

Italian refugees in the Netherlands during the Restoration 1815-1830. Report on a Current Investigation

Anton van de Sande, Hans de Valk

Abstract

lian political emigration with the lower social strata, and to elaborate the data collected so far on more than 1 500 Italians. The answer to the question who exactly is to be considered as a political refugee can be postponed until the search in the archives of several ministries and local authorities has been finished. The spelling of Italian names, often more or less phonetic, sometimes makes them almost unrecognizable.

Citer ce document / Cite this document :

van de Sande Anton, de Valk Hans. Italian refugees in the Netherlands during the Restoration 1815-1830. Report on a Current Investigation. In: L'émigration politique en Europe aux XIXe et XXe siècles. Actes du colloque de Rome (3-5 mars 1988) Rome : École Française de Rome, 1991. pp. 191-204. (Publications de l'École française de Rome, 146);

https://www.persee.fr/doc/efr_0000-0000_1991_act_146_1_4138

Fichier pdf généré le 29/03/2018

ANTON VAN DE SANDE ET HANS DE VALK

ITALIAN REFUGEES IN THE NETHERLANDS DURING THE RESTORATION 1815-1830

REPORT ON A CURRENT INVESTIGATION

Some years ago, we decided quite innocently that some quantitative research ought to be done into certain interesting aspects of the considerable community of political refugees in the Netherlands during the Restoration. A survey of a smaller part of this, in this case the Italians, seemed advisable. Little did we realise that this research would turn out to be a full scale international police investigation a 150 years *post factum*. It is still far from being finished. What we present to you this morning is an intermediate report, in which we'll try to sketch the backgrounds of political immigration into the Netherlands between 1815 and 1830, and the Italian one in particular. Besides, we should like to discuss some of the peculiar difficulties connected with this type of research¹.

THE POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After the downfall of Napoleon's empire in 1814, the Dutch Republic had been combined with the former Austrian Netherlands. The Congress of Vienna, and especially England, created the New United Kingdom of the Netherlands as a bulwark against French expansion-

¹ The authors started their research in 1983, in collaboration with the Dutch Institute in Rome and the Istituto per la storia del Risorgimento italiano. Up to now, three young Dutch historians, Jaap Verschoor (Utrecht University), Marijke Schillings and Marij Leenders (both Nijmegen University) have been collecting data in the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy for restricted periods.

ism. This experiment did not last very long. In August 1830 the Belgian revolution broke out as a part of the rising tide of liberal criticism, and Belgium separated itself from Holland². The Netherlands were a continuous source of anxiety to the great powers during the years 1816-1818. In this period a host of French refugees – banned from France or having fled the intolerant climate of the White Terror – took shelter in the kingdom of William I. Brussels was their capital in exile. In their press these refugees pursued a vigorous propaganda offensive and unremittingly lashed the forces of reaction, obscurantism, clericalism and all that reminded them of the Ancien Régime³.

It is obvious that this concentration of French refugees was a major source of irritation to France, an irritation shared by the allied powers. All agreed that the situation in the Netherlands was becoming intolerable, but it proved to be very difficult to transform this consensus into concrete measures. The problems of the French refugees in the Netherlands and their licentious press thus gained the distinction of being really the first test case of what great power cooperation in peacetime was going to mean. The powers – and especially England – would have to show the extent to which they were prepared to work together⁴.

France, though gravely offended, could do very little itself, being tied by the allied army of occupation. Austria, always on the alert when the balance of power seemed to be in danger, reminded the king of the Netherlands of his supposed task of acting as a barrier against revolution and tried to oblige him to take effective action. Metternich

² For a general survey: E. H. KOSSMANN, *The Low Countries, 1780-1940*, Oxford, 1978; Clive H. CHURCH, *Europe in 1830: Revolution and Political Change*, London, 1983, p. 79-94; A. G. HAAS, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality*, Wiesbaden, 1963; Alan Sked (ed.), *Europe's Balance of Power, 1815-1848*, London, 1979.

³ Cf. G. DE BERTIER DE SAUVIGNY, *Metternich et la France après le Congrès de Vienne*, 3 vols, Neuchâtel, 1946-1949, I, p. 113-117; N. C. F. VAN SAS, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot. Nederland, Engeland en Europa 1813-1831*, Groningen, 1985, p. 125-136.

⁴ VAN SAS, *op. cit.*; H. T. Colenbrander ed., *Gedenkstukken der algemeene geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840*, 10 vols., The Hague, 1905-1922, VIII/1, p. 197, 203-216; S. Charléty ed., *Lettres du duc de Richelieu au marquis d'Osmond, 1816-1818*, Paris, 1939; A. A. Polovtsoff ed., *Correspondence diplomatique des ambassadeurs et des ministres de Russie en France et de France en Russie avec leur gouvernement de 1814 à 1830*, 3 vols., St. Petersburg, 1902-1907, I, p. 468-469. More details on the French community in Brussels gives Arthur J. VERMEERSCH, *De taalsituatie tijdens het Verenigd Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1814-1830*, in *Taal en Sociale Integratie* (Brussels), 4, 1981, vol. 2, p. 389-404.

wanted to use the collective power of the European alliance to put him under pressure, but this was exactly what the British wished to avoid. The British ambassador in the Netherlands became very much involved in trying to solve the problem of the refugees. Various attempts were made to bring the king – who seemed to protect them – into line with the wishes of Europe, while at same time trying to avoid the need for collective action by the alliance. This shows that England felt responsible for what happened in what it clearly considered its own sphere of influence. The Dutch government acted in the end, but far from vigorously. King William evidently did not want to forgo his name as a champion of constitutionality and may have taken a certain pride in the many victims of reaction taking shelter with him⁵.

After 1818 Europe's interest in the Netherlands ebbed away. Other seats of unrest took pride of place, Germany first and from 1820 onwards the Mediterranean region as well. The series of revolutions in the Mediterranean forced into the open the differences of opinion within the alliance, which had already become obvious from the way the various powers reacted to the problems in the Netherlands. England now felt obliged to define its commitment towards Europe more clearly. In his reaction to the revolution in Naples, Lord Castlereagh emphasized the individual responsibility of the powers to safeguard their own security interests. He suggested the practical idea of a Europe divided into spheres of influence, with individual responsibilities for each of the great powers in its own sphere of influence. With regard to England itself this responsibility covered the Low Countries and Portugal. William I made it clear that he was very much willing to remain a close associate of Britain, but again made a point of acting independently by a *de facto* recognition of the revolutionary government in Naples, where the Dutch envoy was to be celebrated as a champion of the Carbonari⁶.

Towards the mid-1820s, the king started to pursue a more active foreign policy. His ambitions amounted to no less than having his United Kingdom recognized as a great power. These international aspira-

⁵ BERTIER DE SAUVIGNY, *Metternich et la France*, I, 115; *Gedenkstukken*, VIII/1, p. 224-227; VAN SAS, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot*, p. 136-162.

⁶ Paul W. SCHROEDER, *Metternich's Diplomacy at its Zenith, 1820-1823*, Austin, 1962; D. L. HAFNER, *Castlereagh, the Balance of Power and 'Non-Intervention'*, in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 26, 1980, p. 71-84; VAN SAS, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot*, p. 182-193; *Gedenkstukken*, VIII/1, p. 287-291 and VIII/2, p. 268-270.

tions were closely linked with the revival of national prosperity, actively promoted by government measures reconciling the economic interests of the Northern and Southern part of the kingdom⁷. In this way, the two parts should be amalgamated into a firm national unity. The leniency of the government towards foreign refugees by now even more served the purpose of showing off at the same time national independence and domestic liberty.

For several years, these plans seemed to succeed, but from 1827 onward, a severe internal crisis developed. The interpretation of this crisis is crucial to the question whether the very existence of the country – let alone its pretensions – still had to be taken seriously. All of a sudden the antagonism between the two parts of the country, which had greatly abated in the 1820s, flared up again. It is mainly this ‘nationalistic’ dimension of the crisis – South vs. North – that has been emphasized in historiography. It is obvious, however, that the leaders of the Belgian opposition in 1828 and 1829 were not set to create an independent Belgian state, and there seem to be good reasons not to regard the Belgian secession as its logical outcome. In stressing the national antagonism between Dutchmen and Belgians, the fact tends to be overlooked that the crisis was in many respects a *liberal* challenge of the government, which might perhaps have been met by a modernization of the political system. As such, the Belgian revolution easily finds its place between the other “forgotten revolutions” of 1830, as they have recently been termed by the English historian Clive Church⁸. In his view, the importance of the revolutionary movements that broke out all over Europe in 1830-1831, has been minimised for too long and the movements themselves considered simple consequences of the French July-revolution, instead of being recognised as parts of a European process of political and social change.

No doubt, problems of this kind still require further investigation. One might hold the view that Church too easily ignores the activities of the many political exiles, mainly from France, Italy and Spain, as an important agent in the outbreak of several revolutions⁹. One doesn’t have to believe in the conspiracy theses so dear to the nineteenth cen-

⁷ VAN SAS, *Onze natuurlijkste bondgenoot*, p. 229-258; W. M. F. MANSVELT, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij*, 2 vols., Haarlem, 1924-1926, I.

⁸ CHURCH, *Europe in 1830*, Ch. 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2, 37-38, 160, 187.

ture to suppose that the continuous movement of these refugees all over Europe and their international contacts with oppositional groups in many countries cannot have failed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and even forms of cooperation¹⁰. The Philhellenic movement may serve as an example. The Greek cause in the late 1820's became the focus for liberal sympathies in almost every country in Europe, as it did in the Low Countries¹¹. Historians, when investigating the domestic crisis in the Netherlands and its international impact, would do well to inquire systematically into the nature and extent of the host of refugees in the Netherlands during the Restoration period.

The immigration wave from 1814 onward may also be understood as a continuation of the proverbial hospitality the Dutch Republic had extended toward fugitives since the outbreak of the revolt against Spain in the sixteenth century.

Incontestably, factors like urbanization, commerce, navigation and political-religious traditions combined to make Dutch society more open and less xenophobe than other European nations. Recent estimates show that in the early seventeenth century a third or even more of the population in the cities of Holland was composed of immigrants from the southern Netherlands. After 1681 some 75.000 French protestant exiles followed, also attracted by the climate of tolerance and opportunity. In early nineteenth century, another group of more than 140.000 so called *Hollandgänger* of German origin settled down in the Netherlands. It has to be mentioned that in this case political motives did not play any part at all¹².

¹⁰ E. J. HOBSBAWM, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*, London, 1988⁴, Ch. 6, spec. 143 ff. For the experience of the Italian refugees, see G. CANDELORO, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, vol. II, *Dalla Restaurazione alla rivoluzione nazionale, 1815-1846*, Milan, 1978¹⁰, p. 145-159.

¹¹ L. WAGNER-HEIDENDAL, *Het Filhellenisme in het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 1821-1829*, Brussels, 1972.

¹² J. BRIELS, *De Zuidnederlandse immigratie, 1572-1630* Haarlem, 1978; J. LUCASSEN and R. PENNINX, *Nieuwkomers. Immigranten en hun nakomelingen in Nederland 1550-1985*, Amsterdam, 1985; I. SCHÖFFER, *The Jews in the Netherlands. The Position of a Minority through three Centuries*, in *Studia Rosenthaliana* 15, 1981, p. 85-100; H. BOTS, G. H. M. POSTHUMUS MEYES and F. WIERENGA, *Vlucht naar de vrijheid: de Hugenoten in Nederland*, Amsterdam, 1985; E. BUNING et al., *De huisgenoten des geloofs. De immigratie van de Hugenoten 1680-1720*, in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 100, 1987, p. 356-373; J. LUCASSEN, *Naar de kusten van de Noordzee. Trekarbeid in Europees perspectief, 1600-1900*,

The arrival of so many French and Italian refugees in the southern part of the Netherlands in the years after 1814 and especially after 1821 therefore was nothing exceptional. They settled down mainly in the Southern Netherlands. For the French, of course, this was close to Paris and no language barrier existed. We suppose that, once they had settled in Brussels and other Southern cities, the wave of Italian refugees in the early twenties followed their suit. No doubt, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic era a liberal climate prevailed in the capital of the former Austrian Netherlands. William I played his role as a constitutional monarch with circumspection and guaranteed freedom of press and action. The Italian immigrants were kept under surveillance, certainly if they were suspected to be members of one of the secret societies as the Carbonari, but they were mostly left in peace.

ITALIAN REFUGEES, 1815-1830

We have focused our attention on the Italian group of refugees for practical reasons. French immigrants are sometimes hard to distinguish from Belgians; Italian people on the contrary constitute a separate group and mostly stand out as Italians even if their names are corruptly written in police files. In these files, a lot of them can be traced and not only for political reasons. The inhabitants of Brussels, after all, were suspicious of Italian immigrants, often seeing them as knife-flashing, excitable vagabonds.

Apart from that, outstanding preparatory work has already been done by Italian historians like Battistini and Scioscioli for Belgium and by Salvatore Carbone for France¹³. Furthermore, our efforts run parallel with those of several investigators on Italian emigration, in parti-

Gouda, 1984; G. F. VAN ASSELT, *De Hollandgänger : gastarbeid in de 19^e eeuw*, in *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 2, 1976, p. 4-41.

¹³ For a general bibliographical survey on the relations between the Southern Netherlands and the Risorgimento movement: R. AUBERT, *Il Belgio*, in *Bibliografia dell'età del Risorgimento in onore di Alberto M. Ghisalberti*, vol. III, Florence, 1974, p. 438-451. M. BATTISTINI, *Esuli Italiani in Belgio (1815-1861)*, Florence, 1968. D. SCIOSCIOLI, *Il dramma del Risorgimento sulle vie dell'esilio. Profili, trame e rivelazioni dei proscritti del Belgio su documenti inediti dei più grandi archivi d'Europa*, 3 vols, Rome, 1937-1959, S. CARBONE, *I rifugiati italiani in Francia (1815-1830)*, Rome, 1962.

cular the *Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento* in Rome. In this way, a firm basis for further research has been laid to build on.

We have in mind a catalogue of Italian (political) refugees in the Netherlands, arranged according to names, in which for each person we try to list all information available in Dutch, Belgian and Italian archives and historiography. In some cases, as for instance the well known revolutionary Filippo Buonarroti or the Neapolitan general Guglielmo Pepe, this may seem rather superfluous, as their lives have been minutely described¹⁴; and yet, sometimes obscure archival sources yield new facts. On the other hand, very little is known about the rank-and-file of Italian refugees abroad. Sometimes, we have nothing but a name to go on, but subsequently police files, passport registers, reports from informers to Italian diplomats in the Netherlands and so on provide us with the elements for an identification: the file card changes into a human being. In this way, we hope to supplement the well known upper layer of the Italian political emigration – aristocrats, *possidenti*, lawyers, generals and revolutionary martyrs – with the lower social strata: commercial travellers, chimney-sweeps, soldiers and street-musicians, artists and *chevaliers d'industrie*. Our knowledge about the social participation in the political movements in Italy during the Restoration in this way can be extended¹⁵.

The use of a computer for this type of work is, of course, highly recommendable, but only recently within reach for the average historian. By now, we can hope to elaborate the data collected so far on more than 1500 Italians to detect the relations between them, to keep track of their movements inside the Netherlands and abroad, to catch them fooling the police or trying to disguise their business. Several other questions may be answered. Who lived in or visited a certain city at a certain time? Who travelled when to England, France, Germany, Switzerland? Simple as these questions may be, they normally would require an enormous amount of work to be done – and the answers could be rather enlightening. Prince Metternich's secret police or the Sûreté Générale in Paris would no doubt have been very envious of such an instrument of investigation.

¹⁴ For Buonarroti, see note 21. G. PEPE, *Guglielmo Pepe. A cura di Ruggero Moscati. Vol. I (1797-1831)*, Rome, 1938; BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, ad ind.

¹⁵ Cf. CHURCH, *Europe in 1830*, Ch. 13.

The Italian immigration into the Netherlands is to be distinguished quite easily in two phases: before and after 1821. In the first phase, the Italian presence was not very impressive. Some veteran soldiers from the Napoleonic armies enrolled in the army of the new kingdom. Other Italians, however, seemed to deploy political activities and Brussels is already described as one of the most important crossroads of the *Carboneria* outside Italy¹⁶. The presence of a large community of French exiles in this city certainly played a role here.

The situation changed dramatically after the outbreak of revolutionary movements in some Italian states in 1820-1821. A constitutional insurrection in the kingdom of Naples was vigorously suppressed by the Austrian army under the aegis of the Holy Alliance. At the same time, a rebellion was struck down in Piemonte. In Lombardy-Venetia a plot was uncovered, while in the duchies of Modena and Parma and the Papal States trouble was expected¹⁷. Between 1821 and 1824, a wave of blind repression rolled over Italy, causing several thousands of suspects, of various political creeds, to flee abroad. They spread all over Europe. Many of them, especially from Naples, reached Spain, only to leave this country after the constitutional regime had been overthrown by a French army in 1823. Others fled to Switzerland, where Austrian repression caused them to leave, or to France, only to be harassed by the police of the Bourbon regime. For some time Great Britain, too, attracted a considerable amount of Italians, but in the end most of them decided not to stay.

A great many of these refugees ended up in the Southern Netherlands and in Brussels in particular. The importance of the Netherlands as a port of refuge may be demonstrated by comparing some data on political emigration from Italy with those we have compiled so far. In January 1822, the Sardinian government issued a list of 290 people who had been mixed up with the plot of 1821; 65 of them were pointed out as being particularly dangerous¹⁸. Of those 65, we have retraced some 25 in the Netherlands. Of 93 people sentenced to death in their absence for the same reason, 35 could be found in the Netherlands. Eight out of nine individuals condemned for high treason in

¹⁶ BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, p. 9.

¹⁷ CANDELORO, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, II, p. 74-159.

¹⁸ BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, p. 13-14; cf. CARBONE, *Rifugiati italiani in Francia*, p. 49-55.

Milan in their absence (1824)¹⁹ lived there for some time. Some examples will serve to illustrate the variety of adventure experienced by Italian refugees in the Netherlands.

From Lombardy count Giuseppe Arconati-Visconti and his wife Costanza came to Brussels in 1821. They counted on the support of their rich uncle Paolo Arconati-Visconti and indeed inherited his castle of Gaesbeek in August of that year. Gaesbeek became a centre of moderate politicians, refugees and artists²⁰. It should be noted that Giuseppe, being sentenced to death in his absence by the Habsburg government, was given hospitality by the Dutch king. It demonstrates king William's independent spirit during this period.

The Tuscan Filippo Buonarroti²¹ had been a close friend of Maximilien Robespierre. He was an old hand at the revolutionary game, conspicuous for his complicity in Gracchus Babeuf's *conspiration des égaux* of 1796 and had been active in secret political societies for more than 25 years. Banned from Geneva in 1823, he continued his activities in Brussels, making a living out of teaching music and Italian. Born in 1761, he is one of the oldest refugees. Most of them belonged to a younger generation; about 60% of those whose age we have established were born between 1780 and 1800²². In the Antwerp bookshop where his fellow-refugee Gregorio (or Pietro Giuseppe) Fontana Rava²³ worked, Buonarroti created a flourishing meeting-point for rather radical liberals like the Belgian Louis de Potter (1786-1859)²⁴, who edited

¹⁹ G. CANDELORO, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, II, p. 126.

²⁰ BATTISTINI, *Esuli Italiani in Belgio*, and SCIOSCIOLI, *Il dramma*, ad ind.; *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. IV, p. 4-6, s.v. ARCONATI; *Biographie nationale de Belgique*, vol. XXX, s.v. Costanza ARCONATI VISCONTI.

²¹ On Buonarroti: A. SAITTA, *Filippo Buonarroti. Contributi alla storia della sua vita e del suo pensiero*, 2 vols., Rome, 1950-1951; A. GALANTE GARRONE, *Filippo Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari dell'800*, Turin, 1951; P. ONNIS ROSA, *Filippo Buonarroti e altri studi*, Rome, 1971; A. LEHNING, *Filippo Buonarroti*, in *De Buonarroti à Bakounine. Études sur le socialisme international*, Paris, 1977, p. 45-127; H. L. EISENSTEIN, *The First Professional Revolutionist: Filippo Michele Buonarroti (1761-1837). A Biographical Essay*, Cambridge Mass., 1959; J. KUYPERS, *Buonarroti et ses sociétés secrètes. D'après des documents inédits (1824-1836)*, Brussels, 1960.

²² About 20% had been born before 1780, only 7% before 1770.

²³ BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, p. 140, p. 203; cf. *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. XV, s.v. BUONARROTI; p. 148-161.

²⁴ E. VAN TURENHOUDT, *Un philosophe au pouvoir. Louis de Potter, 1786-1859*, Brussels, 1946; M. BOLOGNE, *Louis de Potter. Histoire d'un banni de l'histoire*, Liège, 1954.

Buonarroti's famous book *Conspiration pour l'Egalité dite de Babeuf*. De Potter's house in Brussels was one of the nerve centres of the Italian refugee movement in the Netherlands. This wealthy young aristocrat, who was to be one of the leaders of the Belgian revolution of 1830, had lived in Italy for many years. Since 1811 he had a love affair with the paintress Matilde Malenchini who followed him to Brussels in 1825. Many Italian friends or friends of friends corresponded with him or knocked at his door in search of support²⁵.

In 1825 Pietro Gaggia (1791-1845)²⁶ arrived in Brussels. Suspected of being a member of a secret society, he had to leave Brescia in 1823. With financial support of Giuseppe Arconati-Visconti he founded a college and many prominent Belgian liberals sent their children to him. At this college Vincenzo Gioberti (1801-1852), roman catholic priest and an important political philosopher of the *Risorgimento*, Sardinia's prime minister in 1847-1849, taught history and philosophy for twelve years.

So far, we have presented three well known Italian refugees : each of them had a proper circle of influence in the Southern Netherlands. The Arconati family was wealthy and carried political weight. Buonarroti could always rely on his radical friends and admirers. Gaggia adapted very well to his new surroundings and may have done even better for himself than at home. But what about the rank and file? The archives present many cases of radical small fry, continually on the move, often desperately trying to earn a living or to wheedle some money out of their wealthier compatriots.

A typical example of the fighting man is Vittorio Aimino, from Borgomasino near Ivrea in the Kingdom of Sardinia. He had been politically active since 1798 and was mixed up in the conspiracy of 1821. He was 40 years old when he fled his country and arrived in Antibes in April of the same year. Although he called himself a «pro-

²⁵ On de Potter's Italian relations, cf. two unpublished papers by Marijke SCHILLINGS : *Louis de Potter in Italië, 1811-1823* and *Matilde Malenchini, 1779-1858* (Catholic University of Nijmegen, Department of History, 1983, 1987). M. BATTISTINI, *Esuli Italiani in Belgio*, ad ind. In a letter to G. P. Vieusseux, editor of the famous *Antologia*, De Potter complained that he seemed to have been pointed out by an Italian friend «aux réfugiés, ses compatriotes, comme une espèce de vache à lait» (M. SCHILLINGS, *Matilde Malenchini*, p. 134).

²⁶ *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek* vol. I, Brussels, 1964, p. 533-536 (R. O. J. van Nuffel); M. BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, p. 177-181.

prietario», his trade seems to have been the manufacture of saltpeter. He was a former captain in the French army. In his absence, he received a fifteen years' sentence. In May, he was in Spain, almost certainly to take part in the liberal uprising. In 1823 he came to the Netherlands, then went to Britain and returned to Brussels in 1825. He probably enrolled as a volunteer for the Greek campaign of 1826, in which his brother Vincenzo fell. In 1828, he was again denounced as a suspected person to the Dutch authorities. In Brussels, we find him in a radical circle of which count Alerino Palma di Cesnola, a former member of the Italian exiles' committee in London, was the center. After 1828, we lose track of him²⁷. How he supported himself remains a mystery.

Cesare Grillo, from the former Republic of Genoa, is one of the many puzzles we hope to be able to solve. Was he a gardener or a priest, born in 1756 or 1770? Both qualifications and ages appear on passports delivered to him by the Sardinian legation in the Netherlands. What was he doing in The Hague and Antwerp in 1818? Why would either a priest or a gardener be traveling about in these parts, and for what kind of "business" (as he claimed) could he be returning to his native Genoa? In 1821 he reemerged in France, again as a priest. The French political police by this time strongly suspected him of being a contact between the Piedmont revolutionaries and the exiles residing in Lille²⁸.

As remarked, it would be very interesting to know to what extent the Italian exiles played a role in Dutch political life, especially whether they excited any influence on the liberal opposition. The example of Louis de Potter is remarkable, but by no means representative. Their participation in for example the Philhellenic movement and Freemasonry in the Netherlands would have to be studied more closely. Some of them took an active part in the Belgian secession by enrolling as volunteers in the revolutionary army²⁹.

²⁷ BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, p. 93, p. 139; CARBONE, *I rifugiati italiani in Francia*, p. 26, 53, 55; Algemeen Rijksarchief (The Hague), Buit. Zaken, Legatie Groot-Brittannië nr. 77. and Justitie nr. 759.

²⁸ Archives of the Sardinian Legation in the Netherlands (Rome, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, archivio storico), nr. 1/25; CARBONE, *I rifugiati italiani in Francia*, p. 32.

²⁹ Cf. BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, Ch. VIII.

SOME METHODOICAL REMARKS

We should like to end this report by some remarks of a methodical nature. For several reasons, research of this type can turn out to be particularly complicated and annoying. First of all, the archival sources are numerous, scattered not only all over the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy but elsewhere in Europe as well. In the Netherlands, the central State Archives will have to be consulted, but also the provincial archives and those of several cities such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The same goes for Belgium. In Italy, in the first place the archives of the Foreign ministries of states entertaining diplomatic relations with the Netherlands (Naples, Papal State, Tuscany, Sardinia) and, if in existence, the archives of the respective legations in the Netherlands. The police archives or records kept on political exiles can provide supplementary data. The very important police archives in France and Austria fortunately have already been subjects of research³⁰.

A second problem is constituted by literature now available. In the Italian case, almost too much has been written, as the three fat volumes of the *Bibliografia del Risorgimento* testify, but most of it refers to the higher levels of political activity. Information on the revolutionary 'infantry' is mostly hidden in obscure publications.

A last difficulty is presented by the nature of the subject itself. Revolutionary activities call for secrecy and disguise. False names and forged papers have been known to be used by Italian exiles many times. On the other hand, fairly innocent but poor refugees may have taken advantage of the sentiments of their compatriots by pretending to have political motives for their emigration. Things get even more confused by the diligence of paid informers, employed by Italian diplomats in the Netherlands. As their masters were anxious to ingratiate themselves with the authorities at home, they were pressed for fre-

³⁰ CARBONE, *I rifugiati italiani in Francia*; R. BLAAS, *Elenchi di compromessi o sospettati politici negli archivi viennesi (1820-1824)*, in *Rassegna storica del Risorgimento*, 40, 1953, p. 544-563. For England, v. M. C. W. WICKS, *The Italian exiles in London 1816-1848*, Manchester, 1937; for Switzerland G. FERRETTI, *Esuli del Risorgimento in Svizzera*, Bologna, 1948.

quent denunciations, which they willingly supplied, even when these were based on very little or no evidence at all³¹.

Our conclusion is that our survey cannot be limited to political exiles only. We therefore decided to widen our scope to *all* Italians living in or passing through the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The answer to the question who exactly is to be considered as a political refugee can in this way be postponed until the search in the archives has been finished and the information gathered can be analysed.

In the Netherlands no such coordinating service as the French *Sûreté Générale* or political police existed, the archives of which Salvatore Carbone could use for his book on Italian refugees in France between 1815-1830. The most important sources of information in the Netherlands are the archives of several ministries, in particular the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior. Each of these supplies information from a different point of view. The Justice department was kept informed of the presence of foreigners and suspected persons in their districts by the regional Public Prosecutors. The provincial governors reported to the minister of the Interior on the arrival and departure of strangers, basing themselves on the information received from the local authorities. The minister of Foreign Affairs served as *trait d'union* between the governments of the Italian territory and the domestic authorities. On the regional, provincial and local level, the archives of the governors, municipalities, directors of Public Prosecution and Dutch legations abroad can provide supplementary data from such sources as police inquiries, legal prosecutions, registers of passports issued and visa'd and so on.

All this is no more than theory. The Netherlands were by no means an accomplished bureaucracy or police state. Observance of the rules was rather slack, except for periods of great international tension. As long as they didn't meddle in internal politics, the Dutch government was not really interested in their activities. Apart from that, most of the archives described are far from being complete and many of them in a sorry state. This means that important gaps will always exist in our documentation.

Once an Italian name is found in the records, other serious prob-

³¹ Archives of the Sardinian Legation in the Netherlands (Rome), 2/13, 20, 23; BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, Ch. III, sp. p. 46-50, 64, 74-75.

lems may arise. The spelling of Italian names, often more or less phonetic, sometimes makes them almost unrecognizable, while the use of christian names seems to have been rather arbitrary³². One does not need to stretch the imagination to see where combination of this with false statements by the refugees themselves leads. Thus, we find a certain Alessandro Bottone di S. Giuseppe from Turin after his flight in 1821 first hiding in France, next in Pisa under the name of Alessandro Bouquette. Expelled in 1822, he seems to have repaired to Spain and England before coming to Brussels in 1824. Here, he is registered as Alexandre Bottone, cavaliere; Alexandre Batton, *chevalier d'industrie* and, rather surprising, as Batton, Désiré Alexandre, *musicien-compositeur*³³. In such cases, good luck is an only sure ally in finding the facts.

Anton van DE SANDE et Hans DE VALK

³² CARBONE, *I rifugiati italiani in Francia*, XV, cites the example of the rather simple name of «Maceroni» being spelled as Macerone, Macironi, Mecironi. Even worse is the case of general Filippo De Meester Huydel, whose name is misspelled in 12 different ways, for instance "Meyter" and "Hagdel". Computer programs using features like the "Soundex"-technique may provide a solution for this problem.

³³ BATTISTINI, *Esuli italiani in Belgio*, p. 80; CARBONE, p. 40, 51, 62-63, 65; Archives of the Sardinian Legation in the Netherlands (Rome), 2713, 20.