
© T. N. KONDRATYEVA

ktamara1960@yandex.ru

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**B. F. PORSHNEV ON THE EARLY LITERARY ART
OF PAUL DE GONDI**

SUMMARY. The article deals with Boris Porshnev's interpretation of the first Paul de Gondi's work "The Conspiracy of Gian Luigi dei Fieschi". The article shows that Boris Porshnev began his French research, writing a foreword and some commentaries for the supposed publication of "Memoires" written by cardinal de Retz, Paul de Gondi. Boris Porshnev always emphasized that his interest in Fronde and national rebellions comes from the study of these "Memoires". Earl Boris Porshnev's manuscripts give us the opportunity to view his later sociological and Marxist assessments of these "Memoires" as a mere collection of amusing stories and historical anecdotes. The article analyzes the content of three copies of the future foreword. Unlike his contemporary Maskardy, who considered Fieschi to be a rebel, Gondi, as Boris Porshnev remarks, was a fighter for freedom against tyranny. Boris Porshnev supposed, that Gondi's manuscript caught the eye of Cardinal Richelieu and became the reason of Gondi's fall into disgrace and of his future misfortunes.

KEY WORDS. France, La Fronde, Boris Porshnev, absolutism, Paul de Gondi, cardinal de Retz

Boris Fyodorovich Porshnev (1905-1972) is famous, first of all, for his francophone studies. His switch from Russian studies to French took shape in the beginning of the 1930s [1; 107-111], [2; 81-82]. Recollecting this in the middle of the 1950s he wrote: "In 1932 the publishing house "Academia" was going to issue the Russian translation of Retz's (Gondi's) well-known memoirs that depicted the age of the Fronde. I was proposed to write a commentary and preface for this edition" [3; 194]. Indeed, the *Memoirs* of Paul de Gondi were translated by N.M. Gnedina, supplemented with B.F. Porshnev's preface and commentaries, but remained unpublished [4]. It is hard to say what exactly prevented them from being issued. Porshnev himself at that time expected the work to be published. Applying to the USSR Academy of Sciences he wrote: "At the present moment I'm finishing preparing for publishing the annotated edition of Cardinal Retz's *Memoirs* (the most important source on the history of France) and at the same time gathering information on the topic of the peasant movements in the years of the Fronde" [5; 39].

In B.F. Porshnev's archive there remain his handwritten drafts containing a detailed Paul de Gondi's biography. All of them are written in blue and violet ink: two in student copybooks of Soviet production, one in a copybook produced before

the revolution [6], [7], [8]. No doubt these texts are from the beginning of 1930s and are versions of Porshnev's preface to the future edition of the *Memoirs* of the Cardinal of Retz. It is apparent that the researcher highly assesses the literary gift of Gondi placing him, in French literature, between Montaigne and Saint-Simon [9; 3 ob.]. The researcher gives a thorough description of the coadjutor's early art and training. He emphasizes the fact that the future Frondeur had brilliant innate abilities, — he could speak six languages, — and a quarrelsome and arrogant character. Reproaching western historians in their propensity to describe intrigues, the author of the preface himself goes into detail recounting the duels and adulteries of the young man, moreover considering it a pity that the most of the data concerning his character's life has been lost. The composition "The Conspiracy of Count Gian Luigi dei Fieschi", written, as Y.R. Viper underlines, in 1639, is the subject of the researcher's special attention [10; 652]. In accordance with the ideas of his time and following the memoirs of Retz [11; 13], B.F. Porshnev believed that the composition that Gondi named "The Conspiracy of Fieschi" in his manuscript was written in 1631 when the future coadjutor was eighteen [6; 68]. The historian notes that Gondi borrowed his plot from Augustino Mascardi, an Italian who wrote the work "The Conspiracy of Count dei Fieschi" [6; 68].

According to B.F. Porshnev, Gondi's interpretation of the plot was significantly different from that of Mascardi. The play narrates how the Doria family ruled the Canton of Geneva. The representative of this name, the well-known Andrea Doria achieved the "dictatorial power" in the city. "A noble Genevian Gian Lui Fieschi organized a rebellion, captured the city but because of an unfortunate accident the affair failed. The preferences of Retz are completely given to Fieschi. Retz's play was like an indirect tract against Richelieu. For the author, Fieschi is not a criminal conspirator, but the protector of liberty. This work reveals all the ambitious plans of the future cardinal" [6; 68]. It is obvious that B.F. Porshnev quite accurately describes the general picture of rebellion, in some places for some reason calling Genoa Geneva.

The historian refers to evidence by contemporaries (the duchess de Nemours, D'Arjanson, Talliman de Rio), who considered the manuscript, not assigned for publication and accidentally seen by Richelieu, the cause of all Gondi's further misfortunes. D'Arjanson even drew a parallel between Fiescha and Gondi, for they both were of the same age. B.F. Porshnev reproduces the characteristic of Gondi given by Richelieu after the latter read the manuscript. "Here's a dangerous mind", stated the powerful first minister of Louis XIII [6; 68–68 back].

In another place Porshnev focuses on the differences in Mascardi and Gondi's interpretations of Fieschi's rebellion. "If Mascardi praised the victorious Doria and blamed the rebel Fieschi, Gondi on the contrary took the side of Fieschi, the protector of Republic and freedom who was against the sly and autocratic Doria [8; 58–59].

In contrast to the previous variant of narration, here Porshnev talks about Genoa and tries to explain Gondi's interpretation through social and political determinacy. "We should not forget", he reminds the reader, "that Gondi's composition was written at the period of the most intensive growth and consolidation of French absolutism. Consequently, in the author's sympathies for the Republic and freedom-loving words, contemporaries distinguished [...] a far-reaching pamphlet against Richelieu's system. Moreover, in the accurately arranged images of the old man Doria and his son Jenettino they could not fail to recognize a revealing portrayal of Richelieu himself. A subtle historical analogy was further drawn in relation to the characteristics of Doria's rise, international situation [...] and depiction of the struggle that unfolded in Genoa between noble parties and houses" [8; 59].

In Gondi's composition about Fieschi's rebellion, B.F. Porshnev discovers traits of machiavellism and ideas given in "The Prince", particularly: "a queer combination of republican and democratic ideas of giving the ruler full freedom with regard to those ruled [...], the homily of highest right [...] that has to be obtained from the laws of nature". Porshnev states that this is actually the law that Machiavelli, Alexander Makedonskiy, Ceasar and Catilina were guided by when they conquered states and captured power [8; 60–61].

Further, Porshnev consistently advances his thought about the presence of cause and effect relationships between the ideas stated in "The Conspiracy of Fieschi" and Gondi's conduct at the time of the Fronde [8; 62].

Thus, Boris Fyodorovich Porshnev, in fact, began his research on the Fronde, French absolutism and people's movements with the *Memoirs* of the Cardinal of Retz, with a thorough description of numerous details and intrigues for which later he would criticize his foreign colleagues. Turning to the early art of Retz, Porshnev depicted his personage as a feudal aristocrat fighting for the preservation of old privileges and trying to have people's support and love. In Gondi's early work "The Conspiracy of Gian Luigi dei Fieschi" the historian discovered an intricate combination of Machiavelli's views and the ideas of natural right.

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