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## Napoleon and Pozzo

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# The Venetian agents deployed against France

by Pierre Beaudry and Irene Beaudry

The plan of London and Venice was to smash all remnants of republicanism in France and crush any such new growth everywhere else in the world. Their strategy required a two-pronged attack: Napoleon prepared the battleground, and Pozzo di Borgo delivered the death blow.

Both Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) and Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo (1764-1842) were Corsicans, whose families were centuries-old assets of Venice and Genoa. The two were lifelong friends and first cousins on both the maternal and paternal sides. Both families came from the old Corsican nobility, stretching back to the sixteenth century (the di Buonapartes) and the twelfth century (the Pozzo di Borgos). By the eighteenth century, the two families were intermarried and closely allied in their missions for the oligarchy. In fact, the Genoese Princess Pallavicini reportedly answered, when asked what portion of Napoleon's actions was dictated by her family, "*La buona parte*" ("the best part").

In Corsica, under the regime of Pascal Paoli (1755-1769), the Bonapartes and the Pozzo di Borgos were very closely allied. Not only were they associated by kinship (some Pozzo di Borgos lived on the upper floors of the Bonaparte house), but also politically. Both families supported Paoli's efforts to liberate Corsica. Napoleon's father, Charles, participated in the liberation wars with Paoli and was his secretary, while the Pozzos specialized in supplying intelligence reports and diplomacy. Charles Bonaparte became a great supporter of the French and a friend of the French governor to Corsica, Marbeuf. The Pozzos were more restrained in their support, but nevertheless, both families were among the 74 whose noble status was recognized by the French oligarchy, in 1774.<sup>1</sup>

While Pozzo di Borgo was sent to school in Italy, his first cousin, Napoleon Bonaparte, was sent to France to complete his education and military training. Napoleon was sent to France, as were many Corsican nobles, "at state expense as part of the Government's 'francisation' programme."<sup>2</sup> The two young men met in Corsica during Napoleon's intermittent periods of leave. They discussed books, history, and Corsica's

fate. Indeed, it was at this time that Pozzo taught the young Napoleon Italian, and the Corsican dialect, which Napoleon had forgotten. This, of course, was necessary for Napoleon to embrace the nationalist cause of Corsica, which, together with Pozzo, he did. Pozzo reported in his *Memoires*, "We have read together the works of Montesquieu, and other books on politics and legislation. . . . One day, we were talking together about Italy and of the weakness of the governments that prevailed there. . . ." <sup>3</sup> It reportedly was in one of such discussions that Napoleon told Pozzo that if his information were correct, he could make himself ruler of Italy with ten thousand men.<sup>4</sup>

This "nationalist" cause of the two young men was not in the interest of liberating the people of Corsica, as much as it was balance of power and geopolitics. Much later, during Napoleon's banishment at St. Helena, he told his aide Bertrand, "Corsica is a nuisance to France; but there she is, like a wen on her nose. The port of St. Florent is on the doorstep of Toulon; if France doesn't occupy it, the English will. M. de Choiseul [the French minister under whom Corsica was taken by France from Genoa in 1768] once said that if Corsica could be pushed under the sea with a trident, it should be done. He was quite right; it's nothing but an excrescence."<sup>5</sup>

It was with the same spirit of hatred and ambition that the two cousins viewed France. At this early period, Napoleon had this to say about France:<sup>6</sup> "French people, not only did you steal from us all that we cherish, you have also corrupted our way of life. The current situation of my country [Corsica], and the incapacity I find in myself to change it, is a new reason to flee from this land [France] where I am residing by necessity, and where I am obliged to praise men, who, by duty, I must despise." And later in his *Mémoires*, Pozzo would write of their common hatred for France:<sup>7</sup> "The system of violence that we have observed vis-à-vis Corsica after the conquest had excited in his [Napoleon's] heart, a great animosity against the French."

After the French Revolution, Pozzo and Napoleon organized a "Patriotic Committee" to welcome back Paoli from London, where he sought refuge after losing his British-backed liberation war. Paoli handed over Corsica to the British, and, while Pozzo became the great protégé of the English Viceroy to Corsica, Gilbert Elliott (later Lord Minto), Napoleon fled to France, where he was taken under the wing of British agent Paul Barras, one of five members of the Directory who ousted Lazare Carnot from power.<sup>8</sup> Carnot had a

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3. *Idem*, p. 14.

4. *Idem*, p. 29.

5. *Idem*, p. 30.

6. Maurin-Carcopino, *op. cit.*

7. *Idem*, p. 90.

8. Allen and Rachel Douglas, "The Roots of the Trust: From Volpe to Volpi and Beyond—The Venetian Dragomans of the Russian Empire," unpublished manuscript, 1987, p. 112.

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1. Paul Maurin-Carcopino, *Pozzo di Borgo et Bonaparte en Corse*, p. 79.

2. John Michael Peter McErlean, *The Formative Years of a Russian Diplomat: Charles André Pozzo di Borgo in Corsica, 1789-96*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Washington, 1967, p. 4.

good sense of who Barras was. He once said to him, “There is not a louse on your body which would not have the right to spit in your face.”<sup>9</sup>

## Napoleon’s rise to power

It was under the control of his mentor Barras, that Napoleon’s meteoric career began in 1794, when he was stationed in Italy with the French Army. He was sent on a highly secret mission to Genoa, and then, in 1796, with the sponsorship of Barras, he was made general of the French Army in Italy.

The military campaigns that catapulted Napoleon to glory occurred in Italy in 1796. France was under attack from Austria, and the greatest concentration of French forces was near the Rhine in Germany. Had Venice, which hated everything that France stood for, simply mobilized 20,000 to 30,000 men, Napoleon could have been easily ousted from Italy, and the victory would have gone to Austria. Venice chose not to do so.

The plan to destroy the republican nation-state of France was established in Venice and London in the early 1800s, and the aim was to crush all remnants of republicanism throughout Europe. The strategy was a two-pronged attack: Napoleon was to prepare the battleground, and Pozzo di Borgo, who became Russia’s ambassador to France, was to deliver the death blow.

Count Pozzo di Borgo was the Russian ambassador to France from 1815 to 1834, and was recruited by the Russians in Venice. Educated by Jesuit teachers, he internalized their distorted Aristotelian teachings, and it is to them, as he says, “that I owe a certain regularity of manners and spirit which became second nature to me, and which rarely failed me since.” Pozzo di Borgo was entirely controlled by the Genoese/Venetian/Jesuit oligarchy which had orchestrated the Holy Alliance of Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia against France—the very same alliance that created the Frankenstein monster of Napoleon Bonaparte. Pozzo was groomed to become, very rapidly, one of most influential diplomats in France, as the ambassador of Russia to France. His task: to restore the Bourbon royal family to the throne of France, after Napoleon finished his job of destroying the French people.

While Napoleon devastated France with his conquests, Pozzo was plotting the restoration of the Bourbon kings. Pozzo liked to brag that he restored the Bourbons four times: in France, in 1814 and again in 1815; in Naples, in 1821; in Madrid, in 1823. In 1811, Pozzo was working for the British Foreign Office, negotiating with Russia’s Tsar Alexander I, for an alliance with Britain against Napoleon. Later, Napoleon himself (not that his regime was any better) admitted that it was Pozzo di Borgo “who counseled Tsar Alexander to march on Paris. In so doing, he decided the fate of France, of European civilization, and of the entire world.”<sup>10</sup>

Pozzo put Louis XVIII on the throne of France, a man “who



*Napoleon Bonaparte devastated France with his conquests; he was later replaced, as the Anglo-Venetian controller of France, by Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo.*

had spent most of the years since 1789 in Venice, and whose closest friend was the Marchese Francesco Agdollo, assigned to him as a spy by the Venetian Council of Ten.”<sup>11</sup>

In fact, Pozzo supplanted Napoleon as controller of France on behalf of the Anglo-Venetian oligarchy, by being appointed Russian ambassador to France “on the day after the Allies’ victory march in celebration of the defeat of Napoleon” in 1815. Only a year earlier, it was at the home of Talleyrand, on March 31, 1814, that Pozzo convinced Alexander I of Russia, and the King of Prussia, Schwartzberg, and Nesselrode, to accept a Bourbon restoration in France. A few months later, Pozzo had a difference of opinion with Talleyrand, and had him replaced as prime minister by his friend and ally, the former governor of Odessa, Ukraine, the Duke of Richelieu. The witticism of the time was that, although the monarchy had been restored, France was still being run by a Corsican.

One of Pozzo’s first actions against republicanism was to get Louis XVIII to declare an edict removing Gaspard Monge from the directorship over the Ecole Polytechnique, and replacing him with the monarchist and fraudulent mathematician, Augustin Cauchy. In recognition for his accepting to

9. S.J. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

10. Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

11. *Idem*, p.114.

play a subversive role inside the Ecole Polytechnique, Louis XVIII made Cauchy a baron.

Pozzo and his Venetian ally in Russia, Count Giovanni Capodistra, became the authors of the infamous Treaty of Vienna of 1815, which sealed the fate of all of republican Europe, and assured that French republicanism, which had been nurtured for 300 years, since Louis XI, would never again be revived.

### 'Pillow talk' with Princess Lieven

Everything that Pozzo did, and everything he knew about what others did or intended to do, or did not do, was channelled through the bedroom of Princess Lieven, the wife of Count Christopher Lieven, Russian ambassador at the Court of St. James. Princess Lieven (who lived in Paris at the time) and Pozzo were the top British agents of Lord Palmerston, and more broadly of the historical cabal that formed the Holy Alliance, the grand bestial alliance between the Bourbons and England through this band of ultra-reactionaries, the like of Palmerston, Metternich, Castlereagh, and Talleyrand.

Madame de Lieven's correspondence with Prince Metternich (1820-26), and with Lady Palmerston (1828-56), reads like regular intelligence reports on who's who, and who is doing what to whom, in European politics. For example, on the very first day that she arrived in Paris, on Oct. 2, 1823,

she wrote to Metternich:

"No sooner had I arrived in Paris, than Pozzo arrived to pounce on me. . . . He stayed three hours (Oct. 4). If you could look into the Hotel Dorvilliers, where I am staying, you would see me, from nine o'clock in the morning, in conference now with Pozzo, now with Prince Walkonsky; . . . now receiving news from Rothschild, and itineraries and advice on every side. . . . Pozzo treats me as you used to treat me, when we first knew one another [Princess Lieven was formerly Metternich's mistress—ed.]. He finds me a good listener. That is a trick worth learning. A man who feels that he is understood immediately becomes well disposed toward the person who understands him; and I think I have won Pozzo's heart. In any case, it has all been to my advantage; for I have listened to a great deal of witty conversation."<sup>12</sup>

It is obvious from this, that the princess had Pozzo around her little finger, and was in a position to manipulate him as it pleased the Holy Alliance.

In another letter to Metternich, dated Jan. 28, 1823, Princess Lieven even brags about being the key intelligence link between France (Pozzo), Austria (Metternich), and Russia (Alexander). "I smiled to myself at the thought of being the direct channel of information interesting to my Court and to You."<sup>13</sup>

A few years later, Princess Lieven opened a new intelligence channel with Lady Cowper, soon to become Lady Palmerston. All efforts were made by both Madame de Lieven and Pozzo to secure the alliance of Great Britain with Russia against French republicanism, and personally against the imperialist Napoleon. Lady Cowper, who was Palmerston's adviser, played the role of *agent rapporteur*, as she was the perfect confidante of Princess Lieven who would write to her every other day to keep the intelligence reports uninterrupted. Of course, Lady Palmerston made sure that Palmerston was apprised, on a daily basis, of the activities of Pozzo, and that he would be personally knowledgeable of everything that was reported by the princess about Pozzo's successes or failings in the affairs of the Bourbon restoration.

The height of Pozzo's Freemasonic arrogance of power is exemplified by the symbolic gesture of his building of the Chateau de la Punta near Ajaccio, Corsica. The castle, built from the ruins of the Chateau des Tuileries, the royal residence of King Louis XVI, in Paris, is the symbolic token of Pozzo's successful capture of control of the leadership of France. Even the gates and fence of his castle came from the demolished Chateau Saint Cloud, which had served Napoleon Bonaparte, as well as being the restoration residence for Charles X, and Louis Phillippe.

12. *The Private letters of Princess Lieven to Prince Metternich, 1820-1826* (New York: E.P. Dutton), pp. 291-292.

13. Lord Sudley, ed., *The Lieven-Palmerston Correspondence, 1828-1856* (London).

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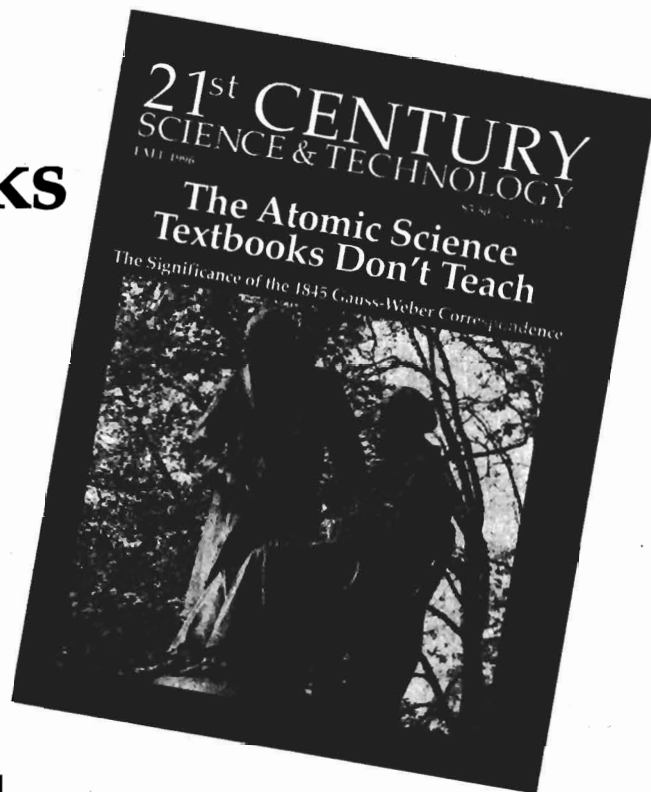
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