THE RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN HUNGARY IN 1849: SOME THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

I. W. ROBERTS

"The fate of Hungary will largely influence the future condition of all Europe." (Lord Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 18 August, 1849).[1]

"The fate and condition of Poland are now, as they have been for the last century, the key to the whole policy of Russia." (Edinburgh Review, April 1847, Vol. CCXXII, p. 292).[2]

Introduction

On the evening of 21st April 1849 during a visit to Moscow to dedicate the reconstructed Great Palace in the Kremlin, originally built by Catherine the Great and burnt down during the French retreat in 1812, the Emperor Nicholas I finally decided to accede to the request made by the Austrian government for military assistance in suppressing the revolt in Hungary which had begun the previous year. The Tsar's decision was announced in public after a formal letter had been sent by Francis Joseph to Nicholas on 1st May.

The Russian intervention in Hungary which was on a massive scale began on 17th June and lasted eight weeks. On 13th August the major part of the Hungarian army led by General Görgey surrendered to the Russians at Világos (Şiria). Shortly afterwards the Russian army began its withdrawal from Hungary, the Austrians exiled General Görgey to Klagenfurt and on 6th October they shocked Europe by executing thirteen Hungarian generals at their military headquarters in Arad. Although the British and French governments did not oppose the intervention, they sent units of their Mediterranean fleets to the Dardanelles after it was over to lend support to Turkey which was finding it difficult to resist Austrian and Russian demands to hand over Hungarian and Polish members of the rebel armies who had sought refuge there. The Russians, followed by the Austrians withdrew their demands, and the possibility of a general European war was averted. Although the Russian intervention was of short duration, it made a deep impression on the rising middle class in Western Europe and had far reaching consequences for the future relationship between Russia and the Habsburg Empire, which was never to be the same again. The memories of the intervention have never dimmed and it has formed an inexhaustible subject for study historians.

In this article five aspects of the intervention will be examined. The first will be the reasons wich caused Nicholas to decide to intervene; the second the reasons for Görgey's decision to surrender to the Russians, rather than the Austrians; the third the policy of non-intervention adopted by Lord Palmerston and the

Hungarian Studies 5/1 (1989)
Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

British government; the fourth the financial background to the intervention and finally, a few remarks about the nature of some of the historical sources on the intervention.

The Reasons for Nicholas' Intervention

There has been much debate among historians about the reasons for Nicholas' decision to intervene in Hungary. Was he concerned with the defence of the cause of legitimacy or was he guided by a wish to protect Russia's own interests, especially in Russian Poland? In order to answer these questions, we must first consider the course of Russian foreign policy during the reign of Nicholas I.

Nicholas succeeded to the Russian throne instead of his elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, the ruler of Russian Poland, in the aftermath of an unsuccessful military revolt in St. Petersburg in December 1825. Constantine, who had no wish to become Tsar, had made his decision known to Alexander I before he died. Nicholas' main interest in life was the Russian army and throughout his reign he was to reiterate that he would have much preferred to follow a military career rather than become the ruler of the Russian Empire. He was the personification of an absolute monarch and believed implicitly that he had been chosen by God to rule over his subjects. More German than Russian in his ancestry, he lost his father at the age of five when the Emperor Paul was assassinated in St. Petersburg in 1801 by a group of disaffected officers. His eldest brother Alexander I, who then succeeded to the throne, left his education to their German mother and a group of tutors who brought Nicholas up during the Napoleonic wars in which he was too young to take part. Naturally straightforward and unwilling to compromise with his principles, he found it difficult to conceal his true feelings, but as the years went by, he was to gain the reputation of being a good actor and was able to exert considerable charm when necessary. As Queen Victoria wrote to her uncle King Leopold of Belgium after Nicholas' visit to her in 1844 to discuss the future of the Ottoman Empire, "he is sincere, I am certain, *sincere* even in his most despotic acts, from a sense that this *is* the *only* way to govern".[3]

Although the diplomatic correspondence of the period, both Russian and foreign, makes frequent reference to "le cabinet russe" no such institution in the Western sense existed in Russia at that time. The State Council and the Council of Ministers were essentially advisory bodies which, in some instances, were called upon to implement decisions which had already been taken by the Tsar. Nicholas had regular meetings with his ministers individually and with the Military Council; the Commander in Chief of the Russian Army, Prince Paskevich, who replaced the Grand Duke Constantine as ruler of Russian Poland, also reported directly to the Tsar. Thus Nicholas acted as his own Prime Minister and his ministers were little more than the faithful executors of this decisions.

The cosmopolitan Count Nesselrode, whom Nicholas inherited as Minister of Foreign Affairs from Alexander I, and kept in office throughout his reign was no exception to this rule. Disliked by the old Russian nobility because of his foreign ancestry, he was a model bureaucrat, industrious and hardworking, who sometimes persuaded Nicholas to have second thoughts and so saved him from

the consequences of some of his impulsive decisions. In the words of the author of a contemporary handbook on European diplomats, Nesselrode was the enlightened hand which wrote the Emperor's will and he was appreciated as "un homme de bon conseil".[4] More unkindly, a British journal of the period described him as "the mere head clerk of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs without one spark of genius, or any other talent than the talent of keeping his place and plodding placidly on".[5]

At the beginning of Nicholas' reign, Russian foreign policy was dominated by three problems, two of which had their origin in the reign of Catherine the Great. These were the ultimate fate of the Ottoman Empire which had begun its long and slow process of decline; the consequences of the partition of Poland between Austria, Prussia and Russia at the end of the eighteenth century; and finally, the fear of the resurgence of revolutionary France under the leadership of a successor to Napoleon Bonaparte.

Nicholas began his reign by having to act against his instincts and make common cause with Great Britain and France in assisting the Greeks to establish an independent state, much to the dismay of Metternich and the Emperor Francis of Austria. He then fought a war with Persia which brought Russia further gains in the Caucasus. An attempt made at the beginning of his reign to reach a peaceful settlement with Turkey on outstanding problems failed and was followed by a long and costly war in 1828/1829. Once again Nicholas' instinctive wish to occupy Constantinople had to give way to the more measured advice of a special committee he had established which recommended that Russia's best interests would be served by the preservation of the Ottoman Empire and the solution of its problems in concert with the other European powers. The war was ended by the Treaty of Adrianople which consolidated Russia's hold on the mouth of the Danube and strengthened her influence in the Danubian Principalities and Serbia. 1830 witnessed the outbreak of revolution in France and the advent to power of Louis Philippe, as well as a revolt in Belgium which led to the establishment of an independent state. Nicholas always regarded Louis Philippe as an usurper but had no success in his efforts to create an alliance to suppress the revolutions in France and Belgium by armed intervention which would have included the use of part of the Polish army. At the end of the year there was a revolt in Russian Poland and in January 1831 the Romanov dynasty was deposed. Nicholas, who had always been an unenthusiastic supporter of the Polish constitution granted by Alexander after the Napoleonic wars, had no hesitation in using the Russian army to crush the Poles. Paskevich, who had played a prominent part in the campaigns in both Persia and Turkey, replaced Diebitsch who died of cholera, and captured Warsaw on 8th September 1831. The revolution collapsed and the Polish leadership, which had been divided by internal dissensions, fled abroad, mainly to France, where its two main factions were to continue their efforts to foment revolution in their divided country and re-unite it. Russian Poland lost its constitution and its own army and retained only a small measure of administrative autonomy under the rule of Paskevich.

Immediately after the Polish revolt, Nicholas' attention was again engaged by the problems of the Ottoman Empire, when the first Egyptian–Turkish crisis occurred. In July 1833 he scored a notable success with the Treaty of

Unkiar Skelessi by which Russia and Turkey agreed to come to earch other's aid in the event of attack. But he had not forgotten the problems of western Europe and after a vain attempt to involve Great Britain and France in reviving the alliance established by his elder brother after the Napoleonic wars, he found himself compelled to turn to Austria in his efforts to prevent the spread of liberalism. Austrian reservations about Russia's relationship with Turkey were set aside and Nicholas was persuaded to overcome his innate suspicions of Metternich and Austrian policy.

In September 1833 at a meeting between the elderly Emperor Francis and Nicholas in the Bohemian town of Muenchengraetz (Mnichovo Hradište) a new alliance was established in which Prussia was eventually to take part. Although the declared purpose of the Muenchengraetz agreement was to prevent a break up of the Ottoman Empire which would be detrimental to the interests of Austria and Russia, the three absolutist powers were equally united by the common purpose of opposing the French principle of non-intervention and preventing the reunification of a divided Poland. In the eyes of Great Britain and France, the new alliance concluded at Muenchengraetz was nothing more than the revival of the Holy Alliance established after the Congress of Vienna and as a result, Europe became divided into opposing camps.

In 1839 the second Egyptian–Turkish crisis led to dissension between France and Great Britain of which Russia sought to take advantage. At one time it appeared that there would be war between France and Germany but eventually in July 1841 the five great powers signed the Straits Convention in London which closed the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to all foreign warships in peace time. Nicholas' subsequent attempts to establish by personal diplomacy a special understanding with Great Britain about the future of the Ottoman Empire during his visit to London in 1844 did not lead to the signing of any formal agreement. Nicholas' belief that he had reached a "gentlemen's agreement" was to be the cause of much misunderstanding in the period before the outbreak of the Crimean War.

In 1846 the attention of Austria, Prussia and Russia again focussed on Poland when a revolt in Galicia and Cracow was suppressed by the combined military intervention of Austria and Russia. In the absence of any serious opposition by Great Britain and France who were occupied with the affairs of the Iberian peninsula, Prussia was persuaded by Austria and Russia to agree to the suppression of the independent state of Cracow, created in 1815, which was incorporated into Austrian Galicia.

Nicholas, who had always regarded Cracow as a thorn in his flesh, especially since the Polish revolt of 1830, was delighted that a further blow had been delivered to the cause of Polish independence. Nevertheless, as the decade of the 1840s drew to a close, he became more and more uneasy about the state of the Russian alliance with Austria and Prussia. On more than one occasion he was to express the view that it no longer consisted of three powers but one and a half. By this he meant that he could no longer rely on his brother-in-law Frederick William IV of Prussia who was failing to stand up to liberal pressure and that he had doubts about the ability of the Austrian State Council, which ruled Austria during the reign of the weak-minded Emperor Ferdinand, to keep the Habsburg

Empire together in the face of increasing restiveness among the nationalities and serious financial problems. In short, Nicholas felt that Russia was the only member of the alliance which would be able to stand firm against the rising tide of liberalism and nationalism which was sweeping across the countries of Europe as they were gradually being transformed into modern industrial societies.

In February 1848 the overthrow of Louis Philippe in France, shortly followed by the fall of Metternich in Vienna and revolts in Hungary and Italy, as well as Frederick William IV's concessions to the liberals in Berlin confirmed Nicholas' worst fears. His immediate reaction was to order a massive mobilization of the reserves of the Russian army. At the same time he attempted to isolate Russia from revolutionary ideas by imposing strict censorship and limiting foreign travel. These actions were followed by the publication of a manifesto and official commentary in March 1848 proclaiming Russia's defiance of revolution along with an assurance that Russia would not intervene in the affairs of other countries.

Nicholas' greatest fear was that the changes in Austria and Prussia would give further encouragement to the Poles in Poznania and Galicia and that revolution would spread from these provinces to Russian Poland. It even seemed possible at one time that France would lend its support to Prussia and the Prussian Poles. But France did not match its words with deeds and by the end of May both the Austrian and Prussian governments had been able to put an end to the troubles in their Polish territories. Throughout these disturbances Russian Poland remained quiet. However, Nicholas continued to be alarmed by the actions of Frederick William IV because of his support for the cause of German nationalism in the dispute with Denmark on the Schleswig-Holstein question. He was content to allow Great Britain to mediate in the affair, but at the same time made limited use of the Russian fleet in the Baltic to lend moral support to the Danes and their Swedish allies.

Nor could Nicholas ignore the consequences of the revolution in Western Europe in the Christian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Disturbances occurred in both Moldavia and Wallachia. After much hesitation, Nicholas decided to send Russian troops into Moldavia in July. Finally, after protracted negotiations with Turkey he sent a Russian force into Wallachia to assist the Turks in carrying out a joint occupation of the Danubian Principalities. As always, Nicholas was perturbed by the role of the Poles in fomenting revolution in these provinces. Their strategic importance and use as a base for any future operations against Hungary in support of Austria was obvious.

At the end of 1848, after the successful suppression of a revolt in Vienna in October, a new Austrian government led by Schwarzenberg took office and the Emperor Ferdinand abdicated in favour of his young nephew, Francis Joseph. The Austrians were now able to turn their attention to the restoration of Habsburg rule in Hungary. In Prussia Frederick William IV, encouraged by the Austrian example, dissolved the Prussian constituent assembly and promulgated a new constitution. As 1848 drew to a close, it seemed as if order was being restored. However, in January 1849, the effects in Europe of Kossuth's decision to make use of the Poles in the Hungarian forces brought an unpleasant surprise in the shape of the victories of the Hungarian army in Transylvania led by General Bem. At the request of the local Austrian military commander and in the face of

opposition from Schwarzenberg, Nicholas reluctantly agreed to a limited intervention by some of the Russian troops based in the Danubian Principalities in support of the Austrians. The intervention was not successful and by the end of March the Russian troops were forced to withdraw along with the defeated Austrian forces. Nicholas was dismayed and determined that any further military intervention he might be called upon to make would be on a suitably massive scale.

Bem's success in Transylvania was followed by further Hungarian victories elsewhere on Hungary under the leadership of General Görgey and by the middle of April the situation had become critical. The replacement of Windischgraetz by Welden as Austrian Commander-in-Chief in Hungary brought no improvement. Despite Radetzky's victory against Piedmont at Novara on 23rd March, continuing Austrian difficulties in Italy made it impossible to transfer troops from there for use against Hungary. As a result, a reluctant Schwarzenberg and Austrian Council of Ministers were compelled to yield to military necessity and appeal to Nicholas for Russian assistance in suppressing the revolt in Hungary.

Austria's first request was for aid in restoring the situation in Transylvania which was rejected by Nicholas as being impractical. This was followed by an urgent personal appeal to Paskevich in Warsaw for the dispatch of Russian troops to assist the Austrians in dealing with the threat of a Hungarian attack on Vienna and renewed outbreak of revolution in the city. Much to Nicholas' displeasure Paskevich sent a composite Russian division by rail from Cracow to Moravia without seeking the Tsar's approval.

Nicholas had made it clear from the outset of the revolutions in Europe which began in 1848 that he would not intervene unless Russia's interests were directly threatened. He could hardly refuse a request from the Austrians for aid especially as he had given a solemn promise to the Emperor Francis before his death that he would come to the assistance of his "idiot son" or successor if misfortune should occur.[6] Nicholas was not the man to break his promise and in any case, he was being asked to defend the cause of order in the struggle against revolution which had begun in France in 1789. Nevertheless, just as be had been reluctant to intervene in the Danubian Principalities the previous year, he wished to be certain that Russia's own interests were directly threatened.

The increasing involvement of the Poles in Hungarian affairs provided Nicholas with the answer to any doubts which he may have had. Bem's successes in Transylvania were followed by reports of a threatened invasion of Galicia, possibly led by General Dembinski, another of the Poles who had joined the Hungarian cause. A Polish general was active in the Sardinian army and Nicholas had not forgotten the part played by the Poles in causing disturbances in the Danubian Principalities. It seemed to him that Hungary was about to become the centre of a general conspiracy led by Russia's eternal enemies, the Poles, against all that was sacred.[7] The Hungarian military successes were beginning to have a disturbing effect on the population of Russian Poland and accordingly Austria's request for aid must be granted for Russia's own safety.[8] In early 1848 Nicholas had spoken to an Austrian diplomat of his concern about the threat from Galica to Russian Poland[9] and he was to use the same phrase "une insurrection à mes

portes" to the French Ambassador who arrived in Warsaw as the campaign in Hungary was drawing to a close. In a conversation about the reasons for his intervention[10] Nesselrode was to compare the role of the Russian intervention force to that of a fire brigade sent to prevent the spread of a fire which had broken out in a neighbour's house.[11]

The Austrians were, of course, well aware of Nicholas' concern about the Poles and it seems quite probable that they deliberately played on his feelings by exaggerating the number of Poles who had enlisted in the Hungarian army. The official commentary which accompanied the Russian manifesto of 8th May 1849 announcing the intervention in Hungary referred to 20,000 Poles serving in the Hungarian army, whereas the true number was much less, possibly 3,000 or 4,000.

Besides defending the conservative principle, as Nicholas wrote to the Sultan of Turkey at the end of the campaign,[12] and protecting Russia from Polish inspired subversion, Nicholas was also anxious to ensure that Austria continued to play an active part in German affairs, especially in suppressing the revolutions which broke out in May in the smaller territories.[13] He was fearful of the possibility of Germany becoming united under the rule of his vacillating brother-in-law, Frederick William IV, even although the latter had refused the offer of the crown of a united Germany made by the Frankfurt Parliament. At the same time as he was agreeing to send a Russian army to Hungary, he was warning the King of Prussia not to fire on the Russian ships he had sent into the Baltic and to give in gracefully to the Danes on the Schleswig Holstein question. At one stage he even spoke to the French Ambassador of Russia and France making common cause if Germany were to be united under a ruler who was a threat to the rest of Europe.[14]

It has sometimes been suggested that Nicholas was interested in fostering the unity of the Slavs in the Austrian and Ottoman Empires and that this was a contributory factor in his decision to intervene in Hungary. This suggestion is quite incorrect and was contrary to one of Nicholas' cardinal principles that subjects had no right to rebel against their lawful ruler. Both the Croats and the Serbs in Hungary endeavoured to obtain Russian support in their struggles against the Hungarians, but received no encouragement. Nicholas approved of the military support given by the semi-independent Principality of Serbia to their fellow nationals, so long as it was directed to restoring the authority of the Austrian Emperor. By the same token he was prepared to support a proposal to recreate a Slovak legion, originally raised by the Austrians, to assist Paskevich in his operations in Northern Hungary. He also allowed the Russian commander in Transylvania to make use of the anti-Hungarian Romanian guerilla leader Avram Iancu. This approval was given for strictly military purposes, just as Nicholas had been prepared to make use of the Bulgarians in his campaign against Turkey in 1820/1829 without giving any encouragement to the political aspirations of the Bulgarians to establish an independent state. In Russia the Slavophiles were regarded with as much suspicion as any other persons who ventured to disagree with official policy. In March 1849 Nicholas ordered the arrest of Ivan Aksakov, the brother of the prominent Slavophile, Konstantin Aksakov, because of incautious remarks he had made in his correspondence. The Slavophiles were believed to have links with the Czecha who had organized the Slav Congress in Prague in June 1848. Nicholas forbade the few Russians invited to attend the

Congress and the only Russian present was the renegade Mikhail Bakunin who was subsequently to be arrested by the Austrians and handed over to the Russians after the collapse of the revolt in Saxony which took place in May 1849.

In short, Nicholas' reasons for intervening in Hungary were a combination of a commitment to the cause of absolutism and monarchical solidarity, combined with a desire to prevent the spread of Polish inspired subversion to Russian Poland and Western Russia. There seems little doubt that it was fear of the Poles which tipped the scales in favour of Austria's request.[15] Indeed, when the news of Görgey's surrender to the Russians on 13th August reached Warsaw Nicholas fell on his knees and thanked God that he no longer had to sacrifice Russian blood for a cause which was not directly the cause of Russia.[16] As Bismarck was to remark in his memoirs, Nicholas was an idealist with a chivalrous nature who never lost this characteristic throughout his reign.[17] But Austria's refusal to come to Russia's aid during the Crimean War was to show Nicholas that there is no such thing as gratitude in politics and that he had been right to have doubts about the wisdom of intervention.

The Reasons for Görgey's surrender to the Russian

In the immediate aftermath of the Hungarian War of Independence there was a violent revulsion against Görgey because of his decision to surrender to the Russians. The legend arose that Görgey was a traitor who had betrayed the Hungarian cause for Russian money and had saved his own life at the expense of his fellow officers. The debate about Görgey's treachery raged in Hungary up to his death in 1916 and it was only afterwards that a calmer and more detached view was taken of his action in 1849. In her study of the Russian intervention published in Moscow in 1935 R. Averbukh revived the accusation of treachery. On the basis of a draft note dated 24th July 1849 found in Paskevich's personal papers she made the assertion that Nicholas I had approved a proposal to bribe Görgey and that he received the money before he went into exile in Klangefurt.[18] A careful examination of the events leading up to the surrender reveals a rather different story.

The use of bribery to persuade an enemy to surrender is an old stratagem in warfare practised by all nations. When the 3rd Corps of the Russian army commanded by General Rüdiger occupied Cracow and Western Galicia as a preliminary to intervening in Hungary in May 1849, the Russians were presented with a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the divisions in the Hungarian leadership which had occurred after Kossuth had deposed the Habsburgs and issued the Declaration of Independence at Debrecen on 14th April. Thanks to the good offices of General Legeditsch, the military commandant of Cracow, General Rüdiger was able to have a personal interview with a paternal uncle of Görgey's, Johann Görgey, who was a retired hussar officer. In this interview, Görgey's uncle gave an account of his nephew's disapproval of the Declaration of Independence and the role of the Poles, especially Generals Bem and Dembinski, in the Hungarian army. It was clear to the Russians that there was a fundamental disagreement between Kossuth and Görgey. General Rüdiger asked

outright whether it would be possible to bribe Görgey to surrender and was told that he was not interested in money. If the Hungarian revolt had not taken place in 1848, Görgey would almost certainly have continued with his chemistry studies and not resumed his abandoned military career by joining the Hugarian army. An account of Rüdiger's interview was sent to Nicholas and Paskevich in Warsaw, as well as General Berg, the Russian liaison officer with the Austrian army.[19]

It is not surprising that General Rüdiger and his staff did not forget this interview and attempted to profit from it at a later stage in the campaign. The first person to do so was Colonel Khruvel, a resourceful cavalry officer, who when surrounded by a larger Hungarian force, attempted to negotiate a surrender with Görgey without any written authority at Rimaszombat (Rimavská Sobota) on 20th July 1849. Shortly afterwards, on 24th July, Görgey was to receive a similar letter from Rüdiger himself who was quite convinced that Görgey could be persuaded to surrender to the Russians, because he considered it impossible to defeat such a huge army.

Görgey duly informed his corps commanders and the Hungarian government of these approaches by the Russians. There followed a series of negotiations with the Russians which were to continue for the rest of the month and into August. It was in the course of these negotiations that Kossuth put forward the proposal that the Hungarian crown should be offered to a member of the Russian royal family.

Paskevich appears to heve been surprised by the actions of Colonel Khrulev and General Rüdiger who, as he subsequently informed the Tsar, had acted entirely on his own initiative without prior approval. At the same time he did not wish to let slip an opportunity of shortening the campaign by seeking a negotiated surrender with Görgey and his forces. As a first step he wrote to General Berg on 23rd June asking the Austrian Commander General Haynau for his views on how the Russians should react to the Hungarian offer of a surrender and some indication of the terms that might be offered. The text of this letter has not been published, but the text of Berg's reply, dated 28th July which was cleared with Haynau before despatch is available. In this letter Berg stated that Haynau agreed that any offer from Görgey should be accepted, since it might encourage other Hungarian units to follow his example. Görgey could be offered immunity and "a certain sum of money", but there could be no question of a general amnesty for any other Hungarian officers.[20]

Paskevich also informed Nicholas in Warsaw of what had occurred. The complete text of this letter which is dated 24th July has never been published, but parts of it are available in two Russian publications, the authors of which had access to official papers. In his letter Paskevich pointed out to the Tsar that the Austrians showed no desire to conciliate the Hungarians and that it appeared that the Hungarians were prepared to trust the Russians. He was worried about his own health and was afraid that the campaign would not he finished in eight weeks as he had originally hoped, but would drag on into the autumn. There were rumours that the Hungarians would be willing to accept a member of the Russian royal family as King of Hungary such as Nicholas' second son, the Grand Duke Constantine who was serving with the Russian army in Hungary. From a careful study of the published parts of the letter it seems possible that Paskevich

incorporated his proposal to bribe Görgey, making use of the draft note of the same which is quoted in Averbukh's book. However, in the published text of Nicholas' reply to this letter, dated 28th July, there is no reference to any such proposal. Instead, the Tsar gives his views on the future conduct of the war. He describes Colonel Khrulev's initiative as "amusing" and makes it clear to Paskevich that he has no wish to allow any member of the Russian royal family to become King of Hungary, or to annex any Hungarian territory.[21]

R. Averbukh does not quote any document in her book in support of her assertion that Nicholas approved the proposal to bribe Görgey. In fact, Nicholas had a curiously ambivalent attitude to this kind of activity and there is evidence from the diary of a senior Russian official writing in 1849 that he strongly disapproved of governments that resorted to this kind of stratagem, rather than risk open warfare.[22] Nor is there any justification for Averbukh's statement that the money was paid to Görgey after he surrendered before going into exile in Klagenfurt. On that occasion Görgey, who had no money of his own apart from the now worthless Kossuth notes, accepted gifts from Paskevich to cover expenses which amounted to 1100 half-imperials (5500 roubles). The amount proposed as a bribe mentioned in Paskevich's draft note of 24th July is far larger, 10,000 chervonets or 100,000 roubles. It was unfortunate for Görgey that the amount of money he received from Paskevich was grossly exaggerated, especially by the Hungarian emigrés who escaped and fled abroad after the war was over.

The explanation for Görgey's decision to surrender to the Russians is therefore not the simple one given by R. Averbukh, but is rather to be found in the fundamental difference in outlook between Görgey and Kossuth about Hungarian policy and the conduct of the war. As a former Habsburg officer and practical soldier, Görgey knew that wars were won by well-equipped and well-disciplined armies rather than by eloquent appeals to patriotism and constitutional rights. After the surrender he spoke freely to the Russian officers at Paskevich's headquarters about the reasons for his decision to surrender. One of the most interesting of these conversations is described in a letter sent on 29th August 1849 by one of Nicholas'aides-de-camp, Colonel Glinka, to the wife of the Russian Minister of War, Princess Chernysheva.[23] As soon as Görgey knew that Russia would intervene, he realized that the war was lost. The Tsar was not a man who indulged in half-measures and he would fight to the bitter end. Görgey believed he could have prolonged the war, but this would have ruined the country and in any event, he had no taste for guerilla warfare. The "Budapest lawyers" had other ideas and Kossuth's attempt to take over the supreme command only made matters worse, since he was ignorant of military matters. Görgey admitted that the decision to lay siege to the fortress of Buda was „the greatest mistake" which could have been made, since it prevented the Hungarians from following up the military successes they had achieved against the Hungarians in early April.[24]

In addition, Görgey did not approve of the Declaration of Independence proclaimed by Kossuth. Ever since the Declaration of Vác on 5th January 1849, he had made it clear to Kossuth that he disapproved of those who broke their oath to defend the constitution. The Declaration of Independence made it impossible to negotiate with the Austrians who were thirsting for the blood of the Hungarians.[25] It therefore seemed sensible to negotiate with the Russians who

appeared to be more well-disposed to the Hungarians in the hope that the Tsar and Paskevich would be able to alleviate their lot by interceding with the Austrians on their behalf.[26] Once Kossuth had handed over power to Görgey, it was possible to take this decision.

Although Paskevich had insisted on unconditional surrender, he had a certain amount of sympathy for the Hungarians and believed that Austria should carry out a policy of reconciliation in Hungary after the war was over in order to keep the Habsburg Empire in being. He also knew that Nicholas' normal policy in dealing with a revolt was to punish the ring-leaders and pardon those who had been led astray. Accordingly, after the surrender had taken place, he urged Nicholas to persuade the Austrians to grant an amnesty and wrote similar letters to Francis Joseph, Schwarzenberg and Haynau. Nicholas, realizing that the honour of the Russian Army was at stake, decided to send his eldest son Alexander to Vienna for a personal meeting with Francis Joseph in the hope that the young Emperor, with whom he believed he had established a special relationship, would be able to overcome the objections of his advisers to the granting of an amnesty. In his letter to the Austrian Emperor he offered to grant asylum to Görgey and assured him that appropriate measures would be taken to prevent him stirring up trouble in Hungary in the future.[27]

Unfortunately for Nicholas and Paskevich, the Austrians were not to be moved in their policy of firmness towards the Hungarians. In their eyes, those Hungarians who had broken their oath to their lawful ruler were rebels and did not deserve to be treated as ordinary prisoners-of-war. In the multi-national Habsburg Empire loyalty to the Emperor was the supreme virtue which had to be upheld at all costs. Consequently, in his replies to Nicholas and Paskevich, Francis Joseph rejected the idea of a general amnesty, but agreed to spare the life of Görgey who to be handed back to the Austrians and sent into exile in Klagenfurt in Carinthia. In due course, the Russians handed over their prisoners to the Austrians and a round of court-martial proceedings and other punishments began for those Hungarians who had previously served in the Habsburg Army. On 6th October, the anniversary of the revolt in Vienna and the murder of Count Latour, the Austrian Minister of War, thirteen Hungarian generals were executed at Arad. The Hungarian garrison in the fortress of Komárom (Komárno), commanded by General Klapka, was more fortunate; its members were allowed to leave and go abroad on 5th October when the fortress surrendered to the Austrians after several weeks of negotiation.

Nicholas was outragee when he received the news of the executions at Arad and instructed Nesselrode to make his views known to the Austrian government. He was particularly angry that the Austrians had executed generals who had surrendered to him and had been handed back to the Austrians with a recommendation for clemency. Paskevich and Rüdiger were equally angry and Paskevich even talked of handing back the Austrian decorations he had received. When Haynau was attacked by a hostile crowd during a visit to London the following year, the Russians in Warsaw could not conceal their delight at what had happened to the Austrian general who had executed the prisoners-of-war of his allies.[28] For Görgey, however, the harsh treatment meted out by the Austrians

to his fellow-Hungarians was far worse than he had expected. Many years later he was to admit that the wound it caused could never be healed.[29]

Bismarck believed that Görgey should have behaved like Cromwell and dissolved Parliament after Kossuth had dethroned the Habsburgs. Having become military dictator, he should then have tried to make peace with Austria before the Russian Army set foot in Hungary. Although Görgey had little respect for politicians, he was not cast in the mould of the Iron Chancellor. Nicholas, for his part, seems to have believed that the granting of an amnesty would have made it easier for Francis Joseph to deal with the nationality problem in the Habsburg Empire. As usual, he over-estimated the influence that a sovereign could exert on policy, especially when the dominant force in the Austrian government was a person like Schwarzenberg who was determined to teach the Hungarians a lesson. Nevertheless, Nicholas' faith in Francis Joseph remained unshaken by this episode and he continued to support him in the struggle with Prussia for hegemony in Germany in the following year. Only later did he realize the extent of his misjudgement of the nature of his relationship with Francis Joseph.

Lord Palmerston and the British Government's Policy of Non-intervention

One of the reasons which caused Nicholas to intervene in Hungary was the virtual certainty that there would be no opposition from the British government. Despite his liberal principles and a direct appeal from a personal envoy of Kossuth who had been sent to London, Palmerston was neither prepared to recognise the independence of Hungary, nor to oppose the Russian intervention. David Urquhart, who had been dismissed from the British diplomatic service by Palmerston and was a passionate Turcophile and Russophobe, took a great dislike to the Foreign Secretary. When he became a Member of Parliament, he attempted to have Palmerston impeached for high treason, alleging that he was in the pay of the Russians. The charge was ludicrous and the Foreign Secretary had little difficulty in refuting it. A more sophisticated explanation for Palmerston's conduct put forward by some writers, is that he was a hypocrite who secretly favoured the cause of reaction. This charge has been made in recent times by the Hungarian historian of the diplomatic background to the Russian intervention, E. Andics, who has written that, although Palmerston liked to give the impression in public that he was a mortal enemy of Nicholas I, he was, in reality, a supporter of the tsar's counter-revolutionar. policy; hence his unwillingness to do anything to help Hungary.[30] In support of this argument much use has been made of a few words spoken by Palmerston to the Russian ambassador in London, Baron Brunnow, at a court function given by Queen Victoria which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps. The words used were: "Finish it off quickly."[31] The true explanation of Palmerston's attitude to the Russian intervention is much more complex and cannot be understood on the basis of a short sentence.

In a speech made in the House of Commons on 1st. March 1848, Palmerston made his famous declaration that Great Britain had no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies. Besides being the champion of justice and right, the most

important task for a British Foreign Secretary was to protect the political and commercial interests of Great Britain.

British commercial and political interests were wide-ranging and the protection of these interests in the Middle East and India inevitably brought Britain into conflict with Russian in Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Palmerston always regarded the Treaty of London of 1841 which finally settled the question of the Straits as one of his greatest diplomatic triumphs, because it would keep Russia in check. When trouble broke out in the Danubian Principalities and Russian troops occupied them during the latter half of 1848, Palmerston declined to recognise the independence of Wallachia, nor did he give any encouragement to Stratford Canning's pleas for some kind of action in support of Turkey. As a former Secretary of State for War he had a keen appreciation of military realities and immediately grasped that the Russian occupation of the Danubian Principalities was closely linked with the troubled situation in Hungary. It was not the first step in another Russian campaign to gain possession of Constantinople. There was nothing that Great Britain could do to prevent it; the only possible course of action was to encourage the Turks to appeal to the other European powers, if the Russians exerted too much pressure on them. Despite the Russian success in renegotiating the terms of its occupation of the Danubian Principalities in April 1849 by the Convention of Balta Liman, Palmerston did not waver from this line of conduct; throughout the campaign in Hungary he exhorted Stratford Canning to urge the Turkish government, whose sympathies lay with Hungary, to remain neutral. Nor did he respond to the pleas of the French government who were perplexed by Palmerston's apparent indifference to the long-term implications of the Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia for the future of the Ottoman Empire.

Although Palmerston was sympathetic to the Polish cause and would have liked Nicholas to restore to Russian Poland the constitution and privileges granted by Alexander I, which were withdrawn after the 1830 revolt, he had no wish to see Russia and Prussia go to war over the future of Prussian Poland. In April 1848 he instructed the British Ambassador in Saint Petersburg to convey his views to Nesselrode, but to add that, despite Britain's sympathy for the Polish cause, the British government would give no support to any attempt made by Polish emigrés to cause trouble in Poland. Apart from Belgium, Great Britain and Russia were the only countries in Europe which had not been affected by the revolutionary upsurge of 1848 and Palmerston had no wish to see this situation altered.[32] As for France, there could be no question of organizing a coalition against her and not recognizing the new government which had replaced that of Louis Philippe, in accordanrce with the usual British practice of recognizing a regime which was firmly established. Nicholas accepted this and later in the year was content to allow Palmerston to mediate between Denmark and Prussia on the Schleswig-Holstein question, since the Foreign Secretary, like the Tsar, disapproved of Prussia's policy and attempts to gain possession of Danish territory.

Throughout 1848 much of Palmerston's energy was devoted to attempts to assist Austria in solving her problems in Northern Italy. He believed that Austria should give up Lombardy and Venetia and consolidate its position north of the

Alps. As always, he was anxious that France should not become involved in a war with Austria over Italy. Palmerston's efforts to mediate on the Italian question were not appreciated by Schwarzenberg and by the end of 1848 relations between Austria and Great Britain were far from cordial. Queen Victoria, who strongly disapproved of Palmerston's anti-Austrian policy on Italy, was particularly annoyed that no special envoy from the Austrian royal family was sent to London to notify her of the abdication of the Emperor Ferdinand and the accession of Francis Joseph.

In early 1849 Palmerston's attention was again drawn to the Danubian Principalities when Russia used them as a base for a short-lived and unsuccessful incursion into Transylvania in support of Austria. Russia's continuing occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia aroused his latent misgivings about her long-term aims in the Middle East. Accordingly, he directed Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador in Vienna, to remind the Austrian government of the threat to her security in the East posed by the presence of the Russian troops in the Danubian Principalities. At the same time Palmerston realised that, for military reasons, Russia would not withdraw its troops until Austria had suppressed the revolt in Hungary. In his view, Austria had no choice but to turn to Russia for assistance, just as a bad swimmer clung to a good one when in difficulty. From the practical point of view there was nothing that Great Britain could do to prevent Russia from sending an army into Hungary; no fair words could outweigh the fine divisions of an autocrat.[33] The sooner a Russian intervention was over and the situation in Hungary was restored, the better for Europe. It was a realistic appraisal of the situation and entirely in line with the Foreign Secretary's general policy of keeping Britain out of a war in Europe. Even although Nesselrode had advised the Tsar that this would be the likely British reaction to an intervention in Hungary, there were those in Russia who found it difficult to believe in the Foreign Secretary's tacit support of the Russian action. One such person was Nicholas' wife who wrote to Princess Lieven in London after the news of Görgey's surrender reached Saint Petersburg, that Palmerston must be upset at the defeat of his "dear Hungarians."[34]

In Hungary Kossuth remained convinced that the prospect of a Russian intervention would cause Britain and France to come to his aid. His two envoys, Ferenc Pulszky in London and László Teleki in Paris, did their best to win support for the Hungarian cause. Although Palmerston was prepared to meet Pulszky privately, there was no question of reversing Britain's official policy, which was fully endorsed by Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, there was a good deal of popular support for the Hungarian cause which the government found it difficult to ignore. On 21st, July in a debate in the House of Commons shortly before Parliament adjourned, Palmerston defended the government's policy of non-intervention. While making it clear that he regarded the separation of Hungary from the Habsburg Empire as a great calamity because it would upset the balance of power in Europe, he also expressed the hope that Austria would settle its differences with Hungary when the fighting was over.

At the beginning of August, when it was apparent that Hungary stood little chance of resisting the overwhelming strength of the Austrian and Russian armies, Palmerston sent a long despatch to the British Ambassador in Vienna. In his view,

the disarming of Hungary would not remove the fundamental causes of discontent in that country; the only solution was to restore the constitution. If Austria was not prepared to be conciliatory, Hungary would continue to be a political cancer which would corrode the vital elements of the existence of the Habsburg Empire. Lord Ponsonby was therefore instructed to offer British mediation in an attempt to solve the problem.[35] In an accompanying private letter Palmerston elaborated on these official instructions. He was under no illusion that the ambassador would be faced with a difficult task. The Austrians would resent the British offer of mediation, but the future of Hungary was too important to be ignored by the rest of Europe. Ponsonby should emphasize the danger from Russia which would be the only country to benefit from a further weakening of Austria. Palmerston also informed the ambassador that he would read out his official despatch to Count Colloredo, the Austrian Ambassador in London.[36]

Schwarzenberg, who had been rejected as a possible Austrian Ambassador in London by Palmerston in the '30s, was enraged by the Foreign Secretary's presumption and the British offer of mediation. Nor had he forgotten an earlier clash with Palmerston in 1833 when both had been involved with King William of Holland in attempts to settle the Belgium question. Lord Ponsonby, who had no sympathy for the Hungarian cause and had consistently supported the conservative elements in the Habsburg Empire, was much embarrassed by Palmerston's initiative and the task he had been given. He urged the Foreign Secretary not to persist in his efforts to persuade the Austrian government to adopt a conciliatory policy towards Hungary, since it was clear that they had no intention of doing so. As for the danger from Russia, he reminded Palmerston that the Danubian Principalities were a reason why Austria would always have reservations about allying itself exclusively with Russia. After an interval of several weeks, Schwarzenberg sent a formal reply to the Austrian Ambassador in London rejecting the British offer of mediation. Austria did not presume to offer Great Britain advice about the conduct of its affairs in Canada or Ireland and Britain's advice about Austria's future policy towards Hungary was neither welcome nor necessary.

But that was not the end of the matter. After Görgey's surrender and the joint Austrian and Russian *démarche* to Turkey for the surrender of the Hungarian and Polish refugees, Palmerston yielded to the insistent demands of Stratford Canning for action, in concert with France, in resisting Russian and Austrian pressure on Turkey. Units of the British and French Mediterranean fleets were despatched to Turkish waters to lend support. Palmerston was, in any case, incensed by reports of Austrian brutality in the territories occupied by its troops and was to describe the Austrians as the "greatest brutes that ever called themselves by the undeserved name of civilized men".[37] Europe appeared to be on the brink of war, but Nicholas who was equally incensed by the Austrian execution of the thirteen Hungarian generals at Arad dropped his demands for the Poles and, in due course, the Austrians followed suit. The British and French naval vessels were withdrawn and the crisis came to an end.

Once again Queen Victoria found herself disagreeing with Palmerston about his policy and protested to the Prime Minister about Britain's support for foreign revolutionaries abroad. In a spirited reply to Lord John Russel, Palmerston

defended the Hungarian revolutionaries and compared them to those in Britain who had carried out the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Austria's action in seeking Russian aid to restore order in Hungary could only be compared to England calling on the aid of France to preserve the union with Scotland.[38] Nor did Palmerston spare Ponsonby who had also protested to the Prime Minister about the tone of some of the letters he had received from the Foreign Secretary. In his own reply Palmerston rebuked Ponsonby for his failure to support the British government's policy on the refugee question, while Lord John Russel chid the ambassador for taking „a very Austrian view of the politics of Europe".[39] Nesselrode, for his part, although relieved that a possible European war had been averted, was convinced that Palmerston's "criminal action" had been carried out in a spirit of revenge as a result of the Russian victory in Hungary.[40]

Palmerston's latent sympathy for Hungary continued to show itself on other occasions. In September 1850 Queen Victoria insisted that Great Britain should apologise to Austria for the hostile reception given to General Haynau when he visited Barclay's Brewery in London. Palmerston threatened to resign but, in the face of the Prime Minister's support for the Queen, he withdrew his threat and sent a suitably apologetic note to the Austrian government. There was further trouble during Kossuth's visit to Great Britain during the autumn of 1851 after his release from exile in Turkey, where, as Palmerston knew, the Austrians had plotted to have him abducted and brought to trial in Austria. As a result of pressure from Queen Victoria and the Prime Minister, Palmerston abandoned his original plan to receive Kossuth who, in his view, was a man who had stood up for the rights of his country. Instead, he received an address from a radical delegation wich praised the Foreign Secretary for his services to liberty in general and Kossuth in particular. In the same address the Austrian and Russian monarchs were described as odious and detestable tyrants. Such conduct only served to increase Palmerston's unpopularity with Queen Victoria and at the end of 1851 Palmerston was finally forred to resign as Foreign Secretary, when he recognised Louis Napoleon as Emperor after his *coup d'état* on his own initiative. But it was not long before he was back in office and towards the end of the Crimean War Queen Victoria had no choice but to accept Palmerston as her Prime Minister. Apart from a short break in 1858/1859, he was to remain in that office until his death in 1865.

Palmerston's decision not oppose the Russian intervention in Hungary was taken on the basis of his judgement that the Habsburg Empire, provided it was reformed, was an essential element in the balance of power in Europe. It is unfortunate that his selfasserting manner and brusque speech earned him many enemies both at home and abroad, so that his advice was often ignored. But there can be no doubt that the British statesman who lost his Tory seat in Parliament because of his support for the Reform Bill of 1832, was sincere in his belief in the cause of constitutional rule rather than absolutism.

Financial Aspects of the Intervention

When Nicholas agreed to offer Austria military aid in suppressing the Hungarian revolt, his only stipulation was that Austria should pay for the cost of the supplies, transport and medical care which the Russian army would require. This decision that Austria should refund to Russia only a proportion of the actual cost of the intervention was taken against a background of financial difficulties in both countries which has been somewhat neglected in historical writing on the intervention.

In the first half of the nineteenth century both Austria and Russia found it difficult to balance their budgets in the aftermath of the heavy military expenditure both states had incurred during the Napoleonic Wars. Both countries resorted to foreign loans to assist in solving their financial problems, but Russia enjoyed one advantage over Austria. During the reign of Nicholas I there was a huge increase in the production of gold in Russia. Halfway through his reign in 1837 the amount of gold produced had increased from a small amount in 1825 to 402 puds (17669 lbs. worth £900,673); by the end of 1848 the corresponding figures were 1768 puds (63,667 lbs. worth nearly £3 million). A currency reform carried out in 1843 also contributed to a brief period of financial stability which helped Russia to recover from the heavy costs of the wars with Persia, Turkey and Poland incurred at the beginning of Nicholas' reign. By contrast Austria had few reserves of precious metal on which to draw and despite attempts to reduce military expenditure, by the end of 1847 the total foreign debt had reached 1,131 million gulden (about £113 million), while the silver reserves of 20 million gulden (£2 million) covered only one-eighth of the total amount of paper money in circulation which was 160 million gulden (£16 million).

In January 1848, before Europe became engulfed in a wave of revolutions, Metternich decided to turn to Russia for financial assistance. In conditions of great secrecy and unknown to the Austrian *Chargé d'Affaires* in Saint Petersburg, an official from the Austrian Ministry of Finance was sent to Russia to negotiate a loan. At first Nicholas was prepared to give favorable consideration to the Austrian request and at the beginning of March Austria was granted a loan of 6 million silver roubles (about £960,000). However, as a result of the revolutions in Vienna and elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire, the loan was cancelled, before any money was actually sent to Vienna; Nicholas had no intention of lending money to the government of a country which had now become a doubtful ally in the fight against revolution. Besides this, Nicholas was faced with the practical problem of finding extra money to finance the increased military expenditure he had authorized in the aftermath of the disturbances in Western Europe. A request from Denmark for financial assistance in its struggle with Prussia over Schleswig-Holstein was to be rejected a few weeks after the cancellation of the Russian loan to Austria.

The outbreak of revolution in Vienna caused a run on the banks as anxious citizens sought to convert paper money into metal coins. Before long silver coins disappeared from circulation and had to be replaced by paper money. In his speech to the Hungarian Diet in Pozsony (Bratislava) on 3rd March 1848 Kossuth included a demand for the setting up of a separate Hungarian Ministry of Finance

and the following month he became Minister of Finance in the first Hungarian government formed by Count Lajos Batthyány. On assuming office, Kossuth wasted no time in altering the methods of financing Hungarian government expenditure which had previously existed. His most important act was an attempt to create by means of a state loan and other methods a reserve of 5 million forints in bullion on the basis of which he could issue Hungarian banknotes to the value of 12 1/2 million forints. The authorities in Vienna were opposed to the issue of separate Hungarian bank-notes, but at the beginning of August Archduke Stephen, the Hungarian Palatine, was persuaded to agree to the issue of 1 and 2 forint notes which the Hungarians were now able to print on their own press, independently of Vienna. (1 and 2 gulden notes had been issued in Vienna on 1st May 1848.) An Austrian attempt to prevent the circulation of the Hungarian notes was quickly followed by Kossuth's decision to ban the use of the Austrian 1 and 2 gulden notes in Hungary. Kossuth then followed up this decision by the first unconstitutional act of the Hungarian government which was the issue of Hungarian 5 forint notes in September, backed by a loan of 61 million forints approved by the Hungarian National Assembly in August, but not ratified either by the Palatine or the Emperor in Vienna. The issue of 10 and 100 forint notes followed shortly afterwards, as well as 15 and 30 pengő (kreuzer) notes in January 1849 to remedy the shortage of copper coins used as small change.

When Schwarzenberg took office at the end of 1848, he soon became aware of the parlous state of Austrian finances and readily agreed that a further attempt should be made to seek a loan from Russia. In a letter sent to Buol-Schauenstein, the newly appointed Austrian Ambassador to Russia, he wrote that if the ambassador were to succeed in obtaining a loan, he would have rendered Austria the greatest service a diplomat could give his country.[41] Unfortunately for the Austrian government, the decision to renew their approach to Russia for financial assistance was made at an inopportune moment. As a result of the increase in military expenditure made in the first half of 1848 Nicholas had been worrying about the 1849 budget for some time. He did not know how he was going to be able to manage and in November he wrote to Paskevich that it was possible that Russia would have to seek a loan abroad.[42]

After arriving in Saint Petersburg, Boul-Schauenstein duly raised the question of a loan during his first audience with the Tsar, but did not meet with an enthusiastic response. Subsequently Nesselrode, who was to act as the ambassador's intermediary in his negotiations with The Russian Ministry of Finance, admitted that Austria's request was badly timed because of Russia's own financial problems. However, the negotiations continued throughout the first weeks of 1849 without any satisfaction for Austria. The Russian Minister of Finance refused to strengthen the silver reserve of the Austrian National Bank by a transfer of silver coins from the Russian reserves. Russia's subsequent offer of a 7 year loan in French government stocks was rejected by Austria. During one audience with Buol-Schauenstein, Nicholas summed up the matter with characteristic bluntness and brevity: "As for money, I can't give any to Austria; I need it too much myself."[43]

When Windischgraetz and the Austrian army entered Hungary and occupied Budapest at the beginning of 1849, they found that the notes issued by Kossuth

were being used throughout the country. In the absence of any clear instructions from Vienna, Windischgraetz had no alternative but to allow his troops to be paid in this money. Eventually the Austrian Minister of Finance decided that the Hungarian 1 and 2 forint notes which had been issued legally with the backing of a bullion reserve could be exchanged for their Austrian equivalents whereas all the other Hungarian notes were declared to be illegal and should be withdrawn from circulation. By this time the metallic reserve of the Hungarian National Bank left behind in Budapest after the Hungarian government and bank-note printing press had moved to Debrecen in January, was transferred to Vienna. The Austrian delay in issuing instructions to Windischgraetz about the Hungarian notes proved to be fatal. As soon as the printing press was reassembled in Debrecen. Kossuth gave orders for more paper money to be printed, but was careful not to exceed the credit which had been voted for this purpose. The country was flooded with more Hungarian notes. It is not surprising that in the period before the Russian intervention, Baron Kübeck, a senior Austrian official sent to Budapest to discuss the Hungarian situation with Windischgraetz in the middle of March 1849, noted gloomily in his diary that Austrian finances were on the brink of a catastrophe.[44]

The Austrian request for a loan from Russia was soon overtaken by the more urgent request for military aid in suppressing the revolt in Hungary. But even in these negotiations, Austria's financial problems played their part. One of the reasons which lay behind Austria's request to Paskevich to despatch General Panyutin's composite division by rail from Cracow to prevent a possible Hungarian attack on Vienna was the fear that the Austrian precious metal reserve of 30 million gulden (£3 million) stored in the capital might fall into the hands of the Hungarians.[45] After Nicholas had agreed to grant military aid, officials from Austria and Russia set to work to draw up an agreement about the division of costs between the two countries. The agreement was signed in Warsaw on 10th June and was ratified by Schwarzenberg in Vienna on 21st June, shortly after the intervention had begun.

Meanwhile Nicholas had to decide how he was to find the extra money needed to finance the intervention in Hungary. There had been a budget deficit of 32 million roubles in 1848, largely as a result of increased military expenditure and a shortfall in revenue caused by a poor harvest, widespread summer fires in the provinces and a serious cholera epidemic. Despite the authorization of extra credit, withdrawals from the precious metal reserves and the sale of gold abroad, Nicholas found himself having to consider raising a loan abroad, as he had done several times earlier in his reign. In June 1849 negotiations began with Baring Brothers in London through their partners Hope & Co. in Amsterdam, but at the beginning of July they were broken of, since it appeared that the Hungarian campaign would soon be over. However, on 22nd August shortly after Görgey's surrender to the Russians, a further 21 million roubles was raised by the issue of a new series of credit notes. The official decree referred to the extra expenditure caused by military operations abroad. By the end of the year it was apparent that the 1849 budget deficit would be even larger than in 1848, since the increase in military expenditure alone was 38 1/2 million roubles more than the original estimate. Accordingly, Nicholas decided to revive the negotiations with Baring

Brothers by requesting a loan of £5 1/2 million (31 million silver roubles) for the completion of the railway from Saint Petersburg to Moscow, the construction of which had begun in 1842. The official decree about the loan was signed on 21st December 1849. A few days later, on 9th January 1850, Baring Brothers received their first notification of the Tsar's decision when a bank official from Saint Petersburg visited them in London and handed over a letter and a copy of the decree. In the face of a threat that the Russian government would go elsewhere in the City, if the loan were not granted, Baring brothers, after consultation with their partners in Amsterdam, acceded to the request.

It was generally believed in liberal circles in Britain that the true purpose of the Russian loan was to finance the cost of the intervention in Hungary, especially as the Russian government never published details of its budget. The Russian historian A. S. Nifontov states this as a fact and asserts on the basis of documents in Russian archives that Nicholas approved the insertion of a false figure for Russian military expenditure (60 1/2 million as opposed to 99 million roubles) in the 1850 budget estimates submitted to the State Council for approval at the end of December 1849. One of the reasons for this decision was a wish to prevent the true size of the 1849 Russian deficit becoming widely known and affecting the loan negotiations which were about to begin the following month.[46] After the loan had been granted, the British Ambassador in Saint Petersburg discussed the matter with the Russian authorities and was assured that the loan had been requested because of an increase in the cost of building the railway compared with the original estimate.[47] In 1851 the railway was completed and opened to the public by Nicholas.

After the wars in Hungary and Italy were over, Austria, like Russia, also found it necessary to raise a loan abroad, since the raising of credit by domestic loans was not sufficient to meet the extra military expenditure incurred during 1848 and 1849. But the immediate problem for the Austrian government was the liquidation of the debt they had incurred in seeking military aid from Russia.

As soon as the fighting was over, Paskevich ordered his own commanders to submit their accounts. The accounts for the 5th Corps which had fought in Transylvania were submitted separately. The Austrians appointed Count Ferenc Zichy, the civil commissioner for Hungary attached to Paskevich, to take charge of the negotiations on their side. Paskevich estimated that the war had cost Russia 10 million roubles. He had not forgotten the length of time that Austria had taken to settle its accounts with Russia after the Napoleonic Wars (they were not settled until 1821) and he hoped that Austria would keep its side of the agreement signed in Warsaw in June. It soon became apparent that Austria would find it difficult to pay off the debt immediately and after much discussion with Zichy, Nicholas finally agreed that Russia would ask Austria to repay 4 1/2 million roubles, of wich half a million was the estimated cost of the operations in Transylvania. In the event, the amount of the account submitted to the Austrian government in February 1850 for the Russian operations in Hungary and Galicia was 3,483, 236 roubles 96 1/2 kopecks to which the sum of 200,000 roubles was to be added for the operations in Transylvania, making a grand total of 3,683,236 roubles and 96 1/2 kopecks. On 2nd April 1850 a special supplement to the agreement of 10 June 1849 was signed in Warsaw. Under its terms Austria agreed to pay 3 million

roubles in cash in three annual instalments with interest. The balance of 683,236 roubles 96 1/2 kopecks was to be paid in salt from the mines at Bochnia and Wieliczka in Galicia. Thus the debt was not finally settled until 31st July 1853, shortly before the outbreak of the Crimean War.[48]

In fact, the official figure for the extra military expenditure incurred by Russia in 1849 was 24,838,677 roubles (about £ 6 million). Nicholas' decision to reduce this amount to a sum slightly less than 4 million roubles (about £700,000) displayed a degree of generosity which was, to quote the words of the British Consul-General in Warsaw, "all the more deserving of notice, as it is well-known that the Russian available funds are anything but abundant".[49] Count Zichy was delighted with the success of the negotiations and was sent to Saint Petersburg to convey Francis Joseph's personal thanks to the Tsar.[50] But there were others who considered that Nicholas had been foolish to settle for such a small amount. These persons included Paskevich who had warned Nicholas during the negotiations that Austria was displaying ingratitude and was showing reluctance to sign any agreement.

The bitter remarks that were made in Russia during the Crimean War about Austria's ingratitude reflected Russian feelings about the refusal of another Christian country to come to the aid of a country engaged in a war with the Turks. Russian resentment at Austria's conduct on this occassion becomes even more understandable in the light of Nicholas' generosity at the end of the Hungarian campaign and it is not surprising that neither he nor Paskevich ever forgave the Austrians for their behaviour.

Some Remarks on Sources

Research into the Russian intervention in Hungary inevitably entails the critical evaluation of historical sources in various languages which have been published in various countries. Some of the problems connected with this process will now be examined in further detail.

One of the most useful sources for the actual campaign are the memoirs written by some of the Russian officers who took part in it. A few were published as books, but the majority are to be found in the serious Russian periodicals published in the second half of the 19th century. There was much writing on the War of Independence in the Hungarian press during the same period which included translations into Hungarian of memoirs written by Russian officers. Regrettably much of the material published in periodicals such as *"Vasárnapi Újság"* in the eighties of the last century appears to be lacking in authenticity, since an exhaustive search in the appropriate places has failed to locate the Russian originals from which the translations are said to have been made. One example of this type of material which has been widely used by historians over the years are the memoirs written by Baron Osten-Korff, described as one of Paskevich's adjutants, which was published in *"Vasárnapi Újság"* in 1886. Space does not permit the citing of other examples of similar material which was also published in other periodicals besides *"Vasárnapi Újság"*, for example, *"Egyetértés"* and *"Pesti Napló"*.[51]

A second problem is the selective editing of official documents before publication. The following example illustrates the problem. As has already been mentioned, the Russians were prepared to subsidize and make use of the Rumanian guerrilla leader, Avram Iancu, in their operations in Transylvania. In a conversation with E. Poujade, the French consul in Bucharest, after the campaign was over, General Lüders, the commander of the Russian 5th Corps, stated that he could not have succeeded without Iancu's assistance. This statement was included in Poujade's official despatch to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris and in a book he subsequently wrote which drew extensively on his official reports. However, it is omitted from the text of the same despatch published in the great "Humurzaki" collection of documents on the History of Romania.[52]

A third problem arises from the effects of the strict censorship of historical material published in Russia before 1917. One of the most useful sources for the reign of Nicholas I are the memoirs of Baron M. A. Korf, a senior official who, inter alia, produced the final version of Nicholas' manifesto on the intervention in Hungary published on 8th May 1849 which was originally drafted by the Tsar himself. These memoirs were carefully censored by Alexander II before publication and appeared in print in the Russian periodical *"Russkaya Starina"* in the years 1899/1900. A Soviet historian who was able to examine the original manuscript material in the '20s reported that it contained many lines or pages which had been blacked out; in addition, many passages were marked with the instruction "not to be printed".[53] The difference between the printed version and the original is clearly demonstrated in the following example:

a) *Version extracted from original*

(Published as footnote on page 72 of A. M. Zaionchkovsky, *Vostochnaya Voyna,* Volume I, Saint Petersburg, 1908.)

"In his views on the method of carrying out military operations the sovereign was a firm opponent of various kinds of illegal military stratagems, such as the bribing of one's enemies and other ruses which were so often tolerated by civilized states and spoke 'with extreme loathing' of a government which preferred to resort to bribery instead of risking cruel bloodshed."

b) *Printed version*

(Published in *Russkaya Starina,* Volume 102, 1900, p. 272)

"The sovereign spoke with extreme loathing of Bem's action and the conduct of the insurgents who had agreed to accept the money offered to them, but approved the instruction of the Austrian government which had preferred to resort to bribery, instead of risking cruel bloodshed."

The above few examples illustrate some of the problems which face the historian seeking to write an objective account of a subject which is as sensitive as the Russian intervention in Hungary. It is clear that the most careful scrutiny is necessary in order to arrive at some understanding of the facts.

Conclusion

The Russian intervention in Hungary was one of the most significant events that took place during the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849. Its success had an unfortunate effect on Nicholas who became even more convinced of his own omnipotence and even less willing to listen to argument.[54] This judgement by one of the Tsar's closest adviers, A. S. Menshikov, the Minister of the Navy, is echoed by Lord Bloomfield, the British Ambassador to Russia, who had his first audience with Nicholas on 17th December 1849 after his return from leave in mid-October. (The delay was caused by the refugee crisis in Turkey.) In a private letter to Palmerston sent two days afterwards, the ambassador wrote that the "trial of 1849" had succeeded beyond the Tsar's expectations and that he now believed he could "dictate the law to a great portion of Europe." Nicholas seemed to be completely unaffected by the political changes which had taken place and appeared to be more convinced than ever of the "superiority of absolute government and the irresistibilty of his vast power".[55] Despite these words, even Lord Bloomfield seemed over-awed by the sheer size of the Russian army and after receiving a report on it from his French colleague, General de La Moricière, wrote to Palmerston of its great efficiency.[56] The Crimean War was to prove to be a greater test for the Russian army than the eight week campaign in Hungary.

Besides over-estimating his military power, Nicholas also over-estimated his political influence. It was Nicholas' misfortune that he became the ruler of Russia in an age of change, just as Philip II became ruler of Spain in an age of dissolving faith. Nicholas completely failed to understand that ideas could not be kept out of Russia in the age of the railway and the steamship. Nor could he comprehend the nature of a constitutional monarchy and that in the Europe which had emerged after the Napoleonic Wars relations between states could no longer be conducted on the basis of personal relationships between sovereigns, as had been possible in the previous century. The point was made to him by Queen Victoria in a reply she sent to one of the Tsar's personal appeals shortly before the outbreak of the Crimean War;

"Whatever the purity of the motives which direct the actions of a sovereign of even the most elevated character, Your Majesty knows that personal qualities are not sufficient in international transactions by which a state binds itself towards another in solemn engagements."[57]

Thus it came about that four years after his intervention in Hungary Nicholas found himself, as Nesselrode had warned him, fighting a war against Great Britain, France, Turkey and Sardinia while his erstwhile allies Austria and Prussia remained neutral. Even more ironically he found himself wondering how he could best exploit any disturbances that might break out in Hungary in the course of the war in order to make Austria carry out his wishes.[58] It was an outcome to his intervention in Hungary which must have seemed utterly remote on the evening of 21st April 1849, as he sat in his study on the first floor of the Grand Palace in the Kremlin, looking out on the river.

Notes

1. Lord Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 18 August 1849. (*Aberdeen Papers,* Add. Mss. 43053, Vol. XV.)
2. *Edinburgh Review,* April 1847, Vol. CCXXII, p. 292.
3. Queen Victoria to King Leopold, 11 June 1844. (*Letters of Queen Victoria,* Vol. II, p. 17, London 1908).
4. J. B. Capefigue *Les Diplomates Européens,* Vol. I., p. 357, Paris 1843.
5. *Illustrated London News,* 24 August 1844, p. 118.
6. *Seymour Diaries,* Vol. XV., 17 October 1851 (Add. Mss. 60305) and Seymour to Palmerston, No. 47 of 20 October 1851 (FO 65/395)
7. Nicholas to Paskevich, 25 April 1849. (A. G. Shcherbatov, *General Fel'dmarshal Knyaz' Pakevich, Ego Zhizn' i Deyatel'nost',* Vol. VI., p. 281, Saint Petersburg 1888.)
8. *Zapiski Barona M. A. Korfa.* (*Russkaya Starina,* 1900, Vol. 102, pp. 40/43.)
9. De Guichen, *Les Grandes Questions Européennes,* Vol. I., p. 79, Paris 1925.
10. E. Bapst, *L'Empereur Nicolas Ier et la Deuxième République Française,* pp. 73/74, Paris 1898.
11. Nesselrode to Metternich, 18 February 1850. (E. Andics *Metternich und die Frage Ungarns,* p. 332, Budapest 1973.)
12. De Guichen, op. cit., p. 414.
13. Buchanan to Palmerston, No. 168 of 10 May 1849. (FO 65/364).
14. E. Bapst, *Les Origines de la Guerre de Crimée,* p. 78, Paris 1892.
15. This is the judgement of the British Ambassador to Russia Sir H. Seymour, writing three years after the event. (Seymour to Malmesbury, No. 44 of 8 April 1852, FO 65/408.)
16. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 25 August 1849, quoting a letter from her nephew, K. K. Benckendorff, one of the tsar's A. D. Cs., who was present in Nicholas' study in Warsaw, when the news of Görgey's surrender arrived. (*Aberdeen Papers,* Add. Mss. 43053, Vol. XV.)
17. Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen,* Vol. I., pp. 217/218, Stuttgart 1898.
18. R. A. Averbukh, *Tsarskaya Interventsiya v Bor'be s Vengerskoy Revolyutsiey,* pp. 166/176, Moscow 1935.
19. A. K. Baumgarten, *Dnevnik 1849 goda.* (*Zhurnal Imperatorskago Russkago Voennago Istoricheskago Obshchestva,* 1901, Vol. 4, pp. 18/19.) This event is also mentioned briefly in the memoirs of Rüdiger's adjutant, F. Grigorov. (See *Russkaya Starina,* 1898, Vol. 94, p. 494.)
20. P. K. Men'kov, *Zapiski,* Vol. III., pp. 261/262, Saint Petersburg 1898.
21. The published parts of Paskevich's letter of 24 July 1849 to Nicholas can be found in Shcherbatov, op. cit., pp. 125/128 and I. Oreus, *Opisanie Vengerskoy Voyny,* Appendices (*Prilozheniya,* pp. 98 and 101. For Nicholas' reply of 28 July 1849, see Shcherbatov, op. cit., pp. 314/317.
22. A. M. Zaionchkovsky, *Vostochnaya Voyna 1853/1856 gg.,* Vol. I, Footnote p. 72 quoting the unpublished version of the diary of Baron Korf. (Saint Petersburg 1908.) See also C. de Grunwald, *La Vie de Nicolas Ier,* p. 248, Paris 1946, for Nicholas' views on intervening with a secret subvention in the affairs of Switzerland in 1847.
23. An extract from Glinka's letter is quoted in L. Islavin, *Documents: Nicolas Ier et Francois-Joseph,* (*Le Monde Slave,* 1929, pp. 455/456.) There is also a brief reference to the same conversation in the diary of Baron L. P. Nikolai, another of the tsar's A. D. Cs. See *Russkaya Starina,* Vol. XV, 1877, p. 403.
24. A. Görgey, *Kratky Obzor Voennykh Deystviy v Verkhney Vengrii,* (*Voenny Sbornik,* March 1859, p. 242.).
25. E. Hanslick, *Aus Meinem Leben,* Vol. I., p. 180 (Berlin 1894).
26. P. K. Men'kov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 158.
27. Nicholas to Francis Joseph, private and official letters of 16 August 1849 quoted in L. Steier, *Haynau és Paszkievics,* Vol. I., pp. 408/410, Budapest n.d.
28. Du Plat to Palmerston (Private), 28 September 1850 (FO 65/383.)
29. Hanslick, op. cit., p. 180.
30. E. Andics, *A Habsburgok és Romanovok szövetsége,* p. 156 et seq., Budapest 1961.
31. Brunnow to Nesselrode, 11 May 1849 quoted in R. Averbukh, op. cit., pp. 289/291.

32. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No. 94 of 14 April 1848 (FO/65/344) and Palmerston to Bloomfield (Private) of 4 April and 11 April 1848 (FO 356/29).
33. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 59 of 20 March 1849 (FO 7/363) and Palmerston to Lord John Russell, 16 March 1849 and 9 April 1849 (PRO 3/22/7F).
34. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 10 September 1849, quoting a letter from the wife of Nicholas I. (*Aberdeen Papers,* Add. Mss. 43053, Vol. XV.)
35. Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos 102 and 103 of 1 August 1849 (FO 7/364).
36. Palmerston to Ponsonby (Private), 2 August 1849, quoted in T. Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile,* pp. 144/147, Columbia UP, NY 1970.
37. Palmerston to Ponsonby (Private), 9 September 1849, quoted in H. C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston,* p. 16, London 1966.
38. Palmerston to Russel, 14 September 1849, quoted in Bell, op. cit., pp. 13/14.
39. Palmerston to Ponsonby, 27 November 1849, quoted in E. Ashley, *The Life of H. J. Temple, Viscount Palmerston,* Vol. I., pp. 167/169, London 1876. and S. Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell,* Vol. II., p. 53 footnote, London 1889.
40. Nesselrode to Vorontsov, 14 November 1849 (*Arkhiv Knyazya Vorontsova,* Vol. 40, p. 356, Moscow 1895).
41. Schwarzenberg to Buol-Schauenstein (Private), 31 December 1848 (*Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv,* Vienna, PA X 27.).
42. Nicholas to Paskevich, 16 November 1848 (Shcherbatov, op. cit., pp. 261/262).
43. *Diary of Buol-Schauenstein,* Vol. IV., p. 319. (HHStA, Vienna.)
44. *Aus dem Nachlass des Freiherrn Cärl Friedrich Kübeck von Kubau,* p. 21, Graz 1960.
45. Du Plat to Palmerston, No. 26 of 10 May 1849. (FO 65/349.)
46. A. S. Nifontov, *Rossiya v 1848 Godu,* p. 39., Moscow 1949.
47. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No. 39 of 30 January 1850 (FO 65/376).
48. V. Aratovsky, *Rasporyazheniya po prodovol'stviyu Deystvuyushchey Armii v 1849 Godu.* (*Voenny Sbornik,* 1872, No. 1, pp. 258/261.)
49. Du Plat to Palmerston, No. 14 of 17 February 1850 (FO 65/383.)
50. Du Plat to Palmerston, No. 21 of 1 April 1850 (FO 65/383.)
51. The same conclusion about the authenticity of these Hungarian translations is mentioned in the introduction to a selection of Russian memoirs translated into Hungarian which has recently been published in Hungary. (See page 11 of *"A Magyarországi hadjárat"* 1849, Editor T. Katona, Budapest 1988.) I am grateful to Professor G. F. Cushing for enabling me to see this book.
52. E. Poujade, *Chrétiens et Turcs,* p. 305, Paris 1859., and Poujade to Tocqueville, 17 September 1849, quoted on p. 205 of *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor,* Vol. XVIII al Colectiei "Hurmuzaki", Bucharest 1916.
53. N. S. Egorova, *Archiv M. A. Korfa* (*Dela i Di,* pp. 432/436, Petrograd 1920).
54. The unpublished memoirs of General A. E. Zimmermann quoted on p. 181 of P. A. Zaionchkovsky, *Pravitel'stvenny Apparat Samoderzhavnoy Rossii v XIX Veke,* Moscow 1978.
55. Bloomfield to Palmerston (Private), 19 December 1849 (FO 356/29).
56. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No. 65 of 4 March 1850 (FO 65/376).
57. Queen Victoria to Nicholas, 14 November 1853 quoted on p. 334 of F. F. Martens, *Sobranie Traktatov i Konventsiy,* Vol. XV, Saint Petersburg, 1909.
58. E. Tarle, *Krymskaya Vopyna,* Vol. I., p. 468, Moscow 1941.