

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

"British Policy towards the French Republic in 1848"

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

David Neil Petler, B.A.

January 1984

Summary of Thesis for Ph.D. degree

by

D.N. Petler

on

"British Policy towards the French Republic in 1848"

The revolutions of 1848, which were sparked off by the overthrow of Louis Philippe and the establishment of the Second French Republic, destroyed the existing balance of power in Europe, increased the likelihood of a major war, and exacerbated the uncertainty and tension on the continent. During this critical period the British Government took a close interest and played a prominent rôle in European affairs. This thesis examines the formation and execution of British policy towards the French Republic between the February Revolution and the election of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

Distrust of France as a potentially disruptive force in Europe played a prominent part in British thinking, and consequently the British Government sought to moderate the Republic's conduct and limit its opportunities for an aggressive foreign policy. This study shows how the British Government pursued this conservative objective whilst working with the Republic and encouraging some of the liberal movements on the continent. The domestic repercussions of the French revolution are also examined. The Government's response to the challenges of the Chartists and the Irish Repealers reveals the determination with which it tried to avert revolution and offers a significant contrast with its "liberal" foreign policy. Moreover, the danger of domestic upheaval and the worrying events on the continent enhanced the conservatism of the Court and the opposition parties, and this hampered the Government's ability to pursue the foreign policy it preferred.

This study offers a fresh interpretation of a significant aspect

of British foreign policy in the mid-nineteenth century. It reveals that the British Government pursued its conservative objectives by "liberal" policies, and that those policies were modified by domestic opposition. It also challenges the assumption that British policies were decisive in averting a European war. It seeks to demonstrate that peace was maintained by factors beyond the control of the British Government and that the course of the revolutions remained largely unchanged by its actions.

Contents

Preface	i
Abbreviations	vi
<u>Chapter I: Britain and Europe, 1846 - 1848</u>	
i) Palmerston's Return to the Foreign Office	1
ii) Palmerston at the Foreign Office	9
iii) The Cabinet, the Court and the Diplomats	29
iv) Parliament, the Press and Foreign Affairs	51
v) Conclusion	67
<u>Chapter II: Britain and the French Revolution</u>	
i) The Outbreak of Revolution	70
ii) Britain and the Fall of Louis Philippe	82
iii) Britain and the Provisional Government	97
iv) Britain and the European Reaction to the Revolution .	113
<u>Chapter III: Chartism and Ireland</u>	
i) Chartism and the French Revolution	131
ii) Ireland and the French Revolution	148
iii) The Aftermath	167
<u>Chapter IV: Palmerston, Lamartine and the March Revolutions</u>	
i) Britain and the March Revolutions	172
ii) The Expulsion of Sir Henry Bulwer	183
iii) The Beginning of the Italian Problem	195
iv) The Hummelauer Mission	206
<u>Chapter V: The Formation of the Anglo-French Entente</u>	
i) The June Days	214
ii) The First Italian Crisis	221
iii) The First Month of the Entente	237
iv) The Second Italian Crisis	258
<u>Chapter VI: The Anglo-French Entente</u>	
i) Britain and Northern Italy	269
ii) The Sicilian Question	291
iii) Minor Problems	306
iv) The French Presidential Elections	319
<u>Conclusion</u>	328
<u>Bibliography</u>	341

Preface

Like 1815 and 1870, 1848, the Year of Revolutions, is seen as a turning-point in European history. It marked the end of the Metternich system, the climax of the revolutionary ferment which had disturbed the continent since 1789, and gave a warning of the rise of Germany and Italy. It was also a time when there was an obvious struggle between conflicting principles, between absolutism and constitutionalism, monarchism and republicanism, and nationalism and supranational empires. Contemporaries recognised that they were living at the dawn of a new age, although what that age would bring seemed unclear. For Britain, however, 1848 marked no such turning-point. There was no great social or political upheaval, and no change of government. There was not even a significant change in Government policy either at home or abroad. But for the final collapse of the Chartist movement and the failure of Smith O'Brien's rebellion in Ireland, it would have been as unremarkable as 1847. The important year in British history had been 1846, when Peel's Conservative Party had been shattered over the Corn Laws and famine had begun to afflict Ireland, and two years later British politics were still trying to adjust to these dramatic events. As a result of the relative quiescence of domestic politics, the momentous occurrences across the Channel assumed a greater significance. The British public began to take a closer interest in the affairs of the continent and in the policies pursued by its government, and it displayed a particular interest in the affairs of its nearest neighbour and traditional rival, France.

This is not the first study of Anglo-French relations in 1848. In 1925 Donald M. Greer's account of Palmerston's policy towards

the Second Republic was published.¹ However Greer's work dealt with the whole of Palmerston's third tenure of the Foreign Office: only sixty of the three hundred and ninety pages covered 1848, and most of them were confined to the crisis in northern Italy. Moreover, Greer took no account of public opinion and, lacking access to the unpublished private papers of the politicians, had only a partial grasp of the British Government's objectives and of its internal divisions.

Since the publication of Greer's book, several students in the United States have made a study of Anglo-French relations in 1848. The value of these works varies. Some of the authors failed to consult the unpublished correspondence and the daily newspapers other than The Times.² In recent years, however, two new studies have appeared, both of which have used the unpublished correspondence in the Public Record Office and the Broadlands Papers. The first of these, by George Billy, is a study of Palmerston's conduct of foreign affairs in the first half of 1848.³ Billy claims to offer "a fresh interpretation and more complete account of Palmerston's foreign policy in 1848" than has previously been given.⁴ In fact he concentrates on Britain's relations with the major Powers and omits important incidents such as the expulsion of Bulwer. Nor are Billy's conclusions particularly new. He emphasises Palmerston's commitment to the maintenance of the balance of power and minimises his support for the liberal movements on the continent.⁵ The second thesis, by John Derden, is of more

-
1. D.M. Greer: L'Angleterre, la France et la Révolution de 1848. Le Troisième Ministère de Lord Palmerston au Foreign Office (1846 - 1851) (Paris 1925).
 2. H.F. Brooks: "English Reactions to the Continental Revolutions of 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska 1948; J.W. Campbell: "The Influence of the Revolutions of 1848 on Great Britain" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia 1963; P.E. Wilson: "Anglo-French Diplomatic Relations, 1848 - 1851" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago 1954.
 3. G.J. Billy: "Palmerston's Foreign Policy: 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, City University of New York 1982.
 4. ibid, 245.
 5. ibid, 266 - 8.

direct relevance to Anglo-French relations.⁶ It examines the activities of Lord Normanby in some detail, but it is of more value in describing how a perceptive observer regarded the events in France in 1848 than in accounting for the various factors which affected the formation of British policy towards the Republic.

Whilst there is no definitive work on British policy towards France in 1848, there are several works in which Anglo-French relations play a major part. The most important of these are by Lawrence Jennings⁷ and A.J.P. Taylor.⁸ Jennings' work deals with Anglo-French relations as seen from Paris. It gives a convincing account of the formation of French policy, but makes only a superficial attempt to cover the formation of British policy. Taylor discusses the formation of British policy with respect to northern Italy, which forms a prominent issue in Anglo-French relations in 1848. Palmerston is depicted as an exponent of real-politik, intent on preventing a major European war and preserving the balance of power, whilst his colleagues are seen as endangering this prudent policy by their pro-Italian sympathies and their "pusillanimous dislike of taking up a firm attitude about anything at all".⁹ The evidence Taylor cites seems to justify these sweeping conclusions, but the evidence is inadequate. Taylor did not use the unpublished letters and diaries of the members of the Government which often reveal the hopes and intentions of the policy-makers. Taylor's field of study is also extremely restricted. Palmerston's problems with the Queen are largely ignored, and the influence of public opinion, which Taylor asserts was pro-Italian,

6. J.K. Derden: "The British Embassy in Paris in 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia 1981.

7. L.C. Jennings: France and Europe in 1848: A Study of French Foreign Affairs in Time of Crisis (Oxford 1973).

8. A.J.P. Taylor: The Italian Problem in European Diplomacy 1847 - 49 (Manchester 1934).

9. ibid, 234.

is dismissed.¹⁰ As a result, he has an incomplete understanding of Palmerston's plans, underestimates the extent and the importance of the opposition to them, and misrepresents the feelings of the Cabinet, Parliament and the public. This thesis does not offer a radical re-interpretation of British policy towards northern Italy in 1848, but it does show that Palmerston was less single-minded, and his colleagues were less contemptible, than Taylor suggests.

The aim of this study is to examine the influences on the formation of British policy towards the French Republic between the February Revolution and the election of Louis Napoleon, and to assess the success of that policy. The private letters of British ministers and diplomats, most of which are unpublished, supplement the official correspondence to give a fuller picture of the British Government's intentions and actions than has previously been achieved. It has also been possible to reconstruct some of the discussions in the Cabinet from the unpublished diaries of Sir John Cam Hobhouse¹¹ and Lords Grey, Minto and Morpeth. Finally, an attempt has been made to examine how the Government's policies were modified by opposition from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, from Parliament, and from the British public as a whole.

* * *

During the course of my research I have received assistance from a large number of people, and it is now my pleasant duty to express my appreciation. I would like to thank: Her Majesty the Queen, for permission to consult and quote from the royal correspondence in the Broadlands (Palmerston) Papers; the Marquis of Normanby, for permission

10. ibid, 7.

11. Extracts from Hobhouse's diaries were published by Lady Dorchester (Lady C. Dorchester (ed.): Recollections of a Long Life (London 1911)), but the accounts of the discussions in the Cabinet were largely omitted.

to consult and quote from the Normanby Papers; the Earl of Clarendon, for permission to quote from the Clarendon Papers in the Bodleian Library; Lord Blake, for permission to consult the 14th Earl of Derby Papers at the Queen's College, Oxford; Lord Howard, for access to the Castle Howard Archives; the Trustees of the Broadlands Archives Trust, for permission to consult and quote from the Broadlands Papers. I have also received unfailing help and courtesy from the staffs of the following institutions: the British Library; the Public Record Office; the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the National Library of Scotland; the Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic, Durham University; the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York; the Institute of Historical Research, London; and Hull University Library. Without the financial assistance of the Hull University Grants Committee I would have been unable to visit London, Oxford and elsewhere to study the unpublished papers. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Bernard Porter, for his advice and guidance.

Abbreviations

Bd. P. = Broadlands Papers.

B.L. Add. Mss. = British Library Additional Manuscripts.

C.H.A. = Castle Howard Archives.

Clar. P. = Clarendon Papers.

DD = C. Pouthas (ed.): Documents Diplomatiques du Gouvernement Provisoire et de la Commission du Pouvoir Exécutif (Paris 1953 - 1954).

Der. P. = 14th Earl of Derby Papers.

Dip. G.B. = F. Curato (ed.): Le Relazioni Diplomatiche fra la Gran Bretagna e il Regno di Sardegna 3rd Series: 1848 - 1860, Vol.I (4 January 1848 - 31 December 1848), (Rome 1961).

Dip. Sard. = F. Curato (ed.): Le Relazioni Diplomatiche fra il Regno di Sardegna e la Gran Bretagna 3rd Series: 1848 - 1866, Vol.I (3 January - 31 December 1848), (Rome 1955).

Dis. P. = Disraeli Papers.

DN = Daily News.

FO = Foreign Office Papers.

GM = C.C.F. Greville: The Greville Memoirs: A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV, King William IV, and Queen Victoria New edn., (ed. H. Reeve), (London 1896 - 1898).

Gra. P. = Graham Papers.

Grey P. = 3rd Earl Grey Papers.

Hal. P. = Halifax Papers.

Hansard = Hansard's Parliamentary Debates 3rd Series.

ILN = Illustrated London News.

It. Prob. = A.J.P. Taylor: The Italian Problem in European Diplomacy 1847 - 49 (Manchester 1934).

LCJR = G.P. Gooch (ed.): The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell 1840 - 1878 (London 1925).

MC = Morning Chronicle.

MEPO = Metropolitan Police Papers.

MG = Manchester Guardian.

MH = Morning Herald.

MP = Morning Post.

NJ = Marquis of Normanby: A Year of Revolution. From a Journal kept in Paris in 1848 (London 1857).

N.L.S. Mss. = National Library of Scotland Manuscripts.

Nor. P. = Normanby Papers.

PP = Parliamentary Papers.

PRO = Public Record Office.

q = quoted in.

QVL = A.C. Benson and Viscount Esher (eds.): The Letters of Queen Victoria. A selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the years 1837 and 1861 (London 1907).

RvP = B. Connell: Regina v. Palmerston: The Correspondence between Queen Victoria and Her Foreign and Prime Minister 1837 - 1865 (London 1962).

Well. P. = Wellington Papers.

Chapter I: Britain and Europe, 1846 - 1848

i) PALMERSTON'S RETURN TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE

On 6 December 1845 Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, told Queen Victoria and Prince Albert that he felt compelled to resign. He was convinced, he explained, that it was necessary to repeal the Corn Laws, but he would not attempt it without the unanimous support of the Cabinet which he did not have. He advised the Queen to send for Lord John Russell, the leader of the Whigs, who a fortnight earlier had declared his support for repeal.¹ When Russell saw the Queen, he told her he could not commit himself to forming a ministry without consulting his colleagues and, because of the large Conservative majority in both Houses, without being assured of Peel's support.² On the 18th, after a week of private discussions and political manoeuvrings, the leading Whigs voted by eleven to five in favour of trying to form an administration.³ The next task was to agree upon a Cabinet.

The most controversial of the proposed appointments was also probably the most predictable. In 1830 the appointment of Lord Palmerston to the Foreign Office had caused a considerable amount of surprise. In December 1845 his return there seemed a foregone conclusion. As early as the 10th Russell, without consulting his colleagues, had told Palmerston that he would be expected to take his old office.⁴ Yet there

1. Prince Albert's memorandum, 7 December 1845: QVL, II, 56 - 60. For Peel's conversion to repeal, Lord Stanley's opposition, and Russell's Edinburgh Letter, see N. Gash: Sir Robert Peel: The Life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830 (London 1972), 531 - 51; W.D. Jones: Lord Derby and Victorian Conservatism (Oxford 1956), 110 - 14; J. Prest: Lord John Russell (London 1972), 201 - 2; F.A. Dreyer: "The Russell Administration, 1846 - 1852" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of St. Andrews 1962, 13 - 16.
2. Russell's Journal, 11 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 103 - 4). The best account of Russell's attempt to form a government is F.A. Dreyer: "The Whigs and the Political Crisis of 1845" English Historical Review LXXX (1965), 514 - 37.
3. Grey's Journal, 18 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12.
4. R. Bullen: Palmerston, Guizot and the Collapse of the Entente Cordiale (London 1974), 44.

was widespread apprehension in Whig circles about Palmerston's return to the Foreign Office.

Opposition within the Whig party to Palmerston as Foreign Secretary was nothing new. In 1835 an attempt had been made to move him because he had been too virulent against the Northern Courts.⁵ More seriously, during the Mehemet Ali crisis of 1840 Clarendon, Holland and Russell had opposed Palmerston's handling of the affair - Russell going so far as to tender his resignation - because they felt he was being too provocative to France.⁶ Whilst in opposition, a large part of the leadership of the party had disapproved of Palmerston's vehement attacks on Aberdeen and the entente cordiale with France, although after the Tahiti incident that disapproval had waned.⁷ Palmerston's proposed return to the Foreign Office, therefore, was unlikely to meet with universal approval in Whig circles.

It was Lord Grey, the son of the former Prime Minister, who led the opposition in December 1845. Grey had long disapproved of Palmerston's conduct of foreign affairs,⁸ and as early as the 13th Edward Ellice warned Russell that Grey would be "difficult about some arrangements at the Foreign Office".⁹ Upon talking to friends and prospective colleagues, Grey found that many people shared his views about Palmerston.

-
5. K. Bourne: Palmerston: The Early Years 1784 - 1841 (London 1982), 545 - 9; Sir C.K. Webster: The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830 - 1841 (London 1951), I, 416 - 21. For earlier opposition in the Cabinet to Palmerston see Bourne, Palmerston, 502 - 3, 524, 529 - 31 and 542 - 5.
 6. Bourne, Palmerston, 589 - 617; Sir H.E. Maxwell: The Life and Letters of George William Frederick Fourth Earl of Clarendon K.G., G.C.B. (London 1913), I, 182 - 212; S. Walpole: The Life of Lord John Russell (London 1889), I, 347 - 54; Webster, II, 675 - 6, 689 - 90, 700, 709 - 13 and 718 - 20.
 7. Bullen, 33 - 5 and 41 - 4.
 8. Bourne, Palmerston, 401, 554, and 565; Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 32; R. Job: "The Political Career of Henry, Third Earl Grey (1826 - 52)" unpublished M.Litt. Dissertation, University of Durham 1959, 376 - 8.
 9. Ellice to Russell, 13 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 89).

On the 18th he confided to his journal that whilst "every body" disliked the thought of Palmerston's return, "as usual the whole odium of making the objectn. will I see be left to me."¹⁰ The same evening Francis Baring warned Russell of the opposition to Palmerston and suggested that he be moved to the Colonial Office and given the leadership of the Lords. Russell replied that the Queen had already told him "that all she was afraid of was Palmerston at the Foreign Office, but that he had said that it must be."¹¹ During the night, however, Russell evidently thought the matter over, for the following morning he told Palmerston

that he knew as well as I did the impression that had been made against him as a warlike politician; that I did not agree in that impression & thought it unjust. That if he had thought it should so far be yielded to that he should take the colonial office I was ready to agree.

Such a tentative approach was hardly likely to persuade Palmerston to relinquish the Foreign Office. "He said he thought that [to accept] would be admitting the justice of the impression. I said in that case I would offer him the foreign office & no other. He agreed to accept it."¹²

On the morning of the 19th Russell began to distribute the offices of his government. He offered Grey the Colonial Office, which Grey accepted, and then described the other proposed appointments. When he mentioned Palmerston Grey interrupted and said that he would not serve in the Government if Palmerston had the Foreign Office.¹³ That

-
10. Grey's Journal, 18 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12. Cf Macaulay to Mrs C. Trevelyan, 19 December 1845: T. Pinney (ed.): The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay (London 1977), IV, 276; Lord Stanmore: Sidney Herbert, Lord Herbert of Lea: A Memoir (London 1906), I, 58.
11. Lord Northbrook: Journals and Correspondence of Francis Thornhill Baring, Lord Northbrook (London 1902 - 1905), I, 224.
12. Russell's Journal, 19 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 106).
13. Grey's Journal, 19 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12; Russell's Journal, 19 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 106 - 7).

evening, in a letter to Russell, Grey explained his objections. He had, he declared, always been "on the most amicable terms" with Palmerston and had "a very high opinn." of his abilities. At the same time,

I could not be blind to the notorious fact that justly or unjustly both friends & opponents regarded with considerable apprehension the prospect of his return to the Foreign Office, & the existence of such a feeling was in my mind no slight objectn. to the appointment. But farther, when he formerly held this office events occurred which are by no means yet forgotten which have created feelings of apparent alienatn. between him & some of the chief statesmen & diplomatists of foreign countries more especially of France. Hence there is now undeniably on their part a pre-disposition to view with jealousy whatever may be done by him, & conduct which may be perfectly proper in itself, might when adopted by him give offence which it wd. not do coming from another person.

He was, he stressed, willing to serve in the administration if Palmerston held another position - he also suggested the Colonial Office - and he denied having any personal aspirations to the Foreign Office. In conclusion, he remarked that he "shd. have felt less confidence in my opinn. to this effect had I not found it universally concurred in", and he expressed his belief that "there is not one of those who were to have been our colleagues who does not think that his taking a different office wd. have been a very great advantage."¹⁴

Russell was dismayed by Grey's decision. Convinced that his government could not survive without Grey's support in the Lords, he asked Ellice to talk to him.¹⁵ Meanwhile he informed Palmerston of what had happened and asked again whether he would take another office. Palmerston, however, dug his heels in. The new objection, he replied, "renders it still more impossible than it was before for me to take any other office".¹⁶ It took Ellice some time to find Grey, and when

14. Grey to Russell, 19 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q Walpole, I, 414 - 16).

15. Russell's Journal, 19 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 107); GM, V, 337.

16. Palmerston to Russell, 19 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E.

he did so he did not press him to drop his opposition to Palmerston, as Russell evidently expected, but rather declared his personal conviction that Grey was right to object. Not surprisingly, Grey maintained his position.¹⁷ Upon learning of Grey's resolve, Russell announced that he must give up the attempt to form an administration as the breach with Grey "would produce difficulties and embarrassments that would materially impair his chance of success."¹⁸ Grey was "bewildered" when he learnt of Russell's decision. He began to wish that instead of making a personal objection to Palmerston's appointment he had suggested that the rest of the proposed Cabinet should vote on the question.¹⁹ But he did not think he had been wrong to oppose the appointment, and he continued to believe that the bulk of the party would support him. The whole business, he told his wife, had been "disagreeable" and he was blamed for Russell's failure, "but as I don't feel to have deserved it I don't care."²⁰

After the flurry of action came the inquest. Who was to blame for the failure to form a Whig government? Russell blamed Grey, and resolved "never to act with him in public again".²¹ He did not deny Grey's right to oppose Palmerston's conduct of foreign affairs, although he personally thought the criticism unjust.²² What he resented was Grey's failure to tell him of his objections before he accepted the task of trying to form a government.²³ The rest of the party was also critical of Grey.²⁴ Both Palmerston and Grey blamed Ellice,

17. Grey's Journal, 19 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12; GM, V, 361.

18. GM, V, 338.

19. Grey's Journal, 19 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12; GM, V, 361.

20. Grey to his wife, 20 December 1845: Grey P. 103/3.

21. Russell to his wife, 21 December 1845: Walpole, I, 417.

22. Russell to Minto, 20 December 1845: N.L.S. Mss. 11774 f96 (q Walpole, I, 416 - 17).

23. Russell to Grey, 21 December 1845: Grey P. 122/1 (q Walpole, I, 416); Russell to Wood, copy, 3 January 1846: PRO 30/22/5A (q LCJR, I, 100 - 2).

24. Baring to Russell, 19 December 1845, Lansdowne to Russell, 21 December 1845, Fox Maule to Russell, 22 December 1845, Ellice to Russell, 23 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 95 - 8).

accusing him of encouraging Grey to continue on the line he had chosen.²⁵ Others, including the Queen, thought that Russell had abandoned his task too precipitately and that he should have tried to go on without Grey.²⁶ In fact, as Sir Charles Wood observed,²⁷ all three had been to blame to some extent. Russell had been anxious to escape a difficult position and had failed to heed the warning signs. Ellice's behaviour, either deliberately or by accident (Palmerston thought the former, Wood the latter), had served to strengthen Grey's resolution rather than weaken it. But, above all, Grey had been too hasty and too dogmatic. He had misread the general apprehension about Palmerston's return to the Foreign Office as a willingness to force him to take another position even at the risk of crippling the party by alienating him completely.

The one person to emerge from the controversy with his position strengthened was Palmerston. He had staked his claim to the Foreign Office and Russell had revealed that whatever the rest of the party thought he was willing to support that claim. Moreover, Palmerston's importance to the Whigs had been demonstrated to all. There was some talk of trying to do without Grey's support in the Lords; there was none of trying to do without Palmerston's in the Commons. But Palmerston's attitude towards his colleagues seems to have undergone a significant change. "I am well aware", he wrote to Lord Melbourne, ". . . that some persons both at home and abroad have imbibed the notion that I am more indifferent than I ought to be as to running the risk of war." He accepted these attacks from foreign statesmen and from Tory opponents, he declared, but he resented the "little

-
25. Hobhouse's Diary, 28 December 1845: B.L. Add. Mss. 56565 f133; Grey to Ellice, copy, 29 December 1845: Grey P. 120/3.
 26. Grey's Journal, 20 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12; Hobhouse's Diary, 28 December 1845: B.L. Add. Mss. 43748 f2; Wood to Russell, 31 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E; GM, V, 338, 341 and 344 - 5.
 27. Wood to Grey, 27 December 1845: Grey P. 105/2.

cabal within our own ranks". His critics, he explained,

could not charge me with failure, because we had succeeded in our undertakings . . .; they could not charge me with having involved the country in war, because, in fact, we had maintained peace; and the only thing that was left for them to say was that my policy had a tendency to produce war . . .

One sign of his disenchantment with the Whigs was his flirtation with the idea of joining a coalition of moderate Whigs and Tory Protectionists.²⁹ Another was his determination to maintain his independence when eventually he returned to the Foreign Office.

Russell's failure to form a ministry in December merely postponed what rapidly became inevitable. Peel forced through the repeal of the Corn Laws and in the process smashed the great Conservative party which he had spent much of his career since 1830 creating. Two-thirds of the party, led by Lord Stanley and inspired by Disraeli, rejected Peel's leadership and became known as Protectionists. On 29 June 1846, after seventy-four Protectionists combined with the Whigs and the Radicals to defeat an Irish Coercion Bill, Peel announced his resignation. The Protectionists could not command sufficient support to form an administration so once again the Queen sent for Russell.³⁰

Russell was determined that the problems of the previous December should not recur. Having decided that Palmerston's support was vital, he resolved to do without Grey's. On 27 June he told Grey that although he did not think it impossible that he and Grey should hold office together in the future, "upon the whole he thought it better we shd.

28. Palmerston to Melbourne, 26 December 1845: QVL, II, 81.

29. H.C.F. Bell: Lord Palmerston (London 1936), I, 363 - 5; R. Stewart: The Politics of Protection: Lord Derby and the Protectionist Party 1841 - 1852 (Cambridge 1971), 70 - 1; Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 46 - 7.

30. For the repeal of the Corn Laws and the break-up of the Conservative party see R. Blake: Disraeli (London 1966), 223 - 43; Gash, 562 - 615; Prest, 210 - 18; Stewart, 48 - 76; Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 37 - 57.

not be so just at present." Grey began to reconcile himself to being excluded from office.³¹ The following day, however, Sir Charles Wood intervened. At the beginning of the year, Wood, Grey's brother-in-law, had done all he could to prevent the rift between Russell and Grey widening further.³² Now he wrote to Russell pointing out the advantages of including Grey and declaring that if Grey was given the Colonial Office he would have "enough to occupy him". With "occasional communication on your part, . . . and a little forbearance from his colleagues," he announced, "I have confident hopes that all might go smooth."³³

Russell found Wood's arguments extremely persuasive. He told Wood, who told Grey, that his objections to Grey had been based upon "the difficulties he foresaw in my getting on with others, [and] that on further enquiry he did not find these difficulties as insuperable as he had supposed."³⁴ It is known that Russell discussed Grey's inclusion with Lansdowne,³⁵ and as he told the Queen that he discussed the composition of the new government with Lansdowne, Palmerston, Clarendon and Cottenham,³⁶ it is probable that he also discussed the subject with Palmerston. Lady Palmerston remarked that her husband "decided to take him [Grey] in in order to avoid having to explain why he was being punished and left out in the cold."³⁷ This statement and Russell's remark to Wood implies that Palmerston had a veto on Grey's inclusion and that in order not to damage his standing among the Whigs Palmerston refused to use it. It also illustrates the importance Russell placed on Palmerston's opinion.

31. Grey's Journal, 27 June 1846: Grey P. C3/12.

32. Wood to Grey, 27 December 1845: ibid 105/2; Wood to Russell, 5 January 1846: PRO 30/22/5A (q LCJR, I, 100 - 2).

33. Wood to Russell, [28 June 1846]: PRO 30/22/5B (q Walpole, I, 427).

34. Grey's Journal, 30 June 1846: Grey P. C3/12.

35. Prest, 224.

36. Prince Albert's memorandum, 30 June 1846: QVL, II, 98.

37. Lady Palmerston to Princess Lieven, 3 July 1846: Lord Sudley (ed.): The Lieven - Palmerston Correspondence 1828 - 1856 (London 1943), 286.

Grey spent much of the 30th considering "all the pros & cons" of accepting the Colonial Office.³⁸ Wood urged him to accept, but warned that "there was no use in his coming in unless he meant to make things go smoothly".³⁹ The following day Grey entered the Cabinet. He explained this decision in his journal by writing that "if I continued out things wd. necessarily arise which wd. produce more or less coolness between myself & my friends" and that Aberdeen's settlement of the Oregon question made the danger of "Palmerston's getting us into a war with the U.S." much less likely.⁴⁰ This second explanation was added in the margin and is clearly an afterthought. Moreover, in his letter of 19 December he had specified France rather than the United States as the country with which Palmerston was most likely to quarrel. The dominant motive for his acquiescence to Palmerston's appointment was his realisation that if he continued his opposition he would be excluded from office.⁴¹ But his views on Palmerston's unsuitability as Foreign Secretary had been repressed, not changed. It was widely doubted, wrote Sir James Graham, whether Palmerston, Grey and Clarendon could be brought into "harmonious union" on foreign affairs. "The seeds of angry difference are thickly scattered on all sides."⁴²

ii) PALMERSTON AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, 1846 - 1848

On 12 December 1845 Charles Greville wrote in his journal with reference to Palmerston: "I don't imagine he cares about corn, fixed duty, sliding scales, or anything else, except so far as they may bear upon his return to that abode of bliss."⁴³ The "abode of bliss"

38. Grey's Journal, 30 June 1846: Grey P. C3/12.

39. Wood to Russell, 30 June 1846: PRO 30/22/5A (q LCJR, I, 108 - 9).

40. Grey's Journal, 30 June 1846: Grey P. C3/12.

41. This is also the judgement of Grey's biographer (Job, 404) and of F.A. Dreyer ("Russell Administration", 64 - 5).

42. Graham to Peel, 3 July 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 40452 f146.

43. GM, V, 324.

to which Greville referred was the Foreign Office. In the mid-nineteenth century the Foreign Office was one of the busiest of the government departments. It was especially busy in 1848 when, Palmerston calculated, 28,000 despatches were received or sent.⁴⁴ The workload for the Foreign Secretary was tremendous, particularly during months of crises. "I have been overpowered by Despatch Boxes falling on me like hailstones & growing up like a Tropical Jungle, and Interviews unceasing every Day", Palmerston complained at the end of March.⁴⁵ There is little doubt, however, that Palmerston loved the work and was overjoyed to be back in harness.

To an increasing number of Englishmen, Palmerston was the personification of John Bull. Fearless of all foreigners and the scourge of continental despots, he protected British interests, supported European liberals and defended the weak against the bullying of the strong. It was an image which Palmerston sought to project by his speeches and through his links with the press.⁴⁶ But this picture of a jingoistic chauvinist belies the complexities of Palmerston's views on foreign affairs.

On 1 March 1848, at the end of a long speech on the Near East, Palmerston made a rousing avowal of the principles upon which he acted - an avowal which is sometimes taken as indicative of Palmerstonian foreign policy.⁴⁷ He listed three main duties of a British Foreign Secretary: the maintenance of peace and friendly relations with all

-
44. Russell to Prince Albert, 19 June 1849: QVL, II, 263. The most recent study of Palmerston at the Foreign Office (although only for the period 1830 - 1841) is Bourne, Palmerston, 408 - 98. Cf C.R. Middleton: The Administration of British Foreign Policy 1782 - 1846 (Durham 1977).
45. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 30 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1040. Cf E. Ashley: The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple Viscount Palmerston (London 1879), II, 78.
46. B. Kingsley Martin: The Triumph of Lord Palmerston: A Study of Public Opinion in England before the Crimean War (London 1924), 46 - 76.
47. K. Bourne: The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830 - 1902 (Oxford 1970), 46; J. Ridley: Lord Palmerston (London 1970), 452 - 3.

nations, as long as it was consistent "with a due regard to the interests, the honour, and the dignity of this country"; the protection and extension of British commerce; and the avoidance of unnecessary alliances. Britain's "real policy", he proclaimed,

is to be the champion of justice and right; pursuing that course with moderation and prudence, not becoming the Quixote of the world, but giving the weight of her moral sanction and support wherever she thinks that justice is, and wherever she thinks that wrong has been done. Sir, in pursuing that course, and in pursuing the more limited direction of our own particular interests, my conviction is, that as long as England keeps herself in the right . . . she never will find herself altogether alone. . . . Therefore I say that it is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.

If he had to sum up his principles in one sentence, he declared in conclusion, "I would adopt the expression of Canning, and say that with every British Minister the interests of England ought to be the shibboleth of his policy."⁴⁸ The language is typically Palmerstonian. It was amusing, memorable and stridently patriotic. But the principles expressed - a determination to further national self-interest and a vague promise to champion "justice and right", combined with a readiness to work with any Power should it seem in Britain's interests - were moderate and largely unobjectionable. But how did those principles work in practice?

It has been said that the keystone of Palmerston's foreign policy in 1848 was the maintenance of the general European peace.⁴⁹ On the whole, this is true. Palmerston was not afraid of a major war, for unlike Aberdeen he was confident that given adequate precautions

48. Hansard, XCVII, 121 - 3 (q Bourne, Victorian England, 291 - 3).

49. Bell, I, 420; D. Southgate: 'The Most English Minister . . .' The Policies and Politics of Palmerston (London 1966), 201; It. Prob., 4 - 5; Billy, 266 - 8; G. Gillessen: "British Policy towards German Unification 1848 - 1851: From the March Revolutions to the Dresden Conferences" unpublished D. Phil. Dissertation, University of Oxford 1958, iii - vi.

Britain would emerge victorious from any conflict.⁵⁰ But he disliked the prospect of it because he knew that the struggle would be prolonged, would weaken Britain, and would damage the Vienna settlement of 1815 by which a balance of power had been established in Europe from which Britain benefited greatly. He was prepared to see the settlement altered, as over Belgium, but only as long as the existing balance of power was maintained and by the consent of all five major Powers. He feared that if the Powers began to change parts of the settlement arbitrarily it would destroy the legitimacy of the whole and might lead to a revival of French expansionism. It was on this ground that he condemned the annexation of Cracow by the Northern Powers. If, he had warned the previous August,

the Treaty of Vienna be not good on the Vistula, it may be equally bad on the Rhine, and on the Po; and therefore I am convinced, that not only a sense of justice, but a sense of policy and of self-interest, will lead those Powers to see that the Treaty of Vienna must be respected as a whole, and that it is eminently for their interests that that whole should in all its parts be observed.⁵¹

The existing European system was bound together by treaties other than those of 1815. Palmerston, for example, objected to the Spanish Marriages by saying that they were a violation of the Treaty of Utrecht.⁵² Unless nations respected their treaty commitments, Palmerston argued, Europe would lapse into confusion and perpetual war.

In conjunction with the treaties were the guarantees which had been given to support certain territorial arrangements. Under a guarantee, Palmerston explained to Van de Weyer, the Belgian minister in London, the guarantor had a duty to protect what had been guaranteed. The signatory of a treaty, in contrast, had a right to intervene

50. Bullen, 54.

51. Hansard, LXXXVIII, 830 - 1.

52. Bullen, 140ff. Whether they were a violation or not was the subject of much controversy.

to protect the stipulations of that treaty, but did not have a duty to do so.⁵³ On the whole, Palmerston disliked guarantees because they restricted Britain's freedom of action. In February 1848, for example, he refused to guarantee any settlement between Naples and Sicily on the grounds that it could "lead us into future Embarrassments & Responsibilities of the most difficult and inconvenient Kind."⁵⁴ As long as Britain had a right to intervene to protect her interests Palmerston was satisfied. Nor, in practice, did the existence of a guarantee mean that Britain would necessarily act to protect what she had guaranteed. In May 1848, despite a treaty of 1720 by which Britain had guaranteed the possession of the whole of Schleswig to Denmark, Palmerston suggested the partition of the duchy on the lines of nationality.⁵⁵ In the realities of international politics, the existence of a guarantee did not compel a government to adopt a specific line over a certain question, but it did make it more difficult for a government to justify its conduct if it was at variance with the guarantee.

Palmerston's desire to maintain the peace of Europe was the result of more than his wish to preserve the balance of power. It was generally accepted among informed British observers that turmoil on the continent, even if it did not directly involve Britain, would seriously damage British trade. On 4 March 1848 The Economist published an article giving details of the importance of Britain's trade with Europe. In 1846, it announced, the total value of British exports had been £57,786,936, of which £26,671,263 worth had been sent to Europe and North Africa. In comparative terms, British exports to Germany had

53. Van de Weyer to d'Hoffschmidt, confidential, 7 March 1848: A. de Ridder (ed.): La Crise de la Neutralité Belge de 1848. Le Dossier Diplomatique (Brussels 1928), I, 142 - 4.

54. Palmerston to Minto, 24 February 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12073 f104.

55. Gillessen, 48 and 51 - 2.

been almost as valuable as those to the territories of the East India Company or to the United States (£6,326,210 to £6,434,456 and £6,830,450 respectively), and similar comparisons could be made between the value of British exports to Italy and British North America (£3,391,022 to £3,308,659) or France and Brazil (£2,715,963 to £2,749,338). War or revolution on the continent, The Economist observed, would hamper trade and probably reduce demand for British goods, and this would inevitably have an adverse effect on British industry.⁵⁶ Leading politicians recognised that a commercial or industrial recession led to social unrest and increased political discontent. "Our great desiderandum is peace", wrote Clarendon after the March revolutions. ". . . If things keep quiet, trade and manufactures will revive, and the British belly - the seat of an Englishman's political opinions - being full, we shall hear less of wild reforms."⁵⁷

In his speech of 1 March Palmerston had said that the protection and promotion of British commerce was one of the principle duties of a Foreign Secretary, and he was not afraid of intervening militarily for this purpose.⁵⁸ But there was never any question of Britain intervening militarily in Europe in 1848 in order to protect her economic interests, for the British Government lacked both the desire

56. The Economist, 4 March 1848, 254 - 5. This prediction of the injurious effect on British exports of unrest on the continent seemed to be proved in 1848. In the first two months of the year the value of British exports to Europe, in comparison with the same period the previous year, rose slightly, but in March they fell by an eighth and in April by almost a third. It was not until September that they approached a similar value (ibid., 10 June 1848, 649 - 50; MG, 11 November 1848, 6).

57. Clarendon to Reeve, 10 May 1848: J.K. Laughton: Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Henry Reeve, C.B., D.C.L. (London 1898), I, 200.

58. At the beginning of 1848, for example, the British navy, in conjunction with the French navy, was involved in a dispute in the Rio Plata in an attempt to protect European economic interests there. See J.F. Cady: Foreign Intervention in the Rio de la Plata 1838 - 50. A Study of French, British, and American Policy in Relation to the Dictator Juan Manuel Rosas (New York 1929).

and the capability to do so effectively. Outside Europe, it was possible to intervene at less expense and with less risk of the problem escalating. At the same time, Palmerston tried to further Britain's commercial interests wherever possible in Europe. He urged both republican France and the Frankfurt Diet to lower their tariff barriers.⁵⁹ The response was disappointing. When Normanby brought up the question, Lamartine "flinched at once from the subject and talked of more immediate matters." The French Government, Normanby explained, was committed to protecting French trade and industry and, because of the economic recession, would be overthrown if it tried to adopt another course. "No Govt. whatever in France could as yet make a move in that direction."⁶⁰ Palmerston sought freer trade because he knew that it would be advantageous to British trade and industry. Continental governments resisted his efforts because they feared that their own industries would not be able to compete with goods that were produced cheaper and better in Britain.

Palmerston sought to preserve European peace, but he was far from being an advocate of the status quo. He was prepared to see territorial changes and even to assist in their achievement. But there were certain pre-conditions to Palmerston's support for change: the existing territorial arrangement had to be shown to be unsatisfactory and the proposed change must not disturb the existing balance of power. Palmerston was sympathetic to most of the nationalist movements on the continent, but whether or not he supported them depended upon whether he thought they would further Britain's interests.

In contrast to his support for European nationalism, Palmerston's support for European liberalism rarely depended on the country involved.

59. Palmerston to Normanby, 26 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/7 (q Ashley, II, 71); Palmerston to Cowley, No 1, 29 July 1848: PRO FO 30/107.
60. Normanby to Palmerston, 1 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/128.

Palmerston believed that there could be no lasting stability in Europe until the continental governments satisfied the legitimate constitutional demands of their subjects. His definition of legitimate constitutional demands tended to be limited to the advocacy of a British-style constitution, and the closer a constitution resembled that of Britain the more admirable Palmerston thought it to be; but many continental liberals failed to realise this. There was, in Palmerston's eyes, an added advantage for Britain in encouraging constitutionalism. If other countries adopted a similar political system, they would, he hoped, be more receptive to the ideas of Free Trade. Therefore he felt that it was both Britain's duty and in Britain's interests to advocate and support constitutionalism whenever and wherever she could.

The most famous case of the British Government's support for European liberalism before 1848 was the mission of Lord Minto to Italy. Minto, a member of the British Cabinet, was sent to Italy initially to get Papal support for the Government's Irish policy,⁶¹ but at the end of October 1847 it was decided to extend the scope of his task. He was instructed to visit Turin and Florence, as well as Rome, where he was to encourage the governments to continue their constitutional reforms and to persuade those people agitating for change to restrain their enthusiasm and moderate their demands.⁶² In Palmerston's opinion, Italy was the "weak part of Europe" and he had predicted soon after entering office that "the next war that breaks out in Europe will probably arise out of Italian affairs." The misgovernment of the Italian states and the oppressive influence of Austria, he

-
61. Palmerston to Russell, 14 September 1847: PRO 30/22/6F (q LCJR, I, 310). For the effect of Minto's mission in this respect see K.B. Nowlan: The Politics of Repeal: A Study in the Relations between Great Britain and Ireland, 1841 - 50 (London 1965), 175 - 8.
62. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 31 October 1847: RvP, 63. Cf Bell, I, 413 - 17; It. Prob., 45 - 6.

judged, would produce insurrections and revolutions which France would be tempted to exploit. The result would be war between France and Austria which would inevitably spread to the rest of Europe. The only way to prevent such a catastrophe, he argued, was for the British Government to support those Italian monarchs who were moving towards constitutionalism and to exhort the other Powers to do the same.

If we succeed . . . I believe we shall be doing a thing agreeable, as well as useful. . . . If, on the contrary, we fail . . . we shall at least stand justified, and shall be able to show that we are wholly absolved from the Responsibility of any misfortunes which may hereafter arise from that Quarter.⁶³

British support for Italian liberalism took a number of forms, but Lord Minto's mission was the most obvious manifestation.

Palmerston's anxiety about Italy was fully justified. On 12 January 1848 a revolution broke out in Sicily when the inhabitants of Palermo demanded of their sovereign, King Ferdinand of Naples, the restoration of the constitution of 1812. After a fortnight of spasmodic fighting most of the Neapolitan troops were expelled and on the 29th Ferdinand granted a constitution.⁶⁴ The first revolution of the Year of Revolutions had succeeded.

It is worthwhile examining the British Government's response to the Sicilian revolution in a little detail, for it clarifies Palmerston's attitude towards the liberal movements on the continent and provides a preview to his initial reaction to the revolutions that broke out later in the year. His first concern was to prevent the problem escalating. He urged Austria in the strongest terms not to intervene on behalf of the Neapolitans - arguing that if she did "there will

63. Palmerston to Russell, 30 July 1846: PRO 30/22/5B (q Ashley, II, 12 - 14).

64. The best accounts in English of the Sicilian revolution are H. Acton: The Last Bourbons of Naples (1825 - 1861) (London 1961), 191 - 202; G.F.-H. Berkeley and J. Berkeley: Italy in the Making: January 1st 1848 to November 16th 1848 (Cambridge 1940), 52 - 62.

infallibly be war, and it will be a war of principles which . . . will spread over all Europe, and out of which the Austrian Empire will certainly not issue unchanged"⁶⁵ - and contemplated ordering the British fleet to prevent Austrian troops "passing from Naples or Elsewhere to Sicily."⁶⁶ Having isolated the problem, he then tried to solve it. Minto, whose good offices were requested by King Ferdinand, hurried south from Rome to see what he could do to reconcile the King and his rebellious subjects. The British Government, Minto was told, wanted Sicily and Naples to remain united under the same crown, and it thought that the best way to remove the discontent that was threatening that union would be "by timely Reforms". If the King had given such reforms earlier, Palmerston added, the problem would probably not have arisen.⁶⁷ The tactics which were to be used to achieve this objective were left to Minto, the only proviso was that Britain would not guarantee any settlement.⁶⁸

The task of reconciling the Neapolitans and the Sicilians was not easy - Lansdowne compared it to trying "to separate two cats when they have once begun to fight"⁶⁹ - but by the end of February a solution seemed in sight. "We have conquered all the difficulties of the Sicilian question except one", Minto reported: "but that one, thro, I think, the absurd obstinacy of both parties still stands

65. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 11 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/807 (q Ashley, II, 63 - 4).

66. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 13 January 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1033. The Cabinet vetoed this idea, "but", Palmerston told Minto, "the less you say about that, the better, because the notion that we might do so, must tend to prevent Metternich from taking such a Step" (Palmerston to Minto, 3 February 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12073 f89). In fact, denied permission to march through Papal territory (Minto to Palmerston, secret, 18 January 1848: PRO FO 44/4, q PP, LVII, 399 - 400), the Austrian Government confined itself to a diplomatic offensive designed to secure the support of Russia and Prussia (It. Prob., 61 - 2).

67. Palmerston to Minto, No 13, 3 February 1848: PRO FO 44/3 (q PP, LVI, 276).

68. Russell to Palmerston, 14 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/181.

69. Lansdowne to Minto, 3 February 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11806 f132.

in the way of any agreement."⁷⁰ Given time, it seems probable that Minto could have overcome the remaining point of difference. Unfortunately it was at this delicate stage of the negotiations that news of the revolution in France arrived to throw the dispute back into the melting pot.⁷¹

* * *

It would be misleading to examine Palmerston's actions in 1848 without looking at his attitude towards the four continental Powers in the years leading up to the revolutions, and the key to an understanding of that attitude is his views on France.

D.M. Greer has said that Palmerston was motivated by a fear and hatred of France, which was a result of his experiences in office during the Napoleonic wars.⁷² This is an exaggeration, but it is true that Palmerston was distrustful of the French nation as a whole. France, he wrote in a memorandum on National Defence, had "so much to covet & so much to revenge" with respect to Britain. Even when there was no desire for conflict on the part of either government, the two countries

come into Contact, and often into something like Conflict Politically & Commercially in almost every Part of the Globe. The Insolence or the Indiscretion of a Subordinate officer, the Rival Jealousy of grasping merchants, a hundred possible Incidents may at any moment give Rise to Questions which inflaming national Feeling on one Side of the Channel or the other, may place the most Peace loving government to say the least of it, in great embarrassment; and which might furnish fair ground of Quarrel to a government in France desirous of finding occasion for a Rupture.⁷³

Palmerston wrote this when France was a monarchy. A French Republic, he felt, would be even more dangerous for it would be more responsive to the whim of popular passions. "Large Republics", he wrote shortly

70. Minto to Russell, 29 February 1848: PRO 30/22/7A.

71. For Britain and the Sicilian revolution after February 1848 see below pp. 127 - 30 and 291 - 306.

72. Greer, 163.

73. Palmerston's memorandum, 10 April 1847: PRO 30/22/6C (q LCJR, I, 248 - 9).

after the February Revolution, "seem to be essentially & inherently aggressive".⁷⁴ Even if the people of France were pacific, the instability of the republic, which he believed to be inherent in the system, might make it expedient for their government to embark on a foreign war in order to prevent its army interfering in domestic politics.⁷⁵

And yet, although Palmerston regarded France as a rival and potential threat to Britain, his attitude towards her was largely pragmatic. He would work with her if he thought such co-operation would further British interests. The history of his first two tenures of the Foreign Office illustrates this dichotomy. The crisis over Belgian independence saw Palmerston playing a double rôle: if the threat to European peace seemed to come from the Northern Powers, he emphasised in Berlin, St. Petersburg and Vienna the danger of French aggrandizement; if the threat seemed to come from France, he emphasised in Paris the probable reaction of the Northern Courts to an aggressive step.⁷⁶ By 1833 the balance had shifted. The settlement of the Belgian question and Palmerston's increasing concern with the threat from Russia led to the establishment of a "liberal alliance" between Britain and France. The "alliance", however, was short-lived. Mutual jealousy, rivalry over Spain and Portugal, and the failure of France to lower her tariff barriers meant that by 1837 it was dead in all but name.⁷⁷ The Mehemet Ali crisis of 1839 - 41 destroyed what remained of the friendly relations between the two governments and led, temporarily at least, to an association between Britain and the Northern Powers. The affair was a diplomatic triumph for Palmerston, but it had been gained at the cost of frightening more cautious spirits in Britain

74. Palmerston to Normanby, 28 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/10 (q Ashley, II, 73).

75. Palmerston to Normanby, 27 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/9 (q Ashley, II, 72).

76. Bourne, Palmerston, 332 - 48; Webster, I, 89 - 176.

77. Bourne, Palmerston, 352 - 406; Webster, I, 349 - 521.

and alienating almost all France.⁷⁸ The entente cordiale established by Aberdeen and Guizot improved relations between the two countries, but it was never as secure as Aberdeen and Guizot liked to imagine and it could not erase the memory of the humiliation France had suffered at the hands of Palmerston.⁷⁹

The events of December 1845 in Britain were viewed with great concern in Paris. Despite an assurance that the departure of Aberdeen need not lead to the collapse of the entente cordiale,⁸⁰ the prospect of Palmerston's return caused Louis Philippe and his ministers to fear that there would be a return to the poor state of Anglo-French relations that had existed when he left office. The basis of the entente cordiale, Guizot told Henry Reeve, was to subordinate minor disagreements in favour of the promotion of a better general understanding. Palmerston, in contrast, allowed small questions to interfere with important ones. "Il aime la lutte," Guizot complained, "and the place where he is least master is that at which he is most anxious to become so." Guizot was determined not to be bullied or out-manoeuvred as Thiers had been over Mehemet Ali.⁸¹ In April 1846, in an effort to dispel this hostility and suspicion, Palmerston and his wife visited Paris and were delighted by their reception.⁸² But the exercise was less successful than they imagined. Guizot, Princess Lieven told Aberdeen, had been unimpressed by Palmerston's protestations of his love of peace and his desire for a good understanding with France. He was convinced it was an act and that the old Palmerston would reappear once in office.⁸³

78. Bourne, Palmerston, 561 - 620; Webster, II, 619 - 776.

79. Bullen, 58 - 9 and 87 - 91; M.E. Chamberlain: Lord Aberdeen: A Political Biography (London 1983), 343 - 84.

80. Louis Philippe to Queen Victoria, 16 December 1845: QVL, II, 67 - 8.

81. Reeve to Russell, 15 December 1845: PRO 30/22/4E (q LCJR, I, 90 - 2).

82. GM, V, 392.

83. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 29 April 1846: E. Jones Parry (ed.): The Correspondence of Lord Aberdeen and Princess Lieven 1832 - 1854 (London 1938 - 1939), I, 250.

The state of feeling about Palmerston in the French Court and Government made a quarrel almost inevitable when he returned to the Foreign Office in June 1846. Convinced that Palmerston would try to deceive them, Louis Philippe and Guizot looked with deep suspicion at all his actions. They scented a deception over the troublesome question of the marriages of the Queen of Spain and her sister, the heiress apparent, and they decided to pre-empt him. Quickly and secretly, and with the connivance of the Spanish Court and Government, they arranged the simultaneous marriages of the Queen to the Duke of Cadiz and of her sister to one of Louis Philippe's sons, the Duc de Montpensier. It was a clear breach of an agreement reached at Eu by Guizot and Aberdeen.⁸⁴ It was also a clear diplomatic victory for France and defeat for Britain.

Guizot had expected Palmerston to be angry about the French coup, but he was disconcerted by the general condemnation it received in London.⁸⁵ The daily press was almost universally hostile.⁸⁶ People whom Guizot had hoped would defend his actions were among the most vehement in their criticism.⁸⁷ Even Aberdeen found it difficult to excuse his friend's conduct.⁸⁸ The British Cabinet, despite some doubts, did not split with Palmerston but united behind him.⁸⁹ For Palmerston, the Spanish Marriages were proof of all he had ever said

84. Bullen, 76 - 119.

85. ibid., 128 - 9.

86. DN, 16 and 28 September, and 9 October 1846, 2; MC, 18 and 24 September, and 8 October 1846, 4 - 5; MP, 21 and 25 September, and 12 October 1846, 4; The Times, 21 and 29 September, and 8 October 1846, 2. An exception was the Morning Herald which played down the affair and tried to defend Louis Philippe (MH, 17 September 1846, 4).

87. Peel to Aberdeen, 22 September 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff213 - 15; Graham to Aberdeen, 24 November 1846: ibid. 43190 ff173 - 5; Queen Victoria to King Leopold, 7 and 14 September 1846: QVL, II, 118 - 19 and 121 - 3.

88. Aberdeen to Peel, 21 September 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 40455 ff388 - 91.

89. Clarendon to Russell, 8 September 1846, and Lansdowne to Russell, 20 September 1846: PRO 30/22/5C (q LCJR, I, 117 and 121); Russell to Jarnac, copy, 26 October 1846: PRO 30/22/5D (q Walpole, II, 5 - 7). For the doubts in the Cabinet see below p. 44.

about the Orleans monarchy and the way Britain should deal with it. "Louis Philippe & Guizot have carried their Point by Boldness, Decision, and Promptitude", he told Russell.

We have been defeated by our Timidity, Hesitation and Delay. . . . We have stood more in awe of France than France has stood in awe of us; & while we have been Shilli Shallying under the Fear of giving her temporary displeasure She has braved our Dissatisfaction, & seized hold of a permanent & important advantage.⁹⁰

Palmerston recognised that he had suffered a defeat over the Montpensier marriage, but he refused to accept it as a fait accompli. He did all he could to mobilise French and Spanish public opinion against the marriage, and tried to persuade Montpensier to renounce his claim to either the French or Spanish throne. He also sought the support of the Northern Courts in the dispute, and in order not to antagonise them toned down his protest over the annexation of Cracow.⁹¹ He was still prepared to work with France if necessary, and did so over Portugal and the Rio Plata,⁹² but he was always reluctant to do so, despite the fact that this could hamper the effective pursuit of British interests. He wished to make the French Government feel the consequences of its estrangement from Britain. When it was suggested that Britain and France should co-operate over Italy, he strenuously and successfully opposed the idea. The French, he wrote to Russell,

take such advantage of Every Thing . . . that if we were to say anything that looked like the Expression of a Strong wish or anxiety for their cooperation about Italy they would say, see here is the English government pretending to be angry with us about Spain, but compelled to come and ask us for Help the very first Time that any Event of any Importance happens in any Part of Europe; It is clear that they cannot do without us, & therefore we may take any liberties with them that we like, either in Spain

90. Palmerston to Russell, 10 September 1846: PRO 30/22/50 (q LCJR, I, 117).

91. Bullen, 136 - 74.

92. ibid, 217 - 61; Cady, 212 - 43.

or Elsewhere.⁹³

Palmerston's determination not to forgive Louis Philippe and Guizot for the Spanish Marriages warped British foreign policy between September 1846 and February 1848, and as a result damaged British interests.

Some members of the British Cabinet, notably Lansdowne and Grey, thought that the passage of time, and the birth of a child to the Queen of Spain, would lead to an improvement in Anglo-French relations. Palmerston, together with Russell and Clarendon, disagreed. He believed that Britain could place no confidence in France as long as Louis Philippe remained on his throne and Guizot headed the French Government.⁹⁴ As late as 4 February 1848 he warned that the fall of Guizot, without a satisfactory settlement of the Montpensier question, would be unlikely to result in an improvement in Anglo-French relations.⁹⁵

Palmerston's observation was the result of reports from Paris that the French Government might be defeated in the Chamber of Deputies over its handling of the Sonderbund crisis and its relations with the Northern Courts.⁹⁶ Normanby, who had been predicting Guizot's downfall throughout 1847,⁹⁷ was told that "there were, amongst those who still voted with the Ministry . . . , a sufficient number of Conservatives determined to get rid of Guizot, to make his fate certain before long."⁹⁸ In fact, Guizot's Government withstood a "magnificent" attack from Thiers and emerged with a majority of eighty;⁹⁹ but, undaunted by the inaccuracy of his prediction, Normanby

93. Palmerston to Russell, 14 September 1847: PRO 30/22/6F (q LCJR, I, 135).

94. Bullen, 128 and 194 - 205.

95. Palmerston to Normanby, 4 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/4.

96. For the rapprochement between France and the Northern Powers see Bullen, 207 - 12 and 293 - 321; It. Prob., 50 - 7.

97. Bullen, 322 - 5.

98. Normanby to Palmerston, 27 January 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/103.

99. Normanby to Palmerston, 5 February 1848: ibid GC/NO/110; Bullen, 326.

continued to assure Palmerston of the widespread opposition to its foreign policy.¹⁰⁰

It is difficult to judge how far the Spanish Marriages and their consequences led to the February Revolution. Lamartine told Normanby that Louis Philippe owed his downfall to the dynastic ambitions which had led to the Montpensier marriage: "I always said that selfish object would be his ruin; it drove him into a line of politics which the Country would not stand".¹⁰¹ However, as Lord Grey observed, this could have been "a dexterous piece of flattery".¹⁰² What seems certain is that the growing association in international affairs of France and the Northern Powers, which resulted from the quarrel with Britain, added to the unpopularity of the Orleans monarchy. In one respect, then, Palmerston was partially responsible for the February Revolution. But there is no evidence to suggest that Palmerston pursued his anti-French policy in order to effect the overthrow of the Orleans monarchy.

There was a positive side to Palmerston's dislike of Louis Philippe and Guizot. Roger Bullen has suggested that Palmerston was "more tactful and understanding" towards the Second Republic than might have been expected because he had been on such bad terms with its predecessor.¹⁰³ It seems a reasonable supposition. But Palmerston's policy towards the Provisional Government was primarily pragmatic. If the Republic remained peaceable and did not threaten British interests, he was willing to work with it; if it challenged Britain, he was ready to resist it with all the powers at his disposal.

100. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 10 February 1848: Nor. P. P/14/24.

101. Normanby to Palmerston, confidential, 28 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 136).

102. Grey's Journal, 29 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

103. Bullen, 338.

* * *

Britain had been on bad terms with Orleanist France during Palmerston's previous tenures of the Foreign Office. On those occasions he had tried to counter-balance the hostility of France by coming to an understanding with the Northern Powers. At the beginning of 1848, however, such an understanding seemed impossible. Despite Palmerston's efforts in the autumn of 1846, it was France rather than Britain which had drawn closer to the Northern Powers. The reason for this was that Metternich, who guided the foreign policies of the Northern Courts, had a different set of priorities to Palmerston.

Metternich took little interest in the Spanish question, except in so far as it affected the diplomatic balance in Europe. He was preoccupied by the unrest in Italy which he regarded as a sign of a wider revolutionary conspiracy which he felt should be crushed mercilessly. He disapproved strongly of Palmerston's advocacy of reform in Italy, even though he knew some reforms were needed.¹⁰⁴ He believed that the support which Palmerston gave the liberals was encouraging the extremists rather than defeating them. If only Palmerston would stop supporting the disruptive elements, he pleaded to Ponsonby, the chances of restoring normality would be greatly improved.¹⁰⁵ Palmerston, he decided, must be a secret supporter of revolution, and as he was certain that Britain as a whole hated revolution he concluded that Palmerston must be hiding his true motives from his colleagues and from the country. His plan, therefore, was to by-pass Palmerston and place his case before Parliament and the British electorate.¹⁰⁶ Metternich, however, was mistaken. The motives which Palmerston avowed were his true ones, and before 1848

104. It. Prob., 16 - 24.

105. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 28, 24 February 1848: PRO FO 7/346.

106. It. Prob., 30 - 1, 42 - 3, and 69.

the British electorate broadly approved of his conduct.¹⁰⁷

At the beginning of 1848 Anglo-Austrian relations seemed to have reached an impasse. Both Metternich and Palmerston were convinced that the policy pursued by the other would lead to revolution. Even when revolution broke out in Sicily it did not cause either to reconsider his views. Each saw it as justifying the policy he had advocated.¹⁰⁸ Both felt that Anglo-Austrian relations could only improve if the other fell from power. Metternich expected Palmerston to be driven from the Foreign Office once public opinion was alerted to the dangerous policy he was pursuing. Palmerston hoped Metternich would be dismissed but he did not see how this could be achieved. He foresaw revolution in Italy, but not at Vienna.

There were no pressing disagreements between Britain and the two other Northern Powers. The rivalry of Britain and Russia over Turkey, which less than a decade later led to war, was in abeyance. The Tsar believed that the two countries had reached a satisfactory compromise in June 1844 when Aberdeen and Nesselrode had agreed that the policies of the two governments should be concerted if, despite their combined efforts to preserve it, the Turkish Empire collapsed. He did not realise that Russell's Government did not feel itself bound by this agreement.¹⁰⁹ On the whole, the British found Prussia the most acceptable of the Northern Powers. Frederick William's decision to establish a single Diet for the whole of Prussia was warmly approved as a step, albeit a hesitant and on its own inadequate step, in the right direction.¹¹⁰ But Prussia, like Russia, was closer to Austria than to Britain. On

107. DN, 28 and 31 August 1847, 1 - 2; The Times, 15 and 24 September 1847, 4; MC, 20 and 23 September 1847, 2; It. Prob., 33 - 5.

108. It. Prob., 61 - 2.

109. H. Temperley: England and the Near East: The Crimea (London 1936), 253 - 7.

110. The Times, 9 February 1847, 5; MC, 10 February 1847, 5; Bell, II, 5; F. Eyck: The Prince Consort: A Political Biography (London 1959), 70 - 4.

the major international issues - the Spanish Marriages, the annexation of Cracow, the unrest in Italy, and the Sonderbund crisis - the Northern Powers presented a united front.

The hostility of the Northern Courts towards Palmerston, because of his support for liberalism, did have its compensations. European liberals regarded him as their champion.¹¹¹ It is apparent, however, that like the continental governments most European liberals did not understand the conservatism implicit in Palmerston's support. Clinton Dawkins, the Consul General at Venice, told Aberdeen in November 1848 that the unrest at the beginning of the year had been "greatly encouraged" by the conduct of the British Government.

The inferences drawn from Ld. Palmerston's despatches, & from Lord Minto's language, . . . were most mischievous . . . England was looked upon as an open enemy to Austria, & a proportionate open friend to Lombardy . . .

It was not that Palmerston failed to explain his policy adequately. It was rather that the effect of his policy seemed to be the reverse of his avowed objectives. He claimed to support the European monarchies, and yet he wished to reduce their authority. He claimed he did not want to see Austrian power reduced, and yet he wanted to deprive her of her Italian possessions. He claimed he wanted to prevent revolution, and yet the encouragement he gave the European liberals seemed to increase unrest. No wonder continental statesmen were confused and viewed his activities with suspicion. Palmerston's answer to these charges was that the foundations of the autocratic regimes were essentially unsound and that major changes were needed before the whole edifice came tumbling down. The events of 1848 prove that, to some extent at least, Palmerston's judgement was correct. But it was much easier to see this at the end of the year than at the beginning.

111. Ridley, 451.

112. Dawkins to Aberdeen, 26 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43247 f23.

*

*

*

On 27 June 1846 Aberdeen gave Peel a brief description of the state of Britain's foreign relations:

The cordial understanding existing with France, prevails in reality, although not so ostentatiously, with all Europe. . . . Even Spain . . . was never more friendly. In the Levant, at no period was our influence ever greater,¹¹³ or exercised with more advantage to British interests.

Eighteen months later the situation was very different: "we are gradually becoming estranged from all our allies, as well as from France; and I do not see that we have any friends in Europe, except the Pope and the Sultan; in addition to the Radicals of all countries."¹¹⁴ Admittedly Aberdeen was a strong critic of Palmerston and the situation when Peel left office had not been as favourable as he described. But there is little doubt that during the first year and a half of Palmerston's third tenure of the Foreign Office Britain suffered several diplomatic setbacks. In December 1845 Lord Grey had predicted that Palmerston would find it difficult to work with continental governments. Events seemed to have proved him right. And yet, despite the failure of many of his policies, Palmerston's position in the Cabinet seemed secure.

iii) THE CABINET, THE COURT AND THE DIPLOMATS

Sir Charles Webster has said that Palmerston "had more opposition in the Cabinet than any other Foreign Minister of the nineteenth century except Canning in his first two years."¹¹⁵ Webster spoke of the period 1830 to 1841, but the statement is equally true of the period 1846 to 1851. Palmerston reacted by trying to establish his independence at the Foreign Office. He had more experience and

113. Aberdeen to Peel, 27 June 1846: *ibid* 40455 f376.

114. Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 17 November 1847: Jones Parry, I, 290.

115. Webster, I, 31.

a better grasp of the complexities of international affairs than his colleagues, and consequently he tended to regard criticism of his actions as ill-informed meddling.

In several respects, the rules for consulting the Cabinet about foreign affairs helped Palmerston to maintain his independence.¹¹⁶ All despatches received were kept in the Cabinet room where members of the Cabinet could peruse them at their leisure. Usually, however, ministers were too busy to sift their way through the mass of information that flowed into the Foreign Office. Palmerston circulated some despatches and private letters which he wanted his colleagues to read, but often these were selected to justify his own actions.¹¹⁷ In theory, policy decisions were hammered out by the whole Cabinet; in practice, meaningful contributions to the discussions could only be made by those ministers who were well-informed. In the Russell administration the lead in the discussions on foreign affairs was usually taken by Russell and Palmerston, with Clarendon, Grey, Hobhouse, Lansdowne, Minto and Wood making occasional contributions. All out-going despatches should have been approved by Russell and the Queen before they were sent, but this did not always happen.¹¹⁸ Members of the Cabinet rarely saw a despatch before it was sent.¹¹⁹ Private letters to British diplomats could also be used by Palmerston to keep information from his colleagues. Conversations with the Foreign Secretary were rarely more revealing. His manner was often friendly and conciliatory, even when faced with strong criticism. As a result, complained the Duke of Bedford, "he leaves an impression at variance with the fixed

116. There is no study of the Foreign Office during Palmerston's third tenure, but the evidence suggests that the rules for consulting the Cabinet and the Queen were the same as during the Grey and Melbourne administrations, for which see Middleton, 42 - 65.

117. Bullen, 64 - 6; Webster, I, 40 - 1.

118. See, for example, below pp. 33, 185, 274 and 313.

119. Bullen, 65 - 6.

purpose of his own mind."¹²⁰ Most members of the Cabinet, therefore, only knew what was generally known about foreign affairs and what Palmerston told them. But this did not prevent them having strong views about the objectives and conduct of British foreign policy.

It was known from the start that Russell's Cabinet was split. Prince Albert divided it into the "Grey Party", consisting of Lord Grey, Lord Clarendon, Sir George Grey and Sir Charles Wood, and a group, stigmatised by Grey as "old women", consisting of Lords Auckland, Lansdowne and Minto and Sir John Cam Hobhouse. Russell, the Prince judged, "leans entirely to the last named gentlemen"; Palmerston, if forced to make a choice, would "forget what passed in December last, and join the Grey Party".¹²¹ Whatever the value of this division with respect to domestic affairs, however, it would be wrong to regard it as an accurate assessment of the divisions on foreign affairs. Roger Bullen, having studied the period from June 1846 to February 1848, split the Cabinet into two groups on foreign affairs: the largest, consisting of Russell, Lansdowne, Clarendon and Minto, wanted to preserve a good understanding with France, but were unwilling to sacrifice British interests in order to achieve it and, despite some misgivings, on the whole they supported Palmerston in 1846 and 1847; the minority, led by Grey and Wood, thought Palmerston's policies unnecessarily quarrelsome, but, says Bullen, it had little impact on the formation of policy.¹²² This simple division is inadequate for 1848: the majority was less united than it had been, especially over

120. Bedford to Clarendon, 1 February 1849: Clar. P. Irish Box 4. Cf Hobhouse's Diary, 15 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f89.

121. Prince Albert's memorandum, 6 July 1846: QVL, II, 102. Lord Jocelyn, Palmerston's son-in-law, made a similar division, but he was probably more accurate when he placed Palmerston in the "anti-progress" party of Russell and Lansdowne (M.R.D. Foot and H.C.G. Matthew (eds.): The Gladstone Diaries (London 1968 - 1978), III, 555).

122. Bullen, 59 - 64.

Italy, and an examination of the Grey and Halifax papers, which Bullen did not use, reveals that Grey and Wood were more influential than Bullen suggests.

* * *

The person in the Cabinet who had the most influence on Palmerston's conduct of foreign affairs was the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell. In December 1845 Wood had assured Grey that he did not believe "you could have made any arrangement [at the Foreign Office] better than P. under Johnny's control."¹²³ Two years later it was apparent that the arrangement had not worked. Russell could not control Palmerston.

Part of the reason for Russell's failure was his preoccupation with other matters, especially the problems of Ireland. As early as August 1846 Charles Greville was told:

Lord John was well disposed to interfere in foreign affairs, and indeed as a Prime Minister ought in every department; but what he feared was that he would not find time, and that he would be overwhelmed with the multifarious functions that were heaped upon him, the endless correspondence, the innumerable deputations, and the attendance in the House of Commons . . .¹²⁴

But this was not the whole reason. There were several occasions which Russell could have used to assert his authority, yet he failed to do so. In February 1847, for example, Russell contradicted an injudicious and unauthorised threat Palmerston had made. But instead of using the incident to prevent a similar occurrence "he has done no more than stop this attempt, and has left everything to go on as it may."¹²⁵ Russell knew that his Government could not survive without Palmerston's support, and therefore he was careful not to take any step which might antagonise him. "John has exercised control to a certain extent," Bedford assured Clarendon early in 1849, "but

123. Wood to Grey, 27 December 1845: Grey P. 105/2.

124. GM, V, 417. Cf Bullen, 60.

125. GM, VI, 63 - 5.

not to the extent of quarrelling with him".¹²⁶ The longer Russell remained silent, however, the more independent Palmerston became and the less ready he was to accept Russell's interference. It was a vicious circle which Russell did not have the courage to break.

One of the principal people urging Russell to take Palmerston in hand was Queen Victoria. The Queen's complaints about Palmerston were a constant source of worry to Russell in 1848. She had a number of grievances, one of which was that Palmerston did not consult her about despatches until after they had been sent.¹²⁷ The Queen was extremely sensitive about this constitutional practice - she even complained to Aberdeen about his neglect in this respect¹²⁸ - and Palmerston was often remiss about consulting her. But it seems doubtful whether she would have been so determined, or Palmerston so neglectful, but for the fact that she disapproved strongly of the policies Palmerston was pursuing.

Between 1837 and 1841 the Queen's views on foreign affairs had been molded by Palmerston.¹²⁹ In October 1846 he still wrote of her as an "inexperienced honestminded open-hearted young woman".¹³⁰ But whilst Palmerston had been out of office the Queen, under the influence of Peel and Aberdeen, and especially of her beloved Albert, had changed.

The Queen had developed a great respect and liking for Aberdeen, preferring the moderate, conciliatory tone he took with other governments to the pugnacious attitude adopted by Palmerston. She was particularly happy about the entente cordiale, and according to Graham her attachment to Louis Philippe "amounts almost to a

126. Bedford to Clarendon, 1 February 1849: Clar. P. Irish Box 4.

127. See, for example, Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 17 April 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/350 (q QVL, II, 202).

128. Chamberlain, 298.

129. RvP, 23 - 9.

130. Palmerston to Russell, 6 October 1846: PRO 30/22/5D.

Passion."¹³¹ She and Prince Albert continued to discuss foreign affairs with Peel and Aberdeen after they left office.¹³² Palmerston's views differed widely from those of the Queen and he did not treat her with the respect she felt she deserved. But his position was undoubtedly made more difficult by the fact that one of her advisers was his strongest critic.

Prince Albert's influence over his wife was more pervasive. Greville observed that he had "become so identified with the Queen that they are one person, and . . . it is obvious that while she has the title he is really discharging the functions of the Sovereign."¹³³ The Prince took a close interest in foreign affairs, and kept up a private correspondence with several European monarchs. He had a deeply held belief in the rights of monarchs, and he was critical when he thought Palmerston attacked those rights.¹³⁴ His main interest, however, was with furthering the cause of German unity and constitutionalism and promoting the idea of a bloc of constitutional powers in central Europe, led by Germany and Britain, which would act as a barrier to both autocratic Russia and revolutionary France.¹³⁵ He stressed, however, that these constitutional reforms

must be of organic growth, and of national development, if they are to prosper and lead to the happiness of a people. Any stage in that development missed . . . is sure to lead to confusion, and to retard that very development which we

-
131. Graham to Peel, 4 September 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 40452 f161; C. Woodham-Smith: Queen Victoria: Her Life and Times 1819 - 1861 (London 1972), 239 - 52. Her admiration for Louis Philippe took a severe blow over the Spanish Marriages, but by November 1846 there were signs that she favoured a better understanding with France (RvP, 38 - 45).
132. Prince Albert to Aberdeen, 9 September, 16 October and 25 December 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 43046 ff84 - 6, 113 - 16 and 121 - 5; Gash, 673 - 5. The Whigs found this increasingly objectionable (Bedford to Clarendon, 4 February 1849: Clar. P. Irish Box 4).
133. GM, V, 329 - 30.
134. Eyck, Prince Consort, 41 - 53; RvP, 32 and 46 - 61.
135. Eyck, Prince Consort, 64 - 72; T. Martin: The Life of His Royal Highness The Prince Consort (London 1875 - 1880), II, 438 - 58.

desire.¹³⁶

It was on this ground that he disagreed with Palmerston. Palmerston's "hobby", he complained to his former tutor, was "to plunge States into constitutional reforms for which they have no inclination." This, he declared, citing the examples of Greece, Portugal and Spain, was "quite wrong".¹³⁷

It is doubtful whether the Queen fully understood her husband's views on constitutional reform. She judged the question in a more emotional light. Deeply conscious of the rights which she felt were due to a monarch, she thought Palmerston's attacks on the authority of her fellow monarchs were wrong in principle and dangerous in practice. She recognised the failings of other governments, but in her eyes change should only come from the top. There could be no excuse for revolution. "I maintain that Revolutions are always bad for the country, and the cause of untold misery to the people", she told Russell in August 1848. "Obedience to the laws & to the Sovereign, is obedience to a higher Power, divinely instituted for the good of the people, not of the Sovereign, who has equally duties & obligations."¹³⁸

This combination of the Prince's lengthy, reasoned arguments and the Queen's impassioned denunciations was a formidable obstacle for the Foreign Secretary. For his part, Palmerston thought that the Queen interfered too often in the affairs of the Foreign Office. "HRH seems . . . to have forgot that there is a responsible Secy. of State for Foreign Affairs," he noted at the top of one letter, "however I am not likely to forget".¹³⁹ But even he acknowledged

136. Prince Albert to Russell, 5 September 1847: Martin, II, 433.

137. Prince Albert to Stockmar, 2 September 1847: ibid, 426.

138. Queen Victoria's Journal, 6 August 1848: E. Longford: Victoria R.I. (London 1964), 197 - 8.

139. Note on Russell to Palmerston, 10 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/214.

that she had a right to have her views taken into consideration and sometimes he found them difficult to overcome. On such occasions he expressed "the greatest deference" to the views of the Queen and the Prince, "and then goes on in his own course without paying the least attention to what they have been saying to him."¹⁴⁰ He was encouraged in this by his wife who believed that the Queen "has not reflection or sense to feel the force" of her husband's arguments.¹⁴¹ The more the Queen opposed him, the more Palmerston resorted to deception. This made her increasingly angry. She poured out her feelings to Russell, who had the unenviable and ultimately impossible task of reconciling his indignant sovereign and her uncontrollable Foreign Secretary.

Russell realised that both Palmerston and the Queen were to blame for the poor relations between them. He agreed that the tone of some of Palmerston's despatches was objectionable, but, lamented his brother, he found it "impossible" to "alter the spirit in which he writes".¹⁴² He sympathised with the Queen's complaints that she was often not consulted until it was too late and he urged Palmerston to remember to show her despatches before they were sent; "but", he added on one occasion, "as I agree with you very constantly in opinion, my only wish is . . . [to] save the Queen anxiety, & me some trouble".¹⁴³ This was the crux of Russell's dilemma. He recognised that the Queen was sometimes justified when she charged Palmerston with ignoring constitutional practice. But on questions of policy, which lay behind her complaints, Russell usually agreed with Palmerston.

At a Cabinet on 10 May 1848 Russell read a memorandum on what

140. GM, VI, 81.

141. Lady Palmerston to Palmerston, n.d.: M. Countess of Airlie: Lady Palmerston and Her Times (London 1922), II, 122.

142. Bedford to Clarendon, 24 January 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 3.

143. Russell to Palmerston, 1 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/225 (q Walpole, II, 47).

he believed should be the principles of British foreign policy following the March revolutions. He began by dismissing the idea of the sanctity of treaties. The Napoleonic domination of Europe, he remarked, had been established by treaties "as sacred as that of 1815". Britain should not "proclaim the invalidity of the treaties of 1815", for that would encourage other Powers to seek changes, but at the same time should not "go on clinging to a wreck if a safe shore is within our reach." The balance of power, rather than the stipulations of the Vienna settlement, should be the basis for British calculations. Russell then turned to the major European issues confronting Britain. Austria, he declared confidently, "can hardly restore her sway in Italy." Therefore, in conjunction "tho' not in direct concert with France", Britain should use her influence "to produce a frank abandonment of Lombardy & Venice on the part of Austria." A quick settlement was desirable in order to avert French intervention, but it is evident that by a settlement Russell meant the removal of Austrian influence from Italy and not the restoration of peace at any price. His attitude towards the Schleswig-Holstein question was similar: Britain should try to settle the quarrel before it could escalate. Here, however, he does seem to have had any preconditions. With respect to Spain, he thought that Britain should continue to express her disapproval of the Montpensier marriage but should not attempt to gain a diplomatic victory. In conclusion, he declared:

It is in our interest to use our influence as speedily & as generally as possible to settle the pending questions, & to fix the boundaries of states. Otherwise if war once becomes general it will spread over Germany, reach Belgium, & finally sweep England into its vortex. . . . England cannot be indifferent to the supremacy of France over Germany & Italy; or to the advance of Russian armies to Constantinople. Still less to the incorporation of Belgium with a new French Empire.¹⁴⁴

144. Russell's memorandum, 10 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q Walpole, II, 40 - 2, where it is misdated). Cf Grey's Journal, 10 May 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

A comparison between this declaration of principles and the principles which Palmerston sought to pursue reveals a number of similarities. Russell's desire for a speedy restoration of peace and order in Europe was echoed by Palmerston. The necessity of preserving Belgian neutrality and of preventing French expansion across the Rhine and the Alps and Russian expansion towards Constantinople were keystones of Palmerston's policy. Palmerston never went so far as to say that the Vienna settlement was no longer binding on Europe, but he was prepared to countenance sizeable territorial changes. There were, however, two important differences. Russell wanted to drop Britain's quarrel with Spain, at least for the moment; Palmerston was determined to continue his anti-Spanish line.¹⁴⁵ The second difference is more subtle and should not be exaggerated. Russell seems to have favoured the cause of Italian unity and liberalism because he thought that it would be beneficial to the Italians; Palmerston favoured it because he thought it would assist the maintenance of the balance of power and therefore further Britain's interests. Russell was not blind to the claims of national self-interest, just as Palmerston did not ignore the moral claims of the Italians. But there was a difference in emphasis which seems to have made Russell less willing than Palmerston to compromise on the Italian question.

Russell's sympathy for the Italian cause was encouraged by his father-in-law Lord Minto, the Lord Privy Seal, and his brother-in-law Sir Ralph Abercromby, the British minister in Turin. Several members of the Cabinet had a justifiably low opinion of Minto's abilities - Wood, referring to Minto's mission to Italy, declared that he "was no use at home & might as well go abroad"¹⁴⁶ - but Russell placed a great deal of faith in his advice. Minto's journey through Italy

145. See below pp. 183 - 5 and 188.

146. Hobhouse's Diary, 28 January 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f76.

confirmed his enthusiasm for the Italian cause,¹⁴⁷ and upon his return to England he became one of the principle advocates of Sicilian independence. He wrote freely of his support to the Sicilian representatives in London,¹⁴⁸ probably unaware that they were regarded with suspicion and were under surveillance.¹⁴⁹ Abercromby's influence on Russell was probably less than that of Minto, but because of the position he held his views are important. He had great admiration for the Italian people, although he was doubtful about the good intentions of King Charles Albert of Sardinia, and was hostile to Austrian influence in the peninsula. He was also excessively suspicious of French intentions, especially after the February Revolution. Convinced that Italian liberalism and unity was beneficial to both Italy and Britain, he believed that the British Government should be firmer in its support.¹⁵⁰

It is difficult to quantify the influence of Minto and Abercromby on Russell. It is unlikely that they initiated his support for the cause of Italian liberalism, but it seems probable that their enthusiasm helped to make Russell over-optimistic about Italian affairs, and until July 1848 that over-optimism dominated the Cabinet's discussions on Italy.

* * *

Next to those of Palmerston and Russell, the most influential voices in the Cabinet on foreign affairs were those of Lord Lansdowne,

147. See Minto to Russell, 29 September, and 7 and 15 November 1847: PRO 30/22/6F and 30/22/6G (q LCJR, I, 312 - 17); It. Prob., 46 - 50.

148. See the letters from Scalia and Granatelli in N.L.S. Mss. 12084.

149. Reports on their movements can be found in PRO MEPO 2/43.

150. See Abercromby to Russell, 31 August 1847, and 22 February and 4 April 1848: PRO 30/22/6E, 30/22/7A and 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 308 - 9, 331 and 334 - 5).

Lord Clarendon,¹⁵¹ and Sir John Cam Hobhouse. The vastly experienced Lansdowne had the (occasionally embarrassing) task of defending Palmerston's conduct in the House of Lords. Clarendon, widely tipped as a possible replacement as Foreign Secretary,¹⁵² had served as minister to Spain for six years and upon entering the Cabinet had taken a prominent part in the opposition to Palmerston during the Mehemet Ali crisis.¹⁵³ Hobhouse, as President of the Board of Control, took a close interest in anything that affected the security of India. Outside the Cabinet this group had a skilled exponent of its views in the diarist and Clerk of the Privy Council Charles Greville. It was a loose group - only Clarendon and Greville seem to have been on particularly confidential terms - but it is distinguishable by the similarity of the views about Palmerston.

On the whole, before 1848 the Lansdowne-Clarendon group supported the foreign policy pursued by Palmerston. But they were not uncritical admirers. In private they disapproved of the language he sometimes used to other governments, regarding it as provocative and counter-productive. Palmerston "does some things so well", wrote Greville on one occasion, "that it is impossible not to regret that he does any ill, and it is both provoking & astounding that he overlooks the extreme importance of manner & tone".¹⁵⁴ During 1848 this group became less reticent in voicing its criticism. There was even an occasion when Lansdowne and Clarendon opposed Palmerston and Russell

151. Clarendon was only in the Cabinet until May 1847 when he went to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant. But he was kept well informed on affairs in the Cabinet and when in England he attended Cabinet meetings.

152. Grey's Journal, 18 December 1845: Grey P. C3/12; Queen Victoria's memorandum, 19 September 1848, and Russell to Queen Victoria, 22 January 1849: QVL, II, 232 and 250 - 1.

153. Maxwell, I, 67 - 218.

154. Greville to Normanby, 3 February 1848: Nor. P. O/498. Cf Hobhouse's Diary, 28 January 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f77; Clarendon to Reeve, 21 January 1848: Laughton, I, 192.

on a question of policy.¹⁵⁵ The group did not play a prominent part in forming British foreign policy, but the views it expressed, and especially those of Lansdowne and Clarendon, were often influential.

Almost as important as being a member of the Cabinet for influencing the formation of foreign policy was the post of ambassador to France. Indeed it was considered by some as equivalent to Cabinet rank.¹⁵⁶ In 1848 the position was held by the Marquis of Normanby, a prominent Whig politician. Under Lord Melbourne, Normanby had served as Lord Lieutenant in Ireland and at the Colonial and Home Offices, but until his appointment to the Paris embassy he had shown little interest in foreign affairs.¹⁵⁷ He subsequently claimed that he went to Paris because Russell wanted someone there who could "soften the prejudice felt against the departmental chief", but as Bullen remarks this seems unlikely.¹⁵⁸ The appointment was probably the result of Normanby's desire for a diplomatic post combined with the Government's wish to have someone it could trust in Paris. Whatever its origins, the choice was not as bad as at first sight it appeared.

In several respects Normanby's views on foreign affairs were similar to those of Clarendon and Lansdowne. He lamented Palmerston's abrasiveness, and criticised it even when writing to the Foreign Secretary.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, like Russell and Minto, he was an avowed partisan of the cause of Italian nationalism and liberalism. "Poor Italy", he

155. See below pp. 297 - 8.

156. Bullen, 71 - 2. Palmerston called the Paris embassy "the Key Stone of our Foreign Relations" (Palmerston to Normanby, 2 June 1848: Nor. P. P/20/38).

157. In 1839 he was mentioned as one of the members of the Cabinet with whom it was useless to discuss foreign affairs (Webster, I, 41) and his infrequent interventions during the Mehemet Ali crisis seem to have been distinctly unhelpful (Bourne, Palmerston, 593 and 602).

158. Bullen, 72 - 3.

159. See, for example, Normanby to Russell, 23 August 1846: PRO 30/22/5B (q LCJR, I, 115 - 16); Normanby to Palmerston, 20 January 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/99.

wrote in 1847, "I have an adopted son's interest in her fate."¹⁶⁰ His main concern, however, was of course Anglo-French relations. He arrived in Paris in July 1846 with the best intentions, but following the Spanish Marriages - a "most extraordinary piece of trickery"¹⁶¹ - he lost all trust in Louis Philippe and Guizot. In February 1848 he wrote that the King's "blarney" had "rather caught" Stratford Canning. "I know myself how difficult it is at first to believe that such obvious 'bonhomie' should mean nothing but to deceive."¹⁶² This distrust might be understandable, but it seems to have been carried to an extreme and does not excuse the manner in which Normanby consorted with Thiers and Molé.¹⁶³ It did, however, have its compensations. He was more tolerant towards the new Republic than might have been expected of such a proud aristocrat, and he worked well with such diverse characters as Lamartine, Bastide and Cavaignac. Normanby saw his task, with respect to the Republic, as assisting Lamartine and Cavaignac to pursue their moderate foreign policies and helping to prevent the latent Anglophobia, which he believed existed in France, breaking out. It was not an easy job. "I can assure you", he told Palmerston at the end of March, "I never knew a race that required such nice riding between wiging them too much or letting them have too much their own way".¹⁶⁴

Normanby had a number of defects as an ambassador. He was notoriously vain - Hobhouse remarked that if it was true that Lamartine was "one of the vainest of mortals, . . . he is well matched"¹⁶⁵ - and this made him susceptible to flattery. It is difficult to judge how

160. Normanby to Clarendon, 8 September 1847: Clar. P. Irish Box 20.

161. Normanby to Russell, 3 September 1846: PRO 30/22/5C (q LCJR, I, 116).

162. Normanby to Palmerston, 5 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/110.

163. Bullen, 191 - 4.

164. Normanby to Palmerston, 26 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/146.

165. Hobhouse's Diary, 29 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f108 (q Dorchester, VI, 206).

far Normanby was taken in by Lamartine's honeyed words, or even whether Lamartine sought to mislead him. But by June Normanby had lost much of his faith in Lamartine's promises.¹⁶⁶ A convinced constitutional monarchist and Free Trader, Normanby had little sympathy with the socialist republican aspirations of men like Louis Blanc, and this led him to misrepresent the motives and actions of an important section of the Provisional Government. Normanby's greatest drawback was the uncritical way in which he accepted information, especially if that information agreed with his own preconceptions. Louis Blanc's assertion that he was a retailer of "idle rumours and unsifted reports" who did not deign to discover what was really happening¹⁶⁷ is unfair, but not wholly without foundation. On the whole, however, Normanby performed his task well in 1848, defending British interests and keeping his Government well-informed.

*

*

*

Normanby was a trusted and reliable representative of the British Government. The same cannot be said of Lord Ponsonby, the British ambassador to Austria. Ponsonby went to Vienna determined to improve Anglo-Austrian relations. Once there he fell under the spell of Metternich and came to accept his hostile judgement of Palmerston.¹⁶⁸ The effect of this on Ponsonby's performance of his duty was disastrous. He ignored instructions if he thought they would damage Anglo-Austrian relations. The problem was exacerbated by the fact that Dietrichstein, the Austrian ambassador in London, was equally unreliable.¹⁶⁹ Ponsonby's

166. Normanby to Palmerston, 11 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/178.

167. L. Blanc: 1848. Historical Revelations: Inscribed to Lord Normanby New edn., (New York 1971), viii - ix.

168. According to one English visitor, Ponsonby listened to Metternich "as if to an oracle" (Marchioness of Londonderry (ed.): Letters from Benjamin Disraeli to Frances Anne Marchioness of Londonderry 1837 - 1861 (London 1938), 30).

169. It. Prob., 42 - 4.

short-comings were recognised in Foreign Office circles: "Really Ld. Ponsonby is too bad," Lord Eddisbury, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, complained on one occasion, "the language he holds & the conduct he pursues . . . make him appear rather the opponent than the servant of this govt."¹⁷⁰ But Palmerston's hands were tied. Because Ponsonby was a member of the extensive Grey family he could not be recalled without creating trouble in the Cabinet.

After the events of December 1845 Lord Grey was understandably reluctant to oppose Palmerston's conduct of foreign affairs. Besides, the demands of the Colonial Office gave him little time to inquire into the activities of other departments.¹⁷¹ The Spanish Marriages, however, could not but rekindle his interest. He had warned that Palmerston's return might lead to a quarrel with France, and he had been proved right. He discussed the question with Wood, and they concluded that although "the French have behaved very ill . . . P's conduct & still more his language to M. de Jarnac have been very imprudent".¹⁷² Wood began to sound out the rest of the Cabinet to see if they shared his doubts.¹⁷³ He received little encouragement, and in the end reported to Grey: "I do not see anything that Palmerston could have done otherwise than as he did."¹⁷⁴ Grey remained sceptical. He called Lord Stanley's criticism of Palmerston "rather severe" but deserved.¹⁷⁵ However without more support from his colleagues he dare not do anything.

Throughout 1847 Grey kept a wary eye on Palmerston's conduct,

170. Eddisbury to Normanby, 22 December 1848: Nor. P. 0/395. On another occasion Normanby asked that a sensitive despatch should not be communicated to Ponsonby as "he cannot keep anything from Metternich" (Normanby to Palmerston, 6 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/111).

171. Job, 407 - 10.

172. Grey's Journal, 15 September 1846: Grey P. C3/13.

173. Wood to Russell, 21 September 1846: PRO 30/22/5C; Wood to Grey, 27 September 1846: Grey P. 105/2.

174. Wood to Grey, 15 October 1846: Grey P. 105/2.

175. Grey's Journal, 19 January 1847: ibid C3/13.

but he only thought of acting on two occasions. The first concerned Palmerston's links with the Morning Chronicle. During the first week of February the Chronicle printed two violent attacks on Aberdeen and the governments of Austria and France,¹⁷⁶ and on the 12th it described certain "coarse and unwarrantable" insults which Normanby had received from Guizot.¹⁷⁷ Grey was alarmed by these provocative articles and suspected they were inspired by Palmerston.¹⁷⁸ He poured out his anger to Wood, who assured him that Russell was "very much displeased" with the Foreign Secretary.¹⁷⁹ The second occasion occurred in November when Grey complained in the Cabinet about the "system of meddling" in Spanish politics of Sir Henry Bulwer, the British minister in Madrid. "I expressed my opin. decidedly but cautiously", recorded Grey.¹⁸⁰ In themselves these incidents were of little importance, but they helped to confirm Grey's belief that Palmerston was an unsuitable Foreign Secretary.

The main cause of dispute between Palmerston and the "Grey Party" before 1848 was the question of National Defence. The state of Britain's defences had been troubling the military experts since the early 1840s, for the widespread introduction of steamships seemed to have caused a revolution in naval strategy. Peel's Government had discussed the matter, but little had been done because Aberdeen, anxious not to damage the entente cordiale, threatened to resign if the Cabinet agreed to a major increase in military expenditure.¹⁸¹ It was left to the Whigs to consider how best the south coast of England could be

176. MC, 1 and 4 February 1847, 4.

177. MC, 12 February 1847, 4. The "affaire Normanby" is discussed in Bullen, 185 - 94.

178. Grey's Journal, 12 February 1847: Grey P. C3/13. Palmerston had close links with the Chronicle (see below pp. 55 and 58), but on this occasion he seems to have been innocent (see Palmerston to Russell, 9 February 1847: PRO 30/22/6B; Bullen, 200).

179. Grey's Journal, 27 February and 2 March 1847: Grey P. C3/13.

180. Grey's Journal, 5 November 1847: ibid.

181. Chamberlain, 371 - 4; Gash, 517 - 25.

protected against a sudden attack by France. The whole of Russell's Cabinet recognised the inadequacy of the nation's defences. Where the members disagreed was over what improvements were needed and consequently how much should be spent.

Russell and Palmerston favoured a plan advocated by the Duke of Wellington for the formation of a 100,000 strong national militia, the former telling the Cabinet that he would resign rather than "leave the country a prey to any adventurous enemy".¹⁸² The "Grey Party" opposed the idea, initially on the grounds that it would "be very unpopular amongst the class of persons from whom we generally derive our support at elections"¹⁸³ and then, after the general election of 1847, on the grounds of expense.¹⁸⁴ By the beginning of 1848 attitudes on the two wings of the Cabinet had hardened: Palmerston admitted that the nation's finances were strained, but he declared that "almost any expedient to face the temporary Difficulty would be better than to proclaim to Europe that we are too poor & too much distressed to be able to defend the Country";¹⁸⁵ Wood, in contrast, wrote that the danger was "very much over-rated".¹⁸⁶ In the centre, opinion seems to have oscillated from one side to the other.¹⁸⁷ By this time, however, the debate was not confined to the Government.

On 4 January 1848 the Morning Chronicle published a letter from the Duke of Wellington to Sir John Burgoyne describing the inadequacies

182. Palmerston's memorandum, 10 April 1847: PRO 30/22/6C (q LCJR, I, 248 - 9); Hobhouse's Diary, 19 October 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f35 (q Dorchester, VI, 199).

183. Wood's memorandum, 21 March 1847: PRO 30/22/6B (q LCJR, I, 243).

184. Hobhouse's Diary, 19 October 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 ff35 - 7 (q Dorchester, VI, 199 - 200).

185. Palmerston to Russell, 18 January 1848: PRO 30/22/7A.

186. Wood's memorandum, 5 January 1848: ibid.

187. Contrast, for example, Hobhouse's Diary, 2 May 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43750 f33 ("I think they [the military experts] fear too much") and 19 October 1847: ibid 43751 f36 ("I remarked that . . . the danger was great & was imminent").

of Britain's defences.¹⁸⁸ There is no proof how the Chronicle obtained a copy of the letter,¹⁸⁹ but the fact that it was published in the Chronicle may mean that Palmerston had a hand in its publication. Palmerston believed that Parliament would vote the increased expenditure if told the truth.¹⁹⁰ He may have hoped to overcome the resistance in the Cabinet by arousing public opinion. If so, he miscalculated badly. The militia plan was attacked from all sides: Peelite newspapers doubted whether the French could launch a surprise attack, as Wellington assumed;¹⁹¹ Protectionist journals wanted increased spending on the navy, not a militia;¹⁹² whilst Cobden and the Radicals doubted Wellington's judgement and preached that a wider adoption of Free Trade would remove international rivalry and thus the need for large military expenditure.¹⁹³ The support from the Whig press¹⁹⁴ was largely lost amid the general doubt and ridicule.

On 1 February the Cabinet discussed the Budget. Wood announced that, as a result of the expenditure on Ireland and the Kaffir War, the Government was faced with a deficit of £3,200,000 which he thought should be met by making the 3% income tax permanent and having an extra 2% tax for two years. This, he calculated, would leave a surplus of £150 - 160,000. Nothing was said about a militia, except by Grey who remarked that "he had not yet seen a militia bill for which he

188. MC, 4 January 1848, 2.

189. All the Chronicle would say was that it had not received the letter from Wellington or Burgoyne (MC, 5 January 1848, 2).

190. Hobhouse's Diary, 19 October 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f36.

191. The Times, 7 and 11 January 1848, 4; The Economist, 8 and 29 January 1848, 32 - 3 and 116 - 17.

192. MH, 5 and 8 January 1848, 4; MP, 7 and 13 January 1848, 2 and 4; Quarterly Review, LXXXII, 453 - 83.

193. J. Bright and J.E. Thorold Rogers (eds.): Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden, M.P. (London 1870), I, 455 - 72; DN, 7 and 11 January 1848, 1 - 2; ILN, 8 January 1848, 1 - 2.

194. MC, 5 and 8 January 1848, 2; Spectator, 8 and 15 January 1848, 34 - 5 and 60 - 1. The Manchester Guardian had doubts, but on the whole supported the Government (MG, 8 and 22 January 1848, 6 - 7).

could vote."¹⁹⁵ The Cabinet on the 9th was more eventful. Russell, supported by Palmerston, declared that the surplus should be used to create a national militia. Wood retorted "that if we are to call out the militia even a five per cent income tax will be insufficient", whilst Hobhouse observed that there was a strong feeling in the country against any increase in military expenditure. "C. Wood stood his ground manfully," concluded Hobhouse, "Grey muttered & occasionally broke out vehemently." All in all, it had been "far from agreeable."¹⁹⁶

The reverberations of this Cabinet continued that evening. Grey thought "Id. J & Palmerston will upset the Govt. if they do not mind" and said as much to Hobhouse who "begged him to speak to Palmerston or Russell quietly & to say nothing in the Cabinet."¹⁹⁷ Lansdowne was also having doubts. "I cannot shut my eyes to all the difficulty of instantly proposing & carrying an Income Tax," he wrote to Russell. Any surplus, he argued, should be spent on Ireland and not on such a controversial issue as National Defence.¹⁹⁸ Palmerston, however, insisted that at least two-thirds of the surplus should be put aside for the militia. "If this cannot be agreed to," he warned, "I for one should be quite prepared to say that the government is unable to perform its Duty to the Country and ought to go out."¹⁹⁹ Over the next couple of days Russell and Wood worked out a compromise, and on the 12th the former gave the Cabinet the outlines of the Budget in which £150,000 was to be used to improve the existing militia system.²⁰⁰ Grey saw this as a triumph for his viewpoint: "I flatter myself I shall succeed yet in defeatg. any foolish scheme".²⁰¹

195. Hobhouse's Diary, 1 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 ff80 - 1.

196. Hobhouse's Diary, 9 February 1848: ibid ff83 - 5 (partly q Dorchester, VI, 201 - 2).

197. Grey's Journal, 9 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hobhouse's Diary, 9 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f86.

198. Lansdowne to Russell, 9 February 1848: PRO 30/22/7A.

199. Palmerston to Russell, 10 February 1848: ibid.

200. Hobhouse's Diary, 12 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f88.

201. Grey's Journal, 12 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

But Russell and Palmerston had greater reason for satisfaction: the Budget contained a proposal for increased military expenditure.

On 18 February Russell announced the Government's plans for increased taxation to a crowded House of Commons. He placed particular emphasis on the need to increase defence expenditure because of the alleged danger from across the Channel.²⁰² M.P.s on both sides of the House immediately attacked the Budget: Protectionists saw it as proof that Free Trade did not work;²⁰³ Radicals called the proposed increase in military expenditure unnecessary and provocative - it was, said Cobden, "an act calculated to irritate and exasperate" France.²⁰⁴ No Peelite spoke in the debate, but there were rumblings of disapproval from The Times and The Economist.²⁰⁵ Most disturbing of all for the Government was the criticism from some Whigs.²⁰⁶ On the 21st, in an attempt to appease the opposition, Wood offered to submit the military estimates to a select committee. The House rejected this. The proposal, noted Morpeth, "looked like a shirk."²⁰⁷ Three days later came news of the fall of Guizot.

The events in Paris attracted a great deal of public attention away from the burgeoning political crisis. The Budget was largely ignored as the newspapers described the revolution to their readers. The Government, however, still had to get the Budget through Parliament. Wood, checking his figures, discovered that the deficit would be less than he had originally calculated. He informed Peel, his financial mentor,²⁰⁸ that he planned to propose the extra 2% for only one

202. Hansard, XCVI, 900 - 26.

203. ibid., 935 - 42, 946 - 60 and 978 - 9. Cf MH, 19 and 21 February 1848, 4 - 5; MP, 21 February 1848, 4.

204. Hansard, XCVI, 926 - 9, 960 - 8 (Cobden), and 975 - 9. Cf DN, 19 and 21 February 1848, 1 - 2; ILN, 26 February 1848, 111 - 12.

205. The Times, 19 and 21 February 1848, 6 and 4; The Economist, 19 and 26 February 1848, 197 - 8 and 225 - 6.

206. Hansard, XCVI, 933 - 5 and 942 - 6; MG, 23 February 1848, 4.

207. Hansard, XCVI, 987 - 1019; Morpeth's Diary, 21 February 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f4.

208. J.B. Conacher: The Peelites and the Party System (Newton Abbot 1972), 41 - 4.

year.²⁰⁹ Peel replied that he did not think any increase would be a good idea.²¹⁰ Despite this, on the 28th Wood submitted this suggestion to the Cabinet. Russell answered that Graham, Cardwell and Gladstone would oppose any increase, that some Whigs would be hostile, and that with the opposition from the Protectionists and the Radicals it would be impossible to carry the increase. This, wrote Hobhouse, "settled the matter."²¹¹ That evening Wood introduced the new Budget, continuing the existing income tax for three years. It had a stormy passage - being attacked by the Radicals who clamoured for a reduction in military expenditure and by the Protectionists who continued to criticise Free Trade - but, supported by the Peelites, it was accepted.²¹² That morning Peel had warned that it was an unpropitious time to be making an important financial statement; "Men's minds are confounded with what is passing in France."²¹³ In the circumstances, Wood was probably grateful for that fact.

The defeat of the Budget was a grave setback for the Government. Not only did it have to abandon its defence plans, but also Parliament's confidence in its ability to handle public finance was severely shaken.²¹⁴ Russell's failure to judge the feelings of Parliament and the country was almost as culpable as Wood's miscalculation of the deficit. The affair, observed the normally sympathetic Manchester Guardian, had been "a succession of serious blunders."²¹⁵ Yet, in a perverse way, the Government's defeat demonstrated its strength as well as its weakness. There were repeated rumours that the Government might be forced to resign.²¹⁶ Charles Greville thought this unlikely.

209. Wood to Peel, copy, 26 February 1848: Hal. P. A4/122.

210. Peel to Wood, 26 February 1848: ibid.

211. Hobhouse's Diary, 28 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 ff102 - 3.

212. Hansard, XCVI, 1392 - 1450.

213. Peel to Wood, 10 a.m. 28 February 1848: Hal. P. A4/122.

214. Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 106.

215. MG, 1 March 1848, 4.

216. Grey's Journal, 25 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hobhouse's Diary, 26 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 ff 95 - 6 (q Dorchester, VI, 203); GM, VI, 131 - 2.

The Whigs, he wrote on the 20th, were "the only possible Government." Neither the Protectionists nor the Peelites were ready to form an administration on their own, and their differences were too great to form one together. "This is, in truth, the great security which the present Government has for keeping office. If they are defeated, and offer to resign, no other Government will be found possible, and they will be forced to stay in".²¹⁷

iv) PARLIAMENT, THE PRESS AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On 22 January 1848 The Times predicted that the Government's conduct of foreign affairs would not attract much attention in the House of Commons during the coming session.²¹⁸ Three weeks later Lord Redesdale, a leading Protectionist, wrote that he thought that there was little advantage to be gained from attacking Palmerston.²¹⁹ The events of 1848 proved The Times and Redesdale wrong: there were important debates on Spain, Schleswig-Holstein and Italy. And yet, given the scale of the events on the continent and the controversial nature of some of Palmerston's actions, there was a marked reluctance to discuss foreign affairs. This reluctance does not indicate a lack of interest among M.P.s or widespread support for the Government's conduct. Rather it was symptomatic of a desire not to disturb the Parliamentary balance.

Precise figures for the number of supporters each party in the Commons had after the general election of August 1847 are in dispute. F.A. Dreyer has calculated that the Government had between 324 and 336 supporters, fifty more than before the election, the Peelites between 85 and 117, and the Protectionists about 200. The Government's

217. GM, VI, 132 - 3.

218. The Times, 22 January 1848, 6.

219. Redesdale to Stanley, 11 February 1848: Der. P. Box 149/6.

majority, however, was dependent on the Radicals and the Irish Repealers, the proportion of whom had increased and who in 1848 were showing increasing signs of independence.²²⁰ On questions of law and order in Ireland, the Government could usually rely on the support of the Protectionists and the Peelites. On questions of Free Trade, it could expect the support of the Peelites and the Radicals. On questions of foreign policy, however, its position was vulnerable, as the Protectionists, the Peelites and the Radicals had their own strong views on Palmerston's conduct. Neither the Protectionists nor the Peelites wished to bring down the Government. The anxiety of both to prevent the other gaining power was greater than the hostility of either towards the Whigs.²²¹ But a reunion of the Conservative Party was always a possibility, and an issue which could have precipitated the reunification was Palmerston's handling of foreign affairs.

* * *

The three elder statesmen of the Peelites - Sir Robert Peel, Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham - held strong views on Palmerston's conduct. The younger generation of leaders showed less interest. Gladstone's correspondence and diary for 1848 contain very few references to foreign affairs. He spoke only once in Parliament on foreign, as distinct from colonial, affairs when he opposed the diplomatic relations with Rome bill on religious grounds.²²²

The most authoritative of the Peelite voices on foreign affairs was that of Aberdeen, the former Foreign Secretary. Aberdeen was

220. Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 99 - 103. The Morning Herald estimated that of the 328 M.P.s who would usually support the Government, 108 were Repealers, Radicals or Dissenters (MH, 25 August 1847, 5).

221. For the relations between the Protectionists and the Peelites before 1848 see Conacher, 17 - 28 and 34 - 5; Stewart, 81 - 121.

222. Hansard, CI, 229 - 33. Although Gladstone played an important rôle in Parliament and began to show a flair for financial affairs, during 1848 he seems to have been preoccupied with private problems (R. Shannon: Gladstone. I 1809 - 1865 (London 1982), 202 - 13).

also the most critical of Palmerston. He regarded the Spanish Marriages as a breach of the agreement reached at Eu and a "heavy blow" to the entente cordiale.²²³ But he was equally critical of the British Government's response, which he felt was exaggerated and ill-founded.²²⁴ Towards the end of the year this criticism became embroiled in a bitter feud with Palmerston. He resented the attacks on himself in the Morning Chronicle and blamed them on Palmerston.²²⁵ Aberdeen's disapproval of Palmerston was enhanced by his lack of sympathy for the liberal movements in Europe. He thought the behaviour of the inhabitants of Cracow "so scandalous as to justify any severity."²²⁶ His views on Italy were equally uncompromising. He did not trust the Pope and, despite the occupation of Ferrara, thought the fears of Austrian intervention in Papal reforms "mere invention". Italian unification was "an impracticable dream" which, if accomplished, "would be of very doubtful advantage." Britain, he felt, should join France in urging the Pope to moderate his attitudes and actions. Unfortunately, because of Palmerston's hostility towards Louis Philippe and Guizot, this was impossible. "The fundamental principle of our policy," he lamented, ". . . is a blind hatred of France, or rather the French Government, which nothing can abate, and which is seen in every quarter."²²⁷ In Aberdeen's opinion, the collapse of the entente cordiale was a serious setback to the cause of moderate reform in Europe, and it was a setback which he came increasingly to blame on Palmerston.

Neither Peel nor Graham fully shared Aberdeen's views on foreign affairs. Whilst Prime Minister, Peel had been far more suspicious

223. Aberdeen to Peel, 21 September 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 40455 ff388 - 91.

224. Aberdeen to Peel, 3 September and 27 November 1846: ibid ff392 and 396.

225. Aberdeen to Peel, 4 December 1846: ibid f405; GM, VI, 53.

226. Aberdeen to Peel, 2 December 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 40455 f404.

227. Aberdeen to Peel, 28 September 1847: ibid ff445 - 6.

of France than Aberdeen.²²⁸ The Spanish Marriages strengthened this feeling.²²⁹ Like Aberdeen, he had little sympathy for the continental liberals. But he was not uncritical of the Northern Courts: he called the annexation of Cracow "sheer folly",²³⁰ and felt that Austria would make "a great mistake" if she interfered in the domestic affairs of the Italian states, "however threatening they may be."²³¹ Peel felt that unrest on the continent could be appeased if reforms were made. The February Revolution, he wrote in October, could have been prevented if Guizot had been willing to make changes.²³² It was the typical Conservative reaction to all agitation for reform: give a little in order to preserve the whole. In Aberdeen's eyes, however, the failure of Peel to support the policy of repression pursued by Guizot and other continental statesmen indicated an inadequate comprehension of the dangers facing Europe. "I think you have looked at the subject with rather too much of an English view", he replied. The choice in France had not been between two parties who wished to uphold the principles of the existing constitution, but between one which wanted to overthrow the monarchy and another which wanted to sustain it. In such circumstances, it was Britain's duty to support the latter.²³³

Graham did not share Aberdeen's intense suspicion of European liberalism and was alarmed about what he saw as Aberdeen's increasing reactionary tendencies. He told Greville in May 1848 that "these times of universal revolution were unsuitable to the genius and taste of Aberdeen". He had been an "excellent" Foreign Secretary under Peel; "but now the scholar of Castlereagh, whose inclinations all

228. Gash, 496 - 517.

229. Peel to Aberdeen, 22 September and 21 November 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff213 and 247 - 8.

230. Peel to Aberdeen, 21 November 1846: ibid f244.

231. Peel to Aberdeen, 22 September 1847: ibid f332.

232. Peel to Aberdeen, 25 October 1848: ibid ff339 - 42.

233. Aberdeen to Peel, 2 November 1848: ibid 40455 f453.

lay towards Metternich and Guizot, was disgusted and disheartened at the spectacle Europe presented."²³⁴ His criticism of Aberdeen, however, did not mean that he approved of Palmerston's conduct. He blamed him to some extent for the collapse of the entente cordiale and was disturbed by his hostility towards the Northern Courts. "If Palmerston remain much longer Foreign Minister", he wrote in August 1847, "we shall not have a Cordial Friend in Europe."²³⁵ The events of 1848 reinforced these doubts. One of the reasons he gave for refusing the Admiralty in January 1849 was that he could not condone Palmerston's conduct of foreign affairs.²³⁶ Graham was to some extent drawn back to the Whigs by the unrest in Europe; Aberdeen was driven away from them. Peel maintained a position between the two, but his disapproval of Palmerston made him lean towards the latter.

Peel, Aberdeen and Graham disapproved of Palmerston's conduct in 1848, but they did not publicise their views. Their followers in Parliament were equally reticent. The Peelite newspapers were more forthcoming. In theory, it is wrong to speak of a newspaper with a political label, for most papers asserted their political independence. In practice, the political links could be very strong. At the end of 1846 Palmerston claimed that he had "no power of exercising any detailed control over the language and opinions" of the Morning Chronicle,²³⁷ but at the time he made this assertion the leading articles on foreign affairs in the Chronicle reflected his views and some were even drafted by him. Nor was Palmerston alone in manipulating the press: Aberdeen's

234. GM, VI, 180.

235. Graham to Aberdeen, 6 August 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43190 f190. Cf Graham to Aberdeen, 1 December 1846 and 3 January 1847: ibid ff179 - 80 and 183 - 6.

236. Graham to Peel, 12 January 1849: ibid 40452 f312 (q C.S. Parker: Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby, P.C., G.C.B., 1792 - 1861 (London 1907), II, 73); GM, VI, 269 and 271.

237. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 14 December 1846: RvP, 51 - 2.

views were reflected in The Times; Disraeli had close ties with the Morning Post; and the Daily News was established for the specific purpose of propagating the Free Trade viewpoint.²³⁸ And this political influence was for a specific reason: to persuade the electorate to favour a particular policy or a particular politician.

In April 1847 Russell and Clarendon discussed whether public opinion could be mobilised on a question of foreign policy. They agreed "that this, although difficult, might be possible if the Government and the press acted together".²³⁹ Before 1848, however, the major foreign policy questions did not excite the mass of the British public. During the last third of 1846 the Spanish Marriages and their consequences received copious coverage in the leading daily newspapers. But, as John Bright observed, "there hardly could be a question of foreign politics in which the people here have taken less interest".²⁴⁰ Newspaper editors and owners were wary of emphasising a subject in which their readers had little interest. Feargus O'Connor, for example, decided that "not more than 1 col[umn] shall be devoted to foreign news" in the Chartist Northern Star, observing that "much & very just complaint is made of so much space being devoted to matters in which the Star readers and English people take not the slightest interest".²⁴¹ Interest in European affairs did increase in 1848, as was witnessed at the Chartist meetings, for the events on the continent gripped the public imagination, but there seems to have been no attempt to mobilise "public opinion" either in defence or

238. For the Daily News see H.R. Fox Bourne: English Newspapers: Chapters in the History of Journalism (London 1887), II, 140 - 51; S. Koss: The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: Volume One: The Nineteenth Century (London 1981), 94 - 6. For Palmerston, Aberdeen and Disraeli see below pp. 57, 58 - 9 and 60 - 1.

239. Clarendon to Reeve, 1 April 1847: Laughton, I, 184 - 5.

240. Bright to Cobden, 29 November 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 43383 f176.

241. O'Connor to Harney, 4 January 1848: F.G. Black and R.M. Black (eds.): The Harney Papers (Assen 1969), 61 - 2.

in opposition to the Government's policies. The detailed arguments in the press, therefore, were not directed so much at the mass of the people but at the electorate, and in particular the leaders of society, through whom the newspapers and their supporters hoped to influence M.P.s and thereby the Government. For this purpose, as important as the views expressed was where those views appeared, and in this respect the columns of The Times were the optimum place.

The predominance of The Times over other newspapers in mid-nineteenth century Britain was phenomenal. According to Kingsley Martin, in 1852 The Times had a daily circulation of 40,000 whereas its nearest rival sold only 7,000 copies.²⁴² Russell's Government recognised its importance - Clarendon declared that he did not "care a straw what any other newspaper thinks or says"²⁴³ - and, through Clarendon, Greville and Wood, it managed to influence some of its leading articles.²⁴⁴ But The Times remained primarily Peelite in its opinions, especially in the sphere of foreign affairs, and John Delane, the editor, was a close friend of Aberdeen. Palmerston, observed Greville, found the paper "the most troublesome, & most formidable antagonist he has to compete with."²⁴⁵

Palmerston's return to the Foreign Office received a cautious welcome from The Times. Contrasting the peaceful state of Britain's foreign relations with the numerous disputes Aberdeen had inherited, it declared its hope that Palmerston would continue his predecessor's policy of assisting "the maintenance of peace and the advancement of the great cause of human improvement" without increasing "the humiliation or jealousy" of other states.²⁴⁶ Seven months later such

242. Kingsley Martin, 86.

243. Clarendon to Reeve, 18 June 1848: The Times: The History of The Times: The Tradition Established 1841 - 1884 (London 1939), 92.

244. *ibid*, 100 - 3; Clarendon to Russell, 4 June 1847: PRO 30/22/6D.

245. Greville to Clarendon, 26 January 1848: Clar. P. Box c521; History of The Times, 92 - 100.

246. The Times, 29 June 1846, 4.

hopes had vanished. Palmerston's policies, it declared, responding to the attacks on Aberdeen in the Morning Chronicle, "produce the results to which he is most opposed as infallibly as if he connived at them."²⁴⁷ Continental governments, it remarked a year later, regarded Palmerston as "the enemy of all established Governments and the friend of all popular insurrections". No British Foreign Secretary, it declared, should be guilty of such a charge, but it carefully refrained from saying that Palmerston was innocent of it.²⁴⁸ The Times professed much sympathy with the continental liberals, but it was becoming alarmed for the future of Europe. Reform seemed to be being replaced by revolution. Its cautious response to the news of the Sicilian revolution reflects its growing doubts.²⁴⁹ Europe, The Times believed, was in increasing danger and Palmerston's policies seemed to be exacerbating the problem.

Before 1848 Palmerston had a useful ally in his fight against The Times in the Morning Chronicle, which was owned by Sir John Easthope. In February 1848, however, Easthope, angered by the Whig attempts to gain the support of The Times, gave up trying to make the Chronicle profitable and sold it to three Peelites led by Lord Lincoln.²⁵⁰ Greville heard that the new owners intended that the Chronicle should support the Government, but within a few days he noted its hostile tone.²⁵¹ Clarendon found Lincoln's policy incomprehensible, for not only did the Chronicle attack the Whigs, the Radicals and the Protectionists, but it also criticised Peel. "I know they are angry with Peel", he wrote to his brother-in-law, ". . . but they are acting

247. ibid, 5 February 1847, 5.

248. ibid, 22 January 1848, 6.

249. ibid, 28 January and 1 and 11 February 1848, 4 - 5.

250. Bullen, 29 - 37; Koss, 74 - 7 and 86 - 7.

251. GM, VI, 131.

as if they mean to isolate themselves."²⁵² On questions of foreign policy, however, the differences between The Times and the Morning Chronicle were slight. The two papers, for a long time bitter rivals, were now combined in their opposition to Palmerston. To make matters worse for the Foreign Secretary, following the sale of the Chronicle he no longer had a leading newspaper to put across his views. The Manchester Guardian often supported him, but it was careful to maintain its independence.²⁵³ The other two well-established daily newspapers, the Morning Herald and the Morning Post, were controlled by the Protectionists.

* * *

The Protectionist Party at the beginning of 1848 was in some confusion. In the Lords, it was in the capable hands of Lord Stanley, the acknowledged head of the party. In the Commons, it was leaderless. Lord George Bentinck had resigned because he could no longer command the support and respect of the majority of Protectionists. His obvious successor was Benjamin Disraeli, but Disraeli was unacceptable to many in the party and the choice fell on Lord Granby who quickly decided that he was not up to the job.²⁵⁴ As a result, the Protectionists went through the session of 1848 without a recognised leader in the Commons. In such circumstances, Disraeli's oratorical brilliance

-
252. Clarendon to Lewis, 2 July 1848: Clar. P. Box c532. The younger Peelites disapproved of Peel's constant support for the Whigs and favoured a reunion with the Protectionists, and used the Chronicle to express their views. Their loyalty to Peel prevented a schism, but in June they staged a minor rebellion against his leadership when they voted with the Protectionists against the Government's Sugar Bill (Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 112 - 18).
253. D. Ayerst: Guardian: Biography of a Newspaper (London 1971), 105. Soon after the sale of the Chronicle Palmerston tried to recruit The Times to his cause, but the overture was rebuffed by Delane (Greville to Clarendon, 24 February 1848: Clar. P. Box c521; History of The Times, 239).
254. Blake, 261 - 2; Jones, 121 - 6 and 130 - 1; Stewart, 122 - 8. "D'Israeli," declared Stanley when the problem arose again, "with all his talents, is out of the question" (Stanley to Beresford, copy, 10 December 1848: Der. P. Box 178/1).

brought him to the fore. "Let the National Club fret & whine as it may", Lord John Manners wrote to his friend, "- yours must be the guiding spirit in any new government that can be formed on old world principles."²⁵⁵ But what seemed obvious to Manners was not equally so to the more reactionary rank and file. Disraeli's caustic wit was admired, especially when directed against Peel, but it caused many to distrust him. Consequently he spent much of 1848 uncertain of his own position and future in the Protectionist Party.

At first sight, the attitude of the Protectionists towards foreign affairs before 1848 seems to lack consistency. This is best seen by the differing opinions expressed by the Morning Post and the Morning Herald: the Post condemned the Spanish Marriages, the Herald declared that there was nothing to worry about;²⁵⁶ the Post applauded the annexation of Cracow, the Herald condemned the "crime";²⁵⁷ the Post called the Pope's reforms "crude" and "ridiculous" and opposed any British attempt "to sustain a Quixotic priest", the Herald supported the Pope and urged the Austrians to follow his "wise and enlightened course";²⁵⁸ the Post condemned the Sicilian revolution, the Herald cautiously welcomed it.²⁵⁹ These differences represented the views of the two factions within the Protectionists: the Morning Post was sympathetic towards Bentinck and Disraeli, the latter being an occasional contributor; the Morning Herald was under the influence of Beresford and Newdegate and was usually fiercely Protestant.²⁶⁰ Bentinck and Disraeli were noted for the violence of their opinions, and the Post

255. Manners to Disraeli, 12 March 1848: Dis. P. B/XX/M/27.

256. MP, 4 September and 12 October 1846, 4; MH, 4 and 17 September 1846, 4.

257. MP, 23 November 1846, 4; MH, 24 November 1846, 4.

258. MP, 21 September 1846 and 27 August 1847, 2; MH, 2 September 1846 and 10 September 1847, 4. The Herald's support for the Pope is rather surprising as it was usually strongly anti-Catholic.

259. MP, 29 January and 1 February 1848, 4; MH, 7 and 10 February 1848, 4.

260. W. Hindle: The Morning Post 1772 - 1937: Portrait of a Newspaper (London 1937), 177 - 8; Koss, 78 and 83; Stewart, 90 - 1.

reflected this. The majority in the party, represented by the Herald, were more cautious although not necessarily less extreme. But it would be wrong to exaggerate the differences, especially on foreign affairs. Both were anxious to preserve the existing European system. Where they disagreed before 1848 was over how this could best be achieved.

Whatever they felt about the state of Europe, the Post and the Herald were relatively united about what they thought British policy should be. Britain should use her "moral influence" to help settle disputes, but except where her vital strategic interests were affected she should never interfere directly. Nor should she ally herself with any continental Power, as Disraeli explained early in 1847. He had often heard, he said, that peace could only be maintained either by a "cordial understanding" between Britain and France or by a "secret understanding" between Britain and Russia. He disagreed. Peace, he proclaimed,

could be maintained by England alone, if she understood her position, and did not underrate her power. . . . England held the balance, and if she was conscious of her position, and exercised her influence with firmness and discretion, she might obtain and enjoy the blessings of peace, and hand them down to posterity, better than with partial alliances with either of the rival Powers, by a good understanding and generous friendship with both.²⁶¹

These were similar sentiments to those of "no perpetual enemies" and "no eternal allies" subsequently expressed by Palmerston. Indeed Disraeli began his speech by saying that he could find no fault with the principles avowed by the Foreign Secretary.²⁶² Where the Protectionists criticised Palmerston was on the grounds that he did not stick to the policy he professed. Moreover, when he did intervene or complain, he did so

261. Hansard, LXXXIX, 156. Cf W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle: The Life of Benjamin Disraeli Earl of Beaconsfield (London 1910 - 1920), III, 186 - 7.

262. Hansard, LXXXIX, 149.

to little effect²⁶³ and, even worse, in their eyes he usually favoured the wrong side.²⁶⁴ They felt that if Palmerston insisted on meddling, he should at least do so effectively and without damaging Britain's reputation.

Before 1848 the attitude of the Protectionists towards specific questions of foreign policy had been uncertain and unco-ordinated, as might be expected from the party's divided leadership and its preoccupation with domestic issues. The revolutions of that year focussed attention on Britain's foreign policy and united the party in defence of the status quo. Stanley in the Lords and Disraeli in the Commons led the attack on Palmerston with the cry of non-intervention.

* * *

The policy of non-intervention was also that advocated by Richard Cobden and John Bright. In private Cobden and Bright lamented the interest which the British Government took in the affairs of other countries. Britain's "true policy is isolation", wrote Bright. "Our duty is to get rich & to mind our own business".²⁶⁵ But despite this feeling, the Manchester School of Radicals, led by Cobden and Bright, took a keen interest in foreign affairs, arguing that a wider adoption of Free Trade principles would remove international rivalry and thereby abolish war. Early in 1846 Cobden declared:

I see in the Free-Trade principle that which shall act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation in the universe, - drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonism of race, and creed,²⁶⁶ and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace.

Cobden disapproved strongly of Palmerston. Whilst he strove to improve relations between nations, the Foreign Secretary's "brusque manner

263. MH, 22 January 1847, 4.

264. MP, 24 August 1847, 4.

265. Bright to Cobden, 29 November 1846: B.L. Add. Mss. 43383 f176. Cf Cobden to Bright, 18 September 1847: ibid 43649 f70; DN, 2 October 1846, 2.

266. Cobden's Speeches, I, 362 (q Bourne, Victorian England, 269).

of treating national relationships . . . [was] very prejudicial to those ideas of friendly intercourse which are beginning to spread among every civilized people."²⁶⁷

The majority of Radical M.P.s did not share the Manchester School's view of Palmerston. Some were even more critical of him - David Urquhart entered Parliament intent on proving that Palmerston was betraying the country to the Russians.²⁶⁸ Most, however, approved of Palmerston's foreign policy. The Daily News and the Illustrated London News welcomed his return to the Foreign Office.²⁶⁹ His support for European liberals was echoed in their leading articles.²⁷⁰ Cobden bemoaned this tendency. He saw "nothing to object to" in the Daily News, he told Bright towards the end of 1848, "unless it be a proneness to the old tone of foreign policy, & a disposition to back Lord Palmerston in his intermeddling propensities."²⁷¹ Much of this support, however, was based on a misconception of Palmerston's attitude. Many Radicals assumed from Palmerston's language that he was a firmer friend of liberalism than in fact he was. And this could have its drawbacks. In June 1847 the Government's fate seemed in doubt when the Radicals thought of voting against its Portuguese policy (which they thought was too "reactionary") in conjunction with the Protectionists (who thought the policy too "liberal"). There was widespread relief in Government circles when the Radicals called off the attack at the last moment.²⁷²

267. Cobden to Bright, 18 January 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43649 f69.

268. M.H. Jenks: "The Activities and Influence of David Urquhart 1833 - 56, with Special Reference to the Affairs of the Near East" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London 1964, 172 - 274.

269. DN, 2 July 1846, 1; ILN, 4 July 1846, 23.

270. DN, 5 September and 30 November 1846, 28 July and 2 August 1847, 2; ILN, 28 November 1846 and 18 September 1847, 336 - 7 and 177 - 8.

271. Cobden to Bright, 1 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43649 ff84 - 5. By 1850 Cobden was convinced that the paper was under Palmerston's control (Koss, 100).

272. Grey's Journal, 14 June 1847: Grey P. C3/13; Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 93.

On the fringes of radicalism was the Chartist movement. The Chartists had only one M.P., Feargus O'Connor, but their demand for electoral reform struck a responsive chord with many Radicals. In retrospect, it is possible to see that at the beginning of 1848 Chartism was doomed. The movement was deeply divided, between the Moral Force Chartists who disapproved of violence and the Physical Force Chartists who were prepared to resort to it, and much of its energy was absorbed in O'Connor's fruitless Land Plan.²⁷³ At the time, however, Chartism seemed to be undergoing a revival. "Bad trade", declared O'Connor's Northern Star, the leading Chartist newspaper, "has brought not a few of the electoral class to their senses".²⁷⁴ It seemed clear that Chartism would be a potent force in 1848.

An influential section of the Chartist leadership took a close interest in foreign affairs, and more particularly in the continental revolutionary societies. George Julian Harney played a prominent part in the Fraternal Democrats, a society in which Physical Force Chartists and foreign (largely German) exiles met every month to discuss how the cause of international brotherhood could best be furthered.²⁷⁵ Another such society was the People's International League, which was led by William Lovett and Thomas Cooper and which had Mazzini as its "great source of inspiration."²⁷⁶ The rivalry of the two societies was intense, but their attitude towards Palmerston was similar. They accused him of bullying small countries and being cowardly towards the major Powers, especially Russia.²⁷⁷ The Northern Star thought the liberal advice

273. D. Read and E. Glasgow: Feargus O'Connor: Irishman and Chartist (London 1961), 108 - 17; A.R. Schoyen: The Chartist Challenge: A Portrait of George Julian Harney (London 1958), 146 - 9; P.W. Slosson: The Decline of the Chartist Movement (New York 1916), 94 - 5.

274. Northern Star, 1 January 1848, 1.

275. H. Weisser: British Working-class movements and Europe (Manchester 1975), 125 - 40.

276. ibid, 154 - 63; T. Cooper: The Life of Thomas Cooper (London 1872), 299.

277. Weisser, 96 - 7 and 173 - 5.

he gave other countries "remarkably good", but that because he was so conservative at home he was not the person to give it. "We are involuntarily reminded", declared the Star, "of the old proverb of Satan reproving sin."²⁷⁸

It is easy to exaggerate the interest the Chartists took in foreign affairs before 1848. The Northern Star printed accounts of full halls and rapturously received speeches when describing meetings of the Fraternal Democrats. But, as Henry Weisser has shown, such descriptions owed much to the fertile imagination of Harney.²⁷⁹ Some European issues were extremely popular: there was a keen interest in events in France, the acknowledged centre of revolutionary activity, and in the cause of Polish independence.²⁸⁰ But, before 1848, Chartist interest in Europe had been at its least when the movement had been at its height. At these times, the chances of domestic success seemed to preclude any other interest.²⁸¹ Conversely, when the movement was in the doldrums European affairs seemed to offer an encouraging diversion. Events on the continent were looked upon as examples or warnings from which the Chartists could learn in order to further their cause. Interest in Europe for its own sake was confined to a small minority.

Whilst interest in Europe among Chartists was small, among the Irish Repealers it was negligible.²⁸² They were preoccupied by the enormous problems facing Ireland as a result of the Famine. Like the Chartist movement, the Repeal movement was riven by internal differences. The first split came in January 1847 when a group known as Young Ireland

278. Northern Star, 29 April 1848, 4.

279. Weisser, 132 - 4.

280. ibid, 4 - 5 and 118 - 25; S. MacCoby: English Radicalism 1832 - 1852 (London 1935), 366 - 76.

281. Slosson, 200; Weisser, 84 - 99.

282. For details of the Repeal movement see Sir C.G. Duffy: Four Years of Irish History 1845 - 1849 (London 1883); D. Gwynn: Young Ireland and 1848 (Cork 1949), 32 - 154; Nowlan, passim. For the Famine see C. Woodham-Smith: The Great Hunger. Ireland 1845 - 9 (London 1962).

left the Repeal Association to form the Irish Confederation. The Young Irelanders, led by the M.P. William Smith O'Brien and the editor of the Nation Charles Gavan Duffy, felt that they could no longer accept O'Connell's insistence that Repeal must be gained by non-violent means. They did not advocate an immediate recourse to arms, for they recognised that Ireland was not yet ready for a rebellion, but they believed that it should not be precluded. By the autumn a rift had developed in the Confederation. A small group, led by John Mitchel, urged that there should be an immediate rising, arguing that because of the ravages of the Famine the Irish people could not afford to wait. On 7 February 1848 Mitchel and his supporters were expelled from the Confederation. They established their own newspaper, the United Irishman, through which they hoped to provoke a clash with the authorities.

The British Government, through Lord Clarendon, tried to meet the threat from Young Ireland by a mixture of conciliation and coercion.²⁸³ Clarendon wanted greater powers to repress the widespread disorder and control the Irish press. He even asked for the suspension of Habeas Corpus in Ireland. "He is the most thorough Tory Lord Lieut. Ireland has seen for many years", observed Lord Lincoln.²⁸⁴ At the same time, Clarendon wanted to spend more money (albeit not as much as was needed) on famine relief and wanted a bill to provide greater security of tenure, which he hoped would counter-act the promises of the Nation and the United Irishman. Clarendon's colleagues in London were reluctant to accede to these requests. Conscious of the sensitivity which Parliament always displayed on Irish questions, they thought some of them unnecessary and others inexpedient. At the beginning of 1848 their refusal to be panicked seemed justified, for the reports reaching the Cabinet seemed

283. For the Whig Government's response to the Irish problem in 1847 see Nowlan, 165 - 7; Dreyer, "Russell Administration", 123 - 8.

284. Lincoln to Peel, 31 January 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40481 f434.

to show that the state of Ireland was slowly improving.²⁸⁵ However they knew that there was still a long way to go.

v) CONCLUSION

On 9 February 1848 the Belgian Foreign Minister sent a circular despatch to Belgian diplomats in other countries. It concerned the disturbed state of Europe. France and Britain, wrote d'Hoffschmidt,

sont loin d'être dans une situation alarmante. Toutefois, l'une est travaillée par des partis qui peuvent, dans telles circonstances données, lui créer des embarras sérieux; l'autre n'en a pas fini avec la question d'Irlande, toujours pleine de périls. Toutes deux ont, de plus, dans leurs relations extérieures, des complications qu'un avenir prochain peut singulièrement aggraver.

The rest of Europe was scarcely in better shape: Austria had enormous problems in Italy, where the governments of Rome and Naples seemed shaky; the states of Germany were restless, with the exception, d'Hoffschmidt judged, of Prussia; whilst Russia was faced with "les inquiétudes perpétuelles" of Poland. As for Greece, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland, "ces malheureux pays . . . semblent condamnés à parcourir sans relâche le cercle des troubles révolutionnaires."²⁸⁶ Other European statesmen shared d'Hoffschmidt's fears,²⁸⁷ whilst the disruptive elements, such as the Chartists, welcomed the prospect of general upheaval.²⁸⁸ Metternich and Palmerston were working hard in their own mutually incompatible ways to avert the catastrophe, but time was running out.

The British Government seemed ill-prepared to meet the enormous challenges of 1848. Its record was not impressive: its response to

285. Morpeth's Diary, 13 January 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/16 f44.

286. Circular despatch by d'Hoffschmidt, 9 February 1848: Ridder, I, 1 - 2.

287. R. Apponyi: Vingt-cinq ans à Paris (1826 - 1850). Journal du Comte Rodolphe Apponyi: Attaché de l'Ambassade d'Autriche-Hongrie à Paris (Paris 1913 - 1926), IV, 134; Prince Albert to Peel, 4 January 1848: C.S. Parker: Sir Robert Peel: From his Private Papers (London 1891 - 1899), III, 490; King Leopold to Queen Victoria, 12 February 1848: QVL, II, 175.

288. Northern Star, 1 January 1848, 4.

the problems of Ireland was at best unimaginative and dogmatic and at worst criminally negligent, whilst its handling of the economy left much to be desired. Its foreign policy was equally uninspiring: the Spanish Marriages had led to a bitter feud with France, and the support expressed for the continental liberals had antagonised the Northern Powers. The Government's position in Parliament was weak and uncertain. Lacking a reliable majority, Russell's administration was dependent on the support of disenchanted Radical and Irish M.P.s, the tacit backing of the Peelites and the restraint of the Protectionists. The Cabinet itself was deeply divided, with the "Grey Party" disapproving strongly of the Foreign Secretary and the Lansdowne-Clarendon faction having growing doubts about him. Palmerston himself was uncontrollable but indispensable, and Russell, anxious to retain office, was unwilling to change this unsatisfactory state of affairs. The events of 1848 would put a great internal and external strain on the Government. In the circumstances outlined above, it seemed unlikely that it could withstand the pressures.

Fortunately for the Whigs, there were other factors which gave the Government strength. The extra-Parliamentary agitation, although a potent threat, had divided leadership and lacked widespread support. Inside Parliament, the two parties which could have provided, or helped to provide, an alternative administration were happy for the moment to let the Whigs continue in power. Disapproval of Palmerston's actions as Foreign Secretary was widespread, both in the Cabinet and among the opposition parties. But he was tolerated because it was known that the Government could not survive without him and because so far his conduct had not been too outrageous. It was clear, however, that Palmerston only held his position on sufferance. If he did anything which turned public opinion against him, his critics in the Cabinet might try to

get rid of their troublesome colleague and the Protectionists and the Peelites might forget their caution and their differences for the good of the country. It is tempting to suggest that Palmerston might have survived an attempt to force his resignation, as he triumphantly survived the Don Pacifico debate two years later. It is impossible to say whether he would have done so or not. What is clear, is that no attempt was made to force Palmerston's resignation not because his opponents feared his strength, although that might have been part of the reason, but because they were apprehensive about what would happen once he had gone. They disliked what were assumed to be the alternatives to the Whig Government more than they disliked Palmerston.

Chapter II: Britain and the French Revolution

i) THE OUTBREAK OF REVOLUTION

There was a widespread feeling among informed observers in Britain at the beginning of 1848 that France was on the eve of important changes. Some people felt that Louis Philippe might not have long to live - he had been seventy-four at his last birthday and there were reports that he was unwell - and that the changes would come after his death.¹ Others, however, discerned signs of political discontent in France. The widespread social unrest, which was a result of the recent poor harvests and the industrial recession, was largely ignored in favour of more spectacular, and to most Britons more interesting, issues. Normanby noted the dissatisfaction with Louis Philippe's foreign policy and exaggerated its importance,² whilst the scandals and revelations of corruption, which shook France in the summer of 1847 and continued into January 1848, seem to have fascinated the British public.³ The effect of these events on the prestige of the French Government was assumed to be disastrous. "As things are now," asserted the Morning Chronicle,

. . . the fabric of the French constitution has lost its cement, and . . . any semblance of coherency it still retains is owing to mere juxta-position, and to the force of gravity with which the super incumbent portions weigh down the rest. Left undisturbed and unmeddled with, it may hold together for a good while. But once assailed by any violence from without, or undermined by any disturbance from beneath, the whole fabric will tumble into instant ruin.⁴

-
1. Palmerston to Normanby, 3 January 1848: Nor. P. P/20/1; The Times, 4 January 1848, 4; York Herald, 22 January 1848, 4.
 2. See above pp 24 - 5.
 3. The Times, 1 July and 27 August 1847, and 25 January 1848, 4; MH, 1 July and 31 August 1847, and 26 January 1848, 4; MP, 15 July and 28 August 1847, 4; MC, 16 July and 30 August 1847, 4; DN, 21 July 1847, 2.
 4. MC, 23 August 1847, 2.

And that fabric was being attacked, for a campaign for electoral reform was gathering momentum.

The campaign for electoral reform, which took the form of a series of banquets, was viewed with great interest in Britain. The Whigs and the Radicals, and some Peelites, expressed their support for it.⁵ "The truth is," declared the Northern Star, more in hope than expectation, "that these Reform Banquets are 'the beginning of the end,' and that end will be the destruction of Louis Philippe's throne and something more."⁶ More cautious voices, however, alarmed by the troubled state of France, were starting to express doubts. Although the banquets "may not be of much importance", wrote Aberdeen, ". . . they appear to be more numerous than could be wished." "Whether they go fast or slow," declared the Morning Post, referring to those politicians who were agitating for reform, "they go mischievously if they want to overthrow careful protective government".⁷ As the tension in Paris increased, so the opinions expressed in the British press became more extreme. When the news came that the French Government had banned the banquet in the Champs Elysees planned for 22 February, which was supposed to be the climax of the reform campaign, the Daily News was indignant, comparing Louis Philippe to Charles X in 1830. It was dangerous and unwise, it warned, to be dependent upon the army when the people of Paris were roused into justifiable anger.⁸ The Standard, in contrast, supported the ban, congratulating Louis Philippe and Guizot on the firm stand they had taken to defend good government and therefore true liberty.⁹ The crisis in France, which the British press had been predicting

-
5. Spectator, 1 January 1848, 12; The Times, 16 February 1848, 4; York Courant, 17 February 1848, 4; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 119 - 20.
 6. Northern Star, 1 January 1848, 4.
 7. Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 17 November 1847: Jones Parry, I, 290; MP, 4 February 1848, 4.
 8. DN, 23 and 24 February 1848, 3 and 2.
 9. Standard, 24 February 1848, 2.

for several months was coming, seemed to have arrived.

The British Government received copious reports from Paris on the state of affairs, the rumours and the fluctuating fortunes of the various parties. Normanby's letters and despatches, many of which were subsequently published under the title A Year of Revolution, give a valuable insight into the state of Paris at this time.¹⁰ Normanby was a well-informed observer, but he was far from being unbiassed. He barely disguised his hope that the agitation would result in Guizot's fall from power. According to one French deputy, his disappointment on the 20th, when it seemed that Guizot would survive, "était quelque chose d'irrésistiblement comique."¹¹ In London, Palmerston read Normanby's reports with a mixture of satisfaction and apprehension. "Guizot seems playing like a Reckless and desperate Gambler for all or nothing", he wrote on 11 February; "one should say he was more likely to get nothing than all - one would be glad to see him out, but one does not want his Ejectment to be brought about by a Revolution."¹² Guizot might fall, he told Hobhouse, but he had "no fears for the royal Government surrounded by 60,000 troops or more."¹³ Russell, preoccupied with the problems of the Budget, Ireland and Sicily, concluded a letter to Minto with the plaintive cry: "I hope France may not add to our troubles."¹⁴

At first, Normanby did not recognise the signs of revolution when scuffles broke out in the Champs Élysées on the morning of the 22nd. Some windows had been broken, he reported, and the Municipal Guards had moved in to disperse large crowds, but there had been no serious clashes and the crowd seemed to be in a good humour.¹⁵ That evening,

10. NJ, 34 - 80. Cf Derden, 66 - 78.

11. A. de Circourt: Souvenirs d'une Mission à Berlin en 1848 (ed. G. Bourgin) (Paris 1908), I, 22 - 3.

12. Palmerston to Normanby, 11 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/5.

13. Hobhouse's Diary, 15 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f90.

14. Russell to Minto, 12 February 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12073 f98.

15. Normanby to Palmerston, No 88, 22 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 80 - 2); Normanby to Palmerston, 22 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/116 (q NJ, I, 82 - 3).

telling his wife that the trouble was "rather child's play", he went to dine with the Minister of Finance. "I wished him much to send an excuse", wrote Lady Normanby in her journal, "but he said . . . it would [not] do for him to seem afraid to go." When he returned he told his wife that the streets were "quiet but dark, the Gas being stopped", and that there were troops everywhere.¹⁶ It seemed as if the firm line taken by the Government had averted a serious conflict. More experienced observers of Parisian affairs were not so confident. "Some who remember 1830", Normanby reported, "say it is very like the first day."¹⁷

During the early hours of the 23rd the situation in Paris deteriorated. At the British embassy shooting could be heard in distant parts of the city, and by the following morning a number of barricades had been erected, thereby disrupting communications within the city, and rumours were flying from mouth to mouth. "One does not know what to believe", recorded Lady Normanby. Then, early in the afternoon, word came that Guizot had been dismissed. "I hear the cheers of the people".¹⁸ Normanby was less elated by the fulfilment of his predictions. "So Guizot is gone at last!" he wrote to Palmerston.

If this was obtained by any other means I cannot say that there would be the slightest mixture in the feeling with which I regard the event:- But it says but little for the progress of regular Constitutional Govt. that the intervention of armed National Guards should be necessary to force a change.

Louis Philippe had been within twenty-four hours of losing his throne, Normanby judged, and even now it was by no means certain that his position was safe.¹⁹

In Britain the news of Guizot's dismissal provoked a mixed response. The Protectionist papers blamed Louis Philippe and Guizot for what had

16. Lady Normanby's Journal, 22 February 1848: Well. P. 157/70.

17. Normanby to Palmerston, 22 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/116 (q NJ, I, 83).

18. Lady Normanby's Journal, 23 February 1848: Well. P. 157/70 - 1.

19. Normanby to Palmerston, 23 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/117 (q NJ, I, 87 - 8).

happened, although on different grounds: the Morning Herald condemned them for not making concessions; the Morning Post condemned them for not crushing the unrest before it got out of hand.²⁰ The Radical papers were equally divided. The Daily News rejoiced at the triumph of the "moral attitude of the population" over the French army. "The example is a pregnant one," it wrote, "and the lesson such as every monarch and every minister must ponder. Neither must provoke, for neither can overcome, the hostility of a million voices, not to speak of a million arms." The Illustrated London News, on the other hand, called Guizot's downfall "unimportant". The ministers may have changed, but the system remained the same. "Louis Philippe", it judged, "merely plays an old game over again."²¹ The Times did not consider the events in Paris "unimportant". The previous day it had urged the French Government to stand firm behind its "hedge of bayonets"; if it gave way, it would surrender "infinitely more than Ministerial power."²² Now that Louis Philippe had given way, it gave full rein to its fears. The fall of Guizot, it declared, was a revolution. "That ominous term must be employed when the institutions of the country have been subverted and the authority of the Crown subdued by military violence." It judged that the authority of Louis Philippe had been destroyed, predicted that the new government of Odillon Barrot and Thiers would not be able to control the situation, and feared that the events in France would have a profound effect on the rest of Europe. "These considerations", it concluded, "disclose a most threatening and uncertain future."²³

In Government circles the news of Guizot's dismissal was greeted with less rejoicing than might have been expected after the harsh comments that had been made about him since the Spanish Marriages. Palmerston

20. MH, 25 February 1848, 4; MP, 25 February 1848, 4.

21. DN, 25 February 1848, 3; ILN, 26 February 1848, 116.

22. The Times, 24 February 1848, 4 - 5.

23. ibid, 25 February 1848, 4 - 5.

thought the "surrender of the King of the Barriers to the Summons of the National Guard . . . a Curious Example of political and poetical justice" and judged that the new government would be "much more liberal than Guizot's both at Home and abroad".²⁴ But, like Normanby, he regretted and was surprised that Louis Philippe and Guizot had not taken "the Hints so plentifully given them of the national Desire for a Change, & that they chose to subject themselves to the degrading necessity of yielding to compulsion."²⁵ Others had similar mixed feelings. "If it were not for my dread of a French revolution and a conviction of the gravity of the situation," wrote Charles Greville, "I should rejoice much in the downfall of Guizot & the defeat of Louis Philippe."²⁶ What everyone agreed upon was that the future for Louis Philippe looked bleak. "It will be difficult", observed Russell, "for the King of the Barricades to survive such a defeat by an armed force."²⁷

* * *

For a time, it seemed as if the departure of Guizot would satisfy those in Paris demanding change. The crowds were jubilant and the barricades began to be dismantled. However the situation was still confused and tense. The slightest spark could rekindle the revolutionary flame, and that spark was provided when a detachment of soldiers protecting the Foreign Ministry fired on a crowd, killing or wounding fifty-two people. "A deplorable event", noted Lady Normanby, "[which] has again set the whole city in an uproar."²⁸ To make matters worse, the new govern-

-
24. Palmerston to Minto, 24 February 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12073 ff105 - 6 (q Ashley, II, 56, with slight changes).
 25. Palmerston to Normanby, 24 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/6.
 26. Greville to Normanby, 24 February 1848: ibid 0/500.
 27. Russell to Clarendon, 25 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.
 28. Lady Normanby's Journal, 10 p.m. 23 February 1848: Well. P. 157/71. The incident was described to Normanby by Henry FitzRoy, a Peelite M.P. and the son-in-law of Baron de Rothschild, who had been present: Normanby to Palmerston, No 92, 24 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 88 - 93); Normanby to Palmerston, 24 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/118 (q NJ, I, 94 - 5).

ment, anxious to avoid further bloodshed, ordered the regular troops to leave the city. It was a crucial mistake, for by withdrawing the troops the Government abandoned the streets of Paris to an angry, armed mob who were shouting about treachery on the part of the King and his ministers.²⁹ "But where will this end?" wrote Lady Normanby anxiously. "What Ruin, what Sorrow, what Mourning and Grief will there not fall on this bright City; the Mercy of God save us from more bloodshed!"³⁰ Around midday on the 24th it was announced that Louis Philippe had abdicated in favour of his ten year old grandson, the Comte de Paris. But when an attempt was made in the Chamber of Deputies to announce the formation of a regency, it was shouted down by people from the streets who had invaded the building. Instead, a Provisional Government, consisting of known republicans, was proclaimed. "I cannot but hope that tomorrow may bring some signs of a settled future", Normanby wrote to Palmerston, "but nothing can be more gloomy for the prospects of a great Country than the complete anarchy which exists at this moment."³¹

The foreign community in Paris had been viewing events in the city with increasing alarm. For many, the announcement of the formation of a republican government was the final straw. The Count of Syracuse, a son of the King of Naples, took refuge in the British embassy, and over one hundred Austrian and Russian aristocrats and their servants crowded into the Austrian embassy which was protected by fewer than fifty National Guardsmen.³² There were numerous rumours, one of the most persistent and worrying being that the new Republic had declared war on Austria

29. Normanby to Palmerston, No 94, confidential, 25 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 98 - 101).

30. Lady Normanby's Journal, 11 a.m. 24 February 1848: Well. P. 157/72.

31. Normanby to Palmerston, No 93, 4 p.m. 24 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 93 - 4). For a graphic account of the events in the Chamber of Deputies see A. de Lamartine: Histoire de la Révolution de 1848 (Paris 1849), I, 175 - 225.

32. Normanby to Palmerston, 10 p.m. 24 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/119; Apponyi, IV, 150 - 2.

and that troops were already marching to the frontier.³³ On the whole, after some initial alarm, Normanby does not seem to have shared in this panic. His rôle, he told Palmerston, was "to remain perfectly quiet . . . giving all the protection [that] may be possible to the English Residents, and being merely an observer of the political events that are passing around me."³⁴ Nevertheless he advised those Britons who applied to him for assistance to leave Paris as soon as possible.³⁵ Precise figures for the number of British citizens who left France because of the revolution will never be known, but an impression of the scale of the exodus can be gained from The Times which reported that in the week ending 19 March 1,392 people left Boulogne for England whereas only 453 left England for Boulogne.³⁶

Most Britons who left Paris because of the revolution did so voluntarily. Elsewhere this was not the case. On 29 February Normanby heard that British engineers and stokers on the Chemin du Nord were being prevented by French workers from driving the trains and that other British citizens were being bullied into leaving the country.³⁷ Over the next few days more such reports were received, the worst cases being at Rouen where some 2,000 Britons were employed.³⁸ It is impossible to discover how many British workers and their families were forced to leave France,³⁹ but

-
33. Lady Normanby's Journal, 25 February 1848: Well. P. 157/75; Hobhouse's Diary, 28 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f105 (q Dorchester, VI, 204); MP, 28 February 1848, 4; Jennings, 1.
34. Normanby to Palmerston, No 93, 4 p.m. 24 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 94).
35. Normanby to Palmerston, 25 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/120. A few days later, upon learning that rail communications with the coast had been disrupted, he urged them to stay in Paris (Normanby to Palmerston, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/127, q NJ, I, 110).
36. The Times, 24 March 1848, 5.
37. Normanby to Palmerston, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/127.
38. Featherstonehaugh to Normanby, 4 March 1848, enclosed in Normanby to Palmerston, No 130, 6 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804. Cf Darden, 119 - 27.
39. Normanby estimated that 3 - 4,000 wanted to leave (Normanby to Palmerston, No 163, 15 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804, q NJ, I, 230 - 1), but it seems unlikely that this number actually left. Sir George Grey told the Commons that 97 had reached Portsmouth by 6 March, but this was only one port and he later added that many more were still coming over (Hansard, XCVII, 336 - 7 and 458).

it seems to have been a significant number and it caused Normanby and the British Government a variety of problems.

It was realised from the start that the expulsions were not due simply to Anglophobia. Unemployment around Rouen and Le Havre was high - Featherstonehaugh, the British consul at Le Havre, estimated that 20 - 30,000 French workers were "out of employ and starving" - and it was only natural that the British workers should be accused of taking jobs which rightfully belonged to Frenchmen.⁴⁰ Nor were the British the only foreign workers to be victimised: elsewhere in France there were similar incidents involving Belgian and Savoyard workers.⁴¹ But the incidents were disturbing, especially as the new Government declared that it could not prevent them. Alphonse de Lamartine, the new Foreign Minister and the dominant influence in the Provisional Government, condemned the behaviour of his countrymen and promised liberal compensation, but said that as yet the central government lacked the means to make its authority felt in the provinces.⁴²

The British press was quick to condemn what was seen as the ingratitude of the French people. British workers had gone over to help improve French industry, and now they were being brutally evicted. Some French industries, it was asserted with a certain degree of satisfaction, would collapse without British expertise to sustain them.⁴³ At the same time, Sir George Grey's declaration that the Government planned no retaliation⁴⁴ was widely applauded. People were gratified by the way in which French people continued

-
40. Normanby to Palmerston, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/127; Normanby to Palmerston, No 163, 15 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804 (q NJ, I, 231).
41. P. Quentin-Bauchart: Lamartine et la Politique Etrangère de la Révolution de Février (24 février - 24 juin 1848) (Paris 1907), 104 - 6.
42. Normanby to Palmerston, No 130, 6 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804 (q NJ, I, 178 - 9). It is true that the Provisional Government was having difficulty ensuring law and order (Jennings, 61 - 2), but, according to Featherstonehaugh, the authorities at Le Havre seemed to welcome the attacks on the British workers because they diverted popular anger away from themselves (Featherstonehaugh to Palmerston, 20 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/FE/15).
43. The Times, 15 and 17 March 1848, 4 - 5; Spectator, 1 April 1848, 323; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 213; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 386.
44. Hansard, XCVII, 336.

to be well received in London and liked to contrast it with what was happening across the Channel. Besides, there was some apprehension that if the British boycotted French goods, as was suggested, the French might retaliate.⁴⁵

Not all people in Britain were sympathetic to the expelled workmen. The Chartists accused them of depriving their French brothers of valuable employment and charged the "respectable" press with exaggerating the stories of violence done to the workmen in order to discourage support for the revolution.⁴⁶ This second accusation has been taken up by Helen Brooks⁴⁷ and there is some evidence to support it. Normanby reported that many of the claims for compensation proved grossly inflated,⁴⁸ whilst Sir George Grey thought that the fate of the workmen was an example of the misery which revolutions caused, from which would-be British revolutionaries would do well to take warning,⁴⁹ and in his statement to the Commons on the 13th he emphasised that the workmen had arrived from France in a "very destitute condition."⁵⁰ It would be wrong to assume from this that the Government and the press deliberately misled the public, but neither made any effort to minimise the accounts of the suffering.

One of the more unusual results of the expulsion of the workmen was the idea of Lord Grey to send some of the workers to help defend Mauritius. There was uncertainty how news of the revolution would affect parts of the British Empire. Russell expressed doubts about the loyalty of the French Canadians,⁵¹ and on 29 March Palmerston brought up the question

-
45. Hobhouse's Diary, 31 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f12; Spectator, 1 April 1848, 323; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 476.
 46. Northern Star, 11 March 1848, 5; Labourer, III, 184.
 47. Brooks, 183.
 48. Normanby to Palmerston, No 252, 13 April 1848: PRO FO 27/806.
 49. G. Grey to Clarendon, 11 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12.
 50. Hansard, XCVII, 458.
 51. Russell to Grey, 12 March 1848: Grey P. 122/3. The French Canadians were disaffected, but there was no trouble with them in 1848 (see W.P. Morrell: British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell (Oxford 1930), 450 - 1).

of Mauritius. In the event of war with the Republic, he wrote to Grey, the British garrison of 1,600 men would be unable to repulse a French invasion from the nearby Isle de Bourbon, especially as the invaders could expect assistance from the French-speaking population of Mauritius. He suggested, therefore, that reinforcements should be sent from the Cape where the Kaffir war had just ended.⁵² Grey agreed as to the vulnerability of the island, but he felt that the troops in the Empire were as thinly spread as was prudent and he was unwilling to spare any of the regiments in Britain because of the disturbed state of Ireland and the possibility of war in Europe. "If we were not so hard up for money", he wrote,

I wd. propose to the Cabinet to raise a corps of pioneers for the Mauritius roads from the workmen expelled from France. - we wd. get a splendid corps by promising them land after 7 years service, speaking French they are just the men for it, & it wd. be an invaluable additn. to the British populatn. of the Island.⁵³

Despite his doubts, the following morning Grey suggested the idea to Russell, calculating that if the conditions were made sufficiently attractive between three and four hundred workmen would take up the offer.⁵⁴ But, as Grey had feared, the Prime Minister vetoed the scheme on the grounds of expense. If a regiment could not be spared from India, he wrote, "I do not know what we can do." The Government's objective "must be to retrench in colonial defences, & not to spend more money in such objects."⁵⁵

The still-born Mauritius plan reveals less the British Government's concern with the fate of the expelled workmen than its views on Imperial defence. But it was not unsympathetic to the plight of the workmen, and it set up a special fund to help them reach England.⁵⁶ It also took up the question of the deposits left in the French Savings Banks. Not unnat-

52. Palmerston to Grey, 29 March 1848: Grey P. 119/2.

53. Grey to Palmerston, 29 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/GR/2392.

54. Grey to Russell, 30 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

55. Russell to Grey, 30 March 1848: Grey P. 122/3.

56. Bidwell to Bonham, No 7, 20 March 1848: PRO FO 27/817.

urally, the workmen had wanted to withdraw their savings when they left France. But as part of its measures to prop up the nation's finances the Provisional Government had passed legislation which prevented this. The Standard called this "naked robbery".⁵⁷ Normanby tended to agree. He took up the subject with Lamartine who admitted it was "a monstrous injustice" and promised that the restrictions would be lifted.⁵⁸ A fortnight later Lamartine announced that he had signed a decree freeing the deposits.⁵⁹

Normanby thought that this would be the end of the matter, but weeks passed and he heard nothing of the decree. At the beginning of May he took up the subject again; this time he found Lamartine's answers evasive and unsatisfactory.⁶⁰ In June, after questions had been asked in Parliament,⁶¹ Normanby made another attempt to obtain satisfaction. However, instead of honouring the promise Lamartine had made, the Minister of Finance said that only the deposits of those who could prove they had been driven away by actual violence, and not merely by the fear of violence, would be freed. Normanby was furious, calling it a "flagrant . . . evasion of the substantial part of the engagement taken with me by Monsieur Lamartine and the Provisional Government now three months since."⁶² But not even Normanby's anger and his forceful restatement of the British case could persuade the French Government to give way. Goudchaux, who became Minister of Finance after the June Days, remained as resolute as his predecessor.⁶³ He was struggling with the confused state of the nation's finances and the general lack of confidence whilst trying to

-
57. Standard, 14 March 1848, 2. The subject is discussed in detail in Derden, 132 - 43.
58. Normanby to Palmerston, No 163, 15 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804 (q NJ, I, 230).
59. Normanby to Palmerston, No 219, 31 March 1848: PRO FO 27/805.
60. Normanby to Palmerston, No 315, 11 May 1848: ibid 27/807 (q NJ, I, 376 - 7).
61. Hansard, XCIX, 879.
62. Normanby to Palmerston, No 407, 23 June 1848: PRO FO 27/809 (q NJ, II, 18 - 26).
63. Normanby to Palmerston, No 474, 23 July 1848: PRO FO 27/810 (q NJ, II, 116 - 18).

stimulate the economy.⁶⁴ He was reluctant to agree to any financial measure which might hamper the recovery, no matter how beneficial to France's external relations, because no recovery meant continued social distress and political instability. It was only in August that a satisfactory compromise was reached.

Goudchaux's response to Normanby's complaints illustrates the general attitude of French ministers when dealing with the effects of the revolution on British citizens in France. They were anxious to appease the British Government - even Lamartine's deception was an attempt, albeit foolish, to placate the British - but their means were limited and they would not do anything that would jeopardise their own precarious position. For its part, the British Government accepted the French Government's priorities, even if it thought that some of its actions were unjust. It recognised that to take a more forceful line would not solve the problem, and could antagonise ministers who were doing their best in extremely difficult circumstances.

ii) BRITAIN AND THE FALL OF LOUIS PHILIPPE

Not all who left France after the revolution protected by British passports were British citizens. "I am getting the English away as fast as I can," Normanby wrote on the 25th, "& gave some Passports this morning to some of those who I wish were in safety: you will understand who I mean."⁶⁵ The people to whom Normanby alluded were members of the ex-Royal Family, former ministers, and people closely identified with the fallen regime.

At first Normanby was reluctant to give passports to foreigners, believing "that my first duty is not knowingly to do anything which if

64. F.A. de Luna: The French Republic under Cavaignac, 1848 (Princeton 1969), 274 - 6.

65. Normanby to Palmerston, 25 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/120.

discovered might compromise the safety of my own Countrymen."⁶⁶ However he soon received word that the Provisional Government would not hinder the departure of the refugees. Lamartine did not want to antagonise Britain, because he was convinced "qu'aucune coalition sérieuse n'était possible contre la France . . . sans le concours et sans la solde de l'Angleterre." He was determined, therefore, not to give "l'aristocratie anglaise le prétexte de forcer le cabinet anglais à une croisade contre la République."⁶⁷ Moreover, it seems likely that the Provisional Government was glad that the Orleans family and the ex-ministers were escaping, for then it would not have the problem of deciding what to do with them.⁶⁸ On the afternoon of the 25th Normanby told Count d'Alton Shee, whom Lamartine had sent with an assurance that the Provisional Government was doing all it could to restore order and that it wanted to be on good terms with Britain, that first impressions would be important in forming British public opinion and that therefore

every facility should be given at the outposts for the persons furnished with my Passports should not be harassed [sic] with unnecessary formalities which would remind them of what they had heard of the bad days of the first Revolution. This Count d'Alton Shee assured me he was convinced would quite fall in with Lamartine's views.⁶⁹

A subsequent letter suggests that the agreement was more specific. It was agreed, Normanby wrote on 1 March, that "I should get off any of the Ministers I could and orders were given at the ports never to make the least question about my passports."⁷⁰

Precisely which refugees Normanby helped to reach England is unclear. He names the Duchesse de Montpensier, who had been "left behind &

66. Normanby to Palmerston, 26 February 1848: ibid GC/NO/121.

67. Lamartine, Histoire, II, 164.

68. This, at least, was Palmerston's opinion (Palmerston to Normanby, 27 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/9), and it seems confirmed by Louis Blanc's assertion that the Provisional Government took little interest in Louis Philippe once he had abdicated (Blanc, 65 - 6).

69. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 25 February 1848: Nor. P. P/14/39 (partly q NJ, I, 107).

70. Normanby to Palmerston, 1 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/129.

forgotten in the confusion", and M. Dumon, the former Minister of Finance, and Palmerston mentions Princess Lieven;⁷¹ but it is clear from Normanby's letters that there were others. However the greatest concern was for the safety of Louis Philippe, and as late as the 2nd Normanby did not know his whereabouts.⁷² The British Government was also anxious to secure the ex-King's safety. On the 27th it sent a steamer to assist him to cross the Channel, although lacking any definite information it could not be directed to any particular French port,⁷³ and it authorised its consuls at the Channel ports to "grant Passports to any Persons who may be in personal Danger . . . if such Passports are necessary in order to enable them to get away."⁷⁴ For several days ministers, and London society as a whole, waited for news. Then, on the 3rd, Sir George Grey wrote to Clarendon that the former King and Queen "are in safety but nothing is to be said about them till they are on this side [of] the water." He added in a postscript that he had just heard that they had landed at Newhaven.⁷⁵ Featherstonehaugh at Le Havre had been able to contact them and smuggle them aboard the Post Office packet Express.⁷⁶

Featherstonehaugh was immensely proud of his achievement, which he felt was inadequately appreciated. He was furious when the Provisional Government claimed the credit for getting the former King and

71. Normanby to Palmerston, 29 February and 1 March 1848: *ibid* GC/NO/127 and GC/NO/129; Palmerston to Normanby, 7 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/14.

72. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 2 March 1848: Nor. P. P/14/46.

73. Palmerston to the consuls at Le Havre and Cherbourg, confidential, 27 February 1848: PRO FO 27/818; G. Grey to Clarendon, 27 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12.

74. Bidwell to Featherstonehaugh, No 9, 29 February 1848: PRO FO 27/818. The Duc de Nemours had already contacted the consul at Boulogne who got him aboard a Post Office packet (Hamilton to Palmerston, No 11, 12 p.m. 26 February 1848: PRO FO 27/817).

75. G. Grey to Clarendon, 3 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12.

76. For Featherstonehaugh's graphic, and amusing, account of Louis Philippe's escape see Featherstonehaugh to Palmerston, 3 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/FE/12 (q QVL, II, 184 - 8).

Queen away.⁷⁷ But he was not allowed to boast of his success: the Government was anxious to suppress any hint of its involvement,⁷⁸ and Palmerston wanted to put an end to all correspondence on the subject as soon as possible.⁷⁹ Nor was there very much to boast about. Following the agreement between Normanby and Lamartine, what danger there had been to Louis Philippe had come from over-zealous local republicans and not from the new government in Paris.

*

*

*

Reports of the progress of the revolution in Paris reached London every two or three hours on the 25th. By nightfall the fall of the Orleans monarchy and the proclamation of the Second Republic had been confirmed. Excitement and interest, tinged with apprehension, was intense in London society. "You know what London is in a ferment of exciting events," wrote Lady John Russell to her sister,

and can therefore pretty well imagine the constant succession of reports, true and false, from hour to hour, the unceasing cries of the newsmen with 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th editions of all the newspapers, the running about of friends to one another's houses, the continual crossing of notes in the streets, each asking the same questions, the hopes and fears and the conjectures one hears and utters during the course of the day, and the state of blank, weary stupidity to which one is reduced by the end of it.⁸⁰

It was difficult to get authoritative and accurate information, for severe storms in the Channel made communications between Britain and France slow and irregular, or to discern which reports were true and

77. Featherstonehaugh to Palmerston, 7 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/FE/15.

78. Morpeth's Diary, 2 March 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f9; Hobhouse's Diary, 4 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f112. It seems to have been largely successful. The activities of the steamer which had been sent were widely discussed (Earl of Malmesbury: Memoirs of an Ex-Minister. An autobiography New edn., (London 1885), 158 - 9; MH, 28 February 1848, 4), but the detailed accounts of Louis Philippe's escape published in the British press contained no mention of the involvement of the British or French Governments.

79. Palmerston to Featherstonehaugh, No 12, 14 March 1848: PRO FO 27/818.

80. Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby, 3 March 1848: D. MacCarthy and A. Russell: Lady John Russell: A Memoir, with Selections from Her Diaries and Correspondence (London 1910), 96.

which were unfounded. Nevertheless, London society and the British press tried to assess the causes of the revolution, and in particular to what extent Louis Philippe was responsible.

In many cases, judgements about Louis Philippe's culpability reflected preconceived ideas about the causes of revolutions in general and the state of the Orleans monarchy before its overthrow. A small but influential body of opinion in Britain blamed the revolution on a republican conspiracy. The Orleans monarchy at the beginning of 1848 was in quite a healthy condition, these people argued. There were some problems, as was witnessed by the social and political discontent, but these problems were no worse than they had been earlier in Louis Philippe's reign or than they were in other countries. The revolution had occurred because an unscrupulous minority, the Parisian republicans, had exacerbated the discontent and exploited the situation to their own advantage. Disraeli, in his biography of Bentinck, claimed that the conspiracy in France was just one manifestation of a conspiracy which existed throughout Europe to overthrow monarchy, despoil property and attack the influence of the Church.⁸¹ It was a romantic view - painting a picture of secret societies and mysterious men with hidden faces - which reflected Disraeli's romantic temperament, but it was shared by more cautious observers. Aberdeen, having listened to Guizot's explanations, came to believe in the existence of a republican conspiracy, dismissing the reform agitation as "a very convenient pretext" for revolution,⁸² and even Peel, under the influence of his friend, did not discount the idea entirely.⁸³ Moreover, circumstantial evidence seemed to support this interpretation. The speed with which the republicans seized power after Louis Philippe's abdication reinforced the

81. B. Disraeli: Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography New edn., (London 1858), 396 - 8.

82. Aberdeen to Peel, 2 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40455 f454.

83. Peel to Graham, 2 November 1848: Gra. P. Bundle 105.

belief that they had been prepared for the overthrow of the monarchy.⁸⁴

In some respects, the idea that a revolution had occurred as a result of a conspiracy was a reassuring one for a deposed monarch or an evicted minister, or for a politician who felt that his position was threatened. It assumed that the revolution was the result of the activities of a small, unrepresentative group rather than the result of widespread disaffection. But such an explanation created a problem: why had the minority been successful if it did not reflect the aspirations of the majority? The Standard blamed Thiers, initially for associating with the republicans during the banquet campaign, thereby giving them a respectability which they did not deserve and which they would otherwise have lacked, and later for ordering the withdrawal of the troops, which "paralysed all the means provided for the defence of the Crown and the constitution of France."⁸⁵ More popular targets for criticism, however, were Louis Philippe and, to a lesser extent, Guizot. The Morning Herald argued that if the King had promised electoral reform, the majority of those agitating for change would have been satisfied.⁸⁶ Most Protectionists, on the other hand, felt not that Louis Philippe had been too firm but that he had not been firm enough. "What can by possibility [sic] be more contemptible than the conduct of Louis Philippe & his family," asked the Duke of Newcastle, "running away like thieves, & poltroons, . . . preferring their own safety to the grand cause of their Country."⁸⁷ Even Queen Victoria thought

84. Standard, 26 February 1848, 2; Quarterly Review, LXXXII, 541 - 65; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 275 - 6. In fact, the Parisian republicans were as surprised as anyone by the turn of events, but they had responded to the new situation quicker than their rivals.

85. Standard, 28 February and 22 March 1848, 2. Cf Malmesbury, 157.

86. MH, 26 February 1848, 4.

87. Newcastle to Stanley, 29 February 1848: Der. P. Box 147/1. Cf Brougham to Aberdeen, 5 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43194 f5; Manners to Disraeli, 7 March 1848: Dis. P. B/XX/M/26; Hobhouse's Diary (reporting a conversation with Lady Malmesbury), 15 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f130 (q Dorchester, VI, 209); Londonderry, 26 - 7.

that Louis Philippe had abdicated too quickly. "Still", she added, "the recollection of Louis XVI . . . is enough to justify all."⁸⁸

Among Whigs and Radicals there was little regret expressed about the departure of Louis Philippe. His downfall, declared the Daily News, "will be welcomed with contented laughter by perhaps three-fourths of mankind."⁸⁹ "Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the comparative merits of a Republican system of Government," wrote the Free Trade York Courant,

every true friend of freedom will rejoice at the present noble triumph of the French nation. The Guizot Ministry had too long been allowed to insult the people by arrogantly depriving them of their civil rights, whilst its foreign policy also was disreputable in the extreme. With regard to Louis Philippe, his reign has been one long series of emeutes - political intrigues with foreign States - and police plots; and his Government has been supported by incessant prosecutions against the press, and by laws which have trampled all liberty to dust. . . . The people, who elevated him to empire, have driven him from a throne which he was no longer worthy to occupy, and his fall presents a striking and memorable moral example to all the monarchs of Europe.⁹⁰

This was the line adopted by other Whig and Radical newspapers. Louis Philippe, it was asserted, had ignored the rights and legitimate desires of his subjects. He had pursued a dynastic policy abroad and an illiberal policy at home. Eventually, after showing great patience, the people of France had had enough and had driven him out.⁹¹

The Times was also sharply critical of Louis Philippe and his system. Indeed it was so critical that its proprietor made it moderate its tone.⁹² It regretted the fall of the Orleans monarchy and thought

88. Queen Victoria to King Leopold, 11 March 1848: QVL, II, 194.

89. DN, 26 February 1848, 2.

90. York Courant, 2 March 1848, 5.

91. MG, 26 February 1848, 6; Spectator, 26 February 1848, 189; ILN, 4 March 1848, 143 - 4; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 368 - 70; North British Review, IX, 1 - 37; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 207 - 14; Westminster Review, XLIX, 137 - 70.

92. History of The Times, 105 - 6.

that Louis Philippe could have retained his throne by a vigorous use of force. But it judged that the root cause of the revolution was the mistaken policies Louis Philippe had pursued since his accession. Since 1830, it observed, British governments had shown a prudent flexibility, passing the necessary reforms to cope with the greater political awareness of the populace and the problems created by increasing industrialization. Louis Philippe, in contrast, had not responded to the changing circumstances and had suffered the consequences. The speed of the revolution, it argued, did not reveal the strength of the opposition, but showed that "the system was even more hollow, the core more rotten, and the surface more deceptive, than we supposed."⁹³

The interpretation of the causes of the revolution put forward by The Times and the Whig and Radical newspapers was far more convincing than the "conspiracy" theory of certain Tories, for it took full account of the widespread dissatisfaction in France with the Orleans monarchy. But it did not explain why the revolution occurred when it did. Whigs and Radicals argued that the banning of the banquet had been the decisive incident, a last despotic act which provoked the people from peaceful protest to mass violence. The episode outside the Foreign Ministry merely exacerbated the situation. The Times, conscious of the military forces at Louis Philippe's disposal, offered a more reasonable explanation. The state of France made some sort of change inevitable by the beginning of 1848, but the monarchy had fallen because the former King and his ministers had displayed a remarkable degree of timidity and incompetence. They could not have avoided change to the political system, but they could have prevented revolution.

*

*

*

93. The Times, 26 February 1848, 5. Cf The Economist, 26 February 1848, 227.

Whatever the views about Louis Philippe's responsibility for the revolution, there was never any doubt that he would be welcomed as a refugee. As early as 28 February Russell told the Commons that he had "never dreamt that England would refuse to perform any of those sacred duties of hospitality which at all times have been extended to the vanquished, whether they have held extreme monarchical or extreme liberal opinions."⁹⁴ It was an announcement which was endorsed by all sections of the press.⁹⁵ The provision of a safe haven for all political refugees, however distasteful the British might find their views, was a practice of which British politicians and the British public were justifiably proud.⁹⁶ However the presence of the Orleans family in Britain caused a number of problems which Russell's Government would have preferred to avoid.

Potentially the most serious of these problems was the possibility that the Parisian republicans might misunderstand the asylum given to the refugees. Instead of seeing it as an act of hospitality, they might regard it as symbolic of a monarchical alliance against the Republic. The Government, therefore, tried to distance itself from the refugees. It told the Queen that she must not provide one of her palaces for the use of the ex-Royal Family and was grateful when King Leopold made Claremont available.⁹⁷ But it was impossible to check the sympathy shown towards the refugees by London society, and the Government made no attempt to do so. The Queen recognised the delicacy of her position,⁹⁸ but once the former King and Queen arrived

94. Hansard, XCVI, 1431.

95. DN, 1 and 2 March 1848, 2 and 3; Standard, 2 March 1848, 2; The Times, 4 March 1848, 4.

96. For British attitudes towards foreign refugees at this time see B.J. Porter: The refugee question in mid-Victorian Politics (Cambridge 1979).

97. Russell to Queen Victoria, 29 February 1848: QVL, II, 183; Hobhouse's Diary, 11 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f123.

98. Queen Victoria to King Leopold, 1 March 1848: QVL, II, 183 - 4.

in London she forgot her good intentions and resumed her close friendship with them. "Nothing but the extraordinary good sense of Prince Albert and the boundless influence he has over her keeps her affectionate feelings under due restraint", observed Greville.⁹⁹ Outside the Court, Aberdeen seems to have been closest to the refugees: he invited Guizot to stay with him and told Princess Lieven that his "only regret" was that he could not "see him every day of my life."¹⁰⁰ But politicians as diverse as Peel, Disraeli and Russell visited Louis Philippe or dined with Guizot, and sought their views on events in France.¹⁰¹ Even Palmerston gave a quiet dinner for Guizot, and Greville, who had been present, thought they "would have shaken each other's arms off".¹⁰² Individually, these episodes were of little importance. Taken together, however, they created the impression that the refugees were being feted by society, which Clarendon considered "in bad taste & unnecessary".¹⁰³

On 6 March Normanby was told that British politicians should take care not to show too much favour towards the former French ministers.¹⁰⁴ The warning, which came from a friend of Guizot, was heeded by Palmerston. He informed Normanby that, should Lamartine bring up the subject of the refugees, he could explain that

although we shall treat the French here with that personal Courtesy and Consideration which is due to their misfortunes as Exiles, . . . our Behaviour towards them Must not be construed as implying any Sympathy in the cause of Policy in their Past by which their Misfortunes have been produced,

99. GM, VI, 190. Cf Woodham-Smith: Queen Victoria, 285.

100. Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 16 August 1848: Jones Parry, II, 297; F. Balfour: The Life of George Fourth Earl of Aberdeen K.G., K.T. (London 1922), 155 - 6.

101. See, for example, Peel to Aberdeen, 25 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff339 - 42; R. Disraeli (ed.): Lord Beaconsfield's Correspondence with his Sister 1832 - 1852 2nd edn., (London 1886), 216; Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby, 10 December 1848: McCarthy and Russell, 102 - 3.

102. GM, VI, 161.

103. Clarendon to Normanby, 2 April 1848: Nor. P. O/155.

104. Normanby to Palmerston, 6 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/132.

nor as indicating the Slightest Disposition to encourage any Intrigues for the Subversion of the present order of things in France.¹⁰⁵

Ten days later Normanby seized upon an observation by Lamartine that the extreme republican newspapers in Paris were making much of the meetings between Louis Philippe and Queen Victoria to pass on Palmerston's assurances.¹⁰⁶

As early as 14 March it was being rumoured that Normanby had been instructed to apologise for the presence of Louis Philippe in England. Greville was "disgusted" by the report, accusing Russell and Palmerston of a "condescension [sic]" towards the Republic which was "utterly unworthy & unbecoming" of them. "The personal treatment of the Exiles, is a matter for ourselves alone, . . . the Q. of England ought not to apologise to Messrs. Louis Blanc & Co."¹⁰⁷ The Morning Chronicle and The Times took up the story, the latter condemning any apology as "utterly inconsistent with our dignity as a nation".¹⁰⁸ In an effort to put an end to the rumours, on the 21st Palmerston told the Commons that Normanby had not apologised for the presence of the refugees, but had explained that the British Government would give asylum to any foreign exiles and that there was no question of it intriguing with those exiles.¹⁰⁹ The statement was accepted, but not everyone was happy. If the explanation had been given spontaneously, wrote the Standard, "it betrays a nervous timidity which we must think derogates from the dignity of a British Government"; if it had been given in response to a complaint from the Provisional Government, "that remonstrance convicts MM. Lamartine and Co. of a degree of arrogant pretension in which it is neither dignified nor safe to

105. Palmerston to Normanby, 7 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/14.

106. Normanby to Palmerston, No 173, secret, 18 March 1848: PRO FO 27/805.

107. Greville to Bedford, 14 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

108. MC, 17 March 1848, 4; The Times, 20 March 1848, 4.

109. Hansard, XCVII, 847 - 8.

indulge them."¹¹⁰ In either case, the British Government had been at fault.

It was not often that Palmerston was accused of showing too much deference towards a foreign government, but this was one of those occasions. The British public was not going to be told by anyone how to treat its guests; it was certainly not going to be told by foreigners such as those who composed the Provisional Government. Of course Normanby had not apologised and the explanation he had given was similar to those which The Times and the Daily News had given at the beginning of the month when discussing the practice of giving asylum. But the indignation that was aroused when it was rumoured that the British Government might have apologised illustrates the strength of feeling on the subject.

It is ironic that the British Government should have got into trouble for defending Louis Philippe's presence in Britain, for the general impression in London was that the ministers in general, and Palmerston in particular, did not like the refugees. The Foreign Office was convinced that there was a deliberate campaign by Louis Philippe, Guizot and Aberdeen to denigrate the Foreign Secretary. But, as E.J. Stanley observed, "There is enough truth about all these matters to furnish ground for embellishments".¹¹¹ In part this hostility was due to the resentment about the way the refugees complained about their conditions in exile. Russell called them "vile ungrateful dogs".¹¹² But in the main it was the result of the consciousness of their political differences. "The truth is that I like and esteem the man", wrote Macaulay to his sister, explaining why he had refused to dine with Guizot.

110. Standard, 22 March 1848, 2.

111. E.J. Stanley to Normanby, 17 March 1848: Nor. P. 0/387.

112. Russell to Clarendon, 21 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43. Cf Hobhouse's Diary, 11 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f123 (q Dorchester, VI, 207 - 8), and 27 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff60 - 1 (q Dorchester, VI, 227).

But I think the policy of the minister both at home and abroad detestable. At home it was all corruption, and abroad all treachery. I could not hold to him the language of entire respect and complacency without a violation of truth; and, in his present circumstances, I could not bear to shew the least disapprobation.¹¹³

Despite Russell's assurance that "all enmity to his projects as a King ceases with his deposition",¹¹⁴ it was difficult to forget earlier quarrels with Louis Philippe, especially the Spanish Marriages, or to avoid the feeling that the current crisis in France was the result of his foolish policies.¹¹⁵ In Palmerston, however, these feelings were combined with a belief that the Orleans family was still a potential threat to Britain.

The fall of Louis Philippe, reported Bulwer from Madrid, created the impression in Spain that Britain would no longer object to the Montpensier marriage. The British objection, it was argued, had been that there was a danger of France and Spain being united under one crown. But now France was a republic that danger was past.¹¹⁶ Palmerston did not accept this interpretation. The marriage, he wrote at a later date, "never could be considered as a Question of today nor of this year, but . . . had its existence in the Future and in Duration of Time."¹¹⁷ Convinced that France would not "settle down into a Republic",¹¹⁸ he felt that sooner or later there would be a monarchical reaction at which time Louis Philippe's heir, the Comte de Paris, would be "as good a horse to back for winning the Plate, as any other in the

113. Macaulay to Selina Macaulay, 13 March 1848: Pinney, IV, 362.

114. Russell to Queen Victoria, 3 March 1848: QVL, II, 191.

115. Morpeth's Diary, 25 and 28 February 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 ff5 and 7; Grey's Journal, 27 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Clarendon to G. Grey, copy, 29 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 f137; Palmerston to Clarendon, 9 March 1848: Clar. P. Box c524; Sir G.F. Lewis (ed.): Letters of the Right Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Bart., to various friends (London 1870), 170.

116. Bulwer to Palmerston, 16 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/448.

117. Palmerston to Russell, 9 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 136).

118. Palmerston to Normanby, 27 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/8.

Field."¹¹⁹ If the Orleans family was restored, Britain's objections to the Montpensier marriage would be the same as they had been before the revolution.

Both Russell and Lansdowne admitted the principle of Palmerston's argument, but neither believed that the Government should maintain its anti-Montpensier stance, arguing that to do so would look like vindictiveness towards the Orleans family.¹²⁰ Palmerston did not heed their advice, and tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the Montpensiers travelling to Spain. The British public, he warned Jarnac, would object to having Britain used as "a Stepping Stone" in order that Louis Philippe could continue to pursue his dynastic ambitions.¹²¹ In Madrid, Bulwer continued to press for the exclusion of the Montpensiers from the Spanish succession, but to no effect.¹²² The only results of Palmerston's actions were to anger Louis Philippe, who later told Disraeli that Palmerston "persecutes them",¹²³ and to antagonise the Spanish Court and Government.

Palmerston's opposition to Louis Philippe over the Montpensiers did not extend into other spheres, as the ex-King suspected. Soon after the arrival of the Orleans family Palmerston told Jarnac that £1,000 would be made available from the Secret Service fund to ease their financial difficulties, on the understanding that the British Government's involvement should not become known.¹²⁴ More importantly, he took up the question of the private property of the Orleans family with the French Government. Initially it seemed that the Republic

119. Palmerston to Bulwer, copy, 4 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/572.

120. Russell to Palmerston, 25 March 1848: *ibid* GC/RU/191; Lansdowne to Russell, 30 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

121. Palmerston to Bulwer, No 22, 10 March 1848: PRO FO 72/739.

122. Bulwer to Palmerston, 16 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/448.

123. Londonderry, 70.

124. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 10 March 1848: *RvP*, 69. Graham and Peel also offered assistance to Louis Philippe (Graham to Jarnac, copy, 8 March 1848: Gra. P. Bundle 105 (q Parker, *Graham*, II, 71); Peel to Jarnac, copy, 20 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss.

would be generous to the deposed monarch. On 3 March Lamartine told Normanby that the Provisional Government had no intention of confiscating the private property and that it was trying to decide what did and did not belong to the state.¹²⁵ Within a few days, however, Lamartine was showing greater reluctance on the subject, saying "that this was of all other the worst moment to take any step with reference to this property." The financial problems of France would make it difficult to justify handing over large sums of money.¹²⁶ On three separate occasions Normanby was instructed to bring up the subject of Louis Philippe's personal wealth,¹²⁷ but on each the French Government refused to do anything because of the state of public opinion.¹²⁸ It was not until the end of October that the National Assembly voted, "almost without discussion, and with hardly a dissentient voice", to free the property,¹²⁹ and even then a month later Greville noted that the residents of Claremont had still not received their money.¹³⁰ The British Government, however, had done as much as could reasonably be expected of it.

The presence of the refugees in Britain was never a major problem for the British Government. The popular conception of its attitude towards Louis Philippe and the ex-ministers damaged its standing with the British Court and influential sections of Parliament and the electorate, whilst the policies it pursued with respect to them

-
125. Normanby to Palmerston, No 119, 3 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804 (q NJ, I, 168 - 9).
126. Normanby to Palmerston, No 145, confidential, 9 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804 (q NJ, I, 191 - 3).
127. Palmerston to Normanby, 10 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/16; Palmerston to Normanby, No 223, 19 May 1848: PRO FO 27/798; Russell to Normanby, confidential, 17 August 1848: Nor. P. P/23/28.
128. Normanby to Palmerston, 21 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/143; Normanby to Palmerston, No 347, 22 May 1848: PRO FO 27/808 (q NJ, I, 405 - 7); Normanby to Russell, confidential, 20 August 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 300 - 1).
129. Normanby to Palmerston, No 679, 26 October 1848: PRO FO 27/814 (q NJ, II, 264 - 5).
130. GM, VI, 245.

exacerbated the poor relations between Britain and Spain and acted as a minor irritant between Britain and France. The most important thing about the British attitudes towards the refugees, however, was the influence that those attitudes had a forming opinions about the new Republic. Judgements about the new rulers in France were likely to be more hostile where Louis Philippe was regarded with sympathy and respect than where he was regarded with dislike and ridicule.

iii) BRITAIN AND THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

"If retribution could have fallen alone upon L. Phillippe [sic] & Guizot one might almost be glad," wrote Clarendon on 27 February, ". . . but their fate is hardly perceptible in the ocean of trouble which has overwhelmed them and I quite tremble to think of the amount of disaster that may be oncoming."¹³¹ Clarendon's view was a popular one. Whatever one's views about Louis Philippe's regime, it was widely assumed, except in Radical circles,¹³² that the Republic would be worse. Some newspapers condemned the members of the Provisional Government as dangerous, unprincipled revolutionaries.¹³³ The majority, however, thought the Provisional Government was a motley collection of inexperienced idealists (like Lamartine), violent demagogues (like Ledru Rollin), and unrealistic but dangerous theorists (like Louis Blanc), which would be incapable of maintaining peace and stability.¹³⁴ No newspaper questioned the right of the French people to choose their own rulers, but many doubted the wisdom of that choice.

131. Clarendon to Lansdowne, copy, 27 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 f135.

132. DN, 26 February 1848, 2 - 3; York Courant, 2 March 1848, 5; ILN, 4 March 1848, 144.

133. Standard, 28 February 1848, 2; MP, 29 February and 1 March 1848, 4.

134. MC, 26 February 1848, 4; The Times, 28 February 1848, 4; British Quarterly Review, VII, 520 - 2; Quarterly Review, LXXXII, 576 - 83; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 213 and 275 - 6.

In the opinion of many British observers, nowhere was the unsuitability for high office of the new French ministers better demonstrated than in the way they disregarded the doctrines of laissez - faire and favoured state intervention in the economy. The French ministers, observed Macaulay to Morpeth, "are refuting the doctrines of political economy in the way that a man would refute the doctrine of gravitation by jumping from the Monument."¹³⁵ They "betray a profound ignorance of the functions of government, and of the natural laws which regulate alike the production of food and the quantity of employment", judged The Economist. "No government ought to attempt to regulate the hours of labour; no government can guarantee work to all its citizens; nor guarantee the subsistence of the workmen by this labour."¹³⁶ The Provisional Government, it was thought, had contracted obligations which, in the words of The Times, "it is impossible to fulfil",¹³⁷ and this led inevitably on to consideration about what would happen when the policies failed. The consensus, from Protectionists to Radicals, was that French trade and industry would be destroyed, and that the Provisional Government would be discredited. There would be increased social unrest and another revolution, probably resulting in a more extreme government.¹³⁸ Republicanism and socialism was on trial in France, wrote the Spectator, and Europe was watching the result with great interest. The initial results, however, led one to believe that the experiment would fail.¹³⁹ To be fair, the rapid decline of the French economy after the February Revolution seemed to prove the validity of the British criticisms, as the British press was

135. Morpeth's Diary, 4 March 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f11.

136. The Economist, 4 March 1848, 257.

137. The Times, 1 March 1848, 5.

138. MC, 28 February 1848, 4; MP, 29 February 1848, 4; ILN, 4 March 1848, 143 - 4; Spectator, 4 March 1848, 213; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 383 - 4; Westminster Review, XLIX, 103 - 19 and 178 - 92.

139. Spectator, 11 March 1848, 250.

quick to point out.¹⁴⁰ But the British had never felt that there was any need for proof. The belief in the benefits of laissez - faire was so ingrained that any alternative was simply dismissed as unworkable.

This assessment of the Provisional Government's social and economic policies served to confirm the widespread assumption in Britain that the revolution in France was not over, that the relative calm in Paris during the first week of March was only the lull in the storm.¹⁴¹ It was not an assumption that eased British anxiety. It was a matter of "justice and of plain common sense" to desire a stable government in France, declared The Times. Instability led to disorder, damaged trade and industry, and increased the chances of war.

If there is to be a change, if the bubble is to burst, if Lamartine is to collapse into a poet, and Louis Blanc into something still smaller and less practical, let it not be soon. Let Paris have time to settle down . . .

If there was further fighting, or if there was an immediate attempt at a monarchical reaction, the republicans might be driven to further extremes or conceivably the mass of the people might unite behind the Provisional Government in defence of law and order. A period of calm, it was thought, would give the French people time to realise that the policies of the Provisional Government would not work.¹⁴²

The British Government also hoped for a period of calm. Initially ministers had feared the worst: "This is the beginning", noted Hobhouse, remembering 1792; "who will live to see the end?"¹⁴³ Normanby's despatches and letters of the 26th and 27th, however, helped to ease those fears.

140. DN, 15 March 1848, 4; MG, 15 March 1848, 4; The Economist, 18 and 25 March 1848, 309 - 11 and 337 - 8; The Times, 14 and 25 April 1848, 5 and 4; Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXIII, 396 - 404.

141. MC, 26 February 1848, 4; MH, 28 February 1848, 4; MP, 8 March 1848, 4; Queen Victoria to Melbourne, 15 March 1848: QVL, II, 195; Cobden to his wife, 18 March 1848: J. Morley: The Life of Richard Cobden 14th edn., (London 1920), 483.

142. The Times, 5 March 1848, 4. Cf MH, 4 and 6 March 1848, 4; MP, 8 March 1848, 4.

143. Hobhouse's Diary, 27 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f100.

The ambassador reported that order was being restored and that the moderate republicans, led by Lamartine, were gaining ascendancy over the socialists and the anarchists.¹⁴⁴ Particularly welcome was the news that the French ministers "wish peace and respect to all territorial divisions and that as a proof of this they are resolved even if Belgium offers to unite itself with France to refuse it."¹⁴⁵ In the light of these reports, the British Government was prepared to encourage Lamartine. There was little expectation that he would remain in power for long, for it was assumed that the Parisian republicans would soon tire of his moderation, but whilst he did control affairs it was thought advisable to support him "on acct. of his own real merits, and to prevent worse".¹⁴⁶ A "pacific orderly Republic", wrote Russell on 1 March, "must be the utmost extent of our wishes." However, given France's enormous internal problems, the fallacious policies of the Provisional Government and the inflammable state of the rest of Europe, the Prime Minister did not hold out much hope that it could be achieved.¹⁴⁷

* * *

On the evening of the 25th Brunnow and Dietrichstein, the Russian and Austrian ambassadors in London, had a private interview with Palmerston during which, according to Brunnow's account, they expressed their deep concern about the events in France. The revolution, they argued, threatened the peace of Europe and therefore it was important that the four remaining monarchical Powers should do nothing precipitate or individually. They did not advocate that the four Powers should try to overthrow the new Republic, but they felt that they should

-
144. Normanby to Palmerston, No 96, 26 February 1848, and No98, 27 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 112 - 15 and 127 - 30).
 145. Normanby to Palmerston, 3 p.m. 27 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/122.
 146. Palmerston to Normanby, 3 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/11. Cf Grey's Journal, 29 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hobhouse's Diary, 1 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f108 (q Dorchester, VI, 206).
 147. Russell to Clarendon, 1 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.

take a firm, united stance and should declare their joint intention to resist Republican aggression. "Tenez pour certain", Brunnow observed,

que si l'Angleterre, l'Autriche, la Prusse et la Russie demeurent d'accord entr'Elles, nous maintiendrons la France dans ses limites. Elle reculera devant la double danger d'une guerre continentale et maritime, à la fois. Mais si elle entrevoit la possibilité de vous placer sur une ligne de conduite, séparée de notre, - Vous la verrez déborder, en Belgique, sur la Rhin, en Italie, partout, et la guerre deviendra pour nous tous un malheur dès lors inévitable.

In conclusion, Brunnow assured Palmerston that the Tsar "ne laissera pas ses Alliés sans soutien."¹⁴⁸ It was a well written, well reasoned argument which appealed to the widespread fear that the Republic would embark on an expansionist war. Brunnow and Dietrichstein did not relish such a conflict, but they felt that if it came the Republic should be made to suffer the consequences. "Russia would look on & wait," Brunnow told Hobhouse, "but if attacked would make a great effort, and if victorious there would be no more magnanimity".¹⁴⁹

Palmerston's precise response to the approach from Brunnow and Dietrichstein is unclear. According to Van de Weyer, he urged the Prussian Government not to allow a Russian army to march through Germany,¹⁵⁰ but there is no confirmation of this from British sources. But it is clear that the two ambassadors were unhappy with Palmerston's answer, for Brunnow asked that his letter be forwarded to Russell. Russell, however, agreed with Palmerston. Britain, he judged, should communicate her views on the Republic "freely & in a friendly spirit" to the Northern Courts, but ought "to avoid any thing like a Congress . . . [which] would naturally seize the suspicions of France." Russell felt that there were two dangers to the peace of Europe: the Republic might embark on an expansionist war, designed to extend

148. Brunnow to Palmerston, confidential, 26 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/BR/210.

149. Hobhouse's Diary, 26 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f99.

150. Van de Weyer to d'Hoffschmidt, confidential, 3 March 1848: Ridder, I, 70.

the frontiers of France and spread republican principles; or the Republic might be provoked into a war by being challenged or threatened by the Northern Powers. "I do not feel at all satisfied with the present state of things", Russell concluded, "- but from what quarter & in what manner danger may arise, it is not easy to say."¹⁵¹

In an effort to reassure the ambassadors, Russell spoke to them himself. Lamartine's words, he urged, should be construed "in the sense most favourable to a respect for the rights of other countries - & States - that we ought not to provoke war or weaken a Govt. still in the cradle, & that cradle rocked by armed men." Unfortunately, he told Clarendon, Brunnow and Dietrichstein "do not listen to me, & are in despair that England should show any favour to the young Republic."¹⁵² Wellington, at Russell's request,¹⁵³ also tried to reassure Dietrichstein. But, he reported, he seemed to make little impression.¹⁵⁴ According to Dietrichstein, however, Wellington said that if war did break out in Europe Britain would fight alongside the Northern Powers.¹⁵⁵ Even if Wellington had made no such promise, as seems likely, it was the impression he had created, and it confirmed the belief of Brunnow and Dietrichstein that the British Government's determination to maintain an independent line towards the Republic was not shared by other, in their eyes more responsible, British statesmen.

On 28 February the Cabinet discussed what line the British Government should adopt towards the French Republic. Russell announced that he proposed to make a statement in the Commons to the effect that Britain did not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of France. "This

151. Russell to Palmerston, 27 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/184.

152. Russell to Clarendon, 3 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.

153. Russell to Wellington, 4 March 1848: Well. P. 157/97 (q Walpole, II, 34).

154. Wellington to Russell, copy, 6 March 1848: Well. P. 157/100.

155. It. Prob., 73.

seemed to please the Cabinet", noted Hobhouse, "but Palmerston interposed & said that such a volunteer declaration would look like being in a hurry to acknowledge the Republic." He did not disagree with the sentiments which Russell proposed to express, but he warned that care must be taken about the susceptibilities of the Northern Courts. He "thought it better to wait for a question and then to say simply that of course no one thought of interfering in the internal affairs of France or any other Country." Palmerston was supported by Lansdowne, and in the end the rest of the Cabinet agreed.¹⁵⁶ Palmerston had insisted on this compromise because he did not want to show too much favour to the Republic, whilst at the same time not wishing "to discourage the Friends of the English alliance" in France.¹⁵⁷ The rest of the Cabinet had agreed because, as Clarendon observed,¹⁵⁸ they knew that a careful balance had to be struck between not offending France and not offending the Northern Powers. It is revealing, however, that neither Russell nor Palmerston thought it necessary to discuss the proposal of Brunnow and Dietrichstein for a defensive entente. The discussion had been about how much sympathy to show the Provisional Government, and not about whether or not to show any sympathy.

On 29 February Cobden wrote of his alarm at "the tone of the clubs and coteries of London" towards the Republic, which he judged was "decidedly hostile". He felt that it was "the duty of every man in England . . . to raise the cry for neutrality."¹⁵⁹ Cobden had mistaken disapproval of the revolution and anxiety about the future for hostility towards the Republic. Newspapers of all shades of political opinion

156. Hobhouse's Diary, 28 February 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 ff103 - 4. That evening Russell gave the agreed answer in reply to a question from Joseph Hume (Hansard, XCVI, 1389).

157. Palmerston to Normanby, 28 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/10.

158. Clarendon to G. Grey, copy, 29 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 f138.

159. Cobden to Combe, 29 February 1848: Morley, 481.

advocated non-intervention in the internal affairs of France.¹⁶⁰

Those who did speak or write of war with the Republic did so in defensive terms - about maintaining the balance of power in the event of French aggression¹⁶¹ or about honouring Britain's treaty obligations.¹⁶²

The right of a people to choose their own form of government was one of the favourite freedoms advocated by mid-nineteenth century British politicians and leader writers, and just because that choice was thought to be unwise did not mean that the right should be challenged.

Not everyone in Britain believed that the outbreak of even a major war on the continent need force Britain to intervene. The Channel and the Royal Navy, it was argued, would keep Britain secure from invasion. "The true attitude of England, in the case of another continental revolutionary war, is strict neutrality", declared the Daily News.

There is no credit to be got by trying to prop up tottering despotisms, and little by fighting to obtain constitutions or national independence for communities who have not arms and brains to get and keep them for themselves.¹⁶³

At the other end of the political spectrum, the Duke of Newcastle argued that Britain should not intervene until the other Powers had fought themselves to a standstill; "then will be our time to step forward & then we may [be] enabled to act with effect & stand in the position of moderators of Europe & the world."¹⁶⁴

The members of Russell's Government did not believe that Britain could or should stand aloof from a major European war. If the Republic

160. The Times, 28 February 1848, 4; MC, 29 February 1848, 5; MG, 1 March 1848, 4; MH, 1 March 1848, 4; MP, 1 March 1848, 4; ILN, 4 March 1848, 127; York Herald, 4 March 1848, 5.

161. Wellington to the King of Hanover, copy, confidential, 16 March 1848: Well. P. 157/125; Manchester Courier, 1 March 1848, 4 - 5; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 368 - 70.

162. Stanley to Newcastle, copy, 2 March 1848: Der. P. Box 177/2; The Economist, 4 March 1848, 255 - 7.

163. DN, 28 February 1848, 2. Cf Spectator, 4 March 1848, 225.

164. Newcastle to Stanley, 29 February 1848: Der. P. Box 147/1.

attacked its neighbours, Palmerston told Normanby, "we cannot sit quiet & see Belgium overrun, and Antwerp become a French Port; and even a war in other Directions would sooner or later draw us into its vortex."¹⁶⁵ Ministers recognised that in a European war Britain's economic interests would be damaged, her vital strategic interests would be threatened, and the balance of power as established in 1815, by which Britain set so much store, might be overthrown. They did not welcome the prospect of war - for Britain had little to gain and much to lose from a major conflict - but they knew that if there was one Britain would have to intervene to defend her vital interests.

Palmerston's initial instructions to Normanby after the revolution reflect the British Government's desire to prevent a European war and to remain on good terms with both the Republic and the Northern Courts. "I can give you but provisional Instructions," the Foreign Secretary wrote,

continue at your Post keep up unofficial & useful Communications with the Men who from Hour to Hour (I say not even from Day to Day) may have the Direction of Events, but commit us to no acknowledgement of any men, nor of any Things - our Principles of action are to acknowledge whatever Rule may be established with apparent Prospect of Permanency but none other. We desire Friendship and extended Commercial Intercourse with France, and Peace between France & the rest of Europe - we will engage to prevent the Rest of Europe from Meddling with France, which indeed we are quite sure they have no Intention of doing; The French Rulers must engage to prevent France from assailing any Part of the Rest of Europe; upon such a Basis our Relations with France may be placed on a Footing more friendly than they have been or were likely to be with Louis Philippe & Guizot - I have no Time to say more.¹⁶⁶

Palmerston seems to have been trying to develop for Britain a rôle similar to that she had pursued so successfully during the Belgian crisis. Britain would hold the balance of power in Europe, siding

-
165. Palmerston to Normanby, 27 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/9 (q Ashley, II, 72). Cf Grey's Journal, 27 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Russell to Clarendon, 29 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.
166. Palmerston to Normanby, 26 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/7 (mostly q Ashley, II, 71).

with France against threats from the Northern Powers, and with the Northern Powers against threats from France. In such a position, Palmerston would be able to meet a challenge from revolutionary France or the reactionary Northern Powers.

On 28 February Normanby visited the French Foreign Ministry for the first time since the revolution to communicate the contents of the instructions he had received. Lamartine's response was encouraging. His "first desire", he told Normanby, "was to complete the developement of the English alliance" which he felt would promote "the only true interests of France." He admitted that there was a powerful body of opinion in France which wanted to overthrow the Vienna settlement by war, but he said that he had resisted such demands. Nevertheless he warned "that if any weaker State struggling to maintain its independence should be attacked they would feel it their duty to fly to their rescue". He made specific reference to France's relations with Spain, stigmatizing Louis Philippe's policy as "antinational" and assuring Normanby that the Republic wanted no "exclusive influence" in Madrid, before emphasising the measures the Provisional Government had taken to restore law and order. As Normanby started to leave, Lamartine made on final appeal:

'All now depends on you. If England speedily puts in a shape, which can be made public what you have expressed to me personally today we are all saved here, and the foundation of the most lasting and sincere alliance is established between two great nations who ought always to be friends.'¹⁶⁷

Normanby was deeply impressed as to Lamartine's sincerity and believed that Britain should respond to his overture. "I am convinced", he wrote, "that such a timely declaration on our part would do more here to create an English feeling & to maintain the cause of order . . . than any thing else in the world."¹⁶⁸ In London the reaction

167. Normanby to Palmerston, private and confidential, 28 February 1848: PRO FO 27/803 (q NJ, I, 132 - 8).

168. Normanby to Palmerston, 28 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/125.

was more cautious: Grey was so surprised that Lamartine had said "all that is right" that he suspected that he had been flattering Normanby,¹⁶⁹ whilst Greville feared that he had shown too much sympathy towards the new regime.¹⁷⁰ The latter point was subsequently taken up by the Queen. "Lord Normanby is inclined to be on too friendly & confidential terms with M. Lamartine", she wrote on 10 March. "Did Lord Palmerston Caution him? We shd. do all what is right but not show any empressement towards what is after all a great Calamity."¹⁷¹ But Palmerston was prepared to give Lamartine some encouragement. Whilst repeating that Britain would not recognise the Republic until a stable government had been established, he praised the "enlightened sentiments" Lamartine had expressed and said that if the principle of "respect by every Power for the Rights and Independence of other States" was observed by France, as he felt sure it would be by the other Powers, there would be a good chance that peace could be maintained and that Britain and France could remain on terms of friendship.¹⁷²

Lamartine and Normanby were disappointed by Palmerston's response.¹⁷³ They did not know that he had wanted to go further, but had been forced to compromise. The Queen had objected to the desire Palmerston had expressed in the draft despatch for "most cordial friendship" with the Republic as "rather too strong",¹⁷⁴ whilst Russell had thought it "desireable to pin down the new Govt. to terms which will bind them to our allies, as well as to ourselves."¹⁷⁵ As a result, in the final despatch "most cordial friendship" became simply "friendship"

169. Grey's Journal, 29 February 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

170. Greville to Clarendon, 2 and 4 March 1848: Clar. P. Box c521.

171. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 10 March 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/348 (q RvP, 69).

172. Palmerston to Normanby, No 70, 29 February 1848: PRO FO 27/797.

173. Normanby to Palmerston, No 114, 2 March 1848: ibid 27/804 (q NJ, I, 153 - 5); Normanby to Palmerston, 4 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/130.

174. Queen Victoria to Russell, 29 February 1848: QVL, II, 183.

175. Russell to Palmerston, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/185.

and the section about respecting the integrity of other countries was inserted. The response may not have been as warm as Lamartine had hoped, but nor was it as cold as the Russian and Austrian ambassadors would have wished. The British Government had maintained its delicate balancing act between the Republic and the Northern Powers.

* * *

At the same time as Lamartine was giving his private assurances to Normanby, he was making a public declaration of the Republic's pacific intentions. On 27 February he sent a Note to the diplomatic corps in Paris which he hoped would assuage their fears. It was less informative than his conversations with Normanby, but its basic content was the same.¹⁷⁶ In Britain, where the Note was scrutinised closely, the reaction was mixed. The Times was uncertain, saying it "may mean a great deal, but it may also mean nothing at all."¹⁷⁷ Russell was hopeful, calling it "very pacific".¹⁷⁸ Palmerston was more cautious: he found its contents "very gratifying", but wondered how far Lamartine "may finally be able to carry out his Intentions".¹⁷⁹ Even so, he cited it to Metternich as further proof of the Republic's pacific intentions.¹⁸⁰

The Note was not designed as a statement of policy. That came a week later with the publication of Lamartine's Manifesto.¹⁸¹ This is an important document, but it is also confusing for its tone varies. Parts of it were conciliatory, as where Lamartine promised that the Republic "ne fera point de propagande sourde ou incendiaire chez ses voisins" and where he assured Britain that the Republic wanted no

176. Circular Note by Lamartine, 27 February 1848: DD, I, 1; Jennings, 10.

177. The Times, 1 March 1848, 5.

178. Russell to Clarendon, 1 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.

179. Palmerston to Normanby, 3 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/11.

180. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/808 (q Ashley, II, 75).

181. The Manifesto is printed in Lamartine, Histoire, II, 34 - 41. The most recent and best analysis of it is Jennings, 10 - 16.

exclusive influence in Spain. Elsewhere, however, the Manifesto seemed to threaten the other Powers. "Les traités de 1815", Lamartine declared, "n'existent plus en droit aux yeux de la République française", although he promised that the Republic would only try to effect changes by peaceful means. This declaration was followed by another, still more menacing in the eyes of the rest of Europe:

si l'heure de la reconstruction de quelques nationalités opprimées en Europe, ou ailleurs, nous paraissait avoir sonné dans les décrets de la Providence . . . la République française se croirait en droit d'armer elle-même pour protéger ces mouvements légitimes de croissance et de nationalité des peuples.

Lamartine claimed that if France "a la conscience de sa part de mission libérale et civilisatrice dans la siècle, il n'y a pas un de ces mots qui signifie guerre." But was this assertion reconcilable with the determination to change the Vienna settlement and the promise to assist oppressed nationalities?

In England, the reaction to the Manifesto was predominantly unfavourable. Some observers, mainly Protectionists, shared a view expressed by Dietrichstein that it was a virtual declaration of war on the rest of Europe.¹⁸² The majority, however, did not know what to make of it. The problem, observed the Morning Chronicle, was the ambiguity of Lamartine's language. The refusal to acknowledge the legality of the treaties of 1815 combined with the promise to assist oppressed nationalities alarmed the British press. These were dangerous principles to adopt, it was thought, and if France followed them there would be a European war. The problem was that from the pacific tone of the rest of the Manifesto no one could be sure whether Lamartine intended to follow these principles. Was it a bellicose declaration, disguised in the language of peace and conciliation, or was it a pacific declaration,

182. Spencer to Bedford, 6 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 290); Van de Weyer to d'Hoffschmidt, confidential, 6 March 1848: Ridder, I, 102; Quarterly Review, LXXXII, 583.

dressed up in the language of war and revolution? The British press was unsure, but it had a tendency to fear the worst.¹⁸³

Dislike of the Manifesto was not universal in England. Lamartine, wrote the Daily News, "preaches the doctrine of peace with philosophic conviction and poetic fervour." It regretted the reference to the treaties of 1815, but it understood the domestic pressures on Lamartine and judged that the Provisional Government hoped to negotiate slight modifications to the Vienna settlement rather than major changes - a return to the boundaries established for France before Napoleon's return from Elba rather than the reannexation of Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine. The Northern Powers could not oppose these changes on principle, the News argued, because they had altered the Vienna settlement with respect to Cracow, and it hoped that the changes could be effected without recourse to war and without involving Britain.¹⁸⁴

The line taken by the Daily News is important for two reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates that a small but significant body of opinion in England accepted that the Vienna settlement was unsatisfactory before the March revolutions revealed the strength of the nationalist aspirations of the Germans, Italians, Magyars and Slavs. Secondly, it reflects clearly an attitude which can also be detected in the other newspapers. The Manifesto was an important and to some extent worrying statement of policy, but it referred to the rest of Europe. Britain might hold strong views on the proposed changes, but she was not directly affected.

Although the general feeling in England was that the Manifesto contained no direct reference to Britain, across the Irish Sea there was a strong opinion to the contrary. There were three oppressed

183. MC, 7 March 1848, 4; MP, 7 March 1848, 4; The Times, 7 March 1848, 4; MG, 8 March 1848, 4; MH, 8 March 1848, 4.

184. DN, 7 March 1848, 2 - 3.

nations in Europe, John Dillon told a meeting of the Irish Confederation: Poland, Italy and Ireland.¹⁸⁵ The promise that the Republic would assist oppressed nationalities was of particular importance to Ireland, wrote John Mitchel in the United Irishman. It meant that

if Ireland rose in insurrection . . . and if England, or any other foreign power, landed one man on this our island to intimidate or defeat us in the assertion of our natural and national right, then the French Republic would believe itself entitled, i.e., justified, necessitated, to protect by force of arms that 'legitimate movement' of an oppressed nation for life, for nationality, for greatness.¹⁸⁶

This interpretation of the Manifesto alarmed Clarendon greatly. He had been anxious lest the Provisional Government should say anything which might act as a stimulus to the Repeal movement.¹⁸⁷ Now Lamartine had published a statement which seemed "almost addressed to this Country & assuredly will be so received here".¹⁸⁸ It was an interpretation which Lamartine had not envisaged would be put on his words. When Normanby mentioned it to him, he laughed and said "Autant les Nationalités d'Alsace ou de Bourgogne!"¹⁸⁹ "I quite know enough of your present subjects to believe that they might think Lamartine must have meant them when he talked of reviving nationalities", wrote Normanby to Clarendon, "but here it was understood as much . . . as if the word Poland had been used."¹⁹⁰ What was important to Clarendon, however, was not what Lamartine had meant but what the Irish Repealers thought he had meant, and the phrases in the Manifesto were sufficiently vague and their tone sufficiently menacing to make the interpretation put on them by Dillon and Mitchel credible.

185. Duffy, 545.

186. United Irishman, 11 March 1848, 72. There is, of course, a significant difference between being "entitled" to intervene, which is what Lamartine said, and being "necessitated" to do so, which is what Mitchel asserted.

187. Clarendon to Russell, copies, 2 and 5 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 ff142 and 147.

188. Clarendon to Palmerston, 7 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/CL/483.

189. Normanby to Palmerston, 12 March 1848: ibid GC/NO/135.

190. Normanby to Clarendon, 11 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 20.

On the fringes of the Government in London the reaction to the Manifesto was as unfavourable as it was among the public as a whole.¹⁹¹ Those with access to Normanby's reports, however, knew that its true meaning was that the Provisional Government wished to maintain peace and that the ominous parts had been inserted to appease the French public.¹⁹² "The Circular is Evidently a Piece of Patchwork", Palmerston told Clarendon,

put together by opposite Parties in the govt. the one war-like & disturbing, the other Peaceful & conciliatory. I should say that if you were to put the whole of it into a Crucible, and to evaporate the gaseous Parts & scum off the Dross you would find the Regulus to be Peace & good Fellowship with other governments.¹⁹³

"If the Powers of Europe wished to make war against France, there are in that Circular abundant materials wherewith to pick a Quarrel with her", he observed to Normanby; "if on the other hand the Powers of Europe are desirous of maintaining Peace, there is to be found in the Circular the substance of Peace although somewhat clothed in the Garb of Defiance."¹⁹⁴ At the same time, Palmerston recognised that the Republic's good intentions were only assured as long as Lamartine held his position of pre-eminence.¹⁹⁵

Palmerston came the closest of any foreign observer to understanding the true meaning of the Manifesto.¹⁹⁶ His perceptiveness, however,

-
191. Greville to Clarendon, 6 March 1848: ibid Box c521; Hervey to Clarendon, 10 March 1848: ibid Irish Box 16; H. Greville: Leaves from the Diary of Henry Greville (ed. Viscountess Enfield), (London 1883), I, 237.
192. On 3 March, for example, Lamartine told Normanby that he had not wanted to say anything about the treaties of 1815, but that because of the hatred with which they were regarded in France it had been "impossible" to say nothing (Normanby to Palmerston, No 118, 3 March 1848: PRO FO 27/804, q NJ, I, 164 - 6).
193. Palmerston to Clarendon, 9 March 1848: Clar. P. Box c524 (q Ashley, II, 76). Cf Lansdowne to Russell, 7 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (partly q LCJR, I, 291); Russell to Wellington, confidential, 12 March 1848: Well. P. 157/115 - 16 (q Walpole, II, 37).
194. Palmerston to Normanby, No 89, 7 March 1848: PRO FO 27/797 (partly q Marquis of Lorne: Viscount Palmerston K.G. (London 1892), 99 - 100).
195. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 13 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/268.
196. Jennings, 18 - 19.

was not because he had studied the document more astutely than most, but because Lamartine had told Normanby what it meant. He recognised that Lamartine might not have been telling the truth or that he might be unable to pursue the pacific policy he avowed, but he saw nothing in the Manifesto which contradicted the private assurances already transmitted through Normanby.

iv) BRITAIN AND THE EUROPEAN REACTION TO THE REVOLUTION

"Sellez vos chevaux, messieurs", Tsar Nicholas I is reputed to have declared upon hearing of the revolution in Paris: "la République est proclamée en France."¹⁹⁷ The story is probably apocryphal, but it gives an accurate impression of the Tsar's reaction to the news. His response was swift and decisive. He ordered the army to be put on a war footing and made available seven million silver roubles, about £1,200,000, which it was calculated would enable an army of 450,000 men to take the field in less than three months. He did not intend to attack France - Nesselrode assured Bloomfield, the British ambassador, that the military preparations "were defensive" - but he dreaded "the impulse which the success of the Republicans of France will give to the spread of liberal opinions in Europe," and he was determined "to stem the torrent of rebellion against vested authority which he apprehends may otherwise approach His own frontier."¹⁹⁸ The military circles in St. Petersburg were in a state of the "greatest excitement", Bloomfield reported, but he doubted whether the danger of war was as great as it seemed. He thought the Russian Government would not "dare . . . leave Poland without a sufficient force to repress disorder" and he felt reassured by Nesselrode's "calm & cautious"

197. E. Bapst: L'Empereur Nicolas I^{er} et la Deuxième République Française (Paris 1898), 2.

198. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 48, 6 March 1848: PRO FO 65/348.

reaction to the news.¹⁹⁹

Like his master, Nesselrode was happy to let "ces féroces Français cuire dans leur jus".²⁰⁰ He told the Russian ambassador in Berlin that if the revolution did not spread to Prussia, "je serais . . . très content."²⁰¹ Where Nesselrode differed from the Tsar was over how best to contain the revolution. Nicholas seemed to relish the prospect of war. Nesselrode thought more in terms of a diplomatic barrier to France, although without discounting the military option which he thought would be an invaluable aid to diplomacy. On 11 March he told Bloomfield that he thought it

impossible to expect that the French people would remain for any length of time peaceably within their own frontiers and that sooner or later they would be endeavouring to spread . . . the pernicious principles of their newly adopted form of Government. It was essential therefore that the Great Powers should come to an understanding as to the course of combined action to be adopted under these circumstances, and that he must always attach the highest value to the adhesion of England to any such project, for Her adhesion would enable the allies to present a most effectual barrier by land and sea to French encroachments.

Bloomfield made no comment, but he gained the impression "that the basis of an offensive and defensive alliance against France has been . . . for some time past agreed upon between Austria, Prussia and Russia."²⁰²

The apprehension in St. Petersburg on learning of the February Revolution was echoed in Berlin where, according to Westmorland, "the greatest alarm prevails both in the Royal Family & in the public".²⁰³ The King saw the events in Paris as a threat to European peace, and, writing to Queen Victoria, he urged that the four monarchical Powers

199. Bloomfield to Palmerston, 7 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/BL/186.

200. Nesselrode to Chreptowitch, 9 March 1848: A. de Nesselrode (ed.): Lettres et Papiers du Chancelier Comte de Nesselrode 1760 - 1856 (Paris n.d.), IX, 70.

201. Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 7 March 1848: ibid, 69.

202. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 52, 11 March 1848: PRO FO 65/348.

203. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 40, 28 February 1848: ibid 64/285.

should, at the first sign of French aggression, "let France feel by sea and by land, as in the years '13, '14, and '15, what our union may mean."²⁰⁴ The reaction of the Prussian Government was more measured. Canitz, the Foreign Minister, assured Westmorland that Prussia had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of France, but that it was determined "to resist any attempt . . . to overthrow the territorial arrangements sanctioned by the Treaties of Vienna."²⁰⁵ Towards that end, Prussia, like other German states, began to prepare its army for war.²⁰⁶

Metternich saw the events in Paris as proof of the validity of the warnings he had been giving the rest of Europe. The revolution, he told the Austrian representative in Rome, "a répudié les dernières apparences de la fantasmagorie libérale qui a servi de voile au radicalisme."²⁰⁷ His thoughts swung back sixty-five years, and during a long interview with Ponsonby on 1 March he remarked that "the present State of affairs in France was just what it was in 1793." It was now time, he told Ponsonby, for Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia to revive their wartime alliance in order to resist possible French aggression.²⁰⁸ As well as the direct threat from France, however, Metternich feared that Europe would be subverted by revolutionary propaganda spread by the Republic. Austria, he told Hardinge on the 9th, "never was so sound",²⁰⁹ but two days earlier he had told Ponsonby that Germany, "with the exception of Prussia", was in a condition

204. King Frederick William to Queen Victoria, 27 February 1848: QVL, II, 177 - 9. Cf Gillessen, 2 - 4.

205. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 41, 29 February 1848: PRO FO 64/285.

206. Jennings, 2.

207. Metternich to Lützow, confidential, 12 March 1848: M.A. de Klinkowstroem (ed.): Mémoires, Documents et Ecrits Divers laissés par le Prince de Metternich, Chancelier de Cour et D'Etat (Paris 1884), VII, 605.

208. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 32, 1 March 1848: PRO FO 7/347 (partly q PP, LVII, 482).

209. Londonderry, 30.

"which may be called Revolutionary."²¹⁰ And he had never made any secret of his views on the state of Italy. King Charles Albert of Sardinia was being encouraged by the same type of men "who have just now overturned in France the Throne of 1830", he told Ponsonby. He pleaded yet again for Palmerston to stop encouraging the liberals and thereby the unrest.²¹¹

It is an exaggeration to say that Metternich "welcomed" the prospect of war with the Republic because he thought it would reunite Britain with the Northern Powers.²¹² But, fearing that war was probable, he hoped that the British Government would see the error of its ways and would join the Northern Courts in resisting French expansionism and stamping out disaffection. On 7 March he sent an identic despatch to St. Petersburg, Berlin and London in which he proposed that the four monarchical Powers should tell the Provisional Government that they did not intend to interfere in France's internal affairs providing the Republic agreed to respect existing treaties, and that they should warn it that if the Republic attacked any one of the four Powers the others would regard it as a declaration of war against them all.²¹³

The Tsar welcomed Metternich's proposal. He now considered the maintenance of peace as possible, "whereas it was at first looked upon as a foolish dream."²¹⁴ But Metternich had always calculated on the support of Russia and Prussia. The important reaction would be that of the British Government. Without Britain, the alliance would not be seen as an alliance in defence of order and the status quo, but as an alliance in support of reaction and despotism. Metternich recognised as clearly as Lamartine the importance of a British declaration

210. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 34, 7 March 1848: PRO FO 7/347.

211. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 33, 3 March 1848: ibid (partly q PP, LVII, 483).

212. It. Prob., 75.

213. Circular despatch by Metternich, 7 March 1848: Klinkowstroem, VII, 598 - 9.

214. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 60, 18 March 1848: PRO FO 65/348.

against the Republic.

"Here is a pretty to do at Paris", wrote Palmerston to Ponsonby on 29 February. It seemed likely, he went on, that the Republic would continue in France, at least for the moment. Any attempt at reaction, either with an internal or external stimulus, would spell disaster; "the only chance for tranquillity and order in France and for Peace in Europe is to give support to Lamartine."²¹⁵ This letter accompanied a despatch to Ponsonby, copies of which were sent to Bloomfield and Westmorland, in which Palmerston gave his opinion as to the best line the monarchical Powers could adopt towards the Republic. The "best and almost only chance of preserving peace in Europe", he declared, must be found in an entire abstinence [sic] on the part of the other Powers of Europe from any measures which might wear the appearance of a threatening demonstration against France, and which might indicate any intention of interfering in her internal concerns.²¹⁶

Whereas the Northern Courts thought that a demonstration of strength and resolve would deter French aggression, Palmerston recognised that such a demonstration might antagonise the Provisional Government and exacerbate its domestic problems.

Advising moderation towards the Republic was only part of Palmerston's recommendations to the Northern Courts. He was convinced that if the states of Germany and Italy were to avoid revolution their governments must institute constitutional reforms. He advised the Austrian Government to initiate reforms in northern Italy and recommended that it settle its differences with Sardinia so that they could combine to meet the new challenge,²¹⁷ and he warned the Prussian Government of the danger of ignoring popular demands for reform and relying on the

215. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/808 (q Ashley, II, 75).

216. Circular despatch to Ponsonby, Bloomfield and Westmorland, 29 February 1848: PRO FO 7/343.

217. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/808 (q Ashley, II, 75).

army, citing the events in Paris as an example of what could happen.²¹⁸ But there was something half-hearted about the manner in which he put forward this advice. Although convinced that Austria and Prussia would be wise to adopt his suggestions, he clearly did not expect them to do so. Meanwhile, he waited to hear how Metternich, Nesselrode and Canitz had received the news of the revolution in France.

Initial reports on both sides seemed to suggest that Britain and the Northern Courts were close to agreement on their policy towards the Republic. Canitz, for example, "most heartily rejoices" at the attitude of the British Government as explained by Bunsen, Westmorland reported.²¹⁹ However closer examination of what had been said and clarification about what had been meant revealed that there was a significant divergence of opinion. Canitz had applauded Britain's attitude so warmly because Bunsen had gained the impression that the British Government would join Metternich's joint declaration and would "unflinchingly uphold" the Vienna settlement.²²⁰ Bunsen had misunderstood what had been said to him, Palmerston explained.

I recommended concert, & deliberation, & caution as to what should be done or said, and I have invariably expressed an opinion that in the present uncertain state of affairs in France, the less that is either done or said by the other Powers of Europe the better.

Those Frenchmen who favoured war should not be given an excuse to start one by arguing that the monarchical Powers were combining against the Republic.²²¹ It was on this principle that Palmerston explained the rejection of Metternich's proposal of 7 March.²²²

There was another reason why the British Government refused to join the Northern Courts in defence of the Vienna settlement. On

218. Palmerston to Westmorland, No 44, 10 March 1848: PRO FO 64/282.

219. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 43, 2 March 1848: ibid 64/285.

220. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 52, 9 March 1848: ibid.

221. Palmerston to Westmorland, No 44, 10 March 1848: ibid 64/282.

222. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 45, 20 March 1848: ibid 7/343.

7 March, before Metternich's proposal was received but in response to a similar suggestion from Bunsen, Russell told Palmerston that the British Government "should be guided by our general concern for the balance of power & the independence of States rather than the stipulation of 1815".²²³ Adjustments to the Vienna settlement were permissible, and in some cases even desirable, as long as the balance of power was maintained and essential British interests were not threatened. Britain had not guaranteed, and therefore had no obligation to defend, the whole of the Vienna settlement, Palmerston told Bunsen. When asked which parts of the settlement Britain would defend, Palmerston replied that it was not the practice of the British Government "to make any declaration as to what England would or would not do in any case which has not yet happened."²²⁴

It seems likely that there was a third factor which affected the British Government's thinking. Palmerston and his colleagues approved of the objectives, although not necessarily the methods, of many of the liberals in Germany and Italy, and this meant criticising the repressive policies of the Northern Courts. They could not ally themselves with the Northern Powers without seeming to abandon European liberalism, and in such circumstances the French Republic might pick up the mantle of the champion of European liberalism cast aside by the British Government.²²⁵ The Cabinet was conscious of a fundamental difference between "liberal" Britain and the "reactionary" Northern Powers, just as there seemed to be a fundamental difference between Britain and the French Republic. In its opinion, there was no natural affinity between the four monarchical Powers, as Metternich seemed to assume. Even so, had Palmerston believed that Metternich's proposal was beneficial

223. Russell to Palmerston, 7 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/188.

224. Palmerston to Westmorland, No 50, 14 March 1848: PRO FO 64/282.

225. This fear became an important factor in Government thinking later in the year (see below pp. 129, 295 and 299 - 300).

to the peace of Europe there seems little doubt that Britain would have associated with the Northern Powers. But Palmerston did not believe that the proposal would be beneficial - indeed he thought it would be harmful - and in such circumstances the difference between constitutional Britain and the despotic Northern Powers served to reinforce his rejection.

* * *

It was not only the Northern Powers that were alarmed by the news of the proclamation of the Second Republic. King Leopold, fearing that revolution would spread to Belgium, prepared to join Louis Philippe in exile and on the 26th he offered to abdicate.²²⁶ Van de Weyer, convinced that the French would invade Belgium, asked Palmerston to send a naval squadron to the Scheldt, where its presence "serait une démonstration décisive et forcerait le Gouvernement révolutionnaire de la France à abandonner ses projets d'envahissement."²²⁷ Fortunately, the Belgian Government was made of sterner stuff. It rejected the King's offer to abdicate, increased the garrisons of the frontier fortresses, arrested suspected revolutionaries, and sought confirmation of the guarantee of Belgian neutrality from the signatories of the Treaty of London.²²⁸ The precautions were wise, but as far as the Belgian people were concerned unnecessary. "The spirit of nationality and of repugnance to foreign intervention manifested amongst all classes is most decided", Howard de Walden reported on 4 March. "The tone of the high political Parties has been admirable, all uniting in support of the common cause - National Independence."²²⁹

The British Government was also anxious that Belgium should maintain

226. B.D. Gooch: Belgium and the February Revolution (The Hague 1963), 27 - 8.

227. Van de Weyer to d'Hoffschmidt, confidential, 5 p.m. 27 February 1848: Ridder, I, 6 - 7.

228. Gooch, 28 - 32.

229. Howard de Walden to Palmerston, No 11, 4 March 1848: PRO FO 10/137.

its independence and neutrality. Russell and Palmerston were prepared to go to war to defend Belgium,²³⁰ but they hoped that the Belgian Government would do nothing to provoke an attack or make a successful invasion possible. In contrast to his language to the Northern Courts, Palmerston warned the Belgian Government not "to rely too confidently on the Pacific disposition of the men who for the moment direct the Affairs of France". It would be "highly imprudent" for it "to make any military demonstrations which should indicate an expectation of attack", but it would be equally unwise not to "silently mature its [defensive] arrangements".²³¹

The British Government did not want Belgium to succumb to revolution or invasion, but there was a limit to how far it would go to help King Leopold and his Government. The February Revolution caused a financial crisis in Belgium, and the Belgian Government feared that unless the industrial distress was relieved a revolution might break out. It enquired whether the British Government would give a loan as British bankers had not been satisfied with the securities the Belgian Government had offered. Lansdowne, to whom Van de Weyer communicated the request, was sympathetic, but said that the state of public opinion on questions of finance precluded any loan.²³² Wood made a similar observation on 15 March when the Cabinet considered a request from King Leopold that the British Government should revive the annuity of £30,000 which he had given up in 1830. Sir George Grey added "that he had reports showing the tempting [sic] of the people in the manufacturing districts to republicanism - what would be said of another 30,000£ a year to keep up royalty in Belgium." Combined with certain

230. Palmerston to Normanby, 27 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/9 (q Ashley, II, 72); Russell's memorandum, 10 May 1848: PRO 30/22/70 (q Walpole, II, 42).

231. Palmerston to Howard de Walden, No 4, 6 March 1848: PRO FO 10/136.

232. Gooch, 71 - 3.

understandable doubts about whether Belgium was in as much danger as Leopold and his ministers claimed, this fear of provoking unrest in Britain was sufficient to persuade the Cabinet to reject the request.²³³ The British Government was anxious to maintain stability in Belgium, but not at the cost of increasing the chances of revolution at home.

The Belgian Government was not the only government which feared that the French revolution would find an echo in its own country. The Spanish Government was appalled by the overthrow of the Orleans monarchy. It sought a rapprochement with Britain, saying it wished to concert its policy towards the Republic with that of the British Government. Bulwer, however, rebuffed the overture, using the occasion to criticise the legislation the Spanish Government had introduced to prevent civil disorder.²³⁴ It is tempting to see Bulwer's response as a result of his intense dislike of Narvaez's administration and his sympathy with the liberal opposition.²³⁵ But this was only part of the reason. He had criticised the new legislation, he told Palmerston, because he thought it more likely to provoke unrest than prevent it.²³⁶

The Portuguese, the British minister in Lisbon reported, received the news of Louis Philippe's fall with "less perceptible sensation than was to have been expected". But Seymour felt certain that when revolts began in Spain, as he felt sure they would, there would be "great violence" in Portugal. This could be prevented, he continued, if the present government was dismissed and a more liberal one was established.²³⁷ Palmerston shared Seymour's assessment of the situation. On 28 February he sent the minister a strongly worded despatch in which

233. Hobhouse's Diary, 15 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f129; Morpeth's Diary, 15 March 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f17.

234. Bulwer to Palmerston, No 28, 4 March 1848: PRO FO 72/740 (q PP, LXV, 242).

235. For Bulwer's relations with the Spanish political parties before 1848 see Bullen, passim.

236. Bulwer to Palmerston, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/445.

237. Seymour to Palmerston, No 99, 5 March 1848: PRO FO 63/683.

he expressed the hope that the Portuguese Government would "take timely warning from the events" in Paris and would not, "by persevering in an unconstitutional and unnational Course of Administration, reduce their Sovereign to the melancholy Condition in which evil Counsels have placed the King of the French."²³⁸ The Queen of Portugal was furious when Seymour read Palmerston's despatch to her. She declared that there was no need to pass reforms and that she had "perfect confidence of being able to meet coming events in security." Saldanha, the Foreign Minister, was more polite but equally resolute, and he condemned the liberal opposition which, he claimed, was "fixed upon French support and upon a Republic". The future of Portugal, he said, depended on whether Britain supported the Portuguese Government.

If they countenance us, we may fairly hope to get safely through the coming ordeal, even should our Neighbours be revolutionized. If they do not, the Queen is lost, English influence is lost, and Portugal must become a Republic under the protection of France.²³⁹

Palmerston's despatch had put an end to any hope of a rapprochement, but Seymour prevented the rift worsening. When he received a despatch from Palmerston warning that the Portuguese Government would be responsible "if the Torch of Civil War should again be lit up",²⁴⁰ he did not give a copy to Saldanha, as he had been instructed, but merely read it to him, judging that that would be less offensive.²⁴¹

At the other end of Europe, the Porte also looked to the British Government for advice and support. The position of the Porte was an invidious one, observed Lord Cowley, the British representative in Constantinople during the prolonged absence of Stratford Canning.

With a republican Government in a country that is never well with Turkey on one side, and a powerful, envious, and not over scrupulous neighbour, the determined enemy

238. Palmerston to Seymour, No 35, 28 February 1848: ibid 63/680.

239. Seymour to Palmerston, No 116, confidential, 16 March 1848: ibid 63/683.

240. Palmerston to Seymour, No 44, 16 March 1848: ibid 63/680.

241. Seymour to Palmerston, No 128, 24 March 1848: ibid 63/683.

of every thing revolutionary on the other, . . . the anxiety to the Turkish Ministers is hardly to be wondered at. They foresee the diplomatic struggle to which they may be subjected, and they dread the anger of the party that Succumbs, should the struggle unfortunately take place.

Reschid Pasha, the Grand Vizier, and Aali Pasha, the Foreign Minister, appealed to Cowley for advice which, despite not knowing his Government's intentions, Cowley felt compelled to give in order to prevent the Porte vacillating between France and Russia.²⁴² When Canning reached Constantinople towards the end of June, he found that "the Sultan looks to England as his sheet anchor in the midst of the storm extending to his dominions". It was an opportune moment, Canning judged, to strengthen the ties between Britain and Turkey.²⁴³

Palmerston must have sensed the opportunity to establish an Anglo-Turkish entente as clearly as Canning, but he did not respond to the overture. He told the ambassador that a closer understanding with the Porte was unnecessary as neither France nor Russia "entertain at present any intentions hostile to Turkey".²⁴⁴ It seems a strangely unPalmerstonian decision, for Palmerston rarely let an opportunity escape if he thought Britain could profit from it. But there was a good reason for his caution on this occasion. Europe was in turmoil after the March revolutions. Palmerston did not want to complicate matters further by stirring up a quarrel with Russia over the Near East.

Signs of the reluctance of both Britain and Russia to upset the balance in the Near East could be discerned as early as March. When the French fleet sailed from Toulon Brunnow warned Palmerston that its arrival off Greece could destabilise the eastern Mediterranean.²⁴⁵ The following month Palmerston consulted the Russian Government before

242. Cowley to Palmerston, most confidential, 26 March 1848: ibid 78/728.

243. Canning to Palmerston, separate and confidential, 1 July 1848: ibid 78/733.

244. Palmerston to Canning, No 86, 2 August 1848: ibid 78/731.

245. Brunnow to Palmerston, 23 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/BR/212.

sending a despatch to Constantinople encouraging the Porte on its course of moderate reform.²⁴⁶ However the mutual suspicion and jealousy was not far beneath the surface. In May, after Cowley had returned to England, the Sultan dismissed Reschid Pasha. Nesselrode declared that Russia had had nothing to do with the Sultan's decision,²⁴⁷ but Palmerston was not convinced. "Brunnow", he wrote to Bloomfield,

has been preaching to me ever since the French Revolution the importance of keeping things quiet in Turkey, and now the Russians bring about a change the obvious and necessary consequence of which is disturbance and commotion.²⁴⁸

Despite his suspicions, on this occasion Palmerston was prepared to give Russia the benefit of the doubt, partly perhaps because he knew that Canning, who had great influence with the Porte, would soon reach Constantinople. But the episode reveals how little he thought of Russian assurances when the interests of the two Powers in the Near East were at stake.

Six years after 1848 Anglo-Russian rivalry over Turkey led to war between the two Powers. But of more immediate concern to the British Government was the possibility that the February Revolution would encourage revolution in Italy and that this could lead to a general war. Initial reports from Italy, however, indicated that the news from France would have the opposite effect to what had been feared. Dawkins, at Milan, wrote that after the first feeling of amazement had passed, "the great majority of those who have anything to lose" began to fear a revolution in northern Italy. They were still hostile to the Austrians, but Dawkins believed that if the Government offered some concessions it "might still rally round it a great number of persons who . . . out of regard for order & dread of the spread of anything like communist opinions, would give their support to the

246. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No 95, 14 April 1848: PRO FO 65/344.

247. Bloomfield to Palmerston, 30 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/BL/190.

248. Palmerston to Bloomfield, copy, 29 May 1848: ibid GC/BL/230.

Authorities."²⁴⁹ Metternich, however, had no intention of making any concessions. He thought the propertied classes would now realise the dangers of the forces with which they had been flirting.²⁵⁰

Elsewhere in Italy the reaction to the February Revolution was equally favourable to the authorities. In Tuscany there was less popular agitation for reform.²⁵¹ In Sardinia there were some demonstrations in favour of the Republic in Genoa, but on the whole the public feeling was "loyal and firm".²⁵² The Sardinian Government, Abercromby told Russell, hoped to be able to restrain the popular hostility towards Austria.²⁵³ Indeed, during the first week of March it seemed likely that it would be France rather than Austria that Sardinia would be fighting. The Sardinians were convinced that the new Republic would embark on an aggressive war and that they would "have to stand the first attack that may be made on the side of Italy." They looked to Britain for support and advice.²⁵⁴ Meanwhile, in order to defend herself, Sardinia mobilised five of her eight divisions.²⁵⁵

The advice which Palmerston gave the Sardinians was not to their liking. Whilst advocating a policy of "strict and rigid neutrality" towards France, he thought it advisable, as he had previously told Metternich, that they should "concert with the Austrian Government measures for joint action in the event of the French Govt. . . . making an attack upon the territories of the King of Sardinia".²⁵⁶ Such advice

249. Dawkins to Palmerston, No 22, 6 March 1848: PRO FO 7/356 (q PP, LVII, 503).

250. Metternich to Lützow, confidential, 12 March 1848: Klinkowstroem, VII, 604.

251. Townley to Minto, 16 March 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12077 f57.

252. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 33, 2 March 1848, No 36, 4 March 1848, and No 40, 8 March 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (q PP, LVII, 482, 484 and 504).

253. Abercromby to Russell, 16 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

254. Abercromby to Palmerston, 2 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/116 (q Dip. G.B., 93). Cf San Marzano to Revel, 2 March 1848: Dip. Sard., 61 - 2.

255. Abercromby to Minto, 5 March 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12083 ff161 - 2.

256. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 19, 13 March 1848: PRO FO 67/148 (q Dip. G.B., 106 - 7). Cf Revel to San Marzano, 14 March 1848 (2 despatches): Dip. Sard., 68 - 70 and 74 - 5; It. Prob., 78.

was unrealistic, for the mutual suspicion and antipathy of the Sardinian and Austrian governments was so great as to preclude any co-operation. A more probable defensive alliance for Sardinia was with Rome and Tuscany, which Abercromby reported was a possibility.²⁵⁷ It was an association which Palmerston wanted to encourage, for he believed that "the more Italy can unite its separate parts into one common system Commercial and Political the better."²⁵⁸ Abercromby also saw advantages in it: if the Sardinian Government could offer its people the prospect of union with Rome and Tuscany, he observed to Russell, it might be able to resist the growing clamour for war with Austria.²⁵⁹

The problem, as most British observers realised, was that the Italians were only united in their moderation by fear of French aggression and respect for Austrian strength. When they realised that the Republic was sympathetic to their cause, Normanby predicted, there would be a revolt in Milan, and the Sardinian Government would be forced by domestic pressure to assist the Lombards. If that happened, the "best thing" would be for the Italians to gain an "unassisted success", for if they were defeated or checked "nothing in the world will prevent the French from crossing the Alps". The result of such intervention, Normanby wrote, would be a European war.²⁶⁰

News of the fall of Louis Philippe reached northern Italy at a time when the governments there were seeking to avert a revolution. It reached southern Italy when the Neapolitan Government, assisted by its British mediator, was trying to settle a revolution which had broken out two months earlier. At first the news seemed to have

257. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 41, secret and confidential, 8 March 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (q PP, LVII, 507).

258. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 21 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/269 (q Dip. G.B., 114 - 15).

259. Abercromby to Russell, 8 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 334).

260. Normanby to Palmerston, 1 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/129.

a beneficial effect, for it alarmed the Neapolitans sufficiently to make them agree to the outstanding Sicilian demands.²⁶¹ But when Minto reached Palermo, he found that the terms to which Ferdinand had agreed were no longer acceptable. Encouraged by events in France, the Sicilians now wanted the whole of the constitution of 1812 and would no longer tolerate being ruled by Ferdinand, wanting one of his sons instead. By a mixture of threats and persuasion, Minto got the Sicilians to accept Ferdinand but he could not make them move on the constitution.²⁶² The King, he thought, should accept the revised proposal. "If he does not he loses Sicily."²⁶³

The situation in Naples had deteriorated during Minto's absence. There were anti-Jesuit and anti-Government riots and clashes between rioters and troops.²⁶⁴ The trouble could have been crushed easily, the British chargé d'affaires judged, but "the Ministry were paralyzed by fear and thought more of Guizot than their Duty."²⁶⁵ It was against this background that Ferdinand, conscious that the revolution in France had got out of hand after Louis Philippe had shown signs of weakness, rejected the new proposal. "I deplore this disastrous termination of all your labours", Napier wrote to Minto, ". . . but they will have it so."²⁶⁶ Negotiations between the Neapolitan Government and the Sicilians were broken off and the latter began to press for their complete independence.

The collapse of the mediation convinced Minto that the continued union of Sicily and Naples was impossible. As he prepared to leave for England, he advised his colleagues to support the cause of Sicilian

261. Minto to Palmerston, No 41, 7 March 1848: PRO FO 44/5 (q PP, LVI, 432).

262. Minto to Palmerston, No 43, 13 March 1848: PRO FO 44/5 (q PP, LVI, 451 - 3).

263. Minto's Journal, 14 March 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12669 f60.

264. Napier to Palmerston, No 86, 11 March 1848: PRO FO 70/222.

265. Napier to Minto, 16 March 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12077 ff68 - 73.

266. Napier to Minto, 22 March 1848: ibid ff87 - 8.

independence. The Sicilians, he wrote, "generally feel they must look for their protection to one of the great Powers: Their eyes are naturally turned towards England; but if we discard them the alliance of the French Republic will probably be sought and obtained."²⁶⁷ In Minto's opinion, the question was not whether Britain wanted to gain Sicily's gratitude, and consequently a strategic advantage in the central Mediterranean, but whether she could afford to let France do so. On 7 March Russell had argued that as long as the balance of power was maintained, the territorial stipulations of the treaties of 1815 did not matter.²⁶⁸ Minto's suggestion that the British Government should support Sicilian independence rather than the continued union of Naples and Sicily was the first attempt, as yet unauthorised, to put that principle into practice.

Minto's mission to Italy, of which the Sicilian mediation was the climax, produced a mixed reaction in Britain. Croker, writing in the Quarterly Review, declared that it was "beyond all doubt the prime incentive to the disturbance in that portion of Europe".²⁶⁹ Disraeli, speaking in the Commons in August, was less condemnatory, but he did observe that Minto's efforts were at best ineffective and at worst counter-productive.²⁷⁰ Palmerston, replying for the Government, ignored Disraeli's challenge to prove that the mission had been successful and merely explained at length that it was not gratuitous interference.²⁷¹ In private, however, Palmerston was prepared to argue that Minto had achieved some beneficial results. If he had not gone to Italy, he wrote in March, "there would by this Time have been nothing but Republics

267. Minto to Palmerston, No 56, 6 April 1848: PRO FO 44/5 (q PP, LVI, 510 - 11).

268. See above p. 119.

269. Quarterly Review, LXXXIV, 300 - 1.

270. Hansard, CI, 149 - 51.

271. ibid, 164 - 8.

from the Alps to Sicily."²⁷² It was not a claim that could be proved one way or the other, but not even Palmerston's colleagues were convinced by it. "I dare say he [Minto] has done an enormous deal of good everywhere", wrote Clarendon, "but I don't happen to perceive the beneficial results".²⁷³ Minto had done his best, but the problem had been beyond his, and probably anyone's, solution.

272. Palmerston to Minto, 28 March 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12073 f113 (q Ashley, II, 57).

273. Clarendon to Normanby, 17 April 1848: Nor. P. 0/156.

Chapter III: Chartism and Ireland

In the previous chapter, the reaction to the French revolution of the British Government and of the British electorate, as reflected in Parliament and the press, was discussed. That reaction, as we have seen, was marked by alarm and distrust. But there was a powerful body of opinion in Britain which did not view the February Revolution in this light. For the English Chartists and the Irish Repealers, the fall of Louis Philippe and the formation of the Second Republic was not a catastrophe but a great social and political advance which heralded the dawn of a new age, during which the aspirations of the Chartists and the Repealers would be fulfilled. As a result, the first challenge to the British Government in 1848 came not from across the Channel, as ministers had feared, but from two sections of the British public.

i) CHARTISM AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

According to Thomas Frost, the news of the abdication of Louis Philippe reached London whilst a meeting of the Fraternal Democrats was in progress. "The effect was electrical", he recalled.

Frenchmen, Germans, Poles, Magyars, sprang to their feet, embraced, shouted, and gesticulated in the wildest enthusiasm. Snatches of oratory were delivered in excited tones, and flags were caught from the walls, to be waved exultingly, amidst cries of 'Hoch! Eljen! Vive la République!' Then the doors were opened, and the whole assemblage descended to the street, and, with linked arms and colours flying, marched to the meeting-place of the Westminster Chartists, in Dean Street, Soho. There another enthusiastic fraternization took place, and great was the clinking of glasses that night in and around Soho and Leicester Square.

1. T. Frost: Forty Years' Recollections: Literary and Political (London 1880), 128 - 9.

The details of Frost's account are in doubt,² but it gives a vivid picture of the enthusiasm with which the Chartists received the news. "The Revolution is accomplished", exulted the Northern Star in its late editions on the 26th. "Amidst a hurricane of blood and fire, the monarchy of Louis Philippe has perished." The revolution was an example for the people of England, it continued. It was time for the working-classes to unite and demand their rights, namely the Charter. "Hurrah for the people of Paris!" it concluded. "Vive la République!"³

The news of the revolution gave a massive and timely boost to the Chartist movement. There were a number of well-attended meetings throughout the country, especially in industrial areas, to which the Star gave copious coverage. At these meetings, which seem to have followed a similar pattern, there was much cheering for the Charter and the Republic and singing of the Marseillaise. The speakers would then read extracts from the newspapers, using them to demonstrate the weakness of the authorities and the strength of the popular cause, and exhort their listeners to agitate for the Charter.⁴ Shorn of the rhetoric, the aims of the Chartists remained relatively moderate. The lesson which it was thought could be learnt from France was not that of revolution but of the irresistibility of mass protest. The fall of the monarchy was not seen as an objective which Britons should try to emulate, but as a warning which the ruling classes would be wise to heed. The strength of the Chartist movement lay not in its vehemence but in the extent and justice of its cause, and that strength could only be harnessed if it was concentrated. "Organise, organise,

-
2. The meeting of the Fraternal Democrats was not until the evening of the 28th (Northern Star, 4 March 1848, 1), by which time the news of the revolution had been known in London for three days.
 3. Northern Star, 26 February 1848, 4. Cf D. Goodway: London Chartism 1838 - 1848 (Cambridge 1982), 68.
 4. Northern Star, 11 and 18 March 1848, 4; R.G. Gammage: History of the Chartist Movement, 1837 - 1854 2nd edn., (London 1894), 293 - 301.

organise", urged the Northern Star; "so that we can bring all our concentrated power to bear on one given point - the weak spot of corruption - and then it must give way."⁵

It was difficult, however, to separate the message from the language that was used to put it forward. The Northern Star preached moderation in an excited and sometimes extreme manner. At Chartist meetings the speakers were encouraged by their enthusiastic reception into using language that was likely to inflame their audience, and there was a tendency to make vague threats towards the authorities. At a meeting of the Fraternal Democrats, for example, Ernest Jones warned that "a republic is a plant not peculiar to France".⁶ Moreover, in private there was tendency to discuss all kinds of plans for revolution and future governments of England. Some of these plots may have been formulated by agents provocateurs, as Thomas Cooper believed,⁷ but the majority were probably the results of the dreams of sincere Chartists who allowed their excitement to get the better of them. The Chartists may have been aiming at reform, but the language they adopted, both in public and private, was sometimes that of revolution.

Until recently, little work had been done on the reaction of the Government and the "respectable" classes to the Chartist agitation in 1848. The studies of David Goodway and David Large⁸ have gone some way to remedying this and they make some useful points, but both tend to look at events from the viewpoint of the Chartists and consequently exaggerate the fear of the "respectable" classes. Large has suggested that the riots in Trafalgar Square, Manchester and Glasgow were regarded

5. Northern Star, 4 March 1848, 4. Cf Labourer, III, 140 - 2 and 183 - 6; Howitt's Journal, III, 162 - 3 and 191; Westminster Review, XLIX, 483 - 503.

6. Northern Star, 4 March 1848, 1.

7. Cooper, 303 - 8.

8. Goodway, 68 - 96; D. Large: "London in the Year of Revolution, 1848" in J. Stevenson (ed.): London in the Age of Reform (Oxford 1977), 177 - 203.

as "omens of approaching Chartist-inspired revolution".⁹ An examination of press opinion, however, indicates that this was not the case. The riots were regarded as social disturbances, not political demonstrations. The crowds that assembled in London, wrote The Times on the 9th, were composed of "a few dozen ruffians and rogues . . . screened and sheltered by a gaping crowd of sight-hunters."¹⁰ In this instance, whether or not the crowds were composed in this manner¹¹ is of less importance than the general belief that that was how they were composed. The Gentleman's Magazine, after describing the riots in Trafalgar Square, Manchester and Glasgow, concluded: "The lower orders had been no doubt inflamed by the speeches of a parcel of low demagogues; but it was evident that plunder, not politics, was the object of the rioters."¹²

The members of the Government shared the general assumption that the riots were not manifestations of political protest.¹³ For the authorities this was an important distinction to make. If the disturbances were the result of hooliganism, and not political disaffection, then the use of force to restore law and order was not political repression. It is possible that ministers deliberately misrepresented the nature of the trouble in order to justify their policies, but there is no evidence of this and, because the views expressed in private were the same as those expressed in public, it would mean that ministers sought

9. Large, 183.

10. The Times, 9 March 1848, 4.

11. Until more work is done on the riots of 1848 the composition of the crowds will remain unclear. Certainly they had more political content than The Times suggested, but preliminary work on the events in Trafalgar Square reveals that, although the meeting was harangued by G.W.M. Reynolds in favour of Chartism, it was not basically a political demonstration (Goodway, 71; Large, 183).

12. Gentleman's Magazine, XXIX, 416 - 17. Cf MH, 8 March 1848, 4; MP, 9 March 1848, 4; DN, 9 and 14 March 1848, 2; Glasgow Herald, 10 March 1848, 2; MG, 11 March 1848, 6; MC, 15 March 1848, 4.

13. G. Grey to Russell, 7 and 8 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 186 - 7; Grey's Journal, 12 March 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Palmerston to Normanby, No 106, 14 March 1848: PRO FO 27/797.

to deceive each other as well as the public. The precautions that were taken, such as the swearing in of Special Constables,¹⁴ were to cope with the widespread disorder that seemed to be breaking out rather than to prevent revolution. However the recollection of the events in France ensured that no one was too complacent. When Morpeth described the trouble in Trafalgar Square as "a set of riff-raff throwing stones at Policemen, lamps & windows", Princess Lieven remarked that that was how the revolution started in Paris.¹⁵

The Government's main concern with respect to the Chartists during March was less their direct impact on Britain than the possibility that they might receive encouragement and support from the French Republic. On 3 March three groups of Chartists, including the Fraternal Democrats, agreed to present a joint address to the "HEROIC CITIZENS" of France, as represented by the Provisional Government. In the address, the Chartists congratulated the people of Paris on the "glorious service" they had rendered mankind. "By your courage and magnanimity, your heroism and devotion to principle, you have consecrated the sacred right of insurrection; the last resource of the oppressed - the last argument against repression." After praising the humanity and moderation shown during the revolution, the Chartists continued:

Should kings and oppressive governments, unmindful of the lessons of the past, dare again to league against France, . . . assure yourselves, citizens, that the nations will not, this time, follow the banners of their tyrants. No! they will march on your side, for your cause is their's. You are the advanced guard of Freedom's army, and we can assure you that the British people will never sanction a fratricidal war against their brethren of France.

Accept our fraternal salutations, and our earnest wishes that the French Republic may triumph over all its enemies, and become a model for the imitation of the world.¹⁶

The Provisional Government received many such addresses from foreign

14. Large, 183 - 4.

15. Morpeth's Diary, 8 March 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f12.

16. Northern Star, 4 March 1848, 1.

deputations, appealing either directly or indirectly for support for their cause, and it became the practice for a senior official to receive them at the Hôtel de Ville during which, usually in the presence of a vociferous crowd, he would make a brief, extemporized speech thanking the deputation for its good wishes and expressing reciprocal feelings for whatever cause was being presented.¹⁷ As far as the Provisional Government was concerned, the object of such receptions was to placate the minority communities in Paris. But for the listening delegation and its supporters, the replies could be represented as French support for their cause, and as many of the replies were ill-considered and vague they sometimes seemed that way to foreign governments. The reply of Garnier-Pagès to the Chartist address was a typical example. "Take care to tell the English Chartists that, in the Provisional Government you have found the liveliest sympathy", the Northern Star reported him as saying. ". . . Tell them we admire their principles and respect their party; and that from such the regeneration of society is to be expected."¹⁸

The Northern Star was understandably delighted with the reply. The British Government, in contrast, was furious about what it regarded as the countenance given to the Chartists' misrepresentation of its attitude.¹⁹ The Chartists had implied that the British Government had been prevented from declaring war on the Republic by the refusal of the British people to support such a step. In fact, the British Government had never intended to attack the Republic. It decided to make its dissatisfaction known, in the hope that it would "check any further Proceedings of the same Kind".²⁰ On the 11th two more Chartist

17. Jennings, 48 - 9.

18. Northern Star, 11 March 1848, 5.

19. Russell to Normanby, 9 March 1848: Nor. P. P/23/24.

20. Palmerston to Clarendon, 9 March 1848: Clar. P. Box c524.

delegations visited the Hôtel de Ville. Lamartine received them himself, in order, he told Normanby, to be "quite sure there was nothing that could offend the English Govt."²¹ His speech, which stressed the links between the two countries and his desire for a close understanding between them,²² was a model of moderation. But the British Government remained unhappy, partly it would seem because Lamartine's speech received less publicity than that of Garnier-Pagès. It made an official protest about the latter, calling it an unwarranted interference in Britain's internal affairs.²³ In reply, Lamartine apologised if any offence had been taken where none had been meant. He stressed the difficulties of making an impromptu speech in front of an often noisy and unruly crowd, and reassured Normanby that "all his colleagues were . . . animated by an unanimous desire to cultivate the English Alliance, and not in any way to interfere in the internal affairs of the British Empire."²⁴ The British Government was satisfied with Lamartine's apology, but it was anxious to avoid a recurrence of the disagreement especially as it knew that a delegation of Irish Confederates was about to visit Paris.²⁵ "The best way would be if Lamartine & his colleagues would give up these public receptions", observed Russell. ". . . It was only permissible in the first days of the new Republic."²⁶

* * *

During the first week of April the attitude of the "respectable" classes in Britain towards the Chartists underwent an important change. Instead of being largely unconcerned with the movement, they became determined that it should be defeated. The reason for the change was

21. Normanby to Palmerston, 11 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/134.

22. A. de Lamartine: Trois Mois au Pouvoir (Brussels 1848), 90 - 2.

23. Palmerston to Normanby, No 105, 14 March 1848: PRO FO 27/797.

24. Normanby to Palmerston, No 162, 15 March 1848: ibid 27/804 (q NJ, I, 225 - 6).

25. See below pp. 158 - 63.

26. Undated note by Russell: Nor. P. P/23/25.

that the Chartists had suddenly become regarded as a serious threat. At the end of March the Northern Star announced that it was arranging a mass rally on Kennington Common on 10 April after which the meeting would march to the Houses of Parliament to present the monster petition that was being signed throughout the country. The very scale of the proposed demonstration would have aroused public interest even in normal times, but the widespread anxiety that the announcement caused was probably the result of the general European situation. The news of the revolutions in Germany and Italy made the public more aware than it had been that the revolutionary phenomenon was not confined to France and that it could spread to countries previously regarded as safe. Few people thought that England was in a revolutionary condition, but in the circumstances no one felt certain. "There was more genuine alarm in London on that day than I ever remember to have existed", wrote G.C. Lewis of 10 April.²⁷ However the alarm among the propertied classes manifested itself not in panic but in a determination to prevent a successful revolution. The press did not deny the right of the Chartists to petition Parliament, but strongly opposed the procession which was seen as an attempt to coerce the Government. Newspapers of all political complexions urged the Government to take a strong and resolute stance, whilst doing what it could to alleviate the distress which gave credence to an otherwise doomed political movement. "When the cause is good, its defence should be prompt, energetic, and decisive", declared The Times on 6 April. "This is not the time to play with public safety and tamper with sedition."²⁸

It has long been known that the Government took great precautions

27. Lewis, 172.

28. The Times, 6, 7 and 8 April 1848, 4; Standard, 6 April 1848, 2; MC, 7 April 1848, 4; MP, 7 and 8 April 1848, 4; DN, 7 and 8 April 1848, 2 - 3; MH, 8 April 1848, 4; MG, 8 April 1848, 6; Spectator, 8 April 1848, 347 - 8.

to prevent a revolution on 10 April: over 7,000 troops were brought into the capital, more than 4,000 police were on duty on the day of the meeting, at least 85,000 Special Constables were sworn in, Government offices and important public buildings were barricaded and garrisoned, and the Queen left London for Osborne.²⁹ But how far was the Government motivated into taking these steps by its own fears and how far by the pressure of public opinion? Several historians have asserted that the general anxiety of the propertied classes persuaded the Government to take these precautionary measures.³⁰ In that case, it should be possible to demonstrate that the Government adopted its arrangements after the popular anxiety began to show. A study of the press and contemporary letters and diaries reveals that it was not until about the 5th that the public began to take a close interest in the Chartist rally. Before that date the main concern had been with the problems of Ireland and the consequences of the March revolutions. However the Cabinet first discussed its response to the Chartist threat on 1 April.

The reports reaching the Home Office towards the end of March suggested that the danger from the Chartists was not great. The Chartists and Repealers were restless, Palmerston told Minto, but the Government would be "fully a match for them. The Country is sound at Heart, and there is a Gallant public spirit that will shew itself at the first Intimation of real Danger."³¹ Ministers were more concerned about the number of foreign revolutionaries who seemed to be coming over to Britain. "Have you heard of any Frenchmen in Dublin?" Sir George Grey asked Clarendon on the 31st. "London seems very full of

29. Gamage, 312 - 13; Goodway, 72 - 4.

30. Goodway, 72; Large, 185 - 6; S.J. Reid: Lord John Russell (London 1895), 116.

31. Palmerston to Minto, 28 March 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12073 f115 (q Ashley, II, 57 - 8). Cf Hobhouse's Diary, 25 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f3.

them".³² The consuls at the Channel ports were instructed to prepare lists of foreigners embarking for Britain.³³ However the reports of the consuls merely confirmed the independent information reaching the Home Office that there was no great influx of foreigners.³⁴ Nevertheless, at a Cabinet on 1 April, someone suggested introducing an Alien Bill. Russell observed that the alarm was such that Parliament would probably agree to one, but that "he was not so much afraid of foreigners as of our own people". Sir George Grey then reported that the Chartists were using revolutionary language and that it seemed probable that the procession from Kennington Common would be armed. "Our general impression in regard to England was that there was no immediate danger of an outbreak," noted Hobhouse, "although that it is contemplated by certain parties there can be no doubt."³⁵ Morpeth was less satisfied with the results of the Cabinet: "I do not think we are quite preventive enough."³⁶ Over the next few days the Government made its arrangements. On the 2nd the Home Secretary ordered several regiments to move quietly into London, "as a precaution".³⁷ Four days later the Cabinet decided to ban the procession.³⁸

Thus, by the time public opinion was fully alerted to the danger of 10 April, the Government had agreed upon all the precautionary measures it was to take. There were several important points still

-
32. G. Grey to Clarendon, 31 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12. Cf Mrs Hardcastle: Life of John, Lord Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain: Consisting of a Selection from his Autobiography, Diary and Letters (London 1881), II, 236.
33. Bidwell to Bonham, No 10, confidential, 31 March 1848: PRO FO 27/817. It was difficult to get this information once they had arrived (Porter, 4).
34. Bonham to Palmerston, No 27, 11 April 1848: PRO FO 27/817; G. Grey to Clarendon, 31 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12. It seems likely that most foreign revolutionaries who took refuge in England before 1848 left in March to join the continental revolutions (Porter, 14).
35. Hobhouse's Diary, 1 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff12 - 13.
36. Morpeth's Diary, 1 April 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f24.
37. G. Grey to Clarendon, 2 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12.
38. Russell to Clarendon, 6 April 1848: ibid Irish Box 43; Morpeth's Diary, 6 April 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f26.

to be settled, such as where to station the troops and where to stop the procession, but these were administrative matters rather than questions of policy. There were some doubts whether the precautions would be adequate, which may have been the result of the general apprehension. On the 7th, for example, the Cabinet discussed whether to ban the meeting as well as the procession, and Palmerston expressed doubts as to the Queen's safety at Osborne.³⁹ But the Cabinet on 8 April, at which Wellington, who had been put in command of the troops in London, explained his plans, seemed to reassure the ministers that all that could be done to prevent a successful revolution had been done. Much of the advice Wellington gave had already been proffered by Colonel Rowan and Mr Mayne of the Metropolitan Police, observed Hobhouse, but "the authority of 'the Great Man' . . . gave weight to it & we all listened & looked on respectfully."⁴⁰ The general feeling among the Cabinet on the eve of the meeting was that there might be some fighting, but that any trouble would not get out of hand.⁴¹

It is now agreed that the Government's massive precautions for 10 April were unnecessary. The authorities had prepared to meet a revolution, but the Chartists had never planned anything other than a peaceful mass protest. The Government must have been aware of this, David Large has argued, because it was well-informed about the activities of the Chartists.⁴² An examination of the diaries and letters of the members of the Cabinet, however, reveals that they did expect fighting on the 10th. Moreover, the language of the Chartists created the impression that they too expected a clash. "It may be that sacrifices

39. Hobhouse's Diary, 7 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f23; Palmerston to Russell, 7 April 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 187).

40. Hobhouse's Diary, 8 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff28 - 9 (q Dorchester, VI, 214). Cf Grey's Journal, 8 April 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hardcastle, II, 236.

41. G. Grey to Clarendon, 9 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12; Morpeth's Diary, 9 April 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f27; Hardcastle, II, 236.

42. Large, 187 - 8.

- bloody sacrifices - may be demanded by the confident and self-relying oppressor", declared the Northern Star;

but, should it be so, the hot blood flowing in the veins of freemen, will contend for the prize and the honour of martyrdom, and the greater the number of victims the more profuse will be the seeds of freedom, for from every drop of the martyrs' blood will spring ten thousand patriots to avenge the martyrs' death.⁴³

The Government realised that there was no reason for a revolution, but the memory of the events in France, where a political demonstration had escalated, made it anxious to be able to meet an accidental explosion as well as a deliberate confrontation.

It is also important when assessing the necessity of the Government's measures to note the way in which Chartist attitudes changed once it became clear that the authorities were prepared to use force. "Every hour the strength of our adversary, and our own weakness, became more and more apparent", recalled Harney in 1850.⁴⁴ The Star might speak boldly about the deaths of martyrs being avenged, but few Chartists were willing to die for their cause. O'Connor lost his nerve when he learnt of the scale of the Government's preparations,⁴⁵ and Thomas Frost remembered the great sense of relief on Kennington Common when it was announced that no attempt would be made to defy the ban on the procession.⁴⁶ The Chartists had not started out with any intention of provoking a clash with the authorities, but the scale of the Government's preparations made them determined to avoid even an accidental conflict. To that extent, therefore, the Government's measures acted as a deterrent. It is clear, however, that the Government was not bluffing and the troops would have been used if necessary.

The events of 10 April are well known and need not be described

43. Northern Star, 8 April 1848, 4.

44. Schoyen, 164.

45. Read and Glasgow, 130 - 4.

46. Frost, 138.

here.⁴⁷ The reactions to the events, however, are important. Historians sympathetic to the Chartists have tried to demonstrate that 10 April was not the fiasco it is often assumed to have been and that the movement continued at least until the summer of 1848.⁴⁸ Their arguments are not always convincing, but they have some value and are useful corrective judgements. But what is important as far as this study is concerned is not whether the Chartists were decisively beaten on 10 April but whether they were thought to have been.

O'Connor claimed that 10 April had been a great success. He wrote on the 15th that 400,000 people had attended the meeting, that the movement had gained much publicity, and that the excessive precautions of the Government would make people wonder what it was afraid of.⁴⁹ A week later he asserted that by agreeing to abandon the procession he had foiled a Government plot to massacre the Chartists.⁵⁰ Few people were fooled by such bold assertions. "The Chartists have made a pretty hash of it", wrote Roebuck, who was not unsympathetic to their cause. "F. O'Connor is a rogue, a liar, and a coward - a precious compound!"⁵¹

Outside Chartist circles, the belief that 10 April had been a triumph for the British constitution, and consequently a severe blow to would-be revolutionaries, was widely and strongly held. There was a vague feeling that all the elaborate precautions had been unnecessary, but few criticised the Government's preparations as excessive. It was better to be over-prepared than not to be prepared at all. The Protectionist and the Peelite press gloried in the victory of law

47. For descriptions of the day see Gammage, 313 - 16; Goodway, 76 - 7; Large, 191 - 2.

48. Goodway, 79 - 96; Large, 193 - 201; Campbell, 46 - 64; J. Saville: "Chartism in the Year of Revolution 1848" The Modern Quarterly VIII (1952 - 3), 23 - 33.

49. Northern Star, 15 April 1848, 1.

50. ibid, 22 April 1848, 1.

51. Roebuck to Black, 16 April 1848: R.E. Leader: Life and Letters of John Arthur Roebuck P.C., Q.C., M.P. (London 1897), 203.

and order. The Times estimated that only 10,000 Chartists had assembled on the Common, whilst 150,000 Special Constables had been sworn in to oppose them. The Times' calculations are somewhat spurious - apart from almost doubling the number of Special Constables, the general estimate of the number of Chartists was between 15 and 30,000, and doubt has recently been placed on figures as low as these⁵² - but it was widely agreed that the Chartist turn-out was low and that the number of people who had rallied behind the authorities had been impressive, and this was seen by the Protectionist and Peelite press as proof of the soundness of the British constitution.⁵³ The Whig and Radical press also welcomed the failure of the Chartist demonstration, which it regarded as an attempt to intimidate the Government. It did not deny the right of the Chartists to agitate for reform, but it objected to the way in which they were pursuing their demands. However, whereas the Protectionists and the Peelites regarded the absence of any trouble as proof that the Chartists were an unrepresentative minority, the Whigs and the Radicals saw the fact that the Chartists had been able to disrupt the life of the capital for a whole day as proof of the existence of a wider problem.⁵⁴ But what that problem was and how it could be solved was a matter on which there was no settled opinion.

The Government was overjoyed that the day had gone off without bloodshed. Palmerston called it "the Waterloo of Peace & order . . . men of all Classes & Ranks were blended together in Defence of Law

-
52. Goodway, 136 - 8. The crux of Goodway's argument is a report that the Government asked the newspapers to print the number as 15,000. But, given the various political affiliations of the Victorian press, it seems unlikely that the Government could have exerted such influence, and as the source of this assertion was a journalist who was sympathetic to the Chartists it must be treated with some scepticism.
53. The Times, 11 April 1848, 4; Standard, 11 April 1848, 2; MC, 11 April 1848, 4; MH, 11 and 13 April 1848, 4; MP, 11 and 15 April 1848, 4; The Economist, 15 April 1848, 421 - 4.
54. DN, 11 and 12 April 1848, 2 - 3; MG, 12 and 15 April 1848, 4 and 6; York Courant, 13 April 1848, 5; ILN, 15 April 1848, 239 - 40; Spectator, 15 April 1848, 369.

& Property."⁵⁵ Sir George Grey was the hero of the hour. According to his biographer, it was the high point of his career.⁵⁶ However it was accepted that the Chartists had not been finally defeated. "Things passed off beautifully here yesterday," Palmerston told Clarendon, "but the Snake is skotched not killed, and we must continue on our guard."⁵⁷ The Home Office continued to monitor the activities of the Chartists, whilst the Cabinet, and Russell in particular, considered ways of appeasing the discontented elements in society.

During the weeks following the Chartist rally Russell received several letters, including one from Normanby, advocating some measure of electoral reform.⁵⁸ They were not without effect. On 24 April Russell wrote to Clarendon that any immediate concession might precipitate a revolution, but that if there was never any reform a revolution was inevitable.⁵⁹ Two months later, opposing a motion introduced by Hume, who wanted an extension of the franchise to all householders, a secret ballot, triennial Parliaments and equal electoral districts, and who cited the Chartist agitation as proof that Parliament needed reforming,⁶⁰ Russell hinted that in the future some extension of the franchise might be desirable.⁶¹ The rest of the Cabinet, however, was less enthusiastic than the Prime Minister. Nothing was done in 1848, and during the later years of the administration Russell's proposals for electoral reform were often received with apathy or

55. Palmerston to Normanby, 11 April 1848: Nor. P. P/20/29 (q Ashley, II, 80).

56. M. Creighton: Memoir of Sir George Grey, Bart., G.C.B. (London 1901), 79.

57. Palmerston to Clarendon, 11 April 1848: Clar. P. Box c524. Cf Grey to Clarendon, 14 April 1848: ibid Irish Box 41; Clarendon to Normanby, 17 April 1848: Nor. P. O/156.

58. Macaulay to Russell, 23 April 1848 (q Walpole, II, 91 - 2), Bannerman to Russell, 26 April 1848, and Normanby to Russell, 29 April 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

59. Russell to Clarendon, 24 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.

60. Hansard, XCIX, 879 - 906.

61. ibid, 915 - 33.

hostility, especially from Palmerston.⁶²

One of the more gratifying aspects of 10 April for the Government was that the foreign revolutionaries who were supposed to be in London did not appear. If they had, wrote Palmerston, the Special Constables "would have mashed them to jelly."⁶³ Even so, on the afternoon of the 11th the Cabinet decided to introduce an Alien Bill, although some ministers remained doubtful about the wisdom of such a controversial step.⁶⁴ The bill, declared Lansdowne that evening when introducing it in the Lords, was a precautionary measure which would give the Government power to expel undesirable aliens. It did not challenge the principle of giving refuge to foreigners, he said, but it was only prudent to have a law on the statute book to deal with foreign revolutionaries who were trying to subvert the British constitution.⁶⁵ It was an argument subsequently used by Russell and G. Grey in the Commons, where they emphasised that it was only a temporary measure - it was planned to last two years - and that it would be of more value with respect to Ireland than to England.⁶⁶

The bill received less opposition than the Government seems to have expected. Most Whigs, Peelites and Protectionists agreed that some such measure was necessary.⁶⁷ Indeed, some Protectionists criticised the bill because they thought it did not go far enough.⁶⁸ But what opposition there was, and it came mainly from the Radicals, was

-
62. Prest, 303 - 6, 324 - 5 and 331 - 6. Palmerston was consistently doubtful about electoral reform. He had resisted in Cabinet what he felt were the extreme parts of the 1832 Reform Bill (Bourne, Palmerston, 503 - 23), and he blocked any Reform Bill whilst he was Prime Minister (Ridley, 631, 755 - 8 and 779).
63. Palmerston to Normanby, 11 April 1848: Nor. P. P/20/29 (q Ashley, II, 80).
64. Hobhouse's Diary, 11 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f36; Morpeth's Diary, 11 April 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f29.
65. Hansard, XCVIII, 136 - 8.
66. ibid, 508, 560 - 1, 855 - 6 and 864.
67. The Times, 12 April 1848, 4; Standard, 12 April and 12 May 1848, 2; MG, 10 May 1848, 4.
68. Hansard, XCVIII, 266 - 7 and 274 - 8.

strong and vociferous. The bill was attacked as imprudent and unnecessary: it was imprudent because it gave the Government powers it might abuse; it was unnecessary because any would-be revolutionaries would find little support for their evil designs. "The late panic appears to have produced one of the common effects of intoxication on the Ministry", observed the Morning Chronicle:

they are seeing double, more than double; the few foreigners who appeared among the Chartists on Kennington-common, have multiplied as fast as Falstaff's men in buckram, and bid fair to grow into a regular band of conspirators, duly commissioned by Ledru-Rollin to co-operate with the Chartists . . . 69

But despite the Chronicle's ridicule and the impassioned opposition from the Radicals, on 11 May the bill was passed by 146 to 29 votes.

According to Tallenay, the newly arrived representative of the French Republic, the British Government quickly regretted introducing the Alien Bill and planned to seize the first opportunity to repeal "cette loi exceptionnelle et très impopulaire."⁷⁰ In fact, it remained in force until it lapsed in 1850 but it was never used.⁷¹ This may have been due in part to the Government's wish to avoid the controversy which would have occurred if it had tried to utilise the bill's provisions, but an equally probable explanation is that the danger from foreign revolutionaries, which the bill was designed to counter-act, never materialised. There were still reports of foreign revolutionaries coming over to intrigue with the Chartists - Brunnow told G. Grey that a party of French republicans planned to sail up the Thames and rendezvous with the Chartists in Whitechapel⁷² and a local official at Folkestone reported that a large number of suspicious looking foreigners had just arrived⁷³ - but these usually proved to be un-

69. ibid., 268 - 71, 397, 562 - 72, 574 - 7, 579 - 84, 852 - 4 and 857 - 60; ILN, 15 April 1848, 239 - 40; MC, 19 April 1848, 4.

70. Tallenay to Lamartine, 13 May 1848: DD, II, 208.

71. Porter, 3.

72. Le Marchant to Mayne, 15 April 1848: PRC MEPO 2/4.

73. Faulkner to G. Grey, 7 June 1848: ibid.

founded.⁷⁴ In fact, the danger from foreign revolutionaries had never been great, if it had existed at all. The introduction of the Alien Bill, though in itself unobjectionable, was one of the few measures taken by the Government as a result of an unfounded panic.

It is easy to stigmatise the British Government's response to the Chartist agitation as alarmist and excessive. The strength of its protest about Garnier-Pagès' speech, the precautions it took for 10 April, and its fear of foreign agitators suggest that it took the Chartist threat more seriously than it deserved. Because there was no revolution in England in 1848 and because the Chartist movement collapsed after its humiliating failures of that year, historians tend to view the Chartists in a less menacing, if more realistic, light than they appeared at the time. However Sir George Grey and his colleagues, and the public in general, did not regard the absence of a revolution as proof that the Government's response had been excessive; rather they saw it as proof that the response had worked. The Government's perception of the danger from the Chartists may have been at fault, but given that perception its firm response was only to be expected and all that the electorate could desire.

ii) IRELAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The impulse given to the Chartist movement by the February Revolution encouraged it along the road of reform. In Ireland, in contrast, the news from France had a more profound effect. It transformed the more radical part of the Repeal movement from a reforming into a revolutionary organisation.

All sections of the Repeal movement welcomed the revolution and saw it as creating a climate of opinion in which Repeal could be

74. Medlicott to Mayne, 17 April 1848; Memorandum by Inspector Haynes, 12 June 1848: ibid.

achieved. They also realised the value of unity to the Irish cause. "In the present condition of Europe," declared Freeman's Journal, "no just and constitutional demand made by a unanimous Ireland could or dare be refused."⁷⁵ However the deep division over tactics continued to divide the O'Connellites from the Young Irelanders, for the former still refused to consider armed rebellion. Freeman's Journal urged a revival of the campaign of monster meetings,⁷⁶ but without Daniel O'Connell's spell-binding oratory it seems doubtful whether such a campaign would have got very far. The O'Connellites were willing to work with the Young Irelanders, but only on their own terms.⁷⁷ John O'Connell even expressed to Normanby his concern about the activities of Smith O'Brien and Mitchel, and spoke of "his great desire to join with the Govt. in any step which might pacify Ireland, & resist with a strong hand any treasonable intentions."⁷⁸ The démarche went no further because the price of O'Connell's co-operation was a "modification" to the Union, but it revealed the gulf between Old and Young Ireland. The best that Young Ireland could hope for was the neutrality of Old Ireland, wrote Duffy later, "but neutrality at such a moment meant so much."⁷⁹

The Confederates welcomed the news of the revolution with great rejoicing. They had expelled Mitchel and his followers for urging the immediate use of violence. The French revolution, however, led them to believe that the time for using force was near at hand. In an article in the Nation entitled "Ireland's Opportunity", Duffy declared:

Ireland's opportunity, thank God and France, has come at

75. Freeman's Journal, 1 March 1848, 2. Cf Nowlan, 183.

76. Freeman's Journal, 4 March 1848, 2.

77. Nowlan, 184.

78. Normanby to Palmerston, 4 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/130.

79. Duffy, 541.

last! Its challenge rings in our ears like a call to battle, and warms our blood like wine. . . . We must answer if we would not be slaves for ever. We must unite, we must act, we must leap all barriers, but those which are divine; if needs be we must die, rather than let this providential hour pass over us unliberated.

He continued to urge caution, arguing that the people of Ireland should wait until England was engaged in a foreign war before rising against their oppressors. But he was convinced that they would not have to wait long, and in the mean time they should prepare for battle.⁸⁰

Duffy's enthusiasm was shared by the rest of the Confederate leadership in Dublin. "The men who, a few weeks before, had fearlessly resisted anarchy, now as fearlessly embraced revolution."⁸¹ The composition of the Provisional Government, and especially the inclusion of Ledru Rollin, gave them hope that they could expect help from the new Republic,⁸² and Lamartine's Manifesto encouraged that hope.⁸³ Steps were taken to effect a reunion with the Mitchelites, whom it was hoped would be satisfied when they saw the Confederates taking action.⁸⁴

The decision of the Confederate leadership to adopt the cause of revolt resulted from more than a vague feeling that somehow the military balance in Ireland had changed as a result of the events in France. "There will be an outbreak sooner or later. Be sure of that", wrote Duffy to Smith O'Brien towards the end of February.

But unless you provide against it, it will be a mere democratic one, which the English Government will extinguish in blood; or if by a miracle it succeeds it will mean death and exile to the middle as well as the upper classes.⁸⁵

In Duffy's opinion, the leadership of the Confederates was necessary in order to channel the Irish revolution, which he believed was inevitable, towards productive ends. Smith O'Brien was even more cautious.

80. Nation, 4 March 1848, 152 - 3 (partly q Duffy, 537).

81. Duffy, 538.

82. Clarendon to Normanby, 23 March 1848: Nor. P. O/154; Duffy, 534.

83. See above pp. 110 - 11.

84. Duffy, 541 - 2.

85. Duffy to Smith O'Brien, no date: Gwynn, 158 - 9.

Writing from London, where he lacked the stimulus of his colleagues, he argued that the Repeal movement should avoid the timidity of the O'Connellites, which would never succeed, and the extremism of the Mitchelites, which if successful would lead to anarchy.⁸⁶ He believed that the movement could only triumph if it gained the support of the gentry and avoided any appeal to religious bigotry, and consequently he distrusted Mitchel. Duffy and his friends, fearful of being pre-empted by Mitchel, were disturbed by Smith O'Brien's caution, but they agreed to go along with him.⁸⁷

Smith O'Brien's position as leader of the Confederates might have become untenable had it not been for the increasing extremism of Mitchel. Mitchel saw the revolution in Paris as the triumph of an angry people over a cruel oppressor. If it could work in France, he argued, why could it not work in Ireland? He chastised his countrymen for remaining patient for so long, and he blamed the Confederation for not providing the leadership the people needed.⁸⁸ He decided that if the Confederates would not provide the leadership, he would himself. He began writing a series of open letters to Clarendon in which his avowed aim was to stir up the Irish people against English rule.⁸⁹ He wanted to provoke the authorities into some brutal act of repression which would unite the people against them. He was convinced that once fighting began the Irish would win, and he assured his readers that as by-products the Chartists would seize power in England, the British Empire would collapse, and help would arrive from the United States and France.⁹⁰

Mitchel's language appalled the Confederates. They shared the

86. Smith O'Brien to Duffy, 1 March 1848: ibid, 160.

87. Duffy, 542 - 3 and 547,

88. United Irishman, 4 March 1848, 57.

89. ibid, 18 and 25 March, and 8 April 1848, 89, 104 and 136.

90. ibid, 18 March 1848, 88.

assumption that the Chartists provided a formidable threat to the ruling classes in England,⁹¹ and the hope of support from France and the United States. But they believed, correctly, that Mitchel did not realise that the people of Ireland were not ready for an immediate insurrection, and they argued that careful preparation was needed if an insurrection was to be successful. "Method is like the cold steel, silent and sure," wrote Duffy later; "and method was what he altogether rejected."⁹² The Confederates looked upon Mitchel's plans as idealistic and impracticable; Mitchel looked upon the plans of the Confederates as so cautious as to be almost cowardly.

Clarendon had little difficulty in keeping track of the progress of the Repeal movement. Most of its activities were described in the Repeal newspapers, and these accounts were supplemented by the reports of the Government's spies and informers, who were put on the alert soon after the news from France arrived.⁹³ Within a few days Clarendon was reporting that there was increased agitation in Dublin, but little chance of an immediate rebellion.⁹⁴ As the weeks passed, however, his anxiety grew. The excitement did not decrease and the language of the Young Irelanders got worse. There were persistent reports that there would be an uprising on St. Patrick's day,⁹⁵ and by the end of March Clarendon's letters had assumed almost an hysterical tone. "No Tipperary Landlord ever recd. more threatening notices than I do", he wrote to Russell, "or more warnings as to when & how I am to be assassinated."⁹⁶ He told Lord Grey that he would not wish his

91. Duffy, 540.

92. *ibid.*, 550.

93. Clarendon to Russell, copy, 27 February 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 f134. Clarendon later boasted that he had known "everything that passed in Dublin in 1848" (q Porter, 157 n147).

94. Clarendon to G. Grey, copy, 1 March 1848, and Clarendon to Russell, copy, 3 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 ff139 and 142 - 4.

95. Clarendon to G. Grey, copies, 8 and 11 March 1848: *ibid.* ff151 and 155.

96. Clarendon to Russell, 30 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q Maxwell, I, 289).

lifestyle in Dublin on his worst enemy, "even Mr. Mitchell [sic]"⁹⁷

Although Clarendon was greatly disturbed by the revolutionary aspect of affairs in Ireland, the policy he advocated remained that of coercion mixed with conciliation. His resentment about the general attitude of the Irish Catholics occasionally broke out - in May he told G.C. Lewis that they had behaved "almost to a man . . . like cowards & traitors" and that if it came to a fight "it is clear that . . . we have only the Protestants to rely upon"⁹⁸ - but he was usually careful to distinguish between those who were disaffected because of their political views, like Smith O'Brien and Mitchel, and those who were disaffected because the economic and social situation gave them little hope in the existing order of things. The former provided the more obvious threat, and K.B. Nowlan has described the coercive measures which Clarendon wanted to introduce to deal with them.⁹⁹ But the latter provided the more serious problem, for they gave a strength to the former which Clarendon believed they would otherwise lack. In ordinary times, Clarendon wrote to Wood,

I shd say that Ireland must get on as she cd . . . but we are not living in ordinary times, for the events of the last 6 weeks have materially altered our position & loosened our tenure in this country. Every steamer that arrives bringing the news of some fresh & easy popular triumph adds to our difficulties by increasing & spreading disaffection.

People who previously had no sympathy with the Repeal cry were now "gravely balancing on wch. side it will be best for them to incline" because "they have not the energy to be loyal & don't see their own interest in it sufficiently to be so." They needed to be shown there was some value in the connection with England, and the best way to do that was to spend more money on alleviating the distress.

The great object is to inspire hope & with it comparative

97. Clarendon to Grey, 10 April 1848: Grey P. 81/2.

98. Clarendon to Lewis, 4 May 1848: Clar. P. Box c532.

99. Nowlan, 196 - 7.

content for the next 5 months. Let us get over them & we shall have weathered the storm. We cannot expect to escape unscathed from the hurricane wch. is desolating Europe & if we can save our honor & the integrity of our Empire at the cost of a little money surely we shall not have made a bad bargain.¹⁰⁰

The Cabinet treated Clarendon's requests for conciliatory measures with growing impatience. At the end of March Russell submitted to his colleagues a package of reforms dealing with more financial assistance for Ireland and tenant rights. The former were opposed by Wood and Grey, the latter by Palmerston and Lansdowne.¹⁰¹ Wood in particular resisted any attempt to get more money from the Treasury. "There is no use in talking of money", he told Clarendon in May, "I have none, & shall have to borrow to pay my way, & that is not very creditable in peace time."¹⁰² The memory of the defeat of the Budget continued to haunt him. "We have had one pretty severe lesson this Session," he reminded Russell, "& we cannot afford to try any more experiments of the same kind."¹⁰³ Russell became depressed by the problems of Ireland,¹⁰⁴ whilst the rest of the Cabinet regarded Clarendon's letters with increasing scepticism and distaste. Lord Grey characterised them as "most peevish & unreasonable, . . . containg. no useful practical suggestns." He also added, "I fear much that Ld. John is hardly equal to the emergency."¹⁰⁵

Clarendon's appeals for greater coercive powers usually had a more favourable reception. The daily press in England on the whole supported the Government on this subject. Repeal of the Union, it was asserted, would ruin Ireland. Smith O'Brien and Mitchel must be either unscrupulous

100. Clarendon to Wood, 30 March 1848: Hal. P. A4/57/2.

101. Nowlan, 197 - 8.

102. Wood to Clarendon, 8 May 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 31.

103. Wood to Russell, copy, 9 April 1848: Hal. P. A4/56/3.

104. Lady John Russell to Lady Mary Abercromby, 31 March 1848: MacCarthy and Russell, 96 - 7.

105. Grey's Journal, 9 April 1848: Grey P. C3/14. Cf Hobhouse's Diary, 25 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f2; Morpeth's Diary, 7 April 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f27.

and unthinking demagogues or out of their minds to advocate it. Besides, there was no broad basis of support for the Repeal cry. It was on behalf of the silent majority and in the interests of the whole of Ireland that the Government resisted the Repeal agitation, and many newspapers urged that tougher measures be taken to subdue the unrest.¹⁰⁶ Only the Daily News, which had as little sympathy with the Repeal cry as anyone, doubted the value of coercion and advocated a policy of conciliation.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, despite this broad measure of support for a strong line, the Government was careful not to propose any repressive legislation which might be thought excessive. It was on this ground, Sir George Grey informed Clarendon in April, that the Cabinet rejected the request for the suspension of Habeas Corpus.¹⁰⁸ As long as there was no danger of an imminent revolt, as despite Clarendon's reports the Cabinet continued to believe, ministers in London preferred what Nowlan has called "a policy of watchful inactivity".¹⁰⁹ It was a marked contrast to the policy they had adopted towards the Chartists in the first week of April.

*

*

*

On 2 March Clarendon informed Russell that he was "eager for the time when . . . we may with advantage or rather propriety recognize the Republic." This desire to be on good terms with France had less to do with the diplomatic advantages for Britain, which Clarendon acknowledged, than with his anxiety to avert the dangers that might result if the two countries were on bad terms. "I am anxious that there should be no fraternization with this country", he wrote, ". . .

106. The Times, 14 and 29 March 1848, 4; MH, 15 March 1848, 4; MG, 15 and 22 March 1848, 4; MC, 16 and 23 March 1848, 4 - 5; MP, 28 and 30 March 1848, 4; ILN, 15 April 1848, 244.

107. DN, 20 and 27 March 1848, 2.

108. G. Grey to Clarendon, 3 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12.

109. Nowlan, 194.

for if once a belief however ill founded got abroad here that Irish rebellion would attract French troops it really would be difficult to preserve tranquillity."¹¹⁰

Palmerston immediately took steps to make Normanby aware of the danger which Clarendon foresaw, especially as he had seen reports that the Confederates had already sent a message to Ledru Rollin and were planning to send a deputation to Paris. He instructed Normanby to tell Lamartine "that we take for granted . . . that all Communications from such Quarters will be declined, as inconsistent with the friendly Relations which the present Govt. wishes to Establish between the Two Countries."¹¹¹ In reply, Lamartine assured the ambassador "that of course we need not have a doubt the Govt. would repudiate any demonstration which was inconsistent with their sincere dispositions towards England." Alluding to Ledru Rollin's former links with the Repeal movement, he remarked "that some individual might receive communications which would be of no importance; but even these should be discouraged."¹¹²

However it was not Ledru Rollin but Lamartine himself who first caused offence to the British Government with respect to Ireland. On 17 March he received a deputation from the Irish community in Paris, led by a M. Leonard, during which, according to the account in the Moniteur, "the flag of Ireland" was presented to the Provisional Government and Lamartine made a brief speech in which he praised the activities of O'Connell and expressed the hope that the Irish people would achieve their constitutional independence in the same way as they had achieved their religious freedom.¹¹³ There is little

110. Clarendon to Russell, copy, 2 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 f142.

111. Palmerston to Normanby, secret, 3 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/11.

112. Normanby to Palmerston, 4 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/130.

113. The Times, 20 March 1848, 5.

doubt that Lamartine's conduct had been incautious, although it should be noted that he expressed approval of Old rather than Young Ireland. But there were understandable reasons for his actions. The 17th was the day of a large demonstration, during which, it was rumoured, the Provisional Government would be overthrown.¹¹⁴ Lamartine himself was uncertain whether it could survive, telling Normanby the following day: "nous sommes sur un Volcan."¹¹⁵ He may have thought to defuse the hostility of the crowd at the Hôtel de Ville by using language that reinforced his revolutionary credentials. But whatever the domestic consequences of his actions, the diplomatic repercussions were grave.

Normanby was appalled when he read the account of the reception in the Moniteur. He went to the Hôtel de Ville to demand "a prompt and satisfactory Explanation". He thought Lamartine's speech was "evidently too much of an expression of an opinion upon our internal concerns", but he was more concerned about the acknowledgement of the flag, which was a de facto acknowledgement of Irish nationality. He told Lamartine he "knew of no such thing as an Irish flag: and that if it was offered to place it by the side of the French Colors it could only be as a rebel flag." Lamartine, surprised by Normanby's tone, quickly assured the ambassador

that he had seen no such flag: that he had paid no attention to any such circumstance: that the Government had accepted no flag: that he had answered the deputation himself, and had not made the slightest allusion to it.

Normanby insisted that the denial be printed in the Moniteur, and Lamartine agreed, saying "he would do his best to give me complete satisfaction on the subject."¹¹⁶

114. Normanby to Palmerston, 17 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/139.

115. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 18 March 1848: Nor. P. P/14/65 (q NJ, I, 246).

116. Normanby to Palmerston, No 171, 18 March 1848: PRO FO 27/805 (q NJ, I, 243 - 6).

The British Government accepted Lamartine's explanation about the flag, but it made an official protest about his speech which it too saw as interference in Britain's internal affairs.¹¹⁷ There was strong criticism of Lamartine's speech in the English press,¹¹⁸ and Palmerston warned that if the Republic continued its practice "of giving in this manner direct encouragement to political agitation within the United Kingdom . . . a Cry will soon arise in this Country for the withdrawal of our Embassy from Paris."¹¹⁹ Lamartine understood why the British Government objected to his speech, but he was mystified by the importance it placed upon it. The Provisional Government, he told Normanby,

did not, as a body, consider themselves answerable for casual expressions used by an individual member in replying, without premeditation, to one of the numerous addresses presented: that, in their relations with Foreign Countries, they were individually and collectively determined to adhere to the principles of his Circular, not to interfere in any respect with the internal concerns of other Countries.

This was where the British and French Governments differed. The British Government, as Normanby explained, felt that because the addresses were presented to the Provisional Government, the replies "must be taken as the opinions of that Provisional Government".¹²⁰ "The fact is", Normanby complained to Palmerston, ". . . he has no proper sense of the responsibilities of his position."¹²¹

It seems doubtful whether the British Government would have made such a strong protest about Leonard's reception but for the knowledge of the existence of a deputation of Confederates, led by Smith O'Brien, which left for Paris on the evening of the 22nd. The deputation's aim, as with the Chartist delegation a fortnight earlier, was to

117. Palmerston to Normanby, No 117, 22 March 1848: PRO FO 27/797.

118. MP, 23 March 1848, 4; DN, 30 March 1848, 2.

119. Palmerston to Normanby, 21 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/19 (q Ashley, II, 76 - 7).

120. Normanby to Palmerston, No 187, 23 March 1848: PRO FO 27/805 (q NJ, I, 250 - 4).

121. Normanby to Palmerston, 22 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/144.

congratulate the French people on their revolution and to attempt to gain a declaration of French support for their cause.¹²² As far as the British Government was concerned, however, this avowed intention disguised a more sinister purpose. The Irish were going to Paris, wrote Hobhouse after a Cabinet on Ireland, "to concert plans with Ledru Rollin for the invasion of Ireland if she can exhibit the requisite 'nationality'."¹²³ "You must endeavour to defeat them", Clarendon told Normanby.¹²⁴

Given that the British Government believed that Smith O'Brien and his friends had gone to Paris to plot an insurrection, it was only natural that it should arrange to have them watched. The idea originated with Clarendon, and Palmerston instructed Normanby to make the necessary arrangements.¹²⁵ Normanby was not inexperienced in matters of espionage. "Almost everything of that kind was till lately done by Klindworth", he told Palmerston on 26 March. But Klindworth had been forced to flee because of the revolution, and Normanby was forced to employ a new man.¹²⁶ He wanted the "best-nosed dog . . . put upon the scent."¹²⁷ Unfortunately, he had not succeeded, as he quickly began to suspect. "I hear the Irish Traitors are arrived", he reported on the 29th: "- my first attempt at 'espionage' under the new regime did not answer very well, for I suspect they arrived yesterday."¹²⁸ His agent was even sufficiently indiscreet to alert Meagher to the fact that they were under surveillance.¹²⁹ Moreover, he seems to have

122. Gwynn, 164 and 168; Nowlan, 190.

123. Hobhouse's Diary, 25 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff2 - 3. Cf Palmerston to Normanby, 27 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/22.

124. Clarendon to Normanby, 23 March 1848: Nor. P. 0/154.

125. Clarendon to G. Grey, copy, 23 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 ff172 - 3; Palmerston to Normanby, 25 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/21.

126. Normanby to Palmerston, 26 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/146.

127. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 30 March 1848: Nor. P. P/14/82.

128. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 29 March 1848: *ibid* P/14/80.

129. Normanby to Palmerston, 5 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/151.

reported what he thought Normanby wanted to hear rather than the truth.¹³⁰ Fortunately for the British Government, the success or failure of Smith O'Brien's mission did not depend on the efficiency of its agent.

The British continued to be apprehensive about what sort of reply Lamartine would give the Irish deputation. The unsatisfactory conversation Normanby had had with him on the 23rd made them wonder whether he would use some ill-considered words which the Confederates could interpret as support.¹³¹ Palmerston urged Lamartine to be "very cautious" about what he said; "anything of any Kind said to them about Irish affairs will be liable to much misconception & misrepresentation here".¹³² He stressed that Smith O'Brien and Meagher had been indicted on a charge of sedition and reminded Lamartine that in his Manifesto he had promised that the Republic would not undertake any "propagande sourde ou incendiaire".¹³³ But although Normanby continued to warn Lamartine about the danger of making an ill-considered reply, he did not want to go a step further and ask him not to receive the deputation. He knew that, because of the precarious position of the Provisional Government, Lamartine would not have felt able to accede to such a request, "and had it been refused one must have been prepared for the consequences."¹³⁴ Besides, Anglo-French relations would have been damaged just by making the request, for it would show that the British

130. On 31 March, for example, he reported that Smith O'Brien had quarrelled with the rest of the deputation and that the Irish were disappointed by their reception (Normanby to Palmerston, 31 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/149). Evidence from Confederate sources, however, reveals that the Irish were impressed and encouraged by what they saw of the revolution (Gwynn, 167) and give no hint of a quarrel. Even Palmerston had his doubts about the informant (Palmerston to Normanby, 4 April 1848: Nor. P. P/20/26).

131. Palmerston to Normanby, No 121, 24 March 1848: PRO FO 27/797; Normanby to Palmerston, No 195, 25 March 1848: ibid 27/805 (q NJ, I, 259 - 60).

132. Palmerston to Normanby, 25 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/21.

133. Palmerston to Normanby, No 124, 25 March 1848, and No 125, 27 March 1848: PRO FO 27/797.

134. Normanby to Palmerston, No 202, 26 March 1848: ibid 27/805.

Government did not trust the assurances Lamartine had given already.

As the day of the reception of the deputation approached, the British became more confident that Lamartine would keep his promise.¹³⁵ Lamartine even sketched out his reply for Normanby, which Normanby passed on to Clarendon with the observation, "Nothing can be more satisfactory". Such optimism was not misplaced. Lamartine "has kept his word with me", Normanby added in a postscript to his letter to Clarendon, "and is said to have given the Irish deputation a good slap in the face."¹³⁶ The speech was "more elaborate" than the sketch Lamartine had given, he observed after reading the full text in the Moniteur, "yet in all the material points of distinct discouragement of any support or countenance from hence to these disloyal men, M. Lamartine courageously and effectually kept his promise to me".¹³⁷ Dressed up amidst the rhetoric of the glories of the Republic and good wishes for all mankind was a direct refusal to assist the cause of Repeal:

Je l'ai déjà dit à propos de la Suisse, à propos de l'Allemagne, à propos de la Belgique et de l'Italie. Je le répète à propos de toute nation qui a des débats intérieurs à vider avec elle-même ou avec son gouvernement. Quand on n'a pas son sang dans les affaires d'un peuple, il n'est pas permis d'y avoir son intervention ni sa main. . . .

Nous sommes en paix et nous désirons rester en bons rapports d'égalité, non avec telle ou telle partie de la Grande-Bretagne, mais avec la Grande-Bretagne toute entière!¹³⁸

The Irish were disappointed and angered by Lamartine's reply: they were disappointed because he had made no public avowal of sympathy for their cause, although in private he and Ledru Rollin seem to have been more forthcoming in this respect;¹³⁹ they were angered because his speech gave the impression that the delegation had asked for military

135. Clarendon to Russell, 30 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 222); G. Grey to Clarendon, 1 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 12; Hobhouse's Diary, 1 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f14.

136. Normanby to Clarendon, 3 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 20.

137. Normanby to Palmerston, No 231, 5 April 1848: PRO FO 27/806 (q NJ, I, 282 - 3).

138. Lamartine, Trois Mois, 135 - 8.

139. Duffy, 569; Nowlan, 191.

aid, which was not the case.¹⁴⁰ In later life Duffy and Mitchel were highly critical of the reply.¹⁴¹ However at the time, for the benefit of their readers, they interpreted it in the way most favourable to the Repeal cause. The United Irishman said its meaning was that Ireland would receive no military aid "till we are able to declare war against the English government".¹⁴² The Nation offered an even more optimistic interpretation:

His answer was all that Ireland could expect. She needs no foreign assistance to attain her independence. Freedom is a useless gift, but a noble acquisition. What she needed was the recognition of her nationality. France has recognised it, in ranking her with Poland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy.¹⁴³

However the Nation was not so satisfied with the reply to emphasise it. It preferred to stress the report, subsequently repeated by Smith O'Brien in the Commons, that the deputation had been offered, and had refused, the assistance of 50,000 armed Frenchmen.¹⁴⁴

The British Government was immensely grateful and not a little relieved when it received a copy of the speech.¹⁴⁵ Clarendon had extracts translated and placarded throughout Ireland, and he was gratified by the anti-French feeling it provoked.¹⁴⁶ When Sir George Grey forwarded the report that Smith O'Brien had received the promise of 50,000 Frenchmen, Palmerston noted at the bottom of the letter: "This must be an Invention of the Irish".¹⁴⁷ English public opinion was, on the whole, also pleased with the reply. Some people would

140. Smith O'Brien's memorandum, no date: Gwynn, 168.

141. Duffy, 568; J. Mitchel: The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps) (London n.d.), 167.

142. United Irishman, 8 April 1848, 136.

143. Nation, 8 April 1848, 232.

144. ibid, 232; Hansard, XCVIII, 75 - 6. Neither the Nation nor Smith O'Brien said where the offer came from.

145. Palmerston to Normanby, 4 April 1848: Nor. P. P/20/25 (q Ashley, II, 77); Russell to Clarendon, 4 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43; Grey's Journal, 8 April 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

146. Clarendon to Normanby, 17 April 1848: Nor. P. O/156.

147. G. Grey to Palmerston, 6 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/GR/2429.

have preferred if Lamartine had refused to receive the deputation,¹⁴⁸ but few were unhappy with what he had said. Lamartine's speech was "excellent", Charles Greville observed. "He gave a lecture to the Irish much stronger than any they have had here; and if his speech does no good it will certainly do no harm."¹⁴⁹

Smith O'Brien remained in Paris for several days after his reception at the Hôtel de Ville - during which time he dined with Lamartine, to which Normanby turned a blind eye as Palmerston had just had Guizot to dinner,¹⁵⁰ and visited a number of Paris clubs where he had a rapturous reception¹⁵¹ - before returning to London to speak (for what proved to be the last time) in the Commons on the evening of 10 April. His task on that occasion was to oppose further coercive measures for Ireland, but he spent a large part of his speech justifying his trip to Paris. He denied that he had gone "for the purpose of enlisting French aid", as had been reported. If he had, he said, "believe me I should have come back accompanied by a tolerably large legion of troops". But the Commons on the evening of 10 April was not the place to make such provocative statements. Jubilant after the defeat of the Chartists, most M.P.s greeted his speech with loud laughter and ironic cheers.¹⁵² Freeman's Journal praised Smith O'Brien's "manly" avowal of the Repeal cause.¹⁵³ The reaction in the English press, however, was as hostile as that of the Commons.¹⁵⁴ "I cannot help thinking that that seedy looking Patriot O'Brien is somewhat

148. Hansard, XCVIII, 147; Standard, 5 April 1848, 2; MC, 6 April 1848, 4.

149. GM, VI, 165. Cf DN, 5 April 1848, 2; The Times, 5 April 1848, 4; MP, 6 April 1848, 4; MH, 6 April 1848, 4; York Courant, 6 April 1848, 5.

150. Normanby to Clarendon, 6 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 20.

151. Palmerston to Normanby, 4 April 1848: Nor. P. P/20/26.

152. Hansard, XCVIII, 73 - 80 (partly q Mitchel, 168 - 9).

153. Freeman's Journal, 12 April 1848, 2.

154. MC, 12 April 1848, 4; The Times, 12 April 1848, 5; York Courant, 13 April 1848, 5; ILN, 22 April 1848, 260.

crazy," wrote E.J. Stanley, "though not too crazy to be transported."¹⁵⁵

K.B. Nowlan has argued that the "obvious failure" of the mission to Paris "did not produce any real change in the general pattern of developments in Ireland."¹⁵⁶ In essence he is correct. The Confederates continued to drift towards rebellion, eventually ^{to} be provoked into a premature rising by the suspension of Habeas Corpus in the last week of July.¹⁵⁷ But there was a noticeable change in the attitude of the Government. Clarendon found encouragement in Smith O'Brien's dejected appearance when he arrived in Dublin,¹⁵⁸ and the Cabinet detected signs of improvement in the condition of Ireland.¹⁵⁹ Not all doubts disappeared - Normanby continued to watch the Irish in Paris¹⁶⁰ and the Government maintained its coercive policy - but there was increasing confidence that if a revolt did break out it would be crushed. There were over 30,000 troops in Ireland, supported by 10,000 police, Palmerston told Normanby shortly before the insurrection. "This Force would make an Example of the Pikemen, and Rifle Corps and nobody can doubt that Rebellion would soon & effectually be put down".¹⁶¹

The rising, when it came, was even more of a fiasco than the authorities had dared hope. Within a week of the outbreak Clarendon was able to report that the rebellion was over. "I hope the French people have viewed this insurrection on its ridiculous side", he wrote to Normanby, "& that they feel proper contempt for the swaggering helpless harmless [sic] who are always ready to invoke foreign aid for what

155. E.J. Stanley to Normanby, 11 April 1848: Nor. P. O/389.

156. Nowlan, 192.

157. For the history of the remainder of 1848 in Ireland see Duffy, 590ff; Gwynn, 171 - 273; Nowlan, 201 - 17.

158. Clarendon to Russell, copies, 13 and 14 April 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 ff210 and 212.

159. Grey's Journal, 16 April 1848: Grey P. C3/14; G. Grey to Wood, 24 April 1848: Hal. P. A4/58/1.

160. Normanby to Palmerston, 15 April, 5 May and 11 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/156, GC/NO/163 (q NJ, I, 363 - 4), and GC/NO/178.

161. Palmerston to Normanby, 21 July 1848: Nor. P. P/20/50.

they cannot do by themselves."¹⁶² As Clarendon hinted, the Confederates had asked the Republic for military assistance, and, according to Duffy, Cavaignac expressed "warm sympathy" with their cause.¹⁶³ This, however, seems unlikely. Normanby was seeing Cavaignac almost daily at this time¹⁶⁴ and received no hint of such a meeting, whilst Palmerston had no hesitation in assuring Clarendon that the Irish would get no support from France.¹⁶⁵ Given his preoccupation with the internal stability of the Republic and his anxiety to cement an understanding with Britain over Italy, if Cavaignac did meet a representative of Young Ireland it is doubtful whether he offered anything more than vague platitudes.

No episode reveals more clearly than that of the Confederate deputation to Paris how little the British Government trusted the Provisional Government when the security of the British constitution was at stake. It was worried about the danger from republican and revolutionary propagandism, and it was alarmed when, despite the promises in the Manifesto, Lamartine made pronouncements which could be interpreted as encouraging unrest in Ireland. It did not deny Lamartine's right to have strong views on Britain's internal affairs - after all it had strong views on the Republic's internal affairs - but it objected when those views, which it considered unfounded and dangerous, were made public in such a way that they could be interpreted as the views of the Provisional Government. It is unlikely, however, that the British Government would have made so much of this principle but for its recognition that French support, whether real or imagined, encouraged unrest in Ireland.

An equally important question is, why did the Republic not give

162. Clarendon to Normanby, 14 August 1848: ibid 0/158.

163. Duffy, 696.

164. See below pp. 225 - 31.

165. Palmerston to Clarendon, 28 July 1848: Clar. P. Box c524.

as much support to the Irish cause as the Repealers expected? Lawrence Jennings has shown that the formation of Lamartine's foreign policy was influenced greatly by his reluctance to take an unpopular step with the Paris clubs.¹⁶⁶ Support for the Irish cause was not as strong as for the causes of Polish or Italian independence, but it was a popular cause and if Lamartine had adopted it he could have counted on the traditional hostility to England in France. It might seem surprising, then, that he should have courted unpopularity by publicly denying any recognition of the Irish flag and by his hostile reply to Smith O'Brien. Of course these actions were prompted by intense pressure from the British Government, but why did Lamartine submit to that pressure? especially when, as W.A.I. Fortescue has observed,¹⁶⁷ the Provisional Government received no compensation such as the recognition of the Republic. It was not because he doubted the ability of the Republic to assist the Irish. The Provisional Government, Garnier-Pagès wrote later, had had the power "de verser sur la Grande-Bretagne des calamités inouïes, et de déchaîner sur elle des tempêtes de feu et sang."¹⁶⁸ The reason was that the Provisional Government believed that the Republic's foreign policy could be furthered most effectively by being on good terms with the British Government. However by the time of Smith O'Brien's reception the initial cause of that belief, a wish to dissuade Britain from uniting with the Northern Courts against the Republic, had disappeared. The overthrow of the governments of Austria and Prussia by revolution, and the retreat of Russia behind her frontiers, had removed the danger of a monarchical coalition. Lamartine continued to pursue his objective of a close

166. Jennings, 44 - 70.

167. W.A.I. Fortescue: "Alphonse de Lamartine as a Politician and Intellectual, 1831 - 1869" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London 1974, 212.

168. L.A. Garnier-Pagès: Histoire de la Révolution de 1848 (Paris 1866 - 1872), VII, 215.

understanding with Britain, but now it was out of preference rather than fear. The result, as we shall see in the next chapter, was to make the Republic's foreign policy less cautious and consequently less to the liking of the British Government.

iii) THE AFTERMATH

The "fiasco" of 10 April and the "failure" of the Irish deputation to Paris marks an important turning-point in British thinking in 1848. Whatever their real importance, the British electorate, and to a lesser extent the British Government, saw these events as being of the greatest significance. At a time when other governments were being toppled by revolutionary movements, the British Government had withstood the twin challenges of Chartism and Young Ireland. By the end of the year the contrast between Britain and the continent seemed still more apparent. Other countries were still in turmoil, whereas Britain had returned to her normal peace and stability. Several leading newspapers, reflecting on the events of 1848, ascribed Britain's success to the benefits of her constitution. The trouble with the Chartists and the unrest in Ireland proved that all was not perfect, but Britain's immunity from serious disorder was seen as proof of the value of constitutional monarchy.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, the failure of the socialist doctrines in France seemed to vindicate the laissez-faire theories which dominated social and economic thinking in Britain. "France has been to England a salutary warning", Clarendon wrote to the King of the Belgians.

She has made trial of every wild thing & of all those unsound principles which are so attractive to the unthinking masses & which were not without their numerous adherents among ourselves. The result has been failure more rapid & ruin more complete than the sternest opponents of such doctrines could have anticipated & I am convinced that it has given a blow

169. ILN, 30 December 1848, 417 - 18; Spectator, 30 December 1848, 1244; MC, 1 January 1848, 4; The Times, 1 January 1848, 4.

to the democratic spirit¹⁷⁰ of England from which it will not quickly recover . . .

At the same time, amidst these comforting reflections, there was also a feeling of relief. "Whatever may have been the difficulties of 1848," wrote Sir George Grey on New Year's Eve, "I feel we ought to be thankful for escaping as well as we have done. We seemed at one time to be threatened with the propaganda of 1793 & the rebellion of 1798 both at once."¹⁷¹

In some respects, the relief expressed by Sir George Grey, which is also discernible among many in the ruling classes after 10 April, contradicts the repeated professions of confidence in the British "system". If the leaders of society were so convinced of the benefits of their balanced constitution and their laissez-faire theories, why were they so thankful when the "subversion" of the Chartists and Young Ireland failed? The obvious answer would be that the ruling classes were not as self-confident as they made out, and that the declarations to the contrary were meant to inspire confidence among the timid and fear among the disaffected. There may have been an element of this before the meeting on Kennington Common, but the self-confidence found expression at less troubled times and in private letters and conversations when there was little advantage to be gained. It could be that the ruling classes were deceiving themselves as well as trying to deceive others, but this would imply self-deception on such an extensive scale as to be almost inconceivable. There is, however, an explanation which reconciles the fear of subversion with the self-confidence of the ruling classes.

This explanation hinges upon early Victorian England's conception of the causes of revolution. Revolutions, it was thought, could be

170. Clarendon to King Leopold, copy, 20 December 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 f197.

171. G. Grey to Clarendon, 31 December 1848: ibid Irish Box 12.

caused when the majority of the inhabitants of a country or part of a country found the regime under which they were living intolerable. Such revolutions might be classified as "natural", for they were assumed to be inevitable without essential changes to the character of the regime, and in such circumstances many Britons sympathised with the revolutionaries for the blame for the unrest lay with the relevant government which had made the conditions intolerable. The insurrections in Sicily in January and in Lombardy and Venetia in March were generally accepted in Britain to have been such "natural" revolutions. On the other hand, revolutions could be "unnatural" if they were caused by the actions of a clique rather than a popular movement. The coup d'états of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1799 and of Louis Napoleon in 1851 were obvious examples of this, and the British public regarded such revolutions with distaste for they were assumed to have perverted the course of history. The distinction between a "natural" and an "unnatural" revolution was not always clear - the February Revolution in France, for example, was regarded by many Tories as "unnatural", but by most Whigs and Radicals as "natural" - but it was a distinction which, if possible, the British ruling classes liked to make, for upon it depended the policies which they felt should be pursued. Put simply, they thought that a "natural" revolution should be met by conciliation and that an "unnatural" revolution should be met by repression.

Most members of the British ruling classes had few doubts that if Britain was threatened by a revolution in 1848, it was by an "unnatural" revolution. The distress which existed among the lower classes was recognised as producing the circumstances in which political discontent flourished. But it was assumed that nothing could be done to alleviate the distress without violating the laws of economics and affecting

personal liberties, and moreover that nothing need be done for, through the action of those laws, trade and industry would pick up, thereby easing distress. The important thing was to prevent the temporary social discontent becoming political disaffection, and to that end those individuals who were incorrigibly disaffected had to be prevented from exploiting the situation. However the extent to which the disaffected could be controlled was limited, for the question impinged upon personal liberties which were assumed to be inseparable from the economic freedoms which had made Britain great,¹⁷² and the Government was careful not to adopt any measure which might be thought excessive. But such powers as were available, which in the exceptional circumstances of 1848 were greater than normal, were used and the Government was prepared, if necessary, to resort to force.¹⁷³

The repressive policies which the British Government adopted at home were in marked contrast to the policies which Palmerston advised other governments to adopt. Early in March, to give but one example, Stratford Canning, en route to Constantinople, was instructed to visit several central European capitals to preach the benefits of constitutional government as the best way to solve unrest.¹⁷⁴ The reason for the difference was that Palmerston thought that the other countries, unlike Britain, were threatened by "natural" revolutions. He shared the assumption of most British politicians that Britain was more ad-

172. For a recent discussion of this see B.J. Porter: Britain, Europe and the World 1850 - 1982: Delusions of Grandeur (London 1983), 3 - 7.

173. Even these limited repressive powers were viewed with suspicion by the more ardent advocates of laissez-faire, such as the opponents of the Alien Bill, who argued that they were unnecessary and who had always suspected that the Tory and Whig aristocrats who dominated the Government were more reactionary than they made out.

174. Palmerston to Canning, No 1, 10 March 1848: PRO FO 30/117. Canning's mission is reminiscent of that of Lord Minto to Italy, but because of the circumstances Canning encountered in Germany it proved far less effective. Cf Gillessen, 7 - 12.

vanced, socially, economically and politically, than the rest of Europe, and consequently that if continental governments wished to share Britain's stability and prosperity they should adopt her course of laissez-faire economics and moderate reform.

Continental statesmen were sceptical about the difference which Palmerston perceived between the revolution which threatened Britain and those which threatened the rest of Europe. They suspected that he had one standard for Britain and another for everyone else. This may be so, but all the evidence suggests that Palmerston believed in the difference he discerned. He genuinely felt that the discontent in England and Ireland was caused by a vociferous and unrepresentative minority, possibly encouraged by foreign agitators, whilst the unrest on the continent reflected the views of an oppressed and resentful majority. It was a simplistic and over-optimistic interpretation of the state of Britain and of the state of the continent, but it was not without foundation. The Chartists and Young Ireland were potent challenges to the authorities, but they lacked the mass support which was necessary for them to be successful.

The "victory" of the Government in 1848 created confidence and stability among the British ruling classes, but it did not provide a permanent solution to the problems presented by the Chartists and Young Ireland. Chartism died in 1848, but the demands for an extension of the franchise continued and gained greater respectability, culminating after Palmerston's death in the passing of the 1867 Reform Bill. In Ireland, the Young Ireland movement collapsed after the failure of Smith O'Brien's insurrection, but Irish nationalism resurfaced in the 1860s as Fenianism. However Russell's Government did not expect its repressive policies to provide a permanent solution. Its aim was to prevent the revolution with which it felt it was threatened, and to that extent it was successful.

Chapter IV: Palmerston, Lamartine and the March Revolutions

i) BRITAIN AND THE MARCH REVOLUTIONS

Towards the end of the second week of March a series of revolutions began to sweep through Europe. During the previous fortnight there had been riots in Munich, Cologne and Berlin, and an abortive rising at Breslau, as well as the unrest in England and Ireland and the continued uncertainty in France. But it was on the 13th, with the outbreak of revolution in Vienna and the fall of Metternich, that the March revolutions really began. On the 15th fighting broke out in the streets of Berlin which only subsided when Frederick William promised his subjects a constitution. The same day, a provisional government was formed in Budapest. On the 18th the inhabitants of Milan rose in revolt and after five days' fighting expelled the occupying Austrian army. On the 22nd the Venetians proclaimed the formation of the Republic of St. Mark, and in Poznan the Poles began to attack the authorities. On the 24th the Germans of Schleswig and Holstein established a provisional government at Kiel in defence, they said, of their rights which the Danish Government was trying to overthrow. The unrest continued throughout April and into May, and although would-be revolutionaries met with a varying degree of success no country was completely immune.

The news of the revolutions shook the political world in London. "A tenth part of any one of the events would have lasted us for as many months, with sentiments of wonder and deep interest", wrote Greville on 25 March; "but now we are perplexed, overwhelmed, and carried away with excitement, and the most stupendous events are become like matters of every-day occurrence."¹ It was almost impossible

1. GM, VI, 158.

for anyone to keep track of the progress of all the revolutions, let alone make balanced forecasts about what would happen next. Indeed the unexpectedness of the revolutions in Berlin and Vienna made many wonder whether it was possible to predict future events at all. One event, however, caught the imagination of the British public: the fall of Metternich.

The resignation of Metternich, wrote The Times, was the end of an era, the fall of "the last beam of the old system". But, it wondered, would his departure be a "great . . . deliverance" to Austria and Europe, or would it leave a "real . . . void"?² Others had few doubts. "The fall of Metternich", wrote Hobhouse, "is the rise of Germany, and the freedom of Italy."³ Palmerston's only regret was that it had not happened earlier, "and then many bad things . . . might have been prevented".⁴ Newspapers of all political persuasions welcomed Metternich's departure.⁵ Some of these articles, declared Fraser's Magazine, were a "disgrace to British journalism", yet it too condemned Metternich's policies as "inimical to the constitutional liberties of the Austrian people and the nations under their sway".⁶

As with Louis Philippe and Guizot, dislike of Metternich's policies was not translated into dislike of Metternich himself when he and his wife arrived in London in April. Princess Metternich did not like England and was disgusted by the manner in which the English seemed to rejoice at what was happening on the continent.⁷ Her husband, however, was fascinated by London and the way in which small numbers

2. The Times, 21 March 1848, 5.

3. Hobhouse's Diary, 20 March 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f138 (q Dorchester, VI, 211).

4. Palmerston to Westmorland, copy, 23 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/WE/191.

5. DN, 21 March 1848, 3; MH, 22 March 1848, 4; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 276 - 7.

6. Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 484 - 7.

7. Princess Metternich's Journal, April 1848: Klinkowstroem, VIII, 18.

of policemen could control large crowds.⁸ He also enjoyed the conversations he had with leading politicians. He kept up a regular correspondence with Wellington and an occasional one with Aberdeen in which he gave his views on the state of Austria, Germany and Italy.⁹ He even received Palmerston, although, perhaps wisely, they did not discuss politics.¹⁰ But it was Disraeli whom he seems to have inspired most. "I never heard such divine talk", Disraeli told his wife early in 1849 after seeing Metternich at Brighton,

- he gave me the most masterly exposition of the present state of European affairs, & said a greater number of wise & willy [sic, wily?] things than I ever recollected having from him on the same day. He was indeed quite brilliant, & his eyes sometimes laughed with sunny sympathy with his shining thoughts.

There was a strong similarity between Metternich and Disraeli: both tended to philosophise about politics, both condemned the revolutions, and both opposed Palmerston's foreign policy. Several of Disraeli's speeches on foreign affairs were influenced by his conversations with Metternich and were recognised as such by contemporaries.¹² Disraeli's talks with Metternich did not alter his general views of foreign affairs, but they seem to have made him a more vigorous opponent of the French Republic and of Palmerston.

Reaction to the European revolutions in general was mixed. The Duke of Newcastle saw them as the will of God.¹³ Palmerston discerned more earthly causes. The revolutions, he instructed Bloomfield to tell Nesselrode, were the result of "a blind disregard . . . of public

8. Metternich to Countess Sandor, 28 May 1848: *ibid.*, 167.

9. See, for example, Metternich to Wellington, 22 May, 24 June, 14 July, 13 August and 18 November 1848: Well. P. 158/66, 158/134 - 7, 159/12 - 13, 159/70 and 160/74 - 7; Metternich to Aberdeen, 24 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43280 ff60 - 3.

10. Palmerston to Normanby, 2 May 1848: Nor. P. P/20/34.

11. Disraeli to his wife, 7 January 1849: Dis. P. A/I/A/242.

12. Morpeth's Diary, 16 August 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/18 ff32 - 3; Monypenny and Buckle, III, 180 - 4; Gillessen, 24 - 5.

13. Newcastle to Stanley, 10 April 1848: Der. P. Box 147/1.

opinion".¹⁴ The only sure way to prevent revolution was the British way of remedying "justly complained of grievances" and introducing "such improvements into the Legislation of the Country, as experience and attentive observation, and mature reflection, have pointed out to be desirable", by which all classes would become attached to the constitution.¹⁵ If the rest of Europe had adopted the course advocated by Britain before 1848, Russell declared in March 1849,

we should have been spared the scenes of the past year, and instead of a transition from the most complete and absolute despotism to a wild and rabid democracy, we should have seen the peaceful progress of improvement, the introduction of constitutional modes of government, and a better state of things in Europe, generally, than now exists.¹⁶

Russell's disillusionment with the way the March revolutions had gone is understandable, and it was shared by many people at the beginning of 1849. At the time, however, most people in Britain welcomed the revolutions. There was disquiet in some quarters, with certain Protectionist journals, convinced that the disorder was the result of a widespread conspiracy, anxiously anticipating some manifestation in England.¹⁷ But such views were not widely held. It was assumed that the revolutions in Germany and Italy were different from that in France. The revolution in France had gone too far by embracing republicanism and socialism, whereas those in Germany and Italy were in favour of constitutional monarchy. Attitudes towards the insurrections in northern Italy were complicated by the Sardinian attack on Austria,¹⁸ but upon the whole the press applauded these "natural" revolutions.¹⁹

14. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No 70, 28 March 1848: PRO FO 65/343.

15. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No 95, 14 April 1848: *ibid* 65/344.

16. *Hansard*, CIII, 378.

17. *MP*, 22 March 1848, 4; *Standard*, 3 June 1848, 2; *Quarterly Review*, LXXXIII, 229.

18. See below pp. 198 - 9.

19. *The Times*, 17 and 30 March 1848, 4; *DN*, 21 March 1848, 3; *ILN*, 1 April 1848, 207; *The Economist*, 1 April 1848, 365 - 8; *Fraser's Magazine*, XXXVII, 487; *Gentleman's Magazine*, XXIX, 414.

Lamartine was overjoyed by the March revolutions. He saw them as justifying the policy of non-aggression he had been advocating since February. By not giving the Northern Powers an excuse to combine against the Republic, he argued, they had been prevented from utilising the revolution in Paris to frighten the rest of Europe into submission. Instead, the shining example of liberty and equality in France had encouraged other nations to follow her lead. There was no need for the Republic to go to war to revolutionize Europe because Europe was being revolutionized without its assistance.²⁰ The rest of Europe, however, wondered whether the Republic would continue its pacific policy. Might not the weakness of central Europe tempt France across the Rhine?²¹ Would the Provisional Government go to war to divert attention away from the "intolerable distress" in France?²² In Paris there was talk of a "general scramble" for territory during which Britain would seize Egypt.²³ No one could be certain what the Republic would do now there was no longer the threat of a monarchical coalition, but the creation of armies on the Rhine and the Var made some fear the worse. The formation of these armies, observed the York Herald, "is but the embodiment of a feeling by which the Government appears to be carried away; its words and phrases are of peace, whilst its acts all point to war, although no Power dreams of attack."²⁴

The British Government continued to regard Lamartine as the best insurance against war. It was thought that as long as he remained in office the "war party" in the Provisional Government would be restrained.²⁵ But by the beginning of May there was no longer the

20. Lamartine, Histoire, II, 275 - 6; Jennings, 36 - 8.

21. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 156, 23 May 1848: PRO FO 65/349.

22. GM, VI, 165.

23. Normanby to Palmerston, 31 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/149.

24. York Herald, 25 March 1848, 5.

25. Normanby to Palmerston, 24 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/161; Palmerston to Normanby, 2 May 1848: Nor. P. P/20/34; Clarendon to Lansdowne, copy, 12 May 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 ff242 - 3.

trust in him that there had been two months earlier. His speeches on foreign affairs were regarded with increasing dissatisfaction,²⁶ and the alliance he established with Ledru Rollin was seen as a sign of his political weakness and growing extremism.²⁷ "I wish I could keep up the illusion that Lamartine will be found equal to his position", wrote Normanby on 3 May.

There is a great charm about him:- he is the most good natured very vain man I ever knew, & one may say almost anything to him without affronting him;- but I am losing my confidence, in his having steadiness to establish any settled Govt.²⁸

The promotion of Jules Bastide, a sincere republican²⁹ whom Normanby described as "slow", "dull", "straight forward enough in his dealings" but formerly "very Anti-English",³⁰ was seen as a further step in the wrong direction. When Bastide became Foreign Minister, upon Lamartine entering the Executive Commission,³¹ he assured anxious diplomats that the Republic would continue to desire peace and friendly relations with other countries and would respect "toutes les nationalités, . . . tous les gouvernements et . . . tous les droits."³² Normanby was sceptical: the tone of the Note "is good, and the promised line conciliatory", he observed, but certain appointments at the Foreign Ministry and the language of members of the Government "prevent one's placing implicit confidence in their professions."³³ These doubts contrast markedly

-
26. Normanby to Palmerston, No 304, 7 May 1848, and No 309, 10 May 1848: PRO FO 27/807 (q NJ, I, 367 - 8 and 372 - 3); The Times, 12 May 1848, 4.
27. Normanby to Palmerston, 10 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/165; Palmerston to Normanby, 16 May 1848: Nor. P. P/20/35; Russell to Normanby, 19 May 1848: Nor. P. P/23/27; GM, VI, 182.
28. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 3 May 1848: Nor. P. P/14/105.
29. Lamartine, Histoire, II, 7 - 8; Jennings, 24 and 123 - 4.
30. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 11 May 1848: Nor. P. P/14/109. After closer contact with Bastide, Normanby came to like and trust him, though he never thought greatly of him as a statesman (see below p. 220).
31. Lamartine, however, still formulated foreign policy (Jennings, 99).
32. Circular Note to the diplomatic community in Paris, 12 May 1848: DD, II, 183 - 4.
33. Normanby to Palmerston, No 324, 14 May 1848: PRO FO 27/808.

with Normanby's ready acceptance of Lamartine's assurances at the end of February.

Suspicious about the trustworthiness of the French Government came to the fore in the second week of May. But it had been six weeks earlier, with the invasions of Belgium by over a thousand Belgian republicans resident in France and their French sympathisers, that the influence of the extremists on the Republic's foreign policy seemed most apparent. Lamartine had disavowed all intention of propagandism, but the aim of the invasions, which had come to nothing, was to revolutionise Belgium.³⁴ The question the British and Belgian Governments asked was, how deeply was the Provisional Government involved?

The British Government had been reassured about French intentions with respect to Belgium by the report on 27 February that the Republic would under no circumstances annex its neighbour.³⁵ The Belgian Government was more doubtful. Although pleased by the Provisional Government's announcement, it was disturbed by Ledru Rollin's language on the subject which, Howard de Walden was told, "was very essentially different from that of M. Lamartine." Ledru Rollin was reported to have said that the Provisional Government would support the Belgian people if they exhibited a desire to join the Republic. The Belgian Government was convinced that he intended "to promote, by agitation of Republican principles, the result desired, . . . the destruction of the neutrality and nationality of Belgium."³⁶

Given these suspicions, it is not surprising that the Belgian Government was quick to accuse Ledru Rollin of complicity in the invasions. After the first attack, the Belgian ambassador in Paris complained to

34. Jennings, 55 - 6.

35. See above p. 100.

36. Howard de Walden to Palmerston, No 29, confidential, 18 March 1848: PRO FO 10/137.

Lamartine about Ledru Rollin's involvement.³⁷ After the second, the Belgian Government obtained evidence that the attackers had received arms from the French authorities.³⁸ Lamartine denied this second charge. He told Normanby that any guns must have come from the Paris clubs over which he had no control, although he admitted that the orders of the ministers might not have been "very loyally executed by some of their subordinates."³⁹ The following day he repeated the denial in even stronger terms. "He pledged his own honor, and that of the Provisional Government, that they were quite irreproachable upon the subject of these expeditions: that they had no connivance with their objects." His only regret, he said, was that the Provisional Government lacked the means to prevent such attacks.⁴⁰

Despite Lamartine's denials, the Belgian Government remained convinced of the Provisional Government's involvement.⁴¹ Lamartine's refusal to make public his denial served to confirm its suspicions.⁴² But it was thought advisable to take the subject no further. As Howard de Walden observed to King Leopold on 1 April, the invasions had not destabilised Belgium, as their backers had hoped, but had led to strong demonstrations of loyalty and nationality. To cast doubt on Lamartine's assurances would not improve Belgium's position, and might damage his standing within the Provisional Government where he advocated peace and moderation.⁴³ Besides, as d'Hoffschmidt remarked, there was little point in continuing to protest when all Lamartine

37. Ligne to d'Hoffschmidt, very confidential, 27 March 1848: Ridder, I, 261 - 2.

38. Howard de Walden to Palmerston, No 36, 30 March 1848: PRO FO 10/137.

39. Normanby to Palmerston, No 210, secret, 31 March 1848: *ibid* 27/805.

40. Normanby to Palmerston, No 221, 1 April 1848: *ibid* 27/806 (q NJ, I, 284 - 5). Cf Ligne to d'Hoffschmidt, 1 April 1848: Ridder, I, 297 - 300.

41. Howard de Walden to Palmerston, No 37, 1 April 1848: PRO FO 10/138.

42. Ligne to d'Hoffschmidt, 1 April 1848: Ridder, I, 297 - 300.

43. Howard de Walden to Palmerston, 1 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/HO/703.
For the effects of the invasions on Belgium see Gooch, 82 - 3.

did was issue denials.⁴⁴

In Britain, the reaction to the accusations of the French Government's involvement was mixed. The Daily News accepted Lamartine's assurances at their face value; The Times did not.⁴⁵ The British Government's views are more difficult to assess for there is no conclusive evidence. It seems probable, however, that it accepted Belgian complaints against Ledru Rollin⁴⁶ and that it saw Lamartine's denials as proof that he had known nothing of his colleague's activities. Such a judgement would have fitted in with the Government's existing belief that Ledru Rollin was a dangerous propagandist and that Lamartine was his dupe. If this was its view, it was close to the truth. As far as can be judged, Lamartine was not involved in the attempt to revolutionize Belgium, but Ledru Rollin, and still more the Préfet de Police and the commissary of the Département du Nord, had encouraged the invaders.⁴⁷ But whatever the truth about Lamartine's involvement, the affair had damaged his standing in the eyes of the British. At best, he had shown an ignorance and powerlessness which boded ill for his continuation as head of the French Government. At worst, he had been revealed to be deceitful, dishonest and engaged in intrigues against other countries. The British preferred to believe the former, but some residue of the latter must have remained to cloud British hopes over more important questions such as the war in northern Italy.

Unlike Lamartine and Palmerston, Nesselrode was appalled by the news of the revolutions in Berlin and Vienna. Metternich's downfall, he told Meyendorff, was one of the worst things that could have happened.⁴⁸

44. D'Hoffschmidt to Ligne, 2 April 1848: Ridder, I, 321 - 3.

45. DN, 5 April 1848, 2; The Times, 1 April 1848, 4 - 5.

46. After the first invasion, for example, Palmerston agreed to protest to Lamartine about Ledru Rollin's involvement (Van de Weyer to d'Hoffschmidt, confidential, 27 March 1848: Ridder, I, 259 - 60).

47. Jennings, 54; Quentin-Bauchart, 190 - 1.

48. Nesselrode to Meyendorff, 21 March 1848: Nesselrode, IX, 70.

Bloomfield reported that he had never seen the Chancellor "so depressed . . . or so completely overcome as he has been by the news from Vienna." He regarded the Austrian revolution as "the failure of all his schemes and the destruction of all his political combinations." Russia, he told Bloomfield, stood alone against "the storm with which She considers Herself to be threatened from the West." In an effort to overcome this isolation, he urged that Britain and Russia should forget their other disagreements, "as they had lost all importance in the presence of the great events which have lately been accomplished", and should come to an understanding on European affairs.⁴⁹ Palmerston replied that it was impossible to come to an understanding with Russia because British public opinion was strongly attached to the cause of Polish independence, and pursuing this line he advised the Tsar to establish a separate Polish state under one of his sons which, Palmerston claimed, might prevent a Polish uprising.⁵⁰ Nesselrode listened patiently to Palmerston's advice, but said that the Tsar would never consider such a plan.⁵¹ Rebuffed by Britain and deprived of her normal allies, for the moment Russia retreated behind her frontiers, leaving the rest of Europe to cope with the revolutions as best it could.

Palmerston's rejection of an understanding with Russia was the result of more than a refusal to become involved with a government which, in his opinion, was not sufficiently liberal. It was part of a deliberate policy not to become entangled in European affairs. The Government's position, he informed the Queen after she had complained that she was not being kept adequately informed, "has been one rather

49. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 64, 20 March 1848: PRO FO 65/348.

50. Palmerston to Bloomfield, copies, 4 and 11 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/BL/227 and GC/BL/228 (q Ashley, II, 79).

51. Bloomfield to Palmerston, 22 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/BL/187. A week later, Nesselrode told Bloomfield "that the subject was one which we had better avoid discussing as there was no probability of the Imperial Government changing their opinions respecting it." (Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 131, 2 May 1848: PRO FO 65/349).

of observation than of action". Given the confused state of the continent, the Government wanted to remain "as free as possible from unnecessary engagements and entanglements" in order to retain its freedom of action.⁵² This did not mean, however, that the British Government did not plan to make its feelings known about European affairs. "We have nothing to do," Palmerston told Normanby, "though we may perhaps have something to say on these matters."⁵³ But given that the Vienna settlement seemed destroyed, what would be the objectives which would guide Britain's observations?

At the end of March Russell drew up some proposed guidelines about future British policy which he sent to Palmerston and Lansdowne. As usual, the principal objective was the maintenance of the general peace and the balance of power in Europe. But Russell recognised that specific policies had to be adapted to the altered circumstances. The British Government, he declared, should try to "maintain peace as long as possible . . . by enacting, & not by foregoing our influence in Europe." It should support Belgian integrity and independence, "so long as the Belgians are themselves willing to uphold it"; it should favour the development of a single German state as the best barrier to French and Russian expansionism; it should try to persuade Austria to abandon northern Italy; in the event of a Polish insurrection, it should encourage Russia to re-establish an independent Polish state; and it should "withdraw altogether from any contest regarding the Spanish succession, expressing our wish to the Spanish Government that they will not form with any foreign country a closer alliance than they are prepared to form with England."⁵⁴

Palmerston and Lansdowne expressed broad agreement with the ideas

52. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 18 April 1848: QVL, II, 203.

53. Palmerston to Normanby, 30 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/23.

54. Russell to Palmerston, 25 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/191.

Russell enunciated, although both felt he had undervalued Britain's commitment to Belgium. Palmerston also made another proviso. He felt that Britain should not drop her objections to the Montpensier marriage.⁵⁵ Compared with their agreement to support the liberal movements on the continent, the disagreement between Russell and Palmerston over Spain did not seem too important. However it was Palmerston's attitude towards the Spanish Government that was to cause a major international and domestic incident in the spring of 1848.

ii) THE EXPULSION OF SIR HENRY BULWER

On 16 March Palmerston wrote a despatch in which he instructed Sir Henry Bulwer to tell the Spanish Government, at a suitable moment, that its method of ruling was unjust, that it did not represent the Spanish people, that it was useless for it to depend upon its army, and that if it did not mend its ways there would probably be a revolution.⁵⁶ There was nothing unusual about Palmerston giving such advice. It was part of his desire to persuade other governments to reform before it was too late.⁵⁷ The tone on this occasion was more peremptory than usual, but that probably reflects his frustration about Spanish politics and it is clear that he did not intend that Bulwer should communicate the despatch directly to the Spanish Government. Unfortunately, Bulwer exceeded his instructions.

The despatch reached Bulwer after he had spent two weeks urging the Spanish Government to institute reforms without apparently making any impression.⁵⁸ Convinced that reform was necessary to prevent a republican revolution, he decided to use the despatch to take a stronger

55. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 30 March 1848: ibid GC/RU/1040; Lansdowne to Russell, 30 March 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

56. Palmerston to Bulwer, No 28, 16 March 1848: PRO FO 72/739 (q PP, LXV, 223). Cf Bourne, Victorian England, 293 - 4.

57. See above pp. 15 - 17, 117 - 18, 122 - 3 and 174 - 5.

58. Bulwer to Palmerston, 16 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/447.

line. He sent a copy of it to the Duc de Sotomayor, the Spanish Foreign Minister.⁵⁹ Sotomayor, infuriated by the arrogant tone of the despatch, returned it and enclosed an angry note asking what right Britain had to interfere in Spain's internal affairs? Bulwer acknowledged receipt of the note by restating what had been said in the despatch. His reply, he told Palmerston, "might have been more brief and more severe; but I thought it better on the whole to answer temperately and I venture to think conclusively the Tirade which may hardly be worthy of so much notice."⁶⁰

Bulwer may have tried to pull back from a quarrel, but Palmerston had no such intention. He approved Bulwer's actions and wrote a despatch, a copy of which Bulwer was instructed to give to Sotomayor, in which he stated at length that after all the assistance Britain had given Spain in the past she was entitled to give advice and that if Spain had done as much for Britain he would have taken the advice in the friendly spirit in which it had been sent.⁶¹ Sotomayor's note, he observed in an accompanying letter to Bulwer, was "very impertinent". If he had the temerity to return the second despatch, Bulwer should "take it back to him, & make him understand that we cannot stand such rudeness".⁶² Unlike Bulwer, who was in close contact with the Spanish opposition parties in an attempt to prevent them "jumping at once into republicanism and gallicism",⁶³ Palmerston did not think that Britain should become identified with Narvaez's opponents.⁶⁴ But he too expected the overthrow of Narvaez's Government and welcomed the prospect.

59. Bulwer to Palmerston, No 63, 10 April 1848: PRO FO 72/741 (q PP, LXV, 223 - 4).

60. Bulwer to Palmerston, No 66, 11 April 1848, enclosing Sotomayor to Bulwer, 10 April 1848, and Bulwer to Sotomayor, 12 April 1848: PRO FO 72/741 (partly q PP, LXV, 225 - 9).

61. Palmerston to Bulwer, No 44, 20 April 1848: PRO FO 72/739 (q PP, LXV, 229 - 30).

62. Palmerston to Bulwer, copy, 20 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/580.

63. Bulwer to Palmerston, confidential, 16 March 1848: ibid GC/BU/448.

64. Palmerston to Bulwer, copy, 18 April 1848: ibid GC/BU/579.

The despatch of 20 April was even more tactless than that of 16 March. In his contempt for the Spanish ministers, Palmerston had completely miscalculated their response. He believed they would back down if given a demonstration of British resolve. To make matters worse, he had sent the despatch against Russell's wishes. The Prime Minister had agreed that Bulwer's actions should be approved, but felt that the long tirade about Spanish ingratitude should be omitted. "I cannot but think", he had written, "that in the present circumstances of Europe, an irritating correspondence with the Sp. Govt. is unadvisable."⁶⁵ Palmerston, however, was unrepentent. "You were perhaps Right about my Draft to Bulwer", he confessed after sending the despatch, ". . . but it did not seem to me that any real Harm could result from sending it as written and I could not resist the Temptation of giving them a Rowland for their Oliver."⁶⁶ As usual, Russell preferred to ignore Palmerston's disobedience rather than risk his alienation.

Bulwer's correspondence with Sotomayor broke upon the British public with the receipt of the Spanish newspapers. The reaction was predominantly hostile to Palmerston. The Protectionist and Peelite press was indignant about Palmerston's attempted interference.⁶⁷ Even Whig and Radical papers found it difficult to defend the Foreign Secretary's actions: the Spectator called the dispute "as gratuitous, as profitless, as detrimental, and as discreditable, as he could have contrived."⁶⁸ Palmerston's colleagues were dismayed by his behaviour - Greville thought that if Russell did not force Palmerston's resignation, the rest of the Cabinet would.⁶⁹ Peel and Graham were appalled by it,

65. Russell to Palmerston, 19 April 1848: ibid GC/RU/196.

66. Palmerston to Russell, 21 April 1848: PRO 30/22/7B.

67. MC, 27 April 1848, 4; The Times, 27 April 1848, 4; MH, 29 April 1848, 4.

68. DN, 26 April 1848, 1 - 2; ILN, 29 April 1848, 276; Spectator, 29 April 1848, 405 - 6.

69. Greville to Clarendon, 28 April 1848: Clar. P. Box c521. Cf Grey's Journal, 27 April 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Normanby to Clarendon, 1 May 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 20.

the latter being "astonished that Lord Grey quietly submits to such Vagaries."⁷⁰ And Lord Stanley resolved to bring the matter up in Parliament as soon as possible.⁷¹

Stanley's speech on 5 May was extremely effective. He claimed that Palmerston was motivated by "two ruling and fixed ideas" when dealing with foreign governments:

The one, an exaggerated and overstrained jealousy of the influence . . . of France in the other Courts of Europe and the world; and the other, a morbid desire for interfering and intermeddling, with a view, no doubt, in his judgement, to the promotion of British interests, with those purely internal concerns of other countries which I hold it to be the first duty of a British Minister most sedulously to abstain from disturbing.

Palmerston's policy of meddling, he went on, had failed elsewhere, for example in southern Italy. But he had not learnt from his mistakes. Instead, he had sent a despatch which seemed almost designed to be offensive and would certainly be counter-productive. Lansdowne made a weak reply. He denied that Palmerston's advice had not produced beneficial results, and he said that the problem with Spain had arisen because Bulwer had exceeded his instructions.⁷²

The Cabinet recognised that Stanley had scored a success and realised that Lansdowne's defence would not stand up to examination. The relevant papers, which the Government had decided to publish, would show that whilst Bulwer had not been ordered to send a copy of the despatch to Sotomayor, the Government had approved his actions when he had done so.⁷³ The Times was quick to take up the "downright contradiction"

70. Peel to Graham, 28 April 1848: Gra. P. Bundle 105; Graham to Peel, 30 April 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40452 ff272 - 3 (q Parker, Peel, III, 495).

71. Stanley to J.W. Patten, copy, 29 April 1848: Der. P. Box 178/1.

72. Hansard, XCVIII, 671 - 99.

73. Grey's Journal, 5 May 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hobhouse's Diary, 6 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff52 - 3. Lansdowne later confessed that he had not read the relevant despatches before he spoke on the 5th "and had not a notion how far Palmerston had committed himself in approval of Bulwer" (GM, VI, 178).

of what Lansdowne had said and what the printed papers revealed. Other opposition papers followed suit.⁷⁴ Stanley took up the contradiction in Parliament and made what Grey admitted was "a very effective & damaging speech". Lansdowne's stumbling reply impressed no one.⁷⁵ Lansdowne's colleagues, however, did not blame him for the Government's embarrassment. They blamed Palmerston.⁷⁶ They were determined that the Foreign Secretary should not get them into such trouble again.

At first Grey thought that the crisis would lead either to Palmerston's resignation or the break-up of the Government, of which alternatives, he confessed, "the former wd. have given me infinite satisfactn."⁷⁷ But it quickly became apparent that neither of these events would occur. Despite the strong language in their newspapers, the Protectionists and the Peelites did not attempt to capitalise on their success in Parliament by pressing for Palmerston's dismissal, for the problem remained that Russell's Government, which they wanted to sustain, could not survive without him.⁷⁸ Moreover, the Whigs and the Radicals seemed to be rallying behind the Foreign Secretary,⁷⁹ thus making any attempt to oust him more difficult. Caution, therefore, seemed not only advisable but necessary. Freed from pressure from the opposition, at a Cabinet on 10 May those ministers who a few days earlier had been furious with Palmerston did not press for his resignation. Instead, they insisted that in future he should show Russell all despatches before they were sent.⁸⁰ It was not a very effective deterrent, for

74. The Times, 8 May 1848, 4; Standard, 9 May 1848, 2; MC, 10 May 1848, 4; MP, 10 May 1848, 4.

75. Hansard, XCVIII, 744 - 51; Grey's Journal, 7 (8?) May 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

76. Grey's Journal, 7 (8?) May 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Bedford to Clarendon, 12 May 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 3; Clarendon to Lansdowne, copy, 12 May 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 f242; GM, VI, 178.

77. Grey's Journal, 7 (8?) May 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

78. See above pp. 32 - 3 and 52.

79. MG, 6 May 1848, 6; DN, 9 May 1848, 2.

80. Grey's Journal, 10 May 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hobhouse's Diary, 10 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f56.

the Cabinet had no way of enforcing its decision. Besides, Palmerston should have done this anyway.

*

*

*

The uproar caused by the despatch of 16 March seems to have surprised Palmerston. He instructed Bulwer to stick to the letter of his instructions in future in order to avoid a repetition of the "monstrous clatter" he had caused.⁸¹ There was also a change of policy towards Spain: pressed by Russell, Palmerston agreed to drop his objections to the Montpensier marriage, although without conceding anything on the principle of his opposition,⁸² and Bulwer was told "to keep intirely aloof from the struggle of contending Parties".⁸³ Unfortunately, at the same time as the British Government tried to pull back from the quarrel, the Spanish Government took it a step further. Isturitz informed Palmerston that he had been ordered to ask for Bulwer's recall. "I told him he might ask if he pleased," Palmerston wrote to Bulwer, "but would get nothing for asking but a plump and positive refusal".⁸⁴

The Spanish Government was infuriated by Palmerston's attitude. It had looked for a public apology for Bulwer's behaviour, and instead had been snubbed. It responded in the only way it believed possible. On 19 May, after a riot in Madrid in which several of Bulwer's friends were implicated and a brief but violent press campaign against him, Sotomayor sent the minister his passports and told him he must leave Spanish soil within forty-eight hours. The Spanish ministers, observed Palmerston on learning the news, "seem to have done an offensive

81. Palmerston to Bulwer, copy, 8 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/581.

82. Russell to Palmerston, 8 May 1848: *ibid* GC/RU/197; Palmerston to Russell, 9 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 136).

83. Palmerston to Bulwer, No 54, 19 May 1848: PRO FO 72/739 (q PP, LXV, 282).

84. Palmerston to Bulwer, copy, 8 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/581.

thing in an offensive manner."⁸⁵ The following day he announced, "very laconically", Bulwer's expulsion to the House of Commons. He added, on prompting from Russell, that this did not mean that friendly relations between Britain and Spain had been interrupted.⁸⁶

The opposition immediately began to calculate how they could best exploit the situation. Lord Ellenborough felt that opinion among Protectionist, Peelite and Radical M.P.s was such that it might be possible to force Palmerston's resignation - "a great gain" - and bring down the Government, thereby leaving office open to a coalition of Protectionists and rank and file Peelites.⁸⁷ George Banks, a Protectionist, and Lord Lincoln, a Peelite, prepared a motion of censure which, Arbuthnot told Bedford, "all the Protectionists would support . . . and if Hume and the Radicals did so likewise, the Government would be beaten."⁸⁸ The leaders of the opposition were more cautious. They were uncertain of their ground: "anything like a vote of censure", wrote Aberdeen to Stanley, "would be clearly premature".⁸⁹ There were also the old doubts about the advisability of turning out the Whigs, at least on the part of the Peelites. A week earlier Graham had "severely criticised" Palmerston's behaviour when speaking to Greville, but had said "that he and Peel did not want to turn the Government out, nor embarrass them".⁹⁰ Most important of all was the reaction outside Parliament. Whereas at the end of April the newspapers were, on the whole, critical of Palmerston, the expulsion of Bulwer had caused sympathies to shift. There was no doubt that Britain had been "snubbed

85. Palmerston to Russell, 22 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 137).

86. Hansard, XCVIII, 1262; Hobhouse's Diary, 23 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f71.

87. Ellenborough to Stanley, 24 May 1848: Der. P. Box 137/7. Ellenborough's calculation about a coalition of Protectionists and some Peelites seems to have been based principally on wishful thinking.

88. GM, VI, 183 - 4.

89. Aberdeen to Stanley, 25 May 1848: Der. P. Box 135/7. Cf Bedford to Clarendon, 26 May 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 3; GM, VI, 184 - 5.

90. GM, VI, 179.

by a third-rate power",⁹¹ but whose fault had the national humiliation been? The Times and the Morning Chronicle blamed Palmerston,⁹² but most Whig and Radical papers rallied behind him and condemned the Spanish Government,⁹³ whilst even the Morning Herald had doubts about Palmerston's culpability.⁹⁴ National pride had been hurt by Bulwer's expulsion. It was felt in many quarters that to criticise the Government too severely would be to exacerbate the injury. As Greville observed, "the outrageous conduct of the Spanish Government" made it "impossible to attack either Palmerston or Bulwer."⁹⁵

At a Cabinet on the 24th the ministers tried to decide what line to take on the affair. Russell spoke "very strongly & said his speech in parliament would be that Narvaez wished to murder Bulwer but Sotomayor would not consent & sent him away to save his life." The rest of the Cabinet recoiled against such a violent and unfounded attack. Grey and Wood felt that Bulwer was at least partly responsible for his expulsion, and even Palmerston was unhappy about some of the actions of his subordinate. The Cabinet decided to publish the relevant correspondence which, Hobhouse judged, "might give some excuse if not altogether justify the transmission of Palmerston's advice to the Spanish Cabinet."⁹⁶ Three days later Palmerston told his colleagues that he had refused to receive the Comte de Mirasol, whom the Spanish Government had sent to explain its actions. This caused some murmuring of discontent. "C. Wood & Campbell said there was a strong feeling in the country

91. ILN, 27 May 1848, 340.

92. MC, 24 and 26 May 1848, 4 - 5; The Times, 24 and 29 May 1848, 4.

93. DN, 24 and 29 May 1848, 3 and 2; York Herald, 27 May 1848, 5; MG, 31 May 1848, 4.

94. MH, 26 and 30 May 1848, 4.

95. GM, VI, 194.

96. Hobhouse's Diary, 24 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff72 - 4. For Palmerston's views on Bulwer's conduct see Palmerston to Bulwer, copy, 12 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/582. To the Queen, however, Palmerston defended Bulwer, and ascribed his expulsion to Orleanist intrigues (Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 12 June 1848: RvP, 77 - 8).

against our Spanish proceedings and that we should take care to make a good case." Palmerston retorted that "he could not consent to wrangle with a man without any official character & who would in all probability only tell him a pack of lies which he should be obliged flatly to contradict." It was decided to invite Isturitz to make in writing the explanations that Mirasol had brought. If those explanations were unsatisfactory, Palmerston declared, "we should demand an apology & in case it was refused hint to Isturitz that he had better return to Spain". The rest of the Cabinet agreed and the meeting broke up in seeming unanimity.⁹⁷

Beneath the surface, however, there were strong undercurrents of anti-Palmerston feeling in the Cabinet. The majority, wrote Greville on the 30th, felt "more or less disgusted and alarmed at Palmerston's proceedings".⁹⁸ As usual, it was Lord Grey who felt most strongly. He believed that Russell did not appreciate the seriousness of the deterioration in Anglo-Spanish relations, and warned him that the Government would face a vote of censure which it might not survive. But, he continued, whatever the result of the vote, the debate itself

will certainly be most damaging. We shall be blamed not merely for the recent correspondence, but for the general system of intermeddling, of which that correspondence is only the climax. The last insult of the Spanish Govt. will probably be admitted to be indefensible, but we shall be told it is the natural result of our own previous misconduct, & that our past errors render it impossible for us to resent this insult as for the honor of the country we ought . . .

He warned that in any debate in the Lords he would be unable to take part in repelling the attacks on the Government, "& further that if I am taxed with disapproving of what has been done, I shall be compelled by silence at least to admit it."⁹⁹

97. Hobhouse's Diary, 27 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff80 - 1.

98. GM, VI, 185. Cf Wood to Russell, 28 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q Walpole, II, 45); Clarendon to Lewis, 6 June 1848: Clar. P. Box c532.

99. Grey to Russell, 28 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (partly q Walpole, II, 44).

Grey was pleased with his letter. The following morning he showed it to Lansdowne, probably in an attempt to recruit his support. Lansdowne, however, thought Grey had gone too far. He agreed that Palmerston had behaved badly, but thought that he had learnt his lesson and that if Grey remained silent in any debate in the Lords it would make his own task of expounding the Government's case, "difficult enough already as it is to this affair", even more difficult. He urged Russell to speak to Grey as soon as possible.¹⁰⁰ Grey, meanwhile, seems to have been discouraged by Lansdowne's attitude. As his biographer observes,¹⁰¹ he was probably willing to move against Palmerston, and thereby risk the break-up of the Government, if he could rely on the support of the bulk of the Cabinet, but he was not prepared to do so on his own. When he saw Russell he spoke in "very temperate terms", remarking that "matters cannot any longer go on as they have done." Russell replied that the most important thing was to get over the immediate crisis, and that once that had been done it would be possible to deal with Palmerston.¹⁰² Grey, and the Foreign Secretary's other critics, allowed himself to be satisfied by this piece of procrastination. At the next Cabinet on Spain there was no sign of internal discord, and the discussion went so smoothly and quickly that Hobhouse wondered whether the subject had been considered sufficiently thoroughly.¹⁰³ There was even a belief in Government circles that they would triumph in the debate in the Commons.¹⁰⁴

Considering the excitement and speculation that Bulwer's expulsion

100. Lansdowne to Russell, 28 May 1848: PRO 30/22/7C.

101. Job, 411 - 13.

102. GM, VI, 189 and 192 - 3.

103. Hobhouse's Diary, 31 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff85 - 6.

104. Clarendon to Palmerston, 29 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/CL/485; Palmerston to Clarendon, 30 May 1848: Clar. P. Box c524; Morpeth's Diary, 31 May 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/17 f49; Hobhouse's Diary, 3 June 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff89 - 90; GM, VI, 187 - 8.

had caused, the debate on 5 June¹⁰⁵ was an anti-climax. The Times compared it to a "sham fight" in which there was "a good deal of oratorical display and glittering evolution" and from which Palmerston emerged "completely unscathed by the bloodless fray."¹⁰⁶ Outside Parliament the reaction was more hostile to the Foreign Secretary. Most Whig and Radical journals continued to support him,¹⁰⁷ but not all of them. The Spectator complained that Palmerston was

so proud of saving his country, that he is always contriving to put her in a condition to be saved. A less ostentatious patriotism, which should spare her the peril and forego the excitement and credit of the salvation would be more welcome.¹⁰⁸

Opposition papers were even more critical. Their tone varied from the Morning Herald, which thought the whole dispute had got out of hand, to the Standard, which condemned Palmerston's "pettish feminine disposition". But they were agreed in believing that the Foreign Secretary should stop what Blackwood's called his "constant meddling with the institutions of foreign states . . . and of everlastingly tendering unsolicited and unpalatable advice."¹⁰⁹

The press was virtually unanimous in its opinion as to what Britain's next step should be in its dispute with Spain. Better to break completely with Spain, declared The Times on 16 June, than to conduct diplomatic relations "without dignity, discretion or success", whatever the dangers of the rift leading to a closer understanding between France and Spain.¹¹⁰ The Cabinet, prompted by Palmerston, also took this line,¹¹¹

105. Hansard, XCIX, 347 - 422.

106. The Times, 7 June 1848, 4.

107. MG, 7 June 1848, 4; ILN, 10 June 1848, 373; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 470 - 3.

108. Spectator, 24 June 1848, 610 - 11.

109. MH, 16 and 19 June 1848, 4; Standard, 22 and 23 June 1848, 2; Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXIV, 289; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVIII, 1 - 14; Quarterly Review, LXXXIII, 284 - 5.

110. The Times, 16 June 1848, 4. Cf MP, 7 June 1848, 4; DN, 16 June 1848, 2; MG, 17 June 1848, 4.

111. Hobhouse's Diary, 3 and 11 June 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff89 and 96; Palmerston to Russell, copy, 4 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1043.

and within a couple of weeks Isturitz and Mirasol had returned to Madrid. For the moment, Palmerston was willing to live with this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Convinced that it was "hardly possible that a Barbarian like Narvaez can long continue to govern such a Country" as Spain,¹¹² he was happy to wait until a more amenable government appeared. Bulwer, in contrast, wanted to force the issue. He suggested that a squadron of the Royal Navy be sent to Cadiz to demand "satisfaction on every point",¹¹³ and he hinted to Normanby "that I should . . . use my influence with the present Govt. here to get through their means a change of Ministry in Spain".¹¹⁴ Palmerston refused to consider these dangerous and irresponsible schemes. It "would never do" to encourage the French Government to interfere in Spain, he observed on the second occasion. "We want them to keep their Hands out of Spanish affairs, & we must not suppose that we can make Hands into Cats Paws for our advantage."¹¹⁵ Britain's position at Madrid was bad enough without encouraging the French to try to resume their predominant position there. Fortunately for Britain, the French Government showed no such inclination.

"When the Queen considers the position we had in Spain," wrote Queen Victoria to Palmerston on 15 June,

& what it ought to have been after the Constitution of the French Republic when we had no rival to fight & ought to have enjoyed the entire Confidence & friendship of Spain, & compares this to the state into which our relations with that Country have been brought, she cannot help being struck how much matters must have been mismanaged.¹¹⁶

The Queen blamed Bulwer for the mismanagement; she would have been nearer the truth if she had blamed Palmerston. Bulwer had been pre-

112. Palmerston to Normanby, 16 June 1848: Nor. P. P/20/41.

113. Bulwer to Palmerston, 12 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/BU/455.

114. Normanby to Palmerston, 21 September 1848: ibid GC/NO/213.

115. Palmerston to Normanby, 24 September 1848: Nor. P. P/20/65.

116. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 15 June 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/365
(q QVL, II, 211 - 12).

capitate and tactless in his dealings with the Spanish Government, but the policy he had been pursuing was essentially that of the Foreign Secretary. That policy was a continuation of the strong anti-Narvaez line he had adopted since the Montpensier marriage, and it back-fired disastrously. He was able to remain in office, despite the trouble he caused and the manner in which he flouted Russell's authority, because of the political balance, which dictated that neither of the opposition parties was anxious to force his resignation, and because of what was seen as the over-reaction of the Spanish Government, which diverted much public anger in Britain away from him. But although Palmerston remained Foreign Secretary, the affair had weakened his standing both with the electorate and with his colleagues. His moderate and prudent response to the continental revolutions was overshadowed by the anger at the unnecessary quarrel he had provoked with Spain. It restored him to his accustomed position of the Whigs' enfant terrible.

iii) THE BEGINNING OF THE ITALIAN PROBLEM

On 20 March Russell wrote to Clarendon: "Metternich's fall may make us easy on the side of Lombardy, where the chief danger of European war was to be apprehended."¹¹⁷ The same day, in Vienna, Count Ficquelmont, the new Austrian Foreign Minister, spoke of the Austrian Government's willingness to grant Lombardy and Venetia meaningful reforms and of his hope that the British Government would use its influence in Italy to help maintain peace.¹¹⁸ Neither man knew that events had already occurred in northern Italy to dash such hopes. Two days earlier revolution had broken out in Milan and the Milanese had appealed to the Sardinians for assistance.

117. Russell to Clarendon, 20 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.

118. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 57, 20 March 1848: PRO FO 7/347 (partly q PP, LVII, 549 - 50).

The news of the events in Milan caused great excitement in Turin. Abercromby soon heard rumours that the Sardinian Government planned to go to the aid of the Lombards. He argued strenuously against such a step, saying that "any attack . . . upon the Territory of Austria . . . would inevitably bring on a general war in Europe [which would be] equally fatal for the interests of Italy and for those of the House of Savoy", and warned that such an attack might alienate Britain.¹¹⁹ The Sardinian ministers refused to listen. It was "quite impossible", Balbo told him, "for the Govt. to restrain the ardour of the People beyond a week unless some fortunate turn was given to affairs."¹²⁰ Such a "fortunate turn" seemed to come on the 23rd when the Sardinian Government learnt that the Austrians had evacuated Milan. But rather than reducing the war fever, it led to the Sardinian Government announcing that it was sending an army into Lombardy.¹²¹ The Government, Balbo and Pareto explained, "were nearly at the end of their resources to controul the frantic enthusiasm of the People". If it had done nothing and had allowed a Republic to be proclaimed at Milan, there would probably have been a revolution in Sardinia. The King and his ministers had decided that it was preferable "to take the initiative, and by placing themselves at the head of the movement to endeavour to arrest the further effusion of blood, and to stop the progress of Republican ideas."¹²²

Abercromby was extremely disappointed by this decision. "I have

-
119. Abercromby to Palmerston, 21 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/123 (q Dip. G.B., 116 - 17).
120. Abercromby to Palmerston, 22 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/124 (q Dip. G.B., 117 - 20).
121. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 53, 23 March 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (q PP, LVII, 544).
122. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 54, 24 March 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (q PP, LVII, 564 - 5). Cf Pareto to Revel, 24 March 1848: Dip. Sard., 81 - 3.

used every argument in my power, short of official protest, to endeavour to arrest this mad design," he told Palmerston, "but as you see with no effect."¹²³ It did not take him long, however, to shift the blame onto the Austrians. If they had offered the Lombards some reforms, he wrote on the 25th, there would have been no insurrection and therefore no Sardinian invasion.¹²⁴ War could be averted, he added a week later, if the Austrians recognised that they had lost Lombardy and Venetia "for ever".¹²⁵ Reports from Vienna, however, did not encourage such speculation. Austria must fight, Ficquelmont told Ponsonby, and he expressed the hope that Austria might win.¹²⁶ The Sardinian attack seemed to confirm the doubts the Austrian Government had long held about Charles Albert's good intentions, and even Abercromby began to get suspicious. Whilst not questioning the explanations the King and his ministers had given, he suspected that "they were not indisposed to allow these circumstances to turn to their advantage." Charles Albert, he judged, would accept the crown of Lombardy if it was offered to him.¹²⁷ But whatever the King's personal ambitions, Abercromby thought it would be useless to try to stop him. Rather the British Government should support him in the course he had adopted, whatever its dangers, in an attempt "to prevent him from being wholly overwhelmed, or becoming a prey to French republican rapacity."¹²⁸

Whatever the advisability of the British Government supporting

-
123. Abercromby to Palmerston, 23 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/126 (q Dip. G.B., 123).
124. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 56, 25 March 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (partly q PP, LVII, 567 - 8).
125. Abercromby to Palmerston, 3 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/132 (q Dip. G.B., 143 - 4).
126. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 77, 2 April 1848: PRO FO 7/348 (q PP, LVII, 650 - 1). Ponsonby did not share Ficquelmont's optimism (Ponsonby to Palmerston, 2 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/563).
127. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 62, 27 March 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (q Dip. G.B., 134 - 5).
128. Abercromby to Palmerston, 25 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/127 (q Dip. G.B., 130 - 1).

Charles Albert, there was little likelihood that it would do so openly. On the whole, the British press favoured the cause of the Italian insurgents,¹²⁹ but there was no such support for the Sardinian invasion of Lombardy. Charles Albert, declared the Morning Post, was "a disturber of order", "a hypocrite", "a Jacobinical monarch" and "an ambitious plotter". Other newspapers were less abusive in their tone, but equally critical of what they saw as an opportunist attempt at self-aggrandizement.¹³⁰ In the House of Lords, Aberdeen, Stanley and Brougham spoke strongly against the King,¹³¹ and it was noticeable that Lansdowne, replying for the Government, simply explained the reasons Charles Albert had given for his actions.¹³² Only the most optimistic Radicals tried to defend him.¹³³

Of all the leading newspapers, only the Daily News welcomed the prospect of the break-up of the Austrian Empire into its constituent nationalities.¹³⁴ The rest dreaded such an event. "England can have no wish to see Austria weakened or abased", The Times pronounced, "for no event could more fatally tend to the ultimate subjugation of the continent by one or other of the rival Powers [Russia and France] which may threaten its independence." It was feared that

-
129. The Times, 5 May, 22 June and 14 July 1848, 4 - 5; DN, 8 May 1848, 2; ILN, 10 June 1848, 372; Spectator, 1 July 1848, 621. Extreme Tory journals, on the other hand, condemned it as they condemned all revolutionary causes (Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXIII, 733 - 40; Quarterly Review, LXXXIII, 227 - 49).
130. The Times, 31 March 1848, 4; MC, 3 and 20 April 1848, 4; MH, 5 April 1848, 4; ILN, 8 April 1848, 228; MP, 3 August 1848, 4; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 487 - 8.
131. Hansard, XCVII, 1194 - 5 and 1198, XCVIII, 140 - 3.
132. ibid, XCVII, 1196 - 7. Following a conversation with Palmerston, however, Revel reported: "Si Lord Palmerston ne nous a pas approuvés, . . . il n'a cependant pas dit le moindre mot qui pût s'interpréter comme blâme ou même un regret de cette détermination du Roi" (Revel to Pareto, 31 March 1848: Dip. Sard., 92 - 3).
133. DN, 6 April 1848, 2.
134. ibid, 21 March 1848, 2.

if the Austrian Empire collapsed, a power vacuum would be created in central Europe into which Russia and/or France would be drawn.¹³⁵ A similar danger was envisaged if Austrian influence was excluded from Italy. Might not one oppressor be replaced by another, France? The answer seemed to be the creation of a Kingdom of Northern Italy, consisting of Sardinia, Lombardy and Venetia, which would provide a buffer between France and Austria and would be strong enough to resist the influence of either.¹³⁶ Alternatives to the Kingdom of Northern Italy were suggested,¹³⁷ but whatever the details those newspapers which favoured the withdrawal of Austria from the peninsula advocated some degree of Italian unification to prevent French expansion there.

This apprehension about possible French expansion into Italy was also reflected in the desire that the Austro-Sardinian war be brought to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion. By satisfactory most papers meant the liberation of northern Italy, but speed was thought to be essential. It was assumed that the French Republic had not intervened on behalf of the Italians only because the Italians seemed able to achieve their own liberty. It was feared that if the Italians suffered a reverse, the French would move in and the war would spread to the rest of Europe where it might easily become a struggle between republican and monarchical principles.¹³⁸

All the arguments discussed by the British press were considered

-
135. MC, 24 March 1848, 4; MH, 30 March 1848, 4; The Times, 12 April 1848, 4 - 5.
136. Spectator, 27 May 1848, 501 - 2; DN, 29 June 1848, 2; Edinburgh Review, LXXXVIII, 143 - 63.
137. The Times consistently argued that the Italians should be satisfied with the liberation of Lombardy and its union with Sardinia (The Times, 12 April, 5 May, 22 June and 14 July 1848, 4 - 5), whilst the Morning Chronicle favoured the idea of an Italian Confederation under the leadership of the Pope (MC, 19 May 1848, 4).
138. MG, 1 April 1848, 6; DN, 6 April 1848, 2; The Times, 17 April and 5 May 1848, 4; Spectator, 1 July 1848, 621.

by Palmerston as he tried to form British policy towards northern Italy.¹³⁹ The plans he had formed after the February Revolution¹⁴⁰ had been overtaken by events. Now that war had broken out he thought it would be futile to try to stem the "general crusade" against Austria.¹⁴¹ He instructed Abercromby "not to encourage aggression or encroachment or annexation, but on the other hand we need not violently oppose things which we have no power to prevent."¹⁴² Britain's attitude was to be that of "passive Spectators."¹⁴³

Adopting the rôle of spectator, however, did not mean that Palmerston viewed the contest without having some preference about what he wanted to happen. He believed that Austria's Italian possessions were a source of weakness rather than strength to her. If she gave up Lombardy and Venetia and established her frontier in the Tyrol, "Austria will be withdrawn from an exposed position and will be much more secure against attack."¹⁴⁴ In order to prevent French expansion into Italy he too favoured the creation of a Kingdom of Northern Italy under Charles Albert, which he also thought "would be most useful in preserving peace" by providing a buffer between France and Austria.¹⁴⁵ Europe, he observed at the end of March, was undergoing "great Changes". If one of those changes was "the Establishment of a good State in Northern

-
139. The Cabinet had strong views on Italy - for example Russell thought Austria should abandon Lombardy and Venetia (Russell to Palmerston, 25 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/191) whilst Clarendon condemned the "unpardonable blockheads" in Turin who endangered European peace (Clarendon to Normanby, 17 April 1848: Nor. P. O/156) - and Palmerston consulted his colleagues regularly (e.g. Hobhouse's Diary, 10 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f56), but British policy towards northern Italy at this time seems to have been formed primarily by Palmerston.
140. See above pp. 126 - 7.
141. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 38, 8 May 1848: PRO FO 67/148 (q PP, LVII, 775).
142. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 28 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/270 (q Dip. G.B., 137).
143. Palmerston to Normanby, 31 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/24 (q Ashley, II, 78).
144. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 28 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/809.
145. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 15 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/272 (q Dip. G.B., 186 - 7).

Italy", he would not be displeased.¹⁴⁶ It might be "another Corner off the Treaty of Vienna", but he felt that some such change was inevitable and necessary to restore stability in northern Italy.¹⁴⁷ Palmerston's hopes for Italy, therefore, were extremely "liberal". He wanted ^{to} see the peninsula free of French and Austrian influence and a significant measure of Italian unification under a constitutional monarchy. These wishes were not the result of any altruistic concern for the well-being of the Italians, for Palmerston believed that the new Italy would be receptive to British ideas and influence and would be a useful aid to the maintenance of the balance of power, and Britain gave no practical assistance to the Italians. But the British Government's moral support for the Italian cause was significant.

Palmerston saw the war in northern Italy as a struggle between liberalism and a foreign despotism in which his sympathies were on the side of the former. The attitude of the French Republic towards the contest, however, complicated the picture and modified his outlook. On 27 March Lamartine told a delegation led by Mazzini that the cause of Italy was that of France, and that if Italy was threatened the sword of France would be at her disposal.¹⁴⁸ In his Manifesto Lamartine had promised that the Republic would assist nationalities struggling for their independence. It seemed that the first nationality to receive aid would be the Italians.

In Sardinia, the activities of the French were looked upon with suspicion and apprehension. Even Charles Albert's patriotic declaration that Italia farà da se seemed to have no impact on French policy. "The feeling throughout Piedmont of alarm at the possibility of a French invasion, under the pretext of assisting the cause of Italy,

146. Palmerston to Normanby, 31 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/24 (q Ashley, II, 78).

147. Palmerston to Normanby, 30 March 1848: Nor. P. P/20/23.

148. Jennings, 38.

gains strength every day", Abercromby reported on 18 May. "With the exception of a few Republicans, nobody looks upon the arrival of the French otherwise than as the signal for the loss of the Italian cause, for the spoliation of property, and the loss of liberty."¹⁴⁹ A series of incidents enhanced the impression that the French might intervene whatever the Sardinian Government said. The Sardinian Government protested about the formation of the French Army of the Alps, saying in response to Lamartine's assurance that the army would not cross the frontier unless invited that it would never be invited,¹⁵⁰ and it objected to the appearance of the Toulon fleet off the coast of Genoa on the grounds that it might spark off a revolution there.¹⁵¹ It was particularly angry about the invasion of Savoy by Savoyard workers and French republicans from Lyons. "The Sardn. Govt.", wrote Abercromby,

have nothing by which they can positively fix upon the Govt. of France direct participation in this aggressive & revolutionary movement but as far as I can make out, they strongly suspect, that the projects and intentions of this band of vagabonds were not unknown to, and not disapproved of by the 'meneurs' at Lyons.¹⁵²

Abercromby himself had no doubt that a republican conspiracy, inspired by and under the control of France, was "going on to a great extent in Piedmont, Lombardy & in the Riviera of Genoa", and that the invasion of Savoy was a premature manifestation of that phenomenon.¹⁵³

Normanby viewed the behaviour of the Republic towards Italy with almost as much concern as Abercromby. He defended Charles Albert's decision to invade Lombardy as preferable to the spread of "that pernicious contagion", republicanism, into Italy.¹⁵⁴ He asked Lamartine

149. Abercromby to Palmerston, confidential, 18 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/140 (q Dip. G.B., 187 - 9).

150. J. Bastide: La République Française et l'Italie en 1848. Récits. Notes et Documents Diplomatiques (Brussels 1858), 22; Jennings, 42.

151. Bixio to Lamartine, 29 March 1848: DD, I, 491; Jennings, 42.

152. Abercromby to Palmerston, 5 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/134 (q Dip. G.B., 147 - 8). Cf Jennings, 52 - 3.

153. Abercromby to Russell, 4 April 1848: PRO 30/22/7B (q LCJR, I, 334 - 5).

154. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 26 March 1848: Nor. P. P/14/75.

about the rôle of the Army of the Alps,¹⁵⁵ and was concerned about the intentions of the Toulon fleet, finding the language of the Provisional Government on the subject "a little suspicious".¹⁵⁶ He sought an explanation about the invasion of Savoy and a reassurance that it would not happen again, and came away with a "strong . . . conviction of the utter helplessness of the Government to control the popular impulse".¹⁵⁷ It was the Provisional Government's susceptibility to public pressure, rather than any doubts about its good intentions, that worried Normanby. On 24 April Lamartine told him that he personally was "very unwilling to do anything at all" with respect to Italy, but that if the Italians suffered a reverse the Provisional Government would find it impossible to resist the popular demand for intervention.¹⁵⁸ Lamartine was "determined to maintain peace if possible," Normanby reported three days later. But "the great majority of the Republican Party & all the Army of every party are dying for an excuse to enter Italy." The republicans, he continued, saw war as a "safety valve" for the Republic's internal problems; the army saw it as a chance to win glory.¹⁵⁹

Normanby's belief in Lamartine's good intentions was shaken by the latter's ambitions with respect to Savoy and Nice. As early as 6 April Normanby had written that if the Republic went to war it would not be satisfied without a return to its natural frontiers.¹⁶⁰ A month later Lamartine assured him that if the Republic intervened in Italy it would be without the "slightest desire for conquest". But, he went on, if a Kingdom of Northern Italy was created, France "might well

155. Normanby to Palmerston, No 227, 3 April 1848, and No 253, 13 April 1848: PRO FO 27/806 (partly q PP, LVII, 626).

156. Normanby to Palmerston, 22 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/159.

157. Normanby to Palmerston, No 242, 8 April 1848: PRO FO 27/806 (q NJ, I, 306 - 7).

158. Normanby to Palmerston, No 274, confidential, 24 April 1848: PRO FO 27/806 (partly q PP, LVII, 738). Cf Normanby to Palmerston, No 288, confidential, 1 May 1848: PRO FO 27/807.

159. Normanby to Palmerston, 27 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/162.

160. Normanby to Palmerston, 6 April 1848: ibid GC/NO/152.

expect some small compensation in the way of security" and he alluded to the annexation of Savoy and Nice.¹⁶¹ Normanby found this revelation difficult to reconcile with Lamartine's professions of peace and lack of desire for conquest. He concluded, rather tentatively, that Lamartine was against annexing Savoy and Nice, but that it was being forced upon him by his more extreme colleagues.¹⁶² In fact, Lamartine was one of the principal advocates of the annexation. The reluctance to allow the creation of a strong state in northern Italy, which was a feature of a French foreign policy in the nineteenth century, was enhanced in Lamartine by a deep dislike of Charles Albert. On 19 and 20 May the newly formed Executive Commission considered whether the Republic should intervene in Italy to prevent the aggrandizement of Sardinia. The idea was rejected by three votes (Arago, Garnier-Pagès and Marie) to two (Lamartine and Ledru Rollin).¹⁶⁴

Palmerston knew nothing of the Executive Commission's discussions, but he was fully aware of the possibility of French intervention in Italy. He urged Lamartine not to do so, warning that it would "bring on in all Probability that general War in Europe which he himself as much as H.M.'s Govt. would deprecate",¹⁶⁵ and tried to reassure him that the unification of northern Italy would not threaten the security of France.¹⁶⁶ But he had little expectation that Lamartine would heed his advice. After all, Normanby's reports seemed to show that if the French Government ordered its army into Italy it would not be out of preference, but because of the pressure of public opinion.

161. Normanby to Palmerston, No 288, confidential, 1 May 1848: PRO FO 27/807.

162. Normanby to Palmerston, No 292, 3 May 1848, and No 298, 5 May 1848: ibid.

163. Jennings, 82 - 6.

164. Garnier-Pagès, VI, 394 - 6; Jennings, 103 - 4.

165. Palmerston to Normanby, No 195, 2 May 1848: PRO FO 27/798; It. Prob., 96.

166. Palmerston to Normanby, No 263, 20 June 1848: PRO FO 27/798.

In such circumstances, Palmerston calculated that the war must be brought to an end before something happened which inflamed French public opinion.

At the beginning of May Palmerston advised the Austrians and the Italians to make peace, emphasising to both the dangers that would result if the French marched into Italy. The terms he recommended specified the liberation of Lombardy and its union with Sardinia.¹⁶⁷ Palmerston's reference to Lombardy but not to Venetia could be taken to mean that he was ready to compromise Italian liberty in order to achieve a quick peace. Such an interpretation, however, would ignore his conviction that there could be no permanent peace in the peninsula unless Italian demands were satisfied. The liberation of Lombardy was a sine qua non. If the Austrians did not accept that, there could be no hope of a negotiated settlement. The future of Venetia was more problematical, and Palmerston was happy to let the belligerents work out a satisfactory compromise.

The response from Turin and Vienna to this overture gave grounds for optimism. The Italians, as Palmerston probably expected, remained obdurate. They were fully alive to the danger of French intervention, Abercromby reported, but the only peace they would consider would be the liberation of the whole of northern Italy. "Any attempt . . . at half measures would be useless".¹⁶⁸ From Vienna, however, came signs of compromise. The Austrian Government had decided to send Baron Hummelauer to London to request British mediation. By the more conciliatory of the plans Hummelauer was bringing, Ponsonby wrote, Austria was willing to accept the "total unconditional abandonment" of Lombardy

167. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 85, confidential, 8 May 1848: PRO FO 7/343 (q PP, LVII, 775 - 6); Palmerston to Abercromby, No 40, 8 May 1848: PRO FO 67/148 (q PP, LVII, 776); It. Prob., 96 - 7 and 104.

168. Abercromby to Palmerston, confidential, 18 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/140 (q Dip. G.B., 187 - 8).

and the establishment in Venetia of an independent Italian state within the Austrian Empire.¹⁶⁹ There was still a sizeable gulf between the Italians and the Austrians, but they were closer together than they had been.

iv) THE HUMMELAUER MISSION

The mission of Baron Hummelauer was born out of despair. Ficquelmont had been driven from office by Viennese students who found his policies too reminiscent of Metternich, and for the moment Austria's foreign policy was in the inexperienced hands of Fillersdorff. Fillersdorff lacked Ficquelmont's intense suspicion of Palmerston and believed that France was about to intervene in northern Italy. Above all, he was convinced that Austria's finances could not sustain a long war. Encouraged by Stratford Canning's assurances that the British Government wanted to see Austria continue as a major Power, he sent Hummelauer to London to ask for British mediation in northern Italy. Hummelauer's instructions were very broad: if possible, he was to get mediation on the basis of an independent Lombardo-Venetian kingdom within the Empire, similar to Hungary; if that was impossible, he could agree to the complete independence of Lombardy, as long as the Lombards took a proportional part of the Austrian national debt, and the establishment of Venetia as a separate state under an Austrian archduke.¹⁷⁰

Palmerston first received Hummelauer on 24 May. He told the Baron that Britain could not accept the first plan as the Italians would never accept such a basis for mediation. He persuaded Hummelauer to propose the second plan which he promised to submit to the Cabinet.¹⁷¹

169. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 154 and No 155, 12 May 1848: PRO FO 7/349 (partly q PP, LVII, 813 and 826).

170. It. Prob., 97 - 107.

171. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 24 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1041; It. Prob., 104 - 5.

A.J.P. Taylor has argued that Palmerston favoured Hummelauer's second plan. Given a choice of accepting this proposal, "which did not grant to Italian nationalism all that it wanted", or rejecting it, which would grant "those demands at the price of opening the door to French influence", Palmerston "did not hesitate to throw over Italian nationalism".¹⁷² Palmerston's own report of his conversation with Hummelauer, however, reveals that he was undecided as to the line Britain should take. He admitted that "it would be a good Bargain" if a speedy peace could be obtained on the basis of Hummelauer's second plan, but he added "that perhaps the best arrangement for the general Interests of Europe would be that the Venetian Territory should be added with Lombardy to Piedmont, so as to make a respectable State in the North of Italy."¹⁷³

Palmerston's indecision is understandable: he recognised the danger of French intervention, which Hummelauer had stressed during their conversation, but at the same time he remained convinced that there could be no stability in northern Italy until Italian demands were satisfied and those demands included the liberation of Venetia. Fortunately he did not have to make that decision on his own. Russell declared that he did not think Venetia could be separated from the rest of Italy,¹⁷⁴ whilst it was about this time¹⁷⁵ that Abercromby's letter of the 18th, announcing that the Italians would accept no settlement which did not free Venetia, arrived. On the afternoon of 24 May Palmerston submitted Hummelauer's plan to the Cabinet which, whilst recognising that if Britain could settle the dispute it would "add greatly to her influence" in Italy, resolved that Britain would

172. *It. Prob.*, 108.

173. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 24 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1041.

174. Russell to Palmerston, 24 May 1848: *ibid* GC/RU/198.

175. Precisely when Abercromby's letter arrived is unclear. Palmerston mentioned it at the Cabinet on the afternoon of the 24th, but he seems not to have known of it when he wrote to Russell.

only mediate on the basis that "Italy proper to the south of the Alps should be independent of Austria".¹⁷⁶ The Cabinet recognised that it was pointless to propose terms which the Italians would not accept. What is equally significant, however, is the evident lack of discussion about French intervention. The Cabinet knew of the danger, but in the absence of any evidence that intervention was likely it did not allow it to dominate its calculations.

Hummelauer was disappointed by the Cabinet's decision. In a letter to Palmerston, which he claimed Palmerston encouraged him to write, he stressed the impossibility of Austria's relinquishing Venetia.¹⁷⁷ But, after further consultation with Russell¹⁷⁸ and possibly with the Cabinet,¹⁷⁹ Palmerston confirmed the earlier decision. It was based, he explained, on two principles: "what arrangement would . . . be best for the true interests of Austria; and . . . what . . . may be looked upon as practically attainable." In the opinion of the British Government, Austria had lost Lombardy and would find it difficult to retain Venetia. In such circumstances, Palmerston declared, the only bases

176. Hobhouse's Diary, 24 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff74 - 5.

177. Hummelauer to Palmerston, confidential, 26 May 1848: PRO FO 7/360 (q PP, LVII, 840 - 1); It. Prob., 107 - 8.

178. A large part of Palmerston's discussions with Russell concerned the Ionian islands. Russell wanted to get rid of them in order that Britain could concentrate her resources in the Mediterranean on the defence of Gibraltar and Malta (Russell to Grey, 16 March, 9 and 15 May 1848: Grey P. 122/3). He suggested offering them to Austria to compensate her for the loss of Venetia (Russell to Palmerston, 3 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/200). Palmerston successfully opposed the idea, arguing that Britain had just spent a lot of money improving the defences of the islands, thereby making it difficult to justify their transfer to the electorate, and that it was foolish to abandon a position which in the event of war would have to be recaptured. He added that Austria would probably not want the islands and that the islanders would certainly not want to be Austrian (Palmerston to Russell, copy, 4 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1044, and 8 June 1848: PRO 30/22/7C).

179. There were Cabinets on 27 and 31 May. The main topic of conversation was Bulwer's expulsion (Hobhouse's Diary, 27 and 31 May 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 ff80 - 1 and 85 - 6), but it is not improbable that Italy was also discussed.

on which the British Government would mediate were the independence of Lombardy and of "such portions of the Venetian Territory as may be agreed upon between the respective Parties".¹⁸⁰

The phrase "portions of the Venetian Territory" is ambiguous. It could mean, as Palmerston assured Hummelauer it meant, as little of Venetia as Austria found necessary.¹⁸¹ Or it could mean, as he assured Russell it meant, "the whole" of Venetia, "for the Italians will agree to nothing less".¹⁸² The ambiguity was deliberate. If Britain proposed terms which either side considered "a sort of preliminary Pledge", Palmerston wrote, ". . . we should no longer be in that free and impartial position which is necessary to make mediation successful."¹⁸³ But which interpretation did Palmerston favour? Taylor judged that he wanted to leave Venetia under Austrian rule, and that in his letter to Russell "he was trying to make a real concession appear . . . a meaningless form of words".¹⁸⁴ It seems more probable, however, that if he had a preference, it was that the whole of Venetia should be liberated for he still believed that that was essential for a lasting settlement.

The ambiguity in the letter of the 3rd did have its domestic uses. The Queen was disturbed by what she regarded as the excessive sympathy of her Government for Charles Albert.¹⁸⁵ She welcomed Hummelauer's mission and the "conciliatory views" he brought.¹⁸⁶ She thought his second plan "most Equitable", and observed that she could not see "Why

180. Palmerston to Hummelauer, 3 June 1848: PRO FO 7/361 (q PP, LVII, 891 - 3); It. Prob., 110.

181. It. Prob., 111.

182. Palmerston to Russell, 8 June 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 338); It. Prob., 110 - 11.

183. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 4 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1044.

184. It. Prob., 111.

185. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 21 and 22 May 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/354 and RC/F/356; RvP, 74.

186. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 23 May 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/358 (q RvP, 75).

Charles Albert ought to get any additional territory".¹⁸⁷ It was not surprising, then, that she disliked the Cabinet's decision. The letter toned down that decision, enabling Palmerston to argue, as he had done with Hummelauer, that Austria might be able to keep almost all Venetia. The Queen was not misled. She characterised the letter as "a mere refusal to do any thing for Austria, & a recommendation that whatever the Italians ask for, ought to be given, for wh. a Mediation is hardly necessary."¹⁸⁸

Palmerston thought that Austria would be well-advised to accept the terms Britain had proposed. He told Ponsonby that Pillersdorff and his colleagues ought

to dismiss from their minds those feelings of anger [towards Charles Albert] by which they are now not unnaturally swayed, and [ought] to endeavour to found their conduct . . . upon a long-sighted consideration of future events and of lasting interests.¹⁸⁹

However the reports from Innsbruck, where the Austrian Court and Government had moved to escape the turbulence of Vienna, revealed a change in the Austrian outlook. On 9 June Archduke John told Ponsonby that Austria's retention of Venetia "is necessary in order to protect Trieste, which is the key to our Illyrian Provinces!"¹⁹⁰ The threat of French intervention, which had encouraged Pillersdorff to send Hummelauer, seemed to the Austrian Government to be diminishing. Wessenberg, the new Foreign Minister, found that the French Government was not as sympathetic to the Italian cause as had been assumed.¹⁹¹ But perhaps the most important factor influencing Austrian thinking was her improved

187. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 25 May 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/359 (q QVL, II, 206 - 7).

188. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 4 June 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/362 (q QVL, II, 211).

189. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 102, 20 June 1848: PRO FO 7/344 (partly q PP, LVII, 957 - 8).

190. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 199, 9 June 1848: PRO FO 7/350 (partly q PP, LVII, 949).

191. It. Prob., 123 - 4; Jennings, 112.

military position in northern Italy. On 19 June Ponsonby reported that Radetzky's army now numbered 55,000 men, and that with the 15,000 men who were on their way to join him he was "confident in his being able to obtain very great advantages over Charles Albert." In these circumstances the Austrian Government decided to seek a military solution. "If their expectations are realized," Ponsonby continued,

their condition will, they think, be extremely improved, and peace may be made upon better terms than can now be had; If they fail, they think they shall not even then be much worse ¹⁹² as to peace than they would be were it now considered.

Palmerston did not accept the Austrian Government's assessment of the diplomatic and military situation. He admitted that the French Government did not view the creation of a Kingdom of Northern Italy with as much favour as the British, but he believed that French public opinion would not allow it to abandon the Italian cause.¹⁹³ His views on the course of the war were still more forceful. He told Ponsonby: "nothing has hitherto happened which seems calculated to shew that lapse of time is not against the Austrians, and in favour of the Italians".¹⁹⁴ But whatever his thoughts about the Austrian Government's reasoning, he had to accept its conclusion.

Palmerston responded to this disappointment by turning to the Italians. He instructed Abercromby not to oppose a settlement based upon Austria's retention of Venetia should the Sardinians and Lombards seem inclined to accept such a compromise.¹⁹⁵ But he did not expect that such a compromise would be acceptable to the Italians. He refused to urge the Sardinians to abandon the Venetians, as advocated by the

192. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 216, 19 June 1848: PRO FO 7/350 (partly q PP, LVII, 978 - 9).

193. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 3 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/814.

194. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 115, 12 July 1848: PRO FO 7/344 (q PP, LVIII, 52).

195. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 62, 28 June 1848: PRO FO 67/148 (partly q PP, LVII, 983 - 4); It. Prob., 116 - 17.

Queen,¹⁹⁶ on the grounds that

if the King of Sardinia should . . . not be inclined to such an arrangement, he would not be led to it by any advice to that effect . . . but the fact that such advice had been given would become known and would be made use of by parties and persons adverse to British interests, for the purpose of creating among the Italians a prejudice against England, and of thus diminishing the influence of Great Britain in Italy, and the means of the British Government to do good.¹⁹⁷

Even if Charles Albert was willing to abandon the Venetians, which seemed unlikely, Palmerston doubted whether he would dare do so because of the reaction it would cause in Sardinia and Lombardy. "Mediation on our part is therefore at present out of the question," he wrote to Abercromby, "and one or other of the contending Parties must be licked before they come to an agreement."¹⁹⁸

Palmerston's assessment of the diplomatic situation was accurate: Charles Albert had no intention of abandoning the Venetians unless compelled to do so, whilst the French Government still feared that it might be forced to intervene. His judgement of the military situation, however, was far less reliable. He remained convinced that the Italians would defeat the Austrians, and there was evidence to support this belief. The fall of Peschiera, for example, was greeted in Radical circles as the beginning of the end for Austria in Italy.¹⁹⁹ But there

196. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 28 June 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/369 (q RvP, 82).

197. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 29 June 1848: RvP, 82 - 3. This provoked the Queen into launching a tirade against British policy in Italy - "abetting wrong . . . for the object of gaining influence" - and Palmerston to respond with a long justification (Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 1 July 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/371 (q QVL, II, 215 - 16); Palmerston to Queen Victoria, copy, Bd. P. RC/FF/10 (q Lorne, 102 - 13); RvP, 83 - 9).

198. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 13 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/274 (q Dip. G.B., 254 - 5). On the other hand, Minto, who had growing doubts about French intentions, told Revel: "je désirerais certainement voir les Autrichiens chassés de toute l'Italie, mais si vous n'avez pas le moyen de remporter promptement quelque victoire décisive, je vous conseille de bien examiner les propositions qui vous sont faites avant de les refuser" (Revel to Pareto, 3 July 1848: Dip. Sard., 171).

199. DN, 7 June 1848, 2; ILN, 10 June 1848, 372.

were signs, apart from Ponsonby's reports, that the Austrian position was better than it had been. On 12 April The Times emphasised the strength of Radetzky's army; by the end of June it was convinced that the Austrians could defeat the Italians.²⁰⁰ The Manchester Guardian consistently stressed that the war was not going as well for the Italians as other papers made out.²⁰¹ Even Abercromby, whose sympathy for the Italian cause could not be doubted, admitted that all was not well. On 20 April, after describing the rifts among the Italians, he wrote: "The longer the struggle lasts . . . the less chance King Charles Albert has of succeeding in his object."²⁰² It was far from clear that the tide of the war had turned, but it does seem that Palmerston allowed his sympathy for the Italians to affect his judgement of the military situation in northern Italy. It was not until 28 July that he ordered a British military observer to Charles Albert's headquarters to assess the "efficiency, numbers and prospect" of the Italian forces.²⁰³ By that time, however, it was too late.

200. The Times, 12 April and 22 June 1848, 4 - 5.

201. MG, 1 and 5 April and 14 June 1848, 4 and 6.

202. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 89, 20 April 1848: PRO FO 67/151 (q Dip. G.B., 163 - 5). Cf Abercromby to Palmerston, No 121, confidential, 24 May 1848: PRO FO 67/152 (q Dip. G.B., 200 - 1). It is significant that when, the following year, Palmerston published a large number of despatches to justify his Italian policy, these were not amongst them.

203. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 75, 28 July 1848: PRO FO 67/148 (q PP, LVIII, 93).

Chapter V: The Formation of the Anglo-French Entente

i) THE JUNE DAYS

By the end of May, the problem of the war in northern Italy had assumed a predominant position in Anglo-French relations. But before it could come to a head, fighting broke out in Paris which, in the eyes of the British public, temporarily overshadowed all other events on the continent.

The outbreak of fighting on the morning of 23 June came as little surprise to British observers of French affairs. Two days earlier Henry Greville had written that no one "has the least faith in the duration of the present form of government, and many believe it to be already à l'agonie."¹ Soon after the February Revolution the British press had predicted further strife in France.² Events since then had confirmed this assessment. The journalées of 16 and 17 March, 16 April and 15 May, which were reported in detail, seemed to show that there was a struggle for power in Paris between moderate republicans, symbolised by Lamartine and often characterised as defenders of law, order and property, and the socialists and communists, who were usually described as violent extremists and anarchists under the leadership of dangerous demagogues like Louis Blanc and Ledru Rollin. The social and economic problems of the Republic were seen as exacerbating the contest, but not altering its basic character. Some sort of decisive clash was thought to be inevitable.³

The British press professed little doubt as to which way the contest would go. The problem was to guess what would happen after the Red

1. H. Greville, I, 276.

2. See above p. 99.

3. ILN, 22 April and 20 May 1848, 255 - 6 and 318 - 19; MC, 18 May 1848, 4; The Times, 18 May and 2 June 1848, 4 - 5; Spectator, 17 June 1848, 574; British Quarterly Review, VII, 524 - 5; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVII, 611 - 13 and 729 - 32.

Republicans had been defeated and their former allies, the moderate republicans, had been discredited. Normanby was uncertain which party would emerge triumphant. The Legitimists, he wrote on 5 June, had gained some support, but would not agree to the terms that were necessary to make them acceptable to the majority. The Orleanists still had a large following, but Louis Philippe was too unpopular to return to the throne. "But", he continued, "there is a third party not numerous but intriguing actively merely upon the deficiencies & unpopularity of either of the other solutions, & this is for a Republic with a Buonaparte at the head of it."⁴ The rapid rise to political power of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is one of the most remarkable aspects of 1848.⁵ His arrival on the political stage in Paris in early June was noted with great interest in Britain, but few people knew what to make of the future Emperor. Many, remembering his escapades at Strasbourg and Boulogne, thought he was an irresponsible adventurer who would quickly disappear back into obscurity. But the extent of his support seemed to challenge this uncomplimentary interpretation. What was clear, was that his emergence destabilised Parisian politics still further.⁶

Whilst the outbreak of fighting in Paris came as little surprise, the extent and ferocity of the struggle caused widespread astonishment. There was never any question where the sympathies of most British politicians and newspapers lay, but as the conflict progressed admiration began to be expressed, if only in private, for the courage and determination

-
4. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 5 June 1848: Nor. P. P/14/132.
 5. For Louis Napoleon's activities in 1848 see A. Lebey: Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte et la Révolution de 1848 (Paris 1907 - 1908), and F.A. Simpson: The Rise of Louis Napoleon 3rd edn., (London 1950), 271 - 319.
 6. Normanby to Palmerston, No 388, 11 June 1848, and No 397, 16 June 1848: PRO FO 27/809 (q NJ, I, 355 - 6 and 478 - 81); Russell to Queen Victoria, 14 June 1848: QVL, II, 211; Palmerston to Normanby, 16 June 1848: Nor. P. P/20/41; Standard, 15 June 1848, 2; The Times, 15 and 16 June 1848, 4 - 5; MP, 19 June 1848, 2; York Herald, 24 June 1848, 4.

with which the insurgents resisted the overwhelming force brought against them. "What a pity", wrote the Queen, "that so much courage & enthusiasm shd. be wasted in so wretched a cause."⁷ "Thank Heaven", observed Clarendon amidst the unrest in Dublin, "we have no people who will fight as those devils of ouvriers have been doing for 3 days at Paris."⁸ There was a general feeling that the insurrection was not the fault of the majority of the insurgents. Prince Albert voiced the opinions of many when he blamed it on "Lamartine, Ledru Rollin & Louis Blanc etc. etc. who have deceived these people by their insincere promises & false theories."⁹ The expectations of the Parisian workers, it was argued, had been raised by the promises of plentiful food and full employment which the Provisional Government had made during the first days of the Republic. But those promises had not been kept, as the British press had predicted they could not be, and in their disappointment the workers, provoked by the closure of the National Workshops and encouraged by Red Republican agitators, had turned to violence.¹⁰

It is possible, with hindsight, to see the defeat of the insurrection as the end of the radical stage of the French revolution of 1848. Some contemporary British observers also regarded it as such: Prince Albert wrote that it had "given the death-blow to the workers' movement and to Communism, and also to the Red Republic."¹¹ The majority, however, were more pessimistic. The Times hoped that the revolt would be the final battle between the forces of law and order in France and those of

-
7. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 26 June 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/368.
 8. Clarendon to G. Grey, copy, 27 June 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 f15.
 9. Prince Albert to Peel, 28 June 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40441 f347.
 10. MC, 26 and 27 June 1848, 4 and 5; DN, 26 and 28 June 1848, 2; MH, 27 and 28 June 1848, 4 - 5; The Times, 30 June and 1 July 1848, 5; MG, 1 July 1848, 6; Spectator, 1 July 1848, 621; The Economist, 1 July 1848, 734 - 5; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVIII, 121 - 5.
 11. Prince Albert to Prince William of Prussia, 4 July 1848: K. Jagow (ed.): Letters of the Prince Consort 1831 - 1861 (trans. E.T.S. Dugdale), (London 1938), 142.

anarchy and revolution, but it doubted whether it would be.¹² The Northern Star, which supported the insurgents and emphasised the brutality of the French army,¹³ also did not believe that the army's victory would be final. It even found comfort in the defeat of the workers. The "sham" Republic of Lamartine had been revealed as unworkable. "There is no longer ground for compromise; the future of France must be the vilest and most cruel despotism, or the - Red Republic."¹⁴

The Northern Star condemned General Cavaignac, who had been given emergency dictatorial powers during the fighting and who was confirmed as head of the French Government after the suppression of the insurrection, for his reactionary tendencies. The bulk of the British press applauded him for the same reason. There were well-founded doubts about whether he could solve France's enormous social and economic problems, but he was seen as a man dedicated to the maintenance of law and order, which it was thought France needed desperately.¹⁵ The Morning Post and the Manchester Guardian urged him to dispense with the National Assembly and assume dictatorial powers.¹⁶ "Si cet homme-là n'était pas un républicain fanatique," wrote Princess Lieven, "quel rôle magnifique il pourrait jouer! Car la France toute entière est monarchique."¹⁷

The British Government greeted Cavaignac's accession to power more cautiously. In May Palmerston had written that "France seems to want

-
12. The Times, 26 June 1848, 4. Cf MC, 28 June and 3 July 1848, 4; ILN, 1 July 1848, 415 - 16; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 484 - 8.
13. Northern Star, 1 July 1848, 4.
14. ibid, 8 July 1848, 4.
15. MH, 30 June 1848, 5; The Times, 1 and 7 July 1848, 5 - 6; Spectator, 8 and 15 July 1848, 646 and 669; ILN, 8 July and 5 August 1848, 7 and 70; Fraser's Magazine, XXXVIII, 243 and 359 - 61; Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, XV, 488.
16. MP, 26 and 27 June 1848, 4; MG, 28 June 1848, 4.
17. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 25 August 1848: Jones Parry, II, 298. It was rumoured in Britain that Cavaignac would invite Thiers to form a government (Hobhouse's Diary, 27 June 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f111; The Times, 27 June 1848, 5). But Cavaignac resisted pressure from the monarchists and formed a government of moderate republicans (De Luna, 176 - 8).

a bold soldier to cut the Knot which Civilians cannot untie."¹⁸ But was Cavaignac the right soldier? Clarendon hoped so, but was doubtful.¹⁹ Charles Greville was unhappy about the way in which he insisted on the appointment of Carnot, a staunch republican.²⁰ Abercromby was fearful that he might seek to avert civil war by invading Italy.²¹ Palmerston thought this unlikely, but he found his reassurance not in Cavaignac but in the atrocious state of French finances.²² Palmerston was convinced that Cavaignac's position was only temporary, and he told Hobhouse that he doubted whether the Republic could last much longer.²³ However it was not the first time he had made this prediction.²⁴ The British Government shared the general happiness at the defeat of the Red Republicans and was not sorry to see the fall of Lamartine, whom it had begun to consider unreliable. But what line would Cavaignac adopt? Would he be a new Napoleon, who would embark on a series of ruinous wars? would he be a new Washington, who would give respectability to the Republic? or would he be a new Monck, who would pave the way to the restoration of the monarchy?

Normanby felt that none of these analogies fitted Cavaignac. "His plain military mode of expressing himself", he told Clarendon, ". . . puts me in mind of the Duke of Wellington."²⁵ It was not an inapt comparison for both were dedicated to and identified with the maintenance of law and order. There was, however, an important difference. Wellington, though revered by large sections of the British public, no

18. Palmerston to Normanby, 16 May 1848: Nor. P. P/20/35.

19. Clarendon to G. Grey, copy, 30 June 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 ff16 - 17.

20. Greville to Normanby, 30 June 1848: Nor. P. 0/505.

21. Abercromby to Palmerston, 30 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/151 (q Dip. G.B., 243 - 4).

22. Palmerston to Normanby, 4 July 1848: Nor. P. P/20/45. Cf Aberdeen to King Leopold, draft, 28 June 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43051 f168.

23. Hobhouse's Diary, 8 July 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43752 f124.

24. See above pp. 94 - 5.

25. Normanby to Clarendon, 23 August 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 20.

longer played a prominent part in politics. Cavaignac, on the other hand, had just reached the apex of his political career. It was more than a matter of courtesy, therefore, that Normanby visited Cavaignac on the morning of 26 June to congratulate him on his victory over the insurgents. It was a preliminary attempt to gauge the General's attitude towards Britain. The result was encouraging.²⁶

Normanby had hoped to be able to avoid becoming entangled in the June Days. His task, as he saw it, was to report what he saw and heard of the fighting, and this he did in great detail.²⁷ Unfortunately, it proved impossible for him to remain detached from events. He was infuriated by the presence of British sightseers in Paris who, he complained, "come over for a lark whenever they hear of a row here" and who had to appeal to him when they got into trouble.²⁸ More serious was an accusation by Flocon, the Minister of Commerce, who told the National Assembly on the 23rd that the insurrection "was got up by Foreign Gold."²⁹ Circumstantial evidence seemed to support Flocon's claim, for British sovereigns were found on some of the rebels.³⁰ There was an alarming upsurge in Anglophobia, and Normanby decided to take up the subject with Bastide. Bastide accepted Normanby's assurance that the British had not been involved in the insurrection³¹ and urged him to make an official complaint so that he could give complete satisfaction by publishing an official denial, which was

-
26. Normanby to Palmerston, No 418, 26 June 1848: PRO FO 27/809 (q NJ, II, 67).
27. NJ, II, 29 - 55.
28. Normanby to Palmerston, 28 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/189 (mostly q NJ, II, 79 - 80). The name omitted in NJ is George Smythe, a friend of Disraeli, who was noted for his scandalous behaviour (e.g. Blake, 168 - 70 and 234 - 5).
29. Normanby to Palmerston, 23 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/183 (q NJ, II, 33).
30. Normanby to Palmerston, 27 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/188 (q NJ, II, 59 - 60).
31. Normanby admitted to Palmerston, however, that some Chartists and Irish Repealers had been found fighting behind the barricades (Normanby to Palmerston, 28 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/189, q NJ, II, 79).

duly done.³²

Bastide's anxiety to give Normanby full satisfaction on the question of the sovereigns was early proof that there would be no sudden change in French policy towards Britain with the departure of Lamartine. Cavaignac's accession to power and Bastide's increased influence in the formation of foreign policy did not lead to the Republic adopting a more bellicose line. Rather the reverse. Both Cavaignac and Bastide wished to avoid war if at all possible and wanted to cement an understanding with Britain.³³ Normanby found it easier to work with them than it had been with Lamartine. He had already lost his early distrust of Bastide, finding him more dependable than Lamartine,³⁴ and he came to admire Cavaignac. He found the General's honesty and integrity refreshing after the intrigues of Ledru Rollin and the equivocalness of Lamartine, although he thought him sometimes slightly naive.³⁵ Cavaignac's impatience occasionally proved awkward, but Normanby put this down to his military background.³⁶ It seemed as if the Republic's foreign policy would be more conservative and more stable than it had been, and that, because troops had been withdrawn from the Army of the Alps in order to maintain stability in France,³⁷ the chances of intervention in Italy had diminished.³⁸

-
32. Normanby to Palmerston, No 417, 26 June 1848, and No 422, 29 June 1848: PRO FO 27/809, and No 433, 3 July 1848: PRO FO 27/810 (q NJ, II, 55 - 6, 81 - 2 and 86 - 7). Bastide's denial is printed in DD, II, 1140 - 1.
33. De Luna, 340 - 1; Jennings, 123 - 5.
34. Normanby to Palmerston, 11 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/178. Normanby expressed his regret when it seemed Bastide might be moved from the Foreign Ministry (Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 28 June 1848: Nor. P. P/14/148, q NJ, II, 69 - 70).
35. Normanby to Palmerston, 1 August and 21 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/201 and GC/NO/213.
36. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 26 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/194.
37. De Luna, 350; Jennings, 167 - 8.
38. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 8 July 1848: Nor. P. P/14/155.

ii) THE FIRST ITALIAN CRISIS

On 8 July Normanby wrote about the war in northern Italy: "It is possible - I am afraid more than possible - that the Italians may be beat".³⁹ It was an opinion that was shared by the French Government. Ten days later, at a reception given by Cavaignac, Bastide told Normanby that he "could not but foresee the possibility of some great reverse on the part of Charles Albert" which would make it difficult for the French Government "to resist a strong expression of the popular wish" for intervention in Italy. But, he continued, "both the General and he were more than ever averse from such an enterprize", especially as it seemed likely that in any war Germany, in the form of the Frankfurt Diet, would side with Austria. He said he wanted "to talk these matters over with me, to see if we could hit upon any means by which we might prevent so incalculable an evil."⁴⁰ Over the next few days Bastide and Normanby had several conversations about northern Italy, whilst the situation there deteriorated. On the 22nd, after the news of the entry of Austrian troops into the Papal States reached Paris, Bastide told Normanby that the French Government wanted to establish a "cordial understanding" with Britain, which would lead "to some common action on the subject." When Normanby asked for clarification, Bastide said Britain and France should offer to mediate between the belligerents on the bases of the unification of Lombardy and Sardinia, which he considered a fait accompli, and the establishment in Venetia of an independent, liberal state under an Austrian archduke, "Such a settlement to be placed under the guarantee, more or less explicit, of England and France." Normanby suggested that perhaps Venetia as well as Lombardy should be united with Sardinia, but Bastide declared that,

39. ibid.

40. Normanby to Palmerston, No 461, confidential, 19 July 1848: PRO FO 27/810.

with all their desire to avoid war, there were two extremes which it would be very difficult for them to admit without opposition, the restoration of Lombardy to the dominion of Austria on the one side, and the union into one powerful state under King Charles Albert of all the Principalities, into which the North of Italy has hitherto been divided.⁴¹

Bastide had initiated the discussions on northern Italy by expressing anxiety about the possible consequences of an Austrian victory. But by opposing the union of Sardinia and Venetia he had revealed another of the French Government's fears. It was determined to oppose the creation of a Kingdom of Northern Italy under Charles Albert. Such a state, it argued, would not be sympathetic towards the Republic and would be a potential threat to southern France. It would also be a barrier to French expansion into Italy, although Bastide did not admit this as one of his motives for opposing its creation.⁴² Normanby had suspected that the French Government would oppose the union of Venetia and Sardinia after the conversation on the 18th,⁴³ and he knew that his Government favoured the very thing to which the French Government objected. But, arguing that the unification of the whole of northern Italy was "not necessary to Italian independence", he felt Britain should agree to Bastide's proposal.⁴⁴

The French proposal was the same in essentials to that submitted by Hummelauer in May which the British Cabinet had rejected. On 21 July, during a conversation with Tallenay, Palmerston repeated that rejection. He was willing, he said, to support the plan if the Italians were prepared to accept it. But he doubted whether they would, "unless worsted in Battle", and he believed that "if it were established it would not produce permanent Tranquillity & Peace."⁴⁵ A week later

41. Normanby to Palmerston, No 469, 22 July 1848: ibid (partly q PP, LVIII, 82 - 3).

42. It. Prob., 130 - 1; Jennings, 142 - 6.

43. Normanby to Palmerston, No 462, 19 July 1848: PRO FO 27/810.

44. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 24 July 1848: Nor. P. P/14/163.

45. Palmerston to Normanby, 21 July 1848: ibid P/20/49.

he sent Normanby a despatch accepting the principle of joint mediation, but rejecting the bases proposed by Bastide.⁴⁶

The week's gap between Palmerston's letter of the 21st and his despatch of the 28th is significant. It resulted from the intervention of Queen Victoria. The Queen opposed any understanding with the Republic. Discussions about a joint policy on Italy, she wrote on the 24th, "can lead to no good".⁴⁷ When Palmerston submitted the draft of his despatch to her, she complained strongly to Russell. She characterised Palmerston's acceptance of the principle of joint mediation as a willingness to establish "an entente cordiale with the French Republic, for the purpose of driving the Austrians out of their dominions in Italy". Such an agreement, she declared angrily, "would be a disgrace to this country."⁴⁸ Russell, however, defended Palmerston. He told the Queen that Britain would be better able to restrain the French by binding them to a mediation. The Queen had to give way, but she insisted that the understanding with the Republic should not "appear as a league . . . against a friendly Power, struggling to preserve . . . a territory granted to her by a Treaty to which we were a party."⁴⁹

The Queen was mistaken if she thought that her opposition would halt the negotiations between Britain and the Republic. Rather it led Palmerston to by-pass what he called the "strong German Predilections in high Quarters here"⁵⁰ by conducting the discussions through unofficial channels. Having rejected the idea of leaving Venetia under Austrian control, he suggested the partition of the province with the line of the Piave as the frontier. He emphasised, however, that

46. Palmerston to Normanby, No 306, 28 July 1848: PRO FO 27/799 (q PP, LVIII, 93 - 4).

47. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 24 July 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/377 (q QVL, II, 220 - 1).

48. Queen Victoria to Russell, 25 July 1848: QVL, II, 221.

49. Queen Victoria to Russell, 27 July 1848: ibid, 222 - 3.

50. Palmerston to Normanby, 28 July 1848: Nor. P. P/20/53.

if the Italians rejected this plan Britain would not coerce them and nor would she support French claims for compensation.⁵¹ But Palmerston had misunderstood the French Government's position. It was not the liberation of Venetia but the aggrandizement of Sardinia to which it objected. Disappointed by the British response, Bastide announced that "it would be better to await the turn which events must now take within the next few days."⁵² "I am glad that Bastide prefers leaving matters alone for the present, & waiting to see the Turn of Military Events", Palmerston wrote in reply.

My own Belief still is that the Italians will drive the Austrians out, unless indeed Germany should take the matter up as a National Quarrel and side with Austria; but if Germany does that, France could not be restrained from taking Part with Italy, & that would be a European Conflict; and then I should back France & Italy to win.⁵³

The discussions about joint mediation seemed to have got nowhere, with Bastide repeating his opposition to the aggrandizement of Sardinia beyond Lombardy and Palmerston stressing his conviction that the Italians would defeat the Austrians. However there had been an important step forward. The exchange between London and Paris was based on the assumption that the two countries would co-operate over northern Italy in order to avert French intervention. The disagreement between Palmerston and Bastide was not about how much of Italy should be liberated, but about what should happen once the liberation was achieved. Both admitted that there was a possibility of an Italian defeat, hence the readiness to discuss joint mediation. But by emphasising his opposition to the aggrandizement of Sardinia, Bastide seems to have been working on the assumption that if the war continued the Austrians would be

51. Palmerston to Normanby, 24 July 1848: ibid P/20/51. This idea seems to have originated in Turin, from where Abercromby reported that Charles Albert might accept such a compromise (Abercromby to Palmerston, confidential, 13 July 1848: ibid P/20/52. Cf Revel to Pareto, confidential, 31 July 1848: Dip. Sard., 187 - 9).

52. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 27 July 1848: Nor. P. P/14/165.

53. Palmerston to Normanby, 28 July 1848: ibid P/20/53.

defeated just as much as Palmerston was.

* * *

On 22 July, near the village of Custozza, Radetzky's army began its long-awaited counter-attack. After three days' fighting the Italians fell back in disorder towards Milan. The decisive battle which Palmerston had hoped would liberate Venetia looked likely to lead to the Austrian reconquest of Lombardy. On 29 July Pareto informed Abercromby that the Sardinian Government had decided to send Albert Ricci to Paris. Ricci's instructions, Pareto stressed, were not to ask for French assistance, but to discover whether such assistance would be forthcoming if the request was made. Abercromby was horrified. He urged the Sardinian Government to abandon the Lombards and Venetians, who had "shewn but very trifling enthusiasm or publick spirit in the [Italian] cause", and open direct negotiations with the Austrians rather than ask for French intervention.⁵⁴ The following day Pareto told Abercromby that the Sardinian Cabinet had decided to follow his advice. If they could get "an honorable armistice . . . preparatory to negotiations for a definitive Peace, they would withhold any application for French Intervention." Abercromby agreed to visit Radetzky's headquarters to see whether it would be possible to conclude such an armistice.⁵⁵ However the Sardinian Government kept its options open: it still sent Ricci to Paris.

Abercromby's interview with Radetzky and his Chief of Staff, Prince Schwarzenberg, was not a success. The minister emphasised the "great probability" of French intervention unless an armistice was arranged. The Austrian generals replied that they too wished to avert French

54. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 173, 29 July 1848: PRO FO 67/153 (q PP, LVIII, 107 - 8).

55. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 175, 30 July 1848: PRO FO 67/153 (q PP, LVIII, 114); Abercromby to Palmerston, 30 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/154 (q Dip. G.B., 267 - 8).

intervention because of the possible consequences, "but they were prepared, and ready to accept them, should they unfortunately be realized." The only possible basis for an armistice, Abercromby was told, was the status quo ante bellum.⁵⁶ A separate attempt by the Comte de Reiset, the French chargé d'affaires at Turin, to secure a ceasefire in order to evacuate the civilian population of Milan before the Austrians attacked was equally unsuccessful.⁵⁷ The attempts to stop the bloodshed had foundered on Austrian intransigence and not, as Taylor asserts,⁵⁸ upon the failure of Abercromby and Reiset to agree on terms. Unable to get the "honorable armistice" it had sought, the Sardinian Government decided to ask for French intervention.¹⁵⁹

Initially Bastide was not too worried by the news of the Austrian success. Unaware of the scale of the Italian defeat, he hoped that the Austrian Government, having allowed its army to recover some of its pride, would be ready to relinquish Lombardy.⁶⁰ But on the evening of the 31st news arrived from Turin of Ricci's mission. Cavaignac and Bastide immediately went to the British embassy where they had a long discussion about the crisis with Normanby. The General made it clear that he did not want to intervene in Italy, but he said that if the Austrians tried to reconquer Lombardy and the Italians appealed to the Republic for assistance, there would be such an upsurge of pro-Italian feeling in France that "no Government established here would long be able to resist the demand for armed intervention". Trying to exploit Cavaignac's reluctance and hoping that the news from Italy might prove exaggerated, Normanby replied "that Austria might, even after these successes, be ready to listen to some proposition

56. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 176, 4 August 1848: PRO FO 67/153 (q PP, LVIII, 132 - 3).

57. G.A.H. de Reiset: Mes Souvenirs (Paris 1901 - 1902), I, 148 - 52.

58. It. Prob., 135.

59. Pareto to Revel, 4 and 5 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 195 - 6 and 197.

60. Jennings, 147 - 8.

of joint mediation on the part of England and France." Cavaignac agreed, and he left Normanby "with the conviction that at any rate no hostile step would be taken without previous communication with Her Majesty's Government."⁶¹

On 2 August, at a Cabinet called to consider the aftermath of the Irish insurrection, Palmerston outlined to his colleagues the situation in northern Italy as far as it was known. He then read Normanby's account of his conversation with Cavaignac and Bastide. "We all agreed no time was to be lost", wrote Hobhouse that evening,

& that we should propose to France to mediate between the Austrians & Piedmontese. The question was, what line of separation would satisfy the Austrians. Venice and her territory of course must be given up, and the Adige made the boundary - but would that be enough?

Palmerston was hopeful; Russell, Grey and Wood had doubts. It was decided that Palmerston should sound out Dietrichstein and Tallenay about the bases for a joint mediation. Unable to agree among themselves, the Cabinet had postponed a decision. "We were in a hurry to get away being satiated with Irish affairs," lamented Hobhouse, "and yet this sad defect may lead to a general war."⁶²

Palmerston had been instructed to sound out the Austrian and French representatives about the terms for a mediation. But the Cabinet had approved joint mediation in principle, and Palmerston, conscious of the danger of delay, informed Normanby of the decision. "I am very sorry for the Turn which affairs have taken north of the Po", he wrote,

61. Normanby to Palmerston, No 489, 1 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811 (partly q PP, LVIII, 105). There was support for the joint mediation from an unexpected source. The Sardinian representatives in Paris agreed to postpone any discussion of French intervention until the British response to the proposed mediation was known (Jennings, 149 - 52).

62. Hobhouse's Diary, 2 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff6 - 7. For the doubts of Grey, Wood and Russell, see Grey's Journal, 2 August 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Wood to his wife, 2 August 1848: Hal. P. A4/43/4; Londonderry (Disraeli reporting a conversation with Russell), 34 - 5.

I had hoped better things, and did not expect that the Austrians would be so Strong, or the Milanese Troops so light heeled - But in this world we must deal with Things as we find them, and make the best of what happens. . . . The Austrians not only hold almost all the Venetian Province, but some of Lombardy. Out of Lombardy they may be got by negotiation, and I think that from the first they may have made up their minds to that. But out of the Venetian Province they can be got only by Force and who is to Force them? Evidently now not Charles Albert. If any Body does it, it must be the French; but that is on many accounts undesirable, and it would be better to leave the Austrians there than drive them out by such means; . . . I am therefore for offering to the Two Parties to settle matters at once by adopting as their Boundary the Line which has separated the Two Provinces which is nearly the Line of the Adige . . .

If England & France were conjointly to propose such an arrangement to the Two Parties one can hardly doubt that it would be accepted; and if Modena & Parma were added to North Italy [i.e. Sardinia and Lombardy] to which I apprehend Austria would not object that State would become a very respectable & prosperous little Kingdom.

As to Venice if it was really Italianized . . . the Venetians would have no great Cause to complain, and they might be as well governed and⁶³ as prosperous as if they formed Part of an Italian Kingdom.

The bases for the mediation which Palmerston suggested were broadly those discussed by the Cabinet. It was thought to be essential to secure Lombard independence, because it was assumed that neither the French nor the Italians would submit to Austria regaining the province. There were also grounds for hoping that the belligerents would accept this solution: the Austrians had suggested such a plan in May, and Palmerston believed that Custozza would make the Sardinians more reasonable than they had been in June. The most controversial part of the plan seemed to be the proposed union of Sardinia and Lombardy, which the French might now oppose. On 5 August, however, Normanby reported that Cavaignac and Bastide accepted the broad points of the plan and for the moment were prepared "to overlook minor difficulties".⁶⁴

Palmerston believed that Austria would readily accept the mediation

63. Palmerston to Normanby, 3 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/54.

64. Normanby to Palmerston, No 502, 5 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811 (partly q PP, LVIII, 119).

in order to avert French intervention and put an end to a bitter and costly war. He received an unpleasant surprise from Dietrichstein. "D. was proud of the success of old Austria as he called her", Palmerston told the Cabinet on the 4th. ". . . When P. talked of the line of the Adige D. said . . . I do not know that Piedmont will get that now!"⁶⁵ It was a clear warning that Austria might want to retain Lombardy, but it was a warning which the Cabinet chose to ignore. Palmerston thought that the Austrian Government would prove more amenable than its ambassador, and no one seems to have questioned this assumption. It was decided to propose to France joint mediation on the basis of the separation of Lombardy and Venetia, with the former joining Sardinia. The mediators would recommend the line of the Adige as the frontier, but would be ready to accept the line of the Mincio.⁶⁶

The Cabinet reached its decision on the afternoon of the 4th, but it was not until the 7th that Palmerston was able to inform Normanby of it officially.⁶⁷ The delay was almost disastrous. The French ministers were extremely nervous and the Sardinians increasingly impatient.⁶⁸ On the 7th the Sardinian Government asked for French intervention.⁶⁹ The Sardinian request placed Normanby in an embarrassing position. He knew that the British Cabinet had agreed to propose joint mediation and he had informed Cavaignac and Bastide of that fact. But until he received official confirmation, no announcement of the agreement, which Cavaignac declared was essential to appease French public opinion, could be made. He went to see Cavaignac, whom he found "in a great

65. Dietrichstein, however, told Wessenberg that he had expressed no opinion (*It. Prob.*, 140 - 1).

66. Hobhouse's Diary, 4 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 f8.

67. Palmerston to Normanby, No 319, 7 August 1848: PRO FO 27/799 (q PP, LVIII, 120 - 1).

68. Normanby to Palmerston, No 506 and No 507, 6 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811.

69. Normanby to Palmerston, No 510, 7 August 1848: *ibid* (partly q PP, LVIII, 130).

state of excitement". The General said that the only thing that could justify him not sending troops across the Alps was "being able to say openly that there was such a certain prospect of a perfect understanding on the subject between France and England as gave every chance of a pacific settlement."⁷⁰ "We are," wrote Normanby, ". . . upon the verge of an European War".⁷¹

The reason for the delay was not the failure of the Cabinet to reach agreement on the 2nd, although that had not helped, but the need to consult the Queen before sending such an important despatch. "I am not surprised at the natural Impatience of the French Govt. to get our official Communication, but I have not been able to get it off sooner", Palmerston wrote on the 7th. "The Queen is in the Isle of Wight, and I did not get back my Draft from Her till late last night."⁷² It is unclear whether the Queen deliberately delayed returning the draft, but it is not impossible. She had agreed to the principle of joint mediation on the 3rd,⁷³ but she was unhappy about the terms. She was convinced that Palmerston was trying to establish a Kingdom of Northern Italy, for which, she had observed to Russell a week earlier, "all considerations of ancient alliance with Austria, of the peace of Europe, the regard for treaties, etc., etc. are to be sacrificed".⁷⁴ She was disturbed to discover that Palmerston had once thought of proposing the line of the Piave,⁷⁵ and, though reconciled to the union of Lombardy and Parma with Sardinia, she resented Palmerston's assumption that Modena would also be annexed by Charles Albert.⁷⁶ Yet, as she had accepted the principle of joint mediation, it is difficult to know

70. Normanby to Palmerston, No 511, 7 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811.
 71. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 7 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/170.
 72. Palmerston to Normanby, 7 August 1848: ibid P/20/57.
 73. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 3 August 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/380.
 74. Queen Victoria to Russell, 27 July 1848: RvP, 90.
 75. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 4 August 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/381.
 76. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 3 August 1848: ibid RC/F/380.

what she hoped to gain by holding back the despatch. The delay may simply have been due to the relative remoteness of Osborne House. But whatever the reason, the failure of the despatch to reach Paris before the Sardinian request was made almost led to war between France and Austria. Fortunately, on the morning of the 8th, before the French had to make their reply, Normanby was able to inform Cavaignac that the crucial despatch had arrived.

* * *

Palmerston was pleased to think that Britain had helped to avert a major European war. He was even optimistic that Austria would accept the proposed mediation. "I wish we could have got Venice too," he wrote to Abercromby, "but that is now impossible."⁷⁷ Other members of the Government were less happy. Russell told Hobhouse that he did not think Austria would want to give up Lombardy, a feeling that was shared by Morpeth and Greville.⁷⁸ Clarendon admitted that the mediation was useful in controlling the "martial ardour" of France, but he felt that a more certain guarantee of peace was the appalling state of the Republic's finances and Cavaignac's need to keep a large force in France to control the Red Republicans.⁷⁹ He also feared the possible consequences of associating closely with the Republic. "I should be sorry", he wrote to Reeve, "if, when catching at the shadow of France, we lost the substance of [the] Russian alliance".⁸⁰ No member of the Government thought they had been wrong to offer joint mediation, but many probably shared Grey's regret that the Government had refused to mediate on the

77. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 7 August 1848: ibid GC/AB/275 (q Dip. G.B., 275 - 6).

78. Morpeth's Diary, 4 August 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/18 f26; Hobhouse's Diary, 8 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 f12; Greville to Clarendon, 11 August 1848: Clar. P. Box c521.

79. Clarendon to Normanby, 14 August 1848: Nor. P. 0/158; Clarendon to Lansdowne, copy, 18 August 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 ff118 - 19. Palmerston had expressed a similar opinion a month earlier (see above p. 218), but now he did not doubt French capabilities.

80. Clarendon to Reeve, 17 August 1848: Laughton, I, 202.

same terms in May.⁸¹

In some respects, the doubts that were now being expressed were simply the result of second thoughts. The ministers had been rushed into a decision, and now the danger was passed they could consider the subject more calmly. It seems reasonable to assume, however, that they were also influenced by the hostile public reaction to the announcement of the proposed mediation. When news of Custozza first reached London there was widespread speculation that the French would march into Italy.⁸² But when the offer of mediation was announced, only a few papers welcomed it as a way to prevent a major war.⁸³

The Protectionists were the most vehement in their criticism. "Everywhere that Great Britain interferes, she espouses the cause of revolt", declared the Morning Post. ". . . But the present Ministers seem not to care how much they disgrace this country, so as they but promote the cause of Liberalism. In that cause they care not what acts of tyranny they perpetrate."⁸⁴ The Standard urged the Queen to take action: "No Crown in Europe, except, perhaps, that of Russia, will be safe if Lord Palmerston be allowed to prosecute his absurd career. He must be got rid of at any price."⁸⁵ The Peelite papers were equally pro-Austrian. The Morning Chronicle welcomed the mediation, but disliked the terms.⁸⁶ The Times was more critical. It attacked Palmerston for rejecting Hummelauer's plan whilst the Italians were winning, but adopting it when the tide of war turned.⁸⁷ But its main doubt was over

81. Grey's Journal, 16 August 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

82. MP, 3 August 1848, 4; DN, 4 August 1848, 2; The Times, 4 August 1848, 4; MC, 5 August 1848, 4; MG, 5 August 1848, 6; Spectator, 5 August 1848, 741 - 2.

83. MC, 6 August 1848, 4; York Herald, 12 August 1848, 5.

84. MP, 10 August 1848, 4. Cf MH, 17 August 1848, 4; Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXIV, 288 - 9.

85. Standard, 9 August 1848, 2.

86. MC, 9 August 1848, 5.

87. The Times, 8 August 1848, 4. Other papers quickly seized upon this point (MC, 9 August 1848, 5; MP, 10 August 1848, 4).

the right of Britain and France to propose the separation of Lombardy from Austria. It agreed that Austria would be better off without Lombardy, but it felt that no country had the right to put pressure on her to abandon the province should she want to keep it. The danger of French intervention, which The Times felt was over-rated, could have been met by exerting British influence in Paris and by using Britain's traditional links with Austria and Russia "to discourage and oppose the scheme of French intervention south of the Alps."⁸⁸

The attitude of the Radicals also gave the Government reason for concern. The establishment of an independent Italy was essential for European peace, the Daily News declared.

We do not say that this can be done at once, or that we are to make war to construct it. But we must preserve what we can of its precious fragments, and use English influence to the utmost to keep intact and together⁸⁹ the elements of Italian freedom and Italian independence.

If Palmerston tried to appease the Tories by minimising the concessions that would be demanded from Austria, he ran the risk of alienating those Radicals who expected him to champion Italian liberalism. It was hardly surprising, then, that Disraeli should feel able to write gleefully: "Palmerston is in an awful mess".⁹⁰

It was almost inevitable that there would be a debate in Parliament about the proposed mediation. Aberdeen confessed to being "delighted" by Austria's success. ". . . It will be too bad if England and France should still insist on giving Lombardy to the King of Sardinia."⁹¹ Even the Duke of Wellington showed signs of stirring against the Government, bemoaning its "velléité révolutionnaire".⁹² But the main debate would be in the Commons, and here Disraeli was determined that his

88. The Times, 10 August 1848, 5.

89. DN, 17 August 1848, 3. Cf ILN, 12 August 1848, 86; Spectator, 12 August 1848, 777.

90. Londonderry, 44.

91. Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 16 August 1848: Jones Parry, II, 297.

92. Wellington to Metternich, copy, 13 August 1848: Well. P. 159/72.

speech should "make a noise".⁹³ He prepared his speech carefully, visiting Metternich to get his views on the mediation.⁹⁴ He wanted to embarrass the Government on a subject where he felt it was particularly vulnerable and also to prove to his critics among the Protectionists that he was irreplaceable. The result was a brilliant oratorical display on the evening of 16 August in which he revealed his wit and his perceptiveness, and also his prejudices.

Disraeli's speech can be divided into three parts. He began by attacking Minto's mission, which he described as "more interesting than successful". He then offered some telling observations on the proposed mediation. He said that there was no need to mediate as the war had been brought to an end, that therefore Austria would probably reject the offer and that Britain and France had no right to impose a settlement. The principle of nationality, which Palmerston seemed to be invoking when assisting the Italians, was "dangerous" and "sentimental", and liable to lead to complications over Schleswig-Holstein and Hungary. Finally, he said that it would be "preposterous" to reward Charles Albert with Lombardy for his perfidious attack on his neighbour. But it was the third part of his speech, where Disraeli discussed Britain's relations with France, which proved most controversial. The avowed object of the proposed mediation, he observed, was to prevent French intervention in Italy. But the French Government said it did not want to intervene and, given the internal condition of the Republic, it seemed incapable of doing so should it so desire. The avowed object, therefore, could not be the real one. In fact, Disraeli claimed, Britain had been ensnared by the Republic, which planned to profit from its association with Britain in order to pursue a more disruptive rôle in the world. "I protest against the attempt to regulate the world

93. Disraeli to his wife, 16 August 1848: Dis. P. A/I/A/229.

94. Londonderry, 43.

by a contrived concert with the Jacobin party", Disraeli announced.

I style them the Jacobin party; . . . I recognise the same features as of yore, I observe the same character and system; it is the old leaven, and I use the same name. It is the system that commences with 'fraternity', and ends with assassination; it is the system that begins by preaching universal charity, and concludes by practising general spoliation. I do not care who the individual may be - whether it be M. Ledru Rollin, or whether it be the gentleman who shakes hands with M. Ledru Rollin. I cannot recognise such persons as the French nation, or as that France with which I would wish my country to be in alliance and cordial understanding . . .

If Palmerston wished to deter French aggression in Italy, he concluded, he could do so by asserting "the principles of public justice in a manner which becomes a British Minister". He would then find that "no bandits, whatever may be their position, will cross any mountains or invade any capitals, when they know that England is prepared to uphold the principles of public law."⁹⁵

Palmerston started his reply slowly. He launched into a long, descriptive account of Minto's mission, which contrasted with Disraeli's sparkling attack and which did not effectively answer the charge that it had been unsuccessful. Turning to the mediation, he ignored Disraeli's observations, merely asserting that it was not "an impertinent interference, without object, and incapable of leading to any result." He was more convincing and confident when he discussed Britain's relations with France. Disraeli's remarks, he said, seemed designed "to rouse the bitter jealousy of a great nation, and, by wounding its pride, to dare it to do that which the hon. Gentleman said he wished it should not do". He admitted that French intervention could easily lead to a European war, but he emphasised that it was in order to prevent such a catastrophe that the British Government had agreed to propose joint mediation. In order to preserve the peace of Europe, he declared,

we shall be happy to combine with the French Government in endeavouring to extinguish the first sparks of war, wherever

95. Hansard, CI, 147 - 63.

they may show themselves, and thus to prevent a conflagration spreading throughout Europe. Notwithstanding the hon. Gentleman's sneers, then, I think that this is conduct of which any Government of England may justly feel proud.

In conclusion, he defended the French ministers from Disraeli's "taunting sneers". Rather than "turning the people loose . . . to occupy themselves with the affairs of other countries," they were "anxiously, wisely, earnestly, and courageously employed in establishing order . . . and I think such a course of conduct does honour to the men so engaged".⁹⁶

Palmerston's speech was warmly applauded in Government circles. It was "one of the most able & effectual speeches I ever heard in Parliament", wrote Hobhouse, "& by a strain of sober statement & conclusive inference completely obliterated the impression made by Disraeli's ridicule."⁹⁷ The Times was less impressed: Palmerston's defence of his Italian policy had been an "elaborate" but "vain effort to shake off the grasp and the sting of his eloquent antagonist."⁹⁸ However The Times was in a minority. Most newspapers felt that Palmerston had got the better of the exchange. The general impression was that Disraeli had spoiled his observations on Italy by his violent diatribe against France.⁹⁹

Charles Greville was more perceptive than most when he observed that Palmerston had "contrived to slide undetected over the weak points, and to satisfy the House of Commons without giving them any information whatever."¹⁰⁰ Disraeli had asked some awkward questions about the objectives and the timing of the mediation which Palmerston had failed

96. ibid., 163 - 74.

97. Hobhouse's Diary, 16 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff15 - 16 (q Dorchester, VI, 224 - 5). Cf Russell to Clarendon, 16 August 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 43.

98. The Times, 17 August 1848, 5.

99. DN, 17 August 1848, 3; MH, 17 August 1848, 4; MC, 18 August 1848, 4; ILN, 19 August 1848, 102; Spectator, 19 August 1848, 789; The Economist, 19 August 1848, 936 - 7.

100. GM, VI, 225.

to answer. It was not that Palmerston had no answers, merely that he did not want to give them as he knew they would be unpopular. Thanks to Disraeli's incautious remarks about the French Republic, which attracted attention away from the proposed mediation, he was able to do this without creating an outcry. But he must have known that he would not be so lucky again.

iii) THE FIRST MONTH OF THE ENTENTE

The crisis in northern Italy was not the only problem which demanded the attention of the Foreign Office at the beginning of August. At the Cabinet on the 4th, when called upon to explain what was happening on the continent, Palmerston asked: "With which shall I begin: Lombardy, Sicily, [or] Holstein?"¹⁰¹ The Cabinet considered the problems of Lombardy and Sicily in some detail, but the discussion on Schleswig-Holstein seems to have been perfunctory, with the rest of the Cabinet listening impatiently whilst Palmerston read a number of despatches. Yet the Schleswig-Holstein question was potentially as dangerous as the war in northern Italy.

The Schleswig-Holstein question does not form a major part of this study.¹⁰² It did not dominate Anglo-French relations as did the war in Italy, but at the end of July it assumed a temporary significance. The complexity of the dispute over Schleswig-Holstein is well known.

101. Hobhouse's Diary, 4 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 f8.

102. The best account of Britain and the first Schleswig-Holstein crisis is Holgar Hjelholt: British Mediation in the Danish-German Conflict 1848 - 1850 (Copenhagen 1965), which considers the subject from a diplomatic standpoint. There is no study of British public opinion on the question, K.A.P. Sandiford's Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question 1848 - 64: a study in diplomacy, politics, and public opinion (Toronto 1975) treating the crisis in 1848 as background for the better known crisis in the 1860s. Anglo-German relations, which are an integral part of the question, are discussed in Gillessen, 38 - 58, and W.E. Mosse: The European Powers and the German Question 1848 - 71: with Special Reference to England and Russia (New York 1969), 18 - 25.

The British Government's attitude towards it, however, was relatively simple. Palmerston summed it up in a letter to the Queen in mid-April when he said he was anxious to bring an end to the war between the Danes and the Germans for which, in his opinion, "no adequate reason appears to exist; which might bring Prussia into collision with Russia and which, in consequence of the British guarantee of Schleswig [to Denmark] in 1720, might even involve your Majesty in embarrassment."¹⁰³ At first Palmerston had no specific thoughts about what the peace settlement should be, merely wanting to end the war before it could escalate. But as he became disenchanted with the Frankfurt Diet he began to favour the Danes. It was probably no coincidence that that sympathy was shared by the bulk of the British electorate, although not by the Queen and Prince Albert.

Initially the Danes tried to exclude the French Republic from the problem. When it arose the Danish Government appealed for help to all the guarantors of the treaty of 1720 except France. By excluding the Republic, however, the Danes offended Lamartine who, despite being sympathetic to their cause, informed Moltke, the Danish minister in Paris, that it "was not a matter with which the Provisional Government could interfere."¹⁰⁴ But as Franco-German relations cooled,¹⁰⁵ Franco-Danish relations improved, and at the beginning of June Bastide declared that it was France's duty to defend the Danes against the high-handed behaviour of Germany.¹⁰⁶

Given this increasing French support for Denmark, it was hardly surprising that when, towards the end of July, an armistice which had been arranged by Denmark and Prussia collapsed because General

103. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 18 April 1848: RvP, 72.

104. Normanby to Palmerston, No 279, 26 April 1848: PRO FO 27/806; L.C. Jennings: "French Diplomacy and the First Schleswig-Holstein Crisis" French Historical Studies VII (1971), 207 - 9.

105. See below pp. 249 - 50.

106. Jennings, 130.

Wrangel, the commander of the German forces who also had the backing of the Frankfurt Diet, rejected the terms,¹⁰⁷ the Danes should appeal to the French Government to confirm its guarantee of Danish possession of Schleswig. Bastide's reaction was to consult Normanby. Calling any German annexation of Schleswig a "monstrous injustice", Bastide said "it would be impossible to acquiesce quietly in the apparent pretensions of the German Central Authority at Frankfort." He wanted, he said, to tell Moltke "that France would resist any attack upon Jutland at all hazards", but thought it preferable that Britain and France should make a combined protest to Frankfurt and Berlin against any such proceeding.¹⁰⁸

Bastide's intention seems to have been to convince the British Government of the need for a joint Anglo-French policy over Schleswig-Holstein in order to prevent unilateral French action. Such an argument had worked over northern Italy - although when Bastide first broached the subject the joint mediation had not yet been arranged - and Bastide must have hoped that it would work again. The result would be to transform the limited understanding on northern Italy into a more general entente, with a consequent increase in the prestige and effectiveness of the Republic.

Over the following week Normanby became convinced of the seriousness of the French threat. On 1 August he told Cavaignac that he felt certain his Government "would be ready to consider the question of any combined diplomatic remonstrance which might bring to reason the parties to this renewed wanton aggression." In return, Cavaignac promised that he would not reply to Moltke's request until he had heard from London.¹⁰⁹ But despite Normanby's attempts to hurry him along,¹¹⁰ there was no

107. Hjelholt, I, 166 - 78.

108. Normanby to Palmerston, No 477, 25 July 1848: PRO FO 27/810. Cf Normanby to Palmerston, No 486, 31 July 1848: ibid.

109. Normanby to Palmerston, No 488, 1 August 1848: ibid 27/811.

110. Normanby to Palmerston, No 504, confidential, 5 August 1848, and No 509, 6 August 1848: ibid.

word from Palmerston on the subject except a vague, dismissive message saying he still hoped that the armistice might be maintained.¹¹¹ On 8 August Cavaignac announced that he could wait no longer and that,

having examined into the Treaty of 1720, the French Government found the pretensions of the German Diet quite inconsistent with the guarantee therein given as to Schleswig, and that they had written in that sense to Berlin and Frankfurt.¹¹²

"If I had had anything of an answer from you to give [Cavaignac]", Normanby complained to Palmerston, after learning of the harmful effect the French declaration had on Franco-German relations, ". . . I could have prevented Moltke from extracting that note from him".¹¹³

The brevity of Palmerston's reply to the French overture reflects his belief that the chances of French intervention were slight and that a joint protest was neither necessary nor desirable, for it is evident that he was not as happy about the state of the armistice as he had implied.¹¹⁴ But he was prepared to exploit the French attitude. Throughout the discussions on Schleswig-Holstein Palmerston had used the threat of Russian intervention to exert pressure on the Germans. The communications from Paris gave him another lever. On 1 August he sent Normanby's despatches of 25 and 31 July to Westmorland with the instruction to use them in his conversations with Prussian ministers to emphasise the danger "that this Sleswig Holstein Question, if not speedily and reasonably settled, would bring on a European War."¹¹⁵

111. Palmerston to Normanby, No 309, 28 July 1848: *ibid* 27/799.

112. Normanby to Palmerston, No 574, 8 August 1848: *ibid* 27/811.

113. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 26 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/194. Normanby was particularly concerned about Franco-German relations because of the possible repercussions on the Italian question (see Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 9 August 1848: *ibid* P/14/176).

114. On 23 July, for example, Palmerston warned the Germans that unless they became more reasonable, "the English Govt. must retire in disgust from a negotiation in which it will become evident to all the world that one of the Parties has no desire or intention to come to an agreement" (Palmerston to Westmorland, copy, 23 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/WE/194).

115. Palmerston to Westmorland, No 165, 1 August 1848: PRO FO 64/383.

The Prussian ministers were duly impressed and, arguing that the problem lay not with them but with the Frankfurt Diet, they asked that the despatches be sent to the Central Power, as the government in Frankfurt was now known.¹¹⁶ In Frankfurt, however, the British Government was faced by a more stubborn and unpredictable adversary. On 3 August the Diet approved Wrangel's decision not to accept the armistice.¹¹⁷ Fortunately, the ministers of the Central Power thought of a way to satisfy the other Powers without antagonising the Diet. The Prussian Government received permission to continue negotiations for an armistice, but not on the bases previously suggested.¹¹⁸ On 27 August a new armistice was signed by the Prussian and Danish representatives at Malmö, and the British Government agreed to mediate between the belligerents.¹¹⁹

The desire of the French Government to help solve the Schleswig-Holstein question did not cease with the resumption of the armistice negotiations. On 24 August Cavaignac spoke to Normanby about Britain and France reaching "a mutual understanding" on the subject, and he enquired whether Britain would be ready to admit France to the mediation. Normanby tried to discourage him. A mediator should be neutral, he observed, but the recent declaration of support for Denmark showed that the Republic was not.¹²⁰ Palmerston approved of what Normanby had said. But, he went on, the French Government

116. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 294, 7 August 1848: ibid 64/289. Palmerston had already done this (Palmerston to Cowley, No 7, 4 August 1848: ibid 30/107).

117. Cowley to Palmerston, No 2, 3 August 1848, and No 6, 4 August 1848: ibid 30/109.

118. Hjelholt, I, 193.

119. This caused a crisis in Frankfurt. The Diet rejected the armistice, thereby precipitating the fall of the Leiningen ministry. Within a fortnight, however, finding that it could not continue the war and under intense diplomatic pressure, the Diet reversed its decision (F. Eyck: The Frankfurt Parliament 1848 - 1849 (London 1968), 294 - 310; Gillessen, 61 - 6).

120. Normanby to Palmerston, No 551, secret and confidential, 24 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812.

might exercise a very useful and salutary influence in this matter even without taking part formally as Mediator, if it were to recommend in the first place strongly to the two Parties, but more especially to the Govt. of Frankfurt, to conclude an Armistice upon terms fair to both sides.¹²¹

In other words, whilst Britain gained prestige by being an unbiassed mediator, the Republic would sustain the odium of putting pressure on one of the belligerents in order to help ensure the success of that mediation.

The disagreement between Britain and France over Schleswig-Holstein helps to clarify the different interpretations of the joint mediation in northern Italy. The French Government saw the mediation as the first step towards a more general entente with Britain. But when Cavaignac and Bastide sought to extend the understanding to another major European dispute, Schleswig-Holstein, they found that the British Government had a more limited interpretation. Palmerston regarded the joint mediation as necessary but not desirable in itself. He had only agreed to it because he saw no other way to avert French intervention in Italy. However he did not believe that it was necessary to include the Republic in the Schleswig-Holstein mediation. He knew that the French Government would not risk a European war in order to honour a treaty obligation which guaranteed the retention by the Danish crown of an obscure duchy which was part German. For Cavaignac and Bastide, the proposed joint mediation in northern Italy was the means to an end; for Palmerston, it was an end in itself.

* * *

The French had reason to be unhappy with Palmerston's attitude towards them over Schleswig-Holstein. However French susceptibilities were soothed by the settlement of a question which had troubled Anglo-French relations since February: that of British recognition of the

121. Palmerston to Normanby, No 362, 29 August 1848: ibid 27/799.

Republic. On 28 February Palmerston informed Normanby that the British Government could not send him "formal Credentials to a govt. professedly Provisional & Temporary. . . . Whenever a permanent govt. shall have been established, then will be the time for deciding as to renewed Credentials".¹²² But what was a "permanent govt."? In mid-May Palmerston declared that the ratification of the Republic by the newly elected National Assembly did not fulfil the necessary conditions.¹²³ The French Government, however, was increasingly unhappy about this state of affairs. Normanby was told that "any apparent hesitation [in recognising the Republic] would be apt to be misconstrued [by the French public], and that it might add to the difficulties of restraining the warlike passions of a large portion of the people."¹²⁴

Palmerston's position was made worse by the attitude of other governments. At the end of February he had tried to concert Britain's position on recognition with that of other countries,¹²⁵ and to a large extent he had been successful.¹²⁶ But with the ratification of the Republic the unanimity that had been achieved began to disintegrate. On 29 May Bastide announced that Belgium had recognised the Republic and that Spain was about to do so,¹²⁷ whilst Prussia and Sardinia were wavering.¹²⁸ This placed Palmerston in a dilemma: should he jeopardise Britain's favoured position with the Republic for the sake of a principle which the rest of Europe was ignoring? He found it difficult to maintain his

122. Palmerston to Normanby, 28 February 1848: Nor. P. P/20/10 (q Ashley, II, 73).

123. Palmerston to Normanby, No 221, 15 May 1848: PRO FO 27/798.

124. Normanby to Palmerston, No 342, 19 May 1848: ibid 27/808 (q NJ, I, 424 - 6).

125. Palmerston to Westmorland, copy, 29 February 1848: Bd. P. GC/WE/189 (q Ashley, II, 74).

126. Jennings, 27.

127. Normanby to Palmerston, No 366, 30 May 1848: PRO FO 27/808 (q NJ, I, 423).

128. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 213, 29 May 1848: PRO FO 64/287; Abercromby to Palmerston, No 130, 7 June 1848: ibid 67/163 (q Dip. G.B., 207 - 9).

position,¹²⁹ and he would probably have been happy to recognise the Republic. The Queen, however, refused to hear of it. She refused to receive Tallenay unofficially, which Palmerston had hoped would satisfy the French. Any exception to "the established rules", she wrote, ". . . might lead to misconstruction and the most inconvenient precedents."¹³⁰

The discussions about joint mediation revived the question of recognition. Normanby reported that one of the subsidiary reasons why the French Government was "so anxious for common action with us is that it would amount to practical recognition on our part".¹³¹ Once the mediation had been arranged, Cavaignac and Bastide brought forward the subject more openly. "Their tone about it", Normanby reported, "is humble but earnest."¹³² They need not have worried. On 4 August the Cabinet accepted Palmerston's recommendation that the Republic should be recognised. Apart from the attitude of other governments, it was acknowledged that the proposed mediation would run into unnecessary difficulties if the mediators did not have regular relations.¹³³ On 7 August Palmerston told Normanby that he would soon receive credentials as an "Ambassador Extraordinary on a Special Mission".¹³⁴

-
129. After several long conversations with Palmerston, Tallenay considered his explanations "plus spécieuse que réelle" (Tallenay to Bastide, 2 June 1848 (2 letters): DD, II, 620 - 3).
130. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 1 May 1848: QVL, II, 204; RvP, 80 - 2. The Queen was not always so scrupulous over matters of protocol. In August she received von Andrian, who had been sent by the Central Power, even though he had no credentials (Gillessen, 71 - 2).
131. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 23 July 1848: Nor. P. P/14/162.
132. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 11 August 1848: ibid P/14/179. This letter is probably wrongly dated, for from its content it seems to have been written at least a week earlier. Cf Normanby to Palmerston, No 503, confidential, 5 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811; Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 7 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/170.
133. Hobhouse's Diary, 4 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 f9; Palmerston to Russell, 4 August 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 298 - 9).
134. Palmerston to Normanby, 7 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/57. The "special & temporary nature" of the credentials was the result of Russell's pet scheme to reduce diplomatic establishments from embassies to missions which, Russell argued, would result in "more choice of

Before Normanby's credentials could be sent, however, Palmerston had to overcome more tough opposition from the Queen. Victoria refused to sanction Normanby's appointment as ambassador, saying that she had "the strongest objection against having an Ambassador of the Republic at her Court, at the head of London Society (who may possibly be a very awkward character)." If Britain only had a minister in Paris, she argued, the French would only be able to send a minister to London.¹³⁵ The Queen saw an additional advantage in this arrangement. It would compel Palmerston to recall Normanby, whom the Queen thought was too friendly to the French ministers, for Normanby could not be expected to remain as a minister where he had once been an ambassador. The Queen, Palmerston informed Normanby, was "not to be shaken without a Battle in which Technical Forms & usual Practice would be on her side". But Palmerston refused to admit defeat. Arguing that "the Public Service would suffer by any change" in Paris, he asked Normanby whether, "under the peculiar Circumstances of the case", he would "remain for a Time at least at Paris, with Credentials as Minister on a Special Mission".¹³⁶ The Queen was furious when she learnt of the request. She wrote to Russell: "This is certainly not what the Queen intended or expected."¹³⁷

It was at this point that Palmerston received a letter from Paris. Cavaignac, Normanby wrote, had remarked that he hoped Normanby would

of people, less expence, & the business probably better conducted" (Russell to Palmerston, 12 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/216). Palmerston detested the idea, believing that British prestige would suffer if it was adopted. Two months earlier he had written to Normanby: "You must not attach too much Importance to John Russell's Schemes for abolishing all Embassies . . . you know our Friend is apt sometimes to take wild notions into his Head" (Palmerston to Normanby, 2 June 1848: Nor. P. P/20/38).

135. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 8 August 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/382 (q QVL, II, 224 - 5).

136. Palmerston to Normanby, confidential, 8 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/58.

137. Queen Victoria to Russell, 9 August 1848, enclosed in Russell to Palmerston, 10 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/214.

remain in Paris, to which Normanby replied that he did not want to leave. Normanby went on to illustrate the advantages of being the doyen of the diplomatic community, a position which would be lost if the British representative was not an ambassador.¹³⁸ Palmerston advised Russell to study this letter carefully. The Queen's objections to a republican ambassador were "natural and intelligible", he wrote, but not such as could be "put forward as a ground for the Conduct of the Government". The only satisfactory reason for not receiving a French ambassador would be if Britain only had a minister in Paris, but as Normanby pointed out that would be "disadvantageous to the public Interest".¹³⁹ Russell agreed, and advised that Normanby's letter be sent to the Queen with a renewed request that he be accredited as an ambassador.¹⁴⁰ Reluctantly, the Queen gave way. She sanctioned Normanby's appointment as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary on a special and temporary mission, "on the distinct understanding that there is to be no Ambassador sent in return to London".¹⁴¹ She had been out-maneuvred and she poured out her anger in a letter to Russell. She condemned Palmerston's deceitfulness and asserted that his sympathy for the Republic was probably the result of his wish "to gratify a personal feeling against Louis Philippe, M. Guizot and Lord Aberdeen." She concluded with the warning: "The Queen must say she is afraid that she will have no peace of mind and there will be no end of troubles as long as Lord Palmerston is at the head of the Foreign Office."¹⁴²

138. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 8 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/173.

139. Palmerston to Russell, 10 August 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (partly q LCJR, I, 299 - 300).

140. Russell to Palmerston, 10 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/215.

141. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 11 August 1848: ibid RC/F/383 (q QVL, II, 225).

142. Queen Victoria to Russell, 11 August 1848: RvP, 92. Two days later Lady John Russell wrote in her diary: "John's difficulties about Lord Palmerston increase, because the Queen's disapprobation of everything Lord Palmerston does increases" (Walpole, II, 46).

The Queen's fears that the French Government would send an uncouth republican proved unfounded. Cavaignac selected Gustave de Beaumont, an experienced diplomat and an aristocrat.¹⁴³ "You will like Gustave de Beaumont very much", Normanby told Palmerston. "He is an old friend of mine, very much attached to England, & accepts the Republic but certainly did not wish it."¹⁴⁴ London society also approved of him. Princess Lieven decided that whilst his manners were not those of the "grand monde", they were sufficiently polished "de me faire comprendre qu'il n'est pas républicain du tout."¹⁴⁵ Whether the Queen was mollified by Beaumont's good behaviour is unclear, but her dislike of republican representatives in general remained. In November, when it was rumoured that Bastide might visit England,¹⁴⁶ Palmerston observed that although the Queen might be persuaded to receive him at Windsor, "She hates the very notion of a French Republic, and would be unwilling to Shew any Civility to Bastide".¹⁴⁷

At first sight the question of British recognition of the Republic seems of little importance. It acted as an irritant in Anglo-French relations, but it never became a major source of disagreement and did not prevent Normanby establishing a close working relationship with Lamartine, Cavaignac and Bastide. However it was important in exacerbating the already poor relations between Queen Victoria and Palmerston. The quarrel was not over protocol but over Britain's relationship with the French Republic. The Queen believed that the Republic was untrustworthy and disreputable, and therefore her Government should have as little to do with it as possible. Palmerston shared the Queen's dislike

143. Jennings, 123 - 4.

144. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 8 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/173.

145. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 25 August 1848: Jones Parry, II, 298. Cf Bedford to Clarendon, 16 August 1848: Clar. P. Irish Box 3; Clarendon to Reeve, 17 August 1848: Laughton, I, 201; Palmerston to Russell, 25 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D; Londonderry, 45.

146. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 9 November 1848: Nor. P. P/14/227.

147. Palmerston to Normanby, 10 November 1848: ibid P/20/72.

of the Republic, although not to the same intensity. But he found it necessary to co-operate with it, and one of the prices of the co-operation was recognition. By recognising the Republic, thereby giving it what Clarendon called "the brevet rank of a gentleman",¹⁴⁸ the British Government did not solve any problems, but it prevented others arising and improved the general atmosphere.

* * *

On 17 August the Central Power's Foreign Minister told Lord Cowley, the British minister in Frankfurt, that if Austria accepted the proposed mediation, his Government "would wish to participate in the negotiations". Germany, he said, "was too much interested in the questions that would be discussed, not to have a right to do so".¹⁴⁹ The belief that the affairs of northern Italy were of deep concern to the Central Power was widespread in Frankfurt. Austria's victories were seen as victories for Germany, and in the heightened rhetoric of German nationalism it was argued that the Tyrol was an integral part of Germany and that Austria's retention of Venetia was essential for the defence of the Reich.¹⁵⁰ Cowley was sceptical whether any real German interests were at stake in Italy,¹⁵¹ but the Central Power's desire to be included as one of the mediators was strong.

The question of the Central Power's admission was complicated by the attitude of Prussia. When informing Normanby of the Central Power's request, Bastide remarked that he had received a confidential communication from Berlin that if the Central Power was invited Prussia would not want to be omitted. "This", observed Normanby to Palmerston, "is

148. Clarendon to Lansdowne, copy, 18 August 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 f119.

149. Cowley to Palmerston, No 41, 17 August 1848: PRO FO 30/109 (q PP, LVIII, 215).

150. Eyck, Frankfurt Parliament, 287; Jennings, 203 - 4.

151. Cowley told Palmerston: "the new Power cannot endure that the first great question which has arisen since its creation, should be settled without its participation" (Cowley to Palmerston, No 48, 21 August 1848: PRO FO 30/109, q PP, LVIII, 239 - 40).

evidently extremely delicate ground to tread."¹⁵² The problem hinged upon the relationship between the Central Power and Prussia. How far did the government at Frankfurt have control over the government at Berlin? The legal aspects of the case were unclear and were debated endlessly, but the basic issue was that the Frankfurt Diet, anxious to promote German unity, wanted more control over Prussian affairs than the Prussian Government, intent on preserving Prussian autonomy, was willing to surrender.¹⁵³ Thus the question of the invitations was part of a power struggle: if the Central Power was asked to join the mediation but Prussia was not, it would be seen as supporting the pretensions of the Frankfurt Diet; if both were invited, it would be seen as encouraging Prussian independence and consequently opposing German unity.

French attitudes towards Germany had undergone a great change since March when the revolutions there had been greeted with great enthusiasm. The suppression of the Polish insurrection in May alienated many Frenchmen.¹⁵⁴ More important as far as the French Government was concerned was the growing realisation that German unity, as espoused at Frankfurt, threatened the rest of Europe. "L'unité allemande est un excellent principe . . ." Bastide wrote at the beginning of August.

Mais, si, sous prétexte d'unité de fraternité, on veut absorber le Sleswig, qui est danois, le Limbourg, qui est hollandais, la Lombardie et Venise, qui sont italiennes, Posen, qui est polonais, et, peut-être, l'Alsace et la Lorraine, l'unité allemande devient un fait qu'il faut combattre . . .¹⁵⁵

Bastide began to move away from a policy of watchful apprehension towards the Central Power to one of active opposition. He hoped to exploit Prussian jealousy of Frankfurt in order to weaken German unity, and

-
152. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 17 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/183.
 153. For details of the relations between Prussia and the Frankfurt Diet see Eyck, Frankfurt Parliament, passim, and Gillessen, 60 - 70.
 154. Jennings, 91 - 4 and 131 - 3; R.J. Hahn: "The Attitude of the French Revolutionary Government towards German Unification in 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University 1955, 121 - 7.
 155. Bastide to Arago, 5 August 1848: Bastide, 50 - 1.

towards this end he encouraged the Prussian Government to press for its inclusion in the mediation.¹⁵⁶ The British Government was unaware how far Bastide had gone in encouraging Prussia,¹⁵⁷ but it was clear which way he was inclined on the subject. On 23 August he told Normanby that he did not want Prussia "to be sacrificed any more than did he Bavaria & the other States to the fancies of Frankfort professors."¹⁵⁸ Normanby, however, tried to moderate French hostility to the Central Power. "My great object", he explained to Palmerston, ". . . was not to complicate the Italian Question & increase the chances of a general war by making Germany ready to quarrel with France."¹⁵⁹

The British Government did not share the French opposition to the Central Power. Whereas Cavaignac and Bastide regarded a unified Germany as a potential threat to France and the peace of Europe, Palmerston and Russell, and still more the Queen and Prince Albert, favoured the creation of such a state for they calculated that it would be a useful ally to Britain in resisting French or Russian expansion.¹⁶⁰ Admittedly the British Government began to lose patience with the Frankfurt Diet, especially over its seemingly irrational and inconsistent behaviour over Schleswig-Holstein,¹⁶¹ but Palmerston did not want to cripple it by encouraging Prussia to reassert her independence. At the same time, Palmerston did not want to antagonise Prussia because Prussia was proving more amenable than the Central Power over Schleswig-Holstein. The requests to join the mediation, therefore, created an awkward problem for Palmerston. His solution was simple. The Central Power

156. Hahn, 188 - 9 and 213 - 22; Jennings, 211 - 12.

157. Westmorland knew that the French minister in Berlin had spoken to the Prussian Government about its inclusion in the mediation, but he was told that this was a private initiative (Westmorland to Palmerston, No 323, 4 September 1848: PRO FO 64/289).

158. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 24 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/193.

159. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 29 August 1848: ibid P/14/198.

160. Gillessen, 15 - 18 and 28 - 9.

161. ibid, 55 and 58 - 64.

could not be invited to join the mediation, he told Cowley, because it was too closely attached to Austria to be an "impartial" mediator;¹⁶² Prussia could not be invited, he told Westmorland, without it seeming like an "unnecessary slight" to the Central Power and without precipitating a Russian request to join.¹⁶³

There was another reason, apart from the possible complications to the German question, which convinced Palmerston that it would be better not to extend the mediation. Britain and France hoped to secure Lombard independence from the mediation. Russia, Prussia and the Central Power would have different objectives. Even before Custozza Bloomfield had reported that Nesselrode thought that Austria should retain Lombardy.¹⁶⁴ After the battle Russian support for Austria was still more pronounced.¹⁶⁵ The support for Austria from the Central Power and Prussia was less obvious, but equally discernible. The Central Power declared that it would mediate on the basis of liberalism and "the desire felt for the unity of Germany",¹⁶⁶ a worrying assertion in the light of previous claims about the Tyrol and Venetia, whilst the Prussian minister in Innsbruck told Ponsonby "that the Mediation should support the establishment, by Austria, of a Constitutional Govt. in Lombardy".¹⁶⁷ The difference between these views and those of Britain and France was too well-defined to be overlooked. As Palmerston observed: "if there is a fundamental difference of opinion between the Parties who perform the task of mediation, some other party may be required to mediate between the Mediators."¹⁶⁸

-
162. Palmerston to Cowley, No 45, 31 August 1848: PRO FO 30/107 (q PP, LVIII, 263).
163. Palmerston to Westmorland, No 190, 12 September 1848: PRO FO 64/284.
164. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 215, 18 July 1848: ibid 65/350.
165. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 233, 8 August 1848, and No 240 and No 241, 22 August 1848: ibid (partly q PP, LVIII, 271).
166. Cowley to Palmerston, No 85, 11 September 1848: PRO FO 30/110 (q PP, LVIII, 372 - 3).
167. Ponsonby's Journal, 9 September 1848: Grey P. Misc. 7.
168. Palmerston to Westmorland, No 190, 12 September 1848: PRO FO 64/284.

In the face of these arguments, the French Government agreed to drop the idea of extending the mediation. However the question had merely been postponed. The appetite of the other Powers had been whetted. They would revive the subject once the belligerents had accepted the Anglo-French offer.

* * *

On 15 August the Sardinian Government announced that it would accept the mediation.¹⁶⁹ But there was a problem. Charles Albert had already signed an armistice with the Austrians, which in the circumstances was a military necessity, by which the Sardinians agreed to evacuate Lombardy, Venetia, Parma and Modena.¹⁷⁰ The Sardinian Government feared that the Austrians might use this to refuse to relinquish Lombardy. Palmerston, echoing Abercromby, explained that as the independence of Lombardy was subject to the mediation, the stipulations of the armistice did not affect it.¹⁷¹ However it did affect the future of Lombardy once freed from Austria. As Normanby observed,¹⁷² the Lombards, having been abandoned by Charles Albert, might no longer accept the union of their province with Sardinia.

The French Government, which had never been keen on the aggrandizement of Sardinia, found encouragement from this change. Naively, Bastide informed Thom that he was no longer happy with the terms that had been proposed. His aim seems to have been to assure Austria that the union of Sardinia and Lombardy was not a precondition to the mediation.

169. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 198, 16 August 1848: ibid 67/153 (q PP, LVIII, 225 - 7). The Sardinian Government warned, however, that it would resume the war if the mediation did not lead to "une paix honorable pour nous et pour l'Italie" (Perrone to Revel, 21 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 216).

170. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 189, 11 August 1848: PRO FO 67/153 (q PP, LVIII, 165).

171. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 196, 13 August 1848, No 197, 13 August 1848, and No 199, 16 August 1848: PRO FO 67/153; Palmerston to Abercromby, No 85, 21 August 1848: PRO FO 67/149 (q Dip. G.B., 298 - 301, 302, 306 - 7 and 319).

172. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 15 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/182.

Unfortunately, the Austrian Government interpreted his words as meaning that the French Government was becoming less enthusiastic about the mediation in general.¹⁷³ Normanby and Russell also began to consider alternatives to the Kingdom of Northern Italy.¹⁷⁴ Palmerston, however, remained firmly attached to the idea. It was necessary, he told Russell, "to prevent the French from attempting to constitute Lombardy into a Republic".¹⁷⁵ "Lord Palmerston will have his kingdom of Upper Italy under Charles Albert," observed the Queen angrily, "to which every other consideration is to be sacrificed".¹⁷⁶

The discussions about the future of Lombardy presupposed that the province would be liberated from Austrian rule. But the French Government was doubtful whether the Austrian Government would consent to this voluntarily. On 7 August Cavaignac spoke to Normanby about giving the mediation "to a certain extent an armed character" which could enforce the proposed settlement, should Austria reject it, without recourse to unilateral French intervention.¹⁷⁷ It is apparent, however, that Cavaignac did not believe that it would be necessary to employ armed mediation. A week later he told Normanby that "if there was but a demonstration on the part of England, . . . the whole business would be settled without war".¹⁷⁸ He thought that if Britain and France were seen to be firm in their resolve to secure Lombard independence, Austria would not dare to defy them. The armed mediation would be a symbol of their determination.

Palmerston disagreed with Cavaignac's premise. He believed that Austria would accept the proposed terms. Ponsonby wrote the Austria's

-
173. *It. Prob.*, 148 - 50; Jennings, 174 - 5.
 174. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 15 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/182; Russell to Palmerston, 16 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/217.
 175. Russell to Queen Victoria, copy, 20 August 1848: PRO 30/22/7C.
 176. Queen Victoria to Russell, 21 August 1848: QVL, II, 227.
 177. Normanby to Palmerston, No 511, 7 August 1848, and No 513, 8 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811; *It. Prob.*, 145; Jennings, 172 - 3.
 178. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 14 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/181.

acceptance seemed probable,¹⁷⁹ whilst even more encouraging were Cowley's reports of his conversations with Wessenberg and Archduke John in Frankfurt. On 5 August Wessenberg declared that

the Emperor would treat on the basis of the complete independence of Lombardy, and that all that Austria would require would be a just partition of the public debt, and such a frontier as would secure her from future attack on the side of Italy.¹⁸⁰

It is understandable, then, that Palmerston should write to Normanby: "As to armed Demonstration, I can hardly think after what we have heard from Frankfurt it can be needed".¹⁸¹

Unfortunately for Palmerston's calculations, over the following week Wessenberg's attitude changed. Shortly before he left for Vienna he told Cowley that although he had "no objection to take [sic] M. Hummelauer's proposition as the basis for a final arrangement, . . . it would probably be thought necessary . . . to introduce some modifications." In view of the fact that she was the injured party, Austria "considered herself entitled to require indemnities for her expences." When Cowley asked whether the indemnities would be in the form of territory, Wessenberg would only say that Austria would want a secure frontier.¹⁸² A despatch from Wessenberg which Koller (who had just replaced Dietrichstein) read to Palmerston on the 16th was, in retrospect, still more ominous. It stressed at length Austria's desire for peace, but mentioned nothing about a willingness to surrender territory.¹⁸³

-
179. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 263, 7 August 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 161).
180. Cowley to Palmerston, No 10, 5 August 1848: PRO FO 30/109 (q PP, LVIII, 131 - 2). Cf Cowley to Palmerston, No 4, 3 August 1848, and No 15, 7 August 1848: PRO FO 30/109 (partly q PP, LVIII, 138 - 9).
181. Palmerston to Normanby, 9 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/55. Cf Revel to Pareto, 8 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 199 - 200.
182. Cowley to Palmerston, No 33, 13 August 1848: PRO FO 30/109 (q PP, LVIII, 193).
183. It. Prob., 148. There were also warnings that Austria might want to keep Lombardy from Dietrichstein (see above p. 229), Archduke John (Cowley to Palmerston, No 18, confidential, 7 August 1848: PRO FO 30/109), and Thom (Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 14 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/181).

The signs that Austria would not accept the loss of Lombardy were there. But Palmerston, trying to reconcile these communications with the earlier reports from Ponsonby and Cowley, misinterpreted Austrian intentions. He still believed that Austria would "give up Lombardy for a pecuniary Compensation", and he considered Wessenberg's talk of "modifications" and "indemnities" as meaning that Austria might want to keep the fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera as well as those of Verona and Legnago.¹⁸⁴ He failed to realise that Radetzky's success had made the Austrian Government determined to retain both Lombardy and Venetia. It was a serious misjudgement.

Even had Palmerston recognised Austrian intentions, it is unlikely that he would have agreed to armed mediation. At the end of July he had made it clear that Britain would not be a party "to any forcible interference" designed to compel Austria to relinquish Lombardy.¹⁸⁵ He repeated this to Beaumont on 12 August, and in Paris Normanby emphasised it to Ricci.¹⁸⁶ The furthest he went was to tell Normanby that

if the Austrians refuse the Terms we & France offer them, we could not object to the French going to assist the Piedmontese, & I dare say in that Case our Government would formally record its Consent, though I cannot at present undertake to say it would do so.¹⁸⁷

The problem, he explained to Beaumont, was that he was constrained by the Cabinet, by Parliament, and by public opinion, which made any understanding "for prospective objects Impossible, & which would render it difficult even if the moment arrived for a Decision."¹⁸⁸ The outcry which had resulted from the announcement of the proposed joint mediation and the doubts being expressed by his colleagues had convinced Palmerston

184. Palmerston to Normanby, 18 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/62.

185. Palmerston to Normanby, No 306, 28 July 1848: PRO FO 27/799 (q PP, LVIII, 94).

186. It. Prob., 145 - 6; Jennings, 173 - 4 and 176 - 7.

187. Palmerston to Normanby, 9 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/55.

188. Palmerston to Normanby, 18 August 1848: ibid P/20/62.

that he could not secure sufficient support, either in the Cabinet or in Parliament, for armed mediation. The most he dare promise was that Britain would not oppose French intervention. But for Cavaignac that was not enough. If he was to reassure the rest of Europe he needed to be able to show that Britain supported French objectives and approved of the means they employed.

Cavaignac's anxiety about the repercussions of French intervention was enhanced by the thought that, despite the mediation, it might soon be necessary to send French troops into Italy. On 9 August he informed Normanby that General Welden's Austrian division had entered the Papal States and was marching on Bologna. Austria, he declared, "had no more right to Bologna than to Lyons", and Normanby began to fear that he would send troops to protect the Pope.¹⁸⁹ On the 14th the French Government received a request for support from the Pope. It responded by ordering two frigates into the Adriatic and sending a protest about the invasion to Vienna.¹⁹⁰ But, Normanby was told, a protest might be insufficient. If Welden advanced further, or even remained at Bologna, "it would be impossible, with the feeling of the country on this subject, for any Government to confine itself to the character of mediator."¹⁹¹

Normanby was convinced that Cavaignac and Bastide were not bluffing.¹⁹² It seems likely, however, that they were. Although French governments were notoriously sensitive about threats to the Pope, on this occasion Cavaignac and Bastide probably exaggerated the chances of French intervention in order to convince Palmerston of the need for armed mediation.¹⁹³ In this, as we have seen, they were disappointed. But Palmerston did

189. Normanby to Palmerston, No 515 and No 516, 9 August 1848: PRO FO 27/811 (q PP, LVIII, 136 and 137); Jennings, 175 - 6.

190. Normanby to Palmerston, No 529, 14 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812; Jennings, 176.

191. Normanby to Palmerston, No 530, 14 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812.

192. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 14 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/181.

193. Jennings, 176 - 7.

add his own protest about the invasion to that of the French.¹⁹⁴

Even more worrying for the French Government than the Austrian presence in the Legations were events in Venetia. Like the Lombards, the Venetians felt betrayed by Charles Albert when he signed the armistice with Austria. Unlike the Lombards, they took some action in consequence: they reversed their decision to unite with Sardinia, announced that they would never submit to Austrian rule, and appealed to France for assistance. Meanwhile, the Austrians, declaring that Venice was not covered by the armistice, continued their inexorable advance on the city.¹⁹⁵

The Venetian request placed the French Government in an awkward position. It was far more sympathetic towards its fellow republicans besieged in Venice than it was to the Sardinians, but it dare not send troops unless it was certain either that the mediation had failed or that it had British support.¹⁹⁶ It sent a couple of frigates to cruise off Venice, ostensibly "in order to protect, if necessary, the lives and property of French subjects",¹⁹⁷ but probably, as the British consul in Venice suspected,¹⁹⁸ as a gesture of support for the Venetians. It was not a major step, but Cavaignac and Bastide would go no further until they had consulted the British Government.

Cavaignac spoke to Normanby about the Venetian request on 23 August. "The General", Normanby reported, "was very impatient at the non-arrival of any answer from Vienna as to the acceptance of the mediation which might cut short this collateral question." The continued presence of Welden in the Legations aggravated his short temper. He had, he declared,

194. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 131, 11 August 1848: PRO FO 7/344.

195. P. Ginsborg: Daniele Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848 - 49 (Cambridge 1979), 252 - 83; Jennings, 177 - 9.

196. Jennings, 179 - 81.

197. Normanby to Palmerston, No 548, 22 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812 (q PP, LVIII, 234).

198. Dawkins to Palmerston, No 125, 8 September 1848: PRO FO 7/357 (partly q PP, LVIII, 388 - 9).

"forced public opinion upon these subjects as far as it would go." Brushing aside Normanby's observation that the delay might be due to Wessenberg's absence at Frankfurt, he said he "proposed to send off at once to Vienna requiring within a certain given time a final answer whether the Mediation was accepted."¹⁹⁹ Meanwhile, in London, Beaumont made yet another attempt to persuade the British Government to agree to armed mediation which, he argued, would obviate the necessity of France going to the assistance of the Venetians. He believed that Palmerston was convinced by this argument, and he agreed to write a memorandum explaining the French viewpoint which Palmerston promised to submit to the Cabinet.²⁰⁰

There was a Cabinet meeting on the afternoon of the 28th,²⁰¹ but there is no evidence whether or not Beaumont's memorandum was discussed. If it was, no decision on what reply to give was reached. However some sort of decision was soon found to be necessary. The following day word reached London and Paris that the Austrian Government considered the proposed mediation unacceptable.

iv) THE SECOND ITALIAN CRISIS

The news that the Austrians intended to reject the proposed mediation reached the British and French Governments in the form of despatches from Ponsonby and Delacour, the French representative in Vienna, describing a conversation they had had with Wessenberg on the 22nd. During this exchange Wessenberg had said that the mediation was unnecessary and that, as to the proposed terms, the military situation in northern

-
199. Normanby to Palmerston, No 550, 24 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812 (partly q PP, LVIII, 243 - 4); Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 23 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/191; It. Prob., 152.
200. Beaumont to Palmerston, 25 August 1848: PRO FO 27/825; Beaumont to de Tocqueville, 26 August 1848: J.P. Mayer (ed.): Alexis de Tocqueville: Oeuvres Complètes Vol.VIII: Correspondance d'Alexis de Tocqueville et de Gustave de Beaumont (Paris 1967), II, 26; Jennings, 181 - 3.
201. The Times, 29 August 1848, 4.

Italy had changed to such an extent "that what might have been applicable . . . some time ago, could not possibly be necessarily applicable at this moment."²⁰² Two days later Koller read to Palmerston a despatch from Wessenberg which amplified the Austrian position. The Austrian Government, Wessenberg declared, had two problems: the war with Sardinia, which it intended to solve by direct negotiations with the Sardinian Government, and the insurgents of Lombardy and Venetia, whom it hoped to appease by offering "administrative and constitutional arrangements which it thinks will be satisfactory and acceptable to them". For the moment, then, the Austrian Government did not need "the friendly aid of Great Britain and France; but that if it should fail in its own endeavours it will then have recourse to the good Offices of the two Powers."²⁰³

The immediate reaction of the British Government was to try to judge why the Austrians had rejected the mediation, for once their motivation was discovered it might be possible to convince them that they were wrong. Ponsonby thought that the Austrian Government did not believe that the French would intervene if it rejected the mediation, or that if they did, Russia, Prussia and the Central Power would come to its assistance, with Britain probably joining the monarchical Powers and at worst remaining neutral.²⁰⁴ The idea that Austria thought that Britain was lukewarm about the mediation was confirmed by an independent source. On 31 August Normanby reported that the representatives of the minor German states

all concurred in saying that the actuating motive of the Austrian Cabinet . . . had been that England was not earnest or sincere in her desire for the acceptance of the mediation;

202. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 272, 22 August 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 281 - 2); It. Prob., 150 - 1.

203. Palmerston to Normanby, No 370, 1 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 269).

204. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 274, 23 August 1848, and No 280, 27 August 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 282).

that the public feeling in England was more Austrian than Italian; and that though this offer had been made to gain time its rejection was expected.²⁰⁵

The Bavarian minister in Paris was still more specific: he said that Ponsonby's language had encouraged the Austrian Government to believe the "no one" in Britain but Palmerston himself "cared for the success of the mediation", and that whatever the Foreign Secretary threatened, his colleagues and Parliament would accept the rejection.²⁰⁶

Although Ponsonby was strongly opposed to the idea of coercing Austria to give up Lombardy,²⁰⁷ there is no conclusive evidence that he urged the Austrian Government to reject the mediation. There is proof, however, that Prince Albert, exasperated by the failure to restrain Palmerston, was passing on such advice through Meyendorff at Vienna and Leiningen at Frankfurt.²⁰⁸ Not that the Austrian Government needed such private encouragement. There were other, more significant signs of the trend of public opinion in Britain. "I am afraid", wrote Normanby, "those Articles in the 'Times' . . . have not been without effect".²⁰⁹ The Austrian Government must have been aware that Palmerston could not agree to an armed intervention without antagonising some of his colleagues and causing an outcry in Parliament.

There were other factors which affected the Austrian decision. Having examined the Austrian archives Taylor stressed the belief that France would not intervene if the mediation was rejected.²¹⁰ Yet it is possible to argue that this belief was also based upon a calculation about Britain's attitude. Cavaignac and Bastide were only reluctant to intervene because they felt they could not rely on British support. The French

205. Normanby to Palmerston, No 565, 31 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812 (q PP, LVIII, 267).

206. Normanby to Palmerston, confidential, 31 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/210.

207. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 17 August 1848: ibid GC/PO/576.

208. Eyck, Prince Consort, 116.

209. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 29 August 1848: Nor. P. P/14/198.

210. It. Prob., 148 - 50.

objective, therefore, was to take a stronger line, with British support, which would convince the Austrians that they were in earnest. The time had come, Cavaignac declared on 29 August,

when it became absolutely necessary to ascertain whether England would take another step in common [with France], it was obvious Austria was acting upon the supposition that we would not, and it only required a demonstration on our part to bring her to reason.

He suggested sending to Venice an Anglo-French expeditionary force, or possibly a French force with a declaration of British support for its actions, in order to protect the city "until Austria accepted the proposed mediation". If the British Government agreed, he said, "he was convinced the whole affair would be settled without any further difficulty." But Normanby held out little hope of this. The British public, he observed, would view a hostile demonstration in a far less favourable light than an offer of mediation. Cavaignac, however, urged Normanby to consider the alternative to a joint demonstration.

A combination of circumstances had enabled him to make the pacific declaration he did the other day without exciting a murmur, but he felt convinced if Austria refused our mediation, and England withdrew her cooperation, that he must at once march into Italy.

Any war between France and Austria, without the controlling influence of Britain, "from its nature must be one of Propagandism", and in such circumstances the Republic could not be expected not to use "those weapons which the dispositions of the People throughout Europe placed in their Power." This threat to revolutionise Europe horrified Normanby, but all Cavaignac would say was that if Britain joined France in making an armed demonstration such a danger would be averted.²¹¹

Beaumont judged that Palmerston received the idea of sending a joint expedition to Venice favourably. But, he complained to de Tocqueville,

211. Normanby to Palmerston, No 561, 29 August 1848: PRO FO 27/812. It is partly quoted in PP, LVIII, 258, but in such a way as to seriously distort Cavaignac's attitude. Cf It. Prob., 156 - 7; Jennings, 184 - 5.

Palmerston was over-ruled by his colleagues who, sensitive of public opinion which was "profondément pacifique", were frightened of even "la plus petite entreprise".²¹² Beaumont was wrong when he imagined that Palmerston had submitted the idea of a joint expedition to the Cabinet. There is no record of a Cabinet meeting on 30 or 31 August. But he was not mistaken as to the difference of opinion between Palmerston and his colleagues.

Palmerston refused to consider Wessenberg's remarks as a final rejection of the mediation. Austria's reply, he told Russell on the 30th, was "evasive". She needed to be pinned down, and he thought the proposed expedition could do that. However such an expedition had to have some British involvement, if only a declaration of British support, in order to prevent an over-reaction by Austria and deter France from trying to "settle all matters as the French Govt. might chuse."²¹³ Russell rejected Palmerston's argument. "It is my opinion that we must decline to go further", he wrote.

We should now withdraw therefore, saying only that when our mediation can be of use, we shall be ready to offer it. France has been applied to by Sardinia for aid, & also by Venice. We cannot deny her right, but for ourselves we think ourselves more useful in maintaining a peaceable attitude.²¹⁴

The following day Revel reported: "il n'y a absolument rien à espérer dans ce pays-ci."²¹⁵

It is easy to criticise Russell's attitude. If the danger of French intervention was as great as Cavaignac said, and there is no evidence that Russell doubted that it was, then the decision not to join the expedition to Venice could have led to a major European war. But did Russell have a choice? The Cabinet was deeply divided. Wood, having

212. Beaumont to de Tocqueville, 31 August 1848: Mayer, II, 34 - 5.

213. Palmerston to Russell, 30 August 1848: PRO 30/22/7C (q LCJR, I, 340 - 1); It. Prob., 154.

214. Russell to Palmerston, 30 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/221.

215. Revel to Perrone, 31 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 236.

heard that "it had been resolved that England & France should send a force conjointly to occupy Venice", told Hobhouse and Morpeth that "he could be no party to any such interference".²¹⁶ Even had the Cabinet been united, it is unlikely that Parliament would have countenanced an attempt to coerce Austria. Already rumours of Austria's rejection of the mediation had begun to reach the press: the Morning Herald and the Morning Post applauded the decision;²¹⁷ The Times said that if Britain joined an armed demonstration she would be encouraging French ambitions rather than restraining them;²¹⁸ and Whig and Radical papers, though still firmly pro-Italian, exhibited little willingness to fight on their behalf.²¹⁹ As Wessenberg had calculated and Beaumont had observed, the strength of public opinion was such as to persuade Russell and the Cabinet to reject Palmerston's aggressive advice.

It is, perhaps, a sign of Palmerston's isolation both in the Cabinet and in the country that, although convinced that the policy he advocated was necessary to prevent a European war, he made no attempt to ignore Russell's decision. He told Beaumont that while he "very much agreed" as to the advisability of a joint expedition to Venice, the rest of the Cabinet did not and he had to bow to their decision. But, he continued, for the moment that did not matter. Repeating his belief that the Austrian reply was only "a temporary evasion", he urged the French Government not to take any precipitate action with respect to Venice until the official Austrian response to the offer of mediation was known.²²⁰

216. Hobhouse's Diary, 30 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff27 - 8. When Hobhouse told Palmerston what Wood had said, Palmerston confirmed that the French were pressing for such a step, but he did not mention that he supported the idea (Hobhouse's Diary, 1 September 1848: ibid f30).

217. MH, 2 September 1848, 4; MP, 2 and 4 September 1848, 4.

218. The Times, 5 September 1848, 4.

219. MG, 2 September 1848, 6; Spectator, 2 September 1848, 838; York Herald, 2 September 1848, 5.

220. Palmerston to Normanby. No 370, 1 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 269 - 70). The Queen disapproved strongly of Palmerston's language to Beaumont (Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 7 September 1848:

Palmerston's aim was to keep the negotiations going either until Austria changed her mind, as he was sure she would, or until he had persuaded British public opinion to accept some sort of joint action with France. "We must try to moderate the Impatience of the French Govt.," he told Normanby, "for it would be awkward if they went into Italy without previous Concert with us, and we are not at present ripe for any such Concert."²²¹ Cavaignac and Bastide remained nervous. The pressure on them to do something for Venice was growing, they informed Normanby.²²² They wanted Britain to put pressure on the Austrian Government in order to get it to announce its decision about the mediation.²²³

On 30 August Delacour received Bastide's despatch of the 23rd demanding a categorical answer whether or not Austria accepted the mediation.²²⁴ He immediately asked Ponsonby to support this demand. Ponsonby refused, explaining to Palmerston that he feared that if "the Austrians be forced to give a yes or a no, . . . it may be a no, and in that case there will be a disagreeable complication."²²⁵ Undeterred, on 1 September

Bd. P. RC/F/391, q RvP, 94). She cited it to Russell as proof that Palmerston intended "using the new entente cordiale for the purpose of wresting from Austria her Italian provinces by French arms" (Queen Victoria to Russell, 7 September 1848: QVL, II, 230). Palmerston, although unrepentant about his views, told the Queen that his aim had been "to calm the extreme impatience and irritation of the French Government" and that he had used "such arguments as seemed to him at the moment best calculated to attain the purpose" (Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 9 September 1848: RvP, 94 - 5).

221. Palmerston to Normanby, 2 September 1848: Nor. P. P/20/64.

222. Normanby to Palmerston, No 573, 3 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813 (q PP, LVIII, 301 - 2).

223. Normanby to Palmerston, No 575, 4 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813 (q PP, LVIII, 307 - 8). Palmerston had already done this, even warning the Austrian Government that "if, owing to their obstinacy, our mediation should fail, the French will enter Italy, and with the consent of England, and we shall not then be content with Hummelauer's Memorandum" (Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 31 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/815, q Ashley, II, 89. Cf Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 144, 31 August 1848: PRO FO 7/344, q PP, LVIII, 263 - 4).

224. See above p. 258.

225. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 286, 30 August 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (partly q PP, LVIII, 338 - 9). The French Government was furious with Ponsonby. Cavaignac declared "that all accounts they had from Vienna mentioned that short of suppressing your written instructions he did everything

Delacour asked Wessenberg for a definite answer. Wessenberg said that Austria intended to refuse the mediation. Delacour responded by sending a Note in which he stated that as the mediation had been rejected, the French Government, having "no longer to consider anything but what it judges necessary for the interests it is charged to defend, will be regretfully but inevitably compelled to act according to this imperious necessity."²²⁶

Delacour's Note shocked Wessenberg. On 2 September he announced that the Austrian Government would accept the Anglo-French mediation, but "reserved the determination of the bases for future arrangement."²²⁷ Subsequent conversations made it clear that Wessenberg's attitude to northern Italy was unchanged: he defended Welden's presence at Bologna;²²⁸ he refused to extend the armistice to Venice;²²⁹ and, when pressed by Ponsonby about the terms for a future settlement, he made it apparent that Austria would not relinquish Lombardy.²³⁰ The acceptance of the mediation, therefore, did not signify any change in Austrian intentions, but was rather a ploy to avert French intervention. But why was Wessenberg so determined to prevent French intervention now, when ten days earlier he had seemed willing to risk it?

The obvious answer, which is favoured by Jennings,²³¹ is the Wessenberg had rejected the mediation because he thought that the French would not intervene, and that Delacour's Note persuaded him that he

in his power to prevent the success of the mediation" (Normanby to Palmerston, copy, confidential, 8 September 1848: Nor. P. P/14/204).

226. Delacour to Wessenberg, 1 September 1848: It. Prob., 162 - 3.

227. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 292, 3 September 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 349); It. Prob., 163; Jennings, 189 - 90.

228. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 285, 29 August 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 337 - 8).

229. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 299, 7 September 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 369); It. Prob., 166.

230. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 307, 11 September 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 382 - 3).

231. Jennings, 189.

had misjudged French intentions and capabilities. Such an explanation, however, ignores Ponsonby's observation²³² that the Austrian Government was willing to face French intervention because it was confident of the support of Russia, Prussia and the Central Power and the neutrality of Britain. The decisive factor seems to have been Wessenberg's belief that he had misjudged the attitude of the British Government. He knew nothing of its refusal to join the expedition to Venice. Instead, because of the time it took despatches to travel from London to Vienna, he had just heard of Palmerston's condemnation of the invasion of the Legations and the continued threat to Venice. Such language seemed to indicate that, despite Ponsonby's feelings, the reassurances of Prince Albert and the leading articles in the British press, the British Government would support the French.²³³ Wessenberg's subsequent behaviour confirms this interpretation: he instructed Koller to emphasise the revolutionary nature of French policy in an attempt to convince Palmerston that Britain's true interests lay with Austria.²³⁴ He would not have done this had he not felt that Britain and France were still working together to the detriment of Austria. Wessenberg had based his rejection of the mediation on the belief that France would not intervene without British support, and that Britain would not support intervention. But because France had threatened to intervene, he assumed that it meant that Cavaignac and Bastide were confident of British support.

It is ironic that at the same time as Wessenberg was convincing himself that his calculations were wrong, events in London and Paris were proving them correct. On 2 September, after learning that Britain would not join the expedition to Venice, Bastide told Thom that the expedition was being postponed. Two days later he said that France

232. See above p. 259.

233. It. Prob., 162.

234. ibid, 163 and 166 - 7.

would no longer insist on the liberation of Lombardy as one of the terms of the mediation.²³⁵ It was a remarkable change to the bellicosity displayed by Cavaignac and Bastide only a few days earlier. Although the General assured Normanby that intervention could not be discounted,²³⁶ it seems clear, as Jennings and Taylor have judged,²³⁷ that the French Government had decided that without British support it would not send troops into Italy.

Normanby, who knew of the cancellation of the Venetian expedition but not of the decision to abandon Lombardy, did not believe that the French Government had given up all thought of intervention. On the 5th he wrote that the prolongation of the Austro-Sardinian armistice, which was about to expire, was essential if France was to continue on her pacific line.²³⁸ Palmerston shared Normanby's apprehension. "Do not let the Austrians delude themselves with the notion that the French cannot send an army into Italy", he instructed Ponsonby. "They could send 60,000 men in no time, and that force added to the Piemontese army and rolling up like a Snow Ball the raw levies of the Italians, would sweep the Austrians clean out of the Country". He dismissed the likelihood of German intervention, arguing that "the only result" of such an action "would be that an army of French Propagandists would revolutionize and annex to France everything west of the Rhine", and discounted Russian involvement, saying the Russian Government needed its troops to prevent revolution at home.

The moral of all this is that Austria ought to settle all these Italian matters at once by accepting the conditions which England and France have proposed as a Basis for negotiation; and she ought to think herself lucky . . . that her temporary successes in the Field have enabled her to negotiate on such terms.²³⁹

235. *ibid.*, 160; Jennings, 192 - 3.

236. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 4 September 1848: Nor. P. P/14/202.

237. *It. Prob.*, 160 - 1; Jennings, 192 - 3.

238. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 5 September 1848: Nor. P. P/14/203.

239. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 7 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/816.

Palmerston, whose intention was clearly to frighten the Austrian Government into accepting the mediation, need not have worried. The same day as he sent this warning the news reached Paris that the Austrian Government had accepted the mediation.

Chapter VI: The Anglo-French Entente

i) BRITAIN AND NORTHERN ITALY

"The Austrian acceptance of the mediation", wrote Clarendon on 12 September, "is a great relief."¹ The relief was shared by Clarendon's colleagues and by the French ministers. But was it justified? The situation with respect to northern Italy was unchanged. When Wessenberg announced what bases for mediation Austria would accept, there was no mention of relinquishing territory and only a vague reference to political and civil rights.² As far as Austria was concerned, the only task of the mediation was to confirm what had already been achieved by force of arms.

Palmerston seemed to ignore the signs emanating from Vienna. When communicating with the Austrian Government he returned to the idea that Lombardy must be granted its independence. "It must be manifest to every impartial observer of events", he wrote on 15 September, "that in the present state of things some very and essentially different arrangements must be made for the north of Italy if the Peace of those Parts, and indeed of Europe in general is to be preserved."³ He used Abercromby's reports of the continuing deep-rooted hatred of the Italians for the Austrians to argue that "no durable peace can be established in Italy unless Austria shall consent to abide by her own proposals as made by M. de Hummelauer."⁴

-
1. Clarendon to Russell, copy, 12 September 1848: Clar. P. Irish letter-Book Vol.3 f142.
 2. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 325, 18 September 1848: PRO FO 7/351 (q PP, LVIII, 440). Cf above p. 265.
 3. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 156, 15 September 1848: PRO FO 7/344 (q PP, LVIII, 372). Cf Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 162, 22 September 1848, and No 170, 26 September 1848: PRO FO 7/344 (partly q PP, LVIII, 420 - 1).
 4. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 177, 29 September 1848: PRO FO 7/344 (q PP, LVIII, 461), enclosing a copy of Abercromby to Palmerston, No 246, 20 September 1848: PRO FO 67/155 (q PP, LVIII, 442 - 4).

In fact, Ponsonby's reports describing Austria's resolve were not without effect. Russell gave up all hope of securing Lombard independence⁵ and began to consider ways in which Austrian rule could be made more palatable to the Lombards.⁶ The French, he judged, would accept such an arrangement if it was supported by Britain.⁷ Palmerston was more optimistic, believing it "not impossible" that Austria would change her mind about keeping such a troublesome province. But if she did not,

at least in trying for that, we should do good upon another Point, because we may be quite sure that such Discussions and arguings would induce her at all Events to deal much more liberally with her Italian Subjects than She would otherwise do . . .

The demand for Lombard independence, therefore, was not a sine qua non for peace, as it had been in May, but simply a negotiating ploy designed to make Austria less obdurate when dealing with her rebellious Italian subjects.

The problem was that whilst the British and French Governments were ready to accept Austria's retention of Lombardy, the Sardinian Government was not. The Sardinians, Abercromby reported, not only continued to insist on the liberation of Lombardy but also its union with Sardinia.⁹ Moreover, the Sardinian position still had its supporters in official British circles. Abercromby told Minto that he would resign if Britain abandoned the Lombards.¹⁰ Minto shared Abercromby's views, but he found no one else in the Cabinet that did. He poured out his resentment in his journal:

I believe that we might recover the confidence of the Italians, and ensure order and stable government in their country were we to take a frank and decided line of our own in their affairs.

-
5. Russell to Palmerston, 18 and 29 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/223 and GC/RU/224.
 6. Memorandum by Russell, 9 October 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.
 7. Russell to Palmerston, 1 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/225.
 8. Palmerston to Russell, 6 October 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.
 9. Abercromby to Palmerston, 22 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/163 (q Dip. G.B., 373 - 5).
 10. Abercromby to Minto, 22 September 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11769 f15.

But of this I see little prospect with our present subjection to French policy, on the one hand, and a timid deference to Austria on the other.

Minto, however, had other explanations for the failure of the Government's pro-Italian policies apart from what he considered its irresolute approach. Ponsonby, he judged, had "very ill represented the policy of his government", thereby encouraging the Austrians "to assume a lofty tone of defiance", whilst the Government's policy had been "much embarrassed and obstructed" and on occasion "in some measure warped" by "the strong German sympathies of Prince Albert and the Queen".¹²

Minto's suspicions about Ponsonby were shared by others. Palmerston opposed his appointment as the British representative at the mediation conference on the grounds that he was "too much of an Austrian partisan."¹³ Nor were these suspicions totally unfounded. Ponsonby himself confessed that "In my obscure way I do my best for preserving a good understanding" between Britain and Austria.¹⁴ He was infuriated by the way in which Palmerston seemed to ignore his advice and warnings, and in mid-September he lost his temper. "It is evident that you do not give credit to what I have told you respecting this country", he wrote.

You deceive yourself. I know much better than you do what is the fact, & the time will come when my Dispatches will prove to the world that it is so. . . . You cannot bully Austria into concessions; They treat here your opinions and Arguments, which I have laid before them in your very words, as children treat opinions and Arguments addressed to them to induce them to take a dose of Rhubarb. . . . Would you have me tell you that your arguments are successful and make an impression? I should betray my duty, I should do worse perhaps, I should deceive you.¹⁵

Palmerston's reply was typical. He thanked Ponsonby for his observations and then went on to recommend that Austria should relinquish Lombardy

-
11. Minto's Journal, 8 November 1848: ibid 11995.
 12. Minto's Journal, 14 October 1848: ibid.
 13. Palmerston to Russell, 25 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D. Cf Normanby to Palmerston, secret, 12 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/218.
 14. Ponsonby to Cowley, 6 November 1848: PRO FO 519/158.
 15. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 15 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/579.

and preferably Venetia as well.¹⁶

The British Court was probably less effective than Ponsonby in modifying British policy over northern Italy, but the opposition of the Queen and Prince Albert to that policy created a great problem for Russell. The main struggle over policy between the Queen and the Foreign Secretary had been in late July and August, but the denouement came in the third week of September at Balmoral. On the 18th the Queen showed Russell Palmerston's account of his conversation with Beaumont and the subsequent correspondence between Palmerston and herself.¹⁷

Russell was surprised by the language Palmerston had used and gently chastised him.¹⁸ The following day the Queen returned to the attack. She told Russell that she "could hardly go on" with Palmerston, "that I have no confidence in him, and that it made me seriously anxious and uneasy for the welfare of the country and for the peace of Europe in general". She complained about his vindictiveness over the Spanish Marriages, implying in doing so that he was responsible for the fall of Louis Philippe, and about the support he had shown for the Italian liberals. "I have proofs", she said,

that he was not always straightforward in his conduct and kept back things which he did not like should be known, . . . that his writings were always as bitter as gall and did great harm . . . and that I often felt quite ill from anxiety; that I wished Lord Clarendon . . . could come over and be Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Lord Palmerston go to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant.

These remarks came as little surprise to Russell, who had been warned by Bedford of the Queen's growing mistrust of Palmerston. He responded in a conciliatory and understanding manner, but he made it clear that he would not move Palmerston. Although he declared that "nothing would be better" than Palmerston going to Ireland, he said "that another

16. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 22 September 1848: ibid GC/PO/817.

17. See above p. 263 and n220.

18. Russell to Palmerston, 18 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/223.

thing to be considered was the danger of making Lord Palmerston an enemy by displacing him . . . [and that] at moments like these one of course was anxious not to do anything which would cause internal trouble."¹⁹

Given the Queen's views on Palmerston, her attempt to move him from the Foreign Office was only to be expected. What is surprising is the extent to which Russell countenanced the idea. He had evidently discussed it with his closest advisers and had found it in some respects attractive. He was annoyed by the belligerence of Palmerston's language, his refusal to listen to the advice of his colleagues, and his incessant warfare with the Court. Whilst he approved of Palmerston's objectives, he thought that he was too independent and too tactless. Clarendon would make a most suitable replacement. The problem, as he had told the Queen, was Palmerston's probable reaction. He would not leave the Foreign Office voluntarily, and if forced to do so he might turn against the Government and effect its downfall. Whether its demise would be in weeks or months was unclear, but it would certainly be doomed. Russell shrank from such a course of action. He preferred to ignore or forgive what many Prime Ministers would have found unforgivable.

Palmerston knew nothing about the Queen's attempt to transfer him to Ireland, but Russell's letter of the 18th warned him of some danger from that quarter. When he replied, he refused to rediscuss his conversation with Beaumont, merely declaring "you may depend upon it I knew what I was about". But he did comment on his poor relations with the Court. "Unfortunately", he wrote,

the Queen gives Ear too readily to Persons who are hostile to her Government, and who wish to poison her mind with Distrust of her Ministers; and in this way, She is constantly suffering under groundless uneasiness.

19. Queen Victoria's Journal, 19 September 1848: RvP, 96 - 8.
20. Palmerston to Russell, 25 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.

In reply, Russell for once tried to be firm. "That the Queen is constantly suffering under uneasiness is too true," he wrote, "but I own I cannot say it is always groundless." He chastised Palmerston for sending despatches before the drafts had been approved and urged him to show more consideration to the Queen's views. But he added a sentence which revealed to Palmerston that he still had the Prime Minister's support.

I confess I feel some of the same uneasiness [as the Queen], but as I agree with you very constantly in opinion, my only wish is that in future you will save the Queen anxiety, & me some trouble by giving your reasons before, & not after an important dispatch is sent.²¹

Fortunately for Palmerston, at this time there was another area of disagreement with the Court where he had Russell's support. The cause of the dispute was who should represent Britain at the mediation conference on northern Italy. Having initially considered Bulwer,²² on 2 October Palmerston suggested Normanby, justifying the choice on the grounds that he was well-informed on Italian affairs and from his experience in Paris he would be able to work closely with the French.²³ Russell liked the idea;²⁴ the Queen did not, declaring "Lord Ponsonby wld. do much better."²⁵ "If", she wrote on the 6th,

the object of our Mediation was only to drive the Austrians out of their lawful dominions in Italy, by means of threatening [them] with French Intervention, Lord Normanby would be the best instrument for that purpose, as he has throughout taken a most violent Italian line . . .²⁶

21. Russell to Palmerston, 1 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/225 (q Walpole, II, 46 - 7). The following January Russell told the Queen that "he had spoken so strongly about Lord P.'s sending drafts to the Queen . . . that Lord John was sure Lord P. would immediately resign upon it, but that Lord P. had taken no notice of it" (Prince Albert's memorandum, 24 January 1849: RvP, 105). The overall tone of the letter, however, does not support Russell's assertion and, given what he had told the Queen on the 19th, it seems unlikely.
22. Palmerston to Russell, 25 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.
23. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 2 October 1848: RvP, 101.
24. Russell to Palmerston, 3 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/226.
25. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 3 October 1848: *ibid* RC/F/394 (q RvP, 101).
26. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 6 October 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/396 (partly q RvP, 102).

The Queen had gone too far, and in doing so she had played into Palmerston's hands. He sent Russell the Queen's letter so that he could see for himself "the Spirit in which the Queen treats the matter." The Queen, he judged, objected to Normanby "because he agrees with us" and preferred Ponsonby "because she thinks he differs from us." It was "not undeserving of attention", he added, "that Two Days before I had received the Queen's Proposal of Ponsonby, Koller had made me precisely the same suggestion." But with the Queen vetoing Normanby, Palmerston had to consider alternatives. He suggested Lord Minto. "He would do capitally," he observed, "and would be the best of all."²⁷

As far as Palmerston was concerned, Minto would indeed have been an excellent choice. Not only was he a strong admirer of Italian liberalism, but he was also Russell's father-in-law and close adviser. If the Queen objected to his appointment, as was probable, she would antagonise Russell. Unfortunately for Palmerston's calculations, Minto disliked the idea. He refused to negotiate on the basis of leaving Lombardy under Austrian control - an arrangement "too little in harmony with the progress of opinion and with national feelings to hold out the promise of endurance" - and he foresaw that he would "constantly be in conflict with the passions & policy of my own Court" and that he would not have "the unqualified confidence and support" of the whole Cabinet.²⁸ With Minto's refusal, Palmerston gave way. He selected Sir Henry Ellis, an uninspiring but unobjectionable choice.

At first sight the disagreement over who should represent Britain at the mediation conference seems unimportant, yet another example of the petty squabbling between the Queen and Palmerston. In fact, the argument was over policy rather than personalities. The Queen favoured Ponsonby because he represented the pro-Austrian school. Palmerston

27. Palmerston to Russell, 6 October 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.

28. Minto's Journal, 14 October 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995.

advocated Normanby and Minto because they were pro-Italian, and it was apparent he had the support of the Prime Minister. The Queen had gained a minor victory by successfully opposing the appointment of Normanby, but she had done so at the cost of emphasising the gap that existed between her views on northern Italy and those of Palmerston and Russell. The Queen and Prince Albert, however, felt it necessary to oppose "this heartless, obstinate and revengeful man" by all the means at their disposal. "We have perhaps been of more use to the Austrians than they can suspect", the Prince boasted towards the end of the year, "and have incessantly waged war for them with Pilgerstein [i.e. Palmerston], in which he got many an ugly poke".²⁹

It is doubtful whether the Court's opposition to the Government's Italian policy would have been so fruitful but for the fact that public support for the Italians was cooling. The attitude of the Protectionists and the Peelites remained unchanged. The Times went so far as to argue that the mediation was retarding a peaceful settlement because it kept alive the futile hopes of what it judged to be the minority of Lombards who still wanted independence.³⁰ As Parliament was not sitting, it is impossible to judge how far the Peelites would have joined the Protectionists in criticising the Government's Italian policy. However there were rumours, which Peel discounted, that Stanley "looked forward to some movement in the Lords in Concert with Aberdeen on his Italian Questions",³¹ and it is true that in private the Peelites were increasingly critical of the Government. British policy in northern Italy, Aberdeen told Princess Lieven,

has been shuffling, inconsistent, and shabby. . . . I hear great complaints of the duplicity of our conduct. This would

-
29. Prince Albert to King Leopold, 20 December 1848: Eyck, Prince Consort, 118.
30. The Times, 20 November 1848, 4. Cf Revel to Perrone, 3 October 1848: Dip. Sard., 284 - 5.
31. Peel to Graham, 26 September 1848: Gra. P. Bundle 105 (q Parker, Graham, II, 65).

be quite a new characteristic of British policy; but in these times, it is far from impossible.³²

There were also signs of disenchantment with the Italians among the Whigs and the Radicals. The Italian cause was still popular in some quarters,³³ but there was a growing feeling that the Italians were not ready for their independence. On 9 September, in an article designed to show that the French should not intervene in Italy and that the Austrians should get out, the Illustrated London News declared: "If the Italians merit independence they are powerful enough to win it for themselves."³⁴ It was not difficult to argue from this premise that because the Italians had been defeated they were undeserving of their liberty. "Political economy is better understood in Italy than in Germany or France", wrote Cobden in November. "But the mass of the Italians are yet too degraded to enjoy all the liberty the educated classes would fain bestow upon them."³⁵ If the Italians could not expel the Austrians on their own, as it seemed they could not, they did not deserve their independence and therefore Britain and France should not obtain it for them.

It would be wrong to imagine that the opposition of the Court and the trend of public opinion were the decisive factors in changing the Government's attitude towards northern Italy. It is true that the views of the Queen and of the public would have made it difficult for the Government to pursue a vigorous pro-Italian policy. But the fact that it did not do so was due to the military and diplomatic situation with respect to northern Italy rather than to domestic factors. It was app-

32. Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 1 November 1848: Jones Parry, II, 302. Cf Peel to Aberdeen, 25 October 1848, and confidential, 29 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff342 and 343 - 4; Graham to Peel, 3 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40452 ff294 - 5.

33. Spectator, 23 October and 4 November 1848, 910 and 1063 - 4; British Quarterly Review, VIII, 524 - 5.

34. ILN, 9 September 1848, 150.

35. Cobden to Bright, 1 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43649 f89.

arent that the Austrians would not give up Lombardy voluntarily, that the Italians could not expel them on their own, and that the French would not intervene. In such circumstances, the British Government had no choice but to accept Austria's decision. The most it could hope to achieve was to make Austrian rule as unobjectionable as possible to the Italians.

* * *

On 15 September Normanby discussed with Cavaignac and Bastide the need for the mediators "to come to an understanding as to the scope and limits of that mediation." Cavaignac agreed with Normanby that if the mediation was restricted to the Austrians on the one hand and the Sardinians and the insurgents of Lombardy and Venetia on the other, "it was easy to refuse the intervention in that mediation of any third Parties". But, he went on,

if we extended our action and agreed to consider the settlement of other parts of the Peninsula which were anxious to submit themselves to our guidance, then other Powers might say that we were raising European Questions in which they ought to have a voice.³⁶

The British Government preferred to keep the mediation limited to the problems of northern Italy,³⁷ a decision which Cavaignac readily accepted.³⁸ Unfortunately, the other Powers had already begun to show an interest.

On 17 September Westmorland reported that the Prussian Government, encouraged by the French minister in Berlin, wanted to join the mediation.³⁹ Cavaignac told Normanby that he was willing to disavow the minister's behaviour,⁴⁰ but Bastide welcomed the request, seeing it as

36. Normanby to Palmerston, No 589, 15 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813 (q PP, LVIII, 385).

37. Palmerston to Normanby, No 396, 22 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 422 - 3).

38. Normanby to Palmerston, No 610, 23 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813 (q PP, LVIII, 434).

39. Westmorland to Palmerston, No 341, 17 September 1848: PRO FO 64/289.

40. Normanby to Palmerston, No 603, 20 September 1848: ibid 27/813.

another opportunity to widen the rift between Prussia and the Central Power.⁴¹ Around the same time, the Central Power sounded out the Sardinians about joining the mediation, having already secured Austria's acquiescence.⁴² If Prussia and the Central Power were admitted, how could Russia be excluded? The result of their inclusion would be to transform the mediation into a General Congress at which the problems of Italy, and possibly the rest of Europe, would be settled by the major Powers.

The idea of a General Congress had a number of powerful British advocates. The Queen favoured it, declaring that it would be "preferable to the settlement by the 'Entente Cordiale' with the French Republic",⁴³ as did Russell and Normanby, the latter arguing that the presence of Russia would ensure the success of the negotiations which could only be achieved if Austria made some concessions.⁴⁴ Palmerston, however, was resolutely hostile. He judged that if Russia, Prussia and the Central Power were admitted, they would "probably side with Austria on Every Question", thereby placing Britain and France "in a Constant minority."⁴⁵ But this was not an argument he could use with the Queen. With her he argued that if the Congress was assembled to consider northern Italy, it would be impossible to prevent the discussions spreading to other subjects.⁴⁶ With Russell he adopted a different line. "The Difficulty may be as to Russia and the Central Power", he wrote: "France may

41. Hahn, 226; Jennings, 213.

42. Palmerston to Normanby, No 410, 28 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 448).

43. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 26 September 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/393 (partly q RvP, 100).

44. Normanby to Palmerston, 1 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/216; Russell to Palmerston, 3 October 1848: ibid GC/RU/226.

45. Palmerston to Russell, 26 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D (q LCJR, I, 342).

46. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 2 October 1848: RvP, 100. The Queen pointed out, quite accurately, that at the Conferences of London the discussions had been successfully limited to the question of Belgian independence (Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 3 October 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/394, partly q RvP, 101).

object to Russia, and Russia may object to act with the present Govt. of France; and both France & Russia will object to let in the Central Power."⁴⁷ Russell disagreed with Palmerston's premise that the Central Power must be included,⁴⁸ but confronted by his staunch opposition, and the tepidness of French support for a Congress,⁴⁹ he gave way. On 10 October Palmerston informed Normanby that, "however dazzling the Notion [of a Congress] may at first sight appear," the British Government thought it better to keep the mediation restricted and limited "to the humbler task" of restoring peace and stability in northern Italy.⁵⁰

Palmerston had managed to exclude the governments in St. Petersburg, Berlin and Frankfurt from the mediation on northern Italy, but it was impossible to prevent them expressing their views, and those views served to strengthen the Austrian position. In Palmerston's eyes, the Prussian Government was the most reasonable of the three Powers. When he rejected its request to join the mediation, he did so not on the grounds that it was too sympathetic to Austria, which he used when rejecting the request from Frankfurt,⁵¹ but on the grounds of the precedent it would set.⁵² It was clear, however, that the Prussian Government was more pro-Austrian than pro-Italian, and it is likely that it was more pro-Austrian than Palmerston believed. There were

47. Palmerston to Russell, 6 October 1848: PRO 30/22/7D. A few days earlier Bastide had remarked "that Prussia as well as Russia would certainly object to the appearance of the Central Government . . . at a European Congress", and he made it clear that he shared their objections (Normanby to Palmerston, No 625, 3 October 1848: PRO FO 27/814).

48. Russell to Palmerston, 8 October 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/228.

49. On 1 October Normanby reported that the French Government had told Berlin that the mediation would not be extended (Normanby to Palmerston, 1 October 1848: *ibid* GC/NO/216).

50. Palmerston to Normanby, No 439, 10 October 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 497 - 8).

51. Palmerston to Normanby, No 410, 28 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 448).

52. Palmerston to Normanby, No 406, 26 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVIII, 444).

no such doubts about the attitude of the Central Power. Early in October Cowley reported that the government in Frankfurt continued to insist that Austria's retention of a secure frontier in Lombardy "was necessary not to Austria, but to Germany".⁵³ It was even rumoured that the Central Power intended to assemble an army of 50,000 men in Bavaria in order that, if necessary, "it may make a demonstration in the Tyrol, or even actually march to Verona in support of the Austrian cause in Italy".⁵⁴ The main support for Austria, however, came not from Prussia or the Central Power, but from Russia.

During August Franco-Russian relations had improved as the two governments recognised the similarity of their views about the Central Power. The Tsar even consented to receive General Le Flô as a representative of the Republic.⁵⁵ When the French Government pressurised the Austrians into accepting the mediation, however, the nascent rapprochement began to founder. The Tsar, reported Bloomfield, "deprecated in the strongest manner the language which had been used by the French Agent at Vienna", and threatened to break off diplomatic relations.⁵⁶ Nesselrode was more moderate in his language, but equally resolute in his view that Austria should retain Lombardy.⁵⁷ At the same time, the Russian Government showed a surprising reluctance to become involved in the dispute. Nesselrode declared that there was no concert between

53. Cowley to Palmerston, No 156, 4 October 1848: PRO FO 30/111 (partly q PP, LVIII, 491).

54. Palmerston to Cowley, No 133, 31 October 1848: PRO FO 30/108. The rumour was strongly denied in Frankfurt (Cowley to Palmerston, No 233, 4 November 1848: ibid 30/113, q PP, LVIII, 586 - 7) and Cowley assured Palmerston that the Central Power "has neither the means nor the disposition to undertake any such expedition" (Cowley to Palmerston, No 229, 30 October 1848: PRO FO 30/112, partly q PP, LVIII, 570). It is a sign of the strength of the views at Frankfurt, however, that such a rumour could be circulated and believed.

55. Hahn, 249 - 63; Jennings, 215 - 18.

56. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 266, confidential, 12 September 1848: PRO FO 65/350.

57. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 274, 19 September 1848: ibid.

Russia and Austria,⁵⁸ and viewed with distaste the idea of a Congress.⁵⁹ The reason for this hesitation seems to have been that the Russian Government did not realise the extent to which the chances of French intervention had diminished.⁶⁰ It was therefore fearful of provoking a hostile response by supporting Austria too openly. Palmerston was happy to play upon these fears,⁶¹ but he knew that they were largely unfounded. It was now evident, at least to the British and French Governments, that if war did recommence in northern Italy, Britain and France would abandon the Italians to their fate, satisfying themselves, at least as long as Sardinian integrity was maintained, with a vigorous but probably unproductive protest.

* * *

Austria's acceptance of the Anglo-French mediation was the result of pressure put on her by France, and the issue which had prompted France to exert that pressure at that moment was the continued threat to Venice. However, the Austrian Government's decision did not solve the problem posed by Venice.

The Austrian position on Venice was simple. The Venetians were rebels, Ponsonby reported paraphrasing Wessenberg, and therefore the Austrian Government need not "treat with them, as it is willing to treat with a foreign State at war with Austria."⁶² The Austrians seemed to be on strong ground, for not only was Venetia Austrian by the terms of the Vienna settlement, but it was also intended that it should remain

58. *ibid.*

59. Buchanan to Palmerston, No 41, 31 October 1848: *ibid* 65/351 (q PP, LVIII, 590).

60. As late as November Nesselrode spoke of the French marching into Italy in order to liberate Lombardy and of the danger of that leading to a European war (Buchanan to Palmerston, No 69, 20 November 1848, and No 72, confidential, 23 November 1848: PRO FO 65/352).

61. Palmerston to Buchanan, No 61, 30 November 1848, and No 62, 2 December 1848: *ibid* 65/346.

62. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 352, 2 October 1848: *ibid* 7/352 (q PP, LVIII, 502).

Austrian by the terms of the mediation. But it seemed advisable that the Austrians should not exploit their rights for it might provoke a hostile response from France. Normanby, forgetting for the moment that it had been the threat to Venice which had prompted the French Government to demand a definite answer to the offer of mediation, wrote that "Austria was clumsy in not getting possession of it before she accepted the mediation."⁶³ Now Austria seemed determined to remedy her omission. How would France react?

On 19 September Beaumont told Palmerston that the Republic could not countenance the recapture of Venice whilst it was constrained by the mediation. He suggested, therefore, that an Anglo-French expedition be sent to preserve the status quo in Venetia. Palmerston replied that the British Government would send no troops and that he thought the French Government should send none. If an expedition was sent, he observed, it would be placed in an extremely awkward position once it reached Venice: if the Austrians had taken the city, it would either have to retake it, thereby precipitating a European war, or it would be forced to return home without doing anything; if they had not, the French would have to sustain the obloquy, once the mediation was concluded, of becoming "the Instrument for handing over the Venetians again to their Austrian Masters", or of "breaking Faith with Austria and separating themselves from England, by insisting upon a different Arrangement".⁶⁴ In the face of these well-reasoned objections, Bastide abandoned the idea of an expedition. Instead, he sent a strongly worded protest to Vienna.⁶⁵ Such a protest, he told Normanby, was necessary "to open the eyes of the Austrian Government to the truth."⁶⁶

63. Normanby to Palmerston, 15 September 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/211.

64. Palmerston to Normanby, No 431, 3 October 1848: PRO FO 27/800.

65. Jennings, 229 - 30.

66. Normanby to Palmerston, No 617, confidential, 28 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813.

Palmerston thought the whole problem superfluous. The Austrian offensive was unnecessary, he told Ponsonby, because

from the very nature of the proposals made to Austria by the two Governments such hostile proceedings can have no influence or ultimate results, and can only tend therefore to increase without necessity the exasperation now existing in Italy against the Austrian Govt.⁶⁷

It is inconceivable that the Austrian Government failed to recognise this. Why did it precipitate a dispute when the future of Venice was not in doubt and when it would antagonise France? The answer, as Taylor has argued,⁶⁸ was probably that the Austrian Government hoped to drive a wedge between France and Britain. The Republic, it calculated, would rush to the defence of the Venetians, and in doing so would alienate Britain. Thanks to Palmerston's warning, the French did not fall into the trap. It is possible that Cavaignac and Bastide did not need Palmerston's warning,⁶⁹ but subsequent events make this unlikely. A month later, when the idea of an expedition was once again rejected by Britain, Bastide announced that the French squadron in the Adriatic would prevent the imposition of an Austrian naval blockade.⁷⁰

The Venetian question was complicated by the attitude of Sardinia. The Sardinian Government remained anxious to secure Austria's withdrawal from Lombardy. There could be "no real pacification of Italy", Abercromby reported,

67. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 184, 2 October 1848: *ibid* 7/345 (q PP, LVIII, 478).

68. *It. Prob.*, 166 - 70.

69. Jennings has suggested that Cavaignac and Bastide never intended to send the expedition and that they were using the threat of it to persuade Palmerston to exert diplomatic pressure on Austria to stop her attacks (Jennings, 230).

70. Normanby to Palmerston, No 678, 26 October 1848: PRO FO 27/814 (q PP, LVIII, 548 - 9); Jennings, 239 - 41. Palmerston's private comment on the French decision was "that the steps which the French are taking about Venice are not strictly within the Limits of mediation, but as the French seem determined to make a Demonstration there, we may as well say no more about it; and what they are doing may not on the whole have a bad effect" (Palmerston to Normanby, 28 October 1848: Nor. P. P/20/67).

. . . unless large and comprehensive concessions are made in favour of the principle of Italian Nationality; and it is equally certain that Sardinia cannot . . . become, with honor or safety to herself, a Party to any peace by which that principle is sacrificed.⁷¹

On 22 September Perrone, the new Sardinian Foreign Minister, informed the British and French Governments that it was vital that the mediation should begin as soon as possible, on the bases already agreed by Sardinia, in order to obviate the necessity of Sardinia resuming its war with Austria.⁷² However the British and French Governments had privately accepted that Lombardy must remain Austrian. If Austria and Sardinia came to the conference with their existing attitudes, the mediation would collapse and war would be resumed. The aim of the mediators, therefore, was to continue negotiating without making any commitment which either side might find unacceptable. For the moment, the Austrian Government, uncertain about Britain's position and beset by internal difficulties, was willing to play along. But the Sardinian Government, conscious of Austria's problems and under pressure at home, was not.

On 6 October Perrone announced that the Sardinian Government had decided to send its fleet back to Venice. This was a violation of the armistice, but Perrone claimed it was merely retaliation for the failure of the Austrians to return the Sardinian ordnance captured in Peschiera, which was also one of the terms of the armistice. The Sardinians, Perrone told Abercromby, "were not throwing down the Gauntlet to Austria, but . . . they were merely taking up the one which Austria herself had cast before them". The chances of "the successful termination of the joint mediation . . . had become so doubtful", he added, that "the

71. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 246, 20 September 1848: PRO FO 67/155 (q PP, LVIII, 442 - 4).

72. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 252, 26 September 1848, enclosing Perrone to Abercromby, 22 September 1848: PRO FO 67/155 (q PP, LVIII, 466 - 7). Cf Perrone to Revel, 12 and 22 September 1848: Dip. Sard., 254 - 5 and 265 - 7.

continuance of a state of suspense became positively prejudicial."⁷³

Palmerston, predictably, protested against the Sardinian decision. He admitted that Austria's retention of the ordnance was "an inexcusable breach of faith",⁷⁴ but he feared that Radetzky's behaviour was designed "to goad the Piedmontese into some proceeding which may lead to a renewal of hostilities" and that by sending the fleet they were falling into his trap.⁷⁵ However Palmerston based his protest upon a miscalculation. He assumed that the Sardinian Government, conscious of its military weakness, was determined to avoid a renewal of the war. In fact, whilst the Sardinian Government did not want war, it feared that public pressure in Sardinia would give it no choice.⁷⁶ It was resigned to the resumption of the struggle, and began to sound out the French Government about what support it might expect.⁷⁷

The French Government was infuriated by the Sardinian intention of ignoring the mediation and resuming the war.⁷⁸ The Sardinians seemed to be precipitating a war on the assumption that if the worst happened, the French would save them. Such irresponsibility was maddening to a French Government which would gain nothing if the Sardinians won and which would be faced with the possibility of sparking off a European war if they lost. On the other hand, if the Sardinians were the victims of aggression, could a French Government abandon them? Bastide decided that it could not. He summed up the French position in a letter to the French minister in Turin: "si le Piémont veut faire la guerre,

73. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 260, confidential, 6 October 1848: PRO FO 67/155 (q PP, LVIII, 500 - 2).

74. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 131, 16 October 1848: PRO FO 67/149 (q PP, LVIII, 526).

75. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 132, 18 October 1848: PRO FO 67/149 (q PP, LVIII, 530). Cf Revel to Perrone, 25 October 1848 (2 letters): Dip. Sard., 315 - 18.

76. Abercromby to Palmerston, No 274, 15 October 1848: PRO FO 67/155 (q PP, LVIII, 536 - 7); Revel to Perrone, 12 October 1848, and Perrone to Revel, 18 October 1848: Dip. Sard., 292 - 6 and 303 - 4.

77. Jennings, 236.

78. ibid, 235 - 6.

qu'il la fasse et paye la peine de sa folie; si on l'attaque, nous le défendrons, nous tiendrons la ligne du Tésin comme si c'était celle du Var."⁷⁹ However French patience was thin. A month later Cavaignac turned angrily on Ricci at a diplomatic reception and asked "whether the Sardinian Government had meant to treat the French Army merely like Swiss Mercenaries"?⁸⁰ Cavaignac had gone too far, as he subsequently admitted.⁸¹ But his anger is understandable. Not only did the Sardinians seem to be peculiarly incapable of accepting that they could not count on French support in all circumstances, but Cavaignac himself wished to put aside all questions of foreign policy and concentrate on the Presidential elections which were less than a month away.⁸²

At the same time as France was quarrelling with Sardinia, Britain was quarrelling with Austria. Palmerston felt compelled to protest against the repressive policies pursued by Radetzky in northern Italy. Austria, he wrote repeatedly to Ponsonby, was hated by most Lombards.⁸³ But having accepted that the province must remain under Austrian rule, he wanted to find ways in which the hatred could be reduced. Radetzky's behaviour, however, seemed to be having the opposite effect, and therefore Palmerston condemned it in the strongest terms.⁸⁴ There was an added problem: Radetzky's conduct was antagonising the already belligerent Sardinians.⁸⁵

-
79. Bastide to Bois-le-Comte, 10 October 1848: Bastide, 121.
 80. Normanby to Palmerston, secret, 15 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815.
 81. Jennings, 238 - 9.
 82. *ibid.*, 243 - 4. Two days earlier Cavaignac told Normanby that it would be useless to start the mediation conference until after the elections because then there would probably be a different government (Normanby to Palmerston, No 722, 11 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815, q PP, LVIII, 590).
 83. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 176, confidential, 29 September 1848: PRO FO 7/344 (partly q PP, LVIII, 461), No 194, 9 October 1848, and No 233, 11 November 1848: PRO FO 7/345 (q PP, LVIII, 494 - 5 and 588 - 9).
 84. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 237, 14 November 1848: PRO FO 7/345 (q PP, LVIII, 592 - 3).
 85. Perrone to Revel, 31 October 1848: Dip. Sard., 323 - 4.

On 20 November Palmerston received a copy of a proclamation issued by Radetzky detailing the repressive legislation and the confiscation of the property of the leading insurgents. He reacted with what seems to have been genuine anger. He instructed Ponsonby to tell Wessenberg that "the moral Feeling of Mankind, and every sentiment of generosity and Justice" would be "revolted" by "a proceeding conceived in the spirit of the most odious oppression, and enuniated by Doctrines which belong only to the Disciples of communism, and which are subversive of the very Foundations of Social order".⁸⁶ A private letter which accompanied this impassioned outburst made it clear that Ponsonby should read it to Wessenberg. "If the Austrians wish to set against them the feelings of every Gentleman in Europe, they are going the right way to work", Palmerston declared. "No one but a semibarbarous Robber Chief in Central Asia would conduct himself in these days as Radetzky has done."⁸⁷

Even before the receipt of this provocative diatribe the Austrian Government had shown itself resentful about Palmerston's complaints. On 24 November Wessenberg protested about what he regarded as Palmerston's officious interference in Austria's internal affairs, and he asked whether Britain would like to be told how to rule Ireland. And Wessenberg, as Ponsonby observed, was a member of the faction that was sympathetic to Britain.⁸⁸ When the despatch of 20 November arrived there was a new Emperor, the youthful Franz Josef, and a new Chancellor and

86. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 241, 20 November 1848: PRO FO 7/345 (partly q It. Prob., 189).

87. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 24 November 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/821.

88. Ponsonby to Palmerston, No 432, 25 November 1848, enclosing Wessenberg to Palmerston, 24 November 1848: PRO FO 7/353. Palmerston responded by repeating his criticisms and dismissing the comparison between Lombardy and Ireland. "It is indeed a common habit with persons on the Continent", he observed, "when they have no good excuse to make . . . to retort the State of Ireland, although such Foreigners know little about Ireland except that discontent exists there, but are wholly ignorant of its nature and causes" (Palmerston to Ponsonby, No 260, 5 December 1848: ibid 7/345).

Foreign Minister, Prince Schwarzenberg.

Schwarzenberg did not share the assumption of Metternich and Wessenberg that imperial Austria and monarchical Britain were natural allies against republican France. He judged Austria's relations with other countries on the basis of the similarity of policy, not the similarity of the political system. He wished to continue the policy of trying to separate Britain and France over northern Italy, but unlike his predecessors he chose to court France rather than Britain. He calculated, correctly, that the French Government was more hostile to the Sardinians than was the British.⁸⁹ The approach to Cavaignac's administration got nowhere - indeed Bastide warned Normanby what the Austrians were attempting⁹⁰ - but a by-product was that the Austrian Government could afford to quarrel with Palmerston. On 6 December Ponsonby was given a copy of a letter Schwarzenberg had written in which he complained in the angriest terms about Palmerston's behaviour, accusing him of trying to destroy the Austrian Empire. Ponsonby defended his superior, but he advised Palmerston to let the letter "pass in silence for as no minister ought to have written in that style, perhaps it may be as well that no minister should reply to it."⁹¹

A.J.P. Taylor has argued that Schwarzenberg had the letter shown to Ponsonby because he wanted to provoke a quarrel with Palmerston in which, he calculated, Palmerston would say or do something which would antagonise his colleagues or the British electorate and thereby lead to his dismissal. This was a mistaken policy, Taylor says, "because - whatever the English public might feel about Palmerstonian bullying of foreign powers - it was not likely to be turned against him by foreign

89. It. Prob., 175 - 8.

90. Normanby to Palmerston, secret, 4 December 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/228.

91. Ponsonby to Palmerston, 10 December 1848: ibid GC/PO/588. Ponsonby evidently enclosed a copy of Schwarzenberg's letter (addressed to Werner, an official at the Austrian Foreign Ministry, and dated 4 December), but this is missing (see below p. 290).

powers bullying him."⁹² Taylor is probably correct about Schwarzenberg's intention, but it is less certain that the British public would have reacted in the way he suggests. The controversy with Spain earlier in the year reveals that although Palmerston could expect some support if criticised by a foreign government, he could also expect to be attacked in the Cabinet, in Parliament and in the press if the criticism was thought to be justified, and given the general views on Palmerston's meddling and the widespread support for Austria at this time it seems likely that Schwarzenberg's criticism would have been judged to have been deserved. Palmerston was already in trouble with the Court about his complaints about Radetzky's conduct, and on 10 December Russell had warned him that "we ought to avoid an irritating correspondence with Austria."⁹³ What is clear is that Palmerston was not sufficiently confident about the reaction the letter would produce to show it even to Russell. He decided to suppress it.⁹⁴

On 22 December Palmerston returned Schwarzenberg's letter to Ponsonby with instructions to throw it in the fire. But he could not resist one jibe against his new adversary. The letter, he declared, was "very extraordinary but somewhat characteristic" of Schwarzenberg.

Characteristic it is because written with that Insolence Impertinence & want of sense which characterize its writer; Extraordinary it is . . . because it resembles rather the outpourings of an enraged woman of the Town, railing at a Policeman who has caught her picking a pocket, than the Remonstrance of a Statesman or a Gentleman.⁹⁵

Schwarzenberg, however, had other ways, apart from his letter, of

92. *It. Prob.*, 186 - 92.

93. Russell to Palmerston, 10 December 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/234. Russell had made a similar observation at the beginning of the quarrel with Spain (see above p. 185).

94. Palmerston seems to have been quite successful in this. The letter was known to the Under-Secretaries at the Foreign Office, one of whom informed Normanby (Eddisbury to Normanby, 15 and 22 December 1848: Nor. P. 0/393 and 0/395). But there is no evidence that the Queen, the Prime Minister or the rest of the Cabinet knew of it at the time, although in 1860 Prince Albert learnt of the incident (Ridley, 475).

95. Palmerston to Ponsonby, copy, 22 December 1848: Bd. P. GC/PO/822.

making the British public aware of his distaste for Palmerston's meddling policies. Early in the new year he omitted to send to London an Austrian archduke to announce the accession of Franz Josef, although one was sent to the other major European capitals. Palmerston dismissed the snub; the Queen and The Times were furious.⁹⁶

ii) THE SICILIAN QUESTION

The problems of northern Italy were the most serious to face the British Foreign Office in 1848. The need to avert a European war and the possibility of creating a new major Power demanded careful thought and skilful conduct. But at the same time as the crisis in northern Italy was reaching its climax, another problem arose in the south of the peninsula which also demanded the attention of the British Government.

The failure of Lord Minto's mediation in April⁹⁷ caused Palmerston to rethink the British Government's attitude towards the Neapolitan Government and the Sicilian rebels. He blamed the failure on what he regarded as King Ferdinand's unreasonable obstinacy.⁹⁸ Sicily, he regretfully concluded, was lost to the King and his sons. Therefore, on 8 May, he told Abercromby that the British Government would not object if the Sicilian crown was offered to the Duke of Genoa, the second son of Charles Albert.⁹⁹ This declaration was based upon the assumption that the choice facing the Sicilians was either a constitutional monarchy, which would be favourable to Britain, or a republic, which would be favourable to France, and that in the former case the Duke of Genoa

96. Queen Victoria to Russell, 22 December 1848: QVL, II, 246; The Times, 9 January 1849, 4; It. Prob., 292 - 3.

97. See above pp. 127 - 30.

98. Palmerston to Clarendon, 22 April 1848: Clar. P. Box c524.

99. Palmerston to Abercromby, No 41, 8 May 1848: PRO FO 67/148 (q PP, LVI, 523). Two days earlier Palmerston had heard from Napier that the Sicilians were considering asking Genoa to become their king (Napier to Palmerston, No 133, 24 April 1848: PRO FO 70/223, q PP, LVI, 522).

was the only suitable candidate.¹⁰⁰ "We sincerely regret that Sicily should be separated from Naples," Palmerston wrote on 15 May, "but we do not wish to see it either Republican or French."¹⁰¹

The British were probably too suspicious about French intrigues in Sicily. There is no doubt that the French were alarmed about the increase of British influence in Sicily and hoped to counteract it.¹⁰² But, despite some suspicions on the part of Normanby,¹⁰³ there is little evidence that they were trying to establish a republic. They opposed the election of the Duke of Genoa, but this was because they regarded him as the British candidate and as a further sign of the attempted aggrandizement of Sardinia.¹⁰⁴ Moreover they opposed his election not by agitating for a republic but by attempting to maintain the link between Sicily and the Neapolitan crown, and when they learnt of Genoa's election they broke off their negotiations with the Neapolitans.¹⁰⁵ On 29 June Bastide assured Normanby that the French Government, following the line Britain had taken towards the Republic, would recognise the Sicilian Government "so soon as the Government should be definitely established."¹⁰⁶ In reply, Palmerston told Normanby "to express to the French Minr. for Foreign Affairs the sincere Gratification of H.M.'s Govt. at finding that the Two Governments are likely to act in Unison and to have the same Views and Object in Regard to the Affairs

-
100. Palmerston to Napier, No 67, 12 July 1848: PRO FO 70/219 (q PP, LVI, 576). Cf Revel to Pareto, 29 June 1848: Dip. Sard., 162 - 3.
101. Palmerston to Abercromby, copy, 15 May 1848: Bd. P. GC/AB/272 (q Dip. G.B., 186 - 7).
102. Jennings, 138 - 9.
103. Normanby to E.J. Stanley, copy, 26 April 1848: Nor. P. P/14/101a.
104. Bastide to Baudin, 17 June 1848: DD, II, 977; Jennings, 142; F. Boyer: "La marine de la seconde république et la révolution sicilienne de février à juillet 1848" Etudes d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine II (1948) 196 - 200.
105. Napier to Palmerston, No 195, confidential, 14 July 1848: PRO FO 70/225.
106. Normanby to Palmerston, No 424, 29 June 1848: ibid 27/809 (q PP, LVI, 570).

of Italy and Sicily".¹⁰⁷

The election of the Duke of Genoa assumed that the separation of Naples and Sicily was irrevocable. This was not so. By the end of July it was apparent that King Ferdinand, having crushed the rebellion on the mainland, was preparing to reconquer the other half of his dominions. The Neapolitan preparations frightened the Sicilians: the Sicilian envoy in Paris "expressed no doubt that they would defeat them again, . . . but [he said] that the Country would be ruined for some time by another conflict."¹⁰⁸ The preparations also frightened the Sardinians. On 30 July Revel read to Palmerston a despatch from Pareto in which, Palmerston told the Cabinet later, it was announced that Genoa would not accept the Sicilian crown "unless England declared She would protect Sicily from the Neapolitans."¹⁰⁹ The British position over Sicily was collapsing. What, if anything, could the British Government do to restore it?

On 2 August Palmerston informed Russell of Pareto's letter which, he observed, "raises an important Question upon which we must take some Decision."

On the one Hand it may be said that seeing that we are at Peace with the King of Naples, . . . it would be an unfriendly Thing to interfere by Force of arms to prevent him from reconquering Sicily if he is able to do so; and he asserts that he is able, and that he can & will do so, if no Foreign Power prevents him.

On the other hand, Palmerston went on, Britain had a moral obligation to assist the Sicilians: the constitution of 1812 had been "established

107. Palmerston to Normanby, No 278, 4 July 1848: PRO FO 27/799 (q PP, LVI, 571). Greer concludes from this that at this early stage Britain and France had an entente on Italy (Greer, 242). Jennings, correcting Greer, says the entente was confined to Sicily (Jennings, 138 and n74). In fact, Palmerston's reply is misleading. The understanding was limited to the question of recognition.

108. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 27 July 1848: Nor. P. P/14/165.

109. Hobhouse's Diary, 4 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff8 - 9. Cf Pareto to Revel, confidential, 17 July 1848 and 25 July 1848, and Revel to Pareto, 31 July 1848: Dip. Sard., 176, 182 - 3 and 185 - 6.

mainly through the Instrumentality of England, and under the Protection of an English Army", whilst, once Minto's mediation had failed, the British Government had encouraged Sicilian claims for independence.

"After all this", Palmerston judged,

it would surely be foolish and Inconsistent, and unworthy to back out intirely, and to leave Sicily to be a Prey to the Barbarities of a Neapolitan Invasion which would produce Murder Pillage & Conflagration, but which could not end in Conquest; and which moreover might lead to the Declaration of a Republic, and an appeal to France for support.

The solution to this dilemma, Palmerston suggested, was to advise the Neapolitan Government, "in Strong Terms", not to attempt the reconquest of Sicily because the Sicilians would never submit to its rule, and to "keep our Fleet at Palermo and Messina to give weight to our negotiation".¹¹⁰

The attempt to maintain Sicilian independence by exerting diplomatic pressure on Naples was only to be expected. But the rôle of the British fleet was more controversial. Palmerston was willing to use its presence in Sicilian waters to deter a Neapolitan attack, but it is unclear whether he favoured using it if the Neapolitans ignored the warning. What is clear is that Russell was opposed to its use as long as the Neapolitans attacked no one but the Sicilians,¹¹¹ whilst, following a conversation with Minto, Revel reported that he had little hope "que nous puissions obtenir un engagement formel de la part de l'Angleterre."¹¹² However, like Palmerston, Russell and Minto were reluctant to abandon the Sicilians. It was decided to submit the decision about the use of the fleet to the full Cabinet.

110. Palmerston to Russell, copy, 2 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/1047. Revel judged that he could have persuaded Palmerston to declare that Britain would oppose a Neapolitan invasion, but that such a declaration would be of little value as "des décisions du Conseil ont déjà, en d'autres cas, modifié les premières assurances de ce Ministre" (Revel to Pareto, 1 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 190).

111. Russell to Palmerston, 2 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/211.

112. Revel to Pareto, 1 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 192.

At the Cabinet on 4 August Palmerston argued strongly that the Neapolitan invasion must be prevented. "If we did not step in," he observed, "France would & Sicily would become a republic." At the same time, he believed that it would not be necessary to use the fleet as the Neapolitans would not dare to defy Britain. "Naples", he said pointedly, "had but four frigates." Sir George Grey and Sir Charles Wood were unconvinced by Palmerston's reassurances. The former "shook his head & said this was warlike interference." Lord Grey, however, proclaimed that he favoured intervention. It was a surprising declaration which Minto subsequently explained by saying that Grey, as Colonial Secretary, was concerned for Malta whose security would be jeopardised if the French gained a base on Sicily. Grey himself offered no explanation for his unusual bellicosity. Whatever the reason, his intervention seemed decisive. Lansdowne and Hobhouse declared that they favoured intervention, and the remainder fell into line. As Morpeth observed, "I think we cannot well do otherwise."¹¹³

The Government probably hoped that its decision to use the fleet if necessary would not become known to the public. Unfortunately, on the evening of the 8th, Lord Stanley, observing that British policy should be not to interfere "in such a struggle of a purely internal and domestic character", asked the Government two questions: had it encouraged the Sicilians to throw off Neapolitan rule by supporting the candidature of the Duke of Genoa? and had the British fleet been used to deter a Neapolitan reconquest of the island? Lansdowne, replying for the Government, admitted that it had supported the candidature of

113. Grey's Journal, 4 August 1848: Grey P. C3/14; Hobhouse's Diary, 4 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff8 - 9; Morpeth's Diary, 4 August 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/18 ff26 - 7; Minto's Journal, 25 October 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995. This decision, however, had no effect on the Sardinians, who by now were preoccupied by the war with Austria. On 9 August Pareto told Revel that Genoa had refused the Sicilian crown (Pareto to Revel, 9 August 1848: Dip. Sard., 200).

the Duke of Genoa, but despite being pressed by Malmesbury he refused to say whether Admiral Parker had been instructed to stop a Neapolitan attack "on the ground that it would not be conducive to the public interest to do so."¹¹⁴ Lansdowne's refusal to answer seems to have been a clumsy attempt to persuade the public that the Government might not intervene. The only result, however, was to create the impression that it had decided to intervene but that it did not want to admit it.

There was support for intervention in some quarters in Britain. The Spectator admitted that technically the Government was wrong to interfere in Sicily, but it felt that the principles upon which it acted - "a recognition of the people, the encouragement of moderation, and the assimilation of Italian institutions to the European fashion of the day by establishing limited Monarchy" - could not be bettered. "Besides," it argued,

those who deprecate English intervention now should be content to apply their own doctrine absolutely. Let it be known that we will on no account interfere in Italy, and France will march in alone . . . How would that suit those who now complain?¹¹⁵

On the other hand, the Daily News, which was also pro-Sicilian, came down against intervention. "The British Government", it judged, "has indeed no right to interfere, except by counsel and by remonstrance."¹¹⁶

The Protectionists and the Peelites were appalled by the Government's decision. "Our conduct at Naples", wrote Aberdeen, "seems to be as unjustifiable and tyrannical as in the north of Italy. Perhaps it is still worse".¹¹⁷ Mediation between the King of Naples and the Sicilians, as had been undertaken by Minto, was permissible, declared The Times. "But there is an enormous distance between a mediation which was desired by both parties and an arbitrary and uncalled resistance by forcible

114. Hansard, C, 1193 - 1208.

115. Spectator, 12 August 1848, 765.

116. DN, 11 August 1848, 2.

117. Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 16 August 1848: Jones Parry, II, 297.

means to the incontestable rights of the Neapolitan Government." Such an intervention would be

utterly indefensible on any principle recognized by civilized nations and by British statesmen. . . . Let us not deviate from the strict rule of non-intervention, and thereby furnish a precedent for all the other States of Europe to gratify either their revolutionary sympathies or their plans of reaction. Above all, let us not lend the encouragement of our policy to insurrection abroad whilst we are crushing the same spirit at home . . .

The comparison between Sicily and Ireland, to which The Times alluded, was not lost on the Irish Repealers. In March the Nation contrasted the Government's policy towards Sicily with its policy in Ireland. If its policy was to assist nationalist movements, as it was assisting that in Sicily, why, asked the Nation, did it firmly repress Irish nationalism?¹¹⁹ Clarendon was disturbed by the comparison. "No good done to Naples", he wrote to Russell after reading the article, "can be worth an injury inflicted on ourselves".¹²⁰ Russell did not accept the comparison between Sicily and Ireland,¹²¹ but what was probably more encouraging to Clarendon was the assurance that Minto was not working to separate Sicily from the Neapolitan crown.¹²² However, whilst this was true in March, it was no longer true in August. When Clarendon learnt of the Cabinet's decision to prevent a Neapolitan invasion he was furious. "You ask me what I think of the Neapolitan question", he wrote to Lansdowne,

. . . and I answer that in my opinion no apprehended European danger can justify the course we have pursued and that we have established a precedent most perilous to the state of Europe and to our own domestic interests. . . . We appear entirely to have forgotten Ireland and yet the similarity of circumstances should have kept it present to the Govern-

118. The Times, 10 August 1848, 5. Cf MC, 10 August 1848, 4; MH, 10 August 1848, 4; MP, 10 August 1848, 4.

119. Nation, 18 March 1848, 185.

120. Clarendon to Russell, copy, 19 March 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.2 ff165 - 6.

121. Russell to Clarendon, 21 March 1848: ibid Irish Box 43.

122. Palmerston to Clarendon, 18 March 1848: ibid Box c524; Russell to Clarendon, 19 March 1848: ibid Irish Box 43.

ment.¹²³

The precedent the Government was establishing was a most dangerous one, he told Normanby, "& some of these days the French may take exactly the same course & justify it by arguments such as we are making use of."¹²⁴

The Government, then, was faced not only by a largely hostile response from the public but also by a deep division within its own ranks. At a Cabinet on the 18th Palmerston, evidently after consultation with Russell, announced

that after the determination of the Cabinet to tell Admiral Parker not to allow the Neapolitan fleet to carry troops to Sicily, he had thought over the matter, & considering such a step rather strong, he had resolved to wait a little for events & he now wished to know our opinion. . . . C. Wood looked up at me [Hobhouse] & laughed, Minto mumbled something, and Lord Lansdowne assented to the policy of not taking any forcible means of interference. . . . The Cabinet agreed to alter its former determination & only to remonstrate strongly with Naples.¹²⁵

The contrast between this meeting and the one a fortnight earlier was apparent to all. Lansdowne had changed his opinion, probably at least partly because of Clarendon's protest. Lord Grey, who had been a staunch advocate of intervention, accepted the decision, although it seems with some regret.¹²⁶ Only Minto remained obdurate, and he confined himself to complaining in his journal that no one had told him why the decision should be reversed.¹²⁷ The reason, as Palmerston explained to Normanby, was the difficulty that would be found in justifying intervention to the public. "We should like to say to the King of Naples, you shall not send your Expedition", Palmerston wrote;

123. Clarendon to Lansdowne, copy, 12 August 1848: ibid Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 ff108 - 9.

124. Clarendon to Normanby, 14 August 1848: Nor. P. 0/158.

125. Hobhouse's Diary, 18 August 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff17 - 18.

126. Grey's Journal, 18 August 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

127. Minto's Journal, 14 October 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995.

but it wd. be difficult to find Reasons for doing so which would be accepted as quite Satisfactory by Parliament & the Public: [therefore] we propose to make an urgent Representation to the King against an attack on Sicily, and in the Mean Time to leave him all the Benefit of uncertainty as to what our Intentions are.¹²⁸

Unfortunately for Palmerston, the need to convince the Neapolitans that Britain might intervene conflicted with the Government's need to regain public confidence by making assurances that it would not. On 23 August Russell told the Commons that Parker had received no instructions to interfere in the struggle between Sicily and Naples.¹²⁹ The effect of this declaration, Minto judged with the benefit of hindsight, was to persuade the Neapolitans that they could go ahead with their attack on Sicily.¹³⁰

* * *

On 10 September the Neapolitan fleet began to bombard Messina as the prelude to an invasion of Sicily. What happened next was in complete contradiction to the British Government's decision of 18 August. After watching the bombardment for several hours Admiral Baudin, the commander of the French fleet, told Parker that he was going to put an end to the fighting. He asked whether Parker wished to join him in this, "but", reported Napier, "[he] expresses his resolution to act singly in case the latter should not deem himself enabled to embrace a similar course."¹³¹ After consulting Napier, Parker decided that he must assist Baudin.¹³¹ Confronted by the overwhelming strength of the British and French fleets, the Neapolitan commander agreed to an armistice.

Baudin justified his intervention on the grounds that he had a moral obligation to put an end to the wanton bloodshed being inflicted by

128. Palmerston to Normanby, 18 August 1848: Nor. P. P/20/62.

129. Hansard, CI, 432 - 3.

130. Minto's Journal, 14 October 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995.

131. Napier to Palmerston, No 252, 10 September 1848: PRO FO 70/227 (q PP, LVI, 720 - 1). To be fair to Napier and Parker, although their action was contrary to the Cabinet's wishes, they do not seem to have been told that they must not intervene.

the Neapolitans. Cavaignac, Normanby reported, accepted this explanation, but regretted that the French Government found itself "thus engaged further in the Question than they had intended."¹³² Napier, however, suspected that Baudin had a more sinister motive:

he may have yielded simply to a sincere impulse of commiseration, or he may have judged the present occasion a favourable one for Cultivating the Affections of the Sicilians by shewing a greater devotion in their cause than the conscientious impartiality of Sir William Parker will allow.¹³³

It was this conviction of Baudin's motives that had prompted Parker and Napier to join the intervention. Officially, Napier claimed that they too had been actuated by considerations of humanity.¹³⁴ In private, Parker confessed that this was not so:

altho' I am aware that I have exceeded the Latitude of my instructions it appeared to me desirable that some responsibility should be assum'd to prevent the Sicilians throwing themselves in the Arms of our Neighbours altogether, & becoming a Republic.

He hoped, he added, that he would not be "severely censured".¹³⁵

Like the French Government, the British Government felt compelled to support the actions of its subordinates in southern Italy. "It would not have been well", Palmerston observed, "that the Interference should have been purely French."¹³⁶ Indeed, Auckland thought it "not very agreeable" that the French had been the first to intervene,¹³⁷ whilst Minto confessed to feeling "a good deal distressed & mortified" that the attack had been allowed in the first place.¹³⁸ The problem was what to do next?

On 20 September Cavaignac spoke to Normanby about the need for Britain

132. Normanby to Palmerston, No 590, 15 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813 (q PP, LVI, 710).

133. Napier to Palmerston, No 260, 13 September 1848: PRO FO 70/227.

134. Napier to Palmerston, No 254, 10 September 1848: *ibid* (partly q PP, LVI, 729 - 30).

135. Parker to Minto, 12 September 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 12084 ff61 - 4.

136. Palmerston to Russell, 25 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.

137. Auckland to Russell, 18 September 1848: *ibid*.

138. Minto to Russell, 16 September 1848: *ibid*.

and France to agree on a joint policy over Sicily. "The French Government", he said,

would not willingly promote any settlement which would tend to the complete separation of Sicily from the Kingdom of Naples. What they would wish to propose would be an independent constitution upon somewhat the model of that of 1812, under a Viceroy appointed by the King of Naples, but should His Neapolitan Majesty not violently oppose himself to such a modification, they would not in the least object to the Throne of Sicily passing to one of his Sons under a Regency.¹³⁹

Such a settlement would be highly desirable to the French Government. It would reaffirm the Republic's revolutionary credentials, by assisting an "oppressed nationality", without damaging French interests by creating a state which would be more favourable to Britain than to France. Moreover, if Britain agreed to these terms, it would strengthen and widen the entente.

The Cabinet's decision of 18 August had made it plain that the complete independence of Sicily was no longer an immediate goal of British foreign policy. However Russell and Palmerston felt obliged to save something for the Sicilians: at the end of August Russell had declared that "we must see that the Sicilians have all the rights assured to them by British influence in 1812",¹⁴⁰ and on 11 September Palmerston had instructed Napier to offer mediation on terms similar to those now suggested by Cavaignac.¹⁴¹ It is not surprising, then, that Palmerston should consider the French proposal "the best that could be made considering the Strength on the one side & the exasperation on the other."¹⁴² On 26 September the British Government agreed to propose joint mediation on the terms suggested by Cavaignac.¹⁴³

139. Normanby to Palmerston, No 601, 20 September 1848: PRO FO 27/813 (partly q PP, LVI, 735 - 6). Cf Palmerston to Russell, 20 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D, reporting a similar conversation with Beaumont.

140. Russell to Palmerston, 31 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/222.

141. Palmerston to Napier, No 78, 11 September 1848: PRO FO 70/219 (q PP, LVI, 703 - 5).

142. Palmerston to Russell, 20 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.

143. Palmerston to Normanby, No 405, 26 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800 (q PP, LVI, 748 - 9).

It was not until 25 October that the Cabinet as a whole had an opportunity to discuss the intervention and the joint mediation. The day before, Russell, Palmerston and Minto considered what line they should adopt at the meeting.¹⁴⁴ But things did not go as they had planned. There was a long inquest about the earlier decisions on Sicily and some sharp exchanges. It was agreed that it had been necessary to approve Parker's actions and agree to the mediation, but no one was happy about what had been accomplished or the way it had been done. The Cabinet then discussed what should be done if the mediation failed. Minto was in favour of resisting a renewed Neapolitan attack, but this was overruled by the rest. However, according to Hobhouse, Palmerston seemed "rather inclined" to the idea. "I do not think that even when we broke up we had a distinct understanding of the course which was to be pursued [if the mediation failed]," Hobhouse concluded, "for a good deal will naturally depend on the conduct of our French allies."¹⁴⁵

The general reaction of the ministers to the meeting was one of dissatisfaction. During the discussion Sir George Grey "more than once shook his head & talked of a parliamentary case".¹⁴⁶ Lord Grey, who a week before had confessed that "the proceedings of our fleet . . . alarms me much", thought the exchanges "unsatisfactory enough."¹⁴⁷ Hobhouse, reflecting on the silence of Russell and the attitude of Palmerston, observed that he "should not be surprised to find that our day's talk has had little effect on our after proceeding."¹⁴⁸ It was Lord Minto, however, who felt most unhappy. He had expected the opposition of the Grey faction, but he was angry at Palmerston's failure to exhibit more support for the Sicilians, and he was disappointed by

144. Minto's Journal, 24 October 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995.

145. Hobhouse's Diary, 25 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff49 - 53.

146. Hobhouse's Diary, 25 October 1848: ibid f53.

147. Grey's Journal, 18 and 25 October 1848: Grey P. C3/14.

148. Hobhouse's Diary, 25 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 f53.

Lansdowne's "decisive" vote against intervention. Minto felt that the Government had deserted the Sicilian cause, and he considered resigning in protest. He decided not to because he judged that "the presence of a warm & zealous friend is important to Lord John since rival ambition[s] begin to manifest themselves in his cabinet". Instead, that evening he told the Sicilian envoys in London that they should "look for no further assistance from us".¹⁴⁹ Two days later Minto had a long talk with Russell after which he felt more hopeful. The Prime Minister's "feelings and good wishes are with the Sicilians", Minto wrote, "- but I suspect him to be constrained by circumstances to yield to the opinions of some whose resignation must break up his government."¹⁵⁰

Except in the case of Minto, the acrimony which existed about this Cabinet meeting did not reflect a disagreement about future policy but rather reflected a consciousness that the policy which had been pursued would not be popular with Parliament. The Protectionists were furious about the intervention. "Surely we have grossly mismanaged the Sicilian business", wrote Lord Stanley, "in which, as it seems to me, our interference has been unjustifiable in principle, & has produced the effect of protracting the state of uncertainty, & of mortally offending both the contending parties."¹⁵¹ Many Peelites were equally angry, with Graham, for example, believing that "by encouraging false Hopes on the part of the Insurgents, we have embittered the conflict and have prolonged it".¹⁵² Peel, who obtained details of the Government's intentions from the Queen,¹⁵³ was more cautious,

149. Minto's Journal, 25 October 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995.

150. Minto's Journal, 27 October 1848: *ibid.*

151. Stanley to Wellington, copy, 24 December 1848: Der. P. Box 178/1. Cf *MP*, 24 October 1848, 2.

152. Graham to Peel, 3 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40452 f295. Cf Aberdeen to Peel, 22 October 1848: *ibid.* 40455 f452; *The Times*, 27 October 1848, 4; *MC*, 23 November 1848, 4.

153. Peel to Aberdeen, confidential, 29 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 f344.

but he too thought the position of the ministers "very embarrassing".¹⁵⁴
 On the whole, the Whigs and the Radicals approved of the intervention.¹⁵⁵
 But even here there were some doubts. Charles Greville confessed he
 found the Government's policy "incomprehensible", arguing that the
 fleets should have intervened either before the Neapolitans attacked
 or not at all. "I can understand intervention or non-intervention,"
 he wrote, "but I cannot understand either what we do or leave undone".¹⁵⁶

The Government's position was made worse by its recognition that
 the mediation would probably fail. At the Cabinet meeting Palmerston
 had disagreed when Minto observed that the Sicilians would never accept
 Ferdinand and Ferdinand would never allow one of his sons to take his
 place.¹⁵⁷ But when announcing the Government's acceptance of the French
 proposal he expressed similar doubts.¹⁵⁸ He hoped that the Sicilians
 would become more manageable "when they see their relative weakness
 & that there is no chance of active Help from England & France", but
 he recognised that their desire for independence was undiminished.¹⁵⁹
 To make matters worse, the Neapolitan Government resented the intervention
 of the British and French fleets,¹⁶⁰ which it considered had prevented
 the reconquest of Sicily, and was unlikely to view the mediation in
 a friendly light. By the end of the year it was apparent that the
 concessions offered by King Ferdinand would not be sufficient to reassure
 the Sicilians. "Our prospects are lowering with regard to the Settlement
 of the Sicilian question . . ." wrote Parker on 23 December.

154. Peel to Graham, 2 November 1848: Gra. P. Bundle 105.

155. ILN, 16 September 1848, 166; Spectator, 7 and 14 October 1848,
 957 - 8 and 981 - 2; DN, 23 October 1848, 1.

156. Greville to Reeve, 28 September 1848: A.H. Johnson (ed.): The Letters
 of Charles Greville and Henry Reeve 1836 - 1865 (London 1924), 185.

157. Hobhouse's Diary, 25 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 f51.

158. Palmerston to Normanby, No 405, 26 September 1848: PRO FO 27/800
 (q PP, LVI, 748 - 9).

159. Palmerston to Russell, 20 September 1848: PRO 30/22/7D.

160. Napier to Palmerston, No 264, 17 September 1848, enclosing Curiate
 to Napier, 13 and 14 September 1848: PRO FO 70/227 (q PP, LVI,
 752 - 5).

The Attitude assumed by Russia, the improvements in the affairs of Austria, & the counsels of Spain, all tend to indispose King Ferdinand to consent to separate his army & forego his ancient power over the Sicilians. He will grant the restoration of the Constitution of 1812, provided he has military occupation to throw it over when he finds it convenient . . .

However the fear of unilateral French action, which seems to have been skilfully exploited by the Sicilian representatives in London,¹⁶² ensured that the British Government did all it could to keep the negotiations going. It had embarked upon a course of action which it seemed could not succeed and which was unpopular with the British electorate, but from which it dare not withdraw.

The British Cabinet's decision in the autumn of 1848 to allow the Neapolitans to regain control of Sicily is understandable given the domestic pressures. But the earlier decision to assist the Sicilians cannot simply be explained by the pro-Sicilian sympathies of the ministers. The British Government sympathised with other liberal movements, but it did not give them assistance. The fact that Britain could use her navy in Sicily to intervene effectively, which she could not do in, say, northern Italy, gave her the means but not the motive. That motive was the fear of French intentions in Sicily, and as far as can be judged that fear was largely unfounded. The objective of the French Government was not to create a republic in Sicily but to prevent the island being dominated by Britain, just as the British Government's objective was

161. Parker to Wood, 23 December 1848: Hal. P. A4/163.

162. Towards the end of November, for example, the representatives told Minto and Palmerston that they had reason to hope that the French Government would "enforce a continuance of the Armistice as long as possible", which, according to Minto, helped to make Palmerston and Russell "quite aware that the French are playing a somewhat double game with them" (Minto's Journal, 26 November and 5 December 1848: N.L.S. Mss. 11995). According to Normanby and Parker, however, it was reassuring how closely French views on Sicily agreed with those of Britain (Normanby to Palmerston, No 721, 11 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815 (q PP, LVI, 793); Parker to Wood, 23 December 1848: Hal. P. A4/163).

was to prevent the island being dominated by France. Mutual suspicion, rather than a mutual desire to assist the Sicilians, was the dominant motive in the formation of British and French policy towards southern Italy. If both Powers had been more trusting, they would have avoided a complication which neither had wanted and which was impossible to solve without further embarrassment.

iii) MINOR PROBLEMS

On 8 April rioting broke out in the town of Jassy in Moldavia. The fighting lasted for four days before the authorities were able to restore order.¹⁶³ In itself the rising was of little importance, but the situation was complicated by the peculiar position of Moldavia and its neighbouring principality of Wallachia. Although still nominally part of the Turkish Empire, by the Treaty of Adrianople both principalities had been given de facto independence and Russia had been given the right to interfere, by force if necessary, in their internal affairs. On this occasion, the Russian Government showed no inclination to intervene.¹⁶⁴ However, ten weeks later, when a more serious revolution broke out in Bucharest, the Russian Government sent 14,000 troops into the principalities to subdue the unrest and pressurised the Porte into assisting its action. After some initial hesitation, which was encouraged by Stratford Canning, the Porte agreed, and by the end of October a joint Turko-Russian force had entered Bucharest and crushed the rebellion.¹⁶⁵

Nesselrode assured Bloomfield "that nothing but absolute necessity would have induced the Russian Government to take the step which they have done". Its intention, he said, was to shore up the Turkish Empire.¹⁶⁶

-
163. R.R.N. Florescu: The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities: A Problem in Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy 1821 - 1854 (Monachii 1962), 189 - 90.
164. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 120, 27 April 1848: PRO FO 65/348.
165. Florescu, 193 - 9.
166. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No 214, 18 July 1848: PRO FO 65/350.

Given the Russian desire not to reopen the Eastern Question whilst Europe was in such turmoil,¹⁶⁷ it is likely that Nesselrode was telling the truth. However the British, as usual extremely sensitive about possible Russian expansion towards Constantinople, remained suspicious. The Russians may have a right to intervene, declared Fraser's Magazine, but might they not be tempted to go further than they were entitled? "The opportunity", it judged, "is, to say the least, tempting."¹⁶⁸ Canning was particularly alarmed, and by 20 November he was asking, in vain, that Parker's fleet be sent into the eastern Mediterranean in order to encourage the Turks to resist Russian demands.¹⁶⁹ Palmerston was less suspicious than many of his countrymen, and even gave muted approval to the initial intervention.¹⁷⁰ But the presence of Russian troops in the principalities did cause friction. Palmerston was convinced that there could be no permanent stability in the principalities until the corrupt and inefficient administration there had been reformed.¹⁷¹ Nesselrode, on the other hand, insisted that there should be no reforms until order had been completely restored for he did not want to seem to be rewarding rebellion.¹⁷² More seriously, once the insurrection had been crushed Palmerston began to pester Nesselrode about the failure of the Russians to withdraw from the principalities.¹⁷³ He remained convinced that the Russians would leave, but he felt that they were taking an unnecessarily long time.¹⁷⁴

167. See above pp. 124 - 5.

168. Fraser's Magazine, XXXVIII, 244. Cf Spectator, 22 July 1848, 694; MH, 24 November 1848, 4.

169. Canning to Palmerston, No 187, 20 November 1848: PRO FO 78/736. Cf Canning to Palmerston, No 136, 7 October 1848: ibid.

170. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No 203, 2 August 1848: ibid 65/345.

171. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No 251, 8 September 1848, and No 259, 19 September 1848: ibid; Palmerston to Canning, No 128, 20 September 1848, and No 133, 3 October 1848: ibid 78/732.

172. Buchanan to Palmerston, No 5, 3 October 1848: ibid 65/351.

173. Palmerston to Buchanan, No 40, 6 November 1848, and No 60, 30 November 1848: ibid 65/346.

174. Palmerston to Normanby, 5 December 1848: Nor. P. P/20/76.

British concern about possible Russian expansion in the Near East was shared by the French Government. Early in May Lamartine told Thom that he wished to see Austria remain powerful on the Danube to counteract Russian influence.¹⁷⁵ A few weeks later Tallenay spoke to Palmerston, albeit only in the most general terms, about the problems of the Near East, and he was happy to report that their views coincided to a great extent.¹⁷⁶ However it was not until after the Russian intervention in the principalities that the Republic began to take a close interest. On 18 July Palmerston assured Bastide that the British Government would co-operate "gladly" with France over the principalities.¹⁷⁷ The day before, he had instructed Canning to "encourage any friendly overtures" which General Aupick, the French representative in Constantinople, may make towards him.¹⁷⁸

Canning was less than enthusiastic about establishing an understanding between himself and Aupick. Although he liked Aupick personally, he regarded him as a potential rival. He was determined that he should not be allowed to play a prominent rôle in Turkish affairs. "His assistance might, no doubt, be occasionally of use", he wrote in September; "but I do not yet feel the want of him, and I had rather have his good will and readiness to second on general terms than be bound up in a system of close co-operation with him".¹⁷⁹ But Canning's suspicions about the French in the Near East were based upon more than a vague alarm for his own position. In mid-August Aupick told him that three French officers had been sent to Wallachia to assess the situation

175. Jennings, 218 - 19. Lamartine's aim was evidently to assure Austria that his wish to deprive her of her Italian possessions was not the result of a desire to destroy her as a major Power.

176. Tallenay to Bastide, 22 May 1848: DD, II, 395 - 6.

177. Palmerston to Normanby, No 294, 18 July 1848: PRO FO 27/799.

178. Palmerston to Canning, copy, 17 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/CA/266.

179. Canning to Palmerston, 4 September 1848: ibid GC/CA/177. Cf Canning to Palmerston, 19 July and 26 August 1848: ibid GC/CA/174 and GC/CA/176.

there. Whilst declaring no wish "to insinuate a suspicion of any ulterior view," Canning observed to Palmerston that neither he nor the Porte had been told of the mission before it departed,¹⁸⁰ and he instructed the British consul in Bucharest to report "any thing in their conduct that may seem to be at variance" with their avowed objective.¹⁸¹ In itself the episode was of little importance, but it helped to preserve Canning's distrust of the French.

On 18 October Bastide spoke to Normanby "very earnestly" about events in the principalities.

He said he was not apt to seek imaginary dangers or to attribute hostile intentions, but he owned he was uneasy at the successful influence which Russia seemed to be exercising in all this affair. That unless some remonstrance on the part of England and of France could inspire the Porte with sounder counsels, the independence of Turkey was near its termination, and we must be prepared to feel the inconvenience of the speedy entrance of Russia into the Mediterranean with all its consequences.¹⁸²

Bastide evidently regarded the presence of Russian troops in the principalities as the beginning of Russian expansion towards Constantinople. Palmerston tried to reassure him. He did not believe that the Russian invasion was the start of a drive towards the Straits. The worst Russia might intend, he judged, was to increase her hold over the principalities, and even this he thought unlikely. But he agreed that Britain and France should "endeavour, by friendly representations to mitigate the course which Russia is pursuing, and to persuade her not to prolong the stay of her Troops in Wallachia."¹⁸³ Bastide agreed to follow Palmerston's advice and sent appropriate orders to Le Flô and Aupick,¹⁸⁴

180. Canning to Palmerston, No 71, 17 August 1848: PRO FO 78/734.

181. Canning to Colquhoun, copy, 28 August 1848: ibid 352/31/2. After some initial alarm at their sudden arrival in Bucharest (Colquhoun to Canning, 18 August 1848: ibid), Colquhoun reported that the officers seemed innocent enough (Colquhoun to Canning, 7 September 1848: ibid).

182. Normanby to Palmerston, No 658, 18 October 1848: PRO FO 27/814.

183. Palmerston to Normanby, No 467, 24 October 1848: ibid 27/800.

184. Normanby to Palmerston, No 672, 23 October 1848, and No 690, 29 October 1848: ibid 27/814.

whilst Palmerston instructed Canning and Buchanan to co-ordinate their attitude on the principalities, "in the spirit of my despatch to Lord Normanby", with their French counter-parts.¹⁸⁵ Le Flô, Buchanan replied, acquiesced to his orders, but "evidently conceived the language of Your Lordship's instructions might have been more energetick."¹⁸⁶

The willingness of the British Government to co-operate with the French Government over the Near East reflected not only a similarity in outlook on the problem, without which co-operation would have been impossible, but also a readiness on the part of the French Government to follow the British lead. The same principle held true over the problem in the Rio Plata. Bastide was uncertain about the importance of the affair and bewildered by its complexity.¹⁸⁷ He told Normanby that "he would do anything he could to get out of that Rio Plata business"¹⁸⁸ and he was ready to follow Palmerston's advice.¹⁸⁹ The result in the Rio Plata, however, was to make French policy confused and ineffective, and to enable Britain to pursue her own interests with little consideration to her ally.¹⁹⁰

* * *

Britain and France had reached useful understandings on the questions of Moldavia-Wallachia and the Rio Plata. There were other problems, however, where the British and French Governments, although anxious to secure an understanding, found it difficult to work together. The most obvious example of this was over Greece, where the rivalry of Britain and France seemed perennial.

The relations between Palmerston and the King of Greece, Otho, and

185. Palmerston to Buchanan, No 32, 31 October 1848: *ibid* 65/345; Palmerston to Canning, No 161, 31 October 1848: *ibid* 78/732.

186. Buchanan to Palmerston, No 51, 10 November 1848: *ibid* 65/352.

187. Cady, 247.

188. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 8 June 1848: Nor. P. P/14/134.

189. Normanby to Palmerston, No 446, 10 July 1848, and No 450, 14 July 1848: PRO FO 27/810.

190. Cady, 238 - 46.

his Government had never been very cordial, but at the beginning of 1848 they were at a particularly low ebb. In March, when Kings and Princes were being swept from their thrones, Palmerston confessed "I should not cry my eyes out if Otho were added to the list."¹⁹¹ He was infuriated with Louis Philippe and Guizot, whom he accused of sabotaging the attempts of the British Government, and more particularly of its representative in Athens Sir Edmund Lyons, to liberalise and reform the Greek Government. With the formation of the Republic, however, he assumed that France would stop supporting what he considered a corrupt and despotic regime.¹⁹²

Lyons had little doubt that Thouvenel, the French chargé d'affaires in Athens, would continue the policy instigated by Guizot.¹⁹³ In fact, Thouvenel was told to put an end to the quarrel, which Bastide stigmatised as "un antagonisme sans but déterminé, une lutte vaine, irritante et stérile en définitives."¹⁹⁴ But when Thouvenel approached Lyons, he found the British minister unresponsive. Good relations were "entirely out of the question", Lyons told Palmerston, as long as the French continued to support Otho.¹⁹⁵

By June the French Government had reached the conclusion that good relations with Britain over Greece could not be achieved until Lyons had been recalled.¹⁹⁶ There seemed grounds for hoping that this would happen, for Tallenay reported that Lyons' recall was being contemplated by the Cabinet.¹⁹⁷ There was indeed much dissatisfaction with Lyons in British circles: Normanby, for example, observed that if "there are two ways of doing a right thing, Lyons is seldom fortunate enough

191. Palmerston to Westmorland, copy, 23 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/WE/191.

192. Palmerston to Westmorland, copy, 21 March 1848: ibid GC/WE/190.

193. Lyons to Palmerston, No 44, 1 April 1848: PRO FO 32/162.

194. Bastide to Thouvenel, 27 May 1848: DD, II, 489 - 90.

195. Lyons to Palmerston, No 83, confidential, 18 July 1848: PRO FO 32/164.

196. Bastide to Tallenay, 12 June 1848: DD, II, 806.

197. Tallenay to Bastide, 8 June 1848: ibid, 740.

to hit upon the best."¹⁹⁸ Palmerston, however, stuck resolutely to the defence of his subordinate. In response to criticisms from Prince Albert he declared:

The Fact is that the only sin of Lyons is that he has been the official organ of the advice & complaints of the English Government, and that the liberal & national Party in Greece look up to him with Respect, & Confidence.¹⁹⁹

Stratford Canning even received a rebuke for failing to adopt Lyons' tone when dealing with the Greek Government.²⁰⁰ Palmerston was anxious to establish an entente with France over Greece, for he believed that shorn of French support Otho would submit to Britain's demands.²⁰¹ But he refused to pay the price of Lyons' recall, which the French Government viewed as "un excellent acheminement au bon accord . . . et la meilleure preuve qu'on put nous donner de la sincérité des intentions exprimées à ce sujet."²⁰²

Despite Lyons' continued presence in Athens, in October there was another attempt to establish an entente. During a conversation with Beaumont Palmerston launched a long diatribe against Otho, against the policies which had been pursued by Louis Philippe, and against the policies which were being pursued by the Northern Courts. "H.M.'s Govt. cannot but believe", he declared in a subsequent despatch to Normanby,

that the Greek Nation may look with Confidence to the present Govt. of France for the Exertion of its moral Influence at Athens in Favor of Law, of Liberty, and of Justice; and H.M.'s Govt. are convinced that if the French Representative at Athens were to receive Instructions to shape his Course so as to promote the Establishment of a good Government in Greece, the Influence of France would not be exerted in vain . . .²⁰³

-
198. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 17 November 1848: Nor. P. P/14/232. Cf Prince Albert to Russell, 12 January 1848: PRO 30/22/7A; Hobhouse's Diary, 28 January 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43751 f77; Canning to Palmerston, 19 June 1848: Bd. P. GC/CA/163; Queen Victoria to Russell, 9 August 1848, enclosed in Russell to Palmerston, 10 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/214.
199. Palmerston to Russell, 13 January 1848: PRO 30/22/7A.
200. Palmerston to Canning, No 79, 25 July 1848: PRO FO 78/731.
201. Tallenay to Bastide, 8 and 12 June 1848: DD, II, 739 - 40 and 806.
202. Bastide to Thouvenel, 16 June 1848: ibid, 937.
203. Palmerston to Normanby, No 429, 3 October 1848: PRO FO 27/800.

Queen Victoria objected strongly to this despatch. She disliked its whole tone, but she particularly regretted the bitter personal remarks about Louis Philippe and Otho.²⁰⁴ Palmerston admitted that the despatch was couched in strong terms, but explained that it reflected the depth of his feelings and that

in his anxiety to persuade the present Government of France to take a fair and juster view of Greek affairs and pursue a more equitable policy, he could not avoid observations on the personal qualities of the one, and the systematic policy of the other . . . because those observations lay at the very root of his argument . . .²⁰⁵

Nevertheless, the Queen insisted that the remarks about Otho and Louis Philippe be omitted.²⁰⁶ A message was sent to the Foreign Office to have the despatch stopped, Palmerston reported on the 16th, "but he was sorry to find that by some inadvertence & mistake in the Hurry of Business that Despatch had contrary to the standing orders . . . been already transmitted to Paris." Even so, Palmerston remained unapologetic, remarking that "when important public Interests are at Stake, essential Truths ought not to be withheld".²⁰⁷ In fact, the despatch had less impact in Paris than Palmerston had hoped and the Queen had feared. Bastide gave it only a cursory glance and expressed a vague wish to put an end to the rivalry in Athens.²⁰⁸ Knowing that he and Palmerston would not agree, he probably wished to avoid the subject.

A month later the gap between the British and French Governments over Greece became more obvious. On 27 October Lyons reported that Thouvenel had tried to persuade three Greek ministers who wanted to resign to remain in office. For Lyons, this was proof that Thouvenel

204. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 8 October 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/397 (q QVL, II, 236 - 7).

205. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 11 October 1848: RvP, 103.

206. Queen Victoria to Palmerston, 14 October 1848: Bd. P. RC/F/398 (partly q RvP, 103).

207. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, copy, 16 October 1848: Bd. P. RC/FF/14 (partly q RvP, 103 - 4).

208. Normanby to Palmerston, No 644, 13 October 1848: PRO FO 27/814.

was sustaining Otho's corrupt and despotic regime.²⁰⁹ Palmerston agreed, and urged the French Government to instruct Thouvenel to work with Lyons for a liberal government in Athens.²¹⁰ Bastide retorted that Thouvenel needed no new instructions.²¹¹ "It was with great difficulty I could make Bastide feel that there was necessarily anything wrong in the intervention of M. Thouvenel", Normanby wrote the following day. ". . . He then adverted to that which I have always found in the mouth of every Diplomatist of every Country & of every Party - the impossibility of anyone getting on well with Lyons."²¹² Palmerston replied that it was not Lyons but Thouvenel who should be replaced. "I presume", he concluded, "Bastide does not wish the French Missions to keep up this guerre aux Coups d'Epingles which Guizot took such Delight in."²¹³

* * *

Despite their deep-rooted distrust, which was most clearly manifested over Sicily and Greece, towards the end of 1848 the British and French Governments were moving, albeit slowly and hesitantly, from a limited entente on northern Italy to a more general understanding on all questions of foreign policy. The two publics, however, remained mutually distrustful, as a number of small incidents illustrated.

At the end of October a party of National Guardsmen paid a good-will visit to London. Their arrival caused consternation. "I have seen many more French uniforms than English on the facade this morning", Wood told his wife: "& it really is absurd to see groups of 12 & 20 French soldiers . . . standing at the street corners & walking about, as if

209. Lyons to Palmerston, No 117, 27 October 1848: ibid 32/165.

210. Palmerston to Normanby, No 512 and No 513, 14 November 1848: ibid 27/801.

211. Normanby to Palmerston, No 733, 16 November 1848: ibid 27/815.

212. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 17 November 1848: Nor. P. P/14/232.

213. Palmerston to Normanby, 19 November 1848: ibid P/20/74.

at home."²¹⁴ Most British newspapers welcomed the visit, believing, as the Spectator observed, that it would promote "mutual good feeling and confidence between French and English." But it was rumoured in some quarters that the Guardsmen were trying to stir up a revolution or were spying out the ground for an invasion.²¹⁵ Such fears were not eased by the fact that the Guardsmen continued to carry their side-arms. Palmerston instructed Normanby to tell the relevant authority that in future it would be better if they left their weapons in France. "It was quite natural that the French National Guards who are accustomed every day to see armed men walking about the streets of Paris . . . should consider it a matter of Etiquette to bring their side arms with them," he wrote, "but in this Country the practice is different".²¹⁶

In Paris, Normanby was equally alarmed when it was rumoured that 1,500 Britons would pay a return visit for that of the Guardsmen. "I am not you know much of an alarmist", he told Palmerston, "but one hears from every quarter that the first occasion will be seized by the Anarchical party to renew the attempts of June." Normanby feared that "a mob of gaping English", visiting the scenes of the fighting in June, might spark off an insurrection, which would probably result in British casualties and might lead to an anti-British outcry. "I know there is no authority to prevent this [visit]", he declared, ". . . but it would be well if they could be induced to postpone it till they could have a real President to stare at."²¹⁷

As well as the tourists crossing the Channel, there was a small but steady stream of French refugees seeking asylum in Britain.²¹⁸ In

214. Wood to his wife, 24 October 1848: Hal. P. A2/43/4.

215. MC, 27 October 1848, 4; Spectator, 28 October 1848, 1030.

216. Palmerston to Normanby, No 520, 17 November 1848: PRO FO 27/801.

217. Normanby to Palmerston, 23 November 1848, enclosed in G. Grey to Palmerston, 29 November 1848: Bd. P. GC/GR/2430. After making discreet enquiries, Grey reported that the proposed visit was not until April 1849 (G. Grey to Palmerston, 7 December 1848: ibid GC/GR/2431).

218. It seems likely that some Irish Repealers fled to Paris after the rising in August, but there is no proof of this which would imply that ~~there~~ ^{their} numbers were small.

March the refugees had been monarchists fleeing the revolution. Now they were socialists fleeing Cavaignac's authoritarian regime. The most famous of these was Louis Blanc, who arrived at the end of August. The British press had little sympathy with his plight, although it did not deny him the right of asylum. Louis Blanc's "offence", The Times declared on 7 September, "if it involves not the wilfulness of murder, at least comprises all the guilt of wholesale and hideous manslaughter".²¹⁹ After the initial interest, Louis Blanc settled down to a routine of dinner parties and writing self-justificatory articles about his involvement with the Provisional Government. Charles Greville, who had expected not to like Louis Blanc, was favourably impressed when they met.²²⁰ Roebuck was not: "A more complete charlatan I never saw", he told his wife. "A thoroughly poor creature, dealing in phrases, and fancying himself a discoverer, because he has revived doctrines that have been exploded a quarter of a century since."²²¹

Whatever the extent of the entente between Britain and France, there was no question of the British Government cutting back on its espionage activities. Indeed, because of the revolution, there was an upsurge in British spying. Under the Orleans monarchy Normanby had developed a highly effective network of informants which provided him with valuable insights into French policy.²²² But, after the revolution, Normanby found information more difficult to come by: some informants, for example Klindworth, had been forced to flee because they were closely associated with the fallen monarchy;²²³ one employee, named La Garde, had died recently,

219. MP, 29 August 1848, 4; MC, 1 September 1848, 4; The Times, 1, 7 and 12 September 1848, 4. The Northern Star, however, defended Louis Blanc (Northern Star, 2 and 16 September 1848, 5 and 4).

220. GM, VI, 241 - 2.

221. Roebuck to his wife, 14 November 1848: Leader, 205.

222. In January, for example, Normanby learnt the details of a secret agreement between France, Austria and Prussia over Switzerland (Normanby to Palmerston, 17 January 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/98).

223. Normanby to Palmerston, 26 March 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/146.

thereby saving the British Government "six hundred a year & a great deal of valuable eyesight in making out his confused twaddle";²²⁴ whilst other informants seem to have been discouraged by recent revelations²²⁵ which enhanced their natural fear of discovery. "All information as to the Army & official detail of that sort is now much more difficult to get", Normanby reported in March.²²⁶ It was possible to recruit people, especially for surveillance work, but they often proved amateurish and unreliable.²²⁷ Nevertheless, in the absence of any suitable alternative, Normanby did occasionally resort to such people, as when the Irish delegation visited Paris²²⁸ and when a French officer offered to spy on the refugees in London in order to discover which should be expelled under the Alien Act.²²⁹

By the summer, with the situation in France stabilising, informants were more forthcoming and the information they transmitted was more valuable. A Captain Martin sent reports about the French army in Algeria, which Normanby described as "well worth what he asks, a Captain of Cavalry's pay."²³⁰ The most valuable spy seems to have been one in the Ministry of Marine:²³¹ at the beginning of June he provided details of French naval activity;²³² a fortnight later the British Cabinet considered a memorandum prepared for Guizot's administration and recently

224. ibid.

225. Klindworth's activities, for example, became known with the seizure and publication of Guizot's papers (see Normanby to Palmerston, 22 April 1848: ibid GC/NO/159).

226. Normanby to Palmerston, 26 March 1848: ibid GC/NO/146.

227. Normanby to Palmerston, 17 April 1848, copy, 26 August 1848, and 1 December 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/157, Nor. P. P/14/195 and Bd. P. GC/NO/227.

228. See above pp. 159 - 60.

229. Normanby to Palmerston, 29 April 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/163. The officer was not employed for long because Normanby discovered he could not speak English (Normanby to Palmerston, 11 June 1848: ibid GC/NO/178).

230. Normanby to Palmerston, 30 June 1848, and copy, 6 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/190 and Nor. P. P/14/154.

231. There is no evidence that there was only one spy in the Ministry of Marine, but it seems unlikely that there were two.

232. Auckland to Russell, 4 June 1848: PRO 30/22/7C.

recirculated about naval strategy in the event of war with Britain;²³³ and in mid-July he sold, for 500 francs, the plans of the improvements to the port at Cherbourg.²³⁴ The "leakiness" of the French ministries, however, did have its drawbacks: on 9 August Normanby purchased a copy of one of Palmerston's despatches on Italy, which he had ~~lent~~ to Bastide, to prevent its publication.²³⁵

It would be wrong to exaggerate the importance of the information bought by Normanby. Its quality varied enormously, and it tended to reflect subjects of particular interest to the British Government rather than the general affairs of France. Most of Normanby's information on the latter came from the French newspapers and from his conversations with leading politicians, notably Bastide, Lamartine and Molé. There were, however, a number of lacunae which Normanby would no doubt have liked to fill. During the first half of the year he had little accurate information about the activities of the Paris clubs and the views of the socialists and communists beyond what was generally known.²³⁶ He also seems to have had little insight into or understanding of the Bonapartists. He tended to accept the judgements, which were usually hostile, of moderate republicans and members of the former Orleanist opposition, and whilst this bias did not hamper his relations with Lamartine and Cavaignac - indeed it may have helped them - it must have affected his assessment of French politics. In March, for example, he did not doubt Lamartine's claim that he had saved France from the socialists.

233. Palmerston to Grey, 17 June 1848: Grey P. 117/6. A copy of the memorandum is in PRO 30/22/7C.

234. Normanby to Palmerston, 13 July 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/193; Palmerston to Normanby, 14 July 1848: Nor. P. P/20/47.

235. Normanby to Palmerston, confidential, 9 August 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/204.

236. By November, however, Normanby was buying information about the Paris clubs from the Vice-President of Blanqui's, although he thought he was selling it to an English journalist (Normanby to Palmerston, 16 November 1848 and 1 December 1848: ibid GC/NO/223 and GC/NO/227).

Now, with the run-up to the French Presidential elections, he barely disguised his belief that Cavaignac would be a much better choice than Louis Napoleon.

iv) THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

From the end of September British observers of French affairs began to take a close interest in the Presidential elections. Three of the five candidates were viewed with dislike and distrust: Ledru Rollin and Raspail were regarded as dangerous revolutionaries who would plunge France into further ruin and disorder,²³⁷ whilst Lamartine, despite continued regard for his personal qualities, was discredited by his former links with the socialists.²³⁸ Once it became clear that the Legitimists and the Orleanists had failed to agree on a compromise candidate - and rumours to the contrary persisted as late as the end of October²³⁹ - the choice was seen to rest between Cavaignac and Louis Napoleon.

In the opinion of the British press neither of the favourites would make a good President. Cavaignac was disliked because, despite his actions during the June Days and the repressive legislation he had subsequently introduced, he was thought to be "soft" on the socialists and because it was recognised that he was determined, if possible, to preserve the Republic. On the other hand, however bad Cavaignac may appear, Louis Napoleon seemed worse. He was regarded as an ambitious adventurer, with only moderate talents, who aimed at the Imperial

237. York Herald, 23 September 1848, 5; The Times, 26 September 1848, 4; MP, 28 September 1848, 4.

238. The Times, 8 September 1848, 4; York Herald, 14 October 1848, 4; MP, 1 November 1848, 4.

239. Peel to Aberdeen, 25 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff339 - 42. In the early stages it was assumed that any Legitimist candidate would stand a good chance (Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 18 July 1848: Nor. P. P/14/160; GM, VI, 226).

crown. It was generally assumed that he would be putty in the hands of skilful and unscrupulous politicians like Thiers. His name seemed to be his only asset, and to many Britons that name was inextricably linked with long, ruinous wars. Cavaignac at least had the merit of being a lover of peace and a friend of Britain.²⁴⁰ There was also a fear that neither Cavaignac nor Louis Napoleon would accept the result if defeated in the elections, and that consequently France would be plunged into further turmoil.²⁴¹

Normanby was perturbed by the language the British press used when speaking of Louis Napoleon. He regarded his victory as "so certain", Greville told Clarendon, "that he wishes our papers would not speak of him with such unmitigated contempt."²⁴² His own preference, however, was for Cavaignac. Despite the reassurances of Bonapartists,²⁴³ he shared the widespread fear that Louis Napoleon's election might lead to a European war.²⁴⁴ Palmerston regarded Louis Napoleon as a political nonentity. "His intentions and disposition are no doubt good," he had written when considering him for the Sicilian crown, "but he seems deficient in those Intellectual Qualities which are requisite to enable a Sovereign to conduct the Affairs of a State."²⁴⁵ At the same time, Palmerston did not share the general preference for Cavaignac. "As to

-
240. MC, 22 September, 28 October and 30 November 1848, 4; MH, 23 September, 30 October and 1 November 1848, 4; The Times, 23 September, 31 October and 29 November 1848, 4 - 5; ILN, 23 September 1848, 182; DN, 29 September 1848, 2; MG, 11 October and 29 November 1848, 4 and 6; MP, 13 October and 29 November 1848, 4.
241. Hobhouse's Diary, 15 November 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43753 ff56 - 7; The Economist, 11 November 1848, 1269 - 70; Northern Star, 25 November 1848, 4.
242. Greville to Clarendon, 4 November 1848: Clar. P. Box c521.
243. Normanby to Palmerston, copy, 23 October 1848: Nor. P. P/20/220. Cf Malmesbury to Stanley, 19 November 1848: Der. P. Box 144/1.
244. Normanby to Cowley, 7 November 1848: PRO FO 519/158. This anxiety was also expressed by politicians as diverse as Cobden, Peel and Russell (see Cobden to Bright, 24 October 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43649 f81; Peel to Aberdeen, 25 October 1848: *ibid* 43065 f341; Russell to Wood, 21 November 1848: Hal. P. A4/56/3).
245. Palmerston to Napier, No 67, 12 July 1848: PRO FO 70/219.

the Election of President", he wrote on 17 November,

one really does not know what to wish . . . We know what we have got in Cavaignac though . . . Cavaignac of today may not be the same as Cavaignac Elected by the violent Republicans. What Louis Napoleon might be as President we have yet to learn; all we know as a ground for Conjecture is that hitherto his best Friends have considered him a goose. . . . There never indeed was a case in which one had so many Things to wish against, and so few to wish for. . . . The only conclusion one can come to is that we must ²⁴⁶ shut our Eyes and take what comes & make the best of it.

Cavaignac had few illusions about his prospects in the elections.²⁴⁷

At the end of November, however, an event occurred which led him to hope that he could snatch victory. On 15 November the Pope's Prime Minister, Count Rossi, was assassinated. Two days later the Pope told the French ambassador that he might have to flee from Rome, and he sounded out the possibility of finding asylum in France. A week later he left Rome for Gaeta, in Neapolitan territory, from where it was thought he would sail to Marseilles.²⁴⁸ News of the Pope's request, "either for a refuge in France or at any rate for such assistance as should enable him to restore order amongst his subjects", reached Paris on the 26th. Bastide, Normanby reported, "said he did not know how it was possible to refuse such a request".²⁴⁹ The following day Cavaignac announced that an expedition of 3,500 men would sail from Marseilles. He said that its purpose was "to offer to protect the person of His Holiness, and if necessary to give him . . . refuge on board, but, without further instructions, the troops were not to be landed to occupy any place in the Papal territory." He did not discount the possibility of French troops being used to restore order in Rome, but he said that

246. Palmerston to Normanby, 17 November 1848: Nor. P. P/20/73.

247. Normanby to Palmerston, No 699, confidential, 2 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815 (q NJ, II, 275 - 6); Normanby to Palmerston, 11 November 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/222 (q NJ, II, 291).

248. Jennings, 246 - 7.

249. Normanby to Palmerston, secret, 26 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815 (partly q PP, LVIII, 629).

in such an eventuality "the anxiety of the French Government would be that it should take place conjointly with England."²⁵⁰

Cavaignac's determination to do something for the Pope was less the result of an altruistic concern for his welfare than a calculation that by assisting him it might be possible to secure the votes of the powerful Catholic lobby in the forthcoming elections. "Some of the heads of the Clergy", Normanby reported, "are said to have boasted they could dispose of a million votes according as this step was or was not taken."²⁵¹ Sensing his fleeting opportunity, Cavaignac seized it with both hands. He lost little time in announcing that the Pope was coming to France and on the 27th Normanby reported that he was far more optimistic about his electoral prospects.²⁵² But whatever the domestic consequences, the diplomatic repercussions of his decision were grave.

In Britain, the news of Rossi's assassination and of the plight of the Pope caused disgust and despondency. The British press and the British public was traditionally anti-Catholic: two years later, for example, the question of "Papal Agression" aroused popular passions in England and caused embarrassment to Russell's Government.²⁵³ In 1848, however, anti-Catholicism was muted, and the Pope was looked upon with sympathy and admiration. The liberal reforms he had instituted had been widely applauded, and the resistance the Papal States had shown to the revolutionary ferment that had swept through Europe seemed to show the merits of a wise, firm, constitutional government.²⁵⁴ The death of Rossi and

250. Normanby to Palmerston, No 753, confidential, 27 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815 (q NJ, II, 327 - 8).

251. Normanby to Palmerston, secret, 28 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815. The Papal Nuncio encouraged such calculations (see Normanby to Palmerston, 27 November 1848: Bd. P. GC/NO/225).

252. Normanby to Palmerston, secret, 27 November 1848: PRO FO 27/815 (q NJ, II, 328 - 30); Jennings, 247.

253. See Prest, 319 - 24.

254. At the same time, support for the Pope's reforms was often linked with anti-Catholicism. Many English Protestants considered the Pope's liberalism irreconcilable with the reactionary nature of the Catholic

the danger to the Pope destroyed this vision. Some newspapers felt that the Pope had failed to go far enough or fast enough to satisfy the legitimate demands of his subjects,²⁵⁵ but the majority felt that there had been no excuse for the revolution and that, in the words of the Gentleman's Magazine, the inhabitants of Rome had "proved themselves utterly unworthy of their liberal and benevolent Pontiff".²⁵⁶

But whilst the Roman revolution might be objectionable, did that justify French intervention? Initially The Times thought that it did. The attempt to protect the Pope, it declared,

is a measure justified and required by the appalling state of Rome; and, as General Cavaignac has carefully guarded the object of this intervention, . . . we see no reason to regard it as a violation of those principles of peace and neutrality which the French Republic has hitherto faithfully observed.

It even urged the British Government to detach part of Parker's fleet to support the Pope.²⁵⁷ Most other newspapers, however, were strongly opposed to intervention: Protectionist and Peelite papers argued that it would be dangerous to allow French troops into Italy, whatever the pretext;²⁵⁸ Whig and Radical papers feared that, whatever the initial objectives, sooner or later the expedition would be used to restore Papal authority, and that would act as a precedent to Austria and Russia.²⁵⁹ Once assured of the Pope's safety, The Times also opposed intervention. The inhabitants of Rome "have shouted for independence, they have shouted

Church, and some hoped that, in Peel's words, "the best part of his civil improvements, will be that they will strike a Blow at Superstition and the undue influence of the Papacy in foreign Countries, even in matters of Religion" (Peel to Aberdeen, 7 October 1847: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff335 - 6).

255. York Herald, 2 December 1848, 5; Spectator, 2 December 1848, 1182 - 3.

256. The Times, 27 and 28 November 1848, 4; MG, 29 November 1848, 4; MC, 1 December 1848, 4; MH, 1 December 1848, 4; Gentleman's Magazine, XXX, 639.

257. The Times, 30 November 1848, 4.

258. MC, 30 November 1848, 4; MP, 30 November 1848, 4; MH, 1 December 1848, 4.

259. DN, 1 December 1848, 2; MG, 2 December 1848, 6; ILN, 2 December 1848, 338; Spectator, 2 December 1848, 1150.

for liberty", it declared on 7 December: "let them have both, until . . . [they] choose between the lawless passions of a people lost to self-government and the regulated despotism of military power."²⁶⁰

Palmerston disliked the whole concept of the expedition. He felt that it was too large to be used simply to protect the Pope's person, and he surmised that the Pope would ask that it be used to restore his authority in Rome. "Then what will the French do?" he asked.

Will they land, and employ Force moral & Physical to coerce the Roman People, and to compel them to submit to Ministers & measures which they do not like? If they do this they will . . . be adopting the Policy of Metternich & of Russia . . .

He was also worried about the precedent that such an action would create, and he warned that "it will be flung in their face by Austria when she marches to Bologna, and by Russia when the French speak to her about Wallachia."²⁶¹ "To refrain from wars of propagandism is very right", Russell observed, "but to use force to prevent other nations from adopting a form of government which the interfering nation has herself adopted is a practical absurdity which could not stand the light of day."²⁶²

On 1 December the news reached Paris that the Pope had fled from Rome. Normanby used this to urge the cancellation of the expedition. The Pope was now safe, he argued, and if the expedition was sent it would be seen as an attempt to coerce the Romans.²⁶³ Two days later Bastide announced that the expedition had been cancelled. He defended the original decision, telling Normanby that he "must recollect the great anxiety that naturally prevailed in the first moments". But, he went on, "now that they were sure that circumstances were changed of

260. The Times, 7 December 1848, 4.

261. Palmerston to Normanby, 29 November 1848: Nor. P. P/20/75. Cf Palmerston to Normanby, No 545, No 546 and No 547, 2 December 1848: PRO FO 27/801.

262. Memorandum by Russell, 2 December 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/233.

263. Normanby to Palmerston, No 765, 1 December 1848: PRO FO 27/816 (q NJ, II, 345).

course the intention would not be persevered in."²⁶⁴

For several days there was uncertainty about where the Pope was heading. Cavaignac and Bastide still believed that he would land at Marseilles, which was probably as influential in their decision to abandon the expedition as the British protests. In Britain, however, there were strong rumours that he might seek asylum in Malta. Palmerston, who called the Pope's flight "an Event of not much less Importance than Louis Philippe's Departure from Paris, or Metternich's from Vienna", declared that he "should be glad . . . if he has gone to Malta, because More & Ferral will in that Case have ample opportunity of explaining to him the true state of Ireland".²⁶⁵ In fact, upon reaching Gaeta, the Pope decided to remain in Naples. He talked of paying a brief visit to France, but it did not materialise.²⁶⁶

It is difficult to assess how far the failure of the Pope to come to France affected Cavaignac's support in the elections. The size of Louis Napoleon's majority - 5,534,520 votes to 1,448,302 - makes it unlikely that it swung the decision away from Cavaignac, but it may have increased the gap. Normanby judged that it had damaged Cavaignac's chances, for the French public felt it had been deceived, but that the fundamental reason for his defeat was the unpopularity of the Republic.²⁶⁷

Whilst Normanby still believed that "the best result with a view to immediate prospects both at home and abroad would have been if General Cavaignac could have been returned", he felt that the best alternative was the election of Louis Napoleon by an overwhelming majority. Such a victory, he argued, would prevent the defeated party, the republicans,

264. Normanby to Palmerston, No 770, 4 December 1848: PRO FO 27/816.

265. Palmerston to Normanby, 5 December 1848: Nor. P. P/20/76. Cf Morpeth's Diary, 5 December 1848: C.H.A. J19/8/19 f30; Clarendon to Russell, copy, 7 December 1848: Clar. P. Irish Letter-Book Vol.3 f182.

266. Jennings, 247 - 8.

267. Normanby to Palmerston, No 777, 10 December 1848: PRO FO 27/816 (q NJ, II, 355 - 8); Jennings, 248.

trying to reverse the decision by an immediate recourse to arms.²⁶⁸

"Fifty thousand", he observed, "will not choose this moment to rise in arms when the voices of Five Millions raised against them, are still ringing in their ears."²⁶⁹

In Britain, some people shared Normanby's belief that the size of Louis Napoleon's victory precluded an immediate rebellion.²⁷⁰ Others were less certain.²⁷¹ But what most people agreed upon was that Louis Napoleon's success was a massive vote against the Republic. Aberdeen, for example, although finding the "universal enthusiasm" for Louis Napoleon "quite unaccountable", regarded the vote "as a decided Protest against the Republick, and as at least an assent to the principle of hereditary claims."²⁷² Because it was assumed that the Republic was dead in all but name, it was thought that in the near future the form of government in France would change. Peel, contemptuous about Louis Napoleon's abilities, looked to a return of the monarchy, although he was uncertain whether the new king would be a Legitimist or an Orleanist.²⁷³ Most people, however, regarded Louis Napoleon's success as the first step to the return of the Empire.²⁷⁴

Palmerston quite welcomed the prospect of the return of the Empire.

"For my own Part", he told Normanby,

I think that the best Thing for France, for England, for Europe . . . would be, that the Buonaparte President should be converted into a permanent & hereditary Sovereign of France, & that the Bourbons should be set aside Root & Branch;

-
268. Normanby to Palmerston, No 778, 12 December 1848: PRO FO 27/816 (q NJ, II, 359 - 64).
269. Normanby to Palmerston, No 783, 14 December 1848: PRO FO 27/816 (q NJ, II, 365 - 6).
270. MG, 16 December 1848, 6; Lewis, 195 - 6.
271. Russell to Palmerston, 13 December 1848: Bd. P. GC/RU/235; ILN, 16 December 1848, 375; Northern Star, 16 December 1848, 4.
272. Aberdeen to Peel, 18 December 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 40455 ff460 - 1. Cf The Times, 12 and 15 December 1848, 4; MG, 13 December 1848, 4; Spectator, 16 December 1848, 1197; Quarterly Review, LXXXIV, 302 - 3.
273. Peel to Aberdeen, 20 December 1848: B.L. Add. Mss. 43065 ff359 - 62.
274. DN, 13 December 1848, 2; MC, 15 December 1848, 4; GM, VI, 259 - 60; Malmesbury, 175.

and if the same Process could be applied to other Countries where that Family reigns I suspect that the nations concerned would have no Cause to regret the change.²⁷⁵

Not everyone in Britain shared Palmerston's detestation of the Bourbons and consequent relative favour for Louis Napoleon. In the eyes of many, a Napoleonic Empire was synonymous with European war. The vote of the French people, declared the Morning Herald, was a vote for an aggressive foreign policy.²⁷⁶ On the other hand, it was possible to interpret the vote in a manner less threatening to European peace. For the people of France, The Economist told its readers, the first Napoleon stood for personal security, internal peace and renewed prosperity, and it was for these, and not expansionist wars, that they had voted.²⁷⁷ Such an interpretation was at least as valid as that put forward by the Morning Herald. Neither assessment, however, was based upon conclusive evidence. Because few people had any clear idea of Louis Napoleon's policies and because his victory was seen simply as a vote against the Republic, it was hard to judge what would happen next. To most British observers, the situation in France at the end of 1848 seemed just as uncertain and menacing as it had been at the beginning of the year.

275. Palmerston to Normanby, 26 December 1848: Nor. P. P/20/81.

276. MH, 16 December 1848, 4. Cf Clarendon to Normanby, 26 December 1848: Nor. P. 0/160; MC, 15 December 1848, 4.

277. The Economist, 16 December 1848, 1410 - 11. Cf The Times, 13 December 1848, 4; MP, 15 December 1848, 5.

Conclusion

The end of 1848 is, in some respects, an unsatisfactory place to end this study for it does not mark an obvious turning-point in European or British history. Although the forces of reaction were clearly in the ascendant on the continent, their triumph was not assured until the spring of 1849 - with Radetzky's victory at Novara, the suppression of the Sicilian revolution, and the Russian intervention in Hungary - whilst the Schleswig-Holstein question, with its attendant problems for Germany, spluttered on for another eighteen months. In Britain, Russell's administration staggered on until the beginning of 1852, despite the growing discontent of the opposition parties and the increasing embarrassment of Palmerston's behaviour at the Foreign Office. On the other hand, the end of 1848, or rather the Presidential elections a fortnight earlier, marks an important turning-point in the history of France. As many British observers had feared, the victory of Louis Napoleon was the first step on the road to the Second Empire.

Whatever the domestic implications of Louis Napoleon's election, there was no sudden shift in French foreign policy. The French (and British) abandonment of the Sardinians and Sicilians in the spring and the use of French troops to crush the Roman revolution in the summer revealed the reactionary nature of the new regime in France, but Louis Napoleon's policies were a logical continuation of those of Lamartine and Cavaignac. Lamartine's Manifesto, with its denunciation of the Vienna settlement and its promise of assistance for oppressed nationalities, was the peak of the Republic's revolutionary foreign policy. What followed was based upon considerations of real-politik rather than revolutionary rhetoric. The promise of assistance for the Italians at the end of March was quickly followed by the disavowal of

any attempt to revolutionise Belgium and the discouragement of the Irish delegation. Even the promise to help the Italians was gradually rescinded: in August Cavaignac and Bastide offered joint mediation rather than intervene; in September they accepted that Austria should retain Lombardy as well as Venetia; and at the end of November they were prepared to aid a sovereign, the Pope, who had been overthrown by a revolutionary movement. French foreign policy in 1848 was marked by increasing conservatism, and parallel with this was the development of the entente with Britain. The obvious assumption would be that Britain was prepared to reach an understanding with the Republic as long as it was sufficiently conservative. In fact, the situation was far more complex than this.

When the February Revolution occurred, many people in Britain, including some members of the Government, would have found it virtually inconceivable that an Anglo-French entente could have been established by the end of the year. The Republic was regarded as a pernicious force, irreconcilable with the peace and stability of the rest of Europe. The policy developed by Palmerston during March reflected this belief. He wished to avert war between the Republic and the Northern Courts and he sought to prevent the spread of the revolutionary contagion.

The possibility of war between France and the Northern Powers brought out the best in Palmerston. He created for Britain a rôle which was designed to maintain the balance of power. Depending where the threat to European peace seemed to come from, he could combine with the Northern Courts against the Republic or with the Republic against the Northern Courts. It was a difficult manoeuvre which Palmerston performed with great skill and assurance. Yet it is unlikely that it was Palmerston's actions which preserved the peace of Europe. Neither the Northern Courts nor the Provisional Government wanted war: the former, conscious

of the lessons of 1792, did not want to provoke the newly aroused revolutionary giant; the latter, drawing on the lessons of 1799 and 1815, feared that war would lead to the overthrow of the Republic by a military dictatorship and the eventual defeat and humiliation of France. The most that can be claimed for Palmerston is that he encouraged and assisted potentially antagonistic regimes to follow the pacific lines they wished to adopt.

If the determination to avert a European war brought out the best in Palmerston, the desire to prevent the spread of revolution brought out the worst in him. Reflecting on the disturbed state of the continent, Palmerston concluded that the only way to prevent revolution was to satisfy the legitimate constitutional demands of the majority of those agitating for change. Reform, he argued, was better than revolution. Unfortunately, whatever the merits of this argument, the manner which Palmerston adopted when recommending it to foreign governments was often unnecessarily abrasive and provocative. The strident, self-confident tone of superiority combined with the occasional insulting observation thrown in to emphasise a point frequently made Palmerston's despatches offensive and counter-productive. The Spanish Government's fury over Palmerston's despatch of 16 March, which eventually led to the expulsion of Bulwer, is the most obvious example of this, but there are other cases in 1848 as when Palmerston urged constitutional government in Portugal and Greece and when he complained of Radetzky's conduct in northern Italy. Nor was Palmerston consistent in his attitude. He objected strongly to interference in Britain's internal affairs, as when the Provisional Government received the Chartist and Irish delegations; yet he expected foreign governments to be amenable, and even grateful, when he interfered in their internal affairs. He argued that conciliation was the only sure way to remove discontent; but when in

1848 the British Government was faced by domestic unrest it adopted a policy of coercion, a policy which Palmerston supported whole-heartedly. Finally, it could be argued that it was too late for reform in many places on the continent, that to submit to the demands for change would encourage the discontent rather than appease it. The Pope had adopted Palmerston's recommendations, yet by the end of the year he too had been driven from his capital.

When urging reform, Palmerston often revealed an insensitivity to the feelings of other governments which created ill-feeling and exacerbated real differences, and he displayed an obvious inconsistency between what Britain did and what she advised other countries to do. The surprising thing is not that foreign governments resented Palmerston's conduct, but that they failed to react more strongly more often. The Spanish Government's expulsion of Bulwer is noteworthy because it is exceptional and because it gives an idea of what could happen when the normal safeguards - the moderating voices of the Queen, the Cabinet, and the relevant ambassador - failed and when a foreign government was willing to quarrel with Britain. It is possible that if Palmerston's advice had been adopted, if continental governments had agreed to institute reforms, the revolutions that broke out in March might have been averted, although this seems unlikely and is unprovable. What does seem clear, however, is that Palmerston's advocacy of reform did little but harm to Britain's relations with other governments.

For the British Government, the March revolutions seemed little short of a disaster. Since the defeat of Napoleon, Britain's aim with respect to Europe had been to maintain the balance of power as established by the Vienna settlement. For the first time since 1815 that balance was seriously threatened. The reduction of Austria and Prussia, for the moment at least, to the condition of second-rate Powers and

the withdrawal of Russia from the affairs of western Europe permitted the rise of Italy and Germany and increased the relative importance of France. As far as the British Government was concerned, the peace of Europe and the balance of power had to be maintained at a time when all was confusion and uncertainty. Revolution was encouraged where the British Government thought it would be advantageous to European stability, as in Italy and to a lesser extent Germany where it was hoped that successful revolutions would lead to the creation of liberal states which would assist the maintenance of the balance of power. But where it was feared that a revolution would be detrimental to that stability, as in the case of Moldavia-Wallachia (where the revolution seemed to threaten the well-being of the Turkish Empire and therefore the security of the route to India) and later Hungary (where the revolution seemed to threaten the well-being of the Austrian Empire and therefore the balance of power), the forces of reaction, if not openly encouraged, were at least not discouraged. In general, the British Government was anxious that such wars as did break out should be settled as soon as possible, before they could escalate. But there is an obvious difference between the case of Schleswig-Holstein, where Britain preferred a return to the status quo ante bellum, and the cases of northern and southern Italy, where the British Government hoped that significant territorial changes would result from the conflicts. The protection and promotion of national self-interest was the fundamental tenet of British foreign policy. But as the demands of the balance of power, which for the British Government formed the keystone of that national self-interest in Europe in 1848, seemed to vary from one part of Europe to another, so British policy varied, sometimes supporting and sometimes opposing revolution, sometimes approving and sometimes disapproving of war. Palmerston's foreign policy

in 1848 was often criticised for being inconsistent. The reason for the inconsistency, however, was that British interests were inconsistent.

In one respect, British policy towards Italy, in both the north and the south of the peninsula, forms the most remarkable aspect of British foreign policy in 1848. Britain's aims remained essentially conservative - the prevention of a European war and the maintenance of the balance of power - but those aims were pursued by countenancing war and encouraging revolution. Moreover, in Italy there was also the greatest need to resist French ambitions. Freed by the March revolutions of the need to adopt a cautious foreign policy, the French Government hoped to increase its influence in Italy, by evicting Austria and restricting the expansion of Sardinia, and possibly extend the French frontiers to include Savoy and Nice. French preoccupation with Italy ensured that Britain took a similar close interest.

Initially, British policy was based on two assumptions: that the Italian liberals would triumph in their struggle against oppression, and that if Britain did not support them and gain their gratitude the French Republic would. Both these assumptions proved false, but in May, when British policy was formed, neither seemed unreasonable. By preference, the British Government was inclined towards the liberals. Not only did the tide of history seem to be in their favour, but also their objectives - a unified northern Italy and an independent Sicily - seemed conducive to British interests. However sympathy was one thing, support was another. The British Government assisted the Italian liberals, both diplomatically and, in the case of Sicily, for a time militarily, because it feared the consequences if it did not. The Sardinians and the Sicilians were looking to either Britain or France to "sponsor" their efforts. They were inclined towards Britain, but if Britain did not answer their expectations they would appeal to France.

For the British Government, then, the French Republic acted as a catalyst. Fear of being discarded for a more rewarding "sponsor" made the British Government go further and faster in support of Italian liberalism than prudence and discretion dictated.

In the first week of August the dangers of the British policy suddenly became apparent. Radetzky's victory at Custoza and the Neapolitan preparations for an attack on Sicily necessitated a rapid reappraisal of the British Government's attitude. A logical continuation of the earlier policy would have been to provide military assistance to the Italian liberals, either directly by Britain or by countenancing the use of French forces. However the former was precluded by the state of British public opinion whilst the latter opened up the horrifying prospect, for the British Government at least, of a European war or the expansion of the influence of the French Republic. Fortunately, the French Government was not inclined to exploit Britain's embarrassment, and indeed proved equally anxious to avoid a further commitment to the cause of Italian liberalism. As a result, whatever their immediate origins, the Anglo-French mediation over northern Italy, and later the Anglo-French mediation over Sicily, became used by the British and French Governments as an excuse not to provide further assistance to the Italian liberals.

The Anglo-French entente over northern Italy was a response to a specific and immediate problem, rather than the result of a general drift on the part of both governments into a better understanding on foreign affairs. The French Government undoubtedly wished to establish such a general understanding. It was the British Government that was reluctant. Palmerston only wanted an entente where he felt that British interests could be furthered more effectively by such an agreement, as over northern Italy, Sicily and Moldavia-Wallachia. Where an entente

seemed unnecessary or detrimental to British interests, as over Schleswig-Holstein and Greece, he was determined not to be bound to France. In Palmerston's eyes, the understandings that were reached with the Republic were designed to assist the solution of particular problems; they were not the first steps towards a new entente cordiale. Thus the deterioration in Anglo-French relations which occurred after Louis Napoleon's election was not caused by Palmerston's hostility towards the new regime. It would have occurred anyway, whenever Palmerston decided that the circumstances that had led to the ententes no longer existed.

Even this limited understanding with France aroused widespread opposition in Britain, especially in conservative circles. In part it reflected a deep dislike and distrust of the Republic. The Republic under Cavaignac might be more moderate than the Republic under Lamartine and Ledru Rollin, but it was still a republic and therefore, in the eyes of its British critics, unreliable and untrustworthy. Britain, they felt, should have as little to do with it as possible. Yet it was the reasons which had led to the entente, as much as the nature of the partner in that entente, that angered the opponents of the mediations. The Protectionists and the Peelites had never been as enamoured with the liberal movements on the continent as the Whigs and the Radicals. They had an innate sympathy with the established governments and a deep-rooted suspicion of the "true" intentions of the liberals. The March revolutions reinforced these doubts and made them fear for the peace and stability of Europe. There was particular distaste for Charles Albert, whose attack on Austria was regarded, not wholly without foundation, as an opportunist attempt at self-aggrandizement. Yet it was Charles Albert and the revolutionary liberals whom the entente seemed designed to assist by preventing them suffering the full consequences

of their action.

The conservatives provided the bulk of the opposition to the Government's Italian policy, but as the year progressed increasing dissatisfaction was expressed by the Government's usual supporters. The failure of the Italian liberals to achieve a victory on their own led the Radicals especially to consider how far Britain should assist them achieve their objectives. The cause of Italian liberalism might be praiseworthy (and even here there was some disenchantment), but many Radicals and some Whigs, most notably the Grey faction, decided that it was not worth a major war and certainly not a war in which Britain was one of the main protagonists. Sympathy for the liberals became subordinated to the demand for non-intervention.

It is easy to discover the arguments used by the opponents of the Government's Italian policy. It is more difficult to discern the effect of that opposition on the Government's actions. The Queen, who was the most persistent critic of Palmerston's actions, and the Grey faction, which carried on the fight in the Cabinet, created problems for the advocates of a pro-Italian policy, but such sniping would have been ineffective without the bigger guns of opposition in Parliament and, by implication, among the electorate. By mid-August a majority in the Cabinet, including Russell and Palmerston, was convinced that the Government could not command sufficient Parliamentary support for the strong line which seemed necessary if effective help was to be given to the Italian liberals. The reversal of the decision to prevent a Neapolitan attack on Sicily was the result of the Cabinet's recognition that Parliament would not countenance such a step, and it seems likely that the refusal to agree to armed mediation in northern Italy was the result of a similar calculation. Yet it is far from certain that the Government would have intervened but for the public

opposition. Palmerston argued that intervention would be unnecessary as the mere threat of it would secure British objectives; he never said that Britain should intervene if the threat proved insufficient. Nor did Britain always have the means to intervene successfully. She could use her fleet in the case of Sicily, but her army was too small to intervene in northern Italy and she dare not agree to the use of French troops. In the summer of 1848, however, even when military intervention was a feasible alternative, Parliamentary opinion precluded that option.

It would be wrong to imagine that the opposition of the electorate, as represented by Parliament, to military intervention in Europe in 1848 reflected a more general opposition to military intervention on the part of mid-Victorian Britain. The British electorate did not like war, for apart from any moral consideration it seemed irreconcilable with the overwhelming desire for the expansion of trade and industry. But it was prepared to support its Government in a warlike policy if that policy was thought to be essential to British interests. In 1848, for example, the British Government, supported by a majority of the electorate, was engaged in a war against the Sikhs in India, had just concluded a war against the Kaffirs in southern Africa, and was using its fleet to influence the struggle in the Rio Plata. All the above mentioned examples occurred outside Europe, where small military means could achieve large results. But the electorate was not necessarily opposed to British involvement in a European war, despite the danger and expense such an involvement would entail. The Crimean War was popular with large sections of the British public and was at least partly due to the public desire that a tough stand should be taken towards Russia. The difference between the Crimean War (and the colonial wars) and British intervention in Italy in 1848 was that in 1854 war seemed

necessary to protect a vital British interest - the maintenance of the Turkish Empire and the security of the route to India. In Italy in 1848 no vital British interest would be served by assisting the liberals. The liberalization and partial unification of Italy might be desirable, but it would not obviously add to Britain's security or further Britain's interests. Indeed in the short term it might be harmful to Britain's interests for the struggle that would be necessary to achieve success would exacerbate and prolong the uncertainty and tension throughout Europe. If the Italian liberals had achieved a quick victory, as seemed probable in April and May, the British electorate would have welcomed their success and applauded Russell and Palmerston for their prudent foresight in supporting them. But they did not achieve a quick victory, or indeed any kind of victory, and consequently the British Government's support for them seemed dangerous and profitless.

Although the British electorate denied its Government the means to support its diplomacy, except in the most pressing circumstances, at the same time it expected that diplomacy to be successful. It was convinced that, because Britain was the world's leading industrial and commercial nation and because (in its opinion) it had the most balanced constitution, Britain was the most powerful country in the world. What this meant in real terms was unclear, but it was assumed that British diplomacy, her "moral influence", could affect European affairs. By exerting that "moral influence", it was thought, Britain could persuade other countries to adopt a course which was beneficial to mankind, and also beneficial to Britain. Three decades of British diplomatic success since 1815 had added to this illusion. The realities of power politics were forgotten or ignored, except by those politicians who had experience of conducting foreign affairs. In the opinion of

large sections of the British electorate, the British Government had only to speak and other governments would be forced to take notice.

The events of 1848 destroyed this illusion. The British Government exerted its "moral influence" on behalf of the liberal movements in Europe (although that influence was not exerted evenly or consistently, depending on the Government's perception of British interests), and it was generally ignored. Nations followed considerations of self-interest, not British advice, and shorn of the military means by which it could compel other governments to take notice the British Government was powerless to change this. This state of affairs was no different from what it had been in the 1820s and 1830s, but in 1848 Europe was in a more volatile condition and nations could attempt to further their objectives more quickly and more openly. As a result, the consequences of the failure of British diplomacy were more apparent.

Since 1815, Britain had been living on her reputation, at least as far as Europe was concerned. Her eventual victory in her long struggle against Napoleon had created a myth of British power and influence, a myth that had been subconsciously propagated both at home and abroad. That power and influence did exist, but it needed more effort and self-sacrifice to utilise it than the British electorate was prepared to expend on non-essential questions. However the memory of that power and influence remained to cloud British and continental thinking. In 1848 memory and reality came into conflict, and reality triumphed. Europe went through a period of tumultuous change with the British Government unable, because the British electorate was unwilling, to affect matters beyond encouraging and assisting other governments, notably France, along lines they had already decided to follow. The Crimean War was a greater blow to British prestige, for it destroyed the legend of the invincibility of the British army, whilst the supremacy

of the Royal Navy, though sometimes questioned, was never seriously challenged in the nineteenth century. But the obvious impotence of British diplomacy in 1848 first threw that power and influence into question.

BibliographyUnpublished Sources

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Bloomfield Papers
 Cowley Papers
 Foreign Office Papers: The volumes for 1848 for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Minto's Mission to Italy, Naples, Portugal, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, Spain, Stratford Canning's Mission to Germany, and Turkey.
 Metropolitan Police Papers: The volumes for 1848 concerning Aliens and Informers.
 Russell Papers
 Stratford Canning Papers

BRITISH LIBRARY ADDITIONAL MANUSCRIPTS, LONDON

Aberdeen Papers
 Bright Papers
 Cobden Papers
 Hobhouse's Diaries
 Peel Papers

BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

Clarendon Papers
 Disraeli Papers
 Graham Papers (on microfilm)

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION, LONDON

Broadlands Papers
 Wellington Papers

OTHERS

14th Earl of Derby Papers: Lord Blake, Queen's College, Oxford.
 3rd Earl Grey Papers: Department of Palaeography and Diplomatic, Durham University.
 Halifax Papers: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York.
 Minto Papers: National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.
 Morpeth's Diaries: Lord Howard, Castle Howard, nr. York.
 Normanby Papers: The Marquis of Normanby, Mulgrave Castle, nr. Whitby.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Daily News
The Economist
Freeman's Journal
Glasgow Herald
Howitt's Journal

Illustrated London News
Manchester Courier
Manchester Guardian
Morning Chronicle
Morning Herald

Morning Post
Nation
Northern Star
Spectator
Standard

The Times
United Irishman
York Courant
York Herald

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine
British Quarterly Review
Edinburgh Review
Fraser's Magazine
Gentleman's Magazine
Labourer

North British Review
Punch
Quarterly Review
Tait's Edinburgh Magazine
Westminster Review

All books in English are published in London and all books in French are published in Paris unless otherwise stated.

Published Letters and Speeches

- A.C. Benson and Viscount Esher (eds.): The Letters of Queen Victoria. A selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the years 1837 and 1861 3 Vols., (1907).
- F.G. Black and R.M. Black (eds.): The Harney Papers (Assen 1969).
- J. Bright and J.E. Thorold Rogers (eds.): Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by Richard Cobden, M.P. 2 Vols., (1870).
- F. Curato (ed.): Le Relazioni Diplomatiche fra il Regno di Sardegna e la Gran Bretagna 3rd Series: 1848 - 1866, Vol.I (3 January - 31 December 1848), (Rome 1955).
- : Le Relazioni Diplomatiche fra la Gran Bretagna e il Regno di Sardegna 3rd Series: 1848 - 1860, Vol.I (4 January 1848 - 31 December 1848), (Rome 1961).
- R. Disraeli (ed.): Lord Beaconsfield's Correspondence with his Sister 1832 - 1852 2nd edn., (1886).
- G.P. Gooch (ed.): The Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell 1840 - 1878 2 Vols., (1925).
- Hansard's Parliamentary Debates 3rd Series.
- K. Jagow (ed.): Letters of the Prince Consort 1831 - 1861 (trans. E.T.S. Dugdale), (1938).
- A.H. Johnson (ed.): The Letters of Charles Greville and Henry Reeve 1836 - 1865 (1924).
- E. Jones Parry (ed.): The Correspondence of Lord Aberdeen and Princess Lieven 1832 - 1854 2 Vols., (1938 - 1939).
- M.A. de Klinkowstroem (ed.): Mémoires, Documents et Ecrits Divers laissés par le Prince de Metternich, Chancelier de Cour et D'Etat 8 Vols., (1884).
- A. de Lamartine: Trois Mois au Pouvoir (Brussels 1848).
- Sir G.F. Lewis (ed.): Letters of the Right Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Bart., to various friends (1870).
- Marchioness of Londonderry (ed.): Letters from Benjamin Disraeli to Frances Anne Marchioness of Londonderry 1837 - 1861 (1938).
- J.P. Mayer (ed.): Alexis de Tocqueville: Oeuvres Complètes Vol.VIII: Correspondance d'Alexis de Tocqueville et de Gustave de Beaumont (1967).

- A. de Nesselrode (ed.): Lettres et Papiers du Chancelier Comte de Nesselrode 1760 - 1856 10 Vols., (n.d.).
- Marquis of Normanby: A Year of Revolution. From a Journal kept in Paris in 1848 2 Vols., (1857).
- Parliamentary Papers Vol.LXV (1847 - 48): Correspondence between the British Government and the Government of Spain.
- Vol.LXV (1847 - 48): Papers relative to the Affairs of Spain, and Correspondence between Sir Henry Bulwer and the Duke of Sotomayor.
- Vol.LXV (1847 - 48): Correspondence between Viscount Palmerston and M. de Isturitz, relating to the Removal of Sir Henry Bulwer from Madrid.
- Vol.LVI (1849): An Account of all Ordnance Stores Returned from the Department to any Contractor, in the Year 1848, for the purpose of being sent to Sicily.
- Vol.LVI (1849): Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Naples and Sicily, 1848 - 1849.
- Vol.LVII (1849): Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Italy Vol.II, From January to June 30, 1848.
- Vol.LVIII (1849): Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Italy Vol.III, From July - December 31, 1848.
- T. Pinney (ed.): The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay 4 Vols., (1977).
- C. Pouthas (ed.): Documents Diplomatiques du Gouvernement Provisoire et de la Commission du Pouvoir Exécutif 2 Vols., (1953 - 1954).
- A. de Ridder (ed.): La Crise de la Neutralité Belge de 1848. Le Dossier Diplomatique 2 Vols., (Brussels 1928).
- Lord Sudley (ed.): The Lieven - Palmerston Correspondence 1828 - 1856 (1943).

Memoirs and Autobiographies

- R. Apponyi: Vingt-cinq ans à Paris (1826 - 1850). Journal du Comte Rodolphe Apponyi: Attaché de l'Ambassade d'Autriche-Hongrie à Paris 4 Vols., (1913 - 1926).
- J. Bastide: La République Française et l'Italie en 1848. Récits, Notes et Documents Diplomatiques (Brussels 1858).
- L. Blanc: 1848. Historical Revelations: Inscribed to Lord Normanby New edn., (New York 1971).
- A. de Circourt: Souvenirs d'une Mission à Berlin en 1848 2 Vols., (ed. G. Bourgin), (1908).
- T. Cooper: The Life of Thomas Cooper (1872).
- B. Disraeli: Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography New edn., (1858).
- Lady C. Dorchester (ed.): Recollections of a Long Life 6 Vols., (1911).
- Sir C.G. Duffy: Four Years of Irish History 1845 - 1849 (1883).
- M.R.D. Foot and H.C.G. Matthew (eds.): The Gladstone Diaries 6 Vols., (1968 - 1978).
- T. Frost: Forty Years' Recollections: Literary and Political (1880).
- R.G. Gammage: History of the Chartist Movement, 1837 - 1854 2nd edn., (1894).
- L.A. Garnier-Pagès: Histoire de la Révolution de 1848 10 Vols., (1866 - 1872).
- C.C.F. Greville: The Greville Memoirs: A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV, King William IV, and Queen Victoria 8 Vols., New edn., (ed. H. Reeve), (1896 - 1898).

- H. Greville: Leaves from the Diary of Henry Greville 3 Vols., (ed. Viscountess Enfield), (1883).
 A. de Lamartine: Histoire de la Révolution de 1848 2 Vols., (1849).
 Earl of Malmesbury: Memoirs of an Ex-Minister. An Autobiography New edn., (1885).
 J. Mitchel: The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps) (n.d.).
 G.A.H. de Reiset: Mes Souvenirs 3 Vols., (1901 - 1902).

Secondary Works

- H. Acton: The Last Bourbons of Naples (1825 - 1861) (1961).
 M. Countess of Airlie: Lady Palmerston and Her Times 2 Vols., (1922).
 E. Ashley: The Life and Correspondence of Henry John Temple Viscount Palmerston 2 Vols., (1897).
 D. Ayerst: Guardian. Biography of a Newspaper (1971).
 F. Balfour: The Life of George Fourth Earl of Aberdeen K.G., K.T. 2 Vols., (1922).
 E. Bapst: L'Empereur Nicolas I^{er} et la Deuxième République Française (1898).
 C.J. Bartlett: Great Britain and Sea Power 1815 - 1853 (Oxford 1963).
 H.C.F. Bell: Lord Palmerston 2 Vols., (1936).
 G.F.-H. Berkeley and J. Berkeley: Italy in the Making: January 1st 1848 to November 16th 1848 (Cambridge 1940).
 R. Blake: Disraeli (1966).
 K. Bourne: The Foreign Policy of Victorian England 1830 - 1902 (Oxford 1970).
 — : Palmerston: The Early Years 1784 - 1841 (1982).
 F. Boyer: La Seconde République, Charles-Albert et l'Italie du Nord en 1848 (1967).
 R. Bullen: Palmerston, Guizot and the Collapse of the Entente Cordiale (1974).
 J.F. Cady: Foreign Intervention in the Rio de la Plata 1838 - 50. A Study of French, British, and American Policy in Relation to the Dictator Juan Manuel Rosas (New York 1929).
 M.E. Chamberlain: Lord Aberdeen: A Political Biography (1983).
 J.B. Conacher: The Peelites and the Party System (Newton Abbot 1972).
 B. Connell: Regina v. Palmerston: The Correspondence between Queen Victoria and Her Foreign and Prime Minister 1837 - 1865 (1962).
 M. Creighton: Memoir of Sir George Grey, Bart., G.C.B. (1901).
 A.I. Dasent: John Thadeus Delane, Editor of 'The Times': His Life and Correspondence 2 Vols., (1908).
 F. Eyck: The Prince Consort: A Political Biography (1959).
 — : The Frankfurt Parliament 1848 - 1849 (1968).
 R.R.N. Florescu: The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities: A Problem in Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy 1821 - 1854 (Monachii 1962).
 W. Fortescue: Alphonse de Lamartine: A Political Biography (1983).
 H.R. Fox Bourne: English Newspapers: Chapters in the History of Journalism 2 Vols., (1887).
 N. Gash: Sir Robert Peel: The Life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830 (1972).
 P. Ginsborg: Daniele Manin and the Venetian Revolution of 1848 - 49 (Cambridge 1979).
 L. Girard: La II^e République (1848 - 1851) (1968).
 B.D. Gooch: Belgium and the February Revolution (The Hague 1963).
 D. Goodway: London Chartism 1838 - 1848 (Cambridge 1982).

- D.M. Greer: L'Angleterre, la France et la Révolution de 1848. Le Troisième Ministère de Lord Palmerston au Foreign Office (1846 - 1851) (1925).
- P. Guedalla: Palmerston (1926).
- E. Vicomte de Guichen: Les Grandes Questions Européennes et la Diplomatie des Puissances sous la Seconde République Française 2 Vols., (1925 - 1929).
- D. Gwynn: Young Ireland and 1848 (Cork 1949).
- J. Hall: England and the Orleans Monarchy (1912).
- Mrs. Hardcastle: Life of John, Lord Campbell, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain: Consisting of a Selection from his Autobiography, Diary, and Letters 2 Vols., (1881).
- W. Hindle: The Morning Post 1772 - 1937: Portrait of a Newspaper (1937).
- H. Hjelholt: British Mediation in the Danish-German Conflict 1848 - 1850 2 Vols., (Copenhagen 1965).
- L.C. Jennings: France and Europe in 1848: A Study of French Foreign Affairs in Time of Crisis (Oxford 1973).
- W.D. Jones: Lord Derby and Victorian Conservatism (Oxford 1956).
- E. Jones Parry: The Spanish Marriages 1841 - 1846: A Study of the Influence of Dynastic Ambition upon Foreign Policy (1936).
- B. Kingsley Martin: The Triumph of Lord Palmerston: A Study of Public Opinion in England before the Crimean War (1924).
- S. Koss: The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: Volume One: The Nineteenth Century (1981).
- J.K. Laughton: Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Henry Reeve, C.B., D.C.L. 2 Vols., (1898).
- R.E. Leader: Life and Letters of John Arthur Roebuck P.C., Q.C., M.P. (1897).
- A. Lebey: Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte et la Révolution de 1848 2 Vols., (1907 - 1908).
- E. Longford: Victoria R.I. (1964).
- Marquis of Lorne: Viscount Palmerston K.G. (1892).
- F.A. de Luna: The French Republic under Cavaignac, 1848 (Princeton 1969).
- D. MacCarthy and A. Russell: Lady John Russell: A Memoir, with Selections from Her Diaries and Correspondence (1910).
- S. MacCoby: English Radicalism 1832 - 1852 (1935).
- T. Martin: The Life of His Royal Highness The Prince Consort 5 Vols., (1875 - 1880).
- Sir H.E. Maxwell: The Life and Letters of George William Frederick Fourth Earl of Clarendon K.G., G.C.B. 2 Vols., (1913).
- C.R. Middleton: The Administration of British Foreign Policy 1782 - 1846 (Durham 1977).
- W.F. Monypenny and G.E. Buckle: The Life of Benjamin Disraeli Earl of Beaconsfield 6 Vols., (1910 - 1920).
- J. Morley: The Life of Richard Cobden 14th edn., (1920).
- W.P. Morrell: British Colonial Policy in the Age of Peel and Russell (Oxford 1930).
- W.E. Mosse: The European Powers and the German Question 1848 - 71: with Special Reference to England and Russia (New York 1969).
- Sir L. Namier: 1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals (1946).
- Lord Northbrook: Journals and Correspondence of Francis Thornhill Baring, Lord Northbrook 2 Vols., (1902 - 1905).
- K.B. Nowlan: The Politics of Repeal: A Study in the Relations between Great Britain and Ireland, 1841 - 50 (1965).

- C.S. Parker: Sir Robert Peel: From his Private Papers 3 Vols., (1891 - 1899).
- : Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby, P.C., G.C.B., 1792 - 1861 2 Vols., (1907).
- B.J. Porter: The refugee question in mid-Victorian Politics (Cambridge 1979).
- : Britain, Europe and the World 1850 - 1982: Delusions of Grandeur (1983).
- R. Postgate and A. Vallance: 'Those Foreigners': The English People's Opinion on Foreign Affairs as reflected in their Newspapers since Waterloo (1937).
- J. Prest: Lord John Russell (1972).
- P. Quentin-Bauchart: Lamartine et la Politique Etrangère de la Révolution de Février (24 février - 24 juin 1848) (1907).
- D. Read and E. Glasgow: Feargus O'Connor: Irishman and Chartist (1961).
- S.J. Reid: Lord John Russell (1895).
- J. Ridley: Lord Palmerston (1970).
- K.A.P. Sandiford: Great Britain and the Schleswig-Holstein Question 1848 - 64: a study in diplomacy, politics, and public opinion (Toronto 1975).
- A.R. Schoyen: The Chartist Challenge: A Portrait of George Julian Harney (1958).
- R. Shannon: Gladstone. I 1809 - 1865 (1982).
- F.A. Simpson: The Rise of Louis Napoleon 3rd edn., (1950).
- A. Sked: The Survival of the Hapsburg Empire: Radetzky, the Imperial Army and the Class War, 1848 (1979).
- P.W. Slosson: The Decline of the Chartist Movement (New York 1916).
- D. Southgate: The Passing of the Whigs 1832 - 1886 (1962).
- : 'The Most English Minister . . . ' The Policies and Politics of Palmerston (1966).
- Lord Stanmore: Sidney Herbert, Lord Herbert of Lea: A Memoir 2 Vols., (1906).
- R. Stewart: The Politics of Protection: Lord Derby and the Protectionist Party 1841 - 1852 (Cambridge 1971).
- A.J.P. Taylor: The Italian Problem in European Diplomacy 1847 - 49 (Manchester 1934).
- : The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848 - 1918 (Oxford 1954).
- H. Temperley: England and the Near East: The Crimea (1936).
- E. Tersen: Le Gouvernement Provisoire et l'Europe (25 février - 12 mai 1848) (1948).
- The Times: The History of The Times: The Tradition Established 1841 - 1884 (1939).
- G.M. Trevelyan: The Life of John Bright (1913).
- G. Villiers: A Vanished Victorian: Being the Life of George Villiers Fourth Earl of Clarendon 1800 - 1870 (1938).
- S. Walpole: The Life of Lord John Russell 2 Vols., (1889).
- J.T. Ward: Sir James Graham (1967).
- Sir C.K. Webster: The Foreign Policy of Palmerston 1830 - 1841 2 Vols., (1951).
- H. Weisser: British Working-class movements and Europe (Manchester 1975).
- C. Whibley: Lord John Manners and his Friends 2 Vols., (1925).
- C. Woodham-Smith: The Great Hunger. Ireland 1845 - 9 (1962).
- : Queen Victoria: Her Life and Times 1819 - 1861 (1972).

Articles

- Sir A. Berlin: "Russia and 1848" Slavonic Review XXVI (1947/48) 341 - 60.
- F. Boyer: "La marine de la seconde république et la révolution sicilienne de février à juillet 1848" Etudes d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine II (1948) 184 - 203.
- : "Les Rapports entre la France et le Piémont sous le Premier Ministère de Jules Bastide (11 mai - 28 juin 1848)" Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine V (1958) 129 - 36.
- : "Charles Albert et la Seconde République (de Juin à Août 1848)" Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento L (1963) 463 - 512.
- : "L'Armée des Alpes en 1848" Revue Historique CCXXXIII (1965) 71 - 100.
- P. Brock: "Polish Democrats and English Radicals 1832 - 1862: A Chapter in the History of Anglo-Polish Relations" Journal of Modern History XXV (1953) 139 - 56.
- J. Chastain: "Jules Bastide et l'unité allemande en 1848" Revue Historique CCLII (1974) 51 - 72.
- F.A. Dreyer: "The Whigs and the Political Crisis of 1845" English Historical Review LXXX (1965) 514 - 37.
- F.J.C. Hearnshaw: "The European Revolutions and After 1848 - 1854" in Sir A.W. Ward and G.P. Gooch (eds.): The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 1783 - 1919 II (Cambridge 1923).
- P. Henry: "Le gouvernement provisoire et la question polonaise en 1848" Revue Historique CLXXVIII (1936) 198 - 240.
- : "La France et les nationalités en 1848, d'après les correspondances diplomatiques: I La France et l'Italie" Revue Historique CLXXXVI (1939) 48 - 77.
- : "La France et les nationalités en 1848, d'après les correspondances diplomatiques: II La France et l'Allemagne" Revue Historique CLXXXVIII - CLXXXIX (1940) 234 - 58.
- L.C. Jennings: "Lamartine's Italian Policy in 1848: A Re-examination" Journal of Modern History XLII (1970) 331 - 41.
- : "French Diplomacy and the First Schleswig-Holstein Crisis" French Historical Studies VII (1971) 204 - 25.
- J. Knight: "Lamartine Ministre des Affaires Etrangères" Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique XX (1906) 260 - 84.
- D. Large: "London in the Year of Revolution, 1848" in J. Stevenson (ed.): London in the Age of Reform (Oxford 1977).
- J. Saville: "Chartism in the Year of Revolution 1848" The Modern Quarterly VIII (1952 - 3) 23 - 33.
- C. Vidal: "La France et la question italienne en 1848" Etudes d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine II (1948) 162 - 83.
- F.G. Weber: "Palmerston and Prussian Liberalism, 1848" The Journal of Modern History XXXV (1963) 125 - 36.

Theses

- G.J. Billy: "Palmerston's Foreign Policy: 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, City University of New York 1982.
- H.F. Brooks: "English Reactions to the Continental Revolutions of 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Nebraska 1948.

- J.W. Campbell: "The Influence of the Revolutions of 1848 on Great Britain" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia 1963.
- J.K. Derden: "The British Embassy in Paris in 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Georgia 1981.
- F.A. Dreyer: "The Russell Administration, 1846 - 1852" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of St. Andrews 1962.
- W.A.I. Fortescue: "Alphonse de Lamartine as a Politician and Intellectual, 1831 - 1869" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London 1974.
- G. Gillessen: "British Policy towards German Unification 1848 - 1851: From the March Revolutions to the Dresden Conferences" unpublished D.Phil. Dissertation, University of Oxford 1958.
- R.J. Hahn: "The Attitude of the French Revolutionary Government towards German Unification in 1848" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University 1955.
- M.H. Jenks: "The Activities and Influence of David Urquhart 1833 - 56, with Special Reference to the Affairs of the Near East" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London 1964.
- R. Job: "The Political Career of Henry, Third Earl Grey (1826 - 52)" unpublished M.Litt. Dissertation, University of Durham 1959.
- P.E. Wilson: "Anglo-French Diplomatic Relations, 1848 - 1851" unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago 1954.