AFTER the failure of the Polish insurrection in 1863, Bakunin no longer believed in national liberation movements as a social and revolutionary force. From now on he advocated a social revolution on an international scale. He was of the opinion that the fall of the Second Empire would inaugurate a new 1848 and that one should be prepared for these events. His main task he saw from now on as finding revolutionaries who would work together intimately to influence the coming events and avoid the mistakes of 1848. To this end he created in 1864 in Florence a secret society, to which he soon gave international ramifications. In one way or another, such a society existed for ten years. It consisted only of those men and women who temporarily worked together with Bakunin on the basis of his programme, though remnants were left long after his death.¹ These societies express rather the evolution of his ideas than the functioning of an organisation. Most of the drafts, programmes and projects Bakunin wrote for those rather ephemeral, or even non-existent, bodies are a fundamental source of his political and social ideas. They were not meant to be ideological or theoretical discourses; they reflect and are connected with his revolutionary activities for a decade.

Why Bakunin chose this way to propagate his ideas, we do not know. He might have thought that the doctrine conceived by 1864 would have found little response if openly proclaimed. Already in 1835 Bakunin had suggested an intimate small circle with his brothers and sisters and their friends: the first idea of a private union of the most intimate comrades, so to speak, the first of his secret societies.
The family circle was in fact the most ideal group to which he ever belonged, the model for all his organisations and his conception of a free and happy life for humanity in general. Later, in connection with his activities for a national liberation movement of the Slavs and the establishment of a democratic Slav federation, he had already tried to create, in 1848 and 1849, political secret societies. However, the organisation he wanted to create in 1864 was of an altogether different character. Just as the Jesuits founded the best secret society, which had existed for two hundred years with the relentless aim of destroying all liberty in the world, so his society 'de longue haleine', which would survive after his death, was founded for the triumph of liberty. It may be recalled that when Adam Weishaupt founded his Order of the Illuminati on 1 May 1776, it was for exactly the same purpose.

Only a fragment of what Bakunin wrote in the decade after 1864 was published during his lifetime. His influence on his contemporaries depended mainly on the spoken word and on that elusive gift called personality; it is impossible to 'convey to posterity that sense of overwhelming power which was always present to those who knew him in his life'. Another factor should be added to explain his influence: his enormous epistolary activity. He had the rare capacity to convince people to devote their lives to his cause and the dexterity to form intimate bonds with people quickly, if they seemed useful to him for the revolutionary cause.

The sceptical and critical Alexander Herzen recognised in Bakunin's character an exceptional superior quality and even greatness, in that, having grasped two or three characteristics of his environment, he detached from it the revolutionary current and immediately set about propelling it further, intensifying it, making it a passionate, vital question.

The story of Bakunin's secret societies, then, must be viewed in the light of his personal approach and activity. There is, it seems, no other example in the nineteenth-century social history of this unique phenomenon but that of Buonarroti. He too built up on an international scale, though over a much longer period, an elaborate underground network, on a freemason pattern, sometimes using masonic institutions, to work for his egalitarian creed of 1796, for a social revolution and for the republicanism of Europe. For forty years the principles remained the same: the leadership was secret; the existence of the higher grades was unknown to the lower; protean in character, this network took advantage of and used other societies. According to Buonarroti, such a secret society could not be a democratic institution in its purpose or its forms, nor could it consist of a single grade and equal participation. There should
be more grades, 'formant entre eux une suite croissante de doctrines et d’autorité de manière que des idées morales et politiques les plus simples, on remonte, par échelons, aux plus complexes et plus hardies et, qu’au grade le plus élevé en doctrine appartiennent le droit de diriger tous les autres' – in other words, a secret society as defined by Adam Weishaupt.9

One of the tasks of Buonarroti’s secret societies was to prepare public opinion through ‘secondary’, i.e. more open, societies, so that at the time of revolution les hommes sages of the inner circle of the society might be called on to exercise supreme power. Thus the revolutionary authority would fall into the hands of wise and vigorous revolutionaries, devoted to equality:

Il faut ... que la même volonté dirige l’affranchissement et prépare la liberté ... au commencement d’une révolution l’autorité suprême ne doit pas être déléguée par le choix libre du Peuple.... Qui donc pourra exercer utilement le droit de désigner les hommes auxquels l’autorité révolutionnaire suprême doit être confiée? Ceux qui sont embrasés de l’amour de l’égalité et ont le courage de se dévouer pour en assurer l’établissement....

The experience of the revolutionary Government of Robespierre had taught that such a political dictatorship could be used to establish the égalité de fait. The douce communauté could only be established with the help of this authority, because only the use of force could ‘entraîner les irrésolus et contenir les récalcitrants’. Only in a society where private property was abolished could democracy and sovereignty of the people function.

All this was a precise and elaborate theorisation of Buonarroti’s own experience, when, in April–May 1796, Babeuf’s ‘Secret Directory’ tried to overthrow the post-Thermidorian Directory and to establish a kind of state communism: a Babouvist Committee of Public Safety to prepare an egalitarian regime. Thus Buonarroti established through his political societies the Jacobin trend in European socialism.10 The aim of Bakunin’s work was to reverse this trend.

There was in Buonarroti’s multifarious activities and gradualism an essential factor which was completely absent from the structure Bakunin outlined for a secret society. Buonarroti worked at the same time in many directions on different ideological levels for more immediate republican or democratic aims, and this was also reflected in his secret underground network with its different ideological strata. Bakunin had only one aim in mind, and there was no ‘gradual’ ideology or theory.

Secret societies were of course a permanent and widespread
phenomenon in Europe since the end of the Napoleonic Empire, and one with which Bakunin was familiar. In Dresden in 1842 he had studied the classic book of Lorenz von Stein, the first extensive survey of French socialist theories and social movements. There he read the story of Babeuf, and in the vast underground revolutionary movements in Europe during the Restoration and the July Monarchy, the name of Buonarroti is omnipresent. Bakunin knew Buonarroti’s famous book of 1828, the *Conspiration pour l'égalité*, with its detailed description of its communist aims and its revolutionary tactics.

Bakunin stressed the historical importance of Babeuf’s attempt but added that, at that moment, the strength of the French Revolution was already exhausted. He also spoke with admiration of Buonarroti, the ‘greatest conspirator of his age’, an ‘homme de fer’, ‘un caractère antique’, but he rejected his theory of establishing equality through the force of the state. Babeuf and his friend, Bakunin wrote, had the cult of equality ‘au détriment de la liberté’: they were Jacobin socialists. The state would confiscate all private property, administer it in the general interest, provide upbringing, education, livelihood and pleasures equally for all, and require physical or mental labour from every citizen. All communal autonomy, all individual initiative in the world, all liberty would disappear. The whole society would present a picture of monotonous and forced uniformity. The Government would exercise absolute power over all members of society. Bakunin was also well aware of the specific character and role of Buonarroti’s underground organisations, i.e. in transmitting ‘Babeuf’s communist testament’ as a ‘sacred trust’ to future generations: thanks to the secret societies, the communist ideas took root in the popular imagination.

In May 1843, in Zürich, Bakunin met Wilhelm Weitling, who in 1838 had written the communist programme for a secret organisation of German *proscrits*, the ‘League of the Just’, which entertained close relationships with the secret revolutionary republican societies of a Babouvist character led by Blanqui and Barbès. After Marx and Engels had joined the secret ‘League of the Just’ in 1847, it took the name ‘Communist League’, propagating its ideas mainly through the German Workers’ Education Society, which published in February 1848 the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, by order of the secret League.

During his stay in Paris in 1845-7 and in Brussels in 1847-8, Bakunin got first-hand information on the leading members and movements of the secret societies and about the mysterious leadership behind them, and he was intimately acquainted then, and again in 1848 in Breslau, with the conspiring Poles.
After his return to London from eleven years in prison and exile, he met in 1862-3 Giuseppe Mazzini. Garibaldi, whom he had visited in Caprera, recommended Bakunin to Giuseppe Dolfi, grand master of the Tuscan freemasonry in Florence, where Bakunin arrived on 26 January 1864. Mazzini wrote to Dolfi of the arrival of Bakunin ‘whose name is honoured by democrats all over the world’, and the Garibaldian Agostino Bertani, whom Bakunin had visited in Genoa upon his arrival in Italy, recommended him to Dolfi with the words: ‘Un noto e fervente apostolo di riforme sociale e politico.’

In Florence Bakunin came in contact with other freemasons like Giuseppe Mazzoni, a former member of the triumvirate of the provincial Government of Tuscany in 1849. In the following years Mazzoni was to belong to his intimate circle. In Florence Bakunin became a member of the lodge ‘Il Progresso Sociale’, founded in 1863.14 In Paris, in the 1840s, he had been admitted to a lodge;15 whether this fact had facilitated his Italian connection is not known and is open to doubt. In the Italian milieu of freemasonry and traditional conspiracy, he expected to find a fruitful environment for his plans. When, a few years later, a prospective candidate whom Bakunin wanted to recruit for his ‘Fraternité’ protested against the paraphernalia of mystery and secrecy, Bakunin said: ‘They aren’t necessary. We invented that for the Italians.’ For some time Bakunin also thought of using freemasonry for his purpose. He regarded freemasonry as the international of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. In Florence he may have tried to revolutionise the lodge or to form a lodge independent of the Grand Orient. Documents are lacking to provide us with details of any such attempts. He wrote a long manuscript on freemasonry (which is lost), but some fragments ‘Catechisme de la Franc-maçonnerie’, written in 1865, have been preserved. Within a year, however, he declared that he never really thought to find anything seriously worth while in freemasonry, though it was conceivably useful as a mask.

In July of the same year, he informed his friends in London that during the last three years he had been engaged in the foundation of a secret international social revolutionary society, of which he was sending them a complete programme. He could report positive results. Friends were to be found in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, England, Belgium, France, Spain and Italy. There were also Poles and a few Russians.18 The ‘complete programme’, which is in fact the first extensive and comprehensive exposition of his ideas, has been preserved.

In an anonymous article, published in 1873, Bakunin has given the following account of the foundation of the ‘Fraternité':
In 1864, during his stay in Italy, Bakunin with some of his Italian friends formed an intimate Alliance [to provide a counterbalance to the Republican Alliance, which was founded just before this by Mazzini and which had a religious direction and exclusively political aims]. This first socialist society in Italy adopted the name of the ‘Alliance of Social Democracy’, which, as a result of the German state communists giving the term ‘social democracy’ a compromising doctrinaire and state meaning, was changed into the ‘Alliance of Socialist Revolutionaries’. Arising as an affirmation of socialism against the religious-political dogmatism of Mazzini, the Alliance asserted in its programme atheism, a total negation of all authority and state, liquidation of juridical law and the denial of civil law, in exchange for the free rule of humanity and collective ownership; it declared labour to be the basis of social organisation, which in his programme was shown as a voluntary federation from the bottom upwards. Into the Alliance, at first a purely Italian organisation, Frenchman and Poles soon entered, and much later people from other countries.20

If this short résumé of the vicissitudes of the different societies is a correct version, then the Italian organisation preceded the international ‘Fraternité’. Bakunin certainly started his enterprise during his stay in Florence, and recruited some adherents. Among the first Italians were Mazzoni, Gambuzzi, Fanelli, Tucci and Saverio Friscia – those who formed in Naples in 1866 the Italian section or ‘family’, according to Bakunin’s vocabulary.21 They published secretly a Programma della Rivoluzione democratico sociale italiana and subsequently linked up with and influenced the federalist democratic movement in southern Italy. In this, Bakunin successfully counteracted the national-revolutionary ideology and the enormous prestige of Mazzini and Garibaldi, which led in 1869 to the foundation of the Italian section of the first International.

During his stay in Stockholm (8 September to 12 October 1864) he enrolled three Swedes, among them August Sohlman, the editor of a democrat paper. On his way back he may have recruited in Norway, a few Poles in London, among them a certain Colonel Bogdanov, as well as Alfred Talandier and Fernando Garrido,22 and in Paris Élisée and Élie Reclus.23 The last of these, as probably the others, understood this intimate circle to be a useful means for progressive men in different countries to be in contact, but not in the sense of Bakunin’s real purpose, a secret organisation to co-ordinate ideology and action. On behalf of August Sohlman, Bakunin wrote an exposé to explain the purpose of his projected society. The document, partly in the form of
a letter to Sohlman, was entitled ‘Société internationale secrète de l’émanicipation de l’humanité. But de la société’. The aim was stated as:

Cette Société a pour but de rallier les éléments révolutionnaires de tous les pays pour en former une alliance vraiment sainte de la liberté contre la sainte Alliance de toutes les tyrannies en Europe: religieuse, politique, bureaucratique et financière.

The manuscript is not complete, but it is likely that the missing pages consisted of a concise document, a ‘Catéchisme’ and a ‘Programme d’organisation provisoirement arrêté par les frères fondateurs’. The last page indeed contained the sentence: ‘Si vous dites “oui” à toutes ces questions, alors lisez les pages qui suivent, car vous êtes des nôtres. Sinon, ne lisez pas.’ These texts are still unknown.

In the Catéchisme révolutionnaire of 1866 the aim of the society is stated as ‘the triumph of the principle of Revolution in the world and consequently the radical overthrow of all presently existing religious, political, economic and social organisations and institutions and the reconstitution first of European and subsequently of world society on the basis of liberty, reason, justice and work’.

In the ‘Swedish manuscript’ Bakunin explains why such an alliance should be secret:

Une telle organisation ne pourra jamais être formée qu’en secret. Faite publiquement, au grand jour, elle produirait des paroles, pas d’actions, – et contre la Sainte Alliance, il faut des actions. Aucun homme ne consentirait à conspirer en public avec des étrangers par-dessus le marché, contre l’État dont il est le sujet. Il se compromettait inutilement et ne servirait aucune cause, parce que tous ces projets trahis par la publicité, seraient étouffés à leur naissance même par les gouvernements dont les moyens matériels d’action sont toujours supérieurs aux nôtres. Le secret est donc indispensable. Mais pas seulement le secret: il faut, pour qu’une telle alliance devienne possible, que les hommes qui la forment aient à peu près, et si faire se peut, tout à fait les mêmes convictions philosophiques, religieuses, politiques et sociales. Autrement ils ne s’accorderaient jamais, et si même, malgré les différences qui les séparent, ils parvenaient même, à force de sacrifices mutuels, à former une entente temporaire, leur union se dissoudrait infailliblement avant même que son but fut atteint. L’histoire est là qui nous prouve par mille exemples l’inutilité, je dirai plus, la nuisibilité d’unions formées par des éléments hétérogéniès. L’égoïsme, la vanité et la sottise des hommes rendent déjà si difficile toute entente sérieuse et durable entre des hommes d’opinions identiques. Ajoutez-y la différence des intérêts
et des idées, et votre alliance ne durera pas six mois. Ajoutez-y surtout le scepticisme maladif et blasé qui recontre avec un sourire ironique et amer toute généreuse entreprise, l'indifférence qui succède si souvent dans les hommes à une exaltation et à un entraînement momentanés, le dégout qui est le résultat ordinaire d'un contact trop intime avec les hommes, dont chacun a des grandes ou des petites faiblesses, maladies journalières mais terribles, et qui rongent dans la racine toute grand action, maladies qui ne purent être vaincues que par une conviction sérieuse, profonde et pour ainsi dire religieuse, que par une persévérance calme à l'extérieur, mais à l'intérieur passionnée. Et vous direz avec moi, que pour produire une alliance des peuples efficace et réelle, il faut d'abord le faire en secret et qu'ensuite et surtout, il peut lui donner pour base un grand principe identique, assez large et assez élevé pour devenir, pour les hommes qui le reconnaissent une sorte de religion, pour leur donner une foi assez forte pour lutter contre les difficultés, les obstacles et les dégoûts journaliers, et pour leur inspirer le sacrifice de leur vanité et de leurs intérêts.

In the Revolutionary Catechism (1866) the revolutionary purpose is clearly defined in the following paragraph:

That the elements of social revolution are already widespread in practically all the countries in Europe, and their fusion into an effective force is merely a matter of mediation and concentration. That this must be the task of the dedicated revolutionaries of every land, gathered at once into both public and private association with the twofold object of broadening the revolutionary front and at the same time paving the way for simultaneous concealed action in all countries in which action proves initially possible, through secret agreement among the most intelligent revolutionaries of those countries.25

'Aucun peuple en Europe ne se levera plus que pour réaliser les idées de l'émancipation politique et sociale et il faut adopter notre programme qui en est la juste expression,' Bakunin wrote in the 'Swedish manuscript' of 1864. To prepare a simultaneous international uprising, 'il faut une organisation secrète préalable'.

Il n'y a de vivant et d'énergique en Europe que le peuple, surtout les ouvriers des fabriques et des villes. Si cette armée se lève simultanément, dans toute l'Europe, nous sommes sauvés. Si elle ne se lève pas ensemble, mais par corps séparés, isolés l'un après l'autre, il y a grande chance à ce que nous soyons battus. Si elle ne se lève pas du tout, nous et la liberté avec nous sommes perdus.
This does not mean that Bakunin ever thought that these small groups could or should start a revolution. Revolutions, he wrote, cannot be brought about either by individuals or by secret societies. They derive from circumstances, from the inevitable course of events, and they can only be successful if they have the support of the masses. There are moments in history when revolutions are impossible, and others when they are inevitable. They ferment for a long time in the depths of the instinctive consciousness of the masses, then they explode, often triggered by apparently trivial causes. But propaganda and action could prepare the revolution. All that a well-organised secret society can do is first to assist the birth of the revolution by sowing ideas corresponding to the instincts of the masses, then to organise, not the army of the revolution – the army must always be the people – but a kind of revolutionary general staff made up of devoted, hard-working, sincere friends of the people, ‘without ambition or vanity’ and ‘capable of acting as intermediaries between the revolutionary idea and the popular instinct’.²⁶

Apart from his mania of writing fantastically elaborate statutes, which were never put into practice, one cannot deny that if one, like Bakunin, rejected the democratic state as well as Jacobin political dictatorship, this idea is not devoid of a realistic political point of view.

Bakunin did not mean that there could be a revolution without violence, but that this should not be directed against persons, rather against institutions. The revolution should, however, not develop a new authority, i.e. the right to coerce. Those who carry out the repression will do so with the approval of the revolutionaries; this is the only legitimation for violence in a revolution, since law does not exist. The unavoidable violence should be short, and not lead to an organisation invested with authority to repress. Not only in these programmes, but in all his public writings, he rejected the idea of a ‘revolutionary Government’, of ‘Committees of Public Safety’, including the so-called ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’. For such a new authority, such a ‘proletarian state’, would in theory ‘represent’ the workers, but would lead in practice to a new ruling class.

To influence revolutionary events would be the task of ‘invisible pilots in the thick of the popular tempest’ – a kind of ‘invisible dictatorship’ without insignia, titles or official rights, having none of the paraphernalia of power – to prevent in particular the establishment of a new state with a new bureaucracy. The triumph of the Jacobins or the Blanquists would be the death of the revolution. Political butchery has never killed off any party and has proved powerless against the privileged classes, since power stems far less from
men than from positions made available to privileged men by the organisation of things, in the first place the institutions of the state. Therefore, positions and things should be attacked, property and the state destroyed. Then there would be no need to destroy men and 'to condemn ourselves to the inevitable reaction which is unfailingly produced in every society by the slaughter of men'. The inevitable result of a bloody revolution based on a centralised revolutionary state would be a military dictatorship under a new master. This new authority would be revolutionary in name only. In practice, it would be a new reaction whose effect would be once again to condemn the popular masses to enslavement and exploitation at 'the hands of a new quasi-revolutionary aristocracy'.

For the triumph of revolution, the unity of revolutionary thought and action must find an agent in the thick of the popular anarchy which would constitute the very life and all the energy of the revolution. Bakunin denied that such an agent, i.e. the revolutionary secret society, would be contrary to the free development of the people, because it was free of vested interest, of ambition; it was anonymous and did not reward any of its members with profit or honour or official power; its organisation would be from the bottom upwards and in accordance with the people's customs and instincts. After the triumph of the revolution there should be no establishment of any sort of state control over the people, 'even one that appears to be revolutionary itself, because all domination would inflict the old slavery on the people in a new form'. The chief aim and purpose of the organisation should therefore be to help the people towards self-determination on the lines of the most complete equality and the fullest human freedom in every direction without the least hindrance from any sort of domination, even if it be temporary or transitional; that is, without any sort of government control. In all his public writings, moreover, Bakunin was to stress this point again and again.

In one of his few writings published at the time, written in August 1870 after the first news of the French defeats, he advocated a social revolutionary uprising to start in the provinces, to fight the enemy of the interior as well as the invader, and summarised the essence of his theory on revolution:

La révolution n'est plus la révolution lorsqu'elle agit en despote, et lorsque, au lieu de provoquer la liberté dans les masses, elle provoque la réaction dans leur sein. Le moyen et la condition, sinon le but principal de la révolution, c'est l'anéantissement du principe de l'autorité dans toutes ses manifestations possibles, c'est l'abolition complète de l'État politique et juridique, parce que l'État, frère
cadet de l'Église, comme l'a fort bien démontré Proudhon, est la consécration historique de tous les despotismes, de tous les privilèges: la raison politique de tous les asservissements économiques et sociaux, l'essence même et le centre de toute réaction. Lorsque au nom de la révolution, on veut faire de l'État, ne fut-ce que de l'État provisoire, on fait donc de la réaction et on travaille pour le despotisme, non pour la liberté: pour l'institution du privilège contre l'égalité. ³⁰

This was the essence of the ideas on revolution he had propagated since 1864. Ever since he was a member of the International, since June or July 1868, he had rejected the theory that the working class should organise in a political party with the purpose of conquering political power, and by 1872 large parts of the International had accepted his view, which found its historical expression in the resolution drafted by Bakunin at the Congress of St Imier in September 1872, that if the proletariat seized political power, it would become itself a dominating and exploiting class and that therefore the destruction of all political power was the first duty of the proletariat; every organisation of political power, nominally provisional and revolutionary, to bring about this destruction could only be another deceit, and would be just as dangerous for the proletariat as all existing governments. ³¹

By the power of its determined propaganda that would really penetrate to the people, and by organisation among the people themselves, it would be possible to demolish governments and to make it for ever and everywhere impossible for them to exist, leaving the revolutionary mass movement free to mature fully and to organise itself, from the base to the top, through the process of spontaneous federation, the most complete freedom, and taking good care that this movement should never be able to reconstitute authorities, governments, states. Such ambitions would have to be countered by the natural influence – which must never be an official influence – of the members of the society dispersed in all countries and powerful only on account of their active solidarity and the unity of their programme and aims. ³²

In the same vein he wrote a long letter in March that year to Celso Ceretti, one of the young Italian militants who had rallied to his cause and who founded the International in Italy. Speaking of the possibility that Government persecution might oblige the public and legal organisations of the sections based on the Romagna to transform themselves into secret organisations, Bakunin suggests that well before that it would be advisable to form des nuclei composés des membres les plus sûrs, les plus dévoués,
les plus énergiques, en un mot des plus intimes. Ces *nuclei*, intimement reliés entre eux et avec les *nuclei* pareils qui s'organisent dans les autres régions de l'Italie et de l'étranger, auront une double mission: d'abord ils formeront l'âme inspiratrice et vivifiante de cet immense corps qu'on appelle l'Association internationale des Travailleurs et ensuite ils s'occuperont des questions *qu'il est impossible de traiter publiquement*. Ils formeront le pont nécessaire entre la propagande des théories socialistes et la pratique révolutionnaire.

Elsewhere Bakunin remarks that even three men united in this sense 'forment déjà, selon moi, un sérieux commencement de puissance'. In his programme of 1866 he wrote: 'One hundred revolutionaries, strongly and earnestly allied, would suffice for the international organisation in the whole of Europe. Two, three hundred revolutionaries will suffice for the organisation of the greatest country.'

Indeed, when Bakunin, after the French defeat at Sedan, advocated immediate social revolution, to start in the provinces, he openly proclaimed these principles in his *Lettre à un Français*, which amounts to a programme of action, written in August 1870:

> Que doivent donc faire les autorités révolutionnaires – et tâchons qu'il y en ait aussi peu que possible – que doivent-elles faire pour étendre et pour organiser la révolution? Elles doivent non la faire elles-mêmes par des décrets, non l'imposer aux masses, mais la provoquer dans les masses. Elles doivent non leur imposer une organisation quelconque, mais en suscitant leur organisation autonome de bas en haut, travailler sous main, à l'aide de l'influence individuelle sur les individus les plus intelligents et les plus influents de chaque localité, pour que cette organisation soit autant que possible conforme à nos principes. Tout le secret de notre triomphe est là.35

Bakunin wrote to Nechaev that in Russia there is an enormous number of people, seminarists, children of peasants and the lower middle class of important civil servants, who could help the people in its fight for freedom. 'But this world must be organised and *filled with moral purpose*.' And Bakunin adds, 'your system will only corrupt them'. For the moral improvement, one should arouse directly and consciously in minds and hearts the desire to free all the peoples of the world. This should be the whole content of the propaganda. The secret organisations to be created should be a force to help the people and become a training-ground for the moral education of its members. The 'Fraternité', in Bakunin's view, as he often explained, should not
only work out the principles but also develop the character, the solidarity, the mutual confidence of its members.

To expose the 'grand principe identique', Bakunin subsequently wrote countless programmes and statutes containing his philosophical, political and social ideas as well as, in broad lines, the concrete plan for a revolution. All this was intended for those he had recruited for his 'Fraternité'. He wanted to educate those who had embraced his cause and to work out practical measures to be taken in the course of a revolution. This has nothing to do with the technical rules for a coup d'état, but only with practical measures, the first steps to be taken towards reconstruction after the destruction of the old power. It seems a much more realistic approach than the belief in a hypothetical 'dialectic historical process', or the belief that all problems would be solved once a revolutionary Government were established. There is no room in the world, wrote Bakunin, for predetermined plans, or established or predicted laws.

Many elements of his doctrine are to be found in his 'Swedish manuscript' – his ideas on religion, on federalism, on liberty. From Hegel he got the idea that the purpose of world history was liberty, but after five years' intensive study of his writings he repudiated the Hegelian abstractions and the identification of the real with the rational he had once admired. The way to liberty was to achieve self-awareness and to act. In his famous article of 1842, where class conflict is advanced as a motive force in the historical process, Bakunin no longer follows the Hegelian trichotomy: no mediation, no reconciliation between thesis and antithesis. The quintessence of the philosophy of history and the conception of the revolution, which determined Bakunin's thought and activity for the next three decades, was that the historically new emerges through the complete destruction of the old. That is the implication of the usually misquoted and misunderstood famous phrase: 'The passion for destruction is also a creative passion.' At the same time, Feuerbach's substitution of anthropology for theology formed the basis of his atheist humanism:

Le monde est plus que jamais partagé aujourd'hui entre deux systèmes éternellement opposés: le principe théologique et le principe humanitaire, celui de l'autorité et celui de la liberté. Le vieux système part de cette idée fondamentale que l'humanité est mauvaise par elle-même et que, pour reconnaître la vérité, elle a besoin de révélation divine, pour reconnaître la justice, les lois divines et pour les observer d'autorité et d'instructions divines, à la fois religieuses et politiques, de l'Église et de l'État.37

The revolution, then, should be the transformation of all institutions
and social organisations, the only way to ‘moraliser les hommes’, and not establish a new ‘droit juridique’. We shall find this formulated in the fragments of his freemason manuscripts and again in *Fédéralisme, socialisme et antithéologisme* (1867): ‘Dieu est, donc l’homme est esclave. L’homme est intelligent, juste, libre, donc Dieu n’existe pas.’ The *Revolutionary Catechism* of 1866 starts: ‘Denial of the existence of a real extra-terrestrial individual God, and consequently of any revelation and any divine intervention in the affairs of the human world.’ All this would find a definite form in the fragments taken from his great manuscript of 1871, published as *God and the State*.

The only moral law is this: ‘Soyez libre et respectez, secondez la liberté de votre prochain, car elle est la condition sine qua non de la vôtre. La liberté de l’un est nécessairement solidaire de la liberté de tous.’ Bakunin repudiated Rousseau – the inventor of ‘l’Être-Suprême, le Dieu abstrait et stérile des déistes’ – whom he called ‘l’écrivain le plus malfaisant du siècle passé’:

C’est bien à tort que Jean-Jacques Rousseau et beaucoup de monde après lui ont prétendu que la liberté de tout homme est limitée par celle de tous les autres. De cette manière, l’ordre qui s’établit parmi les hommes apparaît comme une sorte de contrat social par lequel chacun renonce à une partie de la liberté au profit de tous, c’est-à-dire au profit de la communauté, pour mieux assurer la partie restante et l’État, représentant de l’intérêt général, en surgit non comme sa confirmation, mais comme la négation, ou si l’on veut la limitation de la liberté individuelle de chacun, au profit de la communauté toute entière. Dans ce système philosophique, comme dans le système théologique, dont d’ailleurs il procède directement, l’État apparaît donc toujours comme quelque chose de supérieur et de transcendant à la communauté.

L’ordre dans la société loin de devoir être une limitation de la liberté des individus qui la composent, doit au contraire résulter de son plus grand développement possible et son extension pour ainsi dire infinie. La liberté n’est donc plus la limitation, mais bien la confirmation de la liberté de tous, et elle n’est juste et complète que dans l’entiè re solidarité de chacun et de tous. Pour que je sois libre, il faut que mon droit et mon humanité soient reconnus, que leur image me soit renvoyée comme par la réflexion d’un miroir par la conscience libre de tous les autres.

In a manuscript ‘Programme de la Société de la Révolution. Première partie. Principes théoriques, which is difficult to date but probably written in 1867, we find a very concise formulation in nine-points, some of them annotated:
La liberté individuelle de chacun ne devient réelle et possible que par la liberté collective de la société, dont par une loi naturelle et fatale il fait parti....

L'homme naturel ne devient un homme libre, il ne s'humanise et ne se moralise, ne reconnaît en un mot et ne réalise en lui-même et pour lui-même son propre caractère humain et son droit qu'à mesure seulement qu'il reconnaît ce même caractère et ce droit dans tous ses semblables. Dans l'intérêt de sa propre humanité, de sa propre moralité et de sa liberté personelle, l'homme doit donc vouloir la liberté, la moralité et l'humanité de tous.

Respecter la liberté d'autrui est donc le devoir suprême de tout homme. L'aimer et la servir – voilà la seule vertu. C'est la base de toute morale; il n'en existe point d'autre.

La liberté étant le produit et la plus haute expression de la solidarité, c'est-à-dire de la mutualité, elle n'est complètement réalisable que dans l'égalité. L'égalité politique ne peut être fondée que sur l'égalité économique et sociale. La réalisation de la liberté par cette égalité – voilà la justice.41

L'organisation politique doit être basée sur la commune, l'unité politique de la nation sera l'union fédérale des provinces. L'ordre doit couronner la liberté42 et 'toute organisation politique doit partir de bas en haut, de la circonférence au centre'.

The same words are to be found, two years later, in the Revolutionary Catechism: the nation should be nothing else than 'the federation of autonomous provinces', and Bakunin summarises the political aim of the revolution as follows:

C'est l'abolition du droit historique, du droit de conquête et du droit diplomatique. C'est l'émancipation complète des individus et des associations du joug de l'autorité divine et humaine; c'est la destruction absolue de toutes les unions et agglomérations forcées des communes dans les provinces, des provinces et des conquis dans l'État. Enfin, c'est la dissolution radicale de l'État centraliste, tutélaire, autoritaire, avec toutes les institutions militaires, bureaucratiques, gouvernementales, administratives, judiciaires et civiles. C'est, en un mot, la liberté rendue à tout le monde, aux collectifs, associations, communes, provinces, régions et nations et la garantie mutuelle de cette liberté par la fédération.43

For the future Bakunin envisaged a completely new political structure. The development of the European working men's associations would give rise to new political and economic conditions and eventually, bursting the bounds of the present-day communes, pro-
vinces and even states, will provide the whole of human society with a new constitution ‘no longer divided into nations but into different industrial groupings and organised according to the requirements not of politics but of production’.

In the *Revolutionary Catechism*, Bakunin speaks of free productive associations having become their own masters, which would expand one day beyond national frontiers and form one vast economic federation, with a parliament informed by detailed statistics on a world scale, which would decide and distribute the output of world industry among the various countries so that there would no longer or hardly ever be industrial crisis, stagnation, disasters and waste of capital: ‘Human labour, emancipation, each and every man will regenerate the world.’ It goes without saying that this is the foreshadowing of what under the determined influence of Bakunin was to become the ideology of federations of the International like the federations of Italy and Spain, under the name of revolutionary collectivism: a federation of free economic federations. Such an occasional glimpse of a socialist, or in this case a ‘syndicalist’, utopia is rare in these documents.

Bakunin’s entire activity was focused on the revolution to be expected after the fall of Napoleon III. A revolution in France would, he hoped, influence revolutionary movements in Spain and Italy and could spread to the Slav peoples of Austria, Poland and the Ukraine and reach the peasant masses in Russia.

In the documents of the ‘Fratemite internationale’ of 1868, he deals with the immediate measures to be taken during a revolution, which must set out from the first radically and totally to destroy all state institutions. And in another manuscript, ‘Fratemite internationale. Programme et objet’, of the end of 1868, the ‘positive side’ of ‘Revolutionary Politics’ reads:

Organisation spontanée des groups insurrectionnels en communes provisoires, envoi immédiat de délégués avec mandats impératifs au foyer révolutionnaire, fédération d’urgence de toutes les communes, permanence des barricades et de tout centre de résistance, division du corps des délégués en comités parfaitement distincts et indépendants les uns des autres, qui pourront se répartir ainsi: comités locaux et fédérés du travail, comités locaux et fédérés de l’instruction publique, comités locaux et fédérés pour la détention provisoire des capitaux, comités locaux et fédérés pour la remise temporaire de capitaux entre les mains des associations agricoles et industrielles, comités locaux et fédérés d’organisation communale, comités locaux et fédérés des relations internationales etc., etc., le tout formant la grande Alliance.
fédérative de la solidarité révolutionnaire, fonctionnant sous l’inspiration directe des masses populaires et sous leur sanction immédiate.\textsuperscript{44}

Here we find for the first time the expression ‘federation of the barricades’,\textsuperscript{45} and it may be recalled that two years later the Paris Commune acted, or tried to act, according to these principles. As for Blanqui, so for Bakunin the revolution was an art, but these precise ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ instructions seem much more relevant to a social revolution than the pure insurrectional Instructions pour une prise d’armes of Blanqui.

In June or July 1868 Bakunin joined the International. In September, with the minority which had left the League of Peace and Freedom, he founded the ‘International Alliance of Social Democracy’. Bakunin has given the following account of this event, which subsequently had many repercussions in the International:

[Bakunin] proposed to the minority members of socialist revolutionaries, who had left the League, to enter the International as a mass, preserving at the same time an intimate connection with, and expanding, their Union of Social Revolutionaries in the form of a secret society. The proposal to enter the International was accepted unanimously; but with regard to the Union, the French and Italians wished to preserve its inner intimate character of a secret society. It should appear at the same time as an open organisation under the name the ‘International Alliance of Social Democracy’. They even wished that the Alliance be organised completely independently of the International Association, being satisfied that its members be composed separately as members of that Association. Bakunin argued against this on the basis that such a new international organisation would appear in a most undesirable collaboration in a workers’ organisation. These debates ended with the following resolution to found an open International Alliance of Social Democracy and to declare it an integral member of the International, the programme of which was recognised as obligatory for each member of the Alliance.\textsuperscript{46}

The General Council agreed, on 9 March 1869, to accept the Geneva Section of the International Alliance, after the Alliance had been dissolved as an international body. In the meantime, another secret organisation linked up with the ‘Fraternité’: the secret Alliance. Bakunin wrote several drafts to link up this Alliance with the ‘Fraternité’, which was, however, dissolved in January 1869, but may
have been reconstructed in one form or another. The secret Alliance never really existed. It was only in September 1872, in Zürich, that a new ‘Alliance’ or ‘Fraternité’ was founded: the *Alliance Socialiste Révolutionnaire*. The programme was written by Bakunin, between 2 and 5 September, and adopted on 13 September, after a discussion with his Italian and Spanish friends.

Bakunin’s original French text exists only as a draft. There is however a complete Italian translation. These unpublished manuscripts prove that the programme was in broad lines identical with previous projects of the ‘Fraternité’. According to the statutes there were international, national and provincial ‘frères’. Cafiero, Costa, Nabruzzi, Fanelli and Malatesta were, at the moment, the only Italian international ‘frères’; besides these there were Farga Pellicer, James Guillaume, Marselau and possibly Ralli.

A few months earlier Bakunin had formed a ‘Russian Brotherhood’ with Ross, Ralli, Golstein and El’snich. The text of its programme, too, is lost. However, the Zürich group published in September 1873 a Russian pamphlet *To the Russian Revolutionaries*, summarising this programme. Bakunin regarded this publication as a breach of confidence. The group printed it because they considered the text to be an excellent exposé of anarchist principles; they left out everything which alluded in one way or another to the secret organisation. But Bakunin was not convinced and severed his relations with Ralli and his group.

As in 1866, the Italian section of the new ‘Fraternité’ was the only one which had an objective existence.

After Bakunin became a member of the International, his activities for the next six years were mainly directed towards Switzerland, France, Italy, Spain and Russia. A man like Bakunin, with a revolutionary past of many years and a great prestige among democrats and revolutionaries in all countries, obviously became a member of the International to propagate and to work for his ideas. For the same reason, in September 1864, Marx accepted the invitation to become a member of the ‘Provisional General Council’.

After the Basle Congress of the International, in September 1869, Marx became alarmed at the influence of Bakunin. ‘If he is not careful, he will be excommunicated,’ he wrote to Engels in 1869. That happened indeed three years later, after a long underground campaign and personal attacks. The fact that the Bakuninist collectivist and anti-state ideas took more and more root in the federations was explained by intrigues and ‘complots’ on the part of the ‘fripouille allianciste’.
It was especially in the development of the Spanish Federation that Bakunin’s ‘Alliance’ became an important factor in the ‘lutte des tendances’. The question became an important point on the agenda of The Hague Congress of the International. Engels had prepared a long report\(^5\) for the Congress to prove that in Spain such a secret Alliance existed. This, the Alianza, was this time indeed a real existing organisation. Engels, however, was not well informed — although Paul Lafargue, who had provided most of the incriminating material, had told him that the Alianza was a Spanish affair and that Bakunin had nothing to do with it, as far as an organisation was concerned. He added that it was an excellent idea to form a secret society with the most forceful and intelligent militants, with a view to a possible dissolution and eventual rebuilding of the Spanish International.\(^5\)

A committee of the Congress dealing with the question of the ‘Alliance’ produced an ‘amazing document’, ‘a blend of naivety and irrelevance’.\(^5\) The actual existence of the Alliance could not be proved, but Bakunin had ‘tried and perhaps succeeded’ in forming a ‘society called Alliance’. According to Engels, this society, of which the existence could not be proved, was one and the same as the Spanish Alianza.

The conclusion of the report was that the programme of the Alliance — which Alianza was meant was not clear, they were all mixed up: those which had existed, or those Bakunin ‘had intended and perhaps succeeded in creating’, or the public Geneva Alliance, or the Spanish Alianza — was opposed to that of the International. This was, of course, not the case.\(^5\) The International had no official programme. The Provisional Rules of 1864 and the Statutes of 1866 were vague enough to admit all kinds of organisations of different schools of thought. The policy of the International was worked out at its congresses or especially by its federations.

It is true that the Bakuninist programme was not in accordance with the Marxian resolution of the conquest of political power, adopted at The Hague. But these resolutions had to be confirmed by the federations, and in this case the quasi-totality of the International did not. The accusation that Bakunin wanted to replace the programme of the International by that of the ‘Alliance’ was likewise unjustified. Again and again Bakunin stressed the point that it was very important that the programme of the International should be general enough to unite the workers of all countries.\(^5\)

Engels stated in his report that Bakunin was trying to destroy the International. That, of course, was polemical humbug. All this can only be explained by the fact that Marx and Engels identified the General Council with their point of view, and the International with the General Council.
If, finally, one asks what really did exist in terms of organisation, the answer must be: very little indeed. The Alliance 'had no list of members, no agreed rules or programme (since Bakunin’s numerous drafts were all made on his own responsibility), no officers, no subscriptions, and no regular meetings. A political association having none of these attributes was a myth.' Nevertheless, Bakunin believed and made others believe in this myth. He thought that ‘certaines existences imaginaires’ were very useful and that one shouldn’t disdain them altogether. In the whole of society, he wrote, there is a quarter of reality, and at least three-quarters of imagination, ‘et ce n’est point sa partie imaginaire qui a agi de tout temps le moins puissamment sur les hommes’. James Guillaume, who belonged from 1868 to 1874 to Bakunin’s most intimate circle, stated that the secret Alliance was nothing more than an intimate group among the most devoted accepting its programme.

From the description of Mikhail Sazhin, intimately allied to Bakunin from 1870 to 1874, and with his French and Russian circles, one can draw the same conclusion: there was, he wrote, ‘no secret pact among us. All the time during our friendship and my collaboration with Bakunin, as well as with our mutual friends like Guillaume and Schwitzguébel, there has been no secret society or conspiracy. When I saw Bakunin, in the summer of 1871, my “novitiate” had by then lasted for a year.’

When I appeared there I met some people who arrived before me, Italians, Spaniards and Swiss, whom I already knew. He suggested that I should speak openly about Russian affairs…. So from this meeting it is necessary to count my association with the ‘mythical’ Alliance, or as Michel said, with the ‘holy of holies’. There were no ‘dagger-fights’, no statutes, initiation ceremonies or any other rites connected with secret societies, and no plots either. It continued like this up to the end. Occasionally we came together to consider matters, and sometimes we came individually. This was done most frequently by me and the Italians, as we lived nearer to him than any of the others.

The ‘Fraternité’, then, was a Bakuninist ‘party’ or rather a ‘party’ of Bakunin: the ideal union of all those who had embraced his creed. It was his most personal achievement by which he succeeded in influencing decisively the orientation of large parts of the European labour movement towards the ideology of revolutionary collectivism and libertarian socialism. It was in this way he chose to convey his message of liberty and by which he made a lasting impact on history.
NOTES

1. José García Viñas died in 1931. Errico Malatesta in 1932. With them the last original members of Bakunin's intimate circle had gone.


4. MS. entitled 'Société internationale secrète de l'émancipation de l'humanité. But de la société', Sohlman Archives, Kungl. Biblioteket, Stockholm, 80 pp., quoted subsequently as Swedish MS. Apart from the Swedish MS. all manuscripts here mentioned are in the possession of the International Institute of Social History (I.I.S.G.), Amsterdam. References to pages of unpublished manuscripts are omitted. All italics in Bakunin's quotations are from the original.


6. His diary, e.g., mentions on one day twenty-four letters. Many of them were of the length of a pamphlet. Unfortunately, most of his correspondence from 1864 to his death in 1876 is lost: nearly all his letters to Spain, Italy, the Jura, and an important part of his Russian correspondence. Bakunin and his friends destroyed letters and documents on several occasions.

7. Mikhail Sazhin, 'Vospominaiya o Bakunine', Katorga i Ssylka (Moscow), xxvi (5) (1926) 18; reprinted in Mikhailu Bakuninu 1876-1926. Ocherki istorii anarkhicheskogo dvizheniya v Rossi (Moscow, 1926) p. 180. Sazhin (who after 1870 called himself Arman Ross) characterised Bakunin's method as follows: 'For Bakunin the acquaintance with people who were willing to work for the sake of the revolution was particularly characteristic. Usually he did not enter into any relations, and repelled such people from whom it was impossible to draw any benefit for the revolution. By words, stories, theoretical considerations and programmes he gave each new person a secondary importance, and tried realistically and practically to define one's abilities, one's suitability for particular aspects of activity. He would therefore give someone a certain task, which corresponded with his abilities; if the person wished to be useful as a writer, Bakunin proposed to him, or asked him, to write something, etc. In this way he gradually learnt to know the person, and it happened sometimes that he terminated all practical relations with him because of his inability.' Katorga i Ssylka, p. 13.

8. A. I. Herzen, 'Bakunin i pol'skoe delo', in 'Byloe i dumy', Sobranie sochineniya, xi (Moscow, 1957) 359.

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


11. In fact, by 1796 there no longer existed a popular movement to support
Babeuf. Daniel Guérin called him an 'enragé à retardement'.


15. M. A. Bakunin, Sobranie sochineniya i pisem 1818-1876 (Moscow, 1934) III 538-9; Carr, Michael Bakunin, p. 233.


17. Pis'ma M. A. Bakunina k A. I. Gertsenu i N. P. Ogarevu (Geneva, 1896) p. 164.

18. Ibid., p. 171.


20. Istoriicheskoe razvitie Internatsionala. Chast' I (Zürich, 1873) pp. 301-2. The article of Bakunin, 'The International Alliance of Social Revolutionaries', was signed 'the editor'. The text will be reprinted in Archives Bakounine, v.


22. Alfred Talandier (1822-90), revolutionary democrat, a proscrit of 1852, who in 1864 entered the Provisional General Council of the International; Fernando Garrido y Tortosa, the Spanish democrat and Fourierist. They are mentioned as members of the 'Fraternité' by Albert Richard, 'Bakounine et l'Internationale à Lyon, 1868-1870', Revue de Paris, iii 17 (1 Sep 1896) 121.

23. Élisée Reclus (1830-1905) was then already an anarchist. Writing to Bakunin in 1875, he spoke of himself as a 'frère indépendant'. Élie Reclus (1827-1904) always had a more sceptical attitude towards anarchism. Bakunin wrote of them: 'Ce sont deux savants et en même temps les hommes les plus modestes, les plus nobles, les plus désintéressés, les plus purs, les plus religieusement dévoués à leurs principes que j'aie rencontrés dans ma vie.' Archives Bakounine, i 1, p. 245. Summarising the theoretical principles of the 'Fraternité', Max Nettlau wrote: 'Europe was to be reconstructed on the basis of local autonomy and federation, irrespective of present state boundaries; work was to be done by the widest application of the principle of association; privilege was to be abolished by the abolition of the right of inheritance, all property of any importance devolving upon the death of the present owner to a fund for the education, instruction and apprenticeage of all children, in order to give within a generation an equal start to all. These ideas and corresponding revolutionary action, wherever possible, were to be realised by groups and societies of all kinds which would be secretly formed and their action co-ordinated, controlled and inspired in a thoroughly revolutionary sense by the national and international brethren. Élie and Élisée Reclus accepted this idea, which at that time, when Mazzini and Blanqui had gathered the nationalists of several countries and the authoritarian socialists of France in similar societies, was a very practical thought, conceived before the International Working Men's Association was ever founded. Élisée Reclus was long since an anarchist at heart and willing to support all efforts towards this aim;
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there was no anarchist movement at that time and Bakunin's attempt was the nearest approach to it.' Max Nettlau, 'Elisée Reclus and Michael Bakunin', in *Elisée and Elie Reclus in Memoriam* (Berkeley Heights, Calif: Oriole Press, 1927) pp. 197-8.

24. Cf. a document dated Stockholm, 12 Oct 1864, by which Sohlman was admitted, with several reservations made by him, as a 'frère' of the society. The 'catechism' and the 'programme' are also mentioned in a letter to Sohlman from London, dated 27 Oct, asking him to have these documents read to Colonel Pavel Bogdanov, a Russian who took part in the Polish insurrection. Obviously, Bakunin had recruited him during his stay in London.


27. Here, as often elsewhere, Bakunin uses the term 'anarchy' in the sense of a revolutionary disorder, 'un désordre salutaire'. On 1 Apr 1870 he wrote to Albert Richard: 'Il faut que l'anarchie, le réveil de la vie spontanée, de toutes les passions locales sur tous les points, soient aussi grands que possible, pour que la révolution soit et reste vivante, réelle, puissante.' Bibliothèque de la Ville de Lyon, MS. 5401/12.


29. Ibid.


32. From a letter to T. García Morago, 21 May 1872, MS. I.I.S.G.


34. Michel Bakounine, 'Circulaire à mes amis d'Italie', ibid., p. 308.

35. *Œuvres*, II 228.

36. *Archives Bakounine*, IV 235.

37. Swedish MS.


39. Swedish MS. The same formulations are to be found in the *Revolutionary Catechism* of 1866.

40. MS. after a copy made by Max Nettlau. The manuscript was in the hands of Kropotkin, but seems to be lost in the Kropotkin Museum in Russia.

41. Cf. Buonarroti's: 'La Liberté est une partie de la justice; la justice toute entière est dans l'égalité; la liberté sociale ne peut se concevoir sans l'égalité.' Lehning, *From Buonarroti to Bakunin*, p. 90.

42. Cf. Proudhon's well-known phrase: 'Liberty is not the daughter but the mother of order.' 'Solution du problème social', in *Œuvres complètes*, vi (Paris, 1868) 87.


44. MS. I.I.S.G.

45. In the documents of the 'Fraternité internationale' of 1868, dealing with
the immediate measures to be taken during a revolution, Bakunin also writes:

'The Commune will be organised by the standing Federation of the Barricades and by the creation of a Revolutionary Communal Council composed of one or two delegates from each barricade, one to each street or district, vested with plenary but accountable and rescindable mandates.' L’Alliance de la Démocratie socialiste..., p. 130.

46. Istoričeskoe razvitie Internatsionala, pp. 311-12.

47. In August 1873 a split took place between Ross and the other members, after fifteen months of close collaboration with Bakunin, who had formed with them, in August 1872, the Slav Section of Zürich, affiliated to the Jura Federation of the International.

48. K russkim revolyutsioneram. Revolyutsionnaya obshchina russkikh anarkhistov [n.p.], no. 1 (Sep 1873) 14 pp. The text of this pamphlet (based on Bakunin’s programme of the ‘Russian Brotherhood’) will be reprinted in Archives Bakounine, v, which will contain also the unpublished French and Italian versions of the programme of the ‘Fraternité’ of 1872, the Alliance Socialiste Révolutionnaire.


52. Carr, Michael Bakunin, p. 449. For all relevant documents, see Archives Bakounine, ii.

53. In fact the Geneva Alliance had been admitted by the General Council on 27 July 1869, and its programme declared not contrary to the International.

54. A similar view was held by Engels, who explained that the International had the task of welding in one great army the totality of the workers of Europe and America able to start the fight. It could therefore not take the principles of the Communist Manifesto as a starting-point. In September 1871, however, Marx and Engels tried to give the International this special programme, ‘le coup longtemps préparé’. The answer was a revolt of most of the federations against the General Council, after the Jura Federation had sounded the alarm.

55. Carr, Michael Bakunin, p. 439.

56. Letter to Johann Philipp Becker, 4 Dec 1869, quoted in Archives Bakounine, 12, p. xxxvii.

57. James Guillaume has given the following account of Bakunin’s conception: ‘Pendant son séjour au Locle, [Bakounine] me fit en effet des confidences: il me parla d’une organisation secrète qui unissait depuis plusieurs années, par les liens d’une fraternité révolutionnaire, un certain nombre d’hommes dans différents pays, plus particulièrement en Italie et en France; il me lut un programme contenant des choses qui répondaient entièrement à mes propres aspirations, et me demanda si je ne voudrais pas me joindre à ceux qui avaient créé cette organisation. Ce qui me frappa surtout dans les explications qu’il me donna, c’est qu’il ne s’agissait point d’une organisation du type classique des anciennes sociétés secrètes, dans laquelle on dût obéir à des ordres venus d’en haut: l’organisation n’était autre chose que le libre
rapprochement d'hommes qui s'unissaient pour l'action collective, sans formalités, sans solennité, sans rites mystérieux, simplement parce qu'ils avaient confiance les uns dans les autres et que l'entente leur paraissait préférable à l'action isolée.' James Guillaume, *L'Internationale. Documents et souvenirs (1864-1878)*, t 1 (Paris, 1905) 130. Ross confirms this statement: ‘Guillaume is right when, in his four-volume book about the International, he says that all stories, and even accusations, about the existence of the “Alliance” are the purest fantasy. I repeat once more that during the whole of the six or seven years of my intimate friendship with Bakunin, Guillaume and others, there was nothing that could indicate that there was ever a plot, or a secret alliance, between us.' Mikhail Sazhin, *Katorga i Ssylka*, p. 14.

58. Ibid., p. 19.

59. When Bakunin occasionally speaks of ‘our party’ he uses this term in the same way as Blanqui: a *groupement* of those who had accepted his special trend of revolutionary socialism and who belonged to the movement of which Blanqui was the leader; what name Blanqui gave to his secret organisation is unknown. See Maurice Dommanget, *Les Idées politiques et sociales d'Auguste Blanqui* (Paris, 1957) p. 346.