

ARTHUR LEHNING

BUONARROTI

AND HIS INTERNATIONAL SECRET SOCIETIES

On the 27th May 1797 the High Court at Vendôme sentenced Babeuf to death and Buonarroti, then 36 years old, to deportation, but this being postponed there followed a long life of imprisonment and exile. Buonarroti led a mysterious life, and our knowledge about certain phases of his life and activities since Vendôme is incomplete. Buonarroti has, of course, always been known as one of the important actors of the conspiracy connected with the name of Babeuf, and as the author of a book, dealing with this conspiracy. This rare and famous book, published in 1828¹, was mainly regarded as the historical account of an eye-witness and participant of a post-thermidorian episode of the French Revolution. The book, however, was also a landmark in the historiography of the French Revolution, and did much for the revaluation and the rehabilitation of Robespierre and the revival of the Jacobin tradition under the Monarchy of July. By exposing the social implications of the Terror, and by a detailed account of the organisation and the methods and the aims of the conspiracy of 1796, the book became a textbook for the communist movement in the 1830's and forties in France, and the fundamental source for its ideology. In fact, with the "Conspiracy" started the Jacobin trend in European socialism.

In speaking of his widespread influence² one has to consider different aspects: his communist ideology, his conspirative and insurrectional methods and his theory of a revolutionary dictatorship. In what has always been called somewhat vaguely Babouvism and neo-Babouvism there has never been made a distinction between the ideas of Babeuf and Buonarroti, nor has the question ever been asked as to how far the

¹ *Conspiration pour l'égalité dite de Babeuf*, Bruxelles 1828, 2 vol. In the following quoted as "Conspiracy".

² Alessandro Galante Garrone has studied in his book, *Filippo Buonarroti e i rivoluzionari dell'Ottocento*, Torino 1951, 514 pp., the influence of Buonarroti and his personal relation with the revolutionaries in the 19th century in France, Belgium, Italy.

ideas Buonarroti held in 1828 were the same as those exposed in his book. Neither had Buonarroti's role in the conspiracy ever been examined – Buonarroti hardly ever spoke about the role he had played in the events he described so meticulously – until Alessandro Galante Garrone studied the ideological foundation of Buonarroti's ideas and his part – as distinct as that of Babeuf – in the framing of the doctrine of the Equals¹, and Armando Saitta published his brilliant and fundamental book on Buonarroti.²

When Buonarroti took part in the conspiracy against the Directoire in 1796 his political career till then had already been an important one. Born at Pisa³, in 1761, Buonarroti belonged to an aristocratic family – one of his ancestors being the brother of Michel Angelo – and after having studied law at the University of Pisa he became a Freemason. His anti-clericalism and revolutionary ideas brought him into conflict with the authorities. In October 1789 he left Tuscany – as the first political emigrant of the Risorgimento – for Corsica, from where he started a secret correspondence with his friends in Tuscany, and may have organised small revolutionary centres elsewhere in Italy. His “*Giornale Patriottico di Corsica*” (1790), the first paper in the Italian language in defence of the French Revolution, served this purpose. As a civil servant in the administration he became involved in the intricate struggles of the island. As “*apôtre de la liberté*” – a kind of political propagandist created by the Republican army to spread the Republican faith – Buonarroti joined the illfated expedition for the conquest of Sardinia (Jan.-Feb. 1793), but he was able to carry out his mission on the island of Saint-Pierre, on the South-West coast of Sardinia, where he framed a republican constitution – a “*code de la nature*”, the text of which, unfortunately, is still unknown. In March 1793 he

¹ A. Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e Babeuf*, Torino 1948, 282 pp.

² Armando Saitta, *Filippo Buonarroti. Contributi alla Storia della sua Vita e del suo Pensiero*. Roma Vol. I, 1950, XII 295 pp.; Vol. II, 1951, 315 pp. Subsequently quoted as Saitta I and II.

³ There is still no Life of Buonarroti. The first scholarly biography was published by Giuseppe Romano-Catania, *Filippo Buonarroti*, Milano 1902, 259 pp. For this second enlarged edition the author used the documents in the possession of Félix Delhase, whom he met at the age of 80. One should like to know what has become of these papers. Romano-Catania also used the study of Georges Weill, *Philippe Buonarroti – Revue Historique*, 1901, p. 241-275.

Weill summarized for the first time (*Revue Historique*, 1905, p. 317-323) the papers of Buonarroti in the possession of Baudement, whose son deposited these in the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1905 (F. Fr. Nouv. Acq. 20803 and 20804). Some of these manuscripts have been published by Paul Robiquet, *Buonarroti et la secte des Egaux d'après des documents inédits*, Paris, 1910, 331 pp.

All important papers have now been published in an admirable way by A. Saitta, with great accuracy and knowledge based on a careful philological research by which he was able to date the different manuscripts.

arrived in France, and he became acquainted with Robespierre, for whom he kept a great veneration all his life. In April 1794 he was appointed National Commissar, a virtual dictator, at Oneille, a small principality between Nice and Menton, occupied by the French troops, where he applied the laws of the Revolutionary Government. His experience as an administrator had, as Pia Onnis has shown ¹, a profound influence on his opinions regarding the course of the French Revolution. Until then enthusiastic, he became critical with regard to the concrete results of the Revolution, and his experiences in Oneille formed the basis of the policy and the doctrine he subsequently worked out with Babeuf. Arrested on the 5th March 1795, he was sent to Paris, imprisoned in Du Plessis, where he met other Robespierristes and Hébertistes – and also Babeuf. Here, the ideological and practical programme for the subsequent struggle against the Thermidorian Regime was worked out.

The immediate aim of what is called the conspiracy of Babeuf was to reverse the Thermidor, but the social question was used as the level for the conquest of power, and the instalment of a Revolutionary Dictatorship, which would prepare an equalitarian regime. In the measures of the Revolutionary Government of Robespierre – such as requisitions, forced loans, the maximum, and especially the laws of Ventôse, Buonarroti saw the preliminaries of a new order. The Jacobin dictatorship of the Committee of Public Safety served as an example. If in 1793 the constitution was postponed “jusqu’à la paix” it was because of the war and civil war, which made elections impossible and dangerous. Now, however, in the opinion of Babeuf and Buonarroti, the postponement became a revolutionary principle. The idea of a popular Revolutionary Dictatorship provisionally “en permanence” was one of the political ideas Buonarroti advocated with great consistency till the end of his life.

Since he had been released from prison (9th October 1795), he had been the agent between the Italian patriots and the Government he intended at the same time to overthrow. The policy he advocated was not only to defeat the Royalist Coalition, but also to revolutionarise Italy. The war should not be a war of conquest, but a war of liberation. The Directoire decided to send Buonarroti to the headquarters of Bonaparte with regard to this Italian policy. He did not, however, leave Paris to take up his post with the Army of Italy, but continued his preparations for the insurrection which, a few weeks later, led to

¹ This episode has been studied by Pia Onnis, Filippo Buonarroti. *Commissario rivoluzionario a Oneglia nel 1794-95*. Estratto dalla Nuova Rivista Storica 1939. Fasc. IV-V. 49 pp.

his arrest, 10th May 1796, putting an end also to his plans for an Italian liberation.

The subject of this study are the secret societies which Buonarroti organised and directed from 1797 till his death (1837). During all these years the continuity of these societies can be proved. They reflect, and are an essential part of Buonarroti's multifarious activities for his political and social aims which never changed, i.e. the liberation and unification of Italy, the republicanisation of Europe and his equalitarian credo of 1796.

The conspiracy of Babeuf had been the result of a historical situation and as such a conjuncture never arose again in his life – the events of 1834 in Lyons he judged otherwise – he never came back to the action and the programme he exposed in 1828 in his classic book. He certainly held then and in the subsequent years – in fact since Vendôme – his communist ideas of 1796 of a community of goods and labours, but his “Babouvism” was always part of political activities on a much wider scale. He worked in many ways and directions on different ideological levels for more immediate republican or democratic aims. These multifarious activities, on a European scale, were always linked up with an underground network – again with different ideological levels – of which his equalitarian ideas always played an essential part. This typical Buonarrotist “gradualism” of a political activity, which with a great consistency and continuity lasted for forty years, is extraordinary and unique.

Political history never showed much interest in the undercurrent and “underground” developments of history. If, as I think, it is particularly this “underground” neglected part of history which comes essentially into the province of social history, the study of Buonarroti provides a large and important field.

Many aspects of this study cannot be dealt with within the scope of this article, such as the ideological formation of his ideas, his role in the conspiracy of Babeuf, his historiography of the French Revolution, the influence of his ideas regarding a Dictatorship, and the wide range of his political activities after 1830 with regard to France, Belgium and Italy. All these activities were connected with the secret societies, and his elaborate theoretical writings are no ideological divagations, but are connected with his immediate political propaganda and actions.

A political dictatorship, Buonarroti wrote¹, should be exercised by those “qui sont embrasés de l'amour de l'égalité et ont le courage de

¹ Saitta, II, 136-139, “A Buonarrotist programme for a Revolution”, written probably about 1828/1829.

se dévouer pour en assurer l'établissement". It is the task of the secret society to prepare the public opinion, that these "hommes sages" at the moment of the revolution shall be proclaimed by the people to exercise supreme power: "Le concert des hommes à qui nous voudrions confier le soin de former ainsi l'autorité révolutionnaire s'établirait par une société secrète établie de longue main d'après les principes du Monde. Elle emploierait l'action des Sociétés secondaires et des Fédérations pour diriger le choix populaire sur les candidats désignés".

Here then is the essential clue for the understanding of Buonarroti's secret political work. Although the Babouvist trend of an insurrectional tradition and dictatorship which arose after 1830 in European socialism was largely due to Buonarroti, his idea of a revolutionary government was based on quite another conception than the Proletarian Dictatorship of Blanqui and Marx. Even in the years after 1830 when a working class in the modern sense of a proletariat had entered the political scene, Buonarroti's ideas of a dictatorship were neither those of a party or of a class. His secret societies had not the character of revolutionary minority movements for the conquest of power like the "underground" organisations connected with the names of Blanqui and Barbès, which sprang up after 1835 and which, in fact, were no secret societies in this sense, because the essential character of Buonarroti's secret society was that certain aspects of the organisation, of the leadership, the methods and the ultimate aims were only known to some of the members belonging to the most inner circle of the society. In other words, the essence of a secret society as defined by Adam Weishaupt.¹

All the Buonarrotist societies show the same structure: they are divided into different grades of which alone the highest grade, composed of a small number, controls and directs the other grades, who do not know the men composing it, neither the place of its residence: without such a secrecy the slightest indiscretion would compromise the life and the continuity of the institution. Thus the association could not perish if inferior parts were liquidated, the supreme leadership reproducing new ones. The point to stress is, however, that such a structure was not only based on reasons for safety from political repression, but formed an essential character of Buonarroti's secret societies. In his "General ideas of a secret society", written probably about 1828, Buonarroti has outlined the basic

¹ Eine geheime Verbindung im strengsten Verstande nenne ich diejenige, deren Ursprung, Zweck, Mittel, Einrichtung und Daseyn, nur ihren Eingeweihten, und so viel einige dieser Stücke in ihrem ganzen Umfang betrifft, nur den Geprüftesten ihrer Mitglieder bekannt sind. (Ueber die geheime Welt- und Regierungskunst, Frankfurt 1795, p. 45).

principles of his secret organisation.¹ He wrote that the society in question was a democratic institution by its principles and its aim, but its form and organisation could not be those of democracy.

“Ceux qui voudraient faire d’une Société secrète une institution toute démocratique par le but et par les formes, en excluroient nécessairement toute espèce de mystère, et appliquant à cette Société en guerre ouverte avec les pouvoirs civils la pratique de la plus stricte égalité, se prononceroient pour un grade unique et pour la participation égale et immédiate de tous à la confiance de l’association; ils vedroient dans cette unité le garant de la concorde et du zèle général.

Je suis d’un avis contraire et je pense qu’il doit y avoir plusieurs grades, formant entr’eux une suite croissante de doctrines et d’autorité de manière que des idées morales et politiques les plus simples on remonte par échelons aux plus complexes et plus hardies et qu’au grade le plus élevé en doctrine appartienne le droit de diriger tous les autres.”

To reconstruct the story of these societies, which had their ramifications in many countries in Europe, is difficult and complicated. Buonarroti’s activities were linked up with the vast underground revolutionary movement in Europe under the Empire, the Restoration and the Monarchy of July, and in this underground world the name of Buonarroti was, as Saitta remarked, if not omnipotent at least omnipresent. Bakunin, who knew what he was talking about, called him the greatest conspirator of his age – and that is no exaggeration.

By the very nature of the secret societies a full documentation of their organisation and activities is missing. A more thorough local and regional social historical research may provide some more information, and a further research in the archives may unearth unknown documents. In the memoirs of the period and other historical writings, proceedings of trials, police records etc. one finds, of course, many indications, but all this kind of material has to be handled with great care. The most important participants did not speak, and if they did, it was in the interest of their cause or as accused. If men like Buonarroti, Angeloni, Voyer d’Argenson, Charles Teste, Carl Follen had left complete memoirs, many gaps of our knowledge of the revolutionary history of the first three decennia of the 19th century would have been filled up. An important source for the history of this international underground world is in fact provided by the memoirs of one of

¹ They were written for his special secret organisation the “Monde”, of which nothing was known but the name. A. Saitta discovered and published (op. cit. II, p. 92-116) this document, which is of capital importance.

Buonarroti's intimate companions, Joachim de Prati, whose name is wellknown from the police records of the time and from the writings of the notorious Wit-Döring.

After a revolutionary and adventurous life this Italian carbonaro came to England in 1823 and published fourteen years later anonymously his memoirs in a popular weekly under the title: "An Autobiography. Expressly written for the Penny Satirist".¹ These memoirs contained amongst much ballast many important details and intelligent views on the liberal and revolutionary movements in Europe from 1810-1831.² They provide many facts concerning Buonarroti's activities and especially one of the most essential documents of one of his secret societies, unknown from any other source.

Joachim Paul de Prati, born at Tenno (South Tirol), 26th January 1790, after having studied philosophy at Pavia, went to Milan to study law and there he became initiated in 1810 in a secret society "a masonry in a masonry, unknown to the very grand-masters and deputy-grand-masters" – and from that moment, Prati relates, he became connected with all the secret societies, which afterwards assumed different names, in Germany, Italy and France. The society in Milan was „a section of that "directing committee", which afterwards caused so much uneasiness to Napoleon, the Holy Alliance and to Louis-Philippe".³ This committee was the "Great Firmament" of the "Philadelphes".

In Milan he met some deputies "of the committees of Paris and Geneva", who were preparing the famous conspiracy which was headed by General Malet (1812). The origin and the real story of this anti-Bonapartist secret society is still somewhat obscure. The year of origin given by Buonarroti is 1799. The founder, at any rate the man who seems to have given the society a political orientation was Colonel Jacques Joseph Oudet (1775-1809), who died at the battle of Wagram. Buonarroti may have become a member of the Philadelphes in 1803 or 1804.

After his sentence at Vendôme, Buonarroti was first imprisoned at the Fort Pelée near Cherbourg and there he was able to keep in contact

¹ Penny Satirist, Nr. 8-126, 10 June 1837-14 September 1839. In the collection of the paper in The British Museum one copy, Nr. 73, 8-9-1838, is missing. Prati wrote regularly in the paper and signed his articles "The Medical Adviser". Previously he had published articles in Shepherd (1834-1838), edited by the Rev. J. E. Smith, an Owenite, who also edited the Penny Satirist.

² There is no explanation why the autobiography was not continued, because Prati remained a contributor for several years. It is unlikely that the autobiography appeared in bookform as announced in the Penny Satirist 10-3-1838.

³ Penny Satirist, 23-9-1837.

with the neo-Jacobins, the principal members of the former patriotic clubs.¹ “Des sociétés secrètes furent réorganisées, et plus d’une réaction, plus d’un complot contre le Directoire partirent du fort de Cherbourg”, as Andryane ² relates. From 1800 till 1803 Buonarroti was first interned on the island of Oléron and then, till 1806, at Sospello (Alpes Maritimes). Profiting from the neighbourhood of Piedmont he worked “plus que jamais à établir des communications sûres et actives entre les républicains des différentes provinces de France et celles de l’Italie.... Notre société secrète s’étendit, se propagea dans toutes les classes de la nation et jusque dans l’armée, où nous comptons encore un grand nombre de partisans de la constitution de 1793, mécontents de l’usurpation de Bonaparte”. Having been transferred to Geneva in July 1806, he continues “avec plus de résultats encore à raillier les patriotes et à ourdir des conspirations contre l’oppresser de France et de l’Italie”.³

The influence in the army of the society of the Philadelphes, of which Buonarroti spoke to Andryane, was considerable and both republican plots of Malet against Napoleon (1808 and 1812) were organised by them. Amongst those who took part in the conspiracy against Napoleon were Baudement, one of the agents of Babeuf’s secret committee, and Jean-François Ricord, the former “commissaire aux armées”, one of the accused at Vendôme. One of the leaders of the society was Luigi Angeloni (1758-1843), a former member of the Roman Tribunat, who left Italy with the French troops in 1799. He escaped from the fate of Malet, executed 29th October 1812, who had been initiated in the society by Angeloni in 1807. This was exceptional because no military rank above the grade of colonel was admitted according to the rule. As “grand Archonte” Malet had the authority to direct the Philadelphes of different countries.

Till his expulsion from France in 1823 Angeloni in Paris was the most important link with Buonarroti in Geneva, to whose secret society he belonged.

The conspiracy broke out when Napoleon was in Russia. Buonarroti intended to go to Paris, when the news of the failure came, “rien ne fut compromis, rien ne fut révélé, ni les hommes ni les choses.”⁴

Soon after his arrival at Geneva, 1806, Buonarroti became a member

¹ Two documents relating to this correspondence have been published from the papers of Buonarroti in the B.N., by Saitta II, p. 37-41.

² Alexandre Andryane, *Souvenirs de Genève*.... 1839. T. II, p. 204. These souvenirs of the author of the famous “Memoirs of a Prisoner of State” of which they are a continuation, remain notwithstanding the factual errors, an important source for Buonarroti.

³ Andryane, *ib.* p. 206, mentions Grenoble as being the residence since 1806; he confuses this with Buonarroti’s later stay there in 1813.

⁴ Andryane, *op. cit.* II, p. 207.

and a *vénérable* – under the name of Camille – of the Freemason “*Loge des Amis Sincères*”, which in 1811, after having been suppressed by the authorities because of its republican propaganda, was reorganised under the name “*Triangle*”.¹ In 1806 Buonarroti formed in this *Loge* with T. B. Terray, a former General in the Republican Army and removed from the army after the establishment of the Empire, and with Thomas Villard, a former member of the Commune of Lyons, a secret group of the “*Philadelphes*” (which Buonarroti had joined at Sospello), although Terray may have founded a *Philadelphic* centre before the arrival of Buonarroti. After the plot of Malet against Napoleon, Buonarroti had to leave Geneva. He was transferred to Grenoble (20th March 1813), but he returned the next year to Geneva (16th May 1814).

During his stay at Geneva Buonarroti reorganised the “*Philadelphes*” (1808–1809) and founded a new society: the “*Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits*”.² The aim was no longer exclusively to fight Napoleon in France and Italy and the establishment of a republican regime. It now became an international society of European revolutionaries with the purpose to republicanise Europe. The society, headed by Buonarroti, worked largely indirectly. It tried to direct, to control and influence other societies for its own political aims or sometimes just to counteract their policies. It was a directing committee for the revolution. In the decree of the Great Firmament, 17th September 1820, referring to the Italian situation which led to the revolution of 1820 and 1821 it is said: that the groups had to work “à tourner l’opinion publique d’une manière favorable à une Révolution politique, dont le but serait de donner au peuple une influence directe et accomplie sur la législation. Les réunions s’occuperont en outre, d’échauffer partout la haine pour les oppresseurs, mais très spécialement, de travailler l’esprit de l’armée, qui a été jusqu’à présent l’appui des tyrans”.

Such a revolution should be led by the “*Présidents des réunions*” or by persons dependent on them. “*Les révolutions espagnole et napolé-*

¹ Arch. Nat. F⁷ 6331 2c dossier (reports of the Préfet de Genève and other documents). See also on Buonarroti in Geneva Maurice Pianzola, Filippo Buonarroti in Svizzera, in “*Movimento Operaio*”, Jan.-Febr. 1955, p. 123–134.

² The documents known are mainly those which were confiscated on the arrest of Andryane (18–1–1823) and the information he imparted. They were supplemented partly by the information given earlier to the police by a police spy, who had been initiated into the society (at Turin) in 1820, and by Wit-Döring. Some of these documents were published from the Italian Archives by Mario Rinieri, *Della Vita e delle opere di Silvio Pellico*, Turin 1899, Vol. II, and by Augusto Sandonà, *Contributo alla Storia dei Processi del Ventuno e dello Spielberg*, Torino 1911. I used the copies and summaries of the original documents sent by the Austrian police to the French police (Arch. Nat. F⁷ 6684 and 6685). The original documents were sent to Vienna, which however nobody seems to have used. See also Saitta II, p. 61–91.

taine et toutes celles qui auraient la même tendance, doivent être soutenues et protégées".¹

The Philadelphes were organised according to the scheme of Freemasonry with its symbols and grades, and influenced by the principles and schemes of Weishaupt's Illuminati.² The carbonari in Naples had been formed out of the Freemasonic Lodges through the Illuminati³ and under their influence in France and the North of Italy, the "Adelphes", a derivation of the "Philadelphes", was formed. It is not possible to state exactly when the "Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits" was formed and its relationship with the "Philadelphes" and "Adelphes", but it can be ascertained that this society existed in 1811 as an organisation quite distinct from the other secret societies. The society may have come into being after the first conspiracy of Malet (1808). Buonarroti has given the year 1808-1809 as the date of origin. The oldest document relating to the "Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits", so far known, is of September 1811. A decree of 26th July 1812 says: "Les associations des Ph[iladelphes] et des A[delphes] sont réunies à l'ordre". The society had a Masonic structure. There were three hierarchic grades culminating in a secret centre: the "Great Firmament". To be admitted into the society one had to be a Freemason. Where Freemasonry was permitted, a Lodge according to the rite of the Great Orient had to be set up and to be directed secretly. Also, for the explanation of its real political aims, the society of the "Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits" used the structure, symbols and rituals of Freemasonry. This society, although changing sometimes its name, statutes and structure – when (probably in 1828) it was reorganised as "Monde", no longer Masonic appearances were used – existed under Buonarroti's secret leadership till in the thirties, and parallel with other secret organisations, headed by him as well. Its essential marks can be summarised as follows: 1. The international character (in 1812 "le Monde [i.e. the "Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits"] avait déjà étendu ses rameaux en Europe"); 2. the absolute secrecy of its leadership; 3. the ignorance of the existence of higher grades to the lower; 4. its protean character: its working through other secret societies; 5. the adoption of different forms in different countries. The first grade, called the church, with a "Sage" at the head was under the control of the second and so on; the second grade was the Synod, the

¹ Arch. Nat. F⁷ 6684.

² c.f. Saitta I, p. 114-118.

³ On the influence of the Illuminati on the Philadelphes see Carlo Francovich, *Gli Illuminati di Weishaupt e l'idea egualitaria in alcune società segrete del Risorgimento*, Movimento Operaio July/August 1952, p. 553-586. There existed in Florence a Lodge of the Illuminati in 1786, of which Buonarroti might have been a member.

members of which were called the “Sublimes Elus”. A “diacre territorial” supervised the churches in a certain region (corresponding in France with the “départements” and in Switzerland with the “cantons”). They got their instructions from the “Great Firmament” through a „diacre mobile” (Buonarroti was such a „diacre mobile” and Prati certainly too), whose task it was to direct and supervise the Synods and to organise the propaganda. According to a decree of the Great Firmament of 1819 the “diacres mobiles” “se feront initier aux mystères de Rosecroix”.

After Buonarroti had reorganised the “Philadelphes”, its aim was no longer restricted to fighting the Empire, and subsequently the Restoration, but to republicanising Europe. Its aim was no longer the change of the regime, but a social reform as well. The social programme was not known to the members of the lower grades. To be initiated into a higher grade meant to be initiated into quite another part of the doctrine. A novice was admitted into the society according to the ritual of Freemasonry. After the admission he made an oath, having repeated the formulae of faith. The same procedure was followed for the admission of a “Sublime Maître Parfait” into the rank of the “Sublimes Elus”. The symbols and the formulae often changed. In 1822 (after the discovery of the society in Modena) the “Great Firmament” decreed that all the copies of old rules had to be destroyed, only the “diacres mobiles” were allowed to preserve them. As voluminous documents were dangerous the Book of the statutes of the Grades, with the corresponding decrees and the new ruling for the churches and Synods and the new formulae, had to be reduced to the smallest possible size and form and to be hidden with the greatest care. The printed form of the Grade written on a very thin piece of paper was the only document allowed to exist on the premises. In case of surprise it should be burnt or swallowed. The name of the “Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits” now became: “True Architects”, the Church became Lycée, the Synod: an Academy, the “Sublimes Elus” were now named “Perfect Masons”. These decrees (but also the old ones) are the latest documents known, as they belonged to the papers Andryane carried with him when he was sent by Buonarroti to Italy ¹, after having been initiated into the Order (9th October 1821). As he was only admitted in the second grade of the Synod, and being a “diacre territorial”, the faith and the rules of the third grade were not revealed, and this explains why the “Sublimes Elus” was sometimes taken for the third grade and the Adelphe (used also as a general name for the society) for the first. This third grade, formed probably by the “diacres mobi-

¹ The story of his mission and arrest is told in the first six chapters of his “Mémoires d’un prisonnier d’Etat au Spielberg”.

les”, was the Areopagus, as we know from the memoirs of Prati, who published an English translation of the “professions of faith” of all three grades from the original Latin text. Prati’s reliability¹ can be judged by comparing the translations of the professions of faith of the first and the second grade, of which the Latin texts are known.² Prati’s translation of the three credo’s reads³:

“I believe that I shall obtain from God, the Father of men, just and happy immortality.

I believe that God has but to be worshipped by love and actions of love; that any other worship is folly.

I believe that both by divine and human right, men, as children of one common Parent, are bound to mutual love. That this is the divine source of equality among men, from which a social state and legislation arise, and makes liberty to consist in obeying the laws framed by the consent of the generality.

That any power originating from any other source than the will of the many, must be condemned as a crime.”

The second credo (of the Synod):

“I believe that the true liberty exists only where every human being, without exception, is called to frame the laws: there only the people are the rulers, there only is the true Republic.

The execution of the laws intrusted into one or many hands ought to be conferred by election, never by inheritance, or for the whole life.

Every citizen is entitled to destroy the usurper of supreme power.

The bases of liberal institutions are prudence, a moderate income, sobriety, justice, labour, philanthropy, patriotism, faith, honour, and contempt of richness and dignities.

No means are criminal which are employed to obtain this sacred end.

Both our conscience and God will reward such virtues.”

The text of the credo of the Areopagus was as follows:

¹ Many facts given by Prati in his memoirs can be checked by other sources and proved to be correct.

² The first credo, the “Profession de Foi de l’Eglise de Δ, [in the original the sign of a circle with three points] ou rassemblement des “Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits” reads in the original document: “Credo a Deo hominum patre et legislatore, justum beatam obtenturum immortalitatem. Credo Deum sola charitate colendum, praeter quam quidquid cogitaveris stultitia. Credo in mutuam amorem divino naturalique jure homines quatenus eiusdem filios aequaliter teneri. Credo hunc esse divinum fontem aequalitatis, quam sancivit sociale foedus, vi cuius generali placito, verae nempe legi, obedire vera libertas est. Credo quamcumque potestatem aliunde ortam sicut scelus esse damnandam.” (Arch. Nat. F⁷ 6684). They have been published for the first time from the papers of Andryane by Rinieri, op. cit. II, p. 44-45. Also by Sandonà, op. cit. p. 183 and p. 186, and now by Saitta I, p. 90.

³ Penny Satirist, 10.3.1838.

“From the imprudent division of the land all crimes, vices, and hatred have sprung.

Soon innocence and equality departed to give way to the covetousness of governing, and grasping after pelf.

Hence, vanity, envy, fury, theft, robbery, homicide, revenge, jealousy, hypocrisy, war, opulence, want, tyranny and slavery.

The human frame was enervated; the mind lost heavenly energy.

Enjoyment and honours became the inheritance of idleness, wretchedness and contempt, that of industry of labour.

Hence, shameless kings, corrupted noblemen, nefarious soldiers, and vile taxgatherers.

The people rendered stupid by the fear of spies, punishments and hell is moved in vain, and sinks more and more into slavery.

Gold alone can obtain a shadow of liberty. Let us break down the marks of private property; let us create with the ruins of the private land a social patrimony.

Let the Republic be the sole Proprietor: like a mother it will afford to each of its members equal education, food and labour.

This is the only regeneration aimed at by the philosophers. This is the only rebuilding of Jerusalem. This is the evident and necessary law of social progress, such as has been determined by Providence.”

This third credo reveals the real and most secret programme of the Society, and is indeed the proof that Buonarroti's Communist Creed of 1796 never ceased to be an essential part of his activities during the Restoration, and it provides, says A. Saitta rightly, the thread of Ariadne for the understanding of Buonarroti's secret activities.¹ That this third grade was called the Areopagus is revealing. This was the name of the “conseil”, the highest grade of Weishaupt's “Illuminati”: the “areopagites” were the only ones to know the real story of the order, the date of its foundation, the name of its founder.² Amongst all the Republicans of the continent, Prati wrote, Buonarroti was the only one who had a clear object in view. It was not a mere political change at which he aimed, but a social regeneration of all social institutions. Prati characterised his secret society as not merely a republican, but as a truly social democratic one. It stood under the

¹ This third grade is until now unknown, wrote A. Saitta, but from a page in Buonarroti's papers in the B.N. where in addition to the Latin text, similar to the known “professions of faith” of the first two grades, a third text was given, he ingeniously concluded this to be the third credo, as according to the Masonic structure a third grade must exist. This indeed is the Areopagus.

² On the Areopagus of Weishaupt's society (founded in 1776) see: Leopold Engel, *Geschichte des Illuminaten-Ordens...*, Berlin, 1906, p. 83-85; p. 108-112; R. Le Forestier, *Les Illuminés de Bavière...*, Paris, 1915, p. 30.

direction of that committee, then called "Le Grand Firmament", "which was composed of the disciples of Babeuf whose views have been so ably depicted in the history of my bosomfriend Buonarroti". The basic principles, and the measures taken in concealing the centre from which the regulations were emanating, had been such that it had been impossible for the police of Napoleon, of the Bourbons, and even for that of Louis Philippe, to destroy it. Formed after a hierarchical principle, it was composed of four "concentric circles". The doctrines taught in the different circles – one called the Church, the second the Synod, and the third the Areopagus – were adapted to the capacities of the individuals composing them. The first credo reflected the opinion of liberal and radical members who had joined the society, and who strove for universal suffrage and popular institutions. The opinions laid down in the second credo – of the Synod – could only be accepted by convinced "democrats". The first circle or society stood under the control of the second, and so on, without any knowledge of the existence of the third or fourth.¹

Since 1819 Prati was in Switzerland. In April 1820 he met at Chur Wilhelm Snell and Carl Follen, the well known republican from the University of Giessen. They decided to form a triumvirate. Twelve men, from different countries, should act as leaders. Each of the twelve were entitled to form as many secret societies as they thought proper, in order to associate the army, the nobility, the students, the craftsmen, and others, whilst the political creed was adapted according to their peculiar notions, but leaving them in the dark as to the first and more secret union. Thus the mysterious "Männerbund" was established with the aim to unite and republicanise Germany, whilst for the students the "Jünglingsbund" was organised. It was planned to recruit political associates in Italy, France and Germany. Snell left for Germany, Follen for Paris, Prati for Italy. Follen was in Paris from May-July 1820, where he met Voyer d'Argenson and Joseph Rey, who had founded in 1816 at Grenoble a secret society "Union", of which in Paris Lafayette and Voyer d'Argenson were members. Implicated in the conspiracy of Nantil, 19th August 1820, Rey fled to Switzerland. There, at the end of that year, he met Prati and Wilhelm Snell, and then discussed plans to internationalise the "Union" and the "Männerbund". The "Männerbund" was dependent, as was stated in the "mémoire" for Metternich "on that secret centre which has secretly directed the greater part of the secret societies of Europe for years". In other words: on Buonarroti.

In 1821 Prati met, in Geneva, the political fugitives from Piedmont

¹ Penny Satirist, 10.3.1838.

and Lombardy, and Prati was appointed as a general agent to propagate the association in Switzerland, the Tyrol and Germany. He was, he said, a link between the "Comité directeur" in Paris and the revolutionaries in different countries. So certainly was Angeloni.

Since 1816 the secret leadership of the liberal opposition was in the hands of the famous and elusive "Comité directeur", of which also Bonapartists and Orleanists were members. Some of the republican members, amongst whom featured Voyer d'Argenson, Trélat, Teste, Bazard, Buchez, Pierre Leroux, certainly had relations with the "Great Firmament". This "Great Firmament" was originally the secret centre of the Republican conspiracies of Frenchmen and Italians, in Paris. It has always been assumed that its seat was in Paris¹ and that Buonarroti in Geneva had the special task of communicating with Italy. A. Saitta pointed out that there is no documentary proof that the "Great Firmament" had been in Paris, and that its seat must have been in Geneva. He says rightly that once it is proved that a third grade with an equalitarian credo existed, it is unlikely and even absurd to assume that the "Great Firmament" had been in Paris, as men like Lafayette or de Corcelle certainly would not have accepted such a programme. There is no indication that d'Argenson had already connections with Buonarroti at that time. Prati remarked that the "Great Firmament" was composed of "disciples of Babeuf" and his story of being sent by the "Great Firmament" to Lausanne to form Lodges points also to the fact, that this mysterious centre of the society was at Geneva, at any rate under the Restoration. However, the exact relations of Buonarroti with the centre in Paris and the "Comité directeur" are far from being clear. It must be ascertained that some of the members of the "Comité directeur" acted under instructions of the "Great Firmament". There is no doubt, it seems, that Angeloni in Paris – like Prati – belonged to the most intimate circle of Buonarroti's society², although it is difficult to understand how he

¹ E.g. in the Andryane documents, and also in a report of the Prefect of Lons-le-Saunier (9-9-1824) concerning an international meeting at Aarau in the middle of July 1823 of revolutionaries "sous l'empire suprême du Directoire invisible et universel, qui siège à Paris"; La Harpe, who came from Lausanne had been nominated "comme chef de toute la Suisse par le Directoire ou le Grand Firmament de Paris" (Arch. Nat. F^o 6684).

² Baudement, of whom still very little is known, might have belonged to this circle in Paris. He had been the agent of the second arrondissement of Babeuf's Secret Directory. In the "Conspiracy" he is mentioned twice (under the anagram De Naumbet, but in the Errata the real name is mentioned); in the police dossiers of the conspiracy he figured however under the name Bodman (G. Walter, Babeuf... et la conjuration des Egaux, 1937, p. 134, calls him Baudeman). He was a member of the Philadelphes and he was implicated in the first conspiracy of Malet. His son gave the papers of Buonarroti to the Bibliothèque Nationale (Baudement wanted to write a biography of Voyer d'Argenson, Teste and Buonarroti). Delhasse is said to have written a biography of Baudement under the pseudonym of F. Laidaes.

could have accepted the equalitarian credo of the “Areopagus”. Or was this third grade a group dependent on, but not identical with, the “Great Firmament”? This would explain Prati’s statement of “four concentric circles”.

In 1821 the secret leadership of the anti-Bourbon opposition went over to the “Charbonnerie française”. Bazard, the later Saint-Simonist, formed in 1818 the “Loge des amis de la vérité” with its military “Compagnie franche des écoles”. Behind the “Loge” stood the secret “Union” of Rey, and it was Victor Cousin (of the “Union”) who, in fact, took the initiative. Involved in the military conspiracy of 19th August 1820, two of its members, Joubert and Dugied, having fled to Italy, brought back from Naples the statutes of the Neapolitan “carbonari”. They formed 1st May 1821 the first “Haute Vente” of the “Charbonnerie française”¹ of which soon the leading personalities of the parliamentary opposition such as Lafayette, De Corcelle, Koechlin, Manuel – all deputies – and also Cabet and De Schonen, became members. This “Haute Vente” was practically the reconstructed “Comité directeur” and the organisation soon had a large following. “The revolution was possible and even probable”, wrote De Corcelle. In the fundamental principles was said²:

“La liberté est le droit imprescriptible de tous les hommes. Ils naissent égaux devant la loi. Les gouvernements sont faits pour les peuples et non les peuples pour les gouvernements.

La souveraineté réside dans le peuple et tous les pouvoirs émanent de lui.

Nulle forme de gouvernement ne sera censée émanée du peuple, si elle ne lui assure le maintien de ses libertés par les garanties suivantes:

La libre élection des représentants du peuple par un système en harmonie avec le principe que tous les pouvoirs émanent de lui.

La liberté de la presse.”

The task of the National Congress “sera de choisir les membres du conseil exécutif suprême auquel seront délégués tous les pouvoirs dès l’instant du mouvement insurrectionnel jusqu’à la convocation de l’assemblée constituante”. The programme of the “Charbonnerie” was, therefore, a liberal, not even necessarily a republican one.

The failure of the uprising at the end of 1821, the reaction of the

¹ Apart from the well known narrative of Louis Blanc and the references given by Cabet, see also the articles of Benjamin Pance, J. T. Flottard, and especially Trelat, in *Paris Révolutionnaire*, 1833-34.

² Statuts et programme de la Charbonnerie française: Arch. Nat. F⁷ 6684, Code de la X [i.e. the “Charbonnerie française”] Ms. 22 pp.

futile insurrections and the fight of two fractions – a republican under Lafayette, and an orleanist under Manuel – who both had their own “ventes”, led after two congresses, at Bordeaux and at Paris, to a rapid decline of the organisation. The “Charbonnerie” was never a “parti définitif, lié par les mêmes idées, mais une transaction entre de vifs ressentimens et des principes divers, une sorte de coalition transitoire, hors d’état de survivre aux circonstances extraordinaires qui l’avaient produite”.¹ Buonarroti said to Andryane on the “Charbonnerie”: “des plans concertés de longue main ont avorté par la mésintelligence des chefs ou la légèreté des agents; on conspire comme on parle, sans ordre et sans but: l’insubordination est partout, la confiance nulle part”.

It seems that in the course of 1823 the organisation has no longer been active.²

The defeat of the insurrections in Naples, at Piedmont and in Spain (May 1823) must have led to a disappointment of the revolutionary movement. The year 1823 must be regarded practically as the end of the activities of the revolutionary secret societies, and of their efforts to change the political regime of the Holy Alliance. The arrest of Andryane, his revelations and the confiscation of his documents, followed by the expulsion of many leaders, must have caused a disorganisation and disintegration of the secret societies. Angeloni was expelled from Paris.³ Expulsions followed in Switzerland. Many arrests followed in Germany (1823, 1824). Prati had left Switzerland in the beginning of December 1822 (with Dr. Wilhelm Wesselhöft) for Marseille to go to Greece to organise a liberation army. Buonarroti went the first days of December from Geneva to Yverdon to take leave from Prati⁴ and from there he went to Lausanne, where he met Andryane⁵ who a few days later left Geneva on his fateful mission with the documents, “que Buonarroti m’a remis malgré moi, et qu’il faut que j’étudie, m’a-t-il dit, pendant le temps qu’il me reste

¹ F. De Corcelle, *Documens pour servir à l’Histoire des Conspirations....*, Paris 1831, p. 12.

² “Tout était terminé vers la fin de 1823” (Joseph Rey, *Notice historique sur les sociétés secrètes, Le Patriote des Alpes, 16-12-1847*; A. Calmette: “Après 1823 la Charbonnerie continue à fonctionner, mais elle est sans force” (*Les carbonari en France sous la Restauration, in “La Révolution de 1848”*, 1913, p. 229).

³ The Rules and Statutes Andryane carried with him had been translated into Italian by Angeloni, who gave him also a letter of introduction (dated 6-9-1822). This letter was communicated to the French Government and caused his expulsion (14-3-1823). He died in London in miserable circumstances.

⁴ Penny Satirist, 12.5.1838.

⁵ The dates are in accordance with Andryane (op. cit. II, 328), who wrote on the 6th December: “B. est venu à Lausanne.... Il venait d’Yverdon”.

encore à passer en Suisse. Etrange manie que toutes ces formules, ces statuts, ces chiffres, ces diplômes auxquels il attache autant d'importance qu'on en mettait jadis à des titres de noblesse ou de chevalerie, comme s'il était nécessaire de s'imposer toutes ces vaines formalités pour bien s'entendre et bien agir!... Mais il pense, lui, que les hommes ont besoin, pour former une association politique efficace et permanente, d'être liés entre eux par des signes, des mystères qui flattent leur amour-propre, et donnent à la société dont ils font partie un air d'importance et de consistance que toute la moralité et l'estime réciproque des individus ne sauraient obtenir; il en appelle à son expérience, et peut-être a-t-il raison... car les hochets sont de tous les temps et de tous les pays, pour les grands enfants que nous honorons du nom d'hommes! ¹"

Prati, his embarkment prevented by the French police, was forced to return to Switzerland. He stayed at Basel with his friends Wilhelm Snell and Follen² and there he got the information from Buonarroti that both their names had been given away by Andryane. Prati was expelled, 7th May 1823, so were De Meestre and Buonarroti's friend, the young Westfalian Count Bochoholtz.

Prati went to England and established there in conjunction with Maeza, Storti and some Spaniards ³ a centre of ten of "the society of which Andryane... had been an emissary in Italy". Under this society Prati established a carbonari Lodge. The centre was in constant correspondence with France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain. "Several of the revolutionary movements of these countries occurred with our co-operation and sanction", says Prati. This is the only indication that Buonarroti's society, the "Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits", was still in existence after Buonarroti's arrival in Brussels (April 1824).

Buonarroti had in fact also been expelled from Switzerland. On the 13th May 1823 he had got a passport on his own name to go to England. He left Geneva but stayed another year in the canton de Vaud, till the police found him out and expelled him (April 1824). His passport then carried the name of Jean-Jacques Raimond, born in Geneva and resident there. He arrived in Brussels in the same month

¹ Andryane, op. cit. p. 328.

Andryane, certainly not a heroic character, became thus a rather tragic victim of the barbaric police methods of Metternich. It seems somewhat incomprehensible how Buonarroti gave to Andryane on his secret and dangerous mission also the old documents of the Society, with the Statutes, which (after Modena) had just been abrogated.

² Follen left October 1824 for Paris, from where he went to America.

³ The ramifications of Buonarroti's society in Spain are still to be studied. A report on Spain of the Prefect of the Pyr. Orientales (17.3.1824) is in the Arch. Nat. F⁷ 6684.

and explained to the authorities that he had got this passport to enable him to travel without difficulty through Germany.¹ Obviously it was too dangerous for him to travel on his own name through Germany, as the Austrian Government had, of course, informed the German and other governments of the Andryane documents, and Prussia, as well as France, Italy and Russia, had taken steps with the Swiss Government² to obtain his expulsion. Buonarroti might have had the intention to go to England, to join his friends Prati and Angeloni. Why he changed his mind after his arrival in Brussels is not clear. To the authorities he declared that he lacked the means to continue his journey and that the Dutch climate would be better for his health than that of the British Isles.

In Brussels, a great centre of exiles, Buonarroti stayed for six years. There he found old acquaintances amongst the French exiles, such as Vadier, his co-prisoner of Cherbourg, Barère, Prieur de la Marne, Sièyes. He also made new friends and followers, such as the Italian refugee Francinetti, the young Belgian Félix Delhasse³, introduced to Buonarroti⁴ by the Italian bookseller Fontana⁵ in Antwerp, and Louis de Potter⁶, who helped him in publishing the "Conspiration".⁷ The publisher was the Frenchman Feuillet Dumas, a librarian in Brussels⁸, who visited Prati in 1829 in London and brought him

¹ See the letter of the Parquet in Brussels of 13.5.1824 to the Minister of Justice in The Hague, in answer to his request to be informed on Buonarroti. On the 24.3.1824 the French Foreign Minister had asked for information about Buonarroti. Both letters are in the "Rijksarchief", The Hague (dossier "Justitie" 535 and 544). Further documents relating to the result of the enquiries are missing. In the "Radical" of 15.10.1838 (Alexandre) Delhasse published the curious statement: "on ne trouvera rien sur Buonarroti dans les archives de la police secrète". I wish to thank Dr. Julien Kuypers, chef de cabinet of the Belgian Ministry of Education, for this information and for the research he made in this respect.

² Penny Satirist, 2.6.1838.

³ Félix Delhasse, born in 1809, the first Belgian Buonarrotist, became one of the editors of "Le Radical" (16-4-1837/26-8-1838), an essential source for Buonarroti's influence in Belgium.

⁴ The story is told by Louis Bertrand, *Histoire de la démocratie et du socialisme en Belgique*...., 1906, I, p. 95.

⁵ G. Fontana-Rava, went later to London where he became, with Prati, a Saint-Simonian propagandist.

⁶ See M. Battistini, *Filippo Buonarroti nel Belgio e le sue relazioni con Luigi de Potter*. Livorno 1931, 14 pp.

⁷ De Potter wrote to Tielemans: "...je pourrai dire que je l'ai fait paraître". At the trial against De Potter in 1829, the avocat-général Spruyt said that the accused "se lia intimement avec l'auteur de l'Histoire de la Conspiration.... Il coopéra à la publication de cet ouvrage, avec une ardeur vraiment étrange,...." and quoted long passages from the "Conspiration" to prove the subversive ideas of De Potter! (see "Procès contre L. de Potter, F. Tielemans"...., 3 Mai 1830, I, p. 20, and "Pièces"...., p. 38.)

⁸ On the titlepage of the "Conspiration" is mentioned only "Librairie Romantique".

letters from Buonarroti and the book. In 1828 Buonarroti had sent him already some sheets of the book for which Prati tried, without success, to find an English publisher.¹

At the invitation of Feuillet Dumas Prati went to Brussels², in July 1829, to discuss a representation of this firm in London. At the same time his visit had a political purpose. He was also charged by the London carbonari Lodge “La Vendetta Italiana” to make contacts with the Lodges established in “Brussels and other places” by the secret societies. In Brussels he found the national resistance movement against the Dutch domination in full swing. He visited Louis de Potter in prison³ and was disappointed about the vague aims of the opposition – only united in the negative aim to get rid of the king.

Prati began “for the first time” to doubt the possibility of establishing a government upon “rational principles”. “I began to feel a presentiment that the endeavours of goodmeaning men are always turned to nothing by the vanity and interest of the demagogues. I could not refrain from entering into a warm discussion on this subject with Buonarroti, who like a rock in the foaming ocean, persisted in the conviction, that inspite of all obstacles our views would be accomplished. Strange infatuation of a man of eminent talents and rare qualities of the heart to be continuously disappointed in his plans, betrayed by his most zealous friends, and yet to hope, indeed to be morally convinced that his plans would be realised”.

¹ This settles the confused issue of the existence of an English translation in 1828, as mentioned by Robiquet (op. cit. p. 162); M. Dommanget (Pages Choiesies.... p. 12-13); A. Saitta (I, p. 69); G. Manacorda (in the introduction to the first Italian translation, 1946, p. XXVI). The supposition is based

a on an erroneous interpretation of the passage of Barère – “Les anglais ont fait traduire les deux volumes” – in his *Mémoires* (1844, IV, p. 93). As A. Galante Garrone showed, op. cit. p. 413, this passage refers to the edition of 1836;

b on a remark of G. Charavay in the “Avis” of his edition of 1850: “Les deux premières [éditions] ont paru à Londres et à Bruxelles, en 1828”; also: A. Ranc in his preface to his edition of 1869 (p. I). This too is an erroneous interpretation, because Charavay does not speak of a “translation”, but of an edition, and the edition of Brussels in 1828 was reissued in the same year under a new title in London. The edition of 1836 was the first English translation, as is obvious also from the correspondence of O’Brien with Buonarroti in that year.

² He travelled together with three Germans, Professor Rosen, a lawyer S. and J. G. Wesselhoeft, whom he introduced to Buonarroti (Penny Satirist, 22.12.1838). This was the “young German”, whom Buonarroti recommended to Teste (Letters of 2.4 and 10.6.1830). Johann Georg Wesselhoeft who belonged to the family of Robert and Wilhelm Wesselhoeft (friends of Prati, Follen and Snell) went to America, where he edited in Philadelphia “Die alte und neue Welt”. (c.f. H. v. Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Leipzig 1889, IV, p. 609).

³ In November 1828 Louis de Potter had been sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

There are hardly any documents which throw any light on Buonarroti's secret activities in the years 1823-1830. The "Monde", which he organised in 1828 or 1830, as A. Saitta thinks, must be regarded as a reorganisation of the "Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits", although it is likely that after the arrest of Andryane, the society had already undergone some changes. It is certain that the organisation continued to exist, but nothing is known about its activities, nor of its ramifications. The "Monde" must be considered, as A. Saitta stated, as the "vera centrale" of Buonarroti. The "Grand Firmament" reappears under the name of "Conseil Suprême". The "Monde" existed parallel, but quite distinct and independent of Buonarroti's other secret international organisations.

Carlo Rusconi, who visited ¹ Buonarroti in Paris, wrote in his Memoirs, that Buonarroti was at the head of three secret societies. The visit probably took place before December 1832. In 1834 Mazzini mentioned ² three different secret societies of Buonarroti: the "Haute Vente" (i.e. the "Charbonnerie"), the "Monde" and the "Sfera".³ It is difficult to state exactly when the remnants of the "Charbonnerie française" were reorganised by Buonarroti, first as "Charbonnerie réformée" and then as "Charbonnerie démocratique universelle". The statutes of the first one are only known from an Italian translation sent to Corsica in December 1832, from which A. Saitta, who published the document, deduced that this society was founded in the same month.⁴ There are, however, indications that before 1832 there was already a Buonarrotist "Charbonnerie" in existence. Of Guinard ⁵, one of the founders and a former member of the "Charbonnerie française" is said, that he took part with Buonarroti in the reorganisation of the "Charbonnerie".⁶ At that time, [i.e. after 1823] "seuls les hommes les plus dévoués continuèrent l'oeuvre sous la direction de Voyer d'Argenson et de Buonarroti. Dès ce moment, la société accepta franchement la tradition des Montagnards les plus avancés de la Convention. Et Guinard, qui, dans de fréquents voyages à

¹ See Carlo Rusconi, *Memorie aneddotiche per servire alla storia del Rinascimento Italiano*. Roma 1883, Ch. II, p. 19-26.

² Letter 23.5.1834 to De Rosales (c.f. Romano-Catania, op. cit. p. 232).

³ The significance of "Sfera" is still unexplained.

⁴ Saitta I, p. 152; II, p. 117-124.

⁵ Joseph-Auguste Guinard, involved in most of the conspiracies under the Restoration, was, like Teste, a member of the society "Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera", and one of the leaders of the "Société des Droits de l'Homme", arrested in connection with the insurrection of April 1834.

⁶ See the biographical article on Guinard in: Pascal Rhaye, *Les Condamnés de Versailles* [The Trial in connection with the June insurrection, 13.6.1849], Paris 1850, p. 171.

Bruxelles, faits en compagnie de Godefroy Cavaignac¹, allait se fortifier dans les principes de ce temps fameux, auprès de Cambon², Barère, Prieur de la Marne, eut sa bonne part dans l'adoption du nouveau programme. Néanmoins, cette Charbonnerie régénérée eut des relations beaucoup moins étendues que la première et se concentra pour ainsi dire à Lyon, sous la direction de Lortet".³ It is likely that "Charbonnerie régénérée" stands for "Charbonnerie réformée", and if these statements are correct the "Charbonnerie réformée" existed before 1830. From the correspondence of Buonarroti with Charles Teste it is clear that some kind of Buonarrotist secret group existed before 1830 in France.⁴ Charles Teste (1782-1848) had been intimately connected with the leaders of the "Charbonnerie". After the Restoration he fled to Belgium, returned in 1817 and lived in Paris as a bookseller. From then dated his socialist and republican ideas.⁵ From the end of 1828 he was in connection with Buonarroti, whom he visited the next year in Brussels. He was an influential member of the society "Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera".

Prati gives us direct evidence that immediately after the Revolution Buonarroti's secret group was active in influencing the policy of the republican societies. Prati arrived in Paris in the middle of August and was admitted into the society of the "Amis du Peuple". He presented

¹ Godefroy Cavaignac was one of the most prominent leaders of the revolutionary wing of the republican movement and President of the "Droits de l'Homme" after the resignation of Raspail (1832). Although, in these years, his ideas were very close – like those of his friend Guinard – to those of Buonarroti, he cannot be regarded as a Buonarrotist.

² The mentioning of Cambon (who died in 1820) does not discredit the story, because Cavaignac at any rate, although rather young, met Cambon in Brussels, as A. Saint-Ferréol relates (*Les proscriers français en Belgique*, Bruxelles 1870, I, p. 19), where his father, the conventional Joseph-Baptiste Cavaignac, lived in exile.

³ Dr. P. Lortet (1791-1868) of Lyons. Prati visited him in 1822. His name in the "Charbonnerie" was Lucullus. He advocated after 1830 a decentralisation, and he joined in 1832 the Committee of "Jeune France", of Mazzini's Young Europe.

⁴ The letters are published in extenso by Saitta II, p. 45-54.

⁵ Of the life of Charles Teste is still little known. According to Romano-Catania, Delhasse wrote a biography on Teste, which was never published. A biographical article of Delhasse on Teste appeared in "Nécrologie Liégeoise", 1853. Teste was a member of the masonic order "Misraïm". His name is mentioned in the "Tableau des membres composant la puissance suprême de l'ordre masonique de Misraïm et de ses quatre séries pour la France, année 5826 ou 1822, 90° Δ d Δ , pag. 8, Charles Teste, 90° Δ et d^{er} Δ Le G Δ Expert, Capitaine des Gardes" [the sign Δ stands for three points].

See also the "mémoire sur les sociétés secrètes" by Simon Duplay (the former editor of "l'Eclairer du peuple" who afterwards was employed by Fouché in the secret police, and who kept this post under the Restoration), published in "Revue Internationale des sociétés secrètes", 1913, p. 523-554.

According to Wit-Döring, the three highest grades of the Misraïm, "grades voilés", were dependent on the "Comité directeur" (*Fragmente aus meinem Leben*, Leipzig 1828, III, 1e Abt., p. 12, 13).

a declaration of principles, which had been translated for him by Buonarroti, and which was read by Trélat. The "Amis du Peuple", states Prati, had been created by his "most intimate friends" as a kind of propaganda for liberal ideas throughout France and the rest of Europe, but his friends, some of whom held the highest rank in France, were obliged to keep themselves concealed. Such a society, he remarks quite rightly, once in existence cannot be guided like an automat, and assumes, by degrees, a power of self-will and independence. In order to counteract this natural tendency to independence "the invisible Church to which I belonged allowed now and then some of their Synod to offer themselves as members of the visible one. Having obtained this permission, or rather having been encouraged by my friends, I offered myself as a member of the "Amis du Peuple" in order to train this society in our political creed.¹

From Prati's story one may conclude that Voyer d'Argenson², who certainly was a member of Buonarroti's "Charbonnerie", belonged to his secret society before 1830, although the two men probably did not meet before Buonarroti's return to France.³ The "Charbonnerie" had been essentially a French organisation, the new "Charbonnerie", organised and headed by Buonarroti, had an international character.

At the end of 1833⁴ the "Charbonnerie réformée" was reorganised as "Charbonnerie démocratique universelle". The reason is unknown. Was it perhaps in connection with Buonarroti's arrest on 7th October 1833? On that occasion his "papers and some books in characters only known to me" were seized by the police and not returned.⁵ The programme of the new society was essentially the same as that of the "Charbonnerie réformée". All the statutes of the "Charbonnerie française" were abolished, according to the "Loi nationale pour la France"; this was also the case with those of the "Charbonnerie réformée", with one exception. The statutes and other documents of

¹ Penny Satirist, 2.2.1839.

² On Voyer d'Argenson (1771-1842) see: Georges Weill, D'Argenson et la Question Sociale. International Review of Social History, IV, 1939, p. 161-170.

³ H. Bonnias, Discours prononcé sur la tombe de Voyer d'Argenson, le 4 août 1842.... Paris 1842, p. 7.

⁴ A. Saitta, op. cit. I, p. 110. The date can be deduced from the fact that Buonarroti's anti-Mazzinian Circular dated 1.9.1833 was issued by the "Haute Vente Universelle" of the "Charbonnerie réformée", and the second Circular dated 10.1.1834 was issued by the Ch. D. U. Both Circulars were published by Romano-Catania, op. cit. p. 216-224, the only source.

⁵ As Buonarroti wrote in a letter to his friend Tussau, dated 25.11.1833. The letter has been published by A. Galante Garrone, op. cit. p. 501-502.

the “Charbonnerie démocratique universelle” became known ¹ from the seized papers of the avocat Joseph Mathieu (Epinal), one of the leaders of the “Société des Droits de l’Homme” in Lyons, who belonged with Charles Teste and Voyer d’Argenson, and probably De Ludre ² to Buonarroti’s intimate circle. Mention of the society was made during the trial of the “Droits de l’Homme”, but nothing was revealed.³ The “Charbonnerie démocratique universelle” was indeed an international organisation. “Our institution embraces all nations”, wrote Buonarroti in a circular in 1835.⁴ It was in fact the first attempt for such an organisation, the first link in the chain of international manifestations and organisations which led three decennia later to the foundation of the First International. ⁵

In the “Lois Générales” was said:

“Elle a pour objet de rattacher à un centre commun ⁶ tous les amis de l’égalité, quels que soient leur pays et leur religion. Des hommes de différentes nations composent la Vente suprême qui se recrute d’elle-même; elle ne se manifeste que par l’organe de ses agents. Il n’appartient qu’à la vente suprême d’entretenir des communications avec toutes les ventes directrices de la terre [i.e. the Ventes nationales in each country]; celles-ci ne peuvent communiquer entre elles”.

In the French organisation the lower “ventes” or “forests” were allowed only to communicate amongst each other through the “ventes intermédiaires” or “directrices”. Like the “Charbonnerie réformée”, there were only two grades: the “Vente” for “apprentis” and the “Montagne” for the “maîtres”. In the “Montagne” the political life of the society was concentrated. The members of the “Ventes” were

¹ The documents were published in the reports connected with the trial of the “Droits de l’homme”. Cour des Pairs, Affaire du Mois d’avril 1834; Rapport fait à la cour par M. Girod (de l’Ain), tome quatrième, Paris 1834, p. 187-213.

² Charles de Ludre is mentioned by De Potter as belonging to the intimate group of Buonarroti. He was a deputy and since February 1834 a member of the Central Committee of the “Droits de l’Homme”.

³ Victor Bouton, *Profilés révolutionnaires*, Paris 1848, p. 25, wrote in his biographical article on Mathieu, that Mathieu “... avait reçu des mains de Buonarroti lui-même sa procuration spéciale de la Charbonnerie réformée. Les débats [of the trial in 1835] ne dévoilèrent rien de ce côté [i.e. the Charbonnerie] curieux du procès: rien ne fut découvert, rien ne fut mis à nu. Les liaisons de Mathieu avec Buonarroti et Charles Teste expliquent ce que la justice ne put connaître”. That is to say, Mathieu did not reveal anything.

⁴ c.f. Romano-Catania, *op. cit.* p. 233-235. The last document known.

⁵ See A. M. Lehning, *The International Association. 1855-1859. A contribution to the Preliminary History of the First International*. Leiden, 1938.

⁶ The statutes of the First International, adopted at the Congress at Geneva, said in art. 1: „Une association est établie pour procurer un point central de communication et de coopération entre les ouvriers des différents pays aspirant au même but”.....

not allowed to discuss religion or politics. The principles are laid down in the formulae of questions and answers.

For the grade of the “apprenti” some of the answers read:

“La constitution actuelle de la société civile est vicieuse.

Son vice fondamental est l’inégalité qu’elle établit et maintient entre ses membres.

L’inégalité étendant ses ravages sur toute l’Europe, celle-ci a partout besoin d’une réforme sociale.

La réforme sociale est une oeuvre de sagesse et d’énergie, qui ne peut s’accomplir que par le concours intime des plus vertueux.

Ce concours ne peut s’établir, au milieu de la corruption actuelle, que par un lien invisible. Une bonne société secrète est donc juste et nécessaire.

Mais une société secrète, instituée pour le bonheur de l’Humanité, n’aurait ni durée, ni efficacité, si elle n’était pas dirigée par une grande prudence, et si elle n’était pas fondée sur l’amour le plus pur de l’égalité.

Une telle société, instituée pour réformer d’énormes abus et pour livrer combat à des ennemis puissants, serait perdue, si ceux qui en dirigent les fils et en maintiennent l’unité étaient connus de ses adversaires; il est donc le plus grand intérêt que ses directeurs ne soient connus de personne.”

The questions and answers used for the second grade, that of the “Montagne”, initiated the “Maîtres” into the real political and social doctrine of the organisation, e.g.

“Qu’est-ce que la liberté? – La liberté est, dans la société, le droit de n’obéir qu’à la volonté du peuple.

En quoi consiste l’égalité sociale? – L’égalité consiste dans l’égale participation de tous aux bienfaits de la nature et de la société, et aux droits qui en émanent.

Quel est le but de la société civile? – Le maintien de cette égalité est le but véritable de la société civile.

Y a-t-il des cas où il est de l’intérêt du peuple qu’il suive l’impulsion donnée par un homme ou par plusieurs? – Lorsqu’une longue oppression a divisé ou égaré les citoyens et introduit la corruption dans la société, il est bon qu’un ou plusieurs hommes vertueux s’emparent de la confiance du peuple et lui fournissent les moyens de rétablir l’égalité.”

There is no doubt that these documents were written by Buonarroti, or, to put it in the words of Saitta: “Questo formulario non è eco del

Buonarroti, ma opera del Buonarroti". The doctrine of the "Montagne" expresses completely his social thought as is clear from a comparison with other Buonarrotist documents of the same years, before or after 1830. The source of the utterly authoritarian idea that liberty exists in obeying the will of the people, is not far to seek: "Rousseau fut mon maître", said Buonarroti in his defence in 1797.

The necessity of a dictatorship during a transition period to be exercised by one or more "hommes vertueux" who had to secure the confidence of the people to provide the means to re-establish equality had been proclaimed in the publication, February 1833, of Charles Teste's "Projet de Constitution Républicaine"¹, "a common work", as the author stated in the preface. Buonarroti took part in editing the text, and the "Projet", which reflects his political opinions, must be regarded as the openly proclaimed political programme of Buonarroti's secret societies. The functioning of the constitution Teste had outlined, should be postponed and replaced by the provisional authority, which had directed the revolution....

"une révolution politique qui aurait pour résultat immédiat la mise en activité de la constitution que je propose, ou l'entrée en exercice d'une assemblée législative nommée même par les suffrages d'un peuple entier.... éloignerait, au lieu de l'approcher, l'établissement de l'égalité et l'exercice réel de la souveraineté populaire, et doit être considérée comme une tentative dangereuse et funeste.... Un temps de transition, entre le renversement de l'ordre d'oppression et de l'établissement de l'ordre libre et définitif, est nécessaire;

.....ce temps doit être rempli par l'autorité extra-ordinaire d'hommes forts, sages et dévoués, portés subitement au pouvoir par l'influence de la partie la plus avancée, la plus aimante, la plus énergique et la plus prudente de la société;

....cette autorité libre, populaire et fortement constituée, doit gagner immédiatement, par la justice de ses actes, l'affection et l'appui actif et enthousiaste du peuple.... développer les premiers germes des institutions de l'égalité...."

This "autorité libre", these "hommes sages et dévoués, portés subitement au pouvoir" we come across in all these programmes and documents, that is once more Buonarroti's cherished idea of the

¹ *Projet de Constitution Républicaine et Déclaration des Principes Fondamentaux de la Société; précédés d'un Exposé des Motifs.* Par Ch. Ant. Teste. Egalité, Paris 1833, 68 pp. A Belgian edition, of which 4000 copies were printed, was published three years later (Bruxelles 1836, 88 pp) at the cost of Félix Delhasse.

“gouvernement révolutionnaire des sages”, which is, in fact, the insurrectional committee of the wise and courageous citizens, chosen by the committee of Babeuf’s Secret Directory to be appointed by the “insurrectional people of Paris”.

Buonarroti advocated the same idea in his article “On the government of a people during the period of insurrection for liberty”, signed Camille, published in Mazzini’s paper “Giovine Italia”, in the same month and year as the publication of the “Projet”. Mazzini’s relations with Buonarroti in the years 1830-1833 and his political and social ideas in these years seem to have been more complex than given in the well known traditional picture, largely based on Mazzini’s own writings of the ex-carbonaro, who founded his Young Italy in 1831.

In fact, Mazzini had been a member of the Buonarrotist semi-military society “Apofasimeni”, dependent on Buonarroti’s secret society “Monde”¹ before Carlo Bianco, the head of the “Apofasimeni” under the superior direction of Buonarroti, affiliated this society to Young Italy, through which Mazzini aimed at the leadership of the underground revolutionary movement in Italy. To counteract this rapidly increasing influence of Mazzini, Buonarroti used his “Charbonnerie” and formed a new secret society, the “Veri Italiani” (1832) having exactly the same formulation of aims as Young Italy: Unity, Independence and Liberty, but Liberty, specified the statutes, was to be understood as a “republican democratic government based on the sovereignty of the people and complete equality”. The “Veri Italiani” published a draft of a constitution based on the “Projet” of Charles Teste, preceded by an introduction which was a literal translation of the “Déclaration des principes fondamentaux de la société”. Although the two organisations worked together for a year, and made even a formal pact (September 1832), the differences and conflict between them soon became clear. The difference of approach regarding the social problem was, it seems, the fundamental issue behind the controversy between Buonarroti and Mazzini.

When Mazzini denounced the “Monde” and “Charbonnerie” in the long Manifesto of Young Europe, “Aux patriotes suisses”, 19 April 1834, it was because of “their dependence on France”, and against the “principio parigino”. Mazzini wrote: (1835) “Le progrès actuel pour les peuples est de s’émanciper de la France. Le progrès actuel pour la France est de s’émanciper du XVIIIe siècle et de sa révolution”. The essence of the whole ideological difference with Buonarroti can be

¹ On Mazzini’s relation with Buonarroti and the Apofasimeni and Veri Italiani, see A. Saitta, I. p. 203, and II, p. 199-215, and A. Galante Garrone, *op. cit.*, p. 333-363. See also Carlo Francovich, F. Buonarroti e la società dei Veri Italiani in *Il Ponte*, 1951, p. 136-145; p. 261-269.

summed up in these sentences. Buonarroti, in fact, always kept his belief in the revolutionary initiative of France. There is no doubt that he hoped that the revolution of 1830 would do what the conspiracy of Babeuf had failed to do, i.e. to continue the revolution. His ideas on the ultimate aim of that revolution had never changed, nor his idea that the revolution had to be internationalised and that France had to take the initiative: "Ein Stoss musste von Aussen kommen". This he believed in 1830 as in 1796. In his opinion there never could be a contrast between the interests of a revolutionary France and that of the peoples to be liberated. Buonarroti, in fact, was an internationalist and he personified the best humanistic traditions of eighteenth century cosmopolitanism and the universal appeal of the French Revolution.

Mazzini, however, was certainly right in stating that the whole structure and rituals of the "Bons Cousins" were obsolete, "deplaced, dangerous and absurd". He based his secret international organisation on a committee, formed by representatives of national groups, instead of an unknown secret dictatorial centre. This too was a progress.

However, in destroying Buonarroti's cosmopolitanism, and by his mystic ideology of the nation, he paved the way for nationalism in Europe for more than a century. The attack of Mazzini, the arrests and deportations and political repression, and the September laws (1835), weakened the Buonarrotist organisation and the edifice, Buonarroti had been building up during a lifetime, probably came to an end with his death.

The role, Buonarroti had played during the years of the convention, his friendship with Robespierre, his companionship with Babeuf, his mysterious influence in the secret societies for three decennia, had made him a legendary figure: "vertueux Buonarroti, vénérable patriarche de l'égalité, qui vis dans nos temps, comme un grand et pieux souvenir de ce magnifique passé", wrote Hauréau¹, who knew him personally during his last years in France, and it may be worth while to quote a characterisation which Prati made on Buonarroti:

"I had made the acquaintance of the greatest man among the Republicans of the Continent – yes, I must say, the greatest political character I ever met in all my life. I said I made his acquaintance, I ought to have said I became the intimate friend and associate of the most amiable, talented, vigorous and devoted mind Italy had produced for some centuries – I mean Philipp Buonarroti, the descendant of the

¹ B. Hauréau, *La Montagne*...., Paris 1834, p. 111-112.

great Michel Angelo, the author of the "History of the Conspiracy of Babeuf".... Neither the success of his antagonists, the glory of Napoleon, the combined efforts of the Holy Alliance, the treachery of several among his friends, the calumnies of his enemies, neither exile nor poverty, ever shook his mind, nor relented his endeavours; and I found him a man of seventy, with silver hair floating over his most prepossessing countenance, with a Prometheus-like energy, bidding defiance to the powers of the earth, arousing all far and near to break the chains of despotism.... To a mind highly cultivated, he joined the most refined taste; his very soul was music; he played the piano and sang admirably, which refinements often softened down his stern manly character, and rendered him, who was the terror of tyrants, the object of love of all that had the honour of being his friends." ¹

His book on the conspiracy of Babeuf, of which in 1830, the year of his return in France, appeared a French edition, had only increased his exceptional prestige. He stood outside all controversy in the republican camp. Louis Blanc said of him: "Nearly unnoticed on the political scene, nevertheless in the depth of his obscurity, he held power over generous minds, moved many secret springs, maintained constant relations with the democrats abroad and, seconded by Voyer d'Ar-genson and Charles Teste, held the reigns of propagandism so as to accelerate or restrain its movements". ²

Indeed, Buonarroti took an active part in the political propaganda and in framing the policy of the revolutionary wing of the republican opposition against the Orléans Monarchy, while keeping intact his international secret organisations, and organising new ones, with a constant view of the possibilities of a European revolution.

¹ Penny Satirist, 21.4.1838.

² Louis Blanc, *op. cit.* IV, p. 184.