

CHAPTER I

ILLUMINISM

The Philosophers—Rousseau—Secret Societies—Freemasonry—Adam Weishaupt—The Illuminati—Congress of Wilhelmsbad—Illuminati suppressed.

It is a commonly accepted opinion that the great revolutionary movement which began at the end of the eighteenth century originated with the philosophers of France, particularly with Rousseau. This is only to state half the case; Rousseau was not the originator of his doctrines, and if we were to seek the cause of revolution in mere philosophy it would be necessary to go a great deal further back than Rousseau—to the *Utopia* of Thomas More, and even to Pythagoras and Plato.

At the same time it is undoubtedly true that Rousseau was the principal medium through which the doctrines of these earlier philosophers were brought home to the intelligentia of eighteenth-century France, and that his *Contrat Social* and *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* contained the germs of modern Socialism in all its forms. The theory of Rousseau that has the most important bearing on the theme of this book might be expressed in the colloquial phrase that "Civilization is all wrong" and that salvation for the human race lies in a return to nature. According to Rousseau, civilization had proved the bane of humanity; in his primitive state Man was free and happy, only under the paralysing influence of social restraints had his liberty been curtailed, whilst to the laws of property alone was due the fact that a large proportion of mankind had fallen into servitude. "The first man who bethought himself of saying 'This is mine,' and found

people simple enough to believe him was the real founder of civil society. What crimes, what wars, what murders, what miseries and horrors would he have spared the human race who, snatching away the spades and filling in the ditches, had cried out to his fellows: 'Beware of listening to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one.'"¹ In these words the whole principle of Communism is to be found.

There is a certain substratum of truth in Rousseau's indictment of civilization—a substratum common to all dangerous errors. For if there were no truth at the bottom of false philosophies they would obtain no credence, and thus could never constitute a menace to the world. Rousseau's gigantic error was to argue that because there are certain evils attendant on civilization therefore civilization is wrong from the beginning. As well might one point to a neglected patch in a garden and say: "See the results of cultivation!" In order to remedy the evils of the existing social system more civilization, not less, is needed. Civilization in its higher aspects, not in the mere acquisition of the physical amenities of life, or even of artistic and scientific knowledge, but in the sphere of *moral aspiration* is all that separates Man from the brute. Destroy civilization in its entirety and the human race sinks to the level of the jungle in which the only law is that of the strong over the weak, the only incentive the struggle for material needs. For although Rousseau's injunction, "Go back into the woods and become men!" may be excellent advice if interpreted as a temporary measure, "go back into the woods and remain there" is a counsel for anthropoid apes.

It would be idle, however, to refute the folly of Rousseau's theories, to show that in Nature Communism does not exist, that the first creature to establish the law of property was not man staking out his claim, but the first bird appropriating the branch of a tree whereon to build its nest, the first rabbit selecting the spot wherein to burrow out his hole—a right that no other bird or rabbit has ever dreamt of disputing.

As to the distribution of the "fruits of the earth" one has only to watch two thrushes on the lawn disputing over

¹ *Discours sur l'inégalité des conditions.*

a worm to see how the question of food supply is settled in primitive society. Nothing could be more absurd than Rousseau's conception of ideal barbarians living together on the principle of "Do as you would be done by"; only a dreamer utterly unacquainted with the real conditions of primitive life—the life of rule by the strongest, of pitiless preying on the weak and helpless—could have conjured up such a vision.¹

Even eighteenth-century France, with all its avidity for novelty and its dreams of "a return to Nature," never regarded the primitive Utopia of Rousseau in the light of an attainable ideal, and it is as inconceivable that the philosophy of the *Discours sur l'inégalité* should have led to the attempt to overthrow civilization in 1793 as that the mockeries of Voltaire should have led to the Feasts of Reason and the desecration of the churches. The teaching of Rousseau never reached the people to any appreciable extent, his influence was confined to the aristocracy and *bourgeoisie*, and it was certainly not the hyper-civilized *habitués* of the salons nor the prosperous *bourgeois* of the provinces, nor indeed was it Rousseau himself, living on the bounty of the most dissolute amongst the rich and sharing their vicés, who would have welcomed a return to aboriginal conditions of life.

The salons toyed with the philosophy of Rousseau as they toyed with any new thing—Mesmerism, Martinism, Magic—whilst the disgruntled members of the middle class who took him seriously used his theories merely as a lever for stirring up hatred against the class by which they believed themselves to be slighted, and never dreamt of emulating the Caribbean savages held up to their admiration by the exponent of primitive equality.

It is not then to the philosophers, but to the source

¹ On the Indian frontier, where still to-day no laws exist, the inhabitants are obliged to resort to the plan of building towers reached only by ladders wherein to sleep at night, and by ascending into these refuges and pulling the ladders up after them they are able to slumber in comparative security from assassination. Equality of wealth is maintained by the same primitive methods. "How do you prevent any one getting too rich?" a British general inquired of an inhabitant of the Swat Valley, where a rudimentary form of Communism is carried out. "We cut his throat," was the brief reply.

whence they drew many of their inspirations, that the great dynamic force of the Revolution must be attributed. Rousseau and Voltaire were Freemasons; the *Encyclopédie* was published under the auspices of the same order.¹ Without this powerful aid the drawing-room doctrinaires of the eighteenth century could no more have brought about the mighty cataclysm of 1789 than could the Fabian Society have produced the world revolution of to-day. The organization of the Secret Societies was needed to transform the theorizings of the philosophers into a concrete and formidable system for the destruction of civilization.

In order to trace the origins of these sects it would be necessary to go back quite six centuries before the first French Revolution. As early as 1185 an order had been formed, calling itself the "Confrérie de la Paix," with the main object of putting an end to wars, but also with the idea of establishing community of land. In their attacks on the nobles and clergy, the Confrères thus expressed their belief in the system now known as nationalization: "By what right do they invade the goods that should be common to all such as the meadows, the woods, the game that runs about the fields and forests, the fish that people the rivers and the ponds, gifts that Nature destines equally to all her children?" Accordingly the Confrères set out to destroy the châteaux and monasteries, but the nobles arming themselves in self-defence ended by destroying the "Confrérie."²

It will be seen, therefore, that Rousseau in attacking the rights of property was proclaiming a doctrine that had not only been preached but which it had actually been attempted to put into practice in France 600 years earlier.

The fact that the Confrères of the twelfth century had been thus summarily suppressed did not prevent the formation of further subversive sects; early in the following century came the Albigeois professing much the same doctrines; in 1250 a Hungarian ex-priest named Jacobi organized a crusade against the priests and nobles, and at about the same date the order of the Templars was founded

¹ *Martinès de Pasqually*, by Papis, President of the Supreme Council of the Martiniste Order (1895), p. 146.

² *Recherches politiques et historiques*, by the Chevalier de Malet (1817), p. 17.

in Jerusalem by certain *gentilshommes* of Picardy during the Crusades. On their return to France the Knights Templars instituted themselves as a power independent of the Monarchy, and under their Grand Master, Jacques du Molay, rose against the authority of the King, Philippe le Bel. In 1312 several of their number were arrested and accused, amongst other things, of spitting on the crucifix and of denying the Christ. In the course of their cross-examination they declared that they had not been fully initiated into the Statutes of the Order, and that they suspected "that there were two sorts, some that were shown to the public, others that were carefully hidden and were not even known to all the Knights."¹

• Jacques du Molay and several of the leaders were executed, and, according to the Chevalier de Malet, "those who had escaped the storm afterwards met in obscurity so as to re-knit the ties that had united them, and in order to avoid fresh denunciations they made use of allegorical methods which indicated the basis of their association in a manner unintelligible to the eyes of the vulgar: that is the origin of the Free Masons."²

‘ This last assertion finds further confirmation from the Martiniste Papus, who explains that the "Grand Chapter" of French Freemasonry founded in the eighteenth century was constituted under the Templars, "that is to say that their most eminent members are animated by the desire to avenge Jacobus Burgundus Molay and his companions for the assassination of which they were the victims on the part of two tyrannical powers: Royalty and Papacy."³

Meanwhile Freemasonry in England had developed along quite different lines. This is not the place to discuss its aims or origins; suffice it to say that although French Freemasonry of the Grande Loge Nationale derived from one of the same sources—the Confrérie of the Rose Croix

¹ *Recherches politiques et historiques*, by the Chevalier de Malet (1817), p. 37.

² *Ibid.* p. 39.

³ *Martinès de Pasqually*, by Papus, p. 140. In the above passages I have only touched very briefly on the origins of Continental masonry, as the subject was recently fully dealt with in the very interesting articles that appeared in the *Morning Post* during July 1920 under the title of *The Cause of World Unrest*, and republished in pamphlet form by Grant Richards.

—and received its first charters from the Grand Lodge of London (founded in 1717), the two Orders must not be confounded. The craft masonry of Britain, which was largely a development of the real guild of working masons, has always retained the spirit of brotherly association and general benevolence which animated its founders; and has adhered throughout to the principle that “nothing touching religion or government shall ever be spoken of in the Lodge.”¹

In France, however, as in other Continental countries, the lodges speedily became centres of political intrigue. The *Grand Orient*, founded in 1772, with the Duc de Chartres (later Philippe Égalité) as its Grand Master, was an undeniably subversive body, and by a coalition with the Grand Chapter in 1786 acquired a far more dangerous character. For whilst “the spirit of the Grand Orient was frankly democratic (though not demagogic),” the spirit of the Grand Chapter was revolutionary, “but the Revolution was to be accomplished above all for the benefit of the upper class² (*la haute bourgeoisie*), with the people as its instrument.” The brothers of the Templar rite, that is to say, of the Grand Chapter, were thus “the real fomentors of revolutions, the others were only docile agents.”³ In the opinion of Papus and of contemporary masons themselves the Revolution of 1789 was the outcome of this combination.⁴

Indeed the influence of Freemasonry on the French Revolution cannot be denied by any honest inquirer into the causes of that great upheaval, and, as we shall see later, the French Freemasons themselves proudly claimed the Revolution as their work. It was thus that George Sand, herself a mason (for the Grand Orient from the beginning admitted women to the Order), wrote long afterwards: “Half a century before those days marked out by destiny . . . the French Revolution was fermenting in the dark and hatching below ground. It was maturing in the minds of believers to the point of fanaticism, in the form of a dream of universal revolution. . . .”⁵

¹ Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.* p. 144.

⁵ *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*, ii. 219.

³ Papus, *op. cit.* p. 139.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 142, 144, 146.

The Socialist historian, Louis Blanc, also a Freemason, has thrown much light on the question of these occult forces.

We know, moreover, that George Sand was right in attributing to the Secret Societies the origin of the revolutionary war-cry, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." Long before the Revolution broke out the formula "Liberty and Equality" had been current in the lodges of the Grand Orient—a formula that sounds wholly pacific, yet which holds within it a whole world of discord. For observe the contradiction: it is impossible to have complete liberty and equality, the two are mutually exclusive. It is possible to have a system of complete liberty in which every man is free to behave as he pleases, to do what he will with his own, to rob or to murder, to live, that is to say, under the law of the jungle, rule by the strongest, but there is no equality there. Or one may have a system of absolute equality, of cutting every one down to the same dead level, of crushing all incentive in man to rise above his fellows, but there is no liberty there. So Grand Orient Freemasonry, by coupling together two words for ever incompatible, threw into the arena an apple of discord over which the world has never ceased to quarrel from that day to this, and which has throughout divided the revolutionary forces into two opposing camps.

As to the word Fraternity, which completes the masonic formula, we find that this was added by a further Secret Society, the Martinistes, founded in 1754 by a Portuguese Jew, Martinez Paschalis (or Pasqually), who had evolved a system out of gnosticism, Judaized Christianity, and the philosophies of Greece and of the East.

This Order split up into two branches, one continued by Saint-Martin, a disciple of Martinez Paschalis, but also of Jacob Boehme, and a fervent Christian, and the other a more or less revolutionary body by which the lodge of the Philalèthes was founded in Paris. In the book of Saint-Martin, *Des erreurs et de la vérité*, published in 1775, the formula "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" is referred to as "le ternaire sacré."

The Martinistes, frequently referred to in French contemporary records as the Illuminés, were in reality dreamers

and fanatics,¹ and must not be confounded with the Order of the Illuminati of Bavaria that came into existence twenty-two years later. It is by this "terrible and formidable sect" that the gigantic plan of World Revolution was worked out under the leadership of the man whom Louis Blanc has truly described as "the profoundest conspirator that has ever existed."

Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati, was born on the 6th of February 1748. His early training by the Jesuits had inspired him with a violent dislike for their Order, and he turned with eagerness to the subversive teaching of the French philosophers and the anti-Christian doctrines of the Manicheans. It is said that he was also indoctrinated into Egyptian occultism by a certain merchant of unknown origin from Jutland, named Kölmer, who was travelling about Europe during the year 1771 in search of adepts.² Weishaupt, who combined the practical German brain with the cunning of Machiavelli, spent no less than five years thinking out a plan by which all these ideas should be reduced to a system, and at the end of this period he had evolved the following theory:

Civilization, Weishaupt held with Rousseau, was a mistake: it had developed along the wrong lines, and to this cause all the inequalities of human life were due. "Man," he declared, "is fallen from the condition of Liberty and Equality, the State of Pure Nature. He is under subordination and civil bondage arising from the vices of Man. This is the Fall and Original Sin." The first step towards regaining the state of primitive liberty consisted in learning to do without things. Man must divest himself of all the trappings laid on him by civilization and return to nomadic conditions—even clothing, food, and fixed abodes should be abandoned. Necessarily, therefore, all arts and sciences must be abolished. "Do the common sciences afford real enlightenment, real human happiness? or are they not rather children of necessity, the complicated needs of a

¹ "The Martinistes, whose tendencies were purely scientific, passed frequently for madmen and despised politics" (Papus, *op. cit.* p. 55).

² *Les Sectes et sociétés secrètes*, by the Comte Le Couteux de Canteleu (1863), p. 152.

state contrary to Nature, the inventions of vain and empty brains?" Moreover, "are not many of the complicated needs of civilization the means of retaining in power the mercantile class (Kaufmannschaft), which if allowed any authority in the government would inevitably end by exercising the most formidable and despotic power? You will see it dictating the law to the universe, and from it will perhaps ensue the independence of one part of the world, the slavery of the other. For he is a master who can arouse and foresee, stifle, satisfy, or lessen needs. And who can do that better than tradesmen?"

Once released from the bondage civilization imposes, Man must then be self-governing. "Why," asked Weishaupt, "should it be impossible to the human race to attain its highest perfection, the capacity for governing itself?" For this reason not only should kings and nobles be abolished, but even a Republic should not be tolerated, and the people should be taught to do without any controlling authority, any law, or any civil code. In order to make this system a success it would be necessary only to inculcate in Man "a just and steady morality," and since Weishaupt professed to share Rousseau's belief in the inherent goodness of human nature this would not be difficult, and society might then "go on peaceably in a state of perfect Liberty and Equality." For since the only real obstacle to human perfection lay in the restraints imposed on Man by artificial conditions of life, the removal of these must inevitably restore him to his primitive virtue. "Man is not bad except as he is made so by arbitrary morality. He is bad because Religion, the State, and bad examples pervert him." It was necessary, therefore, to root out from his mind all ideas of a Hereafter, all fear of retribution for evil deeds, and to substitute for these superstitions the religion of Reason. "When at least Reason becomes the religion of men, then will the problem be solved."

After deliverance from the bondage of religion, the loosening of all social ties must follow. Both family and national life must cease to exist so as to "make of the human race one good and happy family." The origins of patriotism and the love of kindred are thus described by

Weishaupt in the directions given to his Hierophants for the instruction of initiates :

At the moment when men united themselves into nations they ceased to recognise themselves under a common name. Nationalism or National Love took the place of universal love. With the division of the globe and its countries benevolence restricted itself behind boundaries that it was never again to transgress. Then it became a virtue to spread out at the expense of those who did not happen to be under our dominion. Then, in order to attain this goal, it became permissible to despise foreigners, and to deceive and to offend them. This virtue was called Patriotism. That man was called a Patriot, who, whilst just towards his own people, was unjust to others, who blinded himself to the merits of foreigners and took for perfections the vices of his own country. So one sees that Patriotism gave birth to Localism, to the family spirit, and finally to Egoism. Thus the origin of states or governments of civil society was the seed of discord and Patriotism found its punishment in itself. . . . Diminish, do away with this love of country, and men will once more learn to know and love each other as men, there will be no more partiality, the ties between hearts will unroll and extend.¹

In these words, the purest expression of Internationalism as it is expounded to-day, Weishaupt displayed an ignorance of primeval conditions of life as profound as that of Rousseau. The idea of palaeolithic man, whose skeleton is usually exhumed with a flint instrument or other weapon of warfare grasped in its hand, passing his existence in a state of "universal love," is simply ludicrous. It was not, however, in his diatribes against civilization that Weishaupt surpassed Rousseau, but in the plan he devised for overthrowing it. Rousseau had merely paved the way for revolution ; Weishaupt constructed the actual machinery of revolution itself.

It was on the 1st of May 1776 that Weishaupt's five years of meditation resulted in his founding the secret society that he named, after bygone philosophical systems, the Illuminati.² All the members were required to adopt

¹ *Nachtrag . . . Originalschriften (des Illuminaten Ordens)*, Zweite Abtheilung, p. 65.

² A German sect of this name professing Satanism, with which Weishaupt's Order may have been connected, existed in the fifteenth century.

classical names: thus Weishaupt took that of Spartacus, the leader of an insurrection of slaves in ancient Rome; his principal ally, Herr von Zwack, privy councillor to the Prince von Salm, became Cato; the Marquis di Constanza, Diomedes; Massenhausen, Ajax; Hertel, Marius; the Baron von Schroeckenstein, Mahomed; the Baron Mengenhofen, Sylla, etc. In the same way the names of places were changed to those celebrated in antiquity; Munich, the headquarters of the system, was to be known as Athens; Ingoldstadt, the birthplace of Illuminism, as Ephesus, or to the adepts initiated into the inner mysteries of the Order, as Eleusis; Heidelberg as Utica, Bavaria as Achaia, Suabia as Pannonia, etc. For greater secrecy in correspondence the word Illuminism was to be replaced by the cypher ☉, and the word lodge by □. The calendar also was to be reconstructed and the months known by names suggestive of Hebrew origin—January as Dimeh, February as Benmeh, etc. For the letters of the alphabet a complete code of figures was constructed, beginning with *m* as number 1, and working back to *a* and on to *z*.

The grades of the Order were a combination of the grades of Freemasonry and the degrees belonging to the Jesuits. Weishaupt, as has already been said, detested the Jesuits, but recognizing the efficiency of their methods in acquiring influence over the minds of their disciples, he conceived the idea of adopting their system to his own purpose. "He admired," says the Abbé Barruel, "the institutions of the founders of this Order, he admired above all those laws, that régime of the Jesuits, which under one head made so many men dispersed all over the universe tend towards the same object; he felt that one might imitate their methods whilst proposing to himself views diametrically opposed. He said to himself: 'What all these men have done for altars and empires, why should I not do against altars and empires? By the attraction of mysteries, of legends, of adepts, why should not I destroy in the dark what they erect in the light of day?'"

Weishaupt at first entertained hopes of persuading other ex-Jesuits to join the society, but having succeeded in enlisting only two he became more than ever the enemy of their

Order, and injunctions were given to his adepts to admit no Jews or Jesuits to the sect of the Illuminati unless by special permission. "Ex-Jesuits," he wrote emphatically, "must be avoided as the plague."

It was in the training of adepts that Weishaupt showed his profound subtlety. Proselytes were not to be admitted at once to the secret aims of Illuminism, but initiated step by step into the higher mysteries—and the greatest caution was to be exercised not to reveal to the novice doctrines that might be likely to revolt him. For this purpose the initiators must acquire the habit of "talking backwards and forwards" so as not to commit themselves. "One must speak," Weishaupt explained to the Superiors of the Order, "sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, so that our real purpose should remain impenetrable to our inferiors."

Thus to certain novices (the *novices écossais*) the Illuminati must profess to disapprove of revolutions, and demonstrate the advantages of proceeding by peaceful methods towards the attainment of *world domination*. But to the Minerval the plan of world power must not be revealed; on the contrary, one of the opening sentences in the initiation for this grade runs as follows: "After two years' reflection, experience, intercourse, reading of the graduated writings and information, you will necessarily have formed the impression that the final aim of our society is nothing less than to win power and riches, to undermine secular or religious government and to obtain the mastery of the world." *Qui s'excuse s'accuse* indeed! The passage then goes on to say vaguely that this is not the case and that the Order only demands of the initiate the fulfilment of his obligations. Nor must antagonism to religion be admitted; on the contrary, Christ was to be represented as the first author of Illuminism, whose secret mission was to restore to men the original liberty and equality they had lost in the Fall. "No one," the novice should be told, "paved so sure a way for liberty as our Grand Master Jesus of Nazareth, and if Christ exhorted his disciples to despise riches it was in order to prepare the world for that community of goods that should do away with property."

This device proved particularly successful not only with

young novices, but with men of all ranks and ages. "The most admirable thing of all," wrote Spartacus triumphantly to Cato, "is that great Protestant and reformed theologians (Lutherans and Calvinists) who belong to our Order really believe they see in it the true and genuine mind of the Christian religion. Oh! man, what cannot you be brought to believe!" By this means, as Philo (the Baron von Knigge) later on pointed out, the Order was able "to tickle those who have a hankering for religion."

It was not, then, until his admission to the higher grades that the adept was initiated into the real intentions of Illuminism with regard to religion. When he reached the grade of Illuminated Major or Minor, of Scotch Knight, Epopte, or Priest he was told the whole secret of the Order in a discourse by the Initiator :

Remember that from the first invitations which we have given you in order to attract you to us, we commenced by telling you that in the projects of our Order there did not enter any designs against religion. You remember that such an assurance was given you when you were admitted into the ranks of our novices, and that it was repeated when you entered into our Minerval Academy. . . . You remember with what art, with what simulated respect we have spoken to you of Christ and of his gospel ; but in the grades of greater Illuminism, of Scotch Knight, and of Epopte or Priest, how we have to know to form from Christ's gospel that of our reason, and from its religion that of nature, and from religion, reason, morality and Nature, to make the religion and morality of the rights of man, of equality and of liberty. . . . We have had many prejudices to overcome in you before being able to persuade you that the pretended religion of Christ was nothing else than the work of priests, of imposture and of tyranny. If it be so with that religion so much proclaimed and admired, what are we to think of other religions? Understand then that they have all the same fictions for their origin, that they are all equally founded on lying, error, chimera and imposture. Behold our secret. . . . If in order to destroy all Christianity, all religion, we have pretended to have the sole true religion, remember that the end justifies the means, and that the wise ought to take all the means to do good which the wicked take to do evil. Those which we have taken to deliver you, those which we have taken to deliver one day the human race from all religion, are nothing else than a pious fraud which we reserve to unveil one day in the grade of Magus or Philosopher Illuminated.

But all this was unknown to the novice, whose confidence being won by the simulation of religion was enjoined to strict obedience. Amongst the questions put to him were the following :

If you came to discover anything wrong or unjust to be done under the Order what line would you take ?

Will you and can you regard the good of the Order as your own good ?

Will you give to our Society the right of life and death ?

Do you bind yourself to absolute and unreserved obedience ?
And do you know the force of this undertaking ?

By way of warning as to the consequences of betraying the Order a forcible illustration was included in the ceremony of initiation. Taking a naked sword from the table, the Initiator held the point against the heart of the novice with these words :

If you are only a traitor and perjurer learn that all our brothers are called upon to arm themselves against you. Do not hope to escape or to find a place of safety. Wherever you are, shame, remorse, and the rage of our brothers will pursue you and torment you to the innermost recesses of your entrails.

It will thus be seen that the Liberty vaunted by the leaders of the Illuminati had no existence, and that iron discipline was in reality the watchword of the Order.

A great point impressed upon the adepts—of which we shall see the importance later—was that they should not be known as Illuminati ; this rule was particularly enforced in the case of those described as “enrollers,” and by way of attracting proselytes they were further admonished to be irreproachable. “The Superiors of the Order are to be regarded as the most perfect and enlightened of men ; they must not even permit any doubts on their infallibility.” Therefore to the enrollers it was said : “Apply yourselves to inward and outward perfection,” but also “Apply yourselves to the art of counterfeit, of hiding and masking yourselves when observing others, so as to penetrate into their minds (Die Kunst zu erlernen, andere zu beobachten und auszuforschen).” These precepts were summed up in the one phrase : “Keep silence, be perfect, mask yourselves.” How far the founder of the Order had himself attained per-

fection was subsequently revealed by the discovery of his papers, amongst which was found a letter from Weishaupt to Hertel in 1783, confessing that he had seduced his sister-in-law, and adding: "I am therefore in danger of losing my honour and that reputation which gave me so much authority over our world."

For a time this reputation for perfectibility was successfully maintained for the benefit of the members, who would have been revolted by a breach of morality, and only those likely to be attracted by it were to be allowed to know of the laxity permitted by the Order.

Women were also to be enlisted as Illuminati by being given "hints of emancipation."¹ "Through women," wrote Weishaupt, "one may often work the best in the world; to insinuate ourselves with these and to win them over should be one of our cleverest studies. More or less they can all be led towards change by vanity, curiosity, sensuality, and inclination. From this can one draw much profit for the good cause. This sex has a large part of the world in its hands."² The female adepts were then to be divided into two classes, each with its own secret, the first to consist of virtuous women who would give an air of respectability to the Order, the second of "light women," "who would help to satisfy those brothers who have a penchant for pleasure." But the present utility of both classes would consist in providing funds for the society. Fools with money, whether men or women, were to be particularly welcomed. "These good people," wrote Spartacus to Ajax and Cato, "swell our numbers and fill our money-box; set yourselves to work; these gentlemen must be made to nibble at the bait. . . . But let us beware of telling them our secrets, this sort of people *must always be made to believe that the grade they have reached is the last.*"³

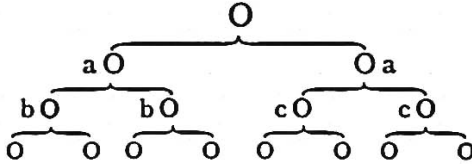
The sect was thus to consist of Weishaupt and the adepts who had been initiated into the inner mysteries, and, besides these, of a large following of simple and credulous people

¹ Heckethorn's *Secret Societies*, ii. 34.

² *Neuesten Arbeiten des Spartacus und Philo*, vi. 139.

³ Barruel, *Mémoires sur le Jacobinisme*, iii. 28, quoting *Originalschriften*.

who could be kept in ignorance of the real goal towards which they were being driven. Weishaupt's method for obtaining proselytes is thus shown by a diagram in the code of the Illuminati :



(Reproduced from *Originalschriften des Illuminaten Ordens, Zweite Abtheilung, p. 60.*)

Naturally the least educated classes offered a wide field for Weishaupt's activities. "It is also necessary," runs the code of the Illuminati, "to gain the common people (das gemeine Volk) to our Order. The great means to that end is influence in the schools. One can also succeed, now by liberty, now by striking an effect, and at other times by humiliating oneself, by making oneself popular, or enduring with an air of patience prejudices that one can gradually root out later." ¹

Espionage formed a large part of Weishaupt's programme. The adepts known as the "Insinuating Brothers" were enjoined to assume the rôle of "observers" and "reporters"; "every person shall be made a spy on another and on all around him"; "friends, relations, enemies, those who are indifferent—all without exception shall be the object of his inquiries; he shall attempt to discover their strong side and their weak, their passions, their prejudices, their connections, above all, their actions—in a word, the most detailed information about them." All this is to be entered on tablets that the Insinuant carries with him, and from which he shall draw up reports to be sent in twice a month to his Superiors, so that the Order may know which are the people in each town and village to whom it can look for support.

It is impossible not to admire the ingenuity of the system by which each section of the community was to be made to believe that it would reap untold benefits from Illuminism—princes whose kingdoms were to be reft from them, priests and ministers whose religion was to be destroyed, merchants

¹ *Neuesten Arbeiten des Spartacus und Philo, vii.*

whose commerce was to be ruined, women who were to be reduced to the rank of squaws, peasants who were to be made to return to a state of savagery, were all, by means of dividing up the secrets of the Order into watertight compartments, to be persuaded that in Illuminism alone lay their prosperity or salvation.

Secrecy being thus the great principle of his system, Weishaupt had not been slow to perceive the advantages offered by an alliance with Freemasonry. During the period when he was thinking out his plan the real aims of masonry were unknown to him. "He only knew," says the Abbé Barruel, "that the Freemasons held secret meetings, he saw them united by a mysterious link and recognizing each other as brothers by certain signs and certain words, to whatever nation or religion they belonged; he therefore conceived a new combination of which the result was to be a society adopting for its methods—as far as it suited him—the régime of the Jesuits and the mysterious silence, the obscure existence of the Masons. . . ."

It was in 1777, nearly two years after he had founded the Order of the Illuminati, that Weishaupt became a Freemason, and towards the end of 1778 the idea was first launched of amalgamating the two societies. Cato, that is to say Herr von Zwack, who became a mason on November 27, 1778, talked the matter over with a brother mason, the Abbé Marotti, to whom he confided the whole secret of Illuminism; and two years later a further understanding between Illuminism and Freemasonry was brought about by a certain Freemason, Freiherr von Knigge, who in July 1780 arrived at Frankfurt, where he met the Illuminatus Diomedes—the Marquis di Constanza—sent by the Bavarian Illuminati to establish colonies in Protestant countries. The two men compared notes on the aims of their respective societies, and Knigge then expressed the wish to be received into the Order of the Illuminati. This met with the approval of Weishaupt, and Knigge, adopting the name of Philo, was thereupon initiated into the secrets of the first class of Illuminism—the Minervals. The zeal he displayed in obtaining proselytes delighted Spartacus. "Philo," he wrote, "is the master from whom to take lessons; give me

six men of his stamp and with them I will change the face of the Universe."

As a result of the negotiations between Weishaupt and Knigge a kind of union was arranged between the two societies, and Spartacus agreed to Illuminism receiving the first three degrees of masonry. On the 20th of December 1781 it was finally decided that the combined Order should be composed of three classes: (a) the Minervals, (b) the Freemasons, and (c) the Mystery Class, which, as the highest of all, was divided into the lesser and greater mysteries, the former including the grades of "Priests" and "Regents," the latter the "Mages" and the "Men-Kings."

But it was not until the Congrès de Wilhelmsbad that the alliance between Illuminism and Freemasonry was finally sealed. This assembly, of which the importance to the subsequent history of the world has never been appreciated by historians, met for the first time on the 16th of July 1782, and included representatives of all the Secret Societies—Martinistes as well as Freemasons and Illuminati—which now numbered no less than three million members all over the world. Amongst these different orders the Illuminati of Bavaria alone had formulated a definite plan of campaign, and it was they who henceforward took the lead. What passed at this terrible Congress will never be known to the outside world, for even those men who had been drawn unwittingly into the movement, and now heard for the first time the real designs of the leaders, were under oath to reveal nothing. One such honest Freemason, the Comte de Virieu, a member of a Martiniste lodge at Lyons, returning from the Congrès de Wilhelmsbad could not conceal his alarm, and when questioned on the "tragic secrets" he had brought back with him, replied: "I will not confide them to you. I can only tell you that all this is very much more serious than you think. The conspiracy which is being woven is so well thought out that it will be, so to speak, impossible for the Monarchy and the Church to escape from it." From this time onwards, says his biographer, M. Costa de Beauregard, "the Comte de Virieu could only speak of Freemasonry with horror."

The years of 1781 and 1782 were remarkable for the

growth of another movement which found expression at the Congrès de Wilhelmsbad, namely, the emancipation of the Jews. During these years a wave of pro-Semitism was produced throughout Europe by Dohm's great book *Upon the Civil Amelioration of the Condition of the Jews*, written under the influence of Moses Mendelssohn and finished in August 1781.¹ "It was thus," wrote the Abbé Lemann, "that eight years before the Revolution the programme in favour of Judaism was sent out by Prussia. . . . This book had a considerable influence on the revolutionary movement ; it is the trumpet call of the Jewish cause, the signal for the step forward."²

Graetz, the Jewish historian, himself recognizes the immense importance of Dohm's work, "painting the Christians as cruel barbarians and the Jews as illustrious martyrs."³ "All thinking people," he adds, "now began to interest themselves in the Jewish question." Mirabeau, a few years later on a mission to Berlin, formed a friendship with Dohm and became an habitu  of the salon of a young and beautiful Jewess, Henriette de Lemos, wife of Dr. Herz, and it was there that the disciples of Mendelssohn, who had just died, pressed him to raise his voice in favour of the oppressed Jews, with the result that Mirabeau published a book in London on the same lines as Dohm's.⁴

Meanwhile, in 1781, Aracharsis Cloutz, the future author of *La R publique Universelle*, wrote his pro-Semitic pamphlet called "Lettre sur les Juifs."

The result of this agitation was seen later in the edicts passed through the influence of Mirabeau and the Abb  Gr goire by the National Assembly in 1791 decreeing the emancipation of the Jews. A more immediate effect, however, was the resolution taken at the masonic congress of Wilhelmsbad—which was attended by Lessing and a com-

¹ Graetz, *History of the Jews*, v. 438 ; A. de la Rive, *Le Juif dans la franc-ma onnerie*, pp. 40-43.

² Abb  Lemann, *L'Entr e des Isra lites dans la soci t  fran aise*, Paris, 1886.

³ Graetz, v. 373.

⁴ *Sur Moses Mendelssohn, sur la r forme politique des Juifs : et en particulier sur la r volution tent e en leur faveur en 1753 dans la Grande-Bretagne*.   Londres, 1787.

pany of Jews¹—that henceforth Jews should no longer be excluded from the lodges.² At the same time it was decided to remove the headquarters of illuminized Freemasonry to Frankfurt, which incidentally was the stronghold of Jewish finance, controlled at this date by such leading members of the race as Rothschild, Mayer Amschel—later to become Rothschild also—Oppenheimer, Wertheimer, Schuster, Speyer, Stern, and others.³ At this head lodge of Frankfurt the gigantic plan of world revolution was carried forward, and it was there that at a large masonic congress in 1786 two French Freemasons afterwards declared the deaths of Louis XVI. and Gustavus III. of Sweden were definitely decreed.⁴

From the moment of the great coalition effected at Wilhelmsbad, Illuminism, aided largely by the activities of Knigge, was able to extend its ramifications all over Germany; the lodge of Eichstadt under Mahomed (the Baron Schroeckenstein) illuminated Baireuth and other Imperial towns; Berlin under Nicolai and Leuchtsenring illuminated the provinces of Brandenburg and Pomerania; Frankfurt illuminated Hanover, and so on. All these branches were controlled by the twelve leading adepts headed by Weishaupt, who at the lodge in Munich held in his hands the threads of the whole conspiracy.

But dissensions had now begun amongst the two principal leaders—Weishaupt and Knigge. Both were indeed born intriguers, but whilst Weishaupt preferred to work in the dark and wrap himself in mystery, Knigge loved to

¹ A. Cowan, *The X-Rays in Freemasonry*, p. 122; *Archives israélites* (1867), p. 466.

² A. de la Rive, *Le Juif dans la franc-maçonnerie*, p. 36. Hitherto Jews had only been admitted into the lodges of the Order of Melchisedeck, of which the three principal grades are given by the Marquis de Luchet as (1) *The Frères Initiés d'Asie*; (2) *The Maîtres des Sages*; (3) *The Prêtres Royaux* or *Véritables Frères Rose-croix*, or the grade of Melchisedeck.

³ *The Frères Initiés d'Asie* were an order of which the hieroglyphics were taken from Hebrew, the supreme direction was called "The small and constant Sanhedrim of Europe" (*Essai sur la secte des Illuminés* (1789), p. 212). Lombard de Langres says this secret society became affiliated to Illuminism, that its centre was at Hamburg, and that only the Grand Master knew the whole secret (*Des sociétés secrètes en Allemagne*, pp. 81, 82).

⁴ Werner Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, p. 187.

⁵ Charles d'Héricault, *La Révolution*, p. 104.

make a noise in the world and to meddle with everything. It was inevitable that two such men could not continue to work together harmoniously, and before long Knigge's persistent attempts to pry into Weishaupt's secrets and to usurp a share of his glory roused the animosity of his chief, who ended by depriving Knigge of his post as director of the provinces and placing him in a subordinate position. Whereat "Philo," on the 20th of January 1783, wrote indignantly to "Cato": "It is the Jesuitry of Weishaupt that causes all our divisions, it is the despotism that he exercises over men perhaps less rich than himself in imagination, in ruses, in cunning. . . . I declare that nothing can put me on the same footing with Spartacus as that on which I was at first." As a matter of fact Knigge was in no way behind Weishaupt in what he described as "Jesuitry," but revolted by the tyranny of his leader he finally left the Illuminati in anger and disgust. "I abhor treachery and profligacy," he wrote again to Cato, "and I leave him to blow himself and his Order into the air."

Public opinion had now, however, become thoroughly roused on the subject of the society, and the Elector of Bavaria, informed of the danger to the State constituted by its adepts, who were said to have declared that "the Illuminati must in time rule the world," published an edict forbidding all secret societies. In April of the following year, 1785, four other Illuminati, who like Knigge had left the society, disgusted by the tyranny of Weishaupt, were summoned before a Court of Inquiry to give an account of the doctrines and methods of the sect. The evidence of these men—Utschneider, Cossandey, Grünberger, and Renner, all professors of the Marianen Academy—left no further room for doubt as to the diabolical nature of Illuminism. "All religion," they declared, "all love of country and loyalty to sovereigns, were to be annihilated, a favourite maxim of the Order being:

Tous les rois et tous les prêtres
Sont des fripons et des traîtres.

Moreover, every effort was to be made to create discord not only between princes and their subjects but between

ministers and their secretaries, and even between parents and children, whilst suicide was to be encouraged by inculcating in men's minds the idea that the act of killing oneself afforded a certain voluptuous pleasure. Espionage was to be extended even to the post by placing adepts in the post offices who possessed the art of opening letters and closing them again without fear of detection." Robison, who studied all the evidence of the four professors, thus sums up the plan of Weishaupt as revealed by them :

The Order of the Illuminati abjured Christianity and advocated sensual pleasures. "In the lodges death was declared an eternal sleep ; patriotism and loyalty were called narrow-minded prejudices and incompatible with universal benevolence" ;¹ further, "they accounted all princes usurpers and tyrants, and all privileged orders as their abettors . . . they meant to abolish the laws which protected property accumulated by long-continued and successful industry ; and to prevent for the future any such accumulation. They intended to establish universal liberty and equality, the imprescriptible rights of man . . . and as necessary preparations for all this they intended to root out all religion and ordinary morality, and even to break the bonds of domestic life, by destroying the veneration for marriage vows, and by taking the education of children out of the hands of the parents." ²

Reduced to a simple formula the aims of the Illuminati may be summarized in the following six points :

1. Abolition of Monarchy and all ordered Government.
2. Abolition of private property.
3. Abolition of inheritance.
4. Abolition of patriotism.
5. Abolition of the family (*i.e.* of marriage and all morality, and the institution of the communal education of children).
6. Abolition of all religion.

Now it will surely be admitted that the above forms a programme hitherto unprecedented in the history of civilization. Communistic theories had been held by isolated

¹ Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, pp. 106, 107.

² *Ibid.* p. 375.

thinkers or groups of thinkers since the days of Plato, but no one, as far as we know, had ever yet seriously proposed to destroy everything for which civilization stands. Moreover, when, as we shall see, the plan of Illuminism as codified by the above six points has continued up to the present day to form the exact programme of the World Revolution, how can we doubt that the whole movement originated with the Illuminati or with secret influences at work behind them?

Here a curious point arises. Was Weishaupt the inventor of his system? We know that he was indoctrinated in occultism by K lmer, but beyond this we can discover nothing. If indeed Weishaupt himself thought out his whole plan of world revolution—that “gigantic conception” as it is described by Louis Blanc—how is it that so vast a genius should have remained absolutely unknown to posterity? How is it that succeeding groups of world revolutionaries whilst all following in his footsteps, even those who we know positively to have belonged to his Order, never once have referred to the source of their inspiration? Is not the answer to the latter question that throughout the movement the adepts of the Order have always adhered to the stringent rule laid down by Weishaupt that they should never allow themselves to be known as Illuminati? The persistent efforts to conceal the very existence of the Order, or, if this proves impossible, to represent it as an unimportant philanthropic movement, has continued up to the very year in which I write.

With regard to the philanthropic nature of Illuminism it is only necessary to consult the original writings of Weishaupt to realize the hollowness of this assurance. Amongst the whole correspondence which passed between Weishaupt and his adepts laid bare by the Government of Bavaria, we find no word of sympathy with the poor or suffering, no hint of social reform, nothing but the desire either for domination, for *world power*, or sheer love of destruction, and throughout all the insatiable spirit of intrigue. For this purpose every method was held to be justifiable, since the fundamental doctrine of the sect was that “the end sanctifies the means (*der Zweck heiligt die*

Mittel),” which Weishaupt referred to in his code, declaring it to be a part of the Jesuit system—an imputation which the Abbé Barruel indignantly denies—and which inevitably led, as Robison points out, to the conclusion that “nothing would be scrupled at, if it could be made appear that the Order would derive advantage from it, because the great object of the Order was held as superior to every consideration.”

As might be expected, Weishaupt loudly protested against the account of his society given by the four professors, declaring that they had not been initiated into its inner mysteries, but the discovery a little later of his correspondence with Zwack—from which quotations have already been given earlier in this chapter—threw a still more sinister light on the real aims of the Order. It was on the 11th of October 1786 that the Bavarian authorities descended upon the house of Zwack and seized the documents which laid bare the methods of the conspirators. Here were found descriptions of a strong box for safeguarding papers which if forced open should blow up by means of an infernal machine; of a composition which should blind or kill if squirted in the face; of a method for counterfeiting seals; recipes for a particularly deadly kind of “*aqua toffana*,” for poisonous perfumes that would fill a bedroom with pestilential vapours, and for a tea to procure abortion. A eulogy of atheism entitled *Better than Horus* was also discovered, and a paper in the handwriting of Zwack describing the plan for enlisting women in the two classes mentioned above:

It will be of great service and procure much information and money, and will suit charmingly the taste of many of our truest members who are lovers of the sex. It should consist of two classes, the virtuous and the freer-hearted. . . . They must not know of each other, and must be under the direction of men, but without knowing it . . . through good books, and the latter (class) through the indulging of their passions in concealment.¹

The Illuminati of course still proclaimed their innocence, and though not attempting to deny the authenticity

¹ *Nachtrag . . . Originalschriften*, i. 6.

of these documents, declared that they had been misinterpreted, and that the real purpose of the Order was to make of the human race "one good and happy family." But the damning evidence their papers contained made the plan of the Illuminati only too clear, which was no other than to bring about "the universal revolution that should deal the death-blow to society." "Princes and nations," Weishaupt had written, "shall disappear off the face of the earth; yes, the time will come when men will have no other laws than the book of nature; this revolution will be the work of the secret societies, and that is one of our great mysteries."

The fearful danger presented by the Illuminati now became apparent, and the Government of Bavaria, judging that the best manner of conveying a warning to the civilized world would be to allow the papers to speak for themselves, ordered them to be printed forthwith and circulated as widely as possible. A copy of this publication, entitled *Original Writings of the Order of the Illuminati*, was then forwarded to every Government of Europe, but, strange to say, attracted little attention, the truth being doubtless, as the Abbé Barruel points out, that the extravagance of the scheme therein propounded rendered it unbelievable, and the rulers of Europe, refusing to take Illuminism seriously, put it aside as a chimera.

The Government of Bavaria, however, continued its proceedings against the sect; several of its members were arrested; Zwack left the country on a mission to England; Weishaupt, with a price set on his head, took refuge with one of his royal adepts, the Duke of Saxe-Gotha. This apparent break-up of the society admirably served the purpose of the conspirators, who now diligently circulated the news that Illuminism had ceased to exist—a deception carried on ever since by interested historians anxious to suppress the truth about its subsequent activities. The truth is that not until Illuminism had been apparently extinguished in Bavaria was it able to make its formidable influence felt abroad, and public anxiety being allayed it could secretly extend its organization over the whole civilized world.