

Metternich and Civil War in Switzerland

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The purpose of this study is analysis of Austrian Chancellor Metternich's approach towards the civil war in Switzerland, which ensued in 1847 between the Catholic and Protestant cantons, and evaluation of the consequences of Metternich's diplomatic defeat, for him personally and also for Austria and its relationship with the German Confederation. Eruption of the conflict itself, its progress and its consequences will be discussed. Metternich considered the dispute in Switzerland to be an issue for Austria, because he believed that the radical (Protestant) cantons' efforts to create a unified federal state could act as an impulse for the increased involvement of German nationalists who would finally trigger a revolution in Germany. He made all possible effort to prevent this development, however, his intention this time was not just to use diplomatic means, but also armed intervention by Austria and France and he also considered using military assistance from the states of the German Confederation. But his efforts failed, the Sonderbund, a military defensive alliance of the seven Catholic conservative cantons created for the purpose of protecting the sovereignty of the cantons, was defeated in the civil war and a new federal constitution was adopted in Switzerland. The Prince's fears were realised when the victory of the Swiss radicals became one of the impulses for a revolution in Germany and Italy in 1848.

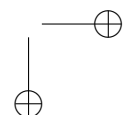
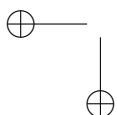
[Civil War; Switzerland; Metternich; 19th Century; Sonderbund; Swiss Confederation; German Confederation]

Introduction

The¹ disputes in relation to the issue of federal reforms, between the radical (Protestant) and conservative (Catholic) cantons, culminated in civil war in Switzerland. While the radical cantons wished to achieve a closely unified federation, which would replace the loose confederation of sovereign cantons, the conservative cantons endeavoured

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to maintain a status quo due to concerns that they would lose their sovereignty and thereby also their cultural and religious autonomy. The first significant step towards the polarisation of forces, which resulted in civil war, was the decision by the government in Aargau to close all eight monasteries located within the territory of this canton from January 1841. Another event, which contributed to escalation of the situation, was the affair surrounding controversial German theologian David Friedrich Strauss, to whom the government in Zurich offered a professorship at its university at the beginning of 1839. The last impulse for the military conflict in Switzerland was the decision Lucerne's Great Council to summon the Jesuits to the country. The radical cantons, led by Aargau, subsequently requested that the Diet banish all Jesuits from the Swiss territories. When this did not happen, they decided to enforce this request by force. A military defensive alliance was subsequently created, the so-called Sonderbund, which was concluded by the seven Catholic conservative cantons for the purpose of protecting the sovereignty of the cantons. At this moment there was nothing preventing armed conflict.

Austrian Chancellor Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Prince von Metternich-Winnerburg, considered development of events leading towards formation of a unified and centralised state in Switzerland, to be a threat to all of Europe, particularly to the countries of the German Confederation and Austria. He considered the dispute in Switzerland to be an issue for Austria because he believed that the efforts of the radical (Protestant) cantons to create a unified federal state, could act as an impulse for the greater involvement of German nationalists, who would trigger a revolution in Germany. He made all efforts to prevent this development, however, his intention this time was not just to use diplomatic means, but also armed intervention by Austria and France and he also considered using military assistance from the states of the German Confederation. But his efforts failed. The Sonderbund was defeated in the civil war and a new Federal Constitution was adopted in Switzerland. The Prince's fears were realised when the victory of the Swiss radicals became an impulse for a revolution in Germany and Italy in 1848.

The issue of Metternich's approach to civil war in Switzerland is a topic that is not of primary interest to historians, in the Czech environment or abroad, and there are therefore very few materials to date

on this topic. Therefore the goal of the submitted study is analysis of the approach by Austrian Chancellor Metternich to the civil war in Switzerland, which ensued in 1847 between the Catholic and Protestant cantons, and evaluation of the consequences of Metternich's diplomatic defeat, for him personally and also for Austria and its relations with the German Confederation. The causes for eruption of the conflict, its progress and consequences will be discussed.

In 1815 the Congress of Vienna formally freed Switzerland from under French rule,² and acknowledged its existence and guaranteed its territorial inseparability and neutrality. This meant that any European conflict would stop at the Swiss borders and, conversely, Switzerland was not permitted to intervene in the disputes of other countries. The main reason on which the decision to guarantee Swiss neutrality was based was the desire of the Great Powers to extricate this country from under the dominant influence of its most powerful neighbour, France. Switzerland was simultaneously permitted to determine its own form of government.³ On 7 August 1815 the Swiss Diet ratified the Federal Treaty. This was the third consecutive constitution that had been guaranteed in Switzerland over the last 17 years and basically restored it to the loose confederation of states that had existed here before Napoleon's intervention. The Swiss Confederation again consisted of 22 cantons.⁴ The individual cantons were declared sovereign entities and were also permitted to conclude alliances between each

² Between 1798 and 1815 the so-called Helvetic Republic existed in Switzerland, which was established here during the Napoleonic Wars. At that time the Swiss cantons were divided into three types: territorial municipality cantons (Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Glarus, Zug and Appenzell), municipal cantons with a professional-aristocratic system (Basel, Bern, Fribourg, Lucerne, Schaffhausen, Solothurn and Zurich) and newly created cantons with a system of representative democracy, which was however limited by the high voting census (St. Gall, Aargau, Thurgau, Ticino and Vaud). The smaller cantons – Basel, Solothurn, Aargau (the hereditary house of Habsburg), Zurich, Thurgau and Appenzell adjoined the German Confederation. T. Ch. MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849. Das vorläufige, erfolgreiche Ende der „demokratischen Revolution“?*, in: D. DOWE – H.-G. HAUPT – D. LANGEWIESCHE (eds.), *Europa 1848. Revolution und Reform*, Bonn 1998, p. 287; J. REMAK, *A Very Civil War. The Swiss Sonderbund War of 1847*, Boulder – San Francisco – Oxford 1993, p. 5.

³ REMAK, pp. 12–14.

⁴ The term Swiss Confederation (*Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft*) is generally used for Switzerland during the period before March, i.e. for the period between 1815 to 1848. Neuchâtel (Neuenburg), Geneva and Valais became new cantons.

other. However, these alliances were not to be directed against the Confederation or the rights of another canton. A federal army was also formed, which each canton was to contribute one contingent to. A Diet (*Tagsatzung*) was also formed as an assembly of canton envoys, in which each canton also had equal voting rights regardless of its number of residents. However, because no permanent place of assembly was determined, Bern, Lucerne and Zurich alternated every two years in presiding over the Diet.⁵

The July revolution provided a power boost to the liberal and national powers in Switzerland, like elsewhere in Europe. However, the Swiss liberals had the advantage that they were able to build on existing foundations – on the principle of a republican state form, self-government and the people's sovereignty. They gradually started to obtain control over the governments of the cantons, which encouraged them to demand political changes. Assemblies immediately began to be held in many cantons and petitions and brochures began to be published, demanding political reform. As a result, the Diet issued a decision at the end of 1830, which enabled the cantons to perform the necessary and purposeful changes to their constitutions. However, the executed modifications were not permitted to be in conflict with the Federal Treaty. This decision by the Diet dating from 27 December 1830 is generally considered the turning point symbolising the specific Swiss path of political modernisation and formation of the state, because it confirmed the sovereignty of the people and the principle of subsidiarity.⁶ Over the course of one year eleven cantons implemented a new constitution and anchored a system of representative democracy with the people's sovereignty and division of power in it. Over the course of a very short period the liberals enforced their constitutional reforms on a cantonal level. The period this event started is identified in Swiss history as the period of regeneration. In most cantons the transition to a more representative democracy was successful, but voices of resistance could also be heard.⁷

⁵ H. MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit von Interventionsstrategie und Anpassungszwang. Die Außenpolitik Österreichs und Preussens zwischen dem Wiener Kongress 1814/15 und der Februarrevolution 1848. Studien zur Geschichte Bd. 12, Bd I., II.*, Berlin 1990, p. 558; H. LUTZ, *Zwischen Habsburg und Preussen. Deutschland 1815–1866*, Berlin 1998, p. 308; REMAK, p. 13; MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 288.

⁶ MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 289.

On a federal level two attempts to reform the Federal Treaty failed in 1832 and 1833, because of the insurmountable differences between federalists and centralists and reformists and conservatives. The liberal cantons wished to achieve a closely unified confederation, which would replace the loose alliance of sovereign cantons. However, the Catholic cantons were against this because they feared loss of their sovereignty and therefore also their cultural and religious autonomy, and also endeavoured to maintain the status quo. Thanks to their efforts none of the submitted reformation proposals were passed by the Diet. Failure of reformation of the Federal Treaty frequently resulted in replacement of liberals by a group of their usually tougher and less patient contemporaries, the so-called radicals. These primarily endeavoured to separate the church from the state, which mainly meant removing schooling and education from the hands of the church.⁸

The conservative neighbouring states felt that the existence of a democratic Switzerland was a great threat to their own peace and security.⁹ This is demonstrated by the dispatch from the Prussian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karl Ernst Wilhelm Freiherr von Canitz and Dallwitz to Minister of Mecklenburg-Strelitz Johann Christoph Ferdinand Louis Haenlein, which states: *"The progress of events in Switzerland is not only a threat with the most serious consequences for the confederation, but also for countries who are in contact with it."*¹⁰ The most disquieting fact was that Switzerland generously provided asylum to radicals, revolutionaries and political refugees from all of Europe and that Swiss democracy also enjoyed great respect in Germany, particularly in its south-west territory.¹¹ Since the July revolution in France this small state in the centre of Europe had offered refuge not only to many German political refugees (this mostly concerned young academically educated radicals and early socialists of independent

⁷ LUTZ, p. 309.

⁸ A. HERMAN, *Metternich*, New York 1932, p. 239; D. WARD, 1848. *The Fall of Metternich and the Year of Revolution*, London 1970, p. 101; REMAK, pp. 14 and 20; MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 290; LUTZ, p. 309.

⁹ J. INAUFEN, *Brennpunkt Schweiz. Die süddeutschen Staaten Baden, Württemberg und Bayern und die Eidgenossenschaft 1815–1840*, Fribourg 2008, p. 121.

¹⁰ Canitz to Haenlein, Berlin, 9.11.1846, Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin (hereinafter LHA SN), 4.11-1 Mecklenburg-Strel. Staatsministerium und Landesregierung Nr. 998.

¹¹ H. HOLBORN, *Deutsche Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, Bd. II, München 1970, p. 273.

professions and also craftsmen and day labourers) and also the option of continuing their fight for civil and national rights from this country. For this reason, Switzerland was the most suitable and popular asylum for Germans. The sympathy of the population and also partially the governments, allowed them an undisturbed residence and practically unrestricted activities. Freedom of the press permitted them to use the newspapers and distribution of pamphlets and political literature and freedom of assembly provided the potential for unification. This is also demonstrated by the fact that Young Germany was formed here as the most important part of the Young Europe established by Giuseppe Mazzini. Furthermore, the Swiss borders were only poorly guarded and easily crossed in secret.¹²

The first important step toward polarisation of forces, which resulted in civil war in Switzerland, was the decision by the liberal government of the canton of Aargau (with mixed confessions) to close all eight monasteries in the country from January 1841. The problem of monasteries in Aargau was rooted in political confrontation because the new constitution prohibited the former system of parity, i.e. equal representation of Catholics and Protestants at the Great Council. Membership in this institution was to continue to be determined only by the current number of votes and nothing else. This provision angered the Catholics in Aargau very much and caused them to agitate for formation of a separate canton in which they would be the majority. The government in Aargau responded to this agitation by arresting several leaders of the Catholic separatists, which resulted in a wave of unrest. It was believed that it was the monasteries that inspired the rebellion and acted as its centre, which is why the Great Council in Aargau voted for closure of the monasteries on 13 January 1841. Their buildings and property were to be seized by the government and used for schools, social care institutions and for pensions for the retired monks, who only had two days to abandon their monasteries in the middle of winter.¹³ Protests were made against this order not only within Switzerland but also abroad, particularly by the Pope and Austria, because one of the monasteries, Muri, was established by the

¹² INAUEN, pp. 120 and 138; MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 558; MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 316; F. FURET, *Člověk romantismu a jeho svět*, Praha 2010, p. 253.

¹³ REMAK, pp. 20–22.

Habsburg Emperor.¹⁴ The Catholics subsequently submitted the entire matter to the Diet and argued that this was not only offensive, but also illegal because it violated the Federal Treaty, because one article assures the continued existence of monasteries and assurance of their property. Although the Diet voted that this was violation of the constitution on 2 April 1841, the entire affair was removed from the agenda subsequently.¹⁵

Other events that contributed to escalation of the situation in Switzerland were the affair surrounding David Friedrich Strauss. The government in Zurich offered this controversial German theologian a professorship at its university at the beginning of 1839.¹⁶ Only four days afterwards several thousand Protestants from rural areas marched to Zurich. The liberal government was forced to resign and the result was restoration of the conservatives and cancellation of Strauss' contract. The situation in Switzerland escalated to such a degree that some Catholic cantons, under the leadership of Lucerne, flirted with the idea of secession. It was also Lucerne that was the first to initiate a counter-attack. Farmer Joseph Leu was convinced that defeat of the forces that threatened ancient values required disciplined and militant organisations, such as the Society of Jesus. At his proposal on 24 October 1844, the Great Council in Lucerne voted for a resolution that invited the Jesuits to come to the country and assume management of the seminaries here.¹⁷ This decision angered political radicals considerably because they considered the Jesuit Order to be a symbol of spiritual slavery and political oppression.¹⁸

Radical cantons, led by Aargau, subsequently requested that the Diet banish all Jesuits from Swiss territories. However, the Diet refused to do so, because the majority did not believe that the Federal Treaty had been violated. At this time, when the legal methods had failed, force was used. In December 1844 a group of radicals tried to overthrow the government in Lucerne by force. This uprising was

¹⁴ LUTZ, p. 308; HERMAN, p. 240; MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 291.

¹⁵ REMAK, p. 22.

¹⁶ In 1835 Strauss published a work titled *The Life of Jesus (Das Leben Jesu)*, which was an attempt to liberate the figure of Jesus from the Biblical legends and present only verifiable facts in their place. *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 24–25; LUTZ, p. 308; MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 292; HERMAN, p. 240.

¹⁸ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 559.

recorded in history as the first campaign by volunteers (*Freischarenzug*).¹⁹ In March 1845 approximately 3,500 volunteers set out on another campaign with weapons in their hands, under the leadership of Bernese advocate Ulrich Ochsenbein towards Lucerne. However, both campaigns ended in failure.²⁰

At the same time, in 1845, the liberal-conservative government in Zurich fell and radicals assumed government in Vaud and Bern by force.²¹ On 11 December 1845, in response to this development, seven Catholic conservative cantons (Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Zug, Fribourg and Valais) agreed on establishment of a military defensive alliance, the so-called Sonderbund, or Separate League, for protection of the sovereignty of the cantons. A joint the War Council with far-reaching authority was also to be formed. The existence of the Sonderbund was initially kept secret. It was only in June 1846 that it was suddenly revealed. It was generally considered a violation of the Federal Treaty, because this, as mentioned above, prohibited formation of alliances that could be directed against the Confederation.²²

At the time the existence of the Sonderbund was revealed, the seat of the Diet was in the canton of Zurich, which immediately proposed dissolution of this organisation, but the requisite majority of 12 votes could not be obtained for this proposal. However, in October 1846, a liberal-radical majority regained power in Geneva, which assured 11 votes. The last vote depended on the results of elections in St. Gall in May 1847, in which the liberals and the radicals won. The leadership of the Diet was also transferred to Bern from 1 January 1847. This would not have meant much if Ochsenbein had not been elected to the head of the Bernese government at the same time. He became not only the prime minister of the government, but also the chair of the Diet. In his speech during the inauguration ceremonies on 5 July 1847 Ochsenbein warned all foreign sympathisers of the Sonderbund who might have been swayed to come to its aid, that this would mean intervention in the domestic affairs of Switzerland.²³

¹⁹ REMAK, p. 29; MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 292.

²⁰ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 560.

²¹ MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, p. 292.

²² HERMAN, p. 240; LUTZ, p. 310; H. VALLOTTON, *Metternich*, Bergisch Gladbach 1978, p. 261; REMAK, pp. 52–56.

²³ REMAK, pp. 58–60; T. MAISSEN, *Vom Sonderbund zum Bundesstaat. Krise und Erneue-*

The matter of the Sonderbund again made the agenda of the Diet on 19 July 1847. Its fate was decided on the second day. It was declared incompatible with the Federal Treaty and was to be dissolved under the threat of military intervention.²⁴ The response from Lucerne was a counterattack. Its envoy put forward the accusation that the enemies of Catholic cantons were incapable of achieving a revolution from below through their partisan attackers and so they tried to achieve a revolution from above by initiating a federal action. In his opinion the Diet had no right to dictate its wishes to Lucerne or its allies any more than the partisans did. The order by the Diet dating from 16 August 1847 subsequently expressed the actual goal of most of the cantons, federal reforms within the meaning of reinforcement of the power of the federation and weakening of the sovereignty of the cantons. The Sonderbund's plans for the future were also known. Its leader, a magistrate from Lucerne, Konstantin Siegwart-Müller, endeavoured to enlarge the territory of the Catholic cantons by integrating the Bernese Highlands (or Bernese Oberland) and the Simmental and establishing better territorial links between all Catholic cantons. In the field of foreign policy his requested a clear statement from Vienna and Paris against the majority cantons and at least a demonstration of military force on the borders. Because the Sonderbund ignored the order of the Diet, the majority cantons acceded to enforcement of this order by dissolution of the organisation by force. On 3 September 1847 the Diet voted for banishment of the Jesuits from Switzerland by the same majority of 12 votes.²⁵

In the middle of October 1847, the Sonderbund's War Council issued an order for mobilisation of its own army. Several days later the Diet also ordered mobilisation of its armed forces. On 28 October a conference of all the cantons was held in the neutral city of Basel, which offered the last chance to maintain peace. Some of the majority cantons offered serious concessions, the most extraordinary of these was a proposal by St. Gall to relinquish involved in dealing with the issue of the Jesuits and letting the Pope decide whether the order could

rung 1798–1848 im Spiegel der NZZ, Zürich 1998, p. 139.

²⁴ WARD, p. 101; G. de B. SAUVIGNY, *Metternich. Staatsmann und Diplomat für Österreich und den Frieden*, Gernsbach 1988, p. 497; P. DU BOIS, *La guerre du Sonderbund. La Suisse de 1847*, Paris 2003, p. 87.

²⁵ LUTZ, p. 311; REMAK, pp. 49 and 62.

remain in Lucerne. However, representatives of the Sonderbund remained adamant and furthermore declared that the Diet would have to cancel the order for mobilisation so that the meeting could continue at all. The day after the peace conferences collapsed, the Diet was summoned at the request of the seven Catholic conservative cantons at which they submitted a request that the matter of the Jesuits be removed from its agenda and that their sovereign rights confirmed, including the right to conclude an alliance. However, most of the cantons refused this, which is why representatives of the Sonderbund left the Diet meeting.²⁶

On 4 November 1847 the Diet adopted a Decree of Implementation (decision for execution) referring to the passage of the edict dating from 20 July 1847 mentioning implementation of dissolution of the Sonderbund using military force.²⁷ General Guillaume Henri Dufour was appointed to command the troops of the confederation, which numbered approximately 100,000 men. The Sonderbund had just under a third of these forces.²⁸ Military operations began on 11 November 1847, when the Sonderbund, under the command of General Johann Ulrich Salis-Soglio, attacked Aargau. However, the entire venture failed.²⁹ The Catholic conservative cantons were more interested in their own interests – protection of their own cantons against invasion and keeping war expenses low – than a joint strategy. On 12 November 1847 Dufour surrounded Fribourg, which finally surrendered and agreed to withdraw from the Sonderbund. All Jesuits had to abandon the canton within 48 hours. On 20 November 1847 Zug also surrendered, voluntarily and without a struggle. The next goal of Dufour's strategy was now Lucerne, which capitulated on 24 November 1847.³⁰

The Swiss civil war was over in less than three weeks and the Sonderbund troops were defeated. However, the Sonderbund did not accept this defeat. The War Council sent an appeal to Vienna request-

²⁶ DU BOIS, p. 100; REMAK, pp. 68–71.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 74.

²⁸ VALLOTTON, p. 262; DU BOIS, p. 90.

²⁹ REMAK, p. 96.

³⁰ Ibidem, pp. 99–103, 111–119 and 139; E. BONJOUR, *Geschichte der Schweizerischen Neutralität. Vier Jahrhunderte Eidgenössischer Aussenpolitik*, I., Basel 1970, p. 199; LUTZ, p. 312.

ing funds and supplies the day before it was dissolved and on 2 December 1847, five days after the last canton of the Sonderbund surrendered, from his exile in Austria Siegwart-Müller personally requested that Metternich initiate immediate military intervention by the Great Powers.³¹ The text of the new Swiss constitution was executed within six weeks between March and April 1848, and guaranteed formation of a two-chamber legislative assembly according to the American example. The lower chamber was elected by the population, the upper chamber represented the cantons. A seven-member Federal Council and Federal Court were also established. In September the constitution was approved by a majority of seven to one.³²

One of the tasks of the Sonderbund War Council was to establish what options there were to obtain assistance from abroad. It was believed that the Habsburg Monarchy would be able to aid in particular. Its fear of revolutionary changes and support of conservative affairs could transform Switzerland from an old enemy to an ally. This calculation was correct.³³ Metternich believed Switzerland was very important for the European peace system due to its geographic location, because it enabled it to serve as a revolutionary transport route between France, Germany and Italy.³⁴ While political refugees found a refuge in the Swiss cantons, the Prince felt the need to intervene in their affairs and supervise them.³⁵ He declared that “*the Helvetic authorities welcome refugees from France, Germany and Italy, every member of perfidious associations, instead of playing their role for the good of Europe within the union of states*”.³⁶ He made the Swiss radicals, who strove to trigger a revolution, responsible for the threat to peace in Europe. The only possible means to stop these forces in his opinion was intervention in the internal affairs of the Confederation. In his opinion,

³¹ W. BAUMGART, *Europäisches Konzert und nationale Bewegung. 1830–1878*, Schöningh 1999, p. 239; VALLOTTON, p. 262; S. DESMOND, *Metternich. Der erste Europäer. Eine Biographie*, Zürich 1993, p. 295; REMAK, p. 156.

³² MÜLLER, *Die Schweiz 1847–1849*, pp. 295–296.

³³ REMAK, p. 55; R. MARCOWITZ, *Großmacht auf Bewährung. Die Interdependent französischer Innen- und Außenpolitik und ihre Auswirkungen auf Frankreichs Stellung im europäischen Konzert 1814/15–1851/52*, Stuttgart 2001, p. 181.

³⁴ BONJOUR, p. 192; VALLOTTON, p. 257.

³⁵ WARD, p. 101.

³⁶ H. FINK, *Metternich. Staatsmann, Spieler, Kavalier*, München 1989, p. 208.

along with destruction of political radicalism, the country should also be cleansed of political refugees.³⁷

As in the case of Cracow, Metternich justified his interference in Swiss domestic affairs by stating that the powers in Vienna had granted integrity and inviolability to Switzerland in 1815 under a constitution that embodied federative principles. The Swiss were able to change this constitution if they wished, but the signatory powers retained the right to examine the proposed changes and make sure that the federative concept remained unaffected. Otherwise, if the constitution was modified so greatly that it transformed the character of the state from a loose federation into a union, the powers reserved their right to decide whether the new constitution deserved their continued lenience and all of Switzerland the guarantee of its neutrality.³⁸ Metternich was of the opinion that withdrawal from the Federal Treaty was the biggest misfortune for the Swiss nation, the result of which was simply discord and disagreement between the Swiss, which culminated in general anarchy and dissolution of existing Swiss political bodies.³⁹ He was concerned about the origin of a unified Switzerland, which in his opinion was the same as France becoming an epicentre of revolution and the enemy of conservative Austria.⁴⁰

In relation to the religious unrest in Switzerland, Metternich stated *“the conflicts between confessional groups are simply an excuse for the revolutionary party to realise its projects, which do not have a confessional motif, under the condition that the term ‘confession’ is not bestowed to the subversive and troublemaking political system. It is not the Protestants who wish to overthrow the government in Lucerne, it is the radicals who now cry: ‘Away with the Jesuits’, it is their motto, like they would have assumed any other, which would have been provided by the circumstances”*.⁴¹ He believed that the starting point of the religious unrest within the Confederation was

³⁷ BONJOUR, p. 192; MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 557.

³⁸ HERMAN, p. 240; MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 562.

³⁹ Metternich to Bombelles, Vienna, 24. 2. 1841, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Wien, Abteilung Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereinafter AT-OeStA/HHStA), Staatenabteilungen (hereinafter StAbt), Frankreich Diplomatische Korrespondenz 322.

⁴⁰ VALLOTTON, p. 259.

⁴¹ Canitz to Bülow, Vienna, 24. 1. 1845, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (hereinafter GStA PK), III. HA Ministerium der auswärtigen Angelegenheiten (hereinafter III. HA Mda), I Nr. 6037/1, Politische Schriftwechsel mit der königlichen Gesandtschaft derselbst. Wien 1845.

not the summoning of the Jesuits for the purpose of managing the seminaries in Lucerne, but the closure of the monasteries in Aargau, because this was violation of the rights of the cantons, whereas the summoning of the Jesuits simply a question of the anticipation of this decision.⁴²

At every step the Prince was handicapped by identification of the conservatism of the Sonderbund with its tolerance of the Jesuits.⁴³ He was not enthusiastic about the decision by the government of the canton of Lucerne to summon the Jesuits, nor was the Pope or even the highest representatives of the Jesuit order.⁴⁴ He regretted that due to his support of the Sonderbund, suspicions arose that he did so because this concerned Catholic cantons, which was not the real reason. He was on their side primarily because they were against innovations and represented the forces of order against chaos and revolution.⁴⁵ Metternich was not an inflamed Catholic, but he saw a threat to European order in the growing power of the democrats and centralists.⁴⁶ He was also aware of the degree to which the religious issue limited the other Great Powers in their approach to Swiss affairs. For instance, the Berlin cabinet shared Metternich's concerns regarding radicalism in Switzerland and its plan for revolution in 1845. However, it could not silently ignore the fact that Lucerne summoned the Jesuits to the country, because it would have subjected itself to complaints from its own Protestant population.⁴⁷ The French cabinet did not stand against the activities of the Jesuits in Switzerland but considered their summoning a source of disturbance of the peace within the Confederation, and so proposed that Lucerne submit the issue of the Jesuits to the Swiss Diet.⁴⁸

In February 1845 the situation in Switzerland escalated to a significant degree and forced Metternich to declare: "*Switzerland is in the*

⁴² Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 24. 1. 1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, Staatskanzlei (hereinafter StK), Preussen 188.

⁴³ HERMAN, p. 241.

⁴⁴ LUTZ, p. 309.

⁴⁵ HERMAN, p. 240.

⁴⁶ WARD, p. 101.

⁴⁷ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 24. 1. 1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187.

⁴⁸ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 17. 2. 1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187.

most dangerous situation. There is fire smouldering at its breast, which, I very much fear will erupt into a great inferno, in spite of the efforts that well-meaning men undoubtedly made to maintain material peace and also moral peace, however this does not exist in any direction."⁴⁹ In March 1845 Metternich subsequently wrote to the Austrian envoy in Berlin Joseph von Trauttmansdorff-Weinsberg: "The situation in which the country is now is based on several pillars of which three are dominant: the first is the spirit of national freedom, which is typical for most people and the strength of which is supported in the small cantons, the second is the enormous deficiencies in the Federal Treaty, the third element is European radicalism, which has found a refuge in Switzerland and suppresses the sense for order and practical freedom in this unfortunate country. These causes, which jointly exert the most fatal influence on Switzerland, must be supplemented by the erroneous French policy, which is constantly occupied with application of its exclusive political influence on neighbouring countries, maintaining the spirit of disorder within them. The Federation is under the influence of a godless sect, which has named itself Young Switzerland."⁵⁰

In the same year the Sonderbund requested support from the Austrian Chancellor by provision of weapons and funds. Metternich wrote about this matter: "The Lucerne government contacted me to obtain weapons and funds in secret, or at least one or the other. It requests delivery of two thousand weapons and a loan [...] of 500,000 Swiss Francs, because its treasury is completely empty."⁵¹ At Metternich's behest some Austrian military units were transferred from Tyrol to the border of the canton of Ticino and the Catholic cantons of the Sonderbund were provided with an interest-free loan of half a million francs and also 3,000 guns and about 75 kg of ammunition, which were stored in the Milanese armouries. However, this cargo was seized at the Ticino borders by the Protestants.⁵² Far reaching coercive means were also considered in Vienna, such as interruption of all trade between Switzerland and the surrounding states, which would force the radical and liberal forces to

⁴⁹ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 19. 2. 1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187.

⁵⁰ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 12. 3. 1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187.

⁵¹ BONJOUR, p. 193.

⁵² FINK, p. 209.

capitulate.⁵³ It must also be mentioned that the chancellor faced considerable criticism in Vienna from Austrian Statesman Count Franz Anton von Kolowrat-Liebsteinsky and President of the Imperial Exchequer Karl Friedrich Kübeck, who were of the opinion that the Swiss separatists were simply disconcerted by assurance of the influence of the Jesuits and did not understand why Austria should provide financial aid or even military support, in this issue. Metternich repeatedly declared that the dispute embodies greater competition within Europe, that the Sonderbund defends the traditional values of society threatened by radical democrats and that if these seven cantons are defeated, this would encourage liberals across the continent to trigger a revolution. The State Conference finally, and very reluctantly, authorised that ten thousand Austrian troops be gathered at the Swiss borders and offered the Sonderbund an interest-free loan.⁵⁴

Metternich declared that the unremitting work of the sects would now be revealed, that the masses are agitated, the governments of the cantons are overcome, their authority is zero and empty and it would only be a question of time when the fires would erupt in several places in Switzerland. However, if Europe was unprepared for these events it would either must make concessions or permit the political and social order in Switzerland to be overthrown and face the consequences of this development.⁵⁵ The Austrian Chancellor believed that at this time, demonstration of complete moral accord between the five Great Powers was of the greatest importance, followed by loud expressed accord between the two neighbouring states of Switzerland, France and Austria. In relation to this, the Prince declared that if civil war broke out in Switzerland, this would be a much smaller threat to Austria than to France and the smaller states of the German Confederation. His belief was based on the assumption that radicalism in these countries would respond to events in Switzerland much more intensively than in the Austrian lands.⁵⁶

⁵³ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 562.

⁵⁴ PALMER, p. 301.

⁵⁵ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 3.7.1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187.

⁵⁶ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 19.2.1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187; Metternich to Dietrichstein, Vienna, 28.10.1846, AT-OeStA/HHStA, Diplomatie und Außenpolitik 1848–1918, Gesandtschafts- und Konsulatarchiv B, Gesandtschaftsarchiv Bern 38.

However, Austria did not have sufficient military forces enabling it to intervene in Switzerland alone.⁵⁷ According to the Prince, such intervention would have to be realised in the closest possible cooperation with the other Great Powers, particularly France.⁵⁸ The European powers should agree on the following points:

1. Transfer of diplomatic bodies from Bern,
2. decisive declaration that the inactivity of the Great Powers has its limits,
3. following the attack of Lucerne, execution of armed intervention at the request of the Sonderbund.

This escalating plan was fully approved in Berlin and Saint Petersburg.⁵⁹ However, London adopted a principle of non-intervention. The value of Switzerland's independence and neutrality to the system of British Prime Minister Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston was in its performance of its assigned role as buffer state between Austria and France. Therefore, it was so persistently against all attempts by these two powers to interfere in Swiss domestic affairs. It was in the interests of British foreign policy, at that time exclusively determined by Palmerston, to support free-thinking movements worldwide. Therefore, British statesman also acted as a protector of liberals in the case of Switzerland. However, his motive was his consideration of the British economy, which required peace in Europe to flourish, on the contrary armed intervention by Austria and France could easily cause it harm.⁶⁰

Without the knowledge of France's support, Metternich believed it impossible to take strict action against the Confederation, which is why he was most interested in an agreement with French King Louis Philippe I and French Minister of Foreign Affairs François Pierre Guillaume Guizot.⁶¹ If France were convinced to participate in the intervention, the ideas of the Sonderbund would be able to predomi-

⁵⁷ HERMAN, p. 241.

⁵⁸ LUTZ, p. 311.

⁵⁹ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 565.

⁶⁰ BONJOUR, pp. 193–195.

⁶¹ H. RIEBEN, *Prinzipiengrundlage und Diplomatie in Metternichs Europapolitik 1815–1848*, Aarau 1942, p. 165.

nate in Switzerland. However, in 1845 he complained that the French King, like Guizot, frequently repeated to Austrian Diplomat Anton von Apponyi that France agrees with Austria, but the French envoy in Vienna was never authorised to impart this opinion personally and furthermore practically did not discuss Switzerland with the Chancellor at all.⁶² But Metternich did not let himself be deceived by this French tactic and did not rely on a truly absolute accord with the French government in this matter: *"This [French] government cannot be strong in relation to the fight against revolution, it cannot stand beside us and hold the same line with us, it would be against its nature."*⁶³ The Prince was of the opinion that Louis Philippe and Guizot could be as conservative as they liked, but the French people would basically remain liberal. Intervention could therefore provoke a union between the French and Swiss radicals and light a revolutionary fire that would end in European-wide war. He therefore realised that he could not rely too much on French military support. But he did hope in their diplomatic assistance at least.⁶⁴ At the same time he could not permit France to become isolated or to fall into open opposition against Austria.⁶⁵

With regard to the escalating situation in Switzerland Metternich proposed that the Great Powers should accept a joint solution, which should be a clear manifest.⁶⁶ The energetic tone of the joint explanation of four continental Great Powers, that they would not permit an attack against the sovereignty of the cantons, seemed to be an infallible means to avoid escalation of the conflict. However, he was unable to convince Paris of this idea. Domestic opinion and consideration of Great Britain did not permit Louis Philippe to take part in the threatening note to the conservative forces.⁶⁷ Guizot also believed that this was not the right time to realise intervention because this would cause significant harm to Swiss national feelings and intervention would face strong resistance. For this reason, the envoys of the three Eastern powers were forced to proceed alone. On 10 January 1846 they

⁶² Canitz to Bülow, Vienna, 5. 3. 1845, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 6037/1.

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ HERMAN, p. 241.

⁶⁵ Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, Vienna, 20. 5. 1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 187.

⁶⁶ HERMAN, p. 241.

⁶⁷ RIEBEN, p. 166.

submitted a clear note to the government in Bern, in which they identified maintenance of the Federal Treaty to be a condition for continued amicable relations. Bern responded to this challenge by permitting establishment of a radical regiment and appointing Ochsenbein as its commander. He responded to the challenge by the Great Powers as follows: *“The suburbs [of Bern] will consider whether to continue maintaining good relations [with the conservative powers], it strongly protests against each potential attempt to intervene.”*⁶⁸ The next two notes by the eastern Great Powers followed on 10 and 11 January 1847 and warned against an attack against the conservative cantons. In a response sent to them on 14 January 1847 from Bern, the inviolability of Swiss sovereignty was defended again and any attempt to interfere in the domestic affairs of Switzerland was decisively rebuffed.⁶⁹

Because the situation in Switzerland escalated further during 1847, Guizot proposed that Austria intervene alone when civil war broke out and that France would then follow. What Guizot proposed was an evident repetition of Ancona and Metternich could not permit this. The radicals could possibly interpret this procedure by France as a hostile act towards Austria, which would mean that France would find itself in the role of protector of Switzerland and Austria in the role of suppressor of freedom.⁷⁰ When this attempt failed, Guizot decided to promote a joint diplomatic intervention by the Great Powers. On 7/8 November 1847 he sent a note to London, Berlin, Vienna and Saint Petersburg in which he justified the right of the European Great Powers to intervene in Swiss matters because it was they who guaranteed the neutrality of Switzerland at the Congress of Vienna. He proposed that all hostile actions be immediately ceased, the matter of the Jesuits passed on to the Pope and representatives of both hostile Swiss parties be invited to a conference of the five Great Powers for the purpose of resolving political issues. The Prussian King agreed but requested that the aforementioned conference take place in Neuchâtel instead of Baden, because he wished to maintain the neutrality of his princi-

⁶⁸ BONJOUR, p. 193.

⁶⁹ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 565.

⁷⁰ Metternich to Kaisersfeld, Vienna, 1. 7. 1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, Diplomatie und Außenpolitik 1848–1918, Gesandtschafts- und Konsulatarchiv B, Gesandtschaftsarchiv Bern 38; Ch. de MAZADE, *Un chancelier d'ancien régime. Le règne diplomatique de M. de Metternich*, Paris 1889, p. 387.

pality. Metternich considered this proposal insufficient.⁷¹ Palmerston's negative reaction continued to be an expression of his defeat in the Spanish affair. There were also very fresh memories of the annexation of Cracow and because Palmerston certainly did not want Switzerland to turn out like Poland, he promoted the principle of non-intervention again. In spite of this London and Paris worked on the exact wording of an identical note by the Great Powers to Switzerland.⁷²

Palmerston proposed that a conference be held in London for the purpose of restoring peace. He set the following conditions: banishment of the Jesuits from Switzerland, maintenance of the principle of the sovereignty of the cantons, dissolution of the Sonderbund and immediate dissolution of military units. However, this proposal did not correspond with Guizot's ideas and so some modifications were made to it. In the end an agreement was reached on a unanimous note on 20 November 1847, which was to be addressed to the Diet. According to this note the Sonderbund should ask the Holy See to withdraw the Jesuits from Switzerland, the sovereignty of the cantons was to be maintained and the Federal Treaty modified only with the consent of all the cantons. Thanks to Palmerston's efforts the note also had an attachment appended which determined that refusal of the Great Powers' proposal would not be punished by armed intervention.⁷³ The note was submitted to the Swiss government on 30 November 1847. However, Great Britain failed to participate with the other Great Powers at the last minute, which was received with outrage. However, at this time the note from the Great Powers was no longer decisive, because there was no longer any Sonderbund War Council, which it could be addressed to and the war had ended. The Diet finally simply expressed its thanks for the offer of mediation, but there was no longer anything to mediate. The main reason the note dated 30 November arrived so late was because Palmerston delayed it.⁷⁴

Metternich made a fatal mistake when he based his actions on the discord between Great Britain and France in relation to the Affair of the Spanish Marriages. He believed that he did not have to take Great

⁷¹ Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 18. 11. 1847, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 6037/3.

⁷² LUTZ, p. 312.

⁷³ BONJOUR, p. 199.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 201; LUTZ, p. 312; REMAK, p. 156.

Britain into consideration because it was in isolation and he also did not believe that it would be possible to convince the British cabinet to participate in the planned threatening note. Because of this he had decided to act without it. He was so concerned with Louis Philippe and Guizot that he left Palmerston aside. He did not endeavour to reach an agreement between the five Great Powers in the Swiss affair. He believed that this would be in vain. However, his belief that Great Britain would not be interested in events on the continent or would let itself be isolated, were completely wrong.⁷⁵ Metternich himself accused France of the failure of intervention by the Great Powers, because it initiated negotiations with Great Britain.⁷⁶ On 12 December 1847 Metternich wrote: *"The key principle of the Confederation has been violated. The Sonderbundkrieg was not an issue of religion, but a conspiracy of the revolutionary forces for the purpose of overthrowing legal order. The radicals' plan is clearly revealed: to destroy seven cantons morally and materially and if these cantons are then relegated to a condition dependent on and subject to the political establishment, the explanation will be that the Federal Acts were reformed."*⁷⁷

Metternich now devoted his full attention to at least limiting the consequences of the victory of the federal forces to the minimum and to Switzerland achieving a form that would be compatible with its state system.⁷⁸ He recommended concurrent intervention by the European powers, whereas Ticino was to be occupied by Austrian troops, Bale by the German Confederation, Jura by France and Geneva by Sardinia. However, if the Diet assured the Great Powers of the guaranteed inviolability of the cantons, this intervention would no longer be necessary.⁷⁹ The only thing the Prince achieved in the end was execution of a joint note, which France, Austria and Prussia, addressed to the Swiss Diet on 18 January 1848, in which they demanded that the Federal Treaty be respected, the sovereignty of the 22 cantons be respected, the principle of unanimousness when enforcing changes to the Federal Treaty and withdrawal of federal troops under the threat of intervention. The note also contained a thesis proposed by Metternich,

⁷⁵ RIEBEN, p. 166.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 169.

⁷⁷ FINK, p. 209.

⁷⁸ RIEBEN, p. 169.

⁷⁹ Ch. ZORGBIBE, *Metternich. Le séducteur diplomate*, Paris 2009, p. 470.

according to which the Great Powers provided its eternal neutrality in 1815 in relation to the concluded Federal Treaty, and if the Swiss failed to fulfil their duties, the same powers would have the indisputable right to accept measures essential for assuring their own safety.⁸⁰

The Swiss government responded with clear refusal and emphasised the neutrality and also the independence of individual cantons and the Swiss Confederation itself.⁸¹ Metternich was understandably not assured by this response. During a walk he explained to his wife Melanie: *"I would like to die and no longer experience the misfortune, which no man can avoid. My role is at an end, the role of all human cleverness has ended. Force will prevail and the world is lost, because law will become simply a subject for laughter to the world."*⁸² Metternich's absolute inability to prevent the triumph of liberalism and a unified state in Switzerland was clear evidence that his influence on the events in Europe were now nearing zero.⁸³ The defeat of the Sonderbund humiliated Metternich and dealt a fatal blow to Austria, because it provided an impulse for rebellion in Italy.⁸⁴ The national movement of the Swiss Confederation therefore violated the Treaties of Vienna from 1815 without being punished.⁸⁵

In October 1847 Metternich feared that developments in Switzerland could become an impulse for the national unification of Germany.⁸⁶ In order to prevent this he wanted to realise a plan of encirclement, intimidate the Swiss Diet and prevent the impending defeat of the Sonderbund.⁸⁷ At the wishes of the conservative party in Switzerland, Vienna accepted a decision to distribute military units along the Swiss border from Lake Constance to Lombardy. Metternich believed that Paris would participate in these measures and reinforce its units on the borders with Switzerland and urged the governments of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden to take the same measures. If this had happened, Switzerland would have found itself encircled.⁸⁸ The

⁸⁰ RIEBEN, p. 170; BONJOUR, p. 204; LUTZ, p. 313.

⁸¹ DU BOIS, p. 159.

⁸² FINK, p. 210.

⁸³ HERMAN, p. 242.

⁸⁴ DESMOND, p. 295; A. BÉTHOUART, *Metternich et l'Europe*, Paris 1979, p. 379.

⁸⁵ O. DANN, *Nation und Nationalismus in Deutschland. 1770–1990*, München 1992, p. 115.

⁸⁶ FINK, p. 208.

⁸⁷ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, pp. 567–568.

⁸⁸ Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 8. 10. 1847, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr.

courts of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden were asked to move several units to the border, which would not cause them great expense according to Metternich. The King of Württemberg showed his good will, but the Archduke of Baden created difficulties, which were completely unjustified according to the Prince. If a military unit had been sent to Lake Constance it would not have cost much and would have made an impression of the canton of Thurgau.⁸⁹ Not even the Bavarian King was willing to take the proposed measures, even though, according to Metternich, this simply concerned dispatching one battalion to Lindau, the only city in Bavaria that was near Switzerland.⁹⁰ Metternich tried to explain to the Munich cabinet that sending a small number of units to Vorarlberg was clear proof that this was not a military operation, but an act of a purely moral character.⁹¹

Metternich tried to convince the South German rulers using statements that the borders of their states with Switzerland are mostly open and a partially in contact with the area where Catholics and Protestants live together and that potential confessional conflicts would take place near their borders. He also argued that the propaganda of German refugees arriving from Paris had already chosen regions of Lake Constance as a gathering site for their hateful actions against Germany and that there was no certainty that Swiss radicals would not invade Germany. For this reason, the South German states should be prepared and should distribute military units along certain points of the Swiss borders, which would be strong enough to resist the first flood of the revolutionary hordes from Switzerland. As a result, the local radicals would realise that the residents of Germany are vigilant and unified in their decision to observe the conflict as a silent but invulnerable witness.⁹² The Berlin cabinet also supported acceptance of preventive measures by the South German courts and endeavoured to convince the governments in Munich, Stuttgart and Karlsruhe of the adequacy of the proposed preventive measures.⁹³ The only thing that Metter-

6037/3.

⁸⁹ Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 4.11.1847, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 6037/3.

⁹⁰ Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 19.10.1847, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 6037/3.

⁹¹ Metternich to Senfft, Vienna, 26.3.1845, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Bayern 177.

⁹² Metternich to Ugarte, Vienna, 8.10.1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Württemberg 38.

⁹³ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 13.10.1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK,

nich managed to enforce was acceptance of the essential measures to secure the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy. Armed forces of approximately 4,000 men were to be placed under the command of General Major Earl Felix Lichnowsky and sent to Vorarlberg.⁹⁴

The Berlin cabinet officially supported Metternich in the Swiss affair but managed to do so very guardedly in practice until the autumn of 1847. In June 1846 Canitz declared that he sees no salvation for Switzerland and that restoring peace in the country would only be possible thanks to its military occupation by Austria and France. He believed that this occupation and respect of religious profession to be the only effective means for suppressing evil within the Helvetic Confederation.⁹⁵ Frederick William IV expressed himself even more sharply when he wrote to Queen Victoria that saving Switzerland from the hands of the radicals would be a matter of absolutely fundamental importance, because if godlessness and lawlessness won in the civil war, then rivers of blood would also flow in Germany, because thousands of criminals had emigrated to the country and were simply waiting for a signal to overflow far past the borders of Germany where this godless band would wander through Germany with the intention of killing kings, priests and aristocrats.⁹⁶

However, in 1847 Canitz stood determinedly against the concept of the demonstrative removal of diplomatic representation of the eastern powers from Switzerland favoured by Metternich and Count Karl Robert Nesselrode and called it an impractical measure. Prussia decided to stand up for its own interests, over the interests of the entire conservative camp. It was particularly interested in maintaining the Prussian position in Neuchâtel, in a Prussian principality where Prussia had not been able to position its own units for the time being. The governor of Neuchâtel gave the border authorities a strict order to prevent any supplies or weapons intended for the Sonderbund from passing through and to send those that had already arrived back to

Preussen 193; Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 17. 10. 1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 193.

⁹⁴ Canitz to Bülow, Vienna, 5. 3. 1845, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 6037/1.

⁹⁵ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 12. 6. 1846, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 190.

⁹⁶ REMAK, p. 155; F. HERRE, *Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Der andere Preußenkönig*, Gernsbach 2007, p. 109.

France.⁹⁷ He did so because he did not wish to provoke the liberal cantons in attacking Neuchâtel. This thwarted Metternich's intention to supply the Sonderbund with weapons and military material for the oncoming conflicts.⁹⁸

It was only in November 1847 that Vienna and Berlin were able to fully agree on the risk posed by the potential spread of political radicalism from Switzerland into the territories of the German Confederation. These concerns were certainly not unfounded because immediately after the war erupted, a strong solidarity movement directed against the endeavours of the Great Powers to reverse social development in Switzerland, developed within the German states. During the period between 7 November 1847 and the end of February 1848 over 50 statements of solidarity were addressed to the Swiss Diet, numbering over 5,000 signatures of people from all social levels of the population. This addressal movement began on 9 November 1847, when Karel Mathy conceived an address signed by moderate liberals and democrats in Manheim and basically formulated it with even more restraint, whereas it emphasised the legality of the procedure by the Diet in Frankfurt am Main and simply mentioned the issue of the Jesuits. The central concept of many addresses from German democrats was the concept of unification of the European nations in the fight against a common enemy and emphasis on Switzerland as an example.⁹⁹ In one of the addressed "to our Swiss friends and brothers" is boldly declared: "Your fight, noble people, is for the most important of all things, it is a fight for the principles of the highest order. Your affairs are our affairs, your enemies, our enemies."¹⁰⁰ It was signed collectively "citizens and residents of Leipzig", including Robert Blum for instance.¹⁰¹ The offer of armed assistance to the Swiss Diet also appeared as a response to the Great Powers' plans for intervention.¹⁰²

The civil war in Switzerland applied to all friends of unification and freedom in Germany as a challenge to their own activities.¹⁰³ It had a

⁹⁷ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 569.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 570; DU BOIS, pp. 159–160; Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 6. 11. 1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 193; Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 9. 12. 1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 193.

⁹⁹ MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, pp. 573–576.

¹⁰⁰ REMAK, p. 176.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰² MÜLLER, *Im Widerstreit*, p. 576.

powerful effect mainly in the south of Germany and completely in the spirit of verses by German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, promising that gunshots from the heights of Switzerland would lead to the unstoppable movement of an avalanche, which would finally crush all the forts of response and break the chains of the nations.¹⁰⁴ Freiligrath celebrated the Swiss victory as a herald of the freedom in Germany and everywhere in the world, from London.¹⁰⁵ In a poem written on 25 February 1848 he declared: “*Its cries will thunder through Germany and no lightening bolt can melt it.*”¹⁰⁶ The poem titled *German Republican Song (Deutsches Republikanerlied)* celebrated the victory in Switzerland as a spark for the opposition in other countries.¹⁰⁷

Metternich was very restrained with regard to the German Confederation’s possible involvement in Swiss affairs, because he feared that this involvement might go in the wrong direction. He again pointed out its purely defensive character and that it was not a force that would be involved in conferences or political congresses. A conversation that the Prussian Envoy in Vienna had with Metternich gave the impression that, according to the Prince, the German Confederation should not be involved in Swiss affairs before the powers know what it intended to do.¹⁰⁸

However, Heinrich von Bülow, a Prussian statesman and Minister of Foreign affairs until 1845, was inclined to take every opportunity to give the German Confederation political authority and increase its importance by revealing itself to the world as a power. In the end he was forced to acknowledge that the procedure proposed by Metternich was correct. The Berlin cabinet agreed that at the present the German Confederation should bide its time face to face with the Swiss movement, but as soon as its domestic relations threatened order in Germany, both German Great powers should request that the Confederation take action. Trauttmansdorff thought that it would be difficult

¹⁰³ P. JOACHIMSEN, *Vom deutschen Volk zum deutschen Staat. Eine Geschichte des deutschen Nationalbewusstseins*, Leipzig – Berlin 1920, p. 71.

¹⁰⁴ J. ŠUSTA, *Dějiny Evropy v letech 1812–1870*, II, Praha 1923, p. 43.

¹⁰⁵ BAUMGART, p. 239.

¹⁰⁶ L. A. VANCHENA, *Political Poetry in Periodicals and the Shaping of German National Consciousness in the Nineteenth Century*, New York 2000, p. 73.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁸ Arnim to Frederick William IV, Vienna, 22. 11. 1847, GStA PK, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 6037/4.

to assume that the revolution in Switzerland would lead to its export into neighbouring countries, because the Swiss liberals and democrats concentrated too much on their own affairs. However, there would be a great risk if radicalism predominated and utilised its existing connections with Germany to move the revolutionary movement to German soil.¹⁰⁹

Metternich joined the Prussian court in the opinion that, for many reasons, it would be appropriate to award the German Confederation the corresponding position towards Switzerland in the present situation. In his opinion the German Confederation could naturally act as a congress power but could also appear as a neighbouring country protecting the German federal territories. Both German powers agreed that they would submit the Swiss affair to the Diet in Frankfurt am Main.¹¹⁰ Even though the Diet began to discuss the Swiss affair, it was not capable of making any progress, because this was prevented by the general progress of the Swiss civil war.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Metternich believed Switzerland to be of great importance to the European peace system due to its geographic position, because the country formed an important barrier between France, Germany and Italy. He also considered it necessary to intervene in its domestic affairs due to the presence of a large number of political refugees from other countries, who had found asylum on Swiss soil. The Austrian Chancellor was of the opinion that the only possible measure to stop the radical forces, which endeavoured to trigger a revolution and threatened peace throughout Europe, was intervention in the domestic affairs of the Confederation. However, he was aware that Austria did not have sufficient military power enabling it to intervene in Switzerland alone. According to the Prince, such intervention would have to be realised in the closest possible cooperation with other powers, particularly France. The only thing he managed to achieve was to address a

¹⁰⁹ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 8. 11. 1847, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 193.

¹¹⁰ Könneritz to Zeschau, Vienna, 2. 12. 1847, Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10717 Ministerium der Auswärtigen Angelegenheiten, 3165.

¹¹¹ Trauttmansdorff to Metternich, Berlin, 1. 1. 1848, AT-OeStA/HHStA, StK, Preussen 194.

unanimous note from the powers to the Swiss Diet in November 1847. But this note was intentionally delayed by Great Britain, which did not even participate with the other countries in the end, and so the note practically lost its significance, because the Swiss civil war had been decided by that time.

The Austrian statesman failed in his efforts to achieve intervention by the Great Powers, the Sonderbund was defeated and Switzerland adopted a new Federal Constitution. His absolute helplessness in preventing the triumph of liberalism and a unified state in Switzerland was evidence that his influence on events in Europe was nearing zero. Metternich made a fatal error when he based his actions on the discord between Great Britain and France in relation to the Affair of the Spanish Marriages. He believed that he would not have to count on Great Britain, because it was isolated. The Prince was no more successful in his efforts to convince the other Great Powers to carry out additional concurrent intervention during which Ticino was to be occupied by Austrian troops, Bale by the German Confederation, Jura by France and Geneva by Sardinia. He simply achieved execution of a joint note, which France, Austria and Prussia addressed to the Swiss Diet on 18 January 1848.

The fact that he was unable to convince the German neighbours of Switzerland to take part in his plan of encirclement and convince them to position military troops along the borders played a significant role in Metternich's failure. His warnings against potential instigation of a revolutionary movement in these states by Swiss radicals did not fall on fertile ground, because the South German states were concerned about the financial expenses linked to deployment of their armed forces. The only thing he managed to enforce in the end was acceptance of the essential measures to secure the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy. It is also important to point out the fact that Prussia, the traditional and most loyal ally of Austria, also gave precedence to its own interests over those of the entire conservative camp in this conflict whereas it was most interested in maintaining the Prussian position in Neuchâtel. Prussia's actions resulted in Metternich's plan to supply the Sonderbund with weapons and military material being thwarted. The defeat of the Sonderbund humiliated Metternich and dealt a fatal blow to Austria, because it became an impulse for eruption of the revolution in 1848 in Germany and Italy.