

ABSTRACT

In my thesis, based on the study of archive sources, source editions and relevant professional literature, I elaborately analysed foreign policy realized by the Austrian prime minister the Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg and its related attempts to implement the plan of unification of the German states with all lands of the Habsburg Monarchy into the country called "the Empire of 70 million" - so called "Mitteleuropa".

The thesis is divided into five main sections. The first of them summarizes the events that happened between 1815 and 1848 in the development of so called German matter. The second section deals with the accession of the Prince of Schwarzenberg to the office of the prime minister, the situation in the German area in the first half of 1849, and the negotiation of possible ways of formation of the united German state. The third section concerns itself with Schwarzenberg's extra-German policy. This term contains partly the issues associated with the fight against Hungarian rebels and with the negotiation of the Russian intervention and the impact of these event on the Austrian foreign policy, partly the development between 1848 and 1849 on the Apennine Peninsula. These are primarily the war with the Kingdom of Sardinia, subsequent peace talks and so called Roman matter, where the French diplomacy acted as the main Schwarzenberg's opponent. The last two sections are focused on the events in German states. The attention is paid here to the contest of Austria against the Erfurt Union which culminated in signing the so called Punctation of Olmutz and the subsequent conference of German sovereigns in Dresden, which meant the shipwreck of ideas of unification of German states and led to restoration of the system of the German Confederation. Schwarzenberg's foreign policy is integrated into the all-European context throughout the thesis.

The revolutionary year 1848 meant threat for the Habsburg Monarchy in both the area of home policy and the area of foreign policy. This fact had a decisive effect on the activity of Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg who ascended the office of the prime minister in the same year in November. I consider three directions, to which the Prince devoted his main attention, determining for the Austrian policy in this period. At first, it is necessary to mention the so called German matter. However, I cannot even omit the fight

against the Hungarian revolution and Austrian activities on the Apennine Peninsula which significantly affected the development in the German area.

Schwarzenberg's activity at the head of the Viennese government can be primarily characterized as an attempt to ensure integrity and a power position of Austria. The essential threat for the integrity of the Danubian monarchy was represented by the effort of the representatives of the German National Assembly in Frankfurt on the Main to unify the German states into one unit. Both variations, the small-German or pan-German solutions, were unacceptable from the Austrian point of view. In this connection, the prime minister Schwarzenberg put forth a proposal called the idea of "Mitteleuropa" which fully reflected the Austrian interests. In the first months of his governance, Schwarzenberg was going to implement his intentions particularly in cooperation with Prussia. However, considering the effort of Berlin to strengthen its position within the German area, this way proved to be unacceptable. For that reason, during 1849 the prime minister inclined towards cooperation with the states of so called Third Germany and he tried to implement his plan on the basis of tripartite organization when he proposed to form the confederation of states consisting of Austria, Prussia and so called „Westdeutschland“ comprising other German states. This change of mind was preceded by the events of 1849 which brought complications to the Habsburg Monarchy in its Hungarian and Italian provinces. Vienna, busy with solving these problems endangering the integrity of the monarchy itself, had to resign to perform the active policy within Germany for some time and limit itself only to reactions to immediate situations. This situation led to strengthening Prussia where the confidant of the king Friedrich Wilhelm IV, general Radowitz, maintaining an idea of formation the small-German Empire headed by Prussia, started to implement his intentions. The result was the establishment of the Erfurt Union endangering the existing position of the Habsburg Monarchy in the German area.

The achievements in the Italian and Hungarian military campaign provided Schwarzenberg and his ministers with the scope to fully devote themselves to the defence of Austrian interests while solving the German matter. However, Austria failed to completely recover its positions which had been lost in the past months in connection with solving the situation in Hungary and Italy. The Austrian prime minister was fully aware that Prussia is the only real opponent of Austria in the German area. This fact is

also reflected in the constant attempts of both countries to find a common ground while solving the German matter. In addition to the political dimension, the project of formation of a large Central-European empire also had an economic dimension. In this connection, the Austrian minister of commerce, Karl Ludwig von Bruck, played an important role. However, in addition to the aspects of the foreign policy, also the unfavourable economic situation of the Habsburg Monarchy and the worries of Austrian industrialists about the German competition prevented his plans from implementation.

The tension between Austria and Prussia was continuously growing. The solution was brought by the so called Punctation of Olmutz negotiated by the Austrian prime minister Schwarzenberg and the Prussian minister of foreign affairs Manteuffel at the end of November 1850. Although these talks and subsequent agreement are in a historical literature sometimes called "the Prussian humiliation of Olmutz", I believe that the agreement of Olmutz was the only reasonable solution of the situation. At the end of 1850, neither Prussia, nor Austria was in the position that would give them unambiguous prospect of the defeat of their opponent. By signing the Punctation of Olmutz the Viennese and Berlin diplomacy demonstrated that finding the solution of the German matter would primarily depend on the opinions of both German powers. I consider the subsequent development, including the negotiations at the conference of German sovereigns in Dresden which took place in the first half of 1851, to be the period of reversion to the policy of Prussian-Austrian anti-revolutionary cooperation from 1848 to 1849. Although Schwarzenberg's German policy did not lead to strengthening the influence of the Habsburg Monarchy in Germany, Vienna managed to defend its position of the leading country within the German Confederation.

Considering the foreign policy, Austria is in the monitored period primarily characterized by dependence on the attitude of Russia which, despite its depreciation at the beginning, decided not to impede implementation of Schwarzenberg's idea of "Mitteleuropa". However, at the same time Petrograd struggled to come together with Prussia. After the end of the conference in Dresden, its effort led to restoration of cooperation of these three conservative powers. France and Great Britain resolutely rejected Schwarzenberg's plans of changes in the German area. However, the interferences from Paris were noticeably limited by own internal political problems. The interferences from Great Britain were also limited by its predominantly extra-European

interests. The situation was different in the Italian matter where Vienna was forced to proceed in order not to cause the intervention from Western-European powers. In case of the fight against the Hungarian rebels, Paris and London controlled themselves.

I consider the effort to maintain the integrity of the Habsburg Monarchy, including strengthening its power position in Europe within Germany, to be the main aim of Schwarzenberg's foreign policy. In this connection, I regard the term "the Empire of 70 million" as misleading because it was not planned on the basis of the old German Confederation and even in case of implementation of Schwarzenberg's plans leading to strengthening the central power of this unit, it would still be a mere confederation of states dependent on the will of its members. Therefore I take it as considerably high-sounding to speak in this regard about the "empire". Thereby I do not regard the idea to build the state unit populated by seventy million people as a real goal but primarily as one of the means how to implement the main goals of the Austrian prime minister, namely maintain the integrity of the Habsburg Monarchy and also its position in Central Europe, from which its position of as an European power was also derived. I understand the considerations about the Empire of 70 million primarily as an effort to offer an alternative to Prussian attempts of a small-German solution of the German matter to the states of the so called Third Germany.