

Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno CII, Settembre-Dicembre 2018, Fascicolo III

Abstracts

ALESSANDRO GUERRA, *Anacharsis Cloots e la Rivoluzione senza frontiere*

Cloots is one of the possible representations of the new revolutionary man, the most atypical one. A Prussian nobleman, an exponent of Radical Enlightenment, a cosmopolitan intellectual, when the French Revolution broke out he embraced the new revolutionary ideals and became a fervent militant. The Revolution in France was a first step in a broader process which aimed at the whole world, renewal did not concern only the French nation but the entire human species. Without ever belonging to one party, Cloots took part in all and finally identified with the Sans-culottes, in the hope that their sovereignty would one day extend to the whole world in the form of a Universal Republic of Mankind.

The role of the universal Sans-culottes was that of rising above the discord and conflict tearing through France in that particular historical juncture. They tried to impose a model of life and action able to ensure peace and justice among men: a future in which – as Cloots made clear – freedom and happiness would be unlimited. In advocating the universality of the new revolutionary man, at a time when the attacks of counterrevolutionary forces were at their peak, Cloots was asking the French to renounce their historical identity tout court. He was in other words stressing the relationship between universality of rights, which the public discourse was keen to identify as its main tenet, and the contingent political situation, by which the destiny of the Revolution was being played out in one nation. Accused of betraying the principals of the Revolution, of having no longer pursued the interests of the French people, he was executed in the spring of 1794. With him the promise of a Revolution able to create a brotherhood of men with no borders was lost.

Keywords:

Anacharsis Cloots

French Revolution

Cosmopolitanism v. Nationalism