



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The importance of conspiracy theory in extremist ideology and propaganda

Fink, A.H.

Citation

Fink, A. H. (2020, April 16). *The importance of conspiracy theory in extremist ideology and propaganda*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/87359>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/87359>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/87359> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Fink, A.H.

Title: The importance of conspiracy theory in extremist ideology and propaganda

Issue Date: 2020-04-16

Chapter 7: Ideological mixing via anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, and the emergence of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion

“All countries, governed by parliaments, are everywhere and always accessible to the influence of bankers (through influence on elections, or direct bribery)...”¹ - Grigori Butmi-De-Katzman, 1898

“Anti-Semitism is the socialism of fools.”

- Attributed to various socialists.

Anti-Jewish variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory continued to dominate European conspiracy theory narratives in the period between 1870-1903. This chapter presents an overview of this period and also examines the phenomena which this period best demonstrates: the ability of conspiracy-theory narratives to “jump” between totally different ideologies. Sometimes this was for use in propaganda, though these alien ideas were often simultaneously incorporated into the political ideas of the adopters. The first section of this chapter argues that this was largely accomplished by the interpretive trick of a belief in a grand deception. In short: if almost everyone is being fooled all the time everywhere, then fragments of truth could emerge from the most unlikely places, even from people who do not really “understand” the “true” nature of what they are revealing. This is an important phenomenon to keep in mind in the later parts of this thesis, as believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory, which up to this point in this thesis have been mainly located in Europe, begin to pop up in wildly different places, and the kinds of narratives that emerged in specific circumstances in 18th and 19th century Europe are adopted by people with radically different backgrounds.

This chapter will also discuss the popularity of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories of the late 19th century, especially emerging from the European left and examine the mixing of various strands of anti-Jewish conspiracy theory during this period. It will also examine the French magazine *le Anti-Semitique*, an early attempt to use the anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy theory in propaganda intended to influence democratic elections. As we shall see, this attempt was a failure in France, but at least one of the articles from the newspaper had an outsized effect in another place.

The chapter will conclude by examining the origins and content of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a document that became important in Russian anti-liberal propaganda and later a touchstone for several extremist ideologies. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* will be placed in its political context, which will give important clues as to its original interpretation and the likely intent of the author or authors.

¹ Г. Бутми, (Grigori Butmi), *Золотая Валюта, сборникъ статей и рѣчей*, (Gold Currency: a collection of articles and reports), (St. Petersburg: Типография товарищества “общественная польза” Press of the Partnership “Public Benefit”, 1904) p. 209. From a 13 May 1898 report titled “Жертвы золотой валюты” (Victims of the gold currency).

Mixing narratives

By 1870 there were two main currents of anti-Jewish conspiracy theory in Europe. The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, modeled after the anti-Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory and the Brafman Kahal conspiracy theory modeled after the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory. These two strands of thought were already united in their identification of the Rothschilds and Crémieux and his Universal Israelite Alliance as major actors in the supposed global conspiracy. However, as both the Western and Russian anti-Jewish conspiracy theories posited a massive global conspiracy of deceptive Jews, their cross-pollination and eventual merger would have been likely even without the common antipathy specifically towards the Rothschilds and Crémieux.

Once one has accepted the idea that there is a massive conspiracy successfully deceiving almost everyone, the fear of being deceived oneself moves to the center of one's thought. This not only results in paranoia, but also can allow the joining of totally different theories about who is really doing the deception and to what end. Conspiracy theorists, if they are not totally dedicated to fighting a single enemy, can turn their minds on a dime as new enemies are unveiled or new material is discovered, even if this information comes from very unlikely sources. Even two totally different conspiracy theorists, sharing no political beliefs and perhaps from alien cultures, each might still believe that the other has understood a piece of the puzzle, if imperfectly. Even if one believes the other is ultimately wrong, he might have valuable "information" about the conspiracy - as we all see imperfectly through the fog of deception. Perhaps a Lutheran believes a cabal of deceptive Jews are conspiring to destroy Protestantism, he could still easily incorporate conspiracy theory material published by a rabidly anti-Protestant Roman Catholic newspaper, provided the material also posits a cabal of deceptive Jews. The Lutheran might be put off if the Roman Catholic publication describes Protestantism as part of this Jewish conspiracy, but the specific material in question might be valuable as long as it identifies the "right" enemy. (Or perhaps, the conspiracy has inserted the line about Protestantism in the document in order to throw their enemies off the scent!) Having a common "ultimate" enemy is not even necessary, merely identifying the existence of a massive deception can be enough. Simonini loved Barruel's work, but thought that the Illuminati were not the ultimate enemy, just a part of an even larger Jewish deception.

So paradoxically, this obsession with deception encourages both paranoia and also acceptance. Thus, a Russian Orthodox conspiracy theorist can adopt ideas formulated by Roman Catholics without much trouble, if the conditions are right. For another example, take the one seen in chapter 4, when the Roman Catholic Austrian diplomat Hammer-Purgstall could snugly incorporate anti-Ismaïli propaganda from 700 years before his birth into the anti-Freemason, anti-Carbonari variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, as they both identify a conspiracy of atheists as the ultimate enemy.

This ability to adopt conspiracy theory material from strange sources may also partially explain the curious relationship between conspiracy theorists and fiction. Recall, in the previous chapter, how the words of Benjamin Disraeli's fictional Jewish character Sidonia was used as evidence of a Jewish conspiracy by the Roman Catholic Gougenot des Mousseaux, who was aware he was drawing from a work of fiction written by a Jewish convert to Anglicanism. Some

conspiracy theorists could reason like this: Perhaps the conspiracy, realizing that eventually their secrets were to be revealed, has planted a fictional version of their conspiracy in advance in order to discredit that eventual revelation. Or, perhaps the conspiracy has such a stranglehold on the publishing industry that the only way an intrepid writer can unveil their machinations is through fiction.²

A notable aspect of anti-Jewish variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the late 19th century is their ability to do just this - to rapidly incorporate new material, for literature to easily cross political and cultural boundaries. Conspiracy theorists of this era even reached across the barrier between fiction and non-fiction with relative ease. An example of this kind of borrowing and mixing is found in another work of fiction, a scene from the novel *Biarritz* by Hermann Goedsche published in 1868 - before either Braufman's or Mousseaux's anti-Jewish books were published. (Indeed, they both may have been influenced by Goedsche or one of his unidentified inspirations.) Early in the novel, Goedsche depicts a once-in-a-century planning meeting in the Jewish cemetery in Prague for an international Jewish conspiracy. This meeting is clandestinely observed by two protagonists in the novel. Showing the possible influence of Éliphas Lévi, Goedsche describes this meeting as the "Kabbalistic Sanhedrin."³ The conspiring Jewish leaders do not worship the God of their fathers, but rather their leader proclaims that: "Ours is that God of today whom Aaron raised up for us in the desert, that Golden Calf, that universal deity of the age."⁴

Like the anti-Jewish conspiracy theories described in the last chapter, the plotters are out to destroy Christian civilization and usurp all earthly power. Their main tool is gold, and the modern age had finally opened the way for their victory, and the branches of the Rothschild offices are the bases of operation⁵ The plot's leader proclaims:

"In no earlier century were our ancestors able to concentrate in our hands so much gold, and therefore so much power, as the nineteenth century has bestowed on us. We can therefore expect, without any rash illusions, to achieve our aim soon... Today all reigning emperors, kings, and princes are burdened with debts contracted in keeping up large standing armies to support their toppling thrones. The stock exchange assesses and regulates those debts, and to a great extent we are masters of the stock exchange everywhere. We must therefore study how to encourage borrowing more and more, so as to make ourselves the regulators of all values and, as security for the capital we lend to countries, take the right to exploit their railways, their mines, their forests, their great ironworks and factories, and other kinds of real estate, even their taxes."⁶

The other major elements of the conspiracy described in this work of fiction are an attack on the Church and clerics and the encouragement of intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles. While Freemasonry is not explicitly named in the speeches, the Jewish cabal depicted in the novel is clearly using some of the typical tactics from the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy

² These ideas seem to be some of the main ways that contemporary believers in the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory keep the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* relevant after sections of it have been conclusively revealed to be plagiarized.

³ Hermann Goedsche under the pen-name "John Retcliffe," *Gesammelte Werke: Historische Romane + Abenteuergeschichten*, (e-artnow, 2015) Ibooks edition, p. 17,343.

⁴ Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, p. 279. Original German at Goedsche, p. 17,353.

⁵ Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, p. 280.

⁶ Ibid.

theory, such as a strategic use of skepticism and freethinking ideas and, of course, control of the press. Just like the Illuminati/Freemason plotters described in earlier conspiracy theories, the Jewish conspiracy will use the press to agitate for current liberal demands ("improving the lot of the workers" is mentioned), but it is all part of their plot to seize power:

"Once we are absolute masters of the press we will be able to transform ideas about honour, about virtue, about uprightness of character, we will be able to deal a blow against that institution which so far has been sacrosanct, the family, and we will be able to achieve its disintegration."⁷

Like the other versions of the Western Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in the mid-19th century, *Biarritz's* description of the Jewish conspiracy took the structure from the anti-Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory and added a Jewish element. The semiotician and novelist Umberto Eco pointed out that Goedsche borrowed the core of the Prague Cemetery scene from the 1849 novel *Joseph Balsamo* by Alexandre Dumas, which contains a scene of the high council of the Illuminati gather from all over Europe to plot the French Revolution. Goedsche's and Dumas' novels even have parallel sections where different Illuminati/Jewish plotters announce their cities of residence one by one at the beginning of their occult ceremonies.^{8 9} Dumas' scene is a fictionalized version of the Freemason/Illuminati myth that Hobson and Barruel and Robison wrote about seriously. Like Simonini, Montiero, and Cretineau-Joly, Goedsche took a version of the old Freemason/Illuminati myth and gave it new life by injecting it with Jew hatred. He did this for only a single scene in a novel, and not as part of some kind of anti-Jewish propaganda campaign. Goedsche never claimed the meeting was real.

However, within a decade this text, later named the *Rabbi's Speech*, was being re-published across Europe as a real narration delivered by a leader of the global Jewish plot. First it was published as a pamphlet in St. Petersburg, then re-published (though labeled as fictional) in Kyiv, and then included as nonfiction in part of an 1872 Polish-language edition of Brafman's work published in Lviv (then in the Austrian Empire). By the late 1880s the widely-read Russian newspapers *Sanktpeterburgskie Vedomosti* and *Novoe Vremia* were representing the speech as evidence of the global Jewish conspiracy.¹⁰ It was published in Roman Catholic newspapers in France in 1880 and in 1898.¹¹ This same story written in central Europe was adopted in Eastern Europe by supporters of Brafman's Kahal conspiracy theory and in Western Europe by believers of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. The importance of this account to conspiracy theorists was that it was evidence of the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy. The fact that the Kahal or the Freemasons are not mentioned in the text is beside the point. After all, the account could be incomplete, or garbled, or lack a detailed description of "obvious" facts.

The ability of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to gather an interested audience everywhere Europe was also a business opportunity for international publishers. The greatest example of this multicultural utility was a man of many cultures: Frederick Augustus Millingen a.k.a. Osman

⁷ Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, p. 283.

⁸ Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, p. 136.

⁹ Alexandre Dumas, *Joseph Balsamo*, (Amazon Digital Services 2014), Kindle Edition, - see the chapter "Introductory" starting at Kindle Location 44.

¹⁰ Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, pp. 440-441.

¹¹ "Le Secret De La Puissance Juive," *La Croix* (Paris, France) February 15, 1898.

Bey a.k.a. Vladimir Alexanderovich. The son of a Lebanese mother and an English doctor working for the Sultan in Istanbul, Millingen was raised in Rome by his deeply Roman Catholic grandmother after his parent's marriage fell apart and then he was sent back to Istanbul to live with his father as a teenager.¹² ¹³ Sometime around the Crimean War he converted to Islam and joined the Ottoman military. He then made some half-hearted attempts at business, tried to emigrate to the United States to serve in the US Civil War (which ended before he got there), lived in Paris, and there finally found success as an author and something of an expert on the Middle East. He published several books on the Turkish Empire and probably ghostwrote his mother's autobiography *Thirty Years in the Harem* (1872) which was highly critical of Ottoman ways of life.¹⁴ This book was followed by a sequel written by his sister that was widely read in Western Europe. It was one of the forerunners of the "harem literature" genre which was to become popular decades later.¹⁵ After his mother's suicide in 1873 and estranged from his father, Millingen traveled to Russia where he tried to take on a Russian identity.¹⁶ He attempted to find publishing success in the Russian Empire and across Europe by writing anti-Jewish and anti-British polemics. His book *The Conquest of the World by the Jews*¹⁷ was published initially in French, then in Russian (where it seemed to quickly go through several editions)¹⁸ and eventually in English and even Italian (1880).¹⁹ He pushed the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy bent on secretly usurp all power using the press and finance, in which the Rothschilds and the Universal Israelite Alliance played leading roles.

While his book did seem to sell well, Millingen's initial attempts at publicizing his own brand of anti-Jewish conspiracy theory did not impress the Russian literary scene,²⁰ however, he may have acquired some powerful patrons. He surfaced again when he published further anti-Jewish conspiracy theories in France, sent there (he said) by a senior official in the Russian government. The chameleon Millingen is such an unreliable narrator, serial fabricator, and exaggerator that one cannot take anything he says as reliable testimony. However, he undoubtedly played an important role in collecting, merging, and spreading anti-Jewish conspiracy theories from all across Europe.

¹² Кета Мирчева and Олга Тодорова, "НЕИЗВЕСТНИ СТРАНИЦИ ОТ БИОГРАФИЯТА НА ЕДИН МЕЖДУНАРОДЕН АВАНТЮРИСТ ПРЕЗ ТРЕТАТА ЧЕТВЪРТ НА XIX ВЕК: БАЛКАНСКИ ВИЗИИ И БЪЛГАРСКИ КОНТАКТИ НА ФР. МИЛИНГЕН (ОСМАН БЕЙ) ДО 1878 ГОДИНА," in *Bulgarian Society in the National Revival Epoch: Studies in Honor of the 75-the Anniversary of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ogniana Mazhdrakova*, (Sofia: Professor Marin Drinov Academic publishing house, 2012, p. 416.

¹³ Millingen's father is said to have incompetently cared for Lord Byron during the Greek War of independence and has been blamed for Byron's death. See Мирчева and Тодороварр, pp. 413-414.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 419-422.

¹⁵ Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, (Rutgers University Press, 2004), pp. 16-17.

¹⁶ Мирчева and Тодорова, pp. 422-423.

¹⁷ In the late 20th century an English translation was published in the United States by an extremist group: Major Osman Bey, *The Conquest of the World by the Jews*, F. W. Mathias trans., (Western Front, 1976).

¹⁸ Фредерик Миллинген (Frederik Millingen), *Покорение мира евреями* (The Conquest of the World by the Jews), 5th edition, (Odesa: Ulrich and Schulze, 1874).

¹⁹ Osman Bey, *Gli Ebrei Alla Conquista del Mondo*, (Venice: Gennaro Favai, 1880).

²⁰ Klier, p. 441.

Anti-Masonic, anti-Jewish propaganda on the Left

The Roman Catholic church had been a champion for the idea of a Freemason conspiracy against the Church and Christian civilization ever since Metternich and his lieutenants persuaded Rome to anathematize the Carbonari in the 1821 Papal bull *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*. As discussed in the previous chapter, anti-Jewish conspiratorial elements were easily fitted to conspiracy theories involving the Freemasons. The Jesuits appear to have played an important role in spreading the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in Western Europe. The Simonini Letter to Barruel, the first version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, was first published in 1878 with commentary by the Russian Jesuit J. Gagarin in the French Roman Catholic magazine *Le Contemporain*.²¹ In 1880 the influential Jesuit magazine the *Civita Cattolica* initiated a 40-month long campaign against the Jews²² that included much material that included the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

The substantial innovations in anti-Jewish conspiracy theories in Western Europe in this period came from the left, which also easily adopted elements from erstwhile right-wing conspiracy theories. These creations could in turn be adopted by the ideological opponents of the creators. The late 19th century in Europe saw the rise of the “Anti-Semitic” movement, an anti-Jewish movement which denied basing their hatred on religion but focused instead on financial and racial grievances, and, of course, conspiracy theories. Socialist ideas often overlapped with 19th century anti-capitalist ideas from anti-Semites railing against Jewish financial power.²³

The term “Anti-Semitism” was coined by a radical atheist German named Wilhelm Marr to describe an ideology of dechristianized Jew-hatred. He described the Jews as supremely practical, with a religion based on a “business relationship” with their God. Marr believed that they had taken over the more spiritual Germany by using finance and other wiles. He identified Bismarck’s newly-unified German Empire, full of massive new industrial and financial projects, as a Jewish construction. His book *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism* (1879) was a big success, with 12 editions published in the first year alone.²⁴ In 1879 Marr even tried to found an Antisemitic League “for the salvation of Germany from complete Jewification.”²⁵

The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory had been originally adapted for propaganda against liberalism and revolution, and the *Kahal* conspiracy theory of Brafman was anything but liberal or revolutionary. This new wave of anti-Jewish agitation in Europe however had a tilt to the left, even if its roots may ultimately have been sectarian hatred. Many of the leftist European anti-Semites saw themselves as the successors of the Revolution of 1848.²⁶ The antisemitic movement in 1880s Vienna was anti-liberal, anti-capitalist, and anti-immigrant. The policies proposed by these anti-Jewish “Christian socialists” included quite “progressive” ideas

²¹ J. Gagarin, “Souvenirs Du P. Grivel sur Les PP. Barruel Et Feller,” in *Le Contemporain: revue d’économie chrétienne*, Series 3, Volume 16, June 1878, Paris.

²² Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews*, Location 2396.

²³ Brendan McGeever and Satnam Virdee, “Antisemitism and socialist strategy in Europe, 1880–1917: an introduction,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 51, pp. 221-234.

²⁴ Rose, pp. 288-295.

²⁵ Rose, p. 293.

²⁶ Robert S. Wistrich, *From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, the Jews, and Israel*, (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), p. 43.

combined with prohibitions against usury revived from earlier times.²⁷ The movement pushed for universal suffrage, a progressive income tax, a tax on the stock market, the nationalization of major sectors of the economy and a limit on working hours. In 1885 the leader insisted that a law banning the Jews from all areas of public life was “indispensable for realizing these reforms.”²⁸

Unsurprisingly given the anti-Jewish tilt of Jesuit-linked publications, most of the leaders and members of the various antisemitic political movements around Europe in the late 19th century were Roman Catholic, but the leader of the movement in protestant Prussia, the earliest one to be codified as an actual political organization, was the protestant preacher Adolf Stöcker.²⁹ An advantage of antisemitic ideas was that they were at root non-sectarian. Protestants could look to Luther for a prominent anti-Jewish forebear, Catholics to any number of previous popes. The antisemitic campaigns were populist, and while some of them may have gotten inspiration for Jew hatred from church newspapers and books published with support from the highest levels, it was anti-Jewish lower clergy who offered support to the antisemitic movement.³⁰

Wilhelm Marr decried the Roman Catholic church as part of his anti-Jewish campaign, as he saw the Jewish monotheistic idea as the root of all evil, and believed that a Christian could never really be a proper anti-Semite.³¹ He fiercely attacked the Jesuits along with the Jews and the “Semitic” banks. As one of his slogans put it: “Without Judah, Without Rome, We will build Germany’s dome.”³² In France, a writer for the newspaper *L’Anti-semitique* once declared that while Roman Catholic clergy might be anti-Jewish on economic and social grounds, they were not able to be of great help because they are “unable to repudiate the sacred books, which it has in common with Judaism...”³³ Despite the anti-clerical bent of many anti-Semites, a Vatican daily in 1898 celebrated the rise of antisemitic parties in Europe, saying: “Masonry and Judaism, sprung up together to combat and to destroy Christianity in the world, must now together defend themselves against the Christian awakening and against the people’s wrath.”³⁴

Especially in France in the late 19th century, there appeared the interesting phenomenon of the mixing of narratives from across ideological lines which share similar conspiratorial elements. This was facilitated by an attempt to present the ideas of the French socialist Toussenel to a wide audience. In the previous chapter Toussenel got a brief mention because of his attacks on the Rothschilds and all “Jewish” parasites in the 1840s. In the late 19th century his ideas became influential on the French left and then throughout the whole world. Many French socialists in the late 19th century saw the “Jewish” issue as a way to draw

²⁷ Wistrich, p. 39.

²⁸ Wistrich, p. 43.

²⁹ Wistrich, p. 38.

³⁰ Wistrich, p. 38.

³¹ Wistrich, p. 41.

³² Wistrich, p. 43.

³³ “Les économistes Chrétiens,” *L’Anti-Sémitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 28, December 8, 1883, p. 217.

³⁴ Kertzer, locations 2680-2681.

attention to “financial feudalism” that oppressed the workers, and indeed all of society,³⁵ and Toussenel’s ideas were the ideological foundation for this push

Toussenel’s conspiracy theory revolved around finance, with the Rothschilds at the heart of a scheme of parasites that had imposed “financial feudalism” on the whole world. Earlier the Roman Catholic conspiracy theorist Crétineau-Joly described Jewish financiers as the secret funders of the masonic conspiracy in order to get revenge on Christianity³⁶ but to Toussenel and his ideological descendants, financial dominance was at the core of the Jewish conspiracy, not merely an incidental or facilitating aspect of an anti-Christian conspiracy.

Toussenel’s hatred for the Rothschilds and their works went far beyond objections to their railroad business. Toussenel had a special hatred for England, which he saw as an important part of the international conspiracy of parasites. England was the global capital of everything Toussenel hated - banking (and the Rothschilds in particular), modern industry, and civil rights for Jews. He saw “So-called liberal ideas, which are only English ideas...”³⁷ as the lubricant for “Jewish” domination. Toussenel held a belief about how free-market economics worked that was analogous to the belief about freedom of the press held by the first generation of conspiracy theorists. As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, if one believed in a massive Illuminati conspiracy to manipulate public opinion through the press, then a “free” press without government interference or censorship would just result in a victory for the Illuminati, who have their own extra-legal means of coercion and manipulation. Likewise, Toussenel decried the idea of free markets: “liberty, the free competition preached by the economists... gave rise to the monopoly and its consequences.”³⁸ Of course, the control of the press by this Judeo-financial conspiracy also played a role in facilitating the growth of these evil monopolies which control economics and politics:

“The means used by financial feudalism to obtain the monopoly of public wealth are: the monopoly of commerce and all that is parasitic industry, a monopoly of *usury*, disguised as credit; monopoly of the chicanery, the notariat, the press, and all the high financial positions. We shall see that each of these functions are adapted to innumerable privileges, constituting a true feudality.”³⁹

In the 1880s there was an attempt to use Toussenel’s ideas to mobilize voters and create a proper, socialist “anti-Semitic” movement in France through the short lived newspaper *L’Anti-semitique*.⁴⁰ The impetus for the creation of this magazine was likely the economic disruption following the collapse of the Union Générale bank in 1882. This bank had been created by Roman Catholic legitimists to rival Protestant and Jewish banks, and some blamed its collapse on the machinations of the Rothschilds.⁴¹ A combination of Toussenel’s “Jewish

³⁵ Victor M. Glasberg, “Intent and Consequences: The ‘Jewish Question’ in the French Socialist Movement of the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 36, no. 1, Jan., 1974, p. 62.

³⁶ Crétineau-Joly, Vol. 2, p. 386-386.

³⁷ Toussenel, p. 195.

³⁸ Toussenel, p. 105.

³⁹ Toussenel, p. 145.

⁴⁰ Bernard-Henri Lévy, *L’idéologie française*, (Grasset, 1981), p. 53.

⁴¹ Kevin Passmore, *The Right in France, from the Third Republic to Vichy*, (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 62

Banker” conspiracy theory with the older Freemason conspiracy theory became a central message of the magazine *L'Anti-semitique*

The remainder of this section will examine the material printed in *L'Anti-semitique* in order to observe how the authors innovated on Tousennel's theme. Also, one example of the paper's effect in Russia will be examined to illustrate the ability of a piece of a conspiracy theory to jump across cultural and ideological boundaries.

Tousennel's ideas were obviously the touchstone of *L'Anti-Semitique*. *L'Anti-Semitique* railed against the power of the Rothschilds and Toussennel is described as a “clairvoyant man” for denouncing them four decades earlier.⁴² *L'Anti-semitique* spread the idea that the Rothschilds deliberately crash stock markets as part of their grand schemes.⁴³ *L'Anti-semitique* presented the financier as the core of a global Jewish conspiracy to dominate the politics of every country:

“This Jew, the financier ...is neither French, nor German, nor Russian, nor of any country: it is Israelite. It obliges a government to sign a treaty of commerce, often against the interests of its citizens, by threatening to withdraw its assistance in the present or to refuse it in the future.”⁴⁴

Taking a page from Toussennel, *L'Anti-Semitique* even included one article that claimed the entire science of political economy (which today we would just call economics) was in fact a creation of the Jewish conspiracy:

“The so-called scientific theories which have been grouped under the name of political economy, have as their object the confusion of the simplest questions, and the loss of the true notion of the common interests of the vulgar. It is particularly fond of writers, whose most obvious mission seems to be to justify the monopolizing of high finance... certain writers devoted to political economy are offended... they write to reproach us, in particular, for having said: 'Economists are Jews in essence...' We will point out to our opponents that if we find ourselves in the presence of a theory favoring 'unproductive parasitism'... we will say with Toussennel that it is Jewish...”⁴⁵

For a further example, *L'Anti-semitique* attacked one French candidate for being in the pay of the Jewish oligarchs, as he was an economist and a supporter of “the economic theories and dishonest processes of the twelve or fifteen financiers who make up the cosmopolitan oligarchy...”⁴⁶

In addition to these Toussennel-derived, antisemitic, secular, left-wing, anti-banker ideas, the magazine also made use of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory and the idea that the Universal Israelite Alliance was at the core of the Jewish conspiracy. An article urging Freemasons to throw off the influence of the Jews stated that “Masonry... is a docile instrument in the hands of the intrigues of the Universal Israelite Alliance.”⁴⁷ Or to take another example

⁴² Jacques Begner, “Sus A L'Ennemi!”, *L'Anti-Sémitique*, (Montdidier, France), No 13, 25 August, 1883, no. 13, p. 97.

⁴³ For an example, see “Rothschild En Autriche”, *L'Anti-Semitique*, No. 3, 16 June 1883, p. 20.

⁴⁴ “Avant La Lutte,” *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 1, 2 June 1883, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Joseph Roland, “Les Systèmes Juifs,” *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 24, 1883, 10 November 1883, p. 187-188.

⁴⁶ L. Guillemain, “L'Élection de Iodéve,” *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 28., 8 December 1883, p. 218.

⁴⁷ “Étude sur la Franc-Maçonnerie”, *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 6, 7 July 1883, p. 43.

from another article “The Israelites have become the supreme and unique directors of the Masonic lodges. It is through masonry that they wish to remove all obstacles to their secular designs...”⁴⁸ To support an anti-finance conspiracy theory rooted in socialism the propagandists of *L’Anti-Semitique* adopted a conspiracy theory that had been regularly used to defend monarchy.

Despite its use of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory (which has much of its foundations in propaganda against the French Revolution), *L’Anti-Semitique* was in general pro French Revolution. The story it told was not that the Freemasons and Jews had engineered the Revolution for their own nefarious ends, but that the progressive and positive French Revolution had been suborned by the Jewish conspiracy. It had replaced the old haughty nobility with a new, Jewish one: “On the ruins of the ancient nobility, a new aristocracy arose, worse perhaps than the first...”⁴⁹ In one article it described the Paris stock exchange as “this modern Bastille, home of corruption and demoralization, which must be razed, and the Jews that it supports, must be expelled from a country which they have been defiling for too long.”⁵⁰

While it was not at the core of the paper’s messaging, *L’Antisemitique* spread the Russian-origin *Kahal* conspiracy theory of Brafman by publishing a series of articles that claimed to be written by an anonymous resident of Odesa, in the Russian Empire. These articles mentioned Brafman, and his conspiracy theory of the secret *Kahal* that was working to dominate commerce in the Russian Empire. The article claimed pogroms were provoked by haughty Jews lording over the Christians (and that losses were compensated by the Universal Israelite Alliance)⁵¹

“Their power is manifested everywhere by capital and by the boldness of their spirit of enterprise: in the West in the form of colossal loans from the various western states and in commercial and financial enterprises; At home [in the Russian Empire], in the form of small credits and small trades.”⁵²

In perhaps the best example of conspiracy-theory mixing, a front-page article from June 21 1883 decried the Jesuit-Judaic Alliance, which it blamed for instigating the Franco-Prussian war, among other things:

“In Austria where a Jewish Parliament and a Jesuitical clergy are closely connected, whenever the Jesuitical-Judaic alliance finds an opportunity to conduct an operation which might awaken the astonishment of the public, it [this alliance] adroitly creates difficulties with the Catholic authorities in Rome in order to divert attention... the source of these clerical difficulties - the “fons et origo mali” - is Paris; And it was the Israeli Empire, especially in Paris, which prompted Napoleon III to declare war on Prussia. It is this which has forced the French and German peoples to become entrenched.... High finance Jews took advantage of the confusion caused by all these affairs and

⁴⁸ “Étude sur la Franc-Maçonnerie”, *L’ Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 8, 21 July 1883, p. 59.

⁴⁹ “La Liberté et les Juifs”, *L’ Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 7, 14 July 1883, p. 51.

⁵⁰ L. Guillemain, “Les Actionnaires Après les conventions”, *L’ Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 31, 29 December 1883, p. 244.

⁵¹ See the Series “Les Juifs en Russie” *L’ Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 13, 25 August 1883, pp. 103-104, No. 14, 1 September 1883, pp. 108-109, and No. 17, 22 September 1883, p. 133.

⁵² “Les Juifs en Russie” *L’ Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 14, 1 September 1883, p. 109.

especially that caused by the Franco-Prussian war to waste the public treasury and divert the attention of the public..."⁵³

The author of this article tied together the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory (an anti-liberal mainstay) with the Rothschild conspiracy theory (an anti-banker and anti-Jewish mainstay) with the Jesuit myth (an anti-clerical mainstay.) One thing to note in this conspiracy theory cocktail is the importance of Paris as the locus of the international conspiracy. Paris had been presented as the seat of the Jacobin/Illuminati conspiracy after the French Revolution, and again in the anti-Jewish conspiracy theories of Mousseaux and Brafman - as it was the headquarters of the Universal Israelite Alliance. This emphasis from *L'Anti-Semitique* on Paris as well is certainly partly inherited from Mousseaux, but it also probably grew from a perception that Paris, the center of political and financial power in France, was lopsidedly Jewish. In 1890 there were less than 80,000 Jews in France, a fraction of the population. According to Norman Cohn, the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory was particularly popular in the French provinces where there were vanishingly few Jews: "...the Jew symbolized for this public... the mysterious and sinister power of Paris, where most Jews lived."⁵⁴

Despite its creativity and flexibility in anti-Jewish conspiratorial propaganda, *L'Anti-Semitique* did not create any political successes. *L'Anti-semitique* endorsed a candidate in a legislative election for Paris' 1st arrondissement on September 9th, 1883.⁵⁵ The antisemitic candidate did not show well, gaining so few votes that his total was not even recorded in newspapers.⁵⁶ After less than two years in print, the publishers of *L'Anti-semitique* shut the paper down and then opened a new one called *le Pêril Social*, explaining that they did "not want to make war on Jews... but on all exploiters."⁵⁷

The first French antisemitic periodical may not have made much of a splash in Western Europe, but one tale it spun found its way to a major Russian newspaper. In 1883 *L'Anti-Semitique* published a supposed secret speech given by Adolphe Crémieux, the founder of the Universal Israelite Alliance. This fake speech is perhaps a "lite" version of the *Rabbi's Speech* - without the occult overtones or the specifics about how the plot operates.⁵⁸ It did, however, include fabricated boasts from Crémieux about how the main enemy, the Roman Catholic church, was mortally wounded, and proclaiming that "The Israelite doctrine must one day be imposed on the whole world."⁵⁹

This fake manifesto, now known as the *Crémieux Manifesto*, was republished in November 1883 in the influential Russian journal *Rus* as evidence of a "Jewish International."⁶⁰ When it was revealed to be a forgery, the editor of the *Sanktpeterburgskie vedemosti* declared

⁵³ G. H. D. Gossip, "L'Alliance Jésuitico-Judaïque ou L'Alliance Israélite", *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 8, 21 July 1883, p. 57.

⁵⁴ Cohn, p. 56.

⁵⁵ *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 15, 8 September 1883, p. 113.

⁵⁶ See election results in *L'Intransigeant*, 11 September 1883, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Glasberg, p. 68.

⁵⁸ Klier, p. 443.

⁵⁹ The first printing of this text was in *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), no. 19, 6 October 1883, pp. 148-149.

⁶⁰ "Еврейская Интернационалка и борьба съ Еврействомъ въ Европѣ" (The Jewish International and the Struggle with Jewry in Europe), *Русь* (Rus), No. 21, 1 November 1883, pp. 20-26.

that they had no problems with the publication of the *Crémieux Manifesto* because even if it was of questionable origins, it did not contain anything new. The editor invited his readers to read Brafman's *Kniga Kagala* if they doubted this.⁶¹ Brafman's conspiracy theory, of Russian origin and derived from the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory from the *Polish Catechism*, prepared the way for the acceptance the *Crémieux Manifesto*, of Western origin and written for a French socialist anti-bank, anti-Mason newspaper.

Drumont, *La France Juive*, and Dreyfus

The best known European anti-Semite of this era was the French journalist Édouard Drumont, who called Toussenel his "inspired precursor."⁶² Drumont popularized anti-Semitism in France, and therefore also in every part of the world that imitated and looked to French culture. Drumont's work was a sort of historical fusion between old-style European religious-based anti-Jewish hatred, racially-based anti-Jewish hate, and anti-Jewish Roman Catholic conspiracy theories mixed with antisemitic socialist ones.⁶³ His embrace of every anti-Jewish conspiracy theory under the sun facilitated this merger. The popularity of his work spread and popularized the conspiracy theories he wrote about. Drumont was anti-Roman Catholic earlier in his life, but he converted to Roman Catholicism around 1880. While there was certainly a strong religious element to what he wrote, the main thrust of his work was his belief in a racial divide between the Semitic Jews and the Aryans, and his subsequent writing and publishing shows he drew inspiration from otherwise anti-clerical writers and continued to reach out to pro-Bonaparte socialists for contributions to his magazine.⁶⁴

Drumont became famous in 1886 after he wrote the anti-Jewish book *La France Juive*. Drumont's sprawling book covered all sorts of conspiracy theory tropes and integrated them into his version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, from the Templars and the legend of Jacques Molay⁶⁵ to the idea that Protestantism was a "a bridge for the Jews to enter ... into humanity."⁶⁶ Drumont reported on Jewish involvement in the fall of the Stuart dynasty in England,⁶⁷ and supported the idea that the Jews had been behind the French Revolution, using the tool of Illuminati-controlled Freemasonry: "The Jews, acting through Freemasonry, revenged themselves on Marie Antoinette for what Maria Theresa had made them endure."⁶⁸ Drumont was anti-French Revolution, stating "The only one which the Revolution benefited is the Jew. Everything comes from the Jew; it all comes back to the Jew."⁶⁹ He claimed Marat was

⁶¹ Klier, p. 447.

⁶² Michele Battini, *Socialism of Fools: Capitalism and Modern Anti-Semitism*, Noor Mazhar trans., (Columbia University Press, 2016), Kindle Edition, p. 43.

⁶³ Battini, p. 53.

⁶⁴ Battini, pp. 47-48.

⁶⁵ Édouard Drumont, *La France juive: essai d'histoire contemporaine, Edition Illustrée*, (Paris: Lib. Blériot, 1885? [this edition lacks a date]), p. 143.

⁶⁶ Drumont, p. 157.

⁶⁷ Drumont, p. 170.

⁶⁸ Drumont, p. 219.

⁶⁹ Drumont, p. 2.

Jewish,⁷⁰ and speculated that Napoleon might have been Jewish.⁷¹ Drumont warned of secret Jews who infiltrate gentile society in order to “give up to their comrades the secrets which can serve them.”⁷² Drumont pointed to the Rothschilds as the prime example of the scheming Jewish conspirator,⁷³ and, of course, Drumont quoted Disraeli’s novel *Coningsby* as evidence of international conspiracy.⁷⁴

At first *La France Juive* languished in bookstores despite favorable reviews in the French Roman Catholic press. However, after an influential French paper attacked the book it flew off the shelves.⁷⁵ Drumont became the leading French anti-Semite and published a number of other successful books. In 1892 he started an antisemitic newspaper *La Libre Parole* which quickly became popular.⁷⁶

While incorporating ideas popular in some socialist circles, Drumont’s works themselves were anti-socialist. Drumont accused the Jews of having invented “socialism, internationalism, nihilism” to please the cultural fancy and lead astray the German, Frenchman, and the Slav.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, *La France Juive* was well-reviewed in the socialist press.⁷⁸ Despite these negative things that Drumont said about socialists in *La France Juive*, one socialist complimented the book because of its anti-banker statements: “Drumont and his followers are rendering a great service to the cause of social revolution, because in creating anti-Semities they have created socialists in religious circles where any other propaganda would certainly fail.”⁷⁹

The modern French public intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy has called the adoption of Toussenel’s work by Drumont and other radically anti-Jewish French Roman Catholics “chicanery,”⁸⁰ but this judgement underestimates the ability of the idea of deception to facilitate unlikely-but-genuine borrowings and alliances. A conspiracy-theory minded anti-Jewish Roman Catholic might embrace Toussenel because Toussenel was “mostly right,” and any details which one might quibble with could be dismissed as incidental to the identification of the Jewish enemy and his methods. Meanwhile a socialist anti-Semite could look at Drumont’s work, with the anti-socialist elements in plain view, and still approve because he saw Drumont as on the right path - someone who has seen past part of the deception - but not all of it, and who has at least identified some of the main issues and enemies. Such a person can be a valuable ally. These elements can be more important than ideological purity. Likewise the writers of *L’Anti-Semitique*, though anti-clerical and pro-French Revolution, gladly accepted conspiracy-theories promoted by clerics to combat the French Revolution. The important message was “There is a

⁷⁰ Drumont, p. 236.

⁷¹ Drumont, p. 243.

⁷² Drumont, p. 54.

⁷³ Drumont, p. 2

⁷⁴ Drumont, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Thomas P. Anderson, “Edouard Drumont and the Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism,” *Catholic Historical Review*, vol 53, Issue 1. (April 1, 1967), p. 28

⁷⁶ William I. Brustein, *Roots of Hate, Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust*, (Cambridge University press, 2003), pp. 119-120.

⁷⁷ Drumont, p. 166.

⁷⁸ Battini, p. 48.

⁷⁹ Glasberg, p. 62.

⁸⁰ Lévy, p. 108-109.

large Jewish conspiracy with amazing powers of deception that has usurped much power and is planning to..." - The latter part that identifies specific goals and ultimate enemies of the Jews could be adapted to suit. Some propagandists might see this idea of a grand deception as far too useful to ignore.

Drumont's star faded a bit among French Roman Catholics in the 1890s after he started vociferously attacking the Roman Church,⁸¹ but he never completely went out of fashion in this era. His ideas even influenced some of the French clergy. The use of racial language against Jews lies outside the scope of this chapter, but it should be noted that after Drumont's work became popular some Roman Catholic clergy in France used racial language, borrowing Drumont's racial anti-Semitism and emphasizing "blood" in contrast to earlier religious-based anti-Jewish ideas.⁸²

Drumont is best known for his agitation connected with two events: the Dreyfus Affair and the Panama Scandals. The Panama Scandals were connected to the bankruptcy of the Panama Company, which had raised an enormous amount of money in France to dig a Panama canal. Some of these loans were backed by a guarantee provided by the French Parliament. The backing of Parliament and the support of the press had been secured through a massive bribery scheme. One of the men who distributed the money gave Drumont a list of who he had bribed. Drumont published the list in small batches. His string of exclusives on this scandal helped increase the popularity of his magazine. Drumont, of course, incorporated this scandal into his anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, even though no Jewish politicians had been bribed, nor were there any Jews on the board of the company.⁸³

The Dreyfus Affair encompasses the events surrounding the false accusation and eventual exoneration of a Jewish French army officer, falsely accused of being a spy for the Germans in the 1890s. Evidence of his innocence was covered up. At first glance this incident falls outside the scope of this study, as the accusation that a Jew is working as a spy for the German government does not seem to fit with some grand Jewish conspiracy, instead it is just an accusation of German espionage (which certainly went on, though in this case the accused was innocent) or an insult to the patriotism of French Jews. In the pages of *La Libre Parole* Drumont and his helpers portrayed the Dreyfus affair as another episode in the long history of Jewish treachery, and part of the larger Jewish plot. He used the affair to attack the French government for being slow to act, accusing them of being part of the vast Jewish conspiracy.⁸⁴ The Dreyfus affair became internationally famous.

These events had an important effect on the left, both in France and in the rest of Europe: the end of the Dreyfus affair was followed by a decline of anti-Semitism among European socialists.⁸⁵ Towards the end of the affair many socialists shifted their stance and became pro-Dreyfus, inspired by the pro-Dreyfus writings of the famous novelist and socialist

⁸¹ Vicki Caron, "Catholic Political Mobilization and Antisemitic Violence in Fin de Siècle France: The Case of the Union Nationale," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (June 2009), pp. 294-346 p. 298.

⁸² Ibid., p. 300.

⁸³ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (Mariner Books, 1973), Kindle Edition, p. 95-96.

⁸⁴ Eric Cahm, *The Dreyfus Affair in French Society & Politics*, Routledge, 2013, p. 18.

⁸⁵ Battini, p. 4.

Émile Zola.⁸⁶ Zola had begun this campaign against antisemitism before he threw himself into defending Dreyfus:

"That a distressing monopoly of wealth in the hands of a few Jews has come about is undeniable. But the same monopoly is to be found among Catholics and Protestants as well. Exploiting popular unrest by using it to further religious passions, serving up Jews to the demands of the disinherited on the grounds that Jews are in control of money - these are the doings of a lying, hypocritical socialism which must be denounced and treated with withering scorn."⁸⁷

Many socialists across Europe dropped their flirtation with antisemitic propaganda.⁸⁸ This created an impression in France that socialism was anti-anti-Jewish, instead of being a potential ally of other anti-Jewish activists and propagandists. In early 1898 the vehemently anti-Jewish French Roman Catholic paper *La Croix* laid out the supposed Judeo-Masonic program two days after republishing the *Rabbi's Speech* declaring: "This Jewish Masonic idea has its political expression in international liberalism, international finance, and international socialism.... We can easily establish that the socialist program is the same as the Freemason program and the Jewish program. Moreover, one has only to note the socialist-Masonic and Jewish solidarity in the Dreyfus-Zola scandals."⁸⁹

Jews and the revolutionary menace

This identification of Jews with socialism predated the Dreyfus affair, in fact the germs of this linkage preceded even the work of Karl Marx. Even if Karl Marx had not been of Jewish descent, any movement which potentially called for the abolition of property or revolution could have been wrapped into the Freemason/Illuminati version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Barruel had identified quasi-socialist ideas supposedly held by the Illuminati to destroy all property in addition to all altars and thrones.⁹⁰ In his fourth volume Barruel had identified François-Noël Baubeuf, the first socialist revolutionary and the leader of the proto-communist 1796 "Conspiracy of Equals" in France, as an agent of the grand Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy.⁹¹ As the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory was injected with anti-Judaism, it was inevitable that anti-Judaism would be sometimes get bound up with anti-socialism, or any kind of anti-revolutionary propaganda.

In addition to this anti-Jewish and anti-socialist strain of thought, there were many anti-Jewish socialists, like Toussenel, who imagined that they saw the anti-socialist machinations of the Jews in the form of the "wrong kind" of socialism, i.e. groups created or co-opted by the Jewish conspiracy to lead socialists and workers away from the true path to revolution and the end of capitalism. Toussenel made this argument in his campaign against Saint-Simonism, a

⁸⁶ William I. Brustein, Louisa Roberts, *The Socialism of Fools?: Leftist Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 66.

⁸⁷ Michael Burns, *France and the Dreyfus Affair: A Brief Documentary History*, (Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998), p. 6

⁸⁸ Battini, p. 59.

⁸⁹ "Le Secret De La Puissance Des F. M.," *La Croix* (Paris, France) February 17, 1898, p. 4.

⁹⁰ Barruel, Vol. 3, p. x.

⁹¹ Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 257.

French socialist movement that emphasized industry and technological advance (Toussenel being a more agriculturally-inclined Fourierist.) Toussenel added a chapter in a subsequent edition of his book *Jews, Kings of the Epoch* that attacked the Saint-Simonists for being in a “natural alliance” with the conspiracy of Jewish bankers, besides having a number of Jews as members.⁹² The great Russian anarchist revolutionary Bakunin, a bitter ideological enemy of Karl Marx, privately speculated in 1871 that Marx was working for the Rothschilds:

“Himself a Jew, Marx has around him, in London and France, but especially in Germany, a multitude of more or less clever, intriguing, mobile, speculating Jews, such as Jews are everywhere: commercial or banking agents, writers, politicians, correspondents for newspapers of all shades, with one foot in the bank, the other in the socialist movement, and with their behinds sitting on the German daily press — they have taken possession of all the newspapers — and you can imagine what kind of sickening literature they produce. Now, this entire Jewish world, which forms a single profiteering sect, a people of bloodsuckers, a single gluttonous parasite, closely and intimately united not only across national borders but across all differences of political opinion — this Jewish world today stands for the most part at the disposal of Marx and at the same time at the disposal of Rothschild. I am certain that Rothschild for his part greatly values the merits of Marx, and that Marx for his part feels instinctive attraction and great respect for Rothschild.

This may seem strange. What can there be in common between Communism and the large banks? Oh! The Communism of Marx seeks enormous centralization in the state, and where such exists, there must inevitably be a central state bank, and where such a bank exists, the parasitic Jewish nation, which, speculates on the work of the people, will always find a way to prevail”⁹³

Ironically, Bakunin had himself been drawn into a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory because of his involvement with the Polish revolutionaries who rose against the Russian Empire in 1863. It is not unlikely that his involvement with them partially inspired the accusation stemming from the *Polish Catechism* that the Russian nihilist movement (over which Bakunin had much influence) was a Polish/Jesuit project. (See the discussion about this in chapter 5.) The link between the Polish uprising and revolutionary violence was deep enough that immediately after the Russian revolutionary Dmitry Karakozov made his famous assassination attempt against Tsar Alexander II in 1866, considered by some to be the first modern “terrorist” attack, the Tsar was said to have asked the captured terrorist “Are you Polish?”⁹⁴ In the trial of Karakozov and his accomplices, the ideological connection between the new wave of revolutionary terrorists and “Jesuit doctrine” was strengthened in the popular imagination. Even after it became clear that Jesuits were not involved “Jesuit doctrine” continued to suffice as an explanation for their attacks.⁹⁵ The menace of nihilist/anarchist revolutionary violence continued to grow in the Russian popular imagination after the Polish uprising had been snuffed out. If one recalls from chapter 5, the nihilist movement and Jewish commercial success in the Russian

⁹² Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction, Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933*, (Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 126.

⁹³ Michael Bakunin, “1871, Personliche Beziehungen zu Marx,” In: *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 3, Berlin 1924, pp. 208-209. Translation from: <http://www.connexions.org/RedMenace/Docs/RM4-BakuninonMarxRothschild.htm>. Accessed April 12, 2019

⁹⁴ Claudia Verhoeven, *The Odd Man Karakozov: Imperial Russia, modernity, and the birth of terrorism*, (Cornell University Press, 2009) P. 45.

⁹⁵ Verhoeven, p. 53.

Empire were both aspects of the faked Jesuit plan described in the forgery *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia*.⁹⁶ As the Jesuit and Polish menace faded from the scene, the Jewish menace took on a larger role as the director of the plot against Russia, rather than just another tool. In 1878 Dostoevsky wrote a letter to the editor of a right-wing newspaper where he asked:

"when will people finally realize how much the Yids (by my own observation) and perhaps the Poles are behind this nihilist business?... The Yids have everything to gain from every radical cataclysm and coup d'etat because it is he himself, status in statu, that constitutes his own community, which is unshakable and only gains from everything that undermines non-Yid society."⁹⁷

Jewish involvement with revolutionary socialist groups in Russia actually developed decades later. Jews were hardly involved in terrorism in Russia until the 1880s, and there was not a single Jew put on the stand during the big trials connected to the first wave of Russian terrorism in the 1870s.⁹⁸ Jews began to appear among the dominant leadership of the revolutionary movement in Russia only after 1884,⁹⁹ following another wave of pogroms and intensifying discrimination against Jews by the Russian government.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps showing the early influence of the Judeo-Masonic or other anti-Jewish conspiracy theories from Western Europe, the identification of the Jew with revolution started to crop up in Russia during the 1870s.¹⁰¹ The editor of a major Russian newspaper (and the recipient of Dostoevsky's aforementioned letter) inserted a note into an 1878 article on Jews in Germany:

"Editor: Recognized as the chief leader of all contemporary conspiracies which seek to destroy the entire political and social side of the Christian world, and of participants in attacks on the lives of Christian monarchs, is the Jew Karl Marx, sheltered in London under the protection of the government of Lord Beaconsfield [Disraeli], and whose chief precursor was the Jew Lassalle."¹⁰²

An important example of this identification of Jews with anti-Russian revolutionary terrorism (and therefore, to some form of socialism) is the 1886 book *Revelations Sur l'Assassinat d'Alexandre II* (Revelations on the Assassination of Alexander II) written by none other than Frederick Millingen, the author of the 1873 *The Conquest of the World by the Jews*, who was discussed earlier in this chapter. *Revelations* was published in Geneva shortly before Drumont's *La France Juive*.¹⁰³ It never approached the popularity of Drumont's work. Millingen certainly was traveling in some of the same circles, and while his work did not have as great a public impact as Drumont's, the specific version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that Millingen

⁹⁶ Maria Kalamajska-Saeed, pp. 43-79.

⁹⁷ Klier, p. 398.

⁹⁸ Klier, pp. 396-398.

⁹⁹ Philip Pomper, "Russian Revolutionary Terrorism," in *Terrorism in Context*, Martha Crenshaw ed., Penn State University Press, 1994 p. 87.

¹⁰⁰ Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism : From Ancient Times to the Present Day*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 78.

¹⁰¹ Klier, pp. 396-398.

¹⁰² Klier, p. 398.

¹⁰³ See review in *Le Constitutionnel*, No. 76, 18 March 1886, page 4, column 1.

tells appears to have been especially influential on subsequent anti-Jewish, anti-liberal conspiracy theories that would become popular later. *Revelations* is mostly a whiny and over-dramatic autobiography of Milligen from about 1880 to 1886, but it also includes a narrative of Milligen's quest to prove the existence of an international Jewish/nihilist revolutionary conspiracy against Russia. Milligen claims that he had made excellent connections in Russian society during his stay there, including being acquainted with the noted slavophile Ivan Aksakov (who, by the way, had been the first to publish the *Crémieux Manifesto* in Russian.)¹⁰⁴ Milligen claims he used these connections to push his theory that the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in March 1881 was the work of a sinister international conspiracy involving the Universal Israelite Alliance.

It is true that a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms followed the assassination of the Tsar in 1881, however, these were probably not directly related to the assassination. The anti-Jewish pogroms were preceded by anti-Muslim violence in Baku. There were a few press reports blaming the assassination on Jews, one member of the group that had planned the assassination was Jewish, but most of the Russian press played down the role of this single Jew in the plot. In fact directives from the Russian Interior ministry instructed local agents to find some way to blame the terrorists for these pogroms.¹⁰⁵

According to Milligen the terrorists who murdered the Tsar were cogs in a much larger Jewish conspiracy, a reflection of the "extreme struggle between the Emperors of all the Russians and the Universal Israelite Alliance, an invisible and unseen power, which enmeshes the two hemispheres by means of an imperceptible, impenetrable net..."¹⁰⁶ He claimed that the Universal Israelite Alliance was in fact directing the nihilist terrorists in Russia. The Universal Israelite Alliance, he wrote, was itself merely the latest packaging of an ancient Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world: "The Universal Israelite Alliance is not a novelty, as claimed by its pseudo-founder Adolphe Cremieux. This Alliance is as old as the world... the Jews have been exclusive and united with each other from all time they have been a coalition to fight against other races..."¹⁰⁷ The Jews, having already dominated all of Europe in the 19th century, had decided that the Russian autocracy was the final obstacle to their domination, and had determined to destroy it:

"The Nihilist movement has so far been wrongly considered as a struggle between the power of an autocrat and his revolted subjects. This struggle, on the other hand, is nothing but a duel... between the cosmopolitan revolution and the autocracy of the Czars, which alone remains today in the middle of the rubble of thrones and altars..."¹⁰⁸

Milligen wrote that the plans of this conspiracy involved much more than just an assassination. The Jews had worked to ruin the Russian landed nobility and disrupt the cereals market through emancipating the serfs and encouraging the spread of agricultural banks which

¹⁰⁴ Major Osman-Bey Kibrizli-Zadé, *Révélation sur L'Assassinat D'Alexandre II*, (Neuchatel, Attinger Frères, 1886), p. 210.

¹⁰⁵ "The Pogroms of 1881 - 1884," in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, John Doyle Klier, Shlomo Lambroz eds., (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*, p. 43.

worked to ruin the gentry. "This nobility at bay is the first revolutionary layer which lies at the foundations of the nihilist movement."¹⁰⁹ The hunger and disruption that resulted encouraged rebellion, revolution, and nihilism that would eventually bring down the autocracy. Once the autocracy fell and a constitution was imposed on Russia, as it had been in most other European countries, the Jewish conspiracy could dominate Russian politics and society just as they dominated Western Europe:

"According to the forecasts and learned calculations of the Alliance, with the death of the Czar, autocracy had to disappear and give way to a constitution, the only form of government that would enable the Jews to breathe freely and prosper."¹¹⁰

Milligen claimed that that the Judeo-nihilist menace could not be stopped the same way that the Polish uprising had been stopped, by deporting troublemakers to Siberia.¹¹¹

"...sooner or later it will be necessary to have a crusade, a holy alliance of all races, in order to get rid of this scourge, this plague which alone makes more victims than epidemics, wars, or even earthquakes have ever done."¹¹²

He wished to see Russia at the head of this crusade. Milligen wrote that if all the peoples of Europe united and expelled the Jews to Africa or Australia "We will no longer hear of socialists, anarchists, or nihilists, since there will no longer be agents provocateurs, satans who amuse themselves by putting one party against another, one class against another; just as they excite the German against the French, the Italian against the Austrian, the Croatian against the Hungarian, and so on."¹¹³

Milligen's main concern was the use the Jewish conspiracy supposedly made of the nihilist movement in Russia, but he also said socialists were unwitting tools of the Jews: "The Socialists are wrongly attacking the capitalists en masse; without suspecting it, they play the game of the Jews."¹¹⁴

Milligen claimed to have received limited support from senior members of the Russian Imperial government, including the head of the Russian secret police, who had dispatched him to Paris to track the nihilist menace.¹¹⁵ He also mentions, more believably, that he got support for his work from some Parisian businessmen who were jealous of the success of their Jewish competitors.¹¹⁶ He wrote that he made a brief visit to the Alliance's headquarters, where he smelled "a strong whiff of nihilism."¹¹⁷ He claimed that he managed to recruit a young, simple, and unscrupulous Parisian Jew, who infiltrated the Alliance and managed to get ahold of their dispatches in the autumn of 1881.¹¹⁸

¹⁰⁹ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 25.

¹¹⁰ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 104.

¹¹¹ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 212.

¹¹² Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 213.

¹¹³ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, pp. 215-216.

¹¹⁴ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 217.

¹¹⁵ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 136, 142.

¹¹⁶ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 157.

¹¹⁷ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 151.

¹¹⁸ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 166.

"On a table, between two gleaming lamps, I saw four large boxes... [the spy] opens one and says to me: "Read, is this what you were looking for?" What do I see! I had trouble believing in my own eyes! It was all fresh from the study of one of the chiefs of the Universal Israelite Alliance: it was a series of dispatches, reports, notes, and lists; and all authentic and with dates, signatures, etc. "You are allowed... to make copies and take notes, but hurry, because at midnight all these notebooks must be returned and put back in their place."

I immediately threw myself on those papers with the fury of a starving man, but I was quickly disenchanted, since most of these documents were for charities, such as schools, hospitals, emergency relief, etc. But as I searched, little by little things changed in appearance, rays of light began to break through this rigmarole of notes and numbers. In order to better disentangle the Gordian knot, I began to classify the subject [of the various papers] by region: France, Italy, Germany etc. But in vain did seek Russia; it had been omitted on purpose. This is the hot-spot that the conspirators of the Alliance must hide carefully, and they know why!"¹¹⁹

Note that Milligen pulls the same mental maneuver that Braufman did, as discussed in the previous chapter: Milligen believed that the lack of evidence for Universal Israelite Alliance operations in Russia was itself evidence of a deep conspiracy. Despite his stated belief that the deception included even falsifying the secret papers of the secret society, Milligen claimed he could still trace a network of 56 bases of operations spread out along the Russian border.¹²⁰ Milligen wrote that he got three more opportunities to examine the secret dispatches of the Alliance, and that he forwarded the fruit of his work to the head of the Russian secret police.¹²¹ The ungrateful Russian government, however, did not send him further aid!¹²² According to his own account, when Milligen returned to Russia and confronted the head of the secret police about the results of his investigations and the lack of support from Russia, the chief said Milligen's reports were all based on fantasy.¹²³

Milligen returned to Western Europe, where he continued to give lectures and turn out pamphlets about the Jewish menace, saying he had been the savior of Russia and complaining that Jews had sabotaged his life. During this entire period he continued to use the pseudonym "Osman-Bey" perhaps to heighten the mystery surrounding him and highlight his "eastern" origins. He was expelled from country after country, presumably for his slanderous activities. In Neuchatel, Switzerland, in the year 1900, he published a pamphlet still harping on the Judeo-nihilist menace and his poor treatment, titled: "Dreyfus, Jewish martyr, Osman-Bey, Martyr of the Jews."¹²⁴ He settled in Nice in 1901 and then disappeared from history.¹²⁵

Conspiracy theories and authoritarianism

¹¹⁹ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, pp. 158-160.

¹²⁰ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, pp. 161, 165.

¹²¹ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 160.

¹²² Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 173.

¹²³ Osman-Bey, *Révélation*s, p. 201.

¹²⁴ Osman-Bey Kibrizli-zade, *Dreyfus, Martyr Juif, Osman-Bey, martyr des Juifs*, (Neuchatel, Rossier et Grisel, 1900).

¹²⁵ Cesare G. De Michelis, *The Non-Existent Manuscript: A Study of the Protocols of the Sages of Zion*, Richard Newhouse trans., (University of Nebraska Press, 2004), p. 155.

The idea of a grand deception allows a propagandist, in a way, to choose his preferred enemy, and twist needed arguments around the chosen image of an enemy. Using this trick, almost any idea or institution can be tarred as dishonest, just a grand deception used by an evil group trying to usurp power. Using the Grand Conspiracy Theory a hated bogeyman (in this case, the Jews) can be attached to a movement or cause (liberalism, capitalism, socialism, Polish independence, etc.) harming the reputation of that movement or cause in the eyes of those who hate or fear the purported enemy.

Close to the turn of the century anti-Jewish conspiracy theories including the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory mixed with anti-Jewish-banker conspiracy theories, and became standard fare in all kinds of political groups, ranging from conservative Roman Catholics to populists and socialists. In a fashion mirroring how the anti-Jesuit myth was imported to Russia and re-purposed for propaganda against the Polish uprising, anti-Semitic ideas and the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy were incorporated into a propaganda narrative by supporters of the Russian autocracy. In a way, this was a return to the “roots” of the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory as used against the French Revolution – as an argument against representative government. While it is not a necessary outcome of a belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory, the arc of consequences that follow if one believes she is facing a massively complex and powerful conspiracy capable of amazing feats of deception bends towards authoritarianism, towards policing and censorship and away from openness, republicanism, and liberalism. How could a diffuse parliament elected by fickle people under the influence of the press ever resist the grand conspiracy?

Of course, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Russia had her own home-grown anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Brafman’s *Kniga Kagala*. An educated resident of the Russian Empire would already have known the anti-Jewish conspiracy theory contained in the *Kniga Kagala*, and anyone with connections to or an interest in Western European politics would have come across the Masonic/Illuminati conspiracy theory. These Western-grown Judeo-Masonic and anti-Banker conspiracy theories would be merged with the Russian-origin *Kniga Kagala* conspiracy theory in Russia in the early 20th century. This new hybrid version was contained in narratives trying to justify the autocracy.

Millingen had already argued that the Jewish conspiracy was interested in setting up a constitution in Russia in order to control it. While he did not get the attention of the Russian government during his life, some Russians followed his path and arrived at similar conclusions (or perhaps, knew his work.) An example of a Russian who spoke in favor of autocracy as a defense against the Jewish bankers was the publicist and orientalist S. N. Syromiatnikov. Syromiatnikov held that the Russian autocracy was the true defender of the people’s interests and the true champion of freedom, exemplified when the Tsar ended serfdom by decree in 1861.¹²⁶ The governments of the West, on the other hand, were mere servants of the financiers. In 1901 he described the king of Belgium as “the slave of bankers.”¹²⁷ He described Western civilization as satanic and “an artificial dispersion of society, which leads to brutalization.”¹²⁸ The

¹²⁶ George Gilbert, *The Radical Right in Late Imperial Russia Dreams of a True Fatherland?*, (Routledge, 2016), p. 66.

¹²⁷ С. Н. Сыромятниковъ (S. N. Syromiatnikov), *Опыты Русской Мысли, Книга Первая* (Experience of Russian Thought, Book One), (St. Petersburg: A. S. Suvorina, 1901) p. 42.

¹²⁸ Syromiatnikov, p. 69-70.

directors of this brutalization were the Jewish bankers. He warned that these bankers would soon interfere in Russia as they had elsewhere in Europe, and that they recognized the natural, organic world of Russia under the Tsar as their adversary: "And so we, Orthodox beggars, can we be brothers of Western bankers? And can Western bankers consider us as their brothers...? Of course not. ... And we need their respect or fear, otherwise they will interfere with all our international actions."¹²⁹ Syromiatnikov suggested that this interference had already begun, complaining of "national debts, the gold currency, the sale of the Russian land to the Rothschilds, and all the tricks of international law..."¹³⁰

The face of this supposed Jewish infiltration of Russian finance was Sergei Witte, the Russian finance minister from 1892 to 1903. He was a champion of the economic reforms that were initiated decades earlier by conservative Russians close to Tsar Alexander II. These reforms involved the development of national industry, the supervision of private enterprise by the state, and tariff protections for Russian industry. After several decades Witte had become an advocate for the gold standard and increased foreign investment in Russia, while he also continued tariff protections for Russian industry. He denounced free trade and wanted greater state involvement in the emerging Russian industrial economy.¹³¹ In a pattern similar to what happened in mid-late 19th century America, these policies were hated by those who had their wealth in landholdings and agriculture instead of in industry, those who could accumulate debts based on the fluctuation of the price of agricultural commodities like grain and who would resent having to pay tariffs on imported goods. Witte was the main object of their hatred.¹³²

One of the most implacable foes of Witte and the introduction of the gold standard in Russia was the economist Gregori Butmi de Katzman. Like Syromiatnikov, Butmi's writings also demonstrates how the belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory can be used to justify autocratic government. Butmi was a Russian noble with a Belgian/Dutch and Bessarabian (that is to say, Romanian) background.¹³³ He was a retired officer, a landowner in Bessarabia (present-day Moldova) and Podolia (present-day Western Ukraine) along the Dniester river.¹³⁴ Butmi fervently believed that the gold standard was a tool of an international conspiracy of bankers which could manipulate the price of gold and dominate the politics of states by controlling the flow of foreign capital. According to a sympathetic contemporary, he was a staunch bimetalist (one who believed in a cheaper currency backed by gold and silver.) He was in correspondence with campaigners against the gold standard all over the world. Butmi took the St. Petersburg

¹²⁹ Syromiatnikov, pp. 222-223.

¹³⁰ Syromiatnikov, p. 70.

¹³¹ Peter Gatrell and Boris Ana'ich, "National and non-national dimensions of economic development in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russia," in *Nation, State and the Economy in History*, Alice Teichova and Herbert Matis eds., (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 223.

¹³² Cohn, p. 113.

¹³³ *Handbuch de Antisemitismus*, Vol 2., Wolfgang Benz ed., (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & co., 2009), p. 117.

¹³⁴ А. Стеланов (A. Stepanov), "БУТМИ де КАЦМАН (Бутми) Георгий Васильевич" (Butmi de Katsman (Butmi) Gregori Vasilevich), in *Черная Сотня, историческая энциклопедия* (Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia), (Institute for Russian Civilization, 2008), p. 79.

economic scene by storm in 1896 after spreading his bimetalist ideas extensively in the provinces.¹³⁵

Based on his surviving writing, at first Butmi did not include an anti-Jewish message in his broadsides against the gold standard. By 1898 he was clearly identifying the bankers as Jewish and declared that the whole thing was a Jewish conspiracy. Butmi easily adapted ideas like Toussenel's or Milligen's - of a cabal of Jewish bankers led by the Rothschilds manipulating politics and popular opinion to their ends. In this case Butmi believed the intermediate Jewish goal was the spread of the gold standard. In an essay written in 1902, Butmi described the various devious ways by which the conspiracy of Jewish financiers had introduced the gold standard around the world: He wrote that in Germany, while the newly-formed parliament right after unification was distracted with questions of whose image to put on new currency and what denominations of coins should be made, two Jewish representatives sneakily inserted two articles into a law that would eventually make a gold standard inevitable.¹³⁶ In France a temporary minister of finance illegally made the switch, and there was a massive deception to keep this fact from the French people "...carried out by some kind of dark power, which operates behind the scenes."¹³⁷ The republics of Switzerland and Belgium followed France's example. He claimed that in the US the introduction of the gold standard was accomplished by a legislative trick that omitted the mention of the silver dollar in a bill sent to the president, one that appeared to be a routine law repeating a previous one.¹³⁸ Butmi lamented that in America the populist Williams Jennings Bryan had been defeated in the election of 1896. Bryan had made bimetallism the centerpiece of his campaign, or as Butmi put it, he wanted to liberate "the American people from the golden yoke of the English bankers." But, Butmi alleged, the Jews had financed his opponent McKinley to the tune of \$2,000,000, a massive sum compared to Bryan's fundraising haul of \$100,000.¹³⁹

Butmi believed that this litany of supposed successful plots demonstrated that fighting back against this giant conspiracy of gold-hoarding, scheming Jews was a losing game in a republic; "All countries, governed by parliaments, [are] everywhere and always accessible to the influence of bankers (through influence on elections, or direct bribery)..."¹⁴⁰ The press would easily succumb and become a tool to spread their deceptions: "...the periodic press, which governs public opinion... extols the blessings of gold currency."¹⁴¹ The mass of the people "is not interested in monetary issues and does not protect its own interests, taking unhesitatingly the distorted interpretations which representatives of bankers' interests fill the columns of newspapers..."¹⁴² In Russia on the other hand, there was hope that the wiles of the Jews would

¹³⁵ С. Шарапов (S. Sharapov), *Два записки Сергея Шарапова о русских финансах* (Two notes of Sergey Sharapova on Russian finance), (Berlin: L. Stankevicha, 1901) p. 17.

¹³⁶ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from a document dated 15 November 1902 "Справка о способах введения золотой валюты в разных странах," (Inquiry on the introduction of gold currency in various countries), p. 230-231.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 233.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 232.

¹³⁹ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from the 1897 introduction to the second edition, p.7.

¹⁴⁰ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from a 13 May 1898 report titled "Жертвы золотой валюты" (Victims of the gold currency), p. 209.

¹⁴¹ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from the 1897 introduction to the second edition, p.7.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 8-9.

be thwarted by: "...the Autocratic power of the Tsar, inaccessible to any influence from any intrigues of the international exchange, [which] constituted an indestructible fortress against any encroachments to abolish the established silver currency."¹⁴³

However, the armor of autocracy was not totally impenetrable. In an 1898 essay Butmi lamented that the Tsar had been successfully manipulated by a deceptive press that obeyed its masters and praised the gold standard. The groans of the people did not reach the Tsar. This was a blow to Butmi's ideas about autocracy: "it is still completely unclear how the autocratic government, independent of all influences, was inclined to accept the gold currency, to increase the demand for gold, to further the increase in gold prices, to the voluntary doubling of the money that Russia pays for the maintenance of the English fleet- to strengthen the naval power of its eternal rival at the cost of disgrace of its people, already poor and burdened." The people were sinking into debt and starvation. Agriculture was being ruined as the ruble devalued while exports of cheapened grain skyrocketed.¹⁴⁴

What would be the end of all this? Butmi believed that the gold standard would bring worldwide ruin and starvation, and in the end, complete Jewish domination. In 1899, having returned to Russia from parts West in Europe (and perhaps, filled with the latest antisemitic ideas) Butmi was shocked by a famine underway in Russia which he blamed on a Jewish conspiracy. He despairingly wondered if the 20th century was "destined to be born in this filth, to be brought up in the cult of the Golden Calf?"¹⁴⁵

All hope was not lost. Russia was still an autocracy and did not have a constitution which could be manipulated by the Jews. It could still change course.¹⁴⁶ In an obvious appeal to Tsar Nicholas II, Butmi called for a new Prince Vladimir (the king of Kyiv who converted the Rus to Christianity) to defy the Jewish plot and save the Russian people, and indeed the people of the world.¹⁴⁷

Pangs of revolution

At the turn of the 20th century Russia was not moving in the direction of greater autocracy. Even some prominent monarchists tried to convince the Tsar that wide-ranging reforms were needed and that a national constituent assembly was necessary to legitimately enact these reforms. Local self-government, *zemstvos*, already existed in Russia, and regular meetings of leaders from around the country facilitated national discussions among liberals and moderate monarchists about reform. Such meetings were banned in 1902, but liberal minded

¹⁴³ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from a 13 May 1898 report titled "Жертвы золотой валюты" (Victims of the gold currency), p. 209.

¹⁴⁴ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, From a 13 May 1898 report titled "Жертвы золотой валюты" (Victims of the gold currency), pp. 210-220, direct quote from p. 214

¹⁴⁵ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from an article dated 10 april 1899 "Умирающий Богатырь" (The Dying Hero), p. 225.

¹⁴⁶ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from a 13 May 1898 report titled "Жертвы золотой валюты" (Victims of the gold currency), p. 219.

¹⁴⁷ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from an article dated 10 april 1899 "Умирающий Богатырь" (The Dying Hero), p. 226.

Russians continued to find ways to meet and discuss the role of local self-government and even the possibility of a national assembly.¹⁴⁸

This increasing popularity of liberal, republican ideas in Russia coincided with the first eruptions of what became an enormous wave of revolutionary terror in Russia. Marxist groups that would become the major players in the Russian Revolution also formed during this period, like the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (which eventually spawned the Communist Party) and the Socialist Revolutionary Party.¹⁴⁹ In 1901 the first terrorist group of this new wave announced that it planned to assassinate the Minister of the Interior, an action they declared would “elicit complete approval not only from the oppositional elements, but from Russian society as a whole.” They then planned to assassinate the procurator of the Holy Synod, the arch-reactionary Konstantin Pobedonostsev, and then the Emperor himself.¹⁵⁰ In early 1902 the Socialist Revolutionary Party founded its “Combat Organization” dedicated to assassinating senior Russian officials. Jewish socialists would play a leading role in this organization.¹⁵¹ It should be noted at this point that the second and most “successful” leader of this organization, (from 1903 to 1909) the Jew Evno Azeff, was in fact the star informant for the Russian secret police the whole time.¹⁵²

Syromiatnikov and Butmi and like-minded subjects of the Russian Empire would have viewed the diminution of autocracy as a reduction of Russia’s defenses against the conspiracy of Jewish bankers who had ruined the West. A paranoid-conspiratorial mind would not have failed to note the increase in terrorist rhetoric and terrorism by groups containing Jews at a time of increased talk of constitutionalism. Clearly the autocracy needed defending.

Both Butmi and Syromiatnikov were members of an organization called the “Russian Assembly” which grew out of meetings of elite pro-autocracy thinkers and writers in St. Petersburg in late 1900.¹⁵³ The purpose of the organization was ostensibly purely cultural: to celebrate Russia’s artistic achievements and oppose the domination of Western culture.¹⁵⁴ The organization was the first public organization to campaign against reducing the power of the Tsar. It was not an organ of the government but had very strong personal links with it and many senior members were also high-ranking officers and bureaucrats.¹⁵⁵ Syromiatnikov was the Vice-Chair of the organization, and Butmi also became a member at some point.¹⁵⁶ The

¹⁴⁸ Sidney Harcave, *The Russian Revolution of 1905*, (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1964), pp. 32-33.

¹⁴⁹ Gilbert, pp. 62-63.

¹⁵⁰ Anna Geifman, *Thou shalt Kill, Revolutionary Terrorism in Russia, 1894-1917*, (Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 17.

¹⁵¹ Pomper, p. 90.

¹⁵² For an account of his life and career, see the chapter on him based on his Russian secret police file in Charles A. Ruud and Sergei A. Stepanov, *Fontanka 16: The Tsars' Secret Police*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), p. 126-151.

¹⁵³ *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia*, for Syromiatnikov see the article on the Russian assembly: “РУССКОЕ СОБРАНИЕ” by A. Stepanov, p. 470. For Butmi, his membership is mentioned in the article “БУТМИ де КАЦМАН (Бутми) Георгий Васильевич” (Butmi de Katsman (Butmi) Gregori Vasilevich), by A. Stepanov. p. 79.

¹⁵⁴ Gilbert, p. 64.

¹⁵⁵ Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, (University of California Press, 1986), p. 191-192.

¹⁵⁶ *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia*, “БУТМИ де КАЦМАН (Бутми) Георгий Васильевич” (Butmi de Katsman (Butmi) Gregori Vasilevich), by A. Stepanov. p. 79. Also Gilbert, p. 64.

association set up a journal called *Мирный Трудъ* “peaceful work” published in Kharkiv, in present-day Eastern Ukraine.¹⁵⁷ This journal was initially not anti-Jewish, neither was the organization as a whole explicitly anti-Jewish at this point, even if it did contain prominent anti-Jewish members like Syromiatnikov and Butmi.

Another member of the Russian Assembly was Butmi’s friend and fellow pro-Tsarist Bessarabian Pavel Krushevan. He is best known for his possible responsibility for instigating the infamous Kishinev Pogrom of 1903. He was said to have deliberately stirred up anti-Jewish fervor through the newspaper he edited: *Бессарабецъ* “Bessarabetz” (for Bessarabia, mostly in present-day Moldova.)¹⁵⁸ Clues from Krushevan’s earlier writing had shown that he was a believer in Brafman’s *Kniga Kagala* conspiracy theory that the Jews were bent on economically dominating the western Russian Empire.¹⁵⁹ Krushevan evidently agreed with many of Butmi’s ideas about a Jewish conspiracy and the idea that the autocracy was a bulwark against their machinations. In addition to publishing his newspaper *Bessarabetz* he also published a short lived newspaper in St. Petersburg, the capital, called *Знамя*, “Znamya” (The Banner). *Znamya* was full of anti-Jewish conspiratorial articles. In an editorial from June 1903 Krushevan himself wrote:

“He [the Jew] declared war to Christianity... insolently slandering the truth, over all the saints that Christians have, over the national feelings of the people, over his beliefs; he makes war not with fire and sword, but with a rejection of life and the unleashing of morality; he demoralizes with gold, mocking the truth, shaking the faith. In recent times this terrible alliance has gone even further; he no longer stops before violence, he is trying to bring about a revolution and confusion by revolutionary propaganda both here and in Europe, he aspires to fragment the peoples through internal coups and strife ... That's the point from which *Znamya* looks at the Jewish question, that's what "Jewry" is about, against which it is trying to fight... millions of Jews tirelessly waging war, undermining both the Autocracy and Orthodoxy, trying to revolutionize the Russian people by revolutionary propaganda and plunge it into the abyss of innumerable disasters”¹⁶⁰

One can see here two of the ideas that also obsessed Butmi, that there is a deceptive Jewish conspiracy against all of Christian civilization, and especially against the Russian autocracy; a conspiracy that uses gold and the gold standard to accomplish its ends. Krushevan’s failed newspaper *Znamya* would have hardly been noticed by historians, except for the fact that in September 1903 it published for the first time the most famous conspiracy-theory text in history: *Протоколы сионских мудрецов*. “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion” (hereafter just called the *Protocols*.)

The *Protocols*

¹⁵⁷ Gilbert, p. 64.

¹⁵⁸ Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905*, (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 97. Also Prince Serge Dmitriyevich Urussov, *Memoirs of a Russian Governor*, Herman Rosenthal trans., (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1906), p. 79.

¹⁵⁹ For an example, see p. 16 or the whole 39th chapter of Krushevan’s 1896 book *Что Такое Россия* (What is Russia?), (Moscow: I. N. Kushnerev and co., 1896).

¹⁶⁰ Павел Крушеван (Pavel Krushevan), “ЧТО Ж ЭТО ТАКОЕ?” *Znamya*, St. Petersburg, Russian Empire, 15th (28th) July 1903, no 159, page 2. N.B. this was printed before the *Protocols* was published.

The *Protocols* was first mentioned in print over a year before it was published. In April 1902 in the newspaper *Novoya Vremya* (where Syromiatnikov worked) the popular journalist Mikhail Menshikov wrote that he had visited the home of an unnamed¹⁶¹ elegant lady who spoke excellent French. This woman showed him a document called *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (the earliest mention of the name) that she claimed was the secret plan of the Jews to conquer the world. She said the plan had been developed under King Solomon in 929 BC and recently purloined from the secret headquarters of the Jews in France:

“...the Jews undertook to undermine both the material and moral well-being of the nations and pledged to collect the capitals of all countries in their hands... More so than with the Jesuits - with diabolical cunning the Jews committed themselves to propagating liberalism, cosmopolitanism, and anarchy, to erode the foundations of order and Christianity, and then, when they finally achieve power, they would enslave all of humanity... France, Germany, and England have already closed in its rings. Now the head of the snake is just over Petersburg. All the events of recent years, the assassinations, riots, gold currency, the Chinese turmoil [likely a reference to the Boxer Rebellion] - all this is instilled and carried out by the forces of this terrible creature, the forces creeping on the land of Jewry.... The human race will not guess in whose power it is, but will carry its yoke without resentment, just as pets do.”¹⁶²

Menshikov said he was not taken in by the document. He wrote that he doubted that “fussy, nervous, frivolous” Jews could really pull off such a conspiracy, especially one that has lasted millennia. Furthermore, he said that when he looked over the document he “immediately recognized the style of a well-known professor at the University of St. Petersburg.”¹⁶³ Menshikov further pointed out the similarities between this tale and the older stories about the designs of the Freemasons the Jesuits, and recent stories about the English secret society of Cecil Rhodes. Menshikov said that the *Protocols* were in the hands of some journalists in St. Petersburg. One of these journalists was presumably Krushevan.¹⁶⁴

The *Protocols* was finally published in September 1903 (August in the old calendar) serialized in Krushevan's newspaper *Znamya*. The headline was “The Jewish Program for the Conquest of the World” which was the title of the 1880 edition of Millingen's first anti-Jewish book.¹⁶⁵ The first publishing of the text was preceded by a short commentary stating that while on the one hand the newspaper's publishers were “absolutely convinced of their authenticity” they allowed that:

“...if it were to be admitted that the “Protocols” are apocryphal, then in this case they are of exceptional interest and are of great importance: in spite of the not-very-successful and sometimes vague translation, they were evidently written by a very clever person, not only an interpreter well familiar with the Jewish question, but also a deep observer who, in the modern movement and the

¹⁶¹ Norman Cohn identified the likely candidate as Yuliana Dmitrievna Glinka, the daughter of a Russian diplomat, lady in waiting to the Tsarina, and Theosophist. See Cohn, pp. 108-111.

¹⁶² М Меньшиковъ (M. Menshikov), “Заговоры противъ челоѣчества” (Conspiracy against mankind), Новое Время (New Time, or usually transliterated as *Novoe Vremya*), (St. Petersburg, Russia) 7 (20) April 1902.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ De Michelis, p. 35.

¹⁶⁵ De Michelis, pp. 7, 16 note 12.

aggressive policy of the Jews, managed to spy out the foundations of the program which they so steadily enforce, seeking to take over the world and create a "super-government."¹⁶⁶

While this first printing included this disclaimer, this wink that the text was really just a prop for someone's anti-Jewish propaganda, the *Protocols* has subsequently been taken quite seriously by many anti-Jewish extremists. The *Protocols* is an extremely important text and few documents in history have created more trouble and debate. This section will first discuss the relationship of the *Protocols* to earlier conspiracy-theory documents, then examine the content of the *Protocols* in light of its evident purpose to support pro-authoritarian ideas, and finally to briefly discuss the likely specific origin of the *Protocols*. To presage the last section and provide context for the discussion, the first two parts of this section assume that the conclusion of the authority on the *Protocols* Cesare G. De Michelis is correct: That the *Protocols* were probably written sometime between 1901 and 1903 by Butmi and Krushevan and/or by someone collaborating with them.¹⁶⁷

The *Protocols* is a document that purports to be some kind of transcript of a secret meeting of senior members of a global Jewish conspiracy. In this it is very similar to the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory texts discussed in chapter 5, *The Secret Plan of the Order* (1848) and the *Polish Catechism* (1863). The *Protocols* was supposedly stolen from the conspiracy's headquarters or from a conference of the Jewish conspirators. The *Protocols* would have fit snugly into Osman Bey's 1886 narrative of traveling to Paris and stealing documents from the Universal Israelite Alliance,¹⁶⁸ only in this version instead of getting scraps of information that must be assembled into a conspiratorial picture, the spy or leaker got the crown jewels.

When it comes to the "cast of characters" and the supposed tools and strategies of the conspiracy, the *Protocols* shows the greatest influence from the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, mainly developed and popularized in Western Europe. It also shows the influence of the economic-based anti-Jewish ideas of Brafman and Toussenel, and also reflects Butmi's obsession with the evils of the gold standard. The influence of Millingen is also evident, with much of the plot involving a Western-Europe based Jewish plot to impose constitutions via propaganda, financial manipulation, and terrorism.¹⁶⁹ Dr. De Michelis pointed out that Millingen was a resident of Nice in 1901, and that in the first mention of the *Protocols* by Menshikov in his 1902 article the *Protocols* were described as having come from Nice "the secret capital of Judaism." This suggests the inspiration and possible involvement of Millingen in the forgery.¹⁷⁰

As Menshikov testified in his first report on the *Protocols*, the basic outline of the conspiracy's plan is to use Jesuit-like cunning to infiltrate all governments and then manipulate them into an enormous crisis. This would eventually lead to the gentiles gladly accepting the global rule of a universal Jewish monarch, who would rule via deception and repression, and whose agents would infiltrate and usurp the Church just as they had infiltrated and usurped all

¹⁶⁶ From the first printing of the *Protocols*. The full title of the first article is damaged in the copy available at the Ukrainian National Library, however future serializations of the *Protocols* had as a title "Програма завоювання світа євреями" (Program of world conquest of the Jews), Знамя (Banner), St. Petersburg, Russian Empire, no. 191, 28 August (19 September) 1903.

¹⁶⁷ De Michelis, pp. 81-82.

¹⁶⁸ De Michelis, pp. 50, 156.

¹⁶⁹ De Michelis, p. 92.

¹⁷⁰ De Michelis, p. 156.

gentile governments.¹⁷¹ The Antichrist is not mentioned in the text,¹⁷² but a universal anti-Christian monarch is probably meant to be identified as the Antichrist by Russian Orthodox readers. (Analogously, the Jesuits are not mentioned at all in the text of the *Polish Catechism*.) In this allusion to the Antichrist we see the influence of Christian traditions that the Antichrist will be Jewish, and possibly the influence of Gougenot des Mousseaux.¹⁷³

The main tools mentioned in the *Protocols* used to carry out this Jewish plot are liberalism, and freemasonry. Taking a page directly from the Judeo-Masonic myth, the narrator in the *Protocols* declares “Gentile masonry blindly serves as a screen for us and our objects,”¹⁷⁴ and boasts that the Jewish conspirators kill many Masons after they have outlived their usefulness. The narrator also brags about how the conspiracy arranged for the success of Darwinism, Marxism, and Nietzscheism,¹⁷⁵ (presumably facilitated by Masonic conspirators) - but their supreme ideological tools are liberalism and republican government, which the *Protocols* indicates has already won them many victories in Europe:

“Political freedom is an idea but not a fact. This idea one must know how to apply whenever it appears necessary with this bait of an idea to attract the masses of the people to one's party for the purpose of crushing another who is in authority. This task is rendered easier if the opponent has himself been infected with the idea of freedom, so-called liberalism, and, for the sake of an idea, is willing to yield some of his power. It is precisely here that the triumph of our theory appears: the slackened reins of government are immediately, by the law of life, caught up and gathered together by a new hand, because the blind might of the nation cannot for one single day exist without guidance, and the new authority merely fits into the place of the old already weakened by liberalism.”

“In all corners of the earth the words “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” brought to our ranks, thanks to our blind agents, whole legions who bore our banners with enthusiasm. And all the time these words were canker-worms at work boring into the well-being of the *goyim*, putting an end everywhere to peace, quiet, solidarity and destroying all the foundations of the *goya* States... The abstraction of freedom has enabled us to persuade the mob in all countries that their government is nothing but the steward of the people who are the owners of the country, and that the steward may be replaced like a worn-out glove. It is this possibility of replacing the representatives of the people which has placed them at our disposal, and, as it were, given us the power of appointment.”¹⁷⁶

This very negative portrayal of liberalism and republican government, which recurs again and again in the document, reveals the actual target of the writers of the *Protocols*. The *Protocols* is an obvious paean to autocracy and an attack against repressive government. In a passage reflecting Butmi's statement that: “All countries, governed by parliaments, [are]

¹⁷¹ *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion with preface and explanatory notes*, Victor E. Marsden trans., 1934, p. 205. This translation of the *Protocols* has become the standard English version of the *Protocols*. It will be referenced as just *Protocols* and will be used for English translations of the *Protocols* in this thesis, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁷² De Michelis, p. 131.

¹⁷³ Cohn, p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ *Protocols*, p. 158.

¹⁷⁵ *Protocols*, p. 151.

¹⁷⁶ *Protocols*, p. 148-149.

everywhere and always accessible to the influence of bankers (through influence on elections, or direct bribery)...¹⁷⁷, the narrator of the *Protocols* claims:

“Every republic passes through several stages. The first of these is comprised in the early days of mad raging by the blind mob, tossed hither and thither, right and left: the second is demagoguery from which is born anarchy, and that leads inevitably to despotism—not any longer legal and overt, and therefore responsible despotism, but to unseen and secretly hidden, yet nevertheless sensibly felt despotism in the hands of some secret organization or other.”¹⁷⁸

The narrator in the *Protocols* constantly emphasizes that autocracy is the best form of government, as it is the only kind that can effectively resist manipulation and usurpation by deception. The narrator derides the idea of equality which is “negated by the laws of creation.” In a tip of the hat to Drumont, the *Protocols* even includes a reference to the Panama Canal scandal. The narrator says that one way they will manipulate elected heads of state is to only select those who were already compromised through bribery and blackmail - just like in the Panama Scandal:

“...we shall arrange elections in favour of such presidents as have in their past some dark, undiscovered stain, some “Panama” or other -- then they will be trustworthy agents for the accomplishment of our plans out of fear of revelations and from the natural desire of everyone who has attained power, namely, the retention of the privileges, advantages and honour connected with the office of president.”¹⁷⁹

The *Protocols* lays out that the reason the Elders of Zion support republican government and liberalism is because this poison could hasten the death of the Christian world and smooth the path to the new Jewish autocracy. Once this autocracy has been established, the Jewish leaders will purge this poison out of their newly-acquired kingdom and “cauterise liberalism out of all institutions”¹⁸⁰ and “put an end to those abuses to which we owe our mastery over the goyim, but which cannot be allowed in our kingdom.”¹⁸¹ They do not want to be poisoned as they poisoned their enemies!

The *Protocols* indirectly praises the landed aristocracy several times. This idea may be lifted from Milligen's 1886 book, which says that a “nobility at bay” is the first step of the Jewish program to destroy Russia.¹⁸² In the *Protocols*, in addition to autocratic government, a landed aristocracy was the core of resistance against the Jewish conspiracy, described as “that class which was the only defense peoples and countries had against us.”¹⁸³ The Jewish plan involved getting the people to annihilate their aristocracy. The conspiracy would prepare for this by “increasing the burdens upon landed property”¹⁸⁴ (perhaps, a reference to the switch to the gold

¹⁷⁷ Butmi, *Gold Currency*, from a 13 May 1898 report titled “Жертвы золотой валюты” (Victims of the gold currency), p. 209.

¹⁷⁸ *Protocols*, p. 158.

¹⁷⁹ *Protocols*, p. 176.

¹⁸⁰ *Protocols*, p. 156.

¹⁸¹ *Protocols*, p. 217

¹⁸² Osman-Bey, *Révélation*, p. 25.

¹⁸³ *Protocols*, p. 149.

¹⁸⁴ *Protocols*, p. 164.

standard and the pro-industry policies of Witte.) This would lead the people to fall “into the grips of merciless money-grinding scoundrels who have laid a pitiless and cruel yoke upon the necks of the workers.” This is contrasted with the past behavior of the landed aristocracy, which because it “enjoyed by law the labour of the workers, was interested in seeing that the workers were well fed, healthy and strong.” The conspiracy, however, did not want happy well-fed workers. They were “interested in just the opposite.”¹⁸⁵

The author(s) of the *Protocols* were enamored with a political and economic system that was rapidly disappearing from Europe, an absolute monarchy supported by a landed aristocracy engaged in agriculture. The *Protocols* insists that the eclipse of this system was not inevitable or desired, but part of an evil plan. What would replace this system? Perhaps the most significant part of the *Protocols* (given the events of the 20th century) was its identification of the Jews with socialism, anarchy, and communism and also to capitalism and republicanism. Several of the major ideological forces of the 20th century, on different sides, were all accused of being tools of the Jewish conspiracy. The described conspiracy began with using capitalism, designed to destroy the world, had an intermediate stage of using communism to foment revolution and smooth the transition to the final state - a global Jewish autocracy. Using an idea similar to the one found in *l'Anti-Semitique*, the *Protocols* declares that the discipline of political economy itself was “invented by our learned elders” and “has for long past been giving royal prestige to capital.”¹⁸⁶

The *Protocols* describes this push to occupy the gentile mind with positive thoughts towards capital and an obsession towards gain as part of a design to create misery and crises. These would increase alienation and enable the rise of socialism and eventually revolution:

“The intensified struggle for superiority and shocks delivered to economic life will create, nay, have already created, disenchanted, cold and heartless communities. Such communities will foster a strong aversion towards the higher political and towards religion. Their only guide is gain, that is Gold, which they will erect into a veritable cult, for the sake of those material delights which it can give. Then will the hour strike when, not for the sake of attaining the good, not even to win wealth, but solely out of hatred towards the privileged, the lower classes of the goyim will follow our lead against our rivals for power, the intellectuals of the goyim”¹⁸⁷

- And then, “We [the Jewish conspirators] appear on the scene as alleged saviours of the worker from this oppression when we propose to him to enter the ranks of our fighting forces -- Socialists, Anarchists, Communists...”¹⁸⁸

Like in the conspiracy theory described in the *Polish Catechism*, the violent anti-religious, anti-state terrorists and revolutionaries were actually the tool of a secret religious cabal bent on world domination. In the *Polish Catechism* the cabal was the Jesuits and their tool was the nihilists, in the *Protocols* the cabal was the Elders of Zion, and their tools were the anarchists and other terrorists. This also shows the influence of Millingen and is likely related to the common perception in Russia that many Russian revolutionaries were Jews.

¹⁸⁵ *Protocols*, p. 154.

¹⁸⁶ *Protocols*, p. 162.

¹⁸⁷ *Protocols*, p. 159.

¹⁸⁸ *Protocols*, p. 154.

A major vector the conspiracy would use for spreading these poisonous ideas was the press. Mirroring the fears of every generation of conspiracy theorists since the French Revolution, the author(s) of the *Protocols* made sure the narrator pointed out that a free press is a sure way to letting public opinion fall into the hands of a sinister conspiracy:

“It is in the Press that the triumph of freedom of speech finds its incarnation. But the goyim States have not known how to make use of this force; and it has fallen into our hands. Through the Press we have gained the power to influence while remaining ourselves in the shade: thanks to the Press we have got the gold in our hands...”¹⁸⁹

An aspect of the *Protocols* that is surprisingly diminished when compared to earlier versions of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory is the grand conspiracy’s plan to destroy Christianity. It is not absent, but the *Protocols* is mainly a document dealing with politics and economics. The fact that the role of religion is relatively small in the document has probably enabled the *Protocols* to be endorsed by people from many different religious beliefs, from Russian Orthodox Tsarists to Atheists, from Neo-Pagans to radical Muslims.

There are several nods to the role religion in the *Protocols*, and it is clear that the destruction of Christianity is an intermediate goal of the conspiracy. “Freedom of conscience has been declared everywhere, so that now only years divide us from the moment of the complete wrecking of that Christian religion...”¹⁹⁰ Of course, not all versions of Christianity are its enemies. The *Protocols* (at least, most versions of the *Protocols*, the version Butmi published later excluded this line)¹⁹¹ mentions that, in preparation for their takeover, the Jewish conspirators “have planted and deeply rooted discord and Protestantism...”¹⁹² in gentile societies.

Origins of the *Protocols Of the Elders of Zion*

Throughout modern history a large number of prominent anti-Jewish extremists have insisted that the *Protocols* is an actual record of a secret Jewish conspiracy, and many continue to do so. Fortunately for people trying to debunk this piece of Tsarist-era propaganda, large portions of the text are confirmed plagiarisms from an earlier work of fiction: *The Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu* (1864) a French satire by Maurice Joly directed against the pseudo-democracy of Napoleon III. Joly’s book is a series of debates about politics between Montesquieu, who champions liberalism and republican government, and Machiavelli, who presents the case for a modern-style despotism that will rule through deception, coercion,

¹⁸⁹ *Protocols*, p. 151.

¹⁹⁰ *Protocols*, p. 204.

¹⁹¹ A useful comparison of the texts of some of the different versions of the *Protocols* was published by the conspiracy theorist Oleg Platonov in his book *Терновый венец России* (Russia’s Crown of Thorns), (Moscow, 1999) Available online at <http://rus-sky.com/history/library/plat6-1.htm>. Accessed February 9, 2018.

¹⁹² *Protocols*, p. 192.

and manipulation. Portions of the *Protocols* are lifted from the cynical plots to subvert democracy that Joly puts in Machiavelli's mouth.^{193 194}

Among the educated Western public, the most widely believed story about the origins of the *Protocols* is that it was a creation of Paris-based agents of the Tsar's secret police, the *Okhrana*. This idea was bolstered by witness statements against the *Okhrana* in a high-profile 1934-35 trial in Bern, Switzerland against Nazi sympathizers spreading the *Protocols*.¹⁹⁵ This is also the conclusion about the best-known serious work on the *Protocols*: *Warrant for Genocide* by Norman Cohn (first published in 1966.) The idea that the Tsar's secret police deliberately fabricated the *Protocols* as a propaganda document would certainly explain the document's obvious pro-Tsarist bent and the fact that sections of the Russian Imperial government subsequently encouraged the spread of the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory based on the *Protocols* after the Revolution of 1905. Unfortunately for this notion, no investigation in Russia, including those initiated after the fall of the Tsarist government has found traces of *Okhrana* involvement in the fabrication of the *Protocols*. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the Russian state would have had to use Krushevan's cheap and obscure newspaper *Znamya* to surface this document and then allow it to languish in obscurity for over a year.¹⁹⁶

In his book *The Non-Existent Manuscript* the scholar Cesare G. De Michelis has demonstrated through exhaustive textual analysis and research that the original text of the *Protocols* was probably written by someone who spoke Russian, but with Ukrainian linguistic influence (based on word choice and grammatical Ukrainianisms.)¹⁹⁷ As mentioned earlier, De Michelis concluded that the most likely authors were Krushevan and Butmi, perhaps with the assistance of Mensikov, the first person to describe the manuscript.¹⁹⁸ Butmi had his estate in Yampil in present-day Vinnytsia oblast, Ukraine. Khrushevan hailed from Bessarabia, the region just across the river from Butmi's main estate, and would presumably have mainly spoken Ukrainian-influenced Russian. Butmi's obsession with the gold standard, his belief that autocracy is the only way to head-off the Jewish conspiracy, and even his accusation that famine was a weapon of the Jewish conspiracy are woven into the *Protocols*.

The *Protocols* also contains a few small plagiarisms from an obscure French economist A. Charby. Butmi was in correspondence with Charby and quoted him in some of his earlier essays.¹⁹⁹ Also, unlike the accusations against the *Okhrana*, one 1917 investigation conducted by the Russian post-Revolutionary provisional government (before the Bolshevik coup) directly stated that Butmi was either the author or one of the authors of the *Protocols*.²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ Cohn, p. 80.

¹⁹⁴ A complete English translation of Joly's *The Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu* is available in the book *The truth about "The protocols of Zion"* by Herman Bernstein, (Covici, Friede, 1935).

¹⁹⁵ Cohn, pp. 84, 125.

¹⁹⁶ De Michelis, p. 68.

¹⁹⁷ De Michelis, p. 15.

¹⁹⁸ De Michelis, p. 81.

¹⁹⁹ De Michelis, pp. 52, 59, 79-80, 99-100.

²⁰⁰ *Союз русского народа. По материалам Чрезвычайной следственной комиссии Временного правительства 1917 г.*, (Union of the Russian people. The materials of the Extraordinary Investigative Commission of the Provisional Government of 1917), Moscow: State Publishing House, 1929) pp. 27, 427.

Other clues in the text also point to an origin within the Russian Empire instead of in France.²⁰¹ The persistent idea that the text was from France flows from two things: First, sections of the text are a plagiarism of the French *Dialogue in Hell*, and these parts are a translation, unlike the rest of the document which was probably originally written in Russian.²⁰² Second, those who produced and promoted the *Protocols* wanted people to believe it was from France, or at least Western Europe. Paris was the headquarters of the *Universal Israelite Alliance*, - which for decades had been identified as the chief organ of the international Jewish cabal by conspiracy theorists. Where else but in France would one acquire the secret Jewish plans? In fact, when one publisher submitted his edition of the *Protocols* to the censor in 1905, he asserted that the reason the Russian government had not been informed about the Paris headquarters of the Jewish conspiracy was because the head of the Russian agents in Paris was himself a Jew.²⁰³ Two fake anti-Polish documents featured in mid-19th century Russian propaganda The *Polish Catechism* and *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia*, similarly claimed to be translations of Polish documents acquired in Poland, though they were probably thought up by loyal supporters of the Russian Empire.

The likely authorship of Butmi casts light on another probable purpose of the *Protocols*. Norman Cohn pointed out that given the *Protocol's* antipathy to the gold standard, and capitalism and warning that this will inevitably lead to the lower classes being abused and rising up, the *Protocols* has "all the appearance of a weapon for use in the campaign against Witte."²⁰⁴ Butmi's other work indicates he was a true believer in the reality of a Jewish conspiracy to use the gold standard to take over the world. His later work shows that he was very likely a believer in the full Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. As Butmi was also a likely author of the *Protocols*, why did he (and Krushevian and perhaps others) write it? Was it begun as just a "party game" as De Michelis suggest?²⁰⁵ It is more likely that the *Protocols* was written as an imitation of the *Polish Catechism* - that the authors truly believed in the essence of the plan described in the *Protocols* and also believed fabrications were necessary to combat it, deceptive propaganda against evil deceptive propaganda. The authors of the *Polish Catechism* could very well have been believers in the Jesuit conspiracy theory and seen the uprising of 1863 as their work. If the enemy is acting and fighting a war against you with all the tools of deception, how should you respond? Taking on the worldview of a conspiracy theorist for a moment, imagine that you can see all the evident signs of the takeover of the world by an evil conspiracy, but you are incapable of convincing enough of your fellow men to fight against it. The enemy makes constant use of lies and deceptions to advance the conspiracy. In the face of such a foe using such tactics, would it not be excusable to do a bit of lying yourself? Should you not strike back at the conspiracy with the same kind of tactics they are using? Besides, if it is an emergency and you are facing an enemy with superpowers of deception, you could not have confidence that the actual grand plan of the conspiracy would ever emerge in time! The nearly all-pervasive conspirators would surely prevent it from being published if it were ever leaked or discovered.

²⁰¹ De Michelis, pp. 35-36.

²⁰² De Michelis, p. 33.

²⁰³ De Michelis, p. 68.

²⁰⁴ Cohn, p. 114.

²⁰⁵ De Michelis, p. 81.

Butmi and his compatriots likely wrote the *Protocols* as part of his (and Krushevian's) campaign against the gold standard and reform and modernization in the Russian Empire, which they saw as part of a Jewish plot. The *Protocols* would probably have stayed in obscurity as an interesting but minor artifact of turn-of-the century anti-Jewish anti-liberal agitation if it had not been modified and adopted by Russian propagandists during the Revolution of 1905. It is the use of the document subsequently by Russian pro-Tsarist propagandists that made it famous, which is the topic of the next chapter.

Conclusion: convergence and mixing, trending to authoritarianism

This chapter surveyed the convergence of three separate anti-Jewish versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the late 19th century: the Judeo-Masonic, the conspiracy theory of the *Kniga Kagala*, and the Toussennel's version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that put Jewish bankers at the core of a global economic conspiracy. The mixing of these different stories was enabled by the nature of conspiracy theories in general, their emphasis on deception which allows conspiratorial narratives to be adapted even from sources which are ideologically opposed, as long as they identify a common enemy, or if the ideological "mistakes" of others can also be chalked up to the effects of deception. The "final" form of the anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed in this chapter is the *Protocols*, which combined elements from Brafman's Kahal conspiracy theory, Tousennel's socialist anti-(Jewish) banker conspiracy theory, and the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, mixed with contemporary references and designed to look western in origin. This document, very likely written or co-written by Gregori Butmi-de-Katzman and was clearly targeted to discredit liberalism and parliamentary government and propagandize in favor of autocracy, Butmi's normal targets. In the next chapter, we will examine how Butmi's creation was turned into state-sponsored conspiratorial propaganda, and resulted in violent extremism motivated by belief in this conspiracy theory.