

“Whose realm, his law”. The Austrian Repression of Italian Nationalist Movement under the Reign of Francis I (1815–1835)

Michal Chvojka

*Department of Historical Sciences and Central-European Studies
Philosophical Faculty, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Nám. J. Herdu 2, 917 01 Trnava
Slovakia
chvojkam@yahoo.de*

The Austrian Empire and the Italian Question

Italian “Carbonari”¹ represented a highly branched secret organization striving first to overthrow the French occupation of Italy at the

¹ There is a considerable number of studies and monographs dealing with Carbonari and their struggle for Italian independence and against the Austrian supremacy. See for instance G. BERTI – F. della PERUTA (eds.), *La nascita della nazione. La Carboneria. Intrecci veneti, nazionali e internazionali*, Rovigo 2002; R. U. MONTINI – A. ZANIBONI, *I processi Spielbergiani. I fogli matricolari dello Spielberg*, Roma 1937; A. ZORZI, *Österreichs Venedig. Das letzte Kapitel der Fremdherrschaft 1798–1866*, Düsseldorf 1990; D. LAVEN, *Venice and Venetia under the Habsburgs (1815–1835)*, Oxford 2002; F. PESENDORFER, *Eiserne Krone und Doppeladler. Lombardo – Venetien 1814–1866*, Wien 1992, pp. 160–161; D. UHLÍŘ, *Moravská epizoda v dějinách italské karbonerie*, in: *Nový Mars Moravicus*, Brno 1999, pp. 366–367; H. REINALTER, *Der Geheimbund der Carbonari*, in: K. BRANDSTATTER – J. HORMANN (eds.), *Tirol – Österreich – Italien*, Innsbruck 2005, pp. 571–

turn of the 18th and 19th century. In the beginning, they were not centrally organized and existed in different branches. Like freemasons, Carbonari surrounded themselves with mysterious rituals, using the charcoal burner symbolic, as their name refers to. As opposed to the apolitical and cosmopolitical goals of freemasonry, however, Carbonari had pursued the unification and independence of Italy. First Carbonari lodges were created in the southern Italy, from where they had expanded to the north and crystallized into specific local forms, as for instance the “guelfi” in the Papal state, “adelfi” or “filadelfi” in Piedmont or “federati lombardi” in Lombardy.

Despite Lombardy and Venetia had been affiliated with the Habsburg monarchy after the Congress of Vienna 1814/15, Carbonari were resuming their activities in order to shake off the foreign yoke and join all the Italian states together. Thus they had become a national challenge to the multinational Habsburg Empire and the greatest threat to its security and predominance in the Apennine peninsula.

Being conquered and occupied since 1813, Venetia “had” to be incorporated into Austrian Empire after 1815 as compensation for lost Belgium, for revenues and security to the south as well as for general Austrian leadership in Italy. Moreover, it was a territory rounding off Austria and connecting it with Illyria and Dalmatia. Lombardy, however, was acquired by Habsburg monarchy rather for strategic than territorial or economic reasons, especially aimed to keep France out of Italy. There were several groupings struggling for power and influence in Lombardy already by 1815, reaching from the vice-king Eugène de Beauharnais, pro-French party, the so-called “pure” Italians, i. e. the Piedmontese expansionists favoring old Savoyard expansionist ambitions in Lombardy, Napoleon’s general and king of Naples Joachim Murat or even foreign outsider like the British general William

572; E. LENNHOFF, *Tajné politické společnosti*, Praha 1932, pp. 111–112, 131–132; G. SCHUSTER, *Die geheimen Gesellschaften, Verbindungen und Orden*, Wiesbaden 1997, Vol. 2, pp. 402–403; M. CHVOJKA, *Josef Graf Sedlnitzky als Präsident der Polizei- und Zensurhofstelle in Wien (1817–1848). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Staatspolizei in der Habsburgermonarchie*, Frankfurt am Main u. a. 2010, pp. 41–70, etc.

Cavendish-Bentinck. As Paul Schroeder put it, the Austrian acquisition of Lombardy-Venetia was mainly designed "to promote the balance of power and make Austria secure", as much from revolution and conspiratorial secret societies as from war.² Despite the obvious conciliation tendency of the Austrian military and civil authorities towards public opinion in Lombardy and Venetia, its rule proved inefficient and slow and disgruntled liberals, army officers and former officials. There are several political and economic reasons for this phenomenon. First of all, the new Italian parts of Habsburg monarchy had to be governed like other provinces of Francis's centralized patrimonial empire. Thus, all of the administration, justice and military offices were instructed rather from remote capital Vienna than from Milan or Venice. Furthermore, the Austrian Emperor Francis I dropped both the idea of being crowned a King of Lombardy and of introducing Italian self-government, while substantially limiting the competences of permitted central and provincial congregations. Last phases of Napoleonic Wars, military rule, Habsburg taxation and post-war economic distress had not helped Austrians to win Italian minds as well.³ More uncompromisingly, the Habsburg political authorities sought to "extinguish the spirit of Italian unity and ideas about constitution next to killing Italian Jacobinism".⁴

For this particular reason, the newly established Austrian authorities in Lombardy and Venetia introduced an assessment and classification policy with respect to political attitudes and activities of all officials and clerks regardless of rank or position. Numerous lists of various Italian officials being characterized as "suspect", "bad", "untrustworthy" or even "abhorrent to the public" flowed to Vienna in order to identify and remove prospective opponents of the new regime among them. Having applied a typical Austrian/German preciseness, there

² P. W. SCHROEDER, *The Transformation of European Politics in 1763–1848*, Oxford 1994, pp. 564–570, quotation p. 570.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 565–566; H. RUMPLER, *Österreichische Geschichte 1804–1914. Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa*, Vienna u. a. 1997, pp. 162–164.

⁴ D. BEALES, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, London u. a. 1981, p. 41.

were elaborated descriptions of governmental, provincial and municipal administration or judicial officials in Lombardy-Venetia, like the so-called “congregazioni provinciali”, those entitled to sit at the councilor table, working for the department and city of Venice, prefecture of Verona and elsewhere, criminal and civil court houses in Padova or Udine and last but not least, Lombard financial intendants or members of Procurator General’s office.⁵

The chief of police⁶ in Venice, von Raab was ordered to collect as much information as possible about each and every “former”⁷ Austrian official in Venetia. He reported in June 1814 that it was impossible to obtain information about so many office clerks, medical supervisors or prison guards, because they had been hardly known in the public. As far as their way of thinking is concerned, however, Raab went on, *“we can assume as true that they were all devoted to the former government, what they probably cannot be resented for. Initially, since the Austrian occupation, these officials have maintained passive attitudes; many went off with the enemy troops. Because they are currently anticipating the fate of the Italian provinces has been decided, they have been approaching the government*

⁵ Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (thereafter HHStA), Kabinettsarchiv (thereafter KA), Vertrauliche Akten (thereafter VA), box 50, ff. 63, 65–67 (Verzeichnis einiger übel beschriebener Mailänder Beamten), f. 101 (Verzeichnis der in Ferrara angestellten des Vertrauens nicht würdigen Beamten), f. 117 (Verzeichnis der vom Polizeidirektor Raab als verdächtig angegebenen öffentlichen Beamten in Treviso); box 51, ff. 64–74 (Die charakteristischen Auskünfte über die Finanzintendanten der Lombardie), ff. 109–122 (Charakteristik aller italienischen Beamten, die als zum Ratstisch gehörig angesehen werden können), ff. 142–143 (Charakteristik der in der Lombardie angestellten Prefekten und deren Stellvertreter), ff. 253–260 (Charakter-Schilderung der Mitglieder der Regenz in Mailand), ff. 265–268 (Verzeichnis der bei dem Kriminal- und Zivilgerichte zu Udine angestellten Beamten), ff. 314–321 (Charakteristik der bei dem Zivil- und Kriminaltribunal in Venedig entlassenen Richter), etc.

⁶ The so-called “general police director” (General-Polizeidirektor).

⁷ So that such officials are meant who served in Venice and Venetia during the first Austrian occupation between 1797–1805/6. Thereafter, Venetia had become a part of Napoleonic Italian Kingdom (until 1814).

and seeking to win its confidence through hard work and usefulness".⁸ The Venetian chief of police was well aware of the fact that it was "very difficult to assess public opinion on a public official. Experience has shown that often those officials were in bad calls, because they have fulfilled their obligations with rigor and without indulgence; consequently, the most useful, clever and reliable officials fall into disrepute and are accused of Freemasonry and of loyalty to the French system in the public".⁹ Nevertheless, it emphasizes a general principle that police excluded, controlled and considered people dangerous "because of their freedom, their evil heart, and (...) their Masonic principles".¹⁰ One had even prepared a list of those persons, deportation of which was supposed to take place in Lombardy and Venetia in case of the advance of the enemy.¹¹ Accordingly, persons like former Capitano provinciale in Venice, Guido Crizzo, renowned lawyers and freemasons Pietro and Francesco Comaralo or the president of Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, cavaliere Zicognara, next to several others from Treviso or Vicenza as well as from departments Adige and Friuli should be expelled from Italy.¹² Such lists and characteristics might have served as a simple notification, after Napoleon had been banned to the island of Saint Helena, the warfare finished in the Apennine peninsula and the Congress of Vienna had restored a long-expected peace in Europe. It points out clearly, however, that the transition from French to Austrian rule in Italy had still not been considered a completed issue. Quite to the contrary, the Austrian political and police authorities had to keep a watchful eye on Lombardy and Venetia in order to preserve the newly-made status quo.

⁸ HHStA, KA, VA, box 50/II, report of Raab from Padova, June 5, 1814.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ HHStA, KA, VA, box 51, ff. 173–177, Raab to Goess, Venice, September 11, 1815. Count Julius Strassoldo, the Governor of Lombardy, set up so-called authentic lists of Freemasons in order to prevent them from maintaining/gaining positions in the administration. See HHStA, KA, VA, box 51, ff. 52–63, report from Strassoldo, Milan, November 17, 1815.

¹¹ HHStA, KA, VA, box 51, f. 172, Goess to Hager, Venice, October 1, 1815.

¹² HHStA, KA, VA, box 51, ff. 173–177, Raab to Goess, Venice, September 11, 1815.

Institutional and Secret Tools of Supervision

In his book about Dictatorship and Political Police, the British historian and sociologist Ernest K. Bramstedt has suggested that one can compare the activities of the political police against the “enemies of the state” with a classical three-act-drama. In the first part, the enemies are being spotted, their plots and organizations discovered. Consequently, the police are chasing and catching them and in the final act, their punishment and repression is going to take place.¹³ I’d like to follow this line of identification, investigation and repression of Carbonari by newly established Austrian laws and institutions in the following part. Therefore, I divided it into two sections. In the first one, we will be looking at the period between the Congress of Vienna and major Carbonari trials, subdivided further into three phases: (a) final establishment of Austrian surveillance in 1815–1816, (b) first Carbonari challenges and the question of Austro-Roman collaboration between 1817–1819 and (c) the years between Carbonari-revolutions and Austrian show trials (1820–1823). In the second part, I will add several selected generalizing remarks – based on particular source analysis – about the imprisonment of Carbonari at Spielberg in Brünn, the capital of the former Habsburg province Moravia-Silesia, between 1822 and 1835.

First, let us have a brief look at the institutional and secret tools of supervision and administration in Lombardo-Venetia.¹⁴ New political and police institutions were organized in what came to be called the “Kingdom of Lombardy and Venetia” in order to centralize surveil-

¹³ E. K. BRAMSTEDT, *Dictatorship and Political Police. The Technique of Control by Fear*, London 1945, p. 23.

¹⁴ This general part about establishing the Austrian police system in northern Italy is also based on my previous research in the archives of Vienna and on following studies: M. CHVOJKA, Zápás habsburskej polície s tajným hnutím talianskych karbonárov po Viedenskom kongrese, in: *Historický časopis* 56, 2, 2008, pp. 223–248 and M. CHVOJKA, “Vigilandum Est Semper, Multae Insidiae Sunt Bonis” or Permanent Police Surveillance in the Pre-March Habsburg Monarchy, in: *Nové historické rozhľady – New Historical Perspectives* 1, 1, 2011, pp. 45–48.

lance in Italian territories of Habsburg monarchy. In respective capitals, Milan and Venice, so-called General police directorates (General-Polizeidirektionen) were established in 1815/16 and their principal task was to trace and to eliminate the activity of secret societies. New Austrian police authorities in northern Italy, subordinated to the chief of the Police and Censorship Court Office in Vienna, Count Joseph Sedlnitzky and encouraged by Habsburg Foreign Minister Prince Metternich, were seeking already since May 1815 to organize the "post lodges"¹⁵ as an "important vehicle" of surveillance in Italy. These institutions were created in Milan in 1815 and in Mantova two years later, while the Austrian attempts to establish them in the Duchy of Tuscany had been either significantly delayed (Livorno, 1838) or its sphere of influence apparently limited (Florence, because of postal treaty between Tuscany and Piedmont-Sardinia). In addition, Napoleonic gendarmerie in Lombardy, established since 1797 in the wake of peace congress at Campofornio, had been included into the Austrian control system after 1815, being subordinated to military authorities in Lombardy and Vienna. This paramilitary security force had to submit its reports both to military and police offices and accounted for state police affairs to central police office in Vienna.¹⁶

In the second half of 1816, Metternich and Sedlnitzky had launched a political espionage by sending three agents, Chevalier Dumont, Captain Frizzi and justice official Pietro Dolce to the Apennine peninsula (especially to Sardinia, Parma, Modena, Tuscany and Rome) and southern France. These agents were charged to collect information about the folk mood ("Volksstimmung") in different Italian states, to recruit secret correspondents there and finally to trace secret societies, their tendency, branches and members. These agents had also recruited secret

¹⁵ Also called "black cabinets", i. e. institutions within the usual post office providing letter censorship by officials specially educated for this regard (opening up the letters, writing down the content or its parts if interesting and closing and sealing the letters again in order to be delivered to its recipient).

¹⁶ H. GEBHARDT, *Die Gendarmerie in der Steiermark von 1850 bis heute*, Graz u. a. 1997, pp. 22–24.

correspondents in Genoa, Livorno, Reggio, Bologna, Rome, Ancona and Ferrara.¹⁷ This basic Austrian network for surveillance of secret societies was supplementing the role of the Habsburg consuls and ambassadors in capitals of bigger Italian states, especially to Rome, Naples or Turin. They were obliged to organize a local network of spies and informants in order to provide Austrian state police authorities in Vienna with confidential messages about political situation of the place. There is a good example concerning one of the most influential Carbonari leaders, Count Federico Confalonieri, with respect both to functioning and limitations of this control system. Being perceived as an engaged and renowned supporter of Italian independence since 1814, Confalonieri ought to have been closely supervised during his journey to Naples and Sicily in June 1816.¹⁸ Therefore, the General police director in Milan, Count Saurau, introduced a two-way scrutiny of this “suspicious traveler”. In the first place, a secret agent was employed for this particular reason, with an obligation to report directly to Milan. Consequently, the Austrian ambassador in Naples, Prince Jablonowsky, was asked to pay his attention to Confalonieri. Most interestingly, as we infer from agent’s report, Jablonowsky completely failed in doing his job, for he “*fell in love with the beautiful Countess Confalonieri and made her exclusive companion*”.¹⁹ In this case, a bottom-up control proved to be

¹⁷ CHVOJKA, Zápás habsburskej polície, pp. 226–229; CHVOJKA, Vigilandum Est Semper, pp. 45–46.

¹⁸ In 1814, Confalonieri led a Milanese delegation urging the Austrian Emperor Francis I to expand Lombardy at the expense of Piedmont and the Papal state and to proclaim an autonomous Kingdom of Italy there under an Austrian archduke. See SCHROEDER, p. 566 and RUMPLER, p. 163. For the perception of Confalonieri, see Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv Wien (thereafter AVA), Polizeihofstelle (thereafter PHS), box 763, No. 1264 ex 1817, Sedlnitzky to Saurau, Vienna, May 13, 1815 and Saurau to Sedlnitzky, Milan, April 24 and May 31, 1817.

¹⁹ The Austrian spy also suggested that there were some positive aspects of Jablonowsky’s failure. His lively devotion for Countess Confalonieri could have had a soothing effect on the Neapolitan government, because “*the malcontents generally believed Count Confalonieri was being used by the prince Jablonowsky for the sake of exploring the mood and feelings of others. The passion for his wife should serve only to mask this intention*”. This reputation was supposed to go ahead of Confalonieri to

more efficient than a top-down surveillance. In any way, this approach represents the general principle of the Austrian surveillance in Italy, as described by Count Saurau: *"In order to achieve a correct and safe management of one part of Italy and to assess its political situation and the mood of the people, it is necessary to observe both the whole peninsula and contacts between the malcontents there."*²⁰

Despite of the framework, I have already mentioned, the guardians of the Austrian "peace, order and security" possessed a rather perplexed image of Carbonari, including more or less difference between hypothesis and reality. The most obvious discrepancy can be seen in the fact that there was a certainty of intense activities of secret societies in Italy, but also a growing confusion concerning their hierarchy, members or sphere of influence. So-called "Congregazione cattolica apostolica romana" was a first particular group in Piedmont and Lombardy to attract the working attention of the Habsburg police in June 1816. In September 1816, this association was claimed to be identical with the secret society of "Philadelphi", but there was uncertainty of its affiliation with Carbonari. Three months later, the aim of Carbonari was supposed to be the establishment of Italian republic, while Freemasons were seen as striving for independent Italian kingdom. Moreover, there were uncertain reports about the existence of so-called "Guelfi" and "Concistoriali" allegedly looking for members among the clergy and "upper class malcontents". Such information could not but persuade the Austrian political and police authorities that there was a strong national independentist movement in different parts of Italy divided generally between the royalists, "papists" and republicans.²¹

Sicily, and as the latter had arrived there, he should have been generally avoided by the constitutionalists, because they took him for a secret spy of Austria. See AVA, PHS, box 763, No. 1264 ex 1817, Saurau to Sedlnitzky, Milan, April 23, 1817.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ See CHVOJKA, *Zápas habsburskej polície*, pp. 226–228.

First Carbonari Challenges and the Question of Austro-Roman Collaboration

Whereas Sicily-Naples, Papal state or Piedmont-Sardinia seemed to be bubbling over with secret societies at the turn of 1816/17, Lombardy and Venetia looked as an island in the tempestuous sea. This persuasion of Foreign minister Prince Metternich and chief of Austrian police Count Sedlnitzky, however, equaled a self-deception that was going to be broken already in February 1817. The discovery of Carbonari lodge in Ascoli in the Papal province Marches and the escape of its leader, Count Francesco Merli, to Milan revealing his connections to Lombardy, set the Austrian police to feverish work. As a result, three members²² of the discovered lodge entitled “Congregazione cattolica apostolica romana” had been arrested and a series of house searches and correspondence controls launched in Milan. As the last measures didn’t manage to provide enough evidence to convict three arrested Carbonari of crimes against the state, a closer collaboration and information exchange with Rome proved to be absolutely indispensable.²³

There were, however, more tasks to solve. First and foremost, the relationship between Carbonari and Guelfi was to be cleared, since the latter were said to have established their headquarters in Milan in June 1817. Gradually, both Austrian and Roman police provided each other with confidential reports and the confusion of the Austrian foreign minister and chief of police with respect to Carbonari had been lessening. On June 20, Sedlnitzky could report to Metternich that the secret society of Guelfi was established after Carbonari had become no secret and thus were limited in their activities. Their purpose consisted like that of Carbonari in the unity and independence of Italy, be it in a republican or constitutional form. As for the membership of Guelfi, however, only Carbonari with a higher degree and the Masons of the Italian – French creations were allowed to enter this secret society.²⁴

²² Ottavio Albicini, don Antonio Gridoglia and Antonio Masserini.

²³ CHVOJKA, Zápás habsburskej polície, pp. 230–231.

²⁴ HHStA, Staatskanzlei (thereafter StK), Noten von der Polizeihofstelle (thereafter

The attempted insurgence of Carbonari in Macerata southerly of Ancona and their expansion to Dalmatia and Lombardy posed once again a question of a real Carbonari-threat within the Habsburg empire. Sedlnitzky didn't omit to reinforce quiet secret inquiries in this respect, although the governor of Lombardy, Count Strassoldo, considered in August 1817 all the possible resonances to be avoided through the timely Papal action. More importantly, Austrian police authorities didn't hesitate to employ arbitrarily looking means in order to maintain the peace and order in Italian provinces. For example, because of being considered a "politically dangerous and corrupted person", Count Maghella, former General Police Director in Kingdom of Naples and one of the closest collaborators of Joachim Murat, was imprisoned in the Piedmont's fortress Fenestrelle. Nevertheless, as a Sardinian citizen he repeatedly asked his government to set him free, especially, after the Habsburg police had failed to provide sufficiently discrediting materials against him and according to Sardinian government, "*the accusations were not so serious to deprive him of his freedom any longer*".²⁵ Both the Austrian chief of police Sedlnitzky and the general police director in Milan, Count Saurau, insisted, however, on keeping him further under lock and key for higher state purposes. They regarded him – to some extent truly – as a "*dangerous coryphaeus of an antihabsburg opposition*". No wonder that his release depended on the level of stabilization in northern Italy, if one takes into account the expansion of Carbonari movement there.²⁶

Thus, in dealing with secret societies, the Austrian government applied a method of secret investigation and close control, aiming at no "public" steps against the "sect leaders" or higher-ranked promoters of Italian independence. In addition, it preferred a more precise pursuit both of the Carbonari and of their attempts to set up new filial lodges

NvP), box 33, Sedlnitzky to Metternich, June 20, 1817.

²⁵ HHStA, StK, Noten an die Polizeihofstelle (thereafter NaP), box 6, Folio 7, Metternich to Sedlnitzky, July 5, 1817.

²⁶ See CHVOJKA, Zápás habsburskej policie, pp. 232–234; CHVOJKA, Vigilandum Est Semper, pp. 46–47.

on the Austrian soil as well as to establish contacts with abroad. By contrast, the Roman police did not hesitate to apply “inquisitorial” and public measures against secret societies, as the Austrian ambassador in Rome, Prince Kaunitz, suggested. Accordingly, the chief of Roman police, Monsignore Pacca, had planned to arrest all the Carbonari-leaders in Italy on one day and to court-martial them. Consequently, he was allegedly intending both to publish the verdict with motives and to grant a full amnesty to all other fraternized, provided that they would declare their aberrations ruefully within a month at the respective local authority.²⁷

The data about the activities of Carbonari, Guelfi and Adelfi²⁸ acquired by Prince Metternich at the Congress of Aachen (October 1818) confirmed once more the importance of mutual collaboration of ultra-conservative powers in the Apennine Peninsula. After the Carbonari-lodge in the Venetian province Polesine had been discovered in January 1819, the repressive machine began its work in the Austrian “Italy”, particularly by establishing the Special investigation commission (Spezial-Untersuchungskommission) in Venice for the purpose of suppressing the Carbonari-movement more effectively. Count Sedlnitzky, pointing out that the Carbonari lodge in Polesine had been established from Ferrara in the Papal State, simultaneously tried to induce the chief of Roman police, Monsignore Pacca, to make both next and previously required information from Rome available to Vienna. Nevertheless, there was a stumbling block in Austro-Roman collaboration fed by their different approaches and geopolitical situation. Habsburg police authorities criticized late information flow from Rome, “too” fast

²⁷ HHStA, StK, NaP, box 7, Metternich to Sedlnitzky, October 8, 1817.

²⁸ In the course of 1818, new information about Carbonari in Lombardy-Venetia came into the police hands, pointing out Counts Aghutti, Archinto and Crivelli as the chiefs of Lombardian independentists. In addition, the “sect” of the so-called “Adelfi” was supposed to exist primarily in Piedmont and to be striving to exert influence upon different Carbonari and Guelfi lodges. Another reports warned of the contacts between Russian and Italian “sectarians” as well as of the emergence of a new secret society called “Societa delfica”. See CHVOJKA, *Vigilandum Est Semper*, p. 47.

detentions of Carbonari by Roman police as well as its "useless" official publication. Roman authorities, by contrast, disapproved of the temporizing and tepid Austrian strategy and were anxious about the interference of Austria in Roman affairs.²⁹ Such controversies had affected the degree of police collaboration between Rome and Vienna on one hand and the efficiency with respect to preventing Carbonari activities on the other. It was the weakening vigilance of the Austrian police as well as the assumption that secret societies would not be able to organize a revolution for independence successfully without receiving help from abroad and thus believing the situation in Italy was under control,³⁰ that had left Metternich and Sedlnitzky completely surprised by the outbreak of the revolution in Naples in July 1820.

Between Carbonari-revolutions and Austrian Show Trials

The revolutionary outbreak in Naples in July 1820, as opposed to those in Portugal and Spain four months earlier, alarmed the guardians of Austrian order and security and provoked a set of rigorous counter-revolutionary measures.³¹ First of all, there was a strict supervision of

²⁹ The Papal State suspected Austria because of alleged attempts to gain Papal northern provinces (so-called legations) and thus to strengthen its position in the Apennine peninsula. This hypothesis was false, but based on real Habsburg occupation right in Papal fortresses Ferrara and Comacchio as a basis for intervention to the Central and Southern Italy. As Paul W. Schroeder put it, Austria's acquisition of Lombardy-Venetia created a deeper problem for the international system. It virtually forced Austria to lead and organize Italy, yet did not really empower her to do so. Lombardy-Venetia was not big enough as a power base to give Austria control of the whole peninsula, yet too big for the comfort of others (Piedmont, Papal State). See SCHROEDER, p. 566; CHVOJKA, *Zápas habsburskej polície*, pp. 236–237.

³⁰ See CHVOJKA, *Zápas habsburskej polície*, pp. 239–240.

³¹ The following text is a short version of my article published in Italian language (only) – see M. CHVOJKA, *Tra nazionalismo e assolutismo. I Carbonari, prigionieri politici di stato nello Spielberg*, in: F. LEONCINI (ed.), *L'Alba dell'Europa Liberale. La trama internazionale delle cospirazioni risorgimentali*, Minelliana 2012, pp. 31–47.

borders and passengers travelling from Naples to Piedmont and Lombardy. In late August 1820, the Emperor Francis I proclaimed rigorous punishments against Carbonari in Milan and Venice, reminding the Austrian subjects of death penalty for treason or life imprisonment for collaboration.³²

In the field of diplomacy, the eastern powers Russia, Prussia and Austria negotiated the “Italian question” at the congresses in Troppau (Opava) and Laibach (Ljubljana) at the turn of 1820/21.³³ Consequently, they resolved upon an antirevolutionary intervention principle as well as its particular application in the Kingdom of both Sicilies. The Austro-Russian coalition army under the command of general Frimont suppressed first the revolution in Naples. After another Carbonari-revolt had broken out in Piedmont in March 1821, the intervention was extended there as well in order to restore the status quo. Particular leaders from revolutionary Naples were expelled and supervised in Austria for “higher political purposes”, following the example of French exiles (f. e. Joseph Fouché, Anne-Jean Savary) or Napoleonids. Thus, Police Minister Borelli, Generals Pietro Coletta, Pedrinelli and Arcovito as well as MP’s Poerio and Pepe found their forced domicile within city borders of Prague, Graz and Brno. As late as the congress of Verona had permitted them to choose the residence of their own except for the Kingdom of both Sicilies.³⁴

Prince Metternich developed also an intense diplomatic offensive against Switzerland as a “meeting place of all exiled revolutionaries”. He blamed the Alpine state for giving asylum to political proponents

³² See PESENDORFER, p. 162; CHVOJKA, Zápás habsburskej polície, pp. 240–241; *Seiner Majestät des Kaisers Franz Gesetze und Verfassungen im Justiz-Fache. Für die Deutschen Staaten der Oesterreichischen Monarchie. Von dem Jahre 1798 bis 1803*, Wien 1816, p. 327, §§ 52–55.

³³ See for instance P.W. SCHROEDER, *Metternich’s Diplomacy at Its Zenith*, Austin 1962; J. POLIŠENSKÝ, *Opavský kongres roku 1820 a evropská politika let 1820–1822*, Ostrava 1962.

³⁴ See D. UHLÍŘ, Brněnská internace účastníků Neapolské buržoasní revoluce r. 1820, in: *Brno v minulosti a dnes IV*, Brno 1962, pp. 32–48; CHVOJKA, *Sedlnitzky*, pp. 282–283.

of constitutionalism and independence of Italy or Germany, what he came to call "moral abuse" of the Swiss neutrality. His initiatives temporarily succeeded, as the last congress of Pentarchy in Verona (October – December 1822) agreed to a Protocol affirming the expulsion of political exiles from Switzerland. Moreover, Switzerland proclaimed so-called "Alien- and Press Conclusum" in July 1823 – limiting freedom of the press – under the threat of possible armed intervention of the "Eastern powers".³⁵

In Lombardy and Venetia, the Special investigation commission developed an intense activity meeting with a considerable success. Many Carbonari leaders were arrested and interrogated whereas a series of trials in Milan and Venice in early 1820's demonstrated a climax of Carbonari-repression. It is fair to mention especially both a "Venetian group" around Felice Foresti and Constantino Munari (1821) and "Lombardian groups" around Pietro Maroncelli and Silvio Pellico (1821) as well as Federico Confalonieri and Giorgio Pallavicini (1823).

According to §§ 50–60 of the State Penal Code³⁶ issued by the Emperor Francis II in September 1803 and valid from January 1804, Carbonari were generally alleged of treason because they had been promoting the society striving to bring about the Austrian sovereignty in Italy in a violent way, further disturbing the state order by writings, speeches, railroading the Austrian subjects against the Habsburg administration as well as by omitting proper denunciation of antihabsburg movement. They were also accused of heavy police infringements, mostly because of their membership in secret societies (freemason lodges or Carbonari groups). As the Senate of Justice of Lombardy-Venetia reported in May 1821, Felice Foresti, for instance, was convicted that he had worked for and belonged to the Carbonari after the purpose of this association had already been known. He attended the Vendita of Ferrara in November 1817, received and distributed the Carbonari devices, writings and circulars of the Latin Senate. On

³⁵ CHVOJKA, *Zápas habsburskej polície*, pp. 241–242.

³⁶ See *Kaisers Franz Gesetze*, pp. 326–328.

May 22, 1818, he attended the Carbonari midday meal, briefly, he went on to belong to the Carbonari league faithfully, which he had entered as a provisional Austrian judge and remained there even as a definitive k. k. Praetor.³⁷ Similarly, Antonio Villa was known as a loyal friend of Foresti and proved to be extremely active in spreading of the “sect” in 1818 for the cause of the conspiracy. He was convicted of having entered Carboneria with full knowledge of their criminal purpose. Furthermore, he confessed to have heard from his Carbonari-fellows that they should really act. Villa admitted to have won many of the conspirators for the “sect”.³⁸

As a consequence of these and similar charges, the capital punishment had been imposed on many of Carbonari. The Emperor Francis I commuted it however, in all relevant cases to temporary or lifetime imprisonment at Habsburg fortresses in Brno (Spielberg/Špilberk) or Laibach. The underlying motive can be seen partly in humanity, but most importantly in security policy considerations. By saying that “*I decided to overlook the death penalty also to the three most culpable (Solera, Foresti and Munari – M. CH.) of convicts in question and to change it into a 20-year prison sentence provided they would make more important discoveries – to be proven true yet – concerning several important Carbonari and the Dignitaries of Milan in particular*”,³⁹ the Austrian monarch clearly ordered to use imprisonment as an instrument of obtaining new data about Carbonari-branching in Italy.

Obviously, the main goal of Carbonari repression was to securitize the state order along with the general (deterrent effect of punishment)

³⁷ HHStA, KA, Kabinettskanzleiakten (thereafter KKA), box 50, No. 705, Report of Senate of Justice in Lombardy–Venetia from May 18, 1821.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ HHStA, KA, KKA, box 50, ad No. 705, concept of the highest resolution of Emperor Francis I to police chief Sedlnitzky (undated). This resolution is to be found among documents with respect to a show trial with 47 Carbonari, thirteen of which had been sentenced to death. Firstly, Francis I commuted only ten of them to temporary imprisonment, while having added later also Felice Foresti, Constantino Munari and Antonio Solera to them.

and particular prevention (individual correction)⁴⁰ of political instability.

Incarceration of Carbonari at Spielberg under Francis I

During 1820s, there were 23 Italian Carbonari imprisoned at infamous fortress Spielberg, four of which had died⁴¹ there. Most importantly, we have to mention Silvio Pellico,⁴² Pietro Maroncelli, Antonio Solera, Andrea Tonelli, Felice Foresti, Marco Fortini, Antonio Villa, Francesco Arese, Giorgio Pallavicini, Pietro Borsieri, Gaetano Castillia, Federico Confalonieri, Cesare Albertini, Luigi Manfredini, Constantino Munari or Silvio Moretti. Between 1833–1835, further nineteen Italians had been arrested there, mostly as a consequence of Austrian repression against Young Italy movement.⁴³

⁴⁰ Regarding the general deterrence, punishment of the offender functions by exerting influence on the public in general and by deterring others from committing criminal acts like the former. According to the specific deterrence, the punishment is having an effect on perpetrators themselves and works to educate and improve them, or at least protects society from them. See H. ORTNER, *Gefängnis. Eine Einführung in seine Innenwelt*, Basel 1988, p. 46.

⁴¹ For example, Fortunati Oroboni died in 1823, Antonio Villa in 1827 or Silvio Moretti in 1832.

⁴² Silvio Pellico spent more than 10 years in one of the harshest Habsburg fortresses. His memoirs (in this article, I am referring to "Memoirs of Silvio Pellico or My Prisons, New York 1844"), however, were written in a quite moderate way, but simultaneously providing the reader with a detailed description of the cruel living conditions there. Metternich is notorious for his expression that this book had harmed Austria more than a lost battle. See H. von SRBIK, *Metternich. Der Staatsmann und der Mensch*, München 1925, Vol. 1, p. 490. However, it is important to note that Pellico is not absolutely objective in his otherwise very valuable account. For instance, he doesn't mention the organization of Carbonari, its objectives and activities as well as his role there in particular, but makes only some general remarks in this respect. Consequently, he appears to be completely innocent and the way of his imprisonment unjust and extraordinary harsh in his book (chapters 57, 61, 71–72, 85), which is not true, for he was trialled legitimately and according to particular paragraphs of the Austrian penal code from 1803.

⁴³ See O. FRANĚK – O. TOMAN, *Špilberk*, Brno 1968, pp. 85–91; L. CONTEGIA-COMO, *Spielberg. Documentazione sui detenuti politici Italiani. Inventario 1822–1859*,

Spielberg represented a closed penal institution which was considered to be one of the harshest fortress prisons in the Habsburg monarchy, most importantly due to unbearable sanitary and climatic living conditions. If a prisoner convicted of treason had been allowed to move from Spielberg to castle of Laibach in order to pass the rest of his punishment there under the same conditions, it was still seen as a moderation of the sentence.⁴⁴ No wonder that the change of climate represented a substantial alleviation of living conditions provided that Carbonari had to be confined in fetters in solitary and double cells⁴⁵ with restricted and predetermined food portions.⁴⁶

There was an internal differentiation of inmates according to the type of crime and sex at Spielberg. At the end of May 1823, there were 266 male and 58 female prisoners, guided totally by 79 supervisory guards.⁴⁷ Carbonari – as political prisoners – were separated from the other inmates of Spielberg fortress.⁴⁸ The chief of Austrian

Rovigo 2010.

⁴⁴ For example, Giorgio Pallavicini asked to be transferred to a location with more clement climate repeatedly. The same asked Giorgio di Castiglia for his son Gaetano imprisoned at Spielberg. See Moravský zemský archiv Brno (thereafter MZA), Moravsko slezské gubernium – prezidium (thereafter MSGP), box 953, No. 515/G ex 1832, f. 5 verso, protocol with Pallavicini made by police director Peter von Muth, April 10, 1832 and box 955, No. 587/G ex 1834, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, June 13, 1834.

⁴⁵ See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 403/G ex 1825, fol. 2, cells allocated to Carbonari, June 13, 1825.

⁴⁶ See MZA, Policejní ředitelství (thereafter PŘ), box 70, folio 422, Instruction draft for Spielberg supervisor in chief with respect to Italian Carbonari, §§ 29–33 and MSGP, box 947, No. 170/G ex 1825, ff. 21–25, Mittrowsky to His Majesty (Emperor Francis I), December 21, 1824.

⁴⁷ See MZA, MSGP, box 947, statement on status and numbers of inmates and guards at Spielberg from May 29, 1823. For a complete register of names of guards see MZA, PŘ, box 4, ff. 20–30.

⁴⁸ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 403/G ex 1825, f. 2, cell allocating to Carbonari, June 13, 1825; box 948, No. 418/G and 480/G ex 1826 (arrival of next four (Brescianese) Carbonari from Laibach); See also box 950, No. 85/G ex 1828 (cells allocated to Carbonari) or box 953, No. 246/G ex 1833 (eventual imprisonment of new

police, Count Sedlnitzky, indicated both safety and "higher" state police considerations in this regard. First of all, Carbonari were to be prevented from any possible escape attempt⁴⁹ by keeping an appropriate close watch over them, which was harder to achieve in isolation and separation. More importantly, however, it was necessary to induce the imprisoned Carbonari to reveal "complete data" about "machinations" of secret societies in Italy and to "fill some gaps" in their protocolar assertions. Their isolation was thus supposed to provoke a more intense secret communication between them and their families or supporters, possibly providing a desired information source for Austrian police. Both the governor of Moravia and Silesia Count Anton Friedrich Mittrowsky as a supreme authority in terms of Carbonari surveillance at Spielberg and Brno police director Peter v. Muth as a direct subordinate of Count Sedlnitzky were asked to send a relevant report at least every six months for these explicit reasons.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, Muth was obliged by Sedlnitzky in a "strictly confidential way" both to scrutinize the governor's actions concerning Carbonari inconspicuously and without being suspected and to report whether and how Mittrowsky had been implementing imperial orders.⁵¹ Furthermore, the Austrian police and political authorities in Vienna required regular reports about morality, discipline and health status of Carbonari.⁵² Apparently, control and treatment of Carbonari was being

traitors).

⁴⁹ These considerations were fully justified, for there were not only organized attempts to escape from Spielberg in 1820 and 1822 (MZA, PŘ, box 70, ff. 9–12, Muth to Sedlnitzky, October 7, 1820; MSGP, box 947, No. 503/g ex 1822, Smerczek to governorate, December 5, 1822), but also to assassinate the Spielberg supervisor in-chief Smerczek in April 1826 (see MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 227/g, Governor's decree to Sedlnitzky, April 25, 1826).

⁵⁰ MZA, PŘ, box 2, Sedlnitzky to Mittrowsky, January 22, 1822 and Sedlnitzky to Muth, January 31, 1822.

⁵¹ MZA, PŘ, box 4, f. 7, Sedlnitzky to Muth, June 20, 1825.

⁵² MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 310/G ex 1825, folio 1, Sedlnitzky to Mittrowsky, May 25, 1825 and No. 592/G ex 1825, f. 1, Emperor Francis I to Mittrowsky, November 27, 1825.

run simultaneously according to general laws,⁵³ particular surveillance instructions,⁵⁴ house rules and both specific imperial and state police directives, examples of which we have mentioned above.

The arrested Carbonari were forbidden to correspond⁵⁵ with anybody including their families. Moreover, they should not come into contact with other criminals arrested at Spielberg as well as with anybody not officially entrusted with guarding or treating them due to imperial order from Mid-November 1825.⁵⁶ As a result, they were confined to “socialize” only with their cell mate and police director Muth. The priest, physicians and guards had to limit the conversation “to unavoidable necessities”. Moreover, Carbonari were to be prevented from communicating by knocking on the cell walls or discussing through windows.⁵⁷ Spielberg supervisor in-chief, Moritz Smerczek, was obliged to report daily about surveillance of Carbonari to governor Mittrowsky while three most reliable watchmen⁵⁸ – Joseph Schiller, Ernest Kral and Vinzenz Kupitzky – had to guard them.

⁵³ See *Kaisers Franz Gesetze*, pp. 320–322 (§§ 11–24).

⁵⁴ Police director instructed the Spielberg supervisor in-chief in detail (§ 60) in terms of imprisonment, cell furnishing and cleaning, clothing, occupation, spiritual education, nourishment, medical care and surveillance of Carbonari. See MZA, PŘ, box 70, ff. 418–422, Instruction draft for Spielberg supervisor in chief with respect to Italian Carbonari; MSGP, box 947, No. 310/G ex 1825, f. 1, Sedlnitzky to Mittrowsky, May 25, 1825.

⁵⁵ Relatives of Carbonari could get messages about their health status only via governor of Moravia-Silesia. Otherwise, they were reminded of the fact that according to § 13 of the Austrian Penal Code, it was forbidden to supply Carbonari with messages from outside, be it from relatives or other persons. See *Kaisers Franz Gesetze*, p. 320 (§ 13); MZA, MSGP, box 950, No. 473/g ex 1827; box 951, No. 72/g ex 1829, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, January 24, 1829.

⁵⁶ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 570/G ex 1825, f. 1, Emperor Francis I to Mittrowsky, Pressburg, November 13, 1825.

⁵⁷ See MZA, PŘ, box 70, f. 422, Instruction draft for Spielberg supervisor in chief with respect to Italian Carbonari, §§ 44–45, 48, 51, 57–58.

⁵⁸ See MZA, MSGP, box 947, ff. 10 and 12, Mittrowsky to Emperor Francis I, December 21, 1824.

Medical Care, Spiritual Control and Question of Work at Spielberg

As far as medical care at Spielberg was considered, both the "house physician" Dr. Joseph Bayer and surgeon Linhard were visiting Spielberg regularly three times a week. In specific cases and for not every physician had been allowed to gain access to Carbonari, the substituted medical assistant Dr. Steiner von Pfunzen was brought in.⁵⁹ Carbonari could not correspond with their families, but the latter were supposed to get trimestrial messages about state of health of their imprisoned relatives.⁶⁰ Carbonari were to be healed in their cells, while taking prescribed and necessary (i. e. no redundant) medicaments only. In curing their illnesses,⁶¹ physicians were entitled to ask for alleviations like removing of chains⁶² or ensuring better food or clothes.⁶³

⁵⁹ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 170/g ex 1825, ff. 13–14, Mittrowsky to His Majesty, December 21, 1824.

⁶⁰ See MZA, MSGP, box 949, No. 146/G ex 1827, medical reports of all Italian Carbonari at Spielberg from March and August 1827; box 950, No. 182/G ex 1828, medical reports from May 1828; box 951, No. 374/G ex 1829, medical reports from August 1829; box 952, No. 52/G ex 1830, medical reports from February 1830 etc.

⁶¹ Carbonari suffered for example from flatulence, indigestion, blood flow, haemorrhoids, angina pectoris, gout or even lymphatic tumour, as a result of which Pietro Maroncelli's left leg had to be amputated in June 1828. See medical reports mentioned in the footnote above and for Maroncelli see MZA, MSGP, box 950, No. 100/G and 182/G ex 1828; box 951, No. 347/G ex 1828, f. 2 verso, Inzaghy to Francis I, July 2, 1828 and No. 515/G ex 1828, (artificial limb for Maroncelli); PŘ, box 4, f. 12, Sedlnitzky to Muth, July 8, 1828.

⁶² The visitation of police director Muth had revealed in February 1827 that more Italian prisoners at Spielberg were fastened partly with one chain only, partly without chains and partly only with handcuffs. Consequently, the authorities in Vienna required to know the reasons for such alleviations. See MZA, MSGP, box 949, No. 169/G ex 1827, Sedlnitzky to temporary governor of Moravia-Silesia, Count Klebelsberg, March 29, 1827.

⁶³ MZA Brno, PŘ, box 70, f. 421, Instruction draft for a Spielberg supervisor in chief with respect to Italian Carbonari, §§ 34–41. See also MZA, MSGP, box 949, No. 434/G ex 1827, Imperial resolution about food for Pellico; box 950, No. 496/G

Walking and “making use of fresh air” also proved to be very important measure in terms of health protection of Carbonari, especially if they had been imprisoned in casemate wall of Spielberg without direct access of sunlight and outside world. Silvio Pellico describes it in his memoirs as follows: *“It had been established from the first that each of us should have an hour to walk, twice a week. Afterwards this relief was granted every other day, and still later, every day, except festivals. Each one was taken to walk separately, between two guards, with muskets on their shoulders.”*⁶⁴ The governor Mittrowsky as a provincial head of Carbonari surveillance was compelled to provide them with such a possibility by imperial instructions from December 4, 1824.⁶⁵ Consequently, they used the so-called “small terrace” for this purpose, walking two by two⁶⁶ there according their cell allocation, for the bigger terrace on the other Spielberg side did not conform to required security regards.⁶⁷ Its small size was not the only negative, however, because a smoke was said to condense there in windy weather. Therefore, the chimneys at Spielberg

and 549/G ex 1827, better food for Pellico, Pallavicini, Solera and Tonelli. In case of disease, prisoners were given double size of their usual portion. For instance, 12 of 13 examined Carbonari were issued with these double portions in December 1829 (MZA, MSGP, box 952, No. 523/G ex 1829, report of Spielberg supervisor in-chief, Aloys Dickmann, from December 17, 1829) or 9 of 9 Carbonari in April 1832 (MZA, MSGP, box 953, No. 561/G ex 1832, report of Spielberg supervisor in-chief, Aloys Dickmann, from April 26, 1832).

⁶⁴ See Memoirs of Silvio Pellico, p. 65 (chapter LXV).

⁶⁵ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 170/g ex 1825, folio 1, Mittrowsky to His Majesty, December 21, 1824.

⁶⁶ See MZA, MSGP, box 950, No. 43/G ex 1828, Smerczek to governorate’s presidium, January 29, 1828.

⁶⁷ Firstly, one could dare to jump from the bigger terrace in order to escape through the forest. Secondly and lastly, it was possible to communicate both with external world by means of signs and with the wife, relatives and servants of Spielberg supervisor in-chief, because the windows of his flat were situated towards the bigger terrace. See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 170/g ex 1825, ff. 3–4, Mittrowsky to His Majesty, December 21, 1824.

were to be extended in spring 1825.⁶⁸ Since January 1828, Carbonari were allowed to spend two hours a day walking on the terrace.⁶⁹

Despite the fact that the overall aim of Carbonari's imprisonment was to repress, isolate and marginalize them, there were also strong pastoral objectives in order to promote their reintegration after release. Being deprived of possibility to write and read in general, Carbonari were allowed to read Bible and religious books⁷⁰ like "La religione vincitrice" by Antonio Valsecchi,⁷¹ "Le confessioni" by St. Augustin or "Vita e Dottrina di Gesù Christo" by Federico Leopoldo di Stolberg.⁷² The Emperor Francis I placed great emphasis also on spiritual and pastoral assistance for imprisoned Italians and ordered them to take part in holy messes on Sundays and bank holidays. It was not easy to implement this resolution, however, for there were only two priests at Spielberg for both male and female prisoners so that Carbonari were escorted to "house church"⁷³ only on occasion of major feasts. This was the case, especially if they were to be isolated not only from other criminals at Spielberg, but even among themselves by distinguishing a "Lombard" and "Venetian" group.⁷⁴ Later on, a particular post of a chaplain for Carbonari had been established and priest Stephan Paulovich was sent to Spielberg directly from Vienna, where he had served as a court chaplain, in order to provide church and confession service for them in Italian language at least every three

⁶⁸ Ibidem, ff. 2–4.

⁶⁹ See MZA, MSGP, box 950, No. 43/G ex 1828, Smerczek to governorate's presidium, January 29, 1828.

⁷⁰ MZA, MSGP, box 949, No. 54/g ex 1827, Saurau to Mittrowsky, January 9, 1827.

⁷¹ MZA, MSGP, box 950, No. 604/g ex 1828, Saurau to Inzaghy, November 20, 1827.

⁷² MZA, MSGP, box 953, No. 1369/g ex 1832, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, September 12, 1832.

⁷³ Carbonari were to be separated from each other during holy masses as well. See MZA, MSGP, box 950, No. 35/g ex 1828, statement of Spielberg supervisor in chief Smerczek about division of Carbonari during the holy mass from January 21, 1828.

⁷⁴ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 170/g ex 1825, ff. 1 and 14–16, Mittrowsky to His Majesty, December 21, 1824.

months.⁷⁵ This was only the first and preliminary step until “*a reliable priest, devoted to government, zealous in catholic education and speaking perfect Italian*”⁷⁶ would be found and hired for this purpose in Moravian capital itself.

While authorities in Brno were looking for a suitable candidate in the second half of March 1825, imperial instructions⁷⁷ from Vienna determined main goals as well as scope of employment for priest Paulovich.⁷⁸ The first one of them is particularly interesting for us because it concerned the spiritual and pastoral assistance (control) of Carbonari and its relations to “arrest policy” (Arrestpolizey), pastoring itself as well as to what was termed as a “beneficial” part. By referring to “Arrestpolizey”, the priest was reminded not to behave in a way, which could change or alleviate the punishment itself, especially with respect to preserving order and security at Spielberg. Thus, he was forbidden to assess the verdict or to deliver presents or messages of all kinds from and to imprisoned Carbonari.⁷⁹ As far as pastoring was concerned, the pastor had to confine himself to confession for the purpose of investigating the psychic state of Carbonari and to eschew any insights into record of proceedings. Further, he ought to make them realize damnability, culpability and severity of their crimes, to correct their religious principles if necessary and to evoke remorse and repentance in them. At the same time, the priest was expected to induce Carbonari

⁷⁵ See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 145/G ex 1825, f. 1, Saurau to Mittrowsky, March 10, 1825; FRANĚK – TOMAN, p. 82.

⁷⁶ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 145/G ex 1825, f. 1, Saurau to Mittrowsky, March 10, 1825.

⁷⁷ See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 194/G ex 1825, “Instruction for a pastor to be sent to the Italian prisoners in the castle hill of Brno” and “Directive for a religious teacher of the arrested criminal persons”.

⁷⁸ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 194/G ex 1825, f. 1, Saurau to Mittrowsky, Vienna, March 29, 1825 along with a transcript of imperial order of Francis I from March 28, 1825 (f. 3).

⁷⁹ See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 194/G ex 1825, “Instruction for a pastor to be sent to the Italian prisoners in the castle hill of Brno”.

to bear their punishment patiently.⁸⁰ In the final "beneficial" regard, there were instructions in case that the imprisoned Italians would reveal some new data – as a sort of making amends for committed crimes – about both persons involved in Carboneria and means promoting goals of this association. In the beginning, it does not seem as a superior hierarchical claim to break the seal of confession, for it depended on the priest to decide to what extent the arrest policy, state security or an upcoming crime had been concerned. However, the latter was obliged to report on these issues immediately either to governor (arrest policy) or to Emperor (state security, upcoming crime),⁸¹ so that the existing regime was to benefit from this spiritual service. The directive for a religious teacher of arrested criminals bore itself in a similar spirit delimited between arrest policy, non-interference with authority and moral betterment of prisoners.⁸²

Having seen religious assistance for Carbonari ordered, the imperial order renewed the claim to get regular priest's reports on Carbonari's piety and their frame of mind as well as on their degree of improvement.⁸³ Thus, we can lay our hands on interesting psychological analysis concerning all Italian Carbonari at Spielberg and serving as a spiritual barometer of Habsburg prison's system and hardships of its repression. No wonder that most of Carbonari showed signs of remorse, including Silvio Pellico, Pietro Maroncelli, Andrea Tonelli, Constantino Munari or Federico Confalonieri.⁸⁴ Such system

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 194/G ex 1825, "Directive for a religious teacher of the arrested criminal persons" (§ 16).

⁸³ MZA, MSGP, box 951, No. 55/G, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, January 26, 1829; box 952, No. 87/G, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, February 24, 1830.

⁸⁴ Silvio Pellico, for instance, was characterized by priest Vinzenz Žiak in February 1829 as a quiet, almost always sad and sickly man, explaining his offence – like Pietro Maroncelli – by reading "detrimental" books and contacts with "evil-minded" people. He was aware of his guilt, considered punishment as a righteous act of God's providence and showed a great respect for every authority. To the contrary and as an exception, Silvio Moretti went on to claim to be innocent but

resembles Quaker penitentiaries in Pennsylvania in late 18th century, viewing offenders as those who had abandoned God and therefore should be guided back to Him. According to a proverb “a fault confessed is half redressed”, bible reading and the question of atonement were seen as an inherent part of punishment.⁸⁵

Work assignment supposed to be one of central issues of the penal system, though not for the sake of cost-effective utilization, but as a further “distraction” and prevention of malicious and pernicious effects of “idleness”. As in the case of Carbonari’s walks, however, particular imperial directives were coming into collision with general ones with respect to their scrutiny. Accordingly, Carbonari should be assigned an appropriate work to be done two by two or collectively in a bigger room, but, of course, in isolation from the other inmates at Spielberg.⁸⁶ For this last purpose, they had not been sentenced to carry out public work. Consequently, governor Mittrowsky considered it impossible to realize such instructions, especially in terms of perpetual overcrowding of the penitentiary and increasing number of expenses and supervisory staff.⁸⁷ Indicating complications connected with activities like gardening or carpentry, Mittrowsky suggested reading of belletristic, ancient or scientific books except for diplomacy and politics to be permitted for Carbonari as an appropriate “work” and sign of imperial mercy.⁸⁸ Such a measure had not been adopted though, because the general policy pursued a contradictory course.⁸⁹ The imprisoned

on the other hand, he liked visiting religious lessons. See MZA, MSGP, box 951, No. 80/G, Vinzenz Žiak’s comment on Carbonari, February 8, 1829.

⁸⁵ See ORTNER, pp. 24–25.

⁸⁶ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 170/G ex 1825, ff. 8–9, Mittrowsky to His Majesty (Emperor Francis I), December 21, 1824.

⁸⁷ Mittrowsky pointed out, it would be necessary to employ 9 instead of current three watchmen in order to supervise Carbonari during work in their cells. One had to bring in either next Spielberg inmates or salaried craftsmen as well in order to instruct Carbonari in new activity. *Ibidem*, ff. 9–12.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, ff. 9–13.

⁸⁹ In January 1826, Emperor Francis I ordered to send all books and personal belongings of Carbonari to Vienna, excluding clothes in which they arrived at Spiel-

Italians had to get by with activities like wool spinning or socks and hosiery knitting by means of wooden needles.⁹⁰ Thus, chronic backwardness and ineptness of the penitentiary structure⁹¹ as well as requirements of maintaining security and preventing disorder proved to be considerable limiting factors of the "ordinary" and desired confinement and treatment of Carbonari. These considerations might also lead the new Emperor Ferdinand I as well as judicial and police authorities in Vienna to offer Carbonari at Spielberg an option of being deported to America in 1835.⁹²

Structural-functional Perspectives and Conclusions

As Gresham M. Sykes has suggested, applying a structural-functional approach to the prison as a microcosmos or small-scale society

berg. Consequently, Carbonari were allowed to read a spiritual literature only (like *Divozioni ovvero Esercizi sacri*; *Introduzione alla vita divota*, composta da S. Francesco di Sales or *Dei fondamenti delle religioni* by Antonio Valsecchi). See MZA, MSGP, box 948, No. 83/G ex 1826, Sedlnitzky to Mittrowsky, February 10, 1826 (including list of books brought by imprisoned Carbonari – Silvio Pellico and Pietro Maroncelli alone possessed more than 70 various works in 154 volumes, including Petrarca, Baretto, Homer, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Corneille, Racine or Molière) and No. 477/G ex 1826, Muth to Mittrowsky, August 2, 1826 (including a list of permitted devotional books for Carbonari made by Smerczek on July 31, 1826).

⁹⁰ MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 170/G ex 1825, f. 11, Mittrowsky to His Majesty (Emperor Francis I), December 21, 1824; box 949, No. 426/g, f. 1 verso, Governor's decree to Sedlnitzky, August 13, 1827; box 950, No. 506/G ex 1827; box 951, No. 377/G ex 1828; No. 73/G and 93/G ex 1829 or box 952, No. 105/G ex 1830.

⁹¹ For attempts to overcome these problems by introducing penal colonies see G. N. MODONA, *Das historische Gleichnis der Strafkolonien*, in: M. da PASSANO (ed.), *Europäische Strafkolonien im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2006, pp. 1–6.

⁹² Pietro Borsieri, Giovanni Albinola, Felice Foresti, Gaetano Castiglia, Argenti as well as Federico Confalonieri accepted it and were to be transported first to Gradisca and from there to America. See MZA, MSGP, box 956, No. 876/G ex 1835, Sedlnitzky to Ugarte, December 7, 1835; No. 910/G ex 1835, Sedlnitzky to Ugarte, December 22, 1835 and No. 98/G ex 1836, Sedlnitzky to Ugarte, February 11, 1836.

specified questions about the problems of continuity and order, especially by seeing the prison's objectives, social and physical environment, perceptions and social roles of guards and inmates etc. as interrelated elements. Accordingly and in spite of limiting particular conditions, prison offers the possibility of greater insights on the nature of state's system of control.⁹³

Without getting too involved with complicated Parsonian theory of social system⁹⁴ here because of space absence, I consider Sykes's simplified set of basic insights⁹⁵ fully applicable to and useful for generalizing of Carbonari's imprisonment at Spielberg for following reasons. First and foremost, norms – of both guards and inmates – can be seen as a function of social structure and thus as shaped by the system of power and hierarchical surveillance in which they played out their social roles.⁹⁶ We have seen the system of a “double” or checked control with a governor to be scrutinized by police director, Spielberg supervisor in-chief by his subordinate second supervisor or a priest whose instructions concerned both religious and political purposes. In addition, there was a coexistence of general and particular directives contradicting themselves to a certain degree,⁹⁷ referring to a multiple respects (of authority, legality, justice, humanity, christianity etc.) to be taken into account.

We cannot but agree with a statement that imprisonment involved a set of deprivations that went far beyond the loss of liberty or material comfort. For instance, there was a number of psychological threats to the self-conception or sense of worth,⁹⁸ Italian prisoners had to face. Various statements on Carbonari's medical status and frame of mind

⁹³ G. M. SYKES, *The Structural-Functional Perspective on Imprisonment*, in: T. BLOMBERG (ed.), *Punishment and Social Control*, New York 1995, p. 80.

⁹⁴ See T. PARSONS, *The Social System*, London u. a. 1991.

⁹⁵ See SYKES, pp. 78–83.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 80.

⁹⁷ For instance concerning medical care, church service, walking or work assignment of Carbonari.

⁹⁸ See SYKES, p. 82.

reveal it entirely, be it because of isolation, length of imprisonment or after having seen their inmates to be released prematurely while being excluded from such a mercy.⁹⁹ As a consequence, much of the behaviour of inmates could be understood as conscious or unconscious attempts to meet and counter the problems posed by the deprivations of prison life.¹⁰⁰ Be it by illegal communications, repeated clemency appeals,¹⁰¹ expressed desires¹⁰² and complaints, loyal and submissive behaviour or even declarations to His Majesty.

Moreover, a certain degree of "cooperation" between inmates and guards can be noticed for the sake of a "quiet institution", especially in exchange for illegal or forbidden rewards such as guards ignoring the infraction of prison rules by Carbonari.¹⁰³ Silvio Pellico mentioned it in his *Memoirs*¹⁰⁴ and we can confirm such a phenomenon at least until spring 1826 as police director Muth discovered a series of deficiencies in scrutinizing Carbonari. However, simple casualness and

⁹⁹ See MZA, MSGP, box 953, No. 1224/g ex 1832, ff. 1–2, Muth to Inzaghy, August 23, 1832.

¹⁰⁰ See SYKES, p. 82.

¹⁰¹ MZA, PŘ, box 4, f. 17, Sedlnitzky to Muth, July 18, 1828 (Villa, examination in memoriam); MSGP, box 954, No. 237/G ex 1834, Governor's decree to Sedlnitzky, March 19, 1834 (clemency appeal of Borsieri, Confalonieri, Castiglia); box 955, No. 587/G ex 1834, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, June 13, 1834 (rejection for Castiglia). In following cases, Carbonari had been released from prison – MZA, MSGP, box 952, No. 346/G ex 1830, Sedlnitzky to Inzaghy, July 27, 1830 (remission of punishment for Maroncelli, Pellico and Tonelli); box 953, No. 334/G ex 1832 (remission of punishment for Alexandre Andryane); PŘ, box 71, f. 49, governor Ugarte to Muth, March 24, 1835 (remission of punishment for Munari and Bacchiega).

¹⁰² Except for usual desires of Carbonari to get better food or clothes, new books or opportunity to correspond with relatives, there were also specific wishes, like Antonio Villa desiring a wig of Federico Confalonieri requesting a lathe. See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 730/g, f. 9 verso, Mittrowsky to Francis I, December 21, 1824; box 948, No. 418/G ex 1826, f. 4, Mittrowsky to Francis I, May 19, 1826; box 949, No. 161/G ex 1827; box 950, No. 470/G ex 1827 or box 952, No. 589/G ex 1830.

¹⁰³ See SYKES, p. 81.

¹⁰⁴ See *Memoirs of Silvio Pellico*, p. 65 (chapter LXIV – food offers for Pellico by Schiller), p. 70 (chapter LXXI – conversations with Schiller) or p. 78 (chapter LXXIX – sleeping of guards).

service neglect¹⁰⁵ might come into consideration as well, though to a limited degree, for only the most reliable¹⁰⁶ guards were entrusted with supervising Carbonari.

There is also a claim that behavior patterns of inmates sprang from values, attitudes and beliefs finding expression in the so-called “inmate code”. That implies a search for a theoretical and empirical variable to find out the extent of inmate’s conformity to such a “code”. I tend to agree with Gresham M. Sykes that it demonstrated more an ideal than a description of how inmates behaved,¹⁰⁷ especially if we take into account a special treatment of Carbonari at Spielberg, their general isolation from other inmates and subdivisions among themselves as well.

Well, let me come to my conclusions. The clash between ultraconservative monarchical order and nationalist emancipation movement of various Carbonari groups demonstrates a classical example, when security of the state had opposed and actually was forced to oppress the liberty of its people (nations) for the sake of (inter-)national peace and order. However, there were first clear indications that the seemingly insurmountable ideological dichotomy of these political actors, which had not been channeled by gradual change of the political system in Austria, could only be overcome by the revolution, i. e. by an instrument tracing back its legitimacy to French, American or even English revolutions. Following this point we can suggest a paradox-like thesis, that preserving peace and order in general does not always mean the absence of violence and of revolutions in particular.

¹⁰⁵ Except deficiencies discovered by police director Muth in spring 1826, there was also one even more fatal offence in September 1824, as watchman Urban abandoned his post in front of Carbonari prisons and had been discovered in a pub, addicted to drinking. Urban was kept in prison for 68 hours and afterwards 25 days in solitary house arrest and four months in usual house arrest. See MZA, MSGP, box 947, No. 152/G ex 1826, ff. 1–4, Smerczek to governorate’s presidium, March 10, 1826.

¹⁰⁶ For guards imposing silence or enforcing regulations see *Memoirs of Silvio Pellico*, p. 63 (chapter LXIII), p. 65 (chapter LXIV) or p. 68 (chapter LXVIII).

¹⁰⁷ See SYKES, p. 82.

The very fact that the revolutions of 1820s in Italy and partially in Greece – as opposed to those in France, Spain and Portugal – had been activated and run by secret societies, proved to be the main factor in increasing and intensifying the repressive and preventive (censorship, travel restrictions etc.) police measures in the Habsburg Empire. From then on, the fight against real or imagined secret societies had become the principal task of Austrian police, occupying its authorities until the end of Pre-March period in 1848.

Despite of severe punishments against Italian Carbonari, the trials had not been run completely arbitrarily and the treatment of the prisoners of the state complied to some extent with the general regards of Christianity and humanity, especially if compared to brutal detentions and torturing under totalitarian and authoritarian regimes of the 20th century. Nevertheless, the close confinement in the fortress for political reasons reminds us of the exceeding value which basic human rights/liberties associated with civil or political activity demonstrate for us today. Finally, the lasting contribution of national movements towards democratization and juridification of society cannot be denied. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Quentin Skinner from the Cambridge School of the history of political ideas, the current developments (especially after 9/11) are making us aware even in 21st century that the dangers of insecurity might prevail over freedom and liberty regardless of the type of political system.¹⁰⁸

Abstract

This study deals with the Italian question in the Habsburg Monarchy between 1815 and 1835 in terms of the Austrian political and police sources. In the introduction, the author points out the shortcomings of the newly acquired Austrian Italian territories Lombardy and Venetia as well as the measures seeking to suppress nationalism, constitutionalism and jacobinism there. Since the Austrian authorities had not considered the incorporation process by far as concluded, the nature of the documents

¹⁰⁸ Public evening lecture entitled "Liberty and Security. The Early Modern Debate", delivered at the conference "Sicherheit in der Frühen Neuzeit" (Philipps-University at Marburg, Germany) on September 15, 2011.

mentioned above follow the line of strict surveillance and threat identification, investigation, arrest and repression. In the last section, the attention is being paid to various questions concerning the incarceration of Carbonari at the notorious Moravian prison fortress Spielberg, e. g., the way of their treatment, medical care or spiritual control.

Keywords

Absolutism; Nationalism; Carbonari; Surveillance