

10 Summary

The aim of the present book is to analyse Viscount Palmerston's international policy in relation to Austria in the years 1830–1841. The topic is defined by the Foreign Secretary's tenure, including the hiatus of 1834–1835. The main focus of this work is placed on the primary participation of insular diplomacy in Europe within the period of the outbreak of the July Revolution, the dissolution of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, the November Uprising, events in the German Confederation and the Papal States, civil wars in Portugal and Spain, and the Second Near Eastern Crisis. A distinctive feature of these matters is the clash between Palmerston and Metternich. In the 1830s, both men were the leading figures of European foreign relations and, at the same time, symbols of two different political streams. The aim of the present work is to revise the “traditional” view of Palmerston – a progressive statesman who defends the freedom of European liberalism – and Metternich – a reactionary opponent to social modernisation. The text emphasises the Foreign Secretary's policy motives that are grounded in the promotion of national interests at the expense of the Great Powers' cooperation and the efforts of the Austrian Chancellor for the best possible relations within the Concert of Europe that were perceived as essential for the prosperity of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The presented text was prepared based on primary sources of a diplomatic nature. Documents from The National Archives in London were the primary source of the texts, especially the correspondence between Palmerston and the British Embassy in Vienna, which was represented by Frederick Lamb (later known as The Lord Beauvale). Furthermore, in connection with European issues, correspondence between the British Foreign Office and individual key players of the analysed period, such as the British Embassy in Constantinople, St Petersburg, Paris, Frankfurt, Madrid, and Lisbon, was used. As for the Austrian side's point of view, it was necessary to explore the archives stored in the Austrian State Archives, in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv section in Vienna, mainly the documents between Metternich and the Austrian Embassy in London, represented by Paul Anton Esterházy, Phillip von Neumann, Johann von Wessenberg, and Karl von Hummelauer. Furthermore, writings between Vienna and Constantinople, Paris, and St Petersburg were used to complete the picture of the period in question.

Palmerston's inauguration was strongly influenced by the July events in France. The first issue he had to tackle was a revolution in the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Contributing to the emergence of an independent Belgium was a key concern for Great Britain, as it represented a security barrier and played an

important economic role due to its geopolitical position. Initially, the British Prime Minister pursued cooperation on a Great Powers basis; that is why he insisted that the London conference – whose task was to find a solution to the aforementioned problem – continue. He was faced with Metternich's resistance, who demanded adherence to international law, which stated that the United Kingdom of the Netherlands' king was a legitimate ruler fighting against the revolution. The discrepancy of opinion escalated in 1832; there was an open dispute between the two diplomats and a gradual disintegration of the Great Powers' unity caused by several events. The November uprising following the Belgian Revolution sparked the flame of the British-Russian struggle, which lasted for a decade in the 1830s. Rather than being ideologically driven, Palmerston's support for the Polish revolutionaries was determined by a desire to satisfy the British public in an effort to gain political points and potential voters. The internal political problems related to electoral reform also resonated in the foreign policy strategy. For this reason, the façade of support for liberalism and political freedoms concealed a cold British calculation of how to ensure its Great Power status. Alongside Russia and Prussia, Austria represented the opposition to these ideas. They were perceived as backward and despotic Powers whose common goal was to repress and restrict freedom in Europe.

Diplomacy in Vienna was driven by different motives. The internal problems of the Habsburg Monarchy were also reflected in progress on international issues, and therefore, the stability, peace, and prosperity of the Empire depended on European cooperation and universal peace. In order to achieve these intentions, international law and legitimism were adhered to. Metternich also encountered a lack of understanding from the British side, not only in the German Confederation but especially on the Apennine Peninsula in connection with the uprising in the Papal States. Together, London and Vienna strove for the adoption of reforms in order to strike a balance in central Italy. Palmerston's distrust of Metternich caused the collapse of these ambitions and deepened the gap between the two nations even further. Throughout the period, the Austrian Chancellor sought to reform the ecclesiastical state and was aware that adopting new laws was essential for the stability of the Holy See. Palmerston's tacit consent to the violation of European state law in connection with the French occupation of Ancona was yet another issue that harmed British-Austrian relations. London was willing to sacrifice international guarantees and disrupt the European balance of power in exchange for its national interests. For the government in Britain, cooperation with Paris was considered superior to the traditional concept of the Concert of Europe. Through such cooperation, France could both be kept in check and, at the same time, serve as a tool to promote British policy.

The limits of Palmerston's strategy became apparent during the First Near Eastern Crisis of 1831–1833. Excessive focus on Western European affairs caused a lack of diplomatic flexibility in the East. Not only did the government in London respond late to the developments in the Ottoman Empire, but it also did not have adequate opportunities to help Constantinople ensure the stability of the Sultan's empire. These errors resulted in the signing of a treaty in Hünkâr Iskelesi between Mahmud II and Nicholas I. The existence of the aforementioned alliance posed no threat to Metternich. It was a document signed between rightful monarchs which, moreover, provided protection for the Ottoman Empire, on whose continuity European stability also depended. From the point of view of international law, it was a struggle between the Sultan and his subjects. Palmerston saw the treaty as a way for Russia to spread its influence over the Bosphorus with the ultimate goal of controlling Constantinople. These odd ideas, fed by the British public, triggered a wave of Russophobia, the consequences of which were reflected not only in Europe and the Middle East, but also in faraway Asia.

The crisis in the East completed the Continent's bipolar division into a liberal and conservative part. The British desire for cordial relations with France and the subsequent deepening of cooperation on the Iberian Peninsula forced Austria, Russia, and Prussia to cooperate more closely; the cooperation resulted in a meeting in Münchengrätz, followed by one in Berlin. The Quadruple Alliance between Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal served only as a demonstration of the already distorted cooperation within the Concert of Europe. At the same time, the alliance contained a tool for the government in London to promote its ambitions in Lisbon and Madrid in an effort to secure vital power through military-diplomatic intervention during the ongoing Liberal Wars. For Palmerston, the Western European Union also represented a way to effectively control Paris's foreign policy. Discrepancies between the two countries soon became apparent during the Iberian campaign. Both Great Britain and France favoured their own national interests over Alliance cohesion. The London government promoted the idea of liberalism, but this was, in fact, just a way to conceal the spread of their power. Due to this fact, Palmerston chose to support the conservative representatives of the Spanish government, who were in favour of advice from the British Isles, rather than the more liberal representatives aligned with the French side. On the other hand, Austria fully trusted the Russian advance in the Near East and was convinced of its pure intentions. Despite his efforts to establish friendly relations with Great Britain in the second half of the 1830s, Metternich encountered Palmerston's indifference and persistent mistrust.

The strategy of relying on the French proved to be flawed during the Second Near Eastern Crisis. The Orléans government tried to exert its influence on the Apennine Peninsula, Belgium, and the Pyrenees, as well as in North Africa. Mu-

hammad Ali was seen as an instrument to achieve this ambition, even at the risk of European isolation. However, the Egyptian governor also posed a threat to British objectives in the Near East. The Entente between London and Paris was over, and Palmerston had no choice but to find a new ally. He did not overcome his antipathy towards Metternich, considering cooperation with Austria useful only if it aligned with his ideology. Meanwhile, the Austrian Chancellor continued to seek a common consensus. In order to reach a Great Power consensus, a conference in Vienna to discuss the ongoing Ottoman-Egyptian conflict was proposed. The fact that Russia rejected the proposal was a heavy blow to him, but he did not hesitate to support the idea that London, instead of the Habsburg metropolis, should be the centre of diplomatic talks. The Second Crisis in the Near East represented an opportunity for the Foreign Secretary to revise Britain's shaky influence over the Bosphorus. His goal was to emerge from the situation as a winner and to maximise the benefits, which he managed to some extent. Still, the success of this campaign depended on the sincere commitment of Austria and Russia to peace and stability in Europe.

After the crisis, relations between Palmerston and Metternich were strained again. According to the British Foreign Secretary, Austria was not a Power that had the potential to be a full partner to Great Britain, and the Austrian Chancellor was an unreliable person who longed only to suppress natural social development. He urged the Danubian Monarchy to reform, which he considered the only possible way to achieve mutual power consistency. Vienna, on the other hand, was firm in its ideopolitical views in the 1830s and, instead of enforcing nationalism, strove for a clearly defined and functional cooperation of all Great Powers, subject to respect for international law and legitimacy.