a "breeding ground for revolutionaries."[74] His life's mission became the preservation of peace in Europe and the territorial and dynastic order as created at the Congress of Vienna. No other politician or diplomat expended as much effort on this as Metternich. It was for this reason that he was so insistent on preserving the integrity of the Danish Kingdom and the federal nature of the Swiss Confederation.

During the 1840s, however, a new generation of rulers and statesmen came to the fore, men who more frequently resorted to the use of force instead of law. Most of them had no direct experience of the French Revolution and its consequences, and as such revolution was not the bogeyman to them that it was to Metternich. His peace management, which emphasized reassuring and directing tense sentiments in society and preventing them from escalating into armed conflicts, appeared to them an anachronistic remnant that no longer corresponded to a period dominated by mass nationalism and the belief of individual states in the necessity of ensuring their own security through force. As such, the prince lost his audience. An example here is Metternich's lack of success in Switzerland,

[70]Bonjour, *Geschichte der Schweizerischen Neutralität*, 1:204; Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 10 Feb. 1848, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 194.

[71]Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 22 Nov. 1847, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6037/4; Könneritz to Zeschau, Vienna, 2 Dec. 1847, Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10717 Ministerium der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, Wien, 3165; Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 1 Jan. 1848, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 194.

[72]This argument is supported, for example, by the statement of the later Austrian foreign minister Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust, who was convinced of the crucial importance of the *Sonderbund* crisis for Metternich. He wrote in his memoirs that the "Metternich System" did not go bankrupt in March 1848 or February 1848 but in Switzerland the previous year. In his opinion, the inability to intervene in Switzerland was the starting point of later revolutionary events. F. F. von Beust, *Aus drei Viertel-Jahrhunderten. Erinnerungen und Aufzeichnungen*, vol. 1, *1809–1866* (Stuttgart, 1887), 38.

[73]German historian Sven Externbrink talks about the so-called Metternich generation as one influenced by certain shared, identity shaping experiences, such as growing up and socialization in moderate enlightenment and the experience and participation in upheavals of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era. Externbrink raises the question of whether the Vienna peace settlement had not collapsed due to the change of generations. In his opinion, the next generation of rulers and statesmen, born around 1790, lacked a double experience of peace and war that characterizes the socialization of the Metternich's generation, and therefore they were more willing to provoke or cause confrontations to achieve their goals. Sven Externbrink, "Kulturtransfer, Internationale Beziehungen und die 'Generation Metternich' zwischen Französischer Revolution, Restauration und Revolution von 1848," in *Das europäische Mächtekonzert: Friedens- und Sicherheitspolitik vom Wiener Kongreß 1815 bis zum Krimkrieg 1853*, ed. Wolfram Pyta (Cologne, 2009), 59–78.

[74]Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 12 Mar. 1845, HHStA, StK, Preussen, 188; Jenison-Walworth to Ludwig I of Bavaria, Vienna, 16 Nov. 1846, BHStA, MA, Wien, 2414.

where his efforts to secure a timely intervention from the great powers failed: the *Sonderbund* was defeated and a new Federal Treaty was adopted. Even so, he did not cease in his warnings against revolution and its consequences for European peace or relent in his efforts to encourage the great powers to take joint action against the efforts of the revolutionaries, who, in his opinion, could bear only anarchy and chaos. But he could not persuade Switzerland's German neighbors to agree with his plan to encircle the country or to send military troops to their borders. His warnings that Swiss radicals might foment revolutionary movements in these states fell on deaf ears largely because the south German states were more concerned about the financial costs of deploying troops.[75]

The claim that Metternich was only interested in consolidating Austria's position in the German Confederation and the Austrian Empire's hegemony in Central Europe cannot be accepted. Although as an Austrian foreign minister he prioritized the interests of his country, he was convinced that these interests were general in nature. He perceived the Habsburg Empire as a system in which diverse nationalities lived together within a monarchic system based on social hierarchy and the rule of law. Considering its location in Central Europe, he also perceived it as a true focal point of the balance of power and the peace settlement. It was for these reasons that he was able to identify Austrian interests with European interests, which demanded peace and mutual solidarity among the great powers. That his primary interest, at least between 1840 and 1848, was in maintaining peace in Europe is evidenced not only in his attempt at resolving European crises through peaceful means but also in the fact that he sought to secure a lasting European peace into the future. He realized that confidence in the system of collective security had fallen, something also reflected in German endeavors to form effective armed forces and the increasing faith in the necessity of creating a united nation-state. Metternich opposed these efforts because he believed that strengthening one state would lead to security concerns among its neighbors, so he attempted to resurrect faith in the law through the league to preserve peace in Europe. This league is evidence of Metternich's rationality—far removed from moral theorizing and aware of the need to ensure the security of individual states at a Europe-wide level—and to some extent also evidence of his political foresight. What he had consistently warned about eventually came to pass when Europe was swept by a wave of revolutions that pushed militant nationalism even more to the fore, resulting in several military conflicts in subsequent years. Today, following our experience of two world wars and the ensuing developments leading to European integration, Metternich's peace management may seem more understandable, and it deserves greater recognition.

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[75]Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 19 Oct. 1847, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6037/3; Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 4 Nov. 1847, GStA PK, HA III, MdA I, 6037/3; Metternich to Ugarte, Vienna, 2 Feb. 1845, HHStA StK, Württemberg, 37; Metternich an Ugarte, Vienna, 8 Oct. 1847, HHStA StK, Württemberg, 38.

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