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The importance of conspiracy theory in extremist ideology and propaganda

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The Importance of Conspiracy Theory in Extremist Ideology and Propaganda

Andrew Fink

The Importance of Conspiracy Theory in Extremist Ideology and Propaganda

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Dedication

To my father and mother.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the support, financial and spiritual, of my parents. My father was also the editor of all the first drafts of every chapter, and his good sense and editorial voice greatly improved the final product.

I would also like to especially thank my promotor, Professor Dr. Afshin Ellian, for guiding me through the whole process and sagaciously helping me structure my argument and my narrative. During the three-and-a-half-year-long process of producing this document, Prof. Dr. Ellian consistently demonstrated his uncanny ability to suggest research angles which appeared obscure to me, but soon emerged as essential to the thesis. I could not have received a better teacher, and getting to know him, learn from his experience and work, and becoming his friend have been the most rewarding parts of writing this thesis.

While living and working in Ukraine to do research and keep costs down, I became dependent on part-time work offered by many friends of mine. I would like to extend a special thanks in this regard to Brian Mefford, Andy Bain, and Will Schreiber, who both went well out of their way to provide me with work that enabled me to keep going. My good friend Jason smart also deserves extra special thanks for letting me live in his apartment and raid his pantry for months at a time.

Also along those lines, I would like to thank the staff of Mission to the World (MTW) in Ukraine, and especially Dr. Clay and Darlene Quarterman, David and Erin Pervis, and Jon and Tracy Edie. They invited me to house-sit in their homes, eat at their tables, and connected me to a wide range of people in Ukraine who helped me in figuring out how to live, without which my extended sojourn in Ukraine would have been impossible.

The many librarians and archivists that I worked provided invaluable assistance and advice. The staff of the old periodicals section of the Ukrainian National Library, of the Slavic collection at the National Library of Finland, and of the British Library deserve special thanks from me. I should also thank my friend and colleague Bruce Grover for his assistance in tracking down some documents that I could not get ahold of any other way.

I should also take this opportunity to thank the long-suffering language teachers that I have tormented over many years. Each of them deserves my gratitude, but in particular, I would like to single out three teachers whose kindness and persistence really made a critical difference in my studies at important times: Dr. Maria Shardakova, Ulia Sinaieva, and Narguess Farzad.

Without the assistance I received from friends of mine who were native-speakers of various languages this thesis would be much less interesting and contain many more errors. Specifically, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable translation assistance offered by Jeff Nusratu, Dr. Caroline Varin, Janina Brennan, Anna Mironjuk and of course my fiancée Helen. That being said, I take full responsibility for all the translations provided in this thesis, unless a source that I am copying from is indicated in a footnote. In addition to those in the translations, any other kinds of errors or oversights in this thesis are mine alone.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research deals with a highly influential idea which was born in the late 18th century and has been used widely in propaganda. This idea is a conspiracy theory, we might even describe it as the "main" conspiracy theory, which holds that an organization with nearly limitless powers of deception has secretly seized or is about to seize power. The phrase "Grand Conspiracy Theory" will often be used as a shorthand to describe this idea in this thesis. The original research question was "What is the importance of conspiracy theories in propaganda and extremist ideologies?" but upon further research it became apparent that there was a central idea, a certain kind of conspiracy theory, which played an outsized role. The phrase "The Grand Conspiracy Theory" is used in order to distinguish this more important conspiracy-theory tradition from other smaller scale ones. By focusing on this key conspiracy theory that research revealed to be the central one, this thesis may be able to tell us something about the larger phenomena of conspiracy theories in general. There are certainly many other kinds of conspiracy theory narratives that fall outside this tradition, and reference to them will be made from time to time as they influence the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

This thesis examines the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory idea in both propaganda and extremist ideology, and examines the relationship between this propaganda and the emergence of certain extremist ideologies. In the 230-odd years since the Grand Conspiracy Theory appeared it has changed to fit new contexts, spread to other continents and societies, and been a critical ingredient of a number of violent and revolutionary movements in Europe and the Middle East. This research makes two main arguments. First, that this idea was considered useful in propaganda, especially anti-liberal anti-republican propaganda, and that the needs and the context of various propagandists profoundly shaped the development and increased the spread of this idea. Second, that this idea, molded by these aforementioned propagandists, is a crucially important part of several strains of ideology which are violently anti-western and anti-democratic.

This thesis has two overlapping parts which make these two overlapping arguments. The first part describes the creation and spread of the idea of this massive threat, this non-existent enemy with incredible powers of deception. The narrative will start with the idea's pre-modern precursors and some of the conspiracy theories formulated against the French Revolution. These conspiracy theories that we will examine claimed that the Revolution was at its core just a project of the Freemasons and/or the Bavarian Illuminati. They portrayed the French Revolution not as a revolt against a king and an attempt to create a republic, but as a project of usurpation accomplished via deception, with a Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy manipulating events to keep themselves secretly in power and extend their clandestine kingdom. This idea was further adapted by later propagandists as a useful argument against republican government and liberalism. The important contribution that propagandists made to the formation and spread of different variants of this idea in various times and places will be described over several chapters. The second part concerns the effects of this idea on politics, especially how the idea encourages small groups of true believers in this conspiracy to launch counter-conspiracy, subversion, and rebellion against the imaginary enemy that has deceptively usurped power. This thesis will clarify the structure of the Grand Conspiracy Theory and illustrate how a belief in it can lead to support for subversion and rebellion, even among types of

people who would otherwise not be ideologically inclined to engage in subversion and rebellion. This thesis does not present a comprehensive explanation for political violence, nor should it be read as a comprehensive history of conspiracy theories, though given the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory a casual reader of part of this text may get that impression.

These two parts overlap for two reasons: chronology and personality. This thesis was originally intended to be a series of case-studies of several examples of anti-western ideologies that feature conspiracy theories and also of propaganda campaigns that employed conspiracy theories. However, during the course of research enough connective tissue was found to form a single narrative about the development of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. In the interests of preserving this narrative the chapters are arranged more-or-less chronologically, instead of thematically. The earlier chapters are primarily, though not exclusively, concerned with the importance of anti-liberal/anti-republican propaganda campaigns in the birth, spread, and development of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The latter chapters are mainly concerned with how a few influential believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory attempted to fight this imagined conspiracy, and how this idea became an important part of the ideologies of several groups that have conducted violence on a massive scale, from the Nazis to Al Qaeda.

These two parts also overlap because many of the personalities discussed in this research are both believers and propagandists. Research revealed that many personalities like Klemens von Metternich and Vladimir Lenin appear to have simultaneously been major supporters of spreading propaganda about a grand conspiracy, propaganda that dovetailed with their own political needs, and also to have been real believers in a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Many of these personalities were not above engaging in deception in order to convince others about the existence of a massive, deceptive, grand conspiracy. Therefore this thesis will often deal with historical personalities who may properly belong to both parts, both as propagandists and true believers. The true motives of many of the most influential men who developed different versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory are clouded both by their obscurity (there is often very little biographic information available) and the fact that they themselves dealt in deception.

However, as many of the narratives and texts examined here were created for political propaganda, it is possible to recover some of the motivations behind creating and publicizing these narratives and texts based on the political context. One can often identify the likely political purpose of the propaganda - its persuasive goal. The most common political goal seen in this thesis is anti-liberalism/anti-republicanism, as mentioned before. This thesis will demonstrate how variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory have repeatedly been found useful in attacks on liberalism and republicanism, because if such a massive conspiracy exists and has the powers ascribed to it, then a truly free government is impossible. Reducing censorship merely allows the conspiracy to manipulate the press. Switching to parliamentary democracy would allow the conspiracy to bribe legislators and manipulate politics through manipulating public opinion, etc. By linking liberalism and republicanism to supposed evil plots of the Freemasons/Jews/Jesuits etc. pro-authoritarian anti-liberal propagandists try to discredit the ideas of liberalism and the legitimacy of republican government.

This is not an abstract study. These phenomena cannot be understood at the purely theoretical level and without historical context. In the first part, the narrative and evidence, the “proofs” the idea relies on are largely bound up with the specific demands of politics in particular

times and places, combined with the visceral fear of deception and suspicion and even hatred towards exclusive groups. The second part of the thesis will show that many of the subversive, violent ideologues examined do not view this non-existent enemy as fictional and do not treat the conspiracy theories they espouse as metaphors or just propaganda props. They base their actions on their belief in a non-existent enemy, sometimes taking up arms against it. The rhetoric of "defensive" struggle and "liberation" used by many of the ideologies examined in this thesis is not camouflage or mimicry of "true" liberation movements but is instead a reflection of their belief that they are fighting a massive secret oppressor.[1] Most of the later chapters of this thesis will demonstrate that the Grand Conspiracy Theory plays or played a crucially important role in the ideologies of the Nazis, the USSR, radical Islamists (in this case, Sunnis) like Sayyed Qutb and his intellectual successors in Al Qaeda, and the Khomeinist regime in Iran, specifically by defining the "hidden" enemy that these movements believe they are fighting. The "liberation" they seek is a liberation from the puppet-strings pulled by a hidden enemy.

This research demonstrates that central texts written by major leaders of these ideologies posit the very real existence of a grand conspiracy that has deceived the world. Major tenets of their ideologies are based on this fiction. Unbeknownst to them, the enemy they fear was often the creation of earlier propaganda campaigns, sometimes in support of states or ideas that these leaders would despise. This research suggests that there is a relationship between conspiracy theory propaganda and some variants of political violence, made evident through the intellectual history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. It should be emphasized that this thesis does not argue that the creation of these violent groups was a deliberate result of the activities of propagandists. Unlike in the conspiracy theories featured in the propaganda discussed herein, there is no massive non-state multi-generational clandestine group spreading lies, manipulating politics, and reaping the benefits. This arc of this thesis argues that the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, while spread and modified by propagandists over the centuries, has "escaped into the wild" and now has a self-sustaining momentum of its own. The political results of these kinds of ideas have at times worked against the interests of the state propagandists who spread them, on a few occasions disastrously so. There was no single plot to spread the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, but instead a series of small plots. These plots often hardly merit the name "plot" as they occurred in broad daylight, with state sponsored propagandists placing conspiracy theories on official broadsheets or belting them out on radio broadcasts.

While this thesis does point to a relationship between conspiracy theory propaganda and some kinds of political violence, it does not claim that a turn to violent extremism is inevitable or even common for believers in variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Some of the groups of true believers examined in this thesis did manage to seize power and control the destinies of millions, but they began as small groups of plotters, a miniscule subset of all those who heard and believed in the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This thesis merely emphasizes the importance of

[1] This is in disagreement with the excellent work of Dr. David Suurland, whose PhD thesis, also completed at Leiden under Professor Dr. Afshin Ellian, was an important inspiration and resource for understanding radical Islamism. For the section where he accuses radical Islamists of using such rhetoric as camouflage see Dr. David Surrland "Secular Totalitarian and Islamist Legal-political Philosophy: A Study Into the Applicability of the Totalitarianism Paradigm to Islamist Ideologies and Movements," Part 1, Phd Dissertation, University of Leiden, 2012 p. 18 vol 1.

conspiracy theory in the beliefs of these groups. Later research, aided by sociology and psychology, might be able to elucidate the strength of the link between a belief in conspiracies and a turn to revolutionary violence in individuals, but this interesting question lies outside the scope of the research presented here.

Methodology

This thesis will use the hermeneutic methodology to analyze some of the texts and behaviors of the subjects of this research. In the last two centuries, hermeneutics, the practice of interpretation, has been mainly been connected with interpreting great works of art and literature, history as a whole, and Christian scripture.[2] Paradoxically, the birth of modern hermeneutics involved a much humbler task: detecting a forgery. In 1440 the scholar and priest Lorenzo Valla penned a devastating attack on the *Constitium Constantini,* a.k.a. the *Donation of Constantine,* a document purporting to be a grant by the Emperor Constantine of lands and authority in Italy during the 4th century AD. The *Donation of Constantine* was probably forged in the Papal chancery in the 8th century AD. It was based on an apocryphal story about the conversion and baptism of the emperor Constantine. The *Donation of Constantine* had been used to justify the temporal political authority of popes in parts of Italy in the 12th and 13th century and even sometimes used to claim that the Pope was superior to the Emperor.[3] Earlier writers had challenged the validity of the *Donation of Constantine* on legal grounds, but Valla attacked it as a fabrication by using historical and philological evidence. The writer or writers of the forgery had used Latin words that were common in the 8th century AD but not used in the 4th century AD, such as the word "satrap" (a Persian governor) and had also made a historical mistake by describing the whole Roman Senate as Christian, when even according to the apocryphal history that the *Donation* is based on Roman senators remained as pagans for a long time after Constantine converted.[4]

By analyzing the text of the *Donation of Constantine* and demonstrating that it was a forgery Valla revealed the real meaning, the real purpose, of the *Donation*. Valla made his attack in support of his patron Alphonso of Aragon, who was at war with Pope Eugene IV. Valla's critical re-interpretation of the *Donation* struck a blow against the Pope's claim to have the authority to possess territory and rule it like a king and harmed the reputation of the Papacy, painting it as a purveyor of a lie. As the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg put it: "By exposing a well-known piece of papal propaganda as a forgery, Valla created a most effective piece of antipapal propaganda."[5]

The first part of this research attempts to do something similar, but not by showing that a single document is a fabrication, but by demonstrating that a whole range of documents and narratives are associated with a particular tradition of lies. Some of these documents are

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[2] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (Bloomsbury Academic; Reprint edition, 2004) Kindle Edition, especially pp. 181 – 182.
[3] Dabney G. Park, "Dante and the Donation of Constantine," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, No. 130, 2012, pp. 68-70.
[4] Carlo Ginzburg, *History, Rhetoric, and Proof* (Brandeis University Press/Historical Society of Israel, 1999), pp. 56-57.
[5] Ginzburg, p. 54.

fabrications like the *Donation,* such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* or the *Polish Catechism*. These documents are mostly pieces of political propaganda warning against a massive conspiracy of deception that does not exist. Dealing with documents about a massive deception that are themselves deceptive presents an interesting research challenge. However, the goals of these documents are often evident once one examines the political contexts that the propaganda was produced in, and read the texts in question along with contemporary commentaries about the texts with an aim to discern the message the texts are trying to send. This often involved a method of informing one's original understanding of important conspiracy theory texts by searching through contemporaneous literature: books, newspaper reports and opinion pieces, pamphlets and political speeches, or even (in one case) a sermon. One of the most fruitful methods for discovering texts that greatly aided in contextualizing several important conspiracy-theory documents was examining the earlier writings of the likely authors, especially if they had contributed to newspapers, in order to get a better idea of the kinds of debates they were contributing to, the sources they were likely using, and who they believed their enemies were. Often, these authors had been involved in political debates for some time and their texts served a propagandistic, i.e. politically persuasive, purpose.

This approach was not only useful for understanding the world of individual authors. By approaching the creation and evolution of this important strain of conspiracy theory from the standpoint of propaganda we can get a glimpse at the purpose of many of these texts and narratives. In this sense this research is "getting back to the roots" of hermeneutics by dealing with forgeries and lies. The "deep" meaning of the *Donation of Constantine* was not a tale about the generosity of a Roman emperor but instead a justification for the papacy's control of central Italy. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* for example, may at first pass seem like a warning about a massive international Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, but after one recognizes it is a fabrication it appears as an evident attempt to stir up fear and hatred of the Jews. As will be demonstrated in chapter 7, it should also be seen as a piece of political propaganda, designed to stir up and harness fear and hatred of the Jews, certainly, but more importantly (from the point of view of its likely authors) to direct that fear and hatred against liberalism, representative government, and the gold standard.

In the ensuing research dealing with *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other documents used to persuade people of the existence of the Grand Conspiracy, this thesis will show that the Grand Conspiracy Theory is a tradition, a recurring story that has been taken up, modified, and spun to suit the needs of propagandists in various times and places. The concept of a massive deception emerges as a central part of successive generations of conspiracy theory propaganda. This is one of the reasons the idea of a grand conspiracy has been seen as useful to successive generations of propagandists, it allows them to argue that any evidence contrary to their messaging is manufactured.

This emphasis on deception also carries over into how this thesis analyzes the beliefs of the true believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Their belief in a massive deception allows them to interpret events and institutions in highly paranoid ways. This is especially true when it comes to many of their views of western liberal republicanism. They see the idea of freedom of the press as a form of unilateral disarmament against a massive power that would manipulate the press. They can interpret compromise and attempts at moderation as being tactics of a

super-deceptive enemy. When analyzing history in the place of accidents and contingency they see purpose and motive and the work of generations of evil conspirators.

It is acknowledged that this research methodology does invite the possibility of over-interpreting rhetoric – statements made for effect – as true beliefs that motivate behavior. This is especially a danger in the second part of the thesis and the latter chapters, when apparent believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory head clandestine subversive organizations and at times manage to seize power. In these cases, research was especially focused on the core documents of their ideology in addition to their public statements. This involved reading ideological works such as Khomeini's *Islamic Government* or Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, works that were or are still regarded as authoritative explications of the core ideologies of the regimes/subversive groups, documents meant to inform the elite cadres of the movement, not rhetoric perhaps designed just to rile the masses.

On occasion this thesis will speak about "paranoia" or use other similar terms to describe the mental states of individuals discussed herein or to describe aspects of their beliefs or ideologies. While this thesis does indulge at times in speculation about the origins of the motivations and the beliefs of certain key individuals who had an impact on the evolution of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, this research avoids blaming the acceptance of conspiracy theories by people on some defective mental state. It eschews the progression: "This idea is crazy, therefore the believers in it must be insane." This is not to deny that mental states, heritable traits, diseases, etc. might contribute to an individual's likelihood to believe in conspiracy theories. There is a stream of new useful research from psychologists on conspiracy theories, such Rob Brotherton's 2015 book *Suspicious Minds*. Brotherton concludes that "Conspiracy theories resonate with some of our brain's built-in biases and shortcuts, and tap into some of our deepest desires, fears, and assumptions about the world and the people in it."[6] The author of this thesis certainly agrees with this statement. The regular use of conspiracy theories in propaganda, which this thesis will make evident, probably does tell us something about human nature similar to what Brotherton describes, however this research does not intend to engage this question. To use an analogy: a propensity to violence is similarly based on heritable, biological, and psychological factors. However, it would probably not be useful to describe the outbreak of most wars as the consequence of groups of young men with a propensity to violence happening to meet on battlefields. To understand warfare and mass violence one needs above all to understand politics and history. This thesis is less concerned with why one or another conspiracy theory is found to be persuasive by a particular sub-population, though mentions of times where this happens will occur. Instead it treats conspiracy theories as political phenomena. By examining the history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, especially its use in propaganda, and comparing the various ideologies that have absorbed and incorporated it into whole political worldviews this thesis attempts to uncover new insights into the important role conspiracy theories can play in propaganda and extremist ideology, and the author hopes that other researchers, especially those in other disciplines like psychology and sociology, might make use of this work of political theory and history to generate new insights in their fields.

[6] Rob Brotherton, *Suspicious Minds: Why We Believe Conspiracy Theorie*s, (Bloomsbury Sigma, 2015) Kindle Edition, Location 160.

Selection of sources

The main sources initially selected for this research were the most well-known conspiracy-theory mongering documents in modern history, such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the *Kniga Kagala*, Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* and others. There is already a rich scholarship around these texts that links them together and points to their importance in several 20th century illiberal ideologies such as Nazism and strains of radical Islamism, such as Norman Cohn's classic *Warrant for Genocide*. These texts and the biographies and milieu of the authors or likely authors were researched in an attempt to discover their context, their sources, and their inspirations, drawing on a rich secondary literature. Of course this thesis could not complete an exhaustive examination of every source and eddy in the evolution of conspiracy theories. Instead it focuses on a strain of thought, the Grand Conspiracy Theory, and even within this strain on the events and texts which had the largest impact in changing or spreading the idea. Special attention is paid to the development of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. As such, most of the historical material examined herein is European or from the Middle East. The Grand Conspiracy Theory was born in Europe, and today its most evident influence is among Islamist radicals in the Middle East.

Newspapers contemporaneously record news, opinions, propaganda, and official pronouncements, and therefore along with pamphlets are one of the main sources for studying propaganda before the advent of radio and television. This thesis attempts to delve deeper into influential conspiracy theory material from many newspapers in the late 18th to the early 20th centuries and also the documents and books heavily referenced in secondary sources about conspiracy theories. Digitization has greatly assisted in identifying items that are relevant from many historical newspapers, making it possible for a lone researcher to cover a great deal of historical ground. Newspapers provide important context to the "first drafts" of many versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed herein, informing us not only about the political and cultural context of certain variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, but also often providing useful contemporaneous commentary about the new variants. Given the nature of the Grand Conspiracy Theory - the idea that there is a massive deception - and given the practice of many propagandists to cloak the "evidence" of their conspiracy theories in ambiguity, newspaper commentary about new conspiracy theories can often elucidate the true purpose and target of the propaganda and help us understand its target. Several chapters in this thesis focus on particular newspapers as key sources to understand developments in the Grand Conspiracy Theory or explain how and why a certain variant was transmitted to a different context. As the narrative moves into the 20th century, radio broadcasts become important sources that serve much the same role.

Definitions

In the interest of clarity three key terms should be defined at this point. Unfortunately "conspiracy theory" and "propaganda" have been thrown around so much that these useful

terms are in danger of becoming nothing more than insults, like Orwell's description of the word "fascism" having "...no meaning except in so far as it signifies 'something not desirable'"[7]

Conspiracy:
A group of people secretly working together. This can describe intelligence work, criminal activities, etc. Calling something a conspiracy is not in any way denigrating the truth of its existence or the motivations or morality of the conspirators. Secret plots can indeed be decisive forces in political history, especially in states ruled by a small group of people or by a monarchy or single ruler. The second chapter of this thesis concerns the importance of conspiracies in ancient and medieval monarchies.

Conspiracy theory:
A conspiracy theory is an idea that posits the existence of a group of super-influential plotters who are able to attain great influence over some matter through manipulation and deception. For the purposes of this thesis, the phrase "conspiracy theory" refers to something that is usually false, or at least highly improbable.

Grand Conspiracy Theory:
The idea that there exists one or sometimes several organizations with nearly limitless powers of deception that has secretly seized or is attempting to seize power. This thesis distinguishes the Grand Conspiracy Theory from other conspiracy theories by the nearly all-pervasive, worldwide, nature of the Grand Conspiracy Theory along with a few other distinctive features discussed extensively herein. There are other notable conspiracy theories which will often be referenced in this research, some of which have made important contributions to the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

The author of this thesis was not the first person to recognize the importance of a particular genealogy of conspiracy theory that has appeared in different guises in different eras, and the phrase: "grand conspiracy theory" has been used before to describe this. For example, in 2004 the scholar Dr. W. Daniel Wilson, discussing the Illuminati scandal in 18th century Germany (a topic of chapter 3 of this thesis) noted that the notion that Illuminati plotters had caused the French revolution "developed into the grand conspiracy theory that in later centuries accrued Jews and Communists into a massive Masonic-Jewish-Bolshevist plot that became an obsession of National Socialists and other reactionaries."[8] In 2012 the psychologist Dr. Joachim I. Krueger used the phrase "The Grand Conspiracy Theory" to translate into English his concept "Grosse Verschwörungstheorie,"[9] expressed in a 2010 article, which is the idea that:

> "a small group of individuals controls every aspect of the world that matters: the economy, the media, war and peace, what have you. The governments and their

[7] George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language", first published in *Horizon*, London UK, April 1946. Available at http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit. Accessed April 3, 2019
[8] W. Daniel Wilson, "Eighteenth-Century Germany in its Historical Context", in German Literature of the Eighteenth Century, Barbara Becker-Cantarino ed., (Camden House, 2005), pp. 273-274.
[9] See Joachim Krueger, "Die 'Grosse Verschwörungstheorie' aus psychologischer Sicht" (The 'Great Conspiracy Theory' from a psychological perspective), *Zeitschrift für Anomalistik*, vol. 10, pp. 6-16.

> representatives that we see are not really in charge; they are front pieces of darker and stronger forces that remain out of view, and they may not even know it."[10]

In this thesis the scope of what constitutes "The Grand Conspiracy Theory" is expanded when compared to how Dr. Wilson uses it (to include some of the beliefs of Lenin, Khomeini, anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories, etc.) The use of the phrase is also somewhat different when compared to how Dr. Krueger used it, as herein it can include supposed conspiracies that have *not yet* seized power and taken control of "every aspect of the world that matters." Furthermore, this thesis approaches the concept primarily historically, not psychologically, and treats it as a tradition.

The tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory usually points to the conspiracy's use of the press to manipulate public opinion, its use of republican government to manipulate politics through bribed and compromised legislators, and often links the Grand Conspiracy to agitation for increased political freedom and toleration, and freedom of thought and the press. Another feature, though this is also true of many other conspiracy theories, is that the Grand Conspiracy Theory usually describes the leaders of the Grand Conspiracy as liars – lairs even to some of their close followers. The leaders of the conspiracy claim to be in favor of democracy and manipulate their duped liberal followers when they are actually planning to establish an autocracy - or they claim to be pious members of some religion and lead a flock of believers, but are in fact secret atheists. Various versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory often depict a small group of power-mad plotters bent on world domination who use a larger conspiracy staffed with idealists and true believers in order to manipulate the rest of society.

This thesis suggests that the inspiration of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was, in part, the application of an older way of thinking about a conspiracy to manipulate a monarch, which can actually occur, but applied on a massive scale: describing a plot to manipulate entire populations. Fittingly, this thesis begins the narrative of the Grand Conspiracy Theory with responses to the birth of mass-democracy in Europe, i.e. certain anti-revolutionary responses to the French Revolution, and most of the earlier chapters deal with the "right-wing" applications of this idea - that is, anti-liberal, anti-republican versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. However, as will be discussed especially in chapters 5 and 7, the Grand Conspiracy Theory has been taken up by partisans of different ideological stripes with relative ease.

Propaganda:

In modern English the term "propaganda" has taken on a negative connotation, denoting cynicism and malicious deception.[11] In this thesis the term is used in a more neutral sense, meaning merely persuasive speech directed at populations, not speech that is necessarily deceptive. However, given that this thesis often deals in deceptive propaganda spread by men trying to do harm, a reader might get the impression that the word "propaganda" is used here in

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[10] Joachim I Krueger, "A Conspiracy of One", from the website of *Psychology Today*, March 8, 2012. Available at https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/blog/one-among-many/201203/conspiracy-one?collection=163831. Accessed December 11, 2019.

[11] Cristina Lucia Şutiu, "Propaganda: How a Good Word Went Wrong", *Agathos : an International Review of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, 2012, p. 127.

a negative sense. This is to be credited to the pernicious nature of the central idea examined in this thesis, rather than as an intended commentary on the nature of propaganda as such. Indeed, it might have been possible to write this thesis using the word "rhetoric" or "messaging" in lieu of "propaganda," though this would lose the punch of the word "propaganda" that suggests a desired political effect for the messaging and that the messaging is deliberately spread. In this thesis the term "propaganda" is confined to political and sometimes religious/sectarian persuasive speech (and occasionally a mixture of both). This thesis does not define propaganda as a "central means of organizing and shaping thought and perception,"[12] as the introduction to the Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies does, partly because of the demonstrated continuity between the ideas and messaging of certain groups before and after they achieve state power or even before they got organized and centralized. A document containing propaganda is described as such if it has the goal of political persuasion, even if it is written by a lone person at the fringes. When the creation and spread of propaganda does become centralized, as when an organized group, sometimes with the sponsorship of a state, engages in the systematic spread of propaganda, this thesis will describe this event as a "propaganda campaign." This thesis is only incidentally concerned with the methods by which propaganda is spread, insofar as it affects how and by whom propaganda containing conspiracy theories is consumed.

The word "propaganda" is derived from the Latin *propagare* – to generate or to increase, to enlarge. It is believed have entered modern English vocabulary through the 1622 bull of Pope Gregory XV's *Inscrutabili Divinae* which established the "Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith," a Roman Catholic institution to conduct missionary work and spread the Roman Catholic faith all over the world and to combat the rise of Protestantism.[13] [14] Perhaps protestant England's fear and disdain for this institution is partly responsible for the negative connotation the word has in English today. However, it would be fatuous to restrict one's discussion of such an important concept to modern etymology, and the papal bull itself speaks of the work of the Devil to "*propagari*" (translated by Pendergast and Pendergast as "perpetuated" but the word is *propagare* in the present passive infinitive) ignorant peoples in preparation for hellfire, an activity that the author certainly did not believe began in 1622 AD.[15] The recognition that propaganda – politically persuasive speech directed at populations – long predates the modern era is implicitly recognized by scholars. The word "propaganda" is commonly used by historians of pre-modern eras to describe texts, ceremonies, ideas, etc. that have a political, religious, or politico-religious persuasive purpose, sometimes without knowledge of how organized or centralized the activity

[12] Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo, "Introduction: Thirteen Propositions About Propaganda," in *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*, Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo eds., (Oxford, 2013), p. 2.
[13] See the entry in the Oxford English Dictionary: "propaganda, n.", OED Online, December 2019, Oxford University Press. Accessed December 11, 2019.
[14] Maria Teresa Prendergast and Thomas A. Prendergast, "The Invention of Propaganda: A Critical Commentary on and Translation of *Inscrutabili Divinae Providentiae Arcano*", in *The Oxford Handbook of Propaganda Studies*, Jonathan Auerbach and Russ Castronovo eds., (Oxford, 2013), pp 19-25.
[15] Ibid., p. 21.

to spread these ideas/texts/etc. were.[16] The next chapter of this thesis will discuss some examples of ancient and medieval propaganda.

There is no discussion of "corporate propaganda" or "advertising" or "public relations" in this thesis. This is driven partly by a desire to limit the historical scope and partly by the fact that the ideologies of the extremist groups inspired by the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed this thesis appear to have been mostly formed under the influence of non-commercial, political, often state-sponsored propaganda campaigns. This thesis does not examine the birth and growth of mass advertising in newspapers and later in radio and television. Future research on the spread of entertainment which borrows elements or whole narratives from variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, especially in Hollywood films, would surely deal with this aspect.

It should be noted that a regular refrain one finds in all variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory is the idea that the sinister conspiracy has amazing powers of deception and persuasion and is engaged in an enormous, and enormously successful, well-organized propaganda campaign – often involving false-fronts and infiltration. This thesis does speak a great deal about propaganda, but it avoids this conspiracist obsession and, as mentioned earlier, conducts research into the actual, existing propaganda campaigns which spread the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, taking care to avoid accusations of vast clandestine networks of which there is no evidence or certainly not espousing the belief common among conspiracy theorists that the supposed long-term effects of these campaigns are the work of some largely successful, multi-generational, secret plan. This approach allows this thesis to highlight the irony that many influential individuals who are obsessed with the supposed baneful effects of a massive non-existent propaganda campaign are themselves often the dupes of actual propaganda campaigns, sometimes campaigns from long-defunct regimes.

Propagandist:
One who engages in creating and spreading propaganda, either professionally or just as an enthusiastic "amateur" agitator.

The state of scholarship about conspiracy theories

The importance of particular conspiracy theories in propaganda campaigns or in the ideology of a few violent movements has been noted before by many different scholars, most of them studying a particular era of history. For some prominent examples, take J. M. Roberts' *The Mythology of Secret Societies*[17] which documents the evolution of the conspiracy theory about Freemasons and the Illuminati after the French Revolution, starting from its use in Austrian propaganda - or Jeffrey Herf's *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*[18] which illustrates the importance of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories in Nazi propaganda for the Middle East. These books and many others like them are often cited in the chapters that deal with the historical

[16] For example see R. A. Hazzard, *Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda*, (University of Toronto Press, 2000) or Judith Kolbas, "Historical Epic as Mongol Propaganda? Juwaynī's Motifs and Motives" in *The Mongols' Middle East*, (Brill, 2016).
[17] J. M. Roberts, *The Mythology of Secret Societies,* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1972).
[18] Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, (Yale University Press, 2009) Kindle Edition.

periods these works are concerned with. This thesis is partially an attempt to unite many of these disparate threads and discreet historical studies into a larger theme.

An earlier book that unified the work of many historians and provided a foundational narrative of the emergence of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory and its classic text *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is Norman Cohn's *Warrant for Genocide,*[19] first published in 1966. In a way, this thesis is an expansion and continuation of Cohn's seminal work, broadening the study of the sources that lead to *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* updating Cohn's outline of the evolution of the idea to include more recent scholarship and discuss the adoption of similar ideas in ideologies that were not necessarily anti-Jewish. Several chapters will also cite Daniel Pipes' 1997 *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From*[20] and a few will cite his 1996 *The Hidden Hand: Middle East Fears of Conspiracy.*[21] These books remain the two best historical and thematic summaries of conspiracy theories around the world written since *Warrant for Genocide*.

Some recent scholarship on political extremism has noted the popularity of conspiracy theories among political extremist groups. A paper which this study is surely indebted to is the notable and to some, notorious paper "Conspiracy Theories" by Cass Sunstein and Adrian Vermeule first published in 2008.[22] Sunstein and Vermeule note the ability of conspiracy theorists to see debunkers as "agents or dupes of those responsible for the conspiracy in the first place" [23] and also the existence of "conspiracy entrepreneurs" - people who deliberately concoct and spread conspiracy theories for profit.[24] The first part of this thesis focuses on a particular type of "conspiracy theory entrepreneur" the propagandist, whose motive is usually not financial, but political. Cass and Vermule's interesting essay tends to focus on the role and spread of conspiracy theories in a free society, as does most current scholarship on conspiracy theories. This thesis demonstrates the important role that unfree societies, and especially governments and governing ideologies presiding over unfree societies, have on the evolution of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Indeed, as this thesis will demonstrate, many important developments in the history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory can be seen as attempts by the rulers of unfree societies to construct ideological defenses against the blandishments of Western liberalism.

A 2010 study of conspiracy theories in violent extremist groups by Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller with the British think-tank Demos conducted an analysis of the ideologies of 28 different extremist groups, many of them violent, and concluded that: "The frequency of conspiracy theories within all these groups suggests that they play an important social and

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[19] Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide,* (London: Serif, 2001).
[20] Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From,* (Touchstone, 1999), Kindle Edition.
[21] Daniel Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998).
[22] Original version is Cass R. Sunstein, Adrian Vermeule, "Conspiracy Theories," *Harvard Public Law Working Paper,* No. 08-03, January 15, 2008. Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1084585. Accessed April 3, 2019. This thesis will use the later edition published in Cass Sunstein's *Conspiracy Theories and Other Dangerous Ideas,* (Simon & Schuster, 2014).
[23] Sunstein, p. 5.
[24] Sunstein, p. 13.

functional role within extremism itself"[25] while also denying the impossibility of demonstrating "direct causal links between conspiracy theories and extremism…"[26] Sunstein and Vermule also make a passing reference to when conspiracy theorists turn to violence, mentioning as an example the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City by two men with conspiratorial beliefs about the US Federal Government, remarking that "people who are prone to conspiring are especially likely to accept conspiracy theories." [27] This is an interesting observation, similar to those made by many others (several of which will be discussed in herein), but this thesis is mainly interested in demonstrating the inverse: that those who believe in conspiracy theories sometimes become prone to conspire. This thesis attempts to demonstrate that conspiracy theories also play a crucial role in the ideologies of the most feared contemporary Muslim terrorist organizations, including the one that perpetrated the September 11th 2001 attacks on the United States, and that this is similar to other conspiracy theorists turn towards violence witnessed earlier in European history. This observation about the centrality of conspiracy theory narratives to the ideologies and the strategies of some Islamist extremist groups was the initial impetus for this research. Subsequent research showed not only that there was a central conspiracy theory shared by several different kinds of violent extremist groups, but that this idea mainly developed in Europe before the mid-20th century and that there were a few other groups of violent extremists who operated along the same lines. Their resort to organizing subversive conspiracies is, to them, often a defensive tactic against the imaginary enemy at the center of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

To reiterate: this thesis is not attempting to totally explain all subversive extremist violence as a consequence of the belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory or in conspiracy theories in general. It is attempting to raise the profile of conspiracy theorizing as a contributing factor to the ideologies and strategies of several major subversive extremist groups, which the author believes is an under-studied and overlooked aspect of their thought.

Thesis overview

As was stated earlier in this introduction, this thesis was originally intended to be a series of self-contained case-studies of several examples of violent extremist ideology that feature conspiracy theories and also of propaganda campaigns that employed conspiracy theories. However, during the course of research enough connective tissue was found to fashion a single narrative about the Grand Conspiracy Theory. In the interests of preserving this narrative the chapters are arranged more-or-less chronologically, instead of thematically.

Chapter 2 discusses pre-modern conspiracy theories dealing with manipulation and usurpation in monarchical governments. The kinds of narratives discussed in this chapter feature the ideas of usurpation-via-deception, i.e. the idea of someone taking power through manipulation and trickery as opposed to by war and "open" politics. It is important to discuss these pre-modern

[25] Jamie Bartlett, Carl Miller, *The Power of Unreason: conspiracy theories, extremism and counter-terrorism*, Demos, 2010, p. 4. Available at http://demos.co.uk/project/the-power-of-unreason/. Accessed April 3, 2019.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Sunstein, pp. 24-25.

narratives and their use in propaganda before the democratic age. They provide a lot of the narrative material that is the foundation of the earliest version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Also, this chapter shows that much of the substance of “modern” conspiracy theories were in fact old staples of political propaganda, even from antiquity.

Chapter 3 deals with the birth of the Grand Conspiracy Theory and its use in two anti-French Revolution propaganda campaigns, each of which enjoyed the patronage of rulers who opposed the French Revolution. These relatively short-term campaigns described the French Revolution and some of the ideas associated with it in line with the old “usurpation-via-deception” stories discussed in chapter 2. The French Revolution was presented by them not as a republican revolution against a monarchy but as an attempt by a conspiracy of Freemasons led by the Bavarian Illuminati to seize power. The subsequent popularizers of this idea, Augustin Barruel and John Robison, spread it throughout Europe and embellished the reach and antiquity of the supposed conspiracy.

Chapter 4 analyzes the mutation of the “second generation” of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the post-Napoleonic era, after the threat of the French Revolution had disappeared, but the myth of a Masonic revolutionary conspiracy persisted and changed to fit contemporary fears. This chapter pays special attention to the role that a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory played in the thought and outlook of Klemens von Metternich, who evidently believed he was facing a Masonic or Masonic-inspired enemy with amazing powers of deception. This chapter will examine the possible influence of Medieval Persian conspiratorial narratives, mixed with those about the French Revolution, on Metternich’s thought and how Metternich was instrumental in making the idea of a massive Masonic conspiracy part of accepted Roman Catholic dogma. This chapter also makes a brief mention of the first documented time that a small group of believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory took up arms to combat the supposed conspiracy, though the power they were preparing to attack was not a revolutionary state but Austria.

Chapter 5 deals with anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories, arguably the most important type of sectarian conspiracy theories before the explosion of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories in the late 19th century. It explores how this conspiracy theory merged with the tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. In contrast with much of the rest of this thesis, this chapter deals with how some liberals in Western Europe used this variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to attack their anti-liberal opponents, and some of the interesting consequences of this adoption. This chapter will conclude with an examination of how this “liberal” version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was used in Russian anti-Polish propaganda in the lead up to and during the Polish Uprising of 1863. This will include a discussion of a neglected document, the *Polish Catechism*, an evident forerunner of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Chapter 6 details the birth of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, emerging from the conspiracy theories about the Masons and the Illuminati discussed in chapters 3 and 4, and the separate birth of a Russian anti-Jewish conspiracy theory that appears to be a modification of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory discussed in chapter 5.

Chapter 7 begins with a discussion of "socialist" anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and then narrates how these ideas blended and mixed with other anti-Jewish variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the late 19th and early 20th century. This chapter is mainly about how easily the Grand Conspiracy Theory can be adapted to different contexts, and how propagandists and ideologues of totally different political persuasions and cultures can adapt and mix conspiratorial narratives and evidence of conspiracy from myriad sources to suit their ends. This chapter concludes with a detailed examination of the ultimate classic of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and places it in the context of illiberal Russian propaganda in the lead up to the revolution of 1905.

Chapter 8 analyzes the response of elements of the Russian government to the Revolution of 1905. To combat the rising tide of liberalism and republican government pro-Tsarist propagandists embraced the version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory laid out in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* popularizing the idea of a massive Jewish conspiracy to rule the world by encouraging liberalism. This chapter will also examine how some believers in this idea took matters into their own hands and tried to violently strike back at what they perceived as their Jewish-led enemies.

Chapter 9 deals with how the version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed in chapters 7 and 8 made its way to Germany and inspired Adolf Hitler and other leading Nazis, provoking them to revolutionary rebellion against the Weimar Republic. It focuses on the lead up to the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch, but will also briefly deal with the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Nazi ideology after Hitler came to power.

Chapter 10 examines the curious case of the importation of a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory into Soviet ideology during the 1917 Communist Revolution. This chapter will show how Lenin's seminal 1917 work *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* was based on an anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, though Lenin transformed it into a merely anti-banker conspiracy theory. Again, this demonstrates the amazing flexibility of the idea of a massive conspiracy to fit ideological contexts of all kinds, and shows how this idea was used by the first generation of Soviets to attack the idea of liberal democracy.

Chapter 11 narrates the spread of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to the Middle East through propaganda, focusing on Nazi, Soviet, and Nasserist (Egyptian) radio broadcasts.

Chapter 12 focuses on the work of Sayyed Qutb, the godfather of modern radical Sunni extremism. The importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in his thinking becomes clear upon an examination of his works, especially his multi-volume commentary on the Quran. This chapter also examines how his ideas were put into practice by himself and his ideological successors Osama Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri through their pursuit of violent jihad against governments they believed were in the thrall of a grand Jewish-led conspiracy against "true" Islam.

Chapter 13 discusses the thought of Ruhollah Khomeini, the first leader of revolutionary Iran, and the key role that a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory played in his primary work *Governance of the Jurist*. Despite the large theological differences between him and Sayyed Qutb, this chapter will detail the similarities between the worldviews of Qutb-type radical Sunnis and Khomeini-type radical Shia.

Chapter 14 is the conclusion to this research, that includes some brief speculation on emerging trends in the link between the Grand Conspiracy Theory and extremist violence.

Chapter 2: The Pre-History of the Grand Conspiracy Theory: Deception, Legitimacy, and Power

"...No one has ever doubted that truth and politics are on rather bad terms with each other, and no one, as far as I know, has ever counted truthfulness among the political virtues. Lies have always been regarded as necessary and justifiable tools not only of the politician's or the demagogue's but also of the statesman's trade."[1] - Arendt

Introduction

Before beginning a study of the Grand Conspiracy Theory one ought to review its prehistory, namely in ideas about the role of political conspiracy and deception in pre-modern times. The idea that a conspiracy can manipulate states or that a group can seize power using trickery is probably as old as government itself. This chapter will examine some pre-modern and early modern narratives (and the occasional real historical event) about conspiracies of usurpation via deception, and the usefulness of these narratives in some kinds of political propaganda. The bulk of this chapter deals with monarchical forms of government and the various kinds of palace conspiracies and political tricks that are the stuff of politics when there is a single sovereign decision maker that can be fooled, manipulated or replaced. The Grand Conspiracy theory, which will be the focus of subsequent chapters, takes these narratives of deception and manipulation that are quite possible at monarch-scale and applies them on an impossible national or even a world-scale. When studying conspiracy theories, it is important to recognize that they are not a totally recent phenomenon but grow out of a long literary and historical tradition of palace plots, contested monarchical succession, and propaganda accusing a ruler of being secretly illegitimate. The stories and political habits of peoples under monarchies did not totally disappear in the democratic age.

This chapter focuses on a few kinds of conspiracy-narratives that have continuity with elements of the Grand Conspiracy theory which we will examine in subsequent chapters. They are:

1. Stories about supposed kings being actually fakers or changelings who have tricked the people into following them like true kings.
2. Stories about monarchs being deceived and manipulated by groups of courtiers into doing their will, in effect making them, not the kings, the true exercisers of sovereign power.
3. Stories of monarchs transforming into tyrants, violating their oaths and obligations, doing actions which make their rule illegitimate, all while continuing the pretense that everything is normal.

[1] Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future*, (Penguin Publishing Group, 2006), Kindle Edition, p. 223.

There is a section in this chapter that deals with the ancient Roman republic and its transition into a monarchy, even while keeping the trappings of a republic, which was a kind of public deception similar to the third type above.

The last part of this chapter describes how people have justified overthrowing and killing a tyrant, especially one whose activity would fall under the third kind of narrative described above.

Before we proceed to analyze these conspiracy theories, it is necessary to define what a "tyrant" is. The word "tyrant" comes from the Greeks word "τύραννος" - *turannos*. In ancient Greek this was probably originally a term for an absolute ruler,[2] such as its use in a hymn to Ares the god of war, praising him as the "stern governor [τύραννε] of the rebellious, leader of righteous men…" [3] The historian Herodotus (5th century BC) sometimes used the term as a synonym for king, but sometimes also used it in a negative sense, to mean someone who got his power unlawfully or who acted illegally as ruler.[4] The term was used in a purely negative way by Aristotle (4th century BC) who differentiated between a king, the leader of a state who should be obeyed, and a tyrant, the oppressor of a state who should be overthrown:

> "A king desires to be the guardian of his people, that those who have property may be secure in the possession of it, and that the people in general meet with no injury; but a tyrant, as has been often said, has no regard to the common good, except for his own advantage; his only object is pleasure, but a king's is virtue: what a tyrant therefore is ambitious of engrossing is wealth, but a king rather honour. The guards too of a king are citizens, a tyrant's foreigners."[5]

By the time the word reached modern English it had lost any hint of the earlier ambiguity seen in the ode to Mars and the histories of Herodotus. Today "tyranny" can mean either someone who seizes power unjustly and/or someone who exercises power unjustly, however he might have acquired this power,[6] either way, someone illegitimate and worthy of being overthrown. This is the sense the word is used here. While not all languages may have a special word for an illegitimate ruler who deserves to be overthrown, it is an idea that necessarily exists in any form of politics that does not simply endorse who ever appears to be in power.

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[2] Victor Parker, *A History of Ancient Greece*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2014,) p. 109.

[3] Anonymous. *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica with an English Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, Hugh G. Evelyn-White trans.,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), Perseus Digital Library. Available at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0138%3Ahymn%3D8. Accessed April 5, 2019. Original Greek available at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0137%3Ahymn%3D8. Accessed April 5, 2019.

[4] Arther Ferrill, "Herodotus on Tyranny," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte,* Bd. 27, H. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1978), p. 386.

[5] Aristotle, *Politics: A Treatise on Government*, William Ellis trans., (London/New York: William Ellis / E. P. Dutton, 1928) Kindle Edition, pp 164-5, Location 2514.

[6] "Tyrant, n.1, 3", OED Online, March 2019, Oxford University Press. Accessed April 05, 2019.

Fooling the people about the king's legitimacy

People generally obey their "legitimate authority", whether that authority be a king, an elder, or a bureaucrat. Suspicion about possible deception, that the ruler is actually a tyrant, can play a critical role in de-legitimizing a king, a government, or a government official. If one suspects that one's ruler attained power through subverting the process of selecting a new authority, then the trappings of state are just camouflage for a usurper, and loyal subjects are dupes. While usurpation is usually accompanied by force, there is the possibility that someone can lever his way into power by fooling enough people, especially in a monarchy, becoming a usurper while people believe he is a new legitimate king. The 16th century French political philosopher Étienne de La Boette listed four ways that a people could become enslaved; they could be "driven by force or led into it by deception; conquered by foreign armies...or by political factions..."[7]

In the early 20th century Max Weber defined what became the three broad "inner justifications" for legitimate authority:

1. Authority grounded in tradition and the "eternal yesterday" which is "exercised by the patriarch and the patrimonial prince of yore."
2. Authority grounded in the personal charisma or special revelation given to an individual ruler, which is best exemplified in the prophet, warlord, party leader, or demagogue,
3. Authority grounded in "legality" that is "the belief in the validity of legal statutes and functional 'competence' based on rationally created *rules*."[8]

All three of these justifications could conceivably be faked. Fidelity to tradition can be fabricated (for example, when a hereditary monarchical succession is corrupted by a changeling or a bastard becoming king); the revelation of a "prophet" can be just made up; laws can be created by a corrupt legislature or government official, the civil servants given the authority to carry out the laws might have gotten their jobs through bribery or nepotism. Unless one believes in an obvious divine sanction that cannot be faked, how can one be sure that those who wield the state's sovereign power are actually legitimate?

The idea that people can be fooled into accepting an illegitimate ruler or accepting commands from an illegitimate source is not theoretical. Narratives making accusations of secret illegitimacy have been an important part of political propaganda. In extreme cases, in monarchies, propaganda accusing a reigning monarch of secret illegitimacy can be used to justify rebellion and usurpation. A prominent example of this is the testament of the Persian king Darius I (r. 522-486 BC) at Bisitun, which was carved in Babylonian, Elamite, and Old Persian on a rock face overlooking what was the main road between the eastern and Western parts of the Ancient Persian Empire. Copies of it were written in the chief languages of the empire and circulated through the provinces.[9] A papyrus fragment of the text written in Aramaic was

[7] Etienne de la Boetie, *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude*, Harry Kurz trans., (Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2015), p. 54.
[8] Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills trans., (Routlidge, 2009), p. 42.
[9] Amelie Kuhrt, *The Persian Empire*, (Routledge, 2007). pp. 136, 142.

discovered in the ruins of an ancient Jewish colony in upper Egypt[10] near the empire's frontier. This monumental piece of political propaganda begins with claims of divine favor and election from the Persian god Auramazda, and a list of his subject peoples. It then launches into a narrative justifying his seizure of the throne, alleging that power had been usurped by a conspiracy of deceivers, and that Darius had to rise up against these usurpers:

> "…[the previous Persian King] Cambyses had a brother, by name Bardiya...then Cambyses killed that Bardiya; when Cambyses killed Bardiya, the people did not know that Bardiya had been killed; then, Cambyses went to Egypt. When Cambyses had gone to Egypt; then the people became disloyal… there was a man, a magus [Zoroastrian priest], Gaumata by name...He lied thus to the people: 'I am Bardiya, son of Cyrus, brother of Cambyses.' Then all the people became rebellious against Cambises...He seized the kingship...After that, Cambyses died his own death...There was no man, neither a Persian nor a Mede, nor anyone of our family, who could take the kingship away from that Gaumata the magus. The people were very much afraid of him (thinking that) he would kill many people who had known Bardiya previously… Ten days of the month Bagayadi were past (29 September 522), then I, with a few men, killed that Gaumata that magus, and his foremost followers. A fortress, by name Sikayahuvati, a district by name Nisaya, in Media, that is where I killed him. I took the kingship away from him; with the help of Auramazda. I became king; Aramazda granted me the kingship."[11]

The Greek historian Herodotus tells a similar story, but reports that the evil usurpation was instead done by two magi brothers, one of whom shared a name with and looked like the murdered rightful heir. Herodotus reports that this conspiracy was uncovered by the investigative work of Persian aristocrats and the testimony of the senior official who had killed the real heir.[12]

The narratives carved in Bishtun and related by Herodotus are not impossible, but they are difficult to believe.[13] If Darius and his fellow conspirators in fact killed the actual brother of the king and seized power, as seems likely, then the Bishtun inscription is deceptive political propaganda.[14] The fact that the story carved in the rock is far-fetched does not matter, it was deliberately spread by the most powerful state in the world. Doubting the truth of the story while Darius ruled was probably quite dangerous. Darius tried to make the whole empire believe that they had been dupes, obeying a tyrant instead of a true king, and that he and his companions had rescued them.

While the Bishtun inscription may be the most monumental example of the spreading of propaganda about a usurper secretly reigning while disguised as a legitimate king and justifying rebellion against him, there are many other lesser-known examples from history, especially in

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[10] R. Schmitt, "BISOTUN iii. Darius's Inscriptions," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, IV/3, pp. 299-305, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bisotun-iii (accessed on 25 April 2016).
[11] Kuhrt, p. 143.
[12] Herodotus, *The Histories*,A. D. Godley trans., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), Perseus Digital Library. Available at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0126%3Abook%3D3&force=y (accessed March 3, 2016).
[13] Richard N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran*, (Munich: Beck, 1984), p. 99.
[14] Frye, p. 101

the propaganda of foreign invaders supporting a pretender to justify their aggression. This propaganda is not always necessarily cynical. These narratives are not confined to propaganda, and also appears in fiction. There is a common trope in literature of royal heirs escaping peril, living incognito, and then one day returning and re-claiming the throne. Narratives like this were common in medieval and early modern Europe.[15]

The Bishtun inscription describes the apparent last member of a dynasty as being a secret usurper, but problems connected to a king's legitimacy usually appear when there is a new dynasty. What claim does a usurper or non-dynastic successor have to legitimacy, particularly if a monarchy is reliant on a hereditary claim to the throne? The ancient Egyptians avoided the impasse of a new dynasty or a usurper by claiming that a new Pharaoh was also the offspring of a God, just like the founders of every dynasty. A god had taken on the form of the husband of the new Pharaoh's mother and slept with her, and created a suitably divine royal heir. This kind of story was related in some detail in Egyptian writings, and left open the possibility that any woman could potentially give birth to a god-man, and in this way any new pharaoh could be given legitimacy.[16] Peoples without this kind of political-theological "escape mechanism" through a miraculous conception might be receptive to narratives describing the efforts to trick the people into abandoning their "true" king and accepting the legitimacy of interlopers.

In Portugal in the early modern era, for example, there was a concept of "Sebastianism" that points to the quasi-messianic return of the "true" Portuguese king Sebastian. Sebastian disappeared after the disastrous battle of Alcazarquivir in Morocco in 1578.[17] The throne eventually passed to the Spanish Habsburgs, but the idea of the hidden legitimate king Sebastian was used in propaganda against Spanish rule in Portugal.[18] In 1582 Philip II of Spain ransomed Sebastian's body from Morocco and had the remains buried in a monastery outside Lisbon to convince the Portuguese that Sebastian really was dead.[19] In 1598 a pretender appeared, claiming that he himself was Sebastian, and that he had been imprisoned in Venice by men working for Spain. After the pretender was captured by the Spanish authorities his supporters, led by a noble named Dom Joao de Castro, conducted a propaganda campaign supporting the pretender's cause. The Spanish authorities acted to head-off a brewing Portuguese rebellion in 1603 and executed the pretender. Even after the death of the pretender, his supporter Dom Joao continued to produce apocalyptic propaganda from exile in Paris proclaiming that Sebastian was still alive and that he would return, crush Islam, and rule the world.[20] Three fake papal bulls were circulated between 1598 and 1630 that name this pretender as the actual king Sebastian of Portugal.[21] There was another Portuguese rebellion

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[15] Maureen Perrie, "Trans-national Representations of Pretenders in 17th-Century Russian Revolts," in *From Mutual Observation to Propaganda War*, ed. Maureen Perrie, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014), p. 66.

[16] S. E. Finer, *The History of Government from the Earliest Times: Ancient Monarchies and Empires, Volume 1,* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p 144.

[17] Bryan Givens, "Sebastianism in Theory and Practice in Early Modern Portugal," in *Braudel Revisited: The Mediterranean World 1600-1800,* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), p. 133

[18] Givens, p. 134

[19] Givens, p. 134

[20] Givens, pp. 135-137

[21] Givens, p. 137

against Spanish rule in 1637 that claimed that the rule of the Spanish king was illegitimate because the Portuguese still had a king, though the precise identity of that "Hidden King" was disputed. This myth of the hidden king Sebastian was apparently still a problem for the Portuguese king Joao IV after the restoration of an independent Portuguese throne.[22]

During Russia's 16th-17th century "Time of Troubles" after the end of the Rurik dynasty there was a succession of "false Dmitriis" - people claiming to be the legitimate heirs to the Rurikind throne. The Time of Troubles is one of the most important events in Russian history, and the first signs of the political events that would devastate Russia were rumors that the newly elected Tsar Boris Gudinov had sponsored the assassination of prince Dimitri Ivanovich, a son of Tsar Ivan the Terrible. There were also rumors that Gudinov and his sister (who had been the wife of the previous Tsar) had bribed and manipulated his way into being elected the new Tsar in 1598.[23] In 1600 a pretender appeared in Polish territory claiming to be Dmitri. He claimed that he had escaped an assassination attempt from Gudinov, fled abroad, and bided his time. Contemporaries in Poland and Italy noted holes in the story of this "king" Dmitri and the story's similarity to fictional stories about hidden kings and to other recent stories of supposedly "hidden" pretenders to the throne from Portugal and also Moldavia.[24] Nevertheless, this Dmitri received the support of the Polish crown. He invaded Russia at the head of a 4,000 man army, gained support in Russia, and seized the throne. During the campaign, propagandists in his service traveled throughout southwest Russia and Ukraine handing out leaflets and spreading the news that Dmitri was alive and re-claiming the throne from the usurper Gudinov.[25] The usurper managed to rule for almost a year.

In the end, the first false Dimitri's reign was ended by a conspiracy of Russian nobles, who led a mob into the Kremlin and murdered him, possibly on the pretext of defending him from a Polish plot.[26] One account of the murder of the first False Dimitri recorded by the Dutch ambassador Isaac Massa says that the palace coup was initiated by a piece of propaganda about a false usurper (in this case, it was true.) A very pious chancellor named Timofei Osipov was scheduled to swear allegiance to the new tsarina Maria Mniszech, who was Polish. According to Massa, Osipov was paid by the noble conspirators, took communion twice, received absolution, and prepared himself for death. When he entered the hall where he was to take the oath:

> "...he cried that he recognized Dmitry, not as the tsar's son, but as an unfrocked monk named Grishka Otrepiev who had won the throne of Moscow only through the agency of the Devil; he held this throne unjustly. As for the tsarina, he refused to swear her allegiance. She was a lady Jesuit, a pagan whose presence had profaned the sanctuaries of Moscow, and it was she who was the cause of the country's ruin."[27]

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[22] Givens, p. 141

[23] V. O. Kliuchevskii, *A History of Russia Volume Three,* C. J. Hogarth trans., (London/Edinburgh: J. M. Dent & Sons/ Ballantine Press, 1913), p. 22-3

[24] Perrie, p. 56.

[25] Daniel H. Shubin, *Tsars and Imposters: Russia's Time of Troubles***,** (USA: Algora Publishing, 2009), p. 89.

[26] Kliuchevskii, Vol. 3, p. 32.

[27] Isaac Massa, *A Short History of the Beginnings and Origins of These Present Wars in Moscow under the Reign of Various Sovereigns down to the Year 1610*, G. Edward Orchard trans., (University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 137.

Osipov was immediately killed, but the revolution rolled on and the pretender was dead by the end of the day.[28] [29]

These two examples from Portugal and Russia are among the most extreme cases in European history involving a story that the current ruler is in fact a deceptive usurper. But perhaps the most important and influential examples of a story of a deceptive usurper are found in Islamic history, among the Isma'ilis and some other Shi'a groups. The Isma'ilis are a sect of Islam who follow an Imam who claims descendent from the prophet's family, and also claims to be the only legitimate religious authority. The various Caliphs of Islam after Ali (Muhammad's cousin) were all considered usurpers by the Isma'ilis.[30] The Isma'ili Fatamid Caliphate (909-1171 AD) which at its peak controlled Egypt, Mecca, and much of Northern Africa, was a state founded on the idea that there was a true, legitimate Islamic dynasty that had been usurped by Sunni oppressors, but had now returned to reclaim the leadership of Islam. According to a Fatimid historian, an initial missionary slogan for Fatimid propagandists in Yemen was: "Rejoice, for the days of the oppressors are about to come to an end. The Restorer will come through whom God will restore the community of Muhammad. He is al-Mahdi and then Al-Mansur through whom God will cause religion to triumph."[31]

After the conquest of Egypt by armies who accepted the Isma'ili imam and the establishment of the Fatimid dynasty, the idea of the Fatimid Imam transformed from a hidden messianic leader who would return at the end of the world to a very real religious and political leader in charge of a major state.[32] The primary adversary of this leader was the "usurping" Sunni Abbasid caliphate that also claimed the leadership of Islam. The Fatimid armies or missionaries reached all through the Middle East, and they even briefly captured the Abbasid capital of Baghdad.

The Medieval Nizari Isma'ilis (known to western history as the Assassins) were a later form of Isma'ili Islam stemming from the Fatimids. The decisive break between the Nizari Isma'ilis and the Fatamids was a succession crisis. After the death of the Fatamid Caliph Al-

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[28] Ibid.

[29] This story bears a striking resemblance to part of Herodotus' narrative of king Darius' coup, mentioned earlier. In Herodotus' story a Persian noble named Perxaspes knew about the deceptive usurpation of the Persian throne because he himself had killed the true heir. However, he kept quiet and bid his time. When the cabal of tyrants, knowing that he was well-respected asked him to make an announcement before all the people that the fake king was the real king to buttress his support among the people, Perxaspes agreed. He went up onto a tower in front of a crowd and instead told the truth "saying that he had concealed it before, as it had not been safe for him to tell what had happened, but at the present time necessity forced him to reveal it..." He then jumped out of the tower and killed himself. By happy coincidence, Darius and the other plotters began their coup at the same time. see : Herodotus, The Histories, trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), Perseus Digital Library, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0126%3Abook%3D3&force=y (accessed March 3, 2016).

[30] Farhad Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community,* (Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p 63.

[31] Abū Ḥanīfah Nuʿmān ibn Muḥammad, *Founding the Fatimid State : The Rise of an Early Islamic Empire: an Annotated English Translation of Al-Qāḍī Al-Nuʿmān's Iftitāḥ Al-Daʿwa*, Hamid Haji trans., (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 21.

[32] "Isma'ilis," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, Gerhard Bowering ed., (Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 265.

Mustansir in 1094 AD, a group of Isma'ilis recognized his heir Nizar instead of the heir recognized by the military establishment in Egypt.[33] While the Medieval Nizari Isma'ilis are mainly known in the West for their strategy of infiltration and targeted killing of their opponents "assassinations" (via Crusader accounts and popular fiction) their missionary/propaganda work was the main thing that got the attention of the wider Muslim world. The Fatimids and the Nizaris had sophisticated propaganda/missionary enterprises that spread their message of a divinely-appointed ruler descended from the Prophet.[34] These propaganda/missionary networks, called the *da'wa* worked secretly all through the Muslim world where rulers were not favorably disposed towards their doctrine.[35] The success of this propaganda before the conquest of Egypt may explain the ease with which the Fatimids took it.[36] According to the great Persian historian Juvaini, who was rabidly anti-Isma'ili but had unique access to the records at the Nizari headquarters at the famous castle of Alamut after its capture by the Mongols, the first leader of the Nizari Isma'ilis Hasan I Sabah "dispatched *da'is* (missionaries) in all directions and devoted the whole of his time to spreading his propaganda and perverting the short-sighted."[37] Juvaini relays that Hassan-I-Sabah claimed he captured the fortress of Alamut not by some daring assault but by infiltrating missionaries and spreading Isma'ili propaganda among the garrison until the castle's commander was just forced to leave.[38] A Sunni propaganda response to this force campaigning against the "illegitimate" Sunni caliph was to respond in kind with a story that the Isma'ili imams were false pretenders trying to fool Muslims. An anti-Fatimid manifesto published in 1011 AD claimed that the family claiming descent from the prophet were in fact descendants of an impostor.[39]

The deceived king becomes illegitimate

In his history of politics Samuel Edward Finer describes the two kinds of plots in a "Palace-polity." In addition to the kinds of to remove the ruler and replace him with somebody else or...pre-empt the succession"[40] like those described in the previous section, there was also the possibility of "...intrigue and conspiracy among the courtiers, the ruler's staff, the harem and the like, to get privileged access to the ruler's ear and if possible to shut out all over voices…" Extreme version of this kind of conspiracy take place when military leaders "maintain and even exalt the status of the legitimate monarch, while effectively controlling all his decisions."[41] The most obvious examples of this are in Mamluk Egypt and Japan under the Shogunate, when military leaders kept a pampered divinely-appointed ruler on the throne, while they actually

[33] Anthony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 48.
[34] Farhad Daftary, "FATIMIDS," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Vol. IX, Fasc. 4, pp. 423-426, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fatimids (Accessed 3 May 2016).
[35] Jonathan M. Bloom, "The Mosque of the Qarafa in Cairo" *Muqarnas,* Vol. 4 (1987), pp. 7-20, p. 13.
[36] Bloom, p. 16.
[37] 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *Ghenghis Khan, The History of the World Conqueror*, J. A. Boyle trans., (Manchester University Press, UNESCO publishing, 1997), p. 671.
[38] Juvaini, p. 670.
[39] Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins, A Radical Sect in Islam,* (Basic Books, 2003), p. 32.
[40] Finer, Vol. 1, p. 42.
[41] Finer, Vol. 1, p. 71.

governed the land.[42] Probably no Mamluk Caliph or Japanese Emperor were deceived about his actual position. A more limited usurpation by deception is less obvious to the monarch. It involves the manipulation of the King by his courtiers and informants, often to mask their depredations or to use the king as a weapon against rival factions. This is a constant danger in a monarchy, when a single person wields immense power. The more power concentrated in a single individual, the easier this kind of conspiracy becomes, and the returns from manipulating him for one's own ends becomes higher as well.

The Biblical book of Esther, which was probably written in the 3rd or 4th centuries BC,[43] depicts the dangers of just this kind of palace conspiracy. It is probably the most widely-read narrative of this kind of palace conspiracy. According to the book of Esther, the high official Haman's anger against the Jews was kindled when the loyal Jewish official Mordecai refused to pay homage to him. Haman then persuaded the King to agree to a proclamation ordering the annihilation of the Jews, with the help of an offer to give the king 10,000 talents of silver.[44] This genocidal palace conspiracy of influence is countered by another conspiracy of influence: the plot by the king's wife Esther and her guardian Mordecai to influence the King. Esther craftily maneuvered and persuaded her husband to suddenly turn on Haman and have him executed, while issuing a counter-edict that allows the Jews to defend themselves.[45]

In the book of Esther the legitimacy of the Persian monarch is never questioned, despite his very close brush with condoning genocide for the sake of a favored official and perhaps 10,000 talents of silver. Indeed, the idea that a legitimate monarch could be deceived into making poor choices has been used as a way of explaining misrule without calling the legitimacy of the monarch into question. In Tsarist Russia the idea of "the Tsar is good but the Boyars (nobles) are bad" was a common trope used to express dissent at tyranny and misrule without calling the legitimacy of the divinely-sanctioned monarch into question. Using this line of reasoning, protesters could call on the Tsar to get rid of his bad advisors who were deceiving and manipulating him and bring in good advisors in order to restore proper rule.[46] An American military attache in Tsarist Russia once observed that the peasants who served in the Russian army had very poor opinions of their generals and quartermasters and rued their ill treatment and poor provisions, but comforted themselves with the thought: "If the Tsar only knew." The Tsar could not know everything, so the soldiers had to be patient and endure until someone could inform the Tsar about what his evil subordinates kept hidden from him.[47]

Occasionally in literature the sovereign could become such an unwitting servant of his non-sovereign advisors and subordinates that there he is de-facto usurped. The usurpers keep the king in place, but they conspire to manipulate him into doing their will by deceiving him — a usurpation by proxy. An excellent example of this kind of conspiracy narrative is an English

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[42] Finer, Vol. 1, p. 71.

[43] Sidnie Crawford, "Esther and Judith: Contrasts in Character," in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*, Leonard Jay Greenspoon, Sidnie White Crawford, T&T Clark eds., (A&C Black, 2003), p. 67.

[44] Esther 2:19-3:15 (English Standard Version).

[45] Esther 4-9:19 (English Standard Version).

[46] Maureen Perrie, "Indecent, Unseemly and Inappropriate Words: Popular Criticisms of the Tsar, 1648-50," in *Russische und Ukrainische Geschichte vom 16.-18. Jahrhundert,* (Harrassowitz Verlag, Germany, 2001,) p. 149.

[47] John S. Curtiss "The Peasant and the Army," in *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, Wayne Vucinich ed., (Stanford University Press: 1968), p. 118.

book from 1572 titled *A treatise of tre*asons *against Q. Elizabeth, and the croune of England diuided into two partes* (A treatise of treasons against Queen Elizabeth, and the crown of England divided into two parts.) This staunchly pro-Roman Catholic, anti-Protestant text accused Queen Elizabeth's secretary of State William Cecil and her Lord Keeper of the Great Seal Nicholas Bacon of having usurped power through deception and manipulation of the Queen. The anonymous author stated that Bacon and Cecil "by false suggestions and crafty speeches, had so intruded themselves into her favor and credit, that with contempt and rejection of all the rest, she was wholly governed and ruled by them."[48] Their influence was so complete that Queen Elizabeth was "Queen but in name."[49] Their plots supposedly included encouraging Protestantism in the realm in order to spread chaos and allow them to pose as saviors[50] and also creating the false specter of a Roman Catholic conspiracy against the realm in order to justify the repression of the old nobility.[51] According to this text the conspirators persuaded the Queen to remain unmarried and eventually planned to make a relative of theirs the next king.[52]

This propaganda tract makes a specific point about the danger to nobles and senior courtiers to this kind of palace conspiracy. If a monarch has been captured by a conspiracy of influence, then he - the judge and arbiter of quarrels between aristocrats - would become a tool in the hands of a faction. In this case rebellion could be justified in the name of self-defense in addition to countering tyranny. This is a theme of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, which dramatizes the fall of the English Plantagenet dynasty in 1397-99. In the play the Earl of Northumberland states the initial justification for rebellion:

"The king is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers; and what they will inform,
Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all,
That will the king severely prosecute
'Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our heirs.[53]

Later in the play the rebel Henry Bolingbroke (soon to be Henry IV of England) lists the manipulation of the king perpetrated by two of the king's advisors as the chief reason for their execution after they fall into his hands:

"I will unfold some causes of your death.
You have misled a prince, a royal king,
A happy gentleman in blood and lineaments,
By you unhappy'd and disfigur'd clean:
...Myself, a prince by fortune of my birth,

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[48] John Leslie, (attributed), *A treatise of treasons against Q. Elizabeth, and the croune of England diuided into two partes,* (J Fowler, 1572), p. 31. (Text available online at http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A21247.0001.001 . Transcript with modern spelling by Nina Green (2003) available at http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Leicester/Treatise_Treasons.pdf)
[49] Ibid. p. 29.
[50] Peter Lake "'The Monarchical Republic of Elizabeth I' Revisited (by its Victims) as a Conspiracy," in *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe*, Barry Coward and Julian Swann eds., (Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 94.
[51] Ibid. p. 98.
[52] Ibid. p. 99-100.
[53] William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act II, Scene I, (London: John Bell, 1786), pp. 41-42.

Near to the king in blood; and near in love,
Till you did make him misinterpret me-..."[54]

About six years after this play was written it was used as propaganda to justify rebellion. The Earl of Essex ordered a performance of *Richard II* in London before his unsuccessful rebellion in 1601.[55] The play *Richard II* was suppressed by king Charles II in the 1680's.[56] Evidently, the idea that a king can lose legitimacy and be overthrown because he has become a tool of some faction did not sit well with some monarchs. Naturally, monarchs prefer to be unchallenged, and the implication that illegitimacy springs from courtiers rather than the king himself is small comfort if it can still result in overthrow.

The secret preparation of a tyranny

The danger that the "rightful" king could be corrupted and lose his right to rule does not emanate solely from deceptive courtiers. For political philosophers who believed in a "rational" or "moral" origin and purpose of kings, i.e. that the office exists in order to preserve order and peace, the weight of the question of legitimacy is on the monarch's actions rather than his origin. If a king acts justly, he is a legitimate king. If he acts tyrannically, then he is a tyrant regardless of his dynastic origin. Aristotle's definition of the difference between a monarch and a tyrant, discussed earlier in this chapter, is in harmony with this idea.

A standard way that a king might become illegitimate would be through the violation of oaths he made at his coronation or by using his power to break the laws of the land - assuming the laws of the land are not just dependent on the will of the king. In his political tract *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* the poet and philosopher Milton defended the execution of King Charles I in part by attacking the idea that a king is above the law and not bound by the oaths that he swore when he became king. Milton wrote that it "imports not whether foreign or native: For no Prince so native but professes to hold by Law; which when he himself overturns, breaking all the Covenants and Oaths that gave him title to his dignity, and were the bond and alliance between him and his people, what differs he from an outlandish King, or from an enemy?"[57] Milton draws evidence supporting this idea even from the "monarchical" past, quoting the Byzantine Emperor Leo III in "the Byzantine Laws" : "that the end of a King is for the general good, which he not performing is but the counterfeit of a King."[58]

The "Byzantine Laws" that Milton refers to is an edition of the Justinian Code, the compilation of Roman imperial law collected in the mid-6th century AD. Milton's use of a statement by a Byzantine emperor to justify revolution and attack the idea of the "divine right of kings" is incongruous on the surface, but it points to an important source of political tension and inspiration in the Western tradition. A central fact of the Western political tradition is that a large portion of its "classic" political age, Ancient Rome, was not a monarchy but a republic. The

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[54] Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act III, Scene I, p. 58.
[55] Ernst H. Kantorwitz, *The King's Two Bodies*, (Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 40.
[56] Kantorwitz, p. 41.
[57] John Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, (1650) from the John Milton Reading Room, Dartmouth University, available at http://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/tenure/text.shtml (accessed May 3rd, 2016).
[58] Ibid.

source-civilization for most of Western law has regicide, the rejection of monarchy, and the establishment of a republic at the very center of its story. For much of Roman history identifying someone as an aspiring monarch would mark him for death,[59] as happened to Julius Caesar.

The Roman Republic eventually became an effective monarchy, but the symbols of republican rule remained, and the Roman Republic and the overthrow of the last "tyrannical" Roman king Lucius Tarquinius Superbus were not renounced. The Senate, as the body linking Rome to its founding as a republic, continued to be a key organ legitimating the rule of the Roman emperors well after the emperors were actually ruling as absolute monarchs. An example of this legitimation is the Law on Vespasian's Imperium (c. 70 AD) which has partially survived into modern times preserved on a bronze plaque. The document, which appears to be from the Roman Senate (though it may be a comitial statute) gives Vespasian constitutional authority to make treaties, hold sessions of the Senate, extend the borders of the city of Rome, and also exempts him from any "laws or plebiscites it has been recorded that the deified Augustus or Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus and Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus were not bound…"[60]

While the law enshrined the dictatorial power of Emperor Vespasian, it did not make him a king. It did not do away with the Republican constitutional traditions of elections or of Senate votes or do away with the veneer of law: "...it shall be lawful for him to hold a session of the Senate, to make a motion in it, to refer a matter to it, to propose decrees of the Senate by a motion and by calling for a vote by division…And that whatsoever persons seeking a magistracy, power, imperium, or change of anything he commends to the Roman Senate and people and to whomsoever he gives or promises his electoral support special consideration of them shall be taken in every election."[61]

In the opinion of the French political philosopher La Boette, during the "imperial" era of Rome's history these despots used the offices of a republic in order to deceive and coerce the people and reign as a kings:

> "They didn't even neglect, these Roman emperors, to assume generally the title of Tribune of the People, partly because this office was held sacred and inviolable and also because it had been founded for the defense and protection of the people and enjoyed the favor of the state. By this means they made sure that the populace would trust them completely, as if they merely used the title and did not abuse it."[62]

However, tyrannies do not only come about when republics degenerate. Some staunch monarchists can nevertheless believe that legitimate kings can morph into tyrants. The influential Jesuit political theorist Juan de Mariana (1536-1624) used the notoriously wicked emperor Nero as an example of a tyrant who could justly be killed, in addition to the example of the Egyptian pharaohs (an example drawn directly from Aristotle) and other examples from

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[59] *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, J. H. Burns ed., (Cambridge University Press, 1988), p 30.
[60] Allan Chester Johnson, Paul Robinson Coleman-Norton, Frank Card Bourne, *Ancient Roman Statutes*, (New Jersey: Lawbook Exchange: 2009), p 149.
[61] Ibid.
[62] La Boetie, p. 66.

ancient history and myth.[63] He pointed out a contemporary example as well, Henry III of France. According to Juan de Mariana Henry III had planned to make the Calvinist Henry of Navarre king after him, and when some nobles remonstrated with him he pretended to change his mind, but then had some of them assassinated. The French people, especially in Paris, rose in righteous revolt against this "tyrant."[64] De Mariana identified Henry III as a tyrant even though he was a rightful heir who had not seized the throne through illegitimate means. It was his grossly unjust actions as king that made him illegitimate, despite his continued claim to legitimacy. In this reading, those who had still believed him to be rightful king, and not a tyrant, were deceived.

In the West since the Middle Ages at least, the sovereign derives his authority from the law, which also determines the extent of his power.[65] A sovereign that violates this law deserved to be seen as illegitimate. In modern times, as the idea of the divine election of the sovereign has receded, the legal/"rational" basis for the establishment of sovereign power has grown, to the point that "legal positivism came to reduce legitimate domination to legal domination."[66] But law, process, and even customs are not completely foolproof and cannot defend themselves, especially from deception. If a tyrant has enough power to overwhelm the law or keep it functioning in name only then what can one legally do to stop him? Nothing, so one must turn to extra-legal methods, especially rebellion and assassination. However, this is not a simple answer. The possibility of deception also creates problems in determining when a ruler is a tyrant who deserves to be killed or when a rebellion is actually justified.

Justifying the tyrant's murder

Overthrowing an evil, illegitimate ruler has often been considered praiseworthy. Darius certainly did not try to hide it. Aristotle wrote that "great honour is due to him who kills not a thief, but a tyrant."[67] He even eulogizes tyrannical conspirators as honor-driven selfless warriors:

> "Those who conspire against a tyrant through love of glory and honour have a different motive in view from what I have already mentioned; for, like all others who embrace danger, they have only glory and honour in view, and think, not as some do, of the wealth and pomp they may acquire, but engage in this as they would in any other noble action, that they may be illustrious and distinguished, and destroy a tyrant, not to succeed in his tyranny, but to acquire renown. No doubt but the number of those who act upon this principle is small…"[68]

But who, exactly, can be considered a tyrant? Aristotle pointed to the Egyptian Pharaohs as tyrants[69] and also seemed to indicate that there were "many of them (demi-tyrants) to be met

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[63] Juan de Mariana, *The King and the Education of the King*, G. A. Moore trans., (Chevy Chase, the Country Dollar Press, 1948), p. 140.
[64] John Laures, *The Political Economy of Juan de Mariana*, (The Ludwig Von Mises Institute, 2008), p. 62.
[65] Jean-Marc Coicaud, *Legitimacy and Politics : A Contribution to the Study of Political Right and Political Responsibility*, David Ames Curtis trans., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2002), p. 19.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Aristotle, *Politics: A Treatise on Government*, p. 42, Kindle Location 792.
[68] Aristotle, *Politics: A Treatise on Government,* p. 166, Kindle Location 2559.
[69] Aristotle, *Politics: A Treatise on Government,* p. 170, Kindle Location 2613

with amongst the Persians."[70] But unlike many of the Greek tyrants of Aristotle's age, the Pharaohs claimed to be the legitimate rulers, descended from the gods, and the Persian emperors claimed divine endorsement. Christian churches have endorsed kings and rulers in the West, and the Church was jealous of its ability to declare kings legitimate or illegitimate. If a tyrant or a tyrant-in-waiting is being deceptive, then the ability of outside church authorities to detect and deal with this tyrant (perhaps before it is too late) is further called into question, unless one believes in the infallibility of church leaders.

In the Western tradition during the Middle Ages, the emphasis on oaths, law, and process was often maintained even in the face of apparent usurpations. This teaching was even incorporated into a Church council. One of the best-known examples of the condemnation of the murder of a potential usurper was occasioned by the murder in 1407 of Louis I, the Duke of Orleans by assassins in the pay of his cousin John of Valois. Louis I was the younger brother of the mad king Charles IV, and John of Valois and his faction justified his assassination by claiming that Louis I was an aspiring tyrant who was conspiring to usurp the throne from his brother.[71] This justification was elevated into the realms of theory and theology by Master Jean Petit of the University of Paris, who delivered an address to an audience of French nobles in 1408, which asserted "It is lawful for any subject, without any order or command, according to moral, divine, and natural law, to kill or cause to be killed a traitor and disloyal tyrant."[72] In 1415 the Roman Catholic Council of Constance directly contradicted Jean Petit's teaching, emphasizing the importance of procedure and law and attacking the use of underhand methods, even against a tyrant. The council even implied that treaties and oaths given to tyrants were binding:

> "...various propositions have been taught that are erroneous both in the faith and as regards to good morals, are scandalous in many ways and threaten to subvert the constitution and order of every state. Among these propositions this one has been reported: Any tyrant can and ought to be killed, licitly and meritoriously, by any of his vassals or subjects, even by means of plots and blandishments or flattery, notwithstanding any oath taken, or treaty made with the tyrant, and without waiting for a sentence or a command from any judge. This holy synod, wishing to oppose this error and to eradicate it completely, declares, decrees and defines, after mature deliberation, that this doctrine is erroneous in the faith and with regards to morals and it rejects and condemns the doctrine as heretical, scandalous and seditious and as leading the way through perjury to frauds, deceptions, lies, and betrayals."[73]

This Church's order to always await proper judgement and avoid secret plots requires a faith that institutions can still function to check or at least identify and condemn a usurper. But what if there are no legitimate authorities or judges left to do the condemning, or what if the usurper or usurper-in-waiting can fool or intimidate them? If the process is ineffective or even a

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[70] Aristotle, *Politics: A Treatise on Government,* p. 169, Kindle Location 2601

[71] Franklin L. Ford, *Political Murder: From Tyrannicide to Terrorism*, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), p 129.

[72] Ibid. p. 131-2.

[73] Frances Spilman, *The Councils of the Catholic Church: Nicea to Now*, (Lulu Inc, Raleigh, NC, 2015) p. 327.

tool of a clique or the tyrant then where can one turn who is suspicious that a usurpation has or is about to occur?

Over 180 years after the Council of Constance the aforementioned Jesuit political theorist Juan de Mariana (1536-1624) attacked the authority of the council of Constance. He wrote that it had never been endorsed by a Pope[74] and also Mariana made an argument justifying the murder of a tyrant without due process or a public hearing (NB, following Aristotle, Juan De Mariana wrote that even a legitimate king could lose his authority and become tyrannical because of bad behavior.)[75] After a section eulogizing Jacques Clement (the assassin of Henry III of France, whom De Mariana believed was a tyrant) De Mariana states that there should be procedure and some form of public appeal made to a tyrannical ruler to mend his ways, if this is possible. However, if procedures like these are impossible, then a private citizen should take matters into his own hands.

> "You would ask what must be done if the practicability of public assembly is taken away, as can often happen. There will be, truly, in my opinion at least, no change in the decision, since, when the state is crushed by the tyranny of the ruler and facility for assembly is taken away from the citizens, there would be no lack of desire to destroy the tyrant, to avenge the crimes of the rule, now plainly seen and intolerable, and to crush his destructive attempts. And so, if the sacred fatherland is falling in ruins and its fall is attracting the public enemies into the province, I think that he who bows to the public's prayers and tries to kill the tyrant will have acted in no wise unjustly…"[76]

Juan De Mariana's argument makes sense, otherwise a tyrant could make rebellion impossible for righteous men by engaging in extreme repression. However, there is ambiguity here: How repressive or deceptive must a tyrant or tyrant-in-waiting be before a private citizen can conclude that he must take matters into his own hands?

Juan De Mariana became infamous in England and France for justifying political murder during an age of assassinations.[77] The Scottish historian and Anglican Bishop Gilbert Burnet recorded his alarm in 1683 when his friend "brought me Mariana's Book of a Prince."[78] Burnet reports that this friend, the Earl of Essex, "...told me he knew the King intended to subdue his people as soon as he could… he believed that the Irish had undertaken to her [the Queen, the Roman Catholic Catherine of Braganza] to take possession of Ireland, and to drive the English out of it, and then to bring over an Army to assist the king in the conquest of England."[79] The Earl was soon afterwards condemned as a conspirator in the Rye House Plot against King Charles II and died while imprisoned in the Tower of London.[80]

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[74] Juan de Mariana, p. 150.
[75] Juan de Mariana, pp. 141-42.
[76] Juan de Mariana, p. 148.
[77] Helen Nader, review of the book "Juan de Mariana" by Alan Soons, *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 1983), pp. 285-286.
[78] Quoted in Jonathan Scott, E*ngland's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context*, Cambridge, 2000 p. 164 / Original at British Library, MS 63,057, Transcript of Burnet's *History of His own Time*, Vol II p. 139.
[79] British Library manuscript MS 63,057, Transcript of Burnet's *History of His own Time*, Vol II p. 139.
[80] Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, *Tower of London*, Volume 2, (George Bell & Sons, London: 1902) pp. 75-77.

While the particulars of the conspiracy by the king of England to conquer England described by Burnet were false, the Rye House Plot that the Earl of Essex participated in was not an unjustified conspiracy against an innocent legitimate monarch, but was in fact a textbook example of a reaction against a deceptive tyrant-in-waiting that eventually culminated in the overthrow of James II (Charles II's brother and successor) in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In 1670 King Charles II had made a secret agreement with the French monarch to "declare himself catholic." In this "Secret treaty of Dover" Louis XIV of France agreed to give Charles II two million livres "to assist us (Charles II) in declaring ourself a Catholic" and an additional three million each year to pay the expenses of a new war against Holland.[81] The original text of the treaty also included the provision that the French king would "assist his Britannick Majesty with troops and money as often as there shall be need, in case the subjects of the said Lord the King shall not acquiesce with the said declaration, but rebel…"[82]

This treaty would match the requirements of a planned tyranny according to any protestant Englishman who was familiar with Juan De Mariana, Milton, or Aristotle: a ruler secretly plotting to bring in foreign troops in order to suppress a rebellion after he breaks his coronation oaths. (Of course, Juan De Mariana, being a staunch Roman Catholic, would probably have supported this plot and argued that Parliament was the usurper.) King Charles II and his successor James II continued to behave publicly as if there was never such a treaty for the king to bring in French troops to put down a rebellion and conspired to keep it secret. A version of the treaty without the most sensitive parts, that merely brought Britain into France's war against the Dutch, was publicly signed in late 1670.[83] Lord Shaftesbury, one of the ringleaders of the 1683 Rye House Plot, probably learned of the Secret Treaty of Dover in 1673.[84] England did go to war with the Netherlands, but the results of battle and the poor political fortunes of Charles II meant that he was never able to carry out the secret clauses of the treaty. During this time the attention of much of the English public was absorbed in a fictitious political narrative of a "Popish Plot" of Roman Catholics to murder King Charles II.[85] The widely propagandized and outlandish details of this supposed plot recommend it as the clearest example of the popularization of a conspiracy theory in English history. The anti-Roman Catholic frenzy whipped up in the late 17th century and the suspicion (which it turns out, was justified) that the king might be a Roman Catholic tyrant-in-waiting eventually led to the diminution of the power of the British monarch.

Conclusion: Towards the Grand Conspiracy Theory

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[81] John Dalrymple, *Memoirs Of Great Britain And Ireland: From The Dissolution of the last Parliament of Charles II until the Sea-battle of La Hogue*, Second Edition, (the Strand: W. Strahan and T Cadwell, 1771), p. 78.

[82] Dalrymple, p. 50.

[83] J. Kent Clark, *Whig's Progress: Tom Wharton Between Revolutions*, (Rosemont Publishing & Printing Corp, 2004), p. 243.

[84] Richard Ashcraft, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 115-116.

[85] J. C. D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, ideology and politics during the ancien regime*, (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 70.

This chapter examined three major categories of usurpation-via-deception narratives and provided historical examples of their use in propaganda and actual times when they actually happened. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, ideas about deceptive plots to secretly seize power, tyrants masquerading as legitimate leaders, or other conspiracies secretly manipulate politics have not disappeared in the modern age. They were such a staple of pre-modern propaganda, it is not surprising that they would be used by early modern propagandists. Of course, the stories were changed to reflect the realities of modern politics in countries without monarchies. Instead of distinct and occasional ideas of a conspiracy to usurp or manipulate the throne, the idea emerged of a grand conspiracy to usurp power and manipulate the whole people, and/or a group of tyrants conspiring to mask his tyranny with the trappings of a republic. Narratives about a conspiracy that influences the selection of rulers or influences the decisions of the rulers in an age of mass politics would require a more powerful network of conspirators to deceive the people and manipulate the system than palace intrigue. Theoretically, destroying legitimate succession in a monarchy passed on through primogeniture could require nothing more than an unfaithful queen or a nurse who switches two young children (a trope that often features in the propaganda of pretenders to the throne.) Deceiving and manipulating a monarch requires greater resources, but it is still very feasible. In a republic or in a polity where the legitimacy of a ruler or rulers depend not on family and succession but on the people's perception of the justness and efficacy of the government, the narratives that describe a usurpation via deception become more intricate, as imagined plots must be super powerful and reach into nearly every corner of society as they used to reach into every corner of the palace. Putative conspiracies must be credited with more reach and power to enable them to bring a palace conspiracy out of the palace and into the polis.

A conspiracy theory used by propagandists against the French Revolution described a successful plot of Freemasons to secretly take over France by overthrowing the King and instituting a republic under their control, and warned against their further plans to take over all of Europe in the same way. This became the first version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, and its birth is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 3: The Emergence of the Grand Conspiracy Theory After the French Revolution

"The obscurantists do not see in the French Revolution the consequence of easily traceable causes...but rather the work of a secret society headed by a very few men… that two truly super-human individuals...have in fact worked for the last decade upon the implementation of a plan which the tongues of men and of angels dare not utter, and the minds of men cannot comprehend. The most heterogeneous men, things, and events are all seen as machines in the hands of those two beings...a few hundred scholars who in fact frequently do not know one another; a few hundred court marshals, ambassadors, yes even princes; the Magic Flute, the armies in the Campagne; the generals of the coalition; the dysentery which caused the Prussians so much trouble ...the Duke of Orleans; the Temple of Reason in Paris; the Marseillaise; the bookseller Vollmer at Erfurt; Mirabeau ...Robespierre, ...etc." [1]

- G.F. Rebmann, 1796

"The French Revolution is but the forerunner of a Revolution greater by far, and much more solemn." [2]

- Barruel

"This movement among the Jews is not new. From the days of Spartacus-Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxembourg (Germany), and Emma Goldman (United States)... this worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality, has been steadily growing." [3]

- Winston Churchill, February 1920

The French Revolution was a surprising event, and it quickly became a shocking event for monarchists. It was hardly believable that one of the great ruling dynasties of Europe had

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[1] G.F. Rebmann, *Die Wächter der Burg Zion,* (Hamburg 1796), p. 8-10, Quoted in Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 532.
[2] Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism Vol. 4,* (New York: Shepard Kollock for Cornelius Davis, 1799), p. 281.
[3] "The Churchill you didn't know," *The Guardian,* 7 November, 2002, researched by Amy Iggulden, https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2002/nov/28/features11.g21

collapsed so suddenly, without an invasion. Also, if it could happen to the Bourbons, then it could happen to the Hapsburgs or the Hohenzollerns. In a response to this threat, groups of conservative propagandists supported by the Habsburg monarchy and some German princes took up a conspiracy theory that explained the French Revolution, and these propagandists molded it into a myth that became the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This first version was based on the myth of an Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy. The essential idea of this myth is that a small group of atheist plotters were trying to secretly usurp power, and that they were using Enlightenment ideas as cover to justify their usurpation -or even worse, that Enlightenment ideas themselves were tools in a plot by this group to soften-up unconquered states, subvert legitimate government and religion, and then spread their behind-the-scenes control to new countries. The French Revolution was pointed to as an egregious example of the success of this plot.

This chapter will first examine the origins of the use of an Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy theory to explain the French Revolution and chart the adaptation and use of this theory by reactionary propagandists. This chapter will then illustrate how two of the most well-known conspiracy theorists in history, Augustin Barruel and John Robison, were convinced by this propaganda and further spread the idea in their books, popularizing the Grand Conspiracy Theory among the European reading public. This chapter will then examine the main tenets of this conspiracy theory as presented by Barruel and Robison and its initial impact on European thought.

In the previous chapter, we examined the history of literature about court intrigue in a monarchy and the use of conspiratorial narratives about deception and usurpation-via-deception. These narratives and patterns of thought, indispensable to an understanding of the histories of many monarchies, did not melt away in France with the end of the monarchy. Just as a king could be deceived and manipulated by conspiracies among his servants, courtiers, wives, and mistresses, a democracy could be deceived and manipulated by manipulating the press and public rumor. In fact, compared to a monarch, who could purge his administration or establish an intelligence service to counteract these conspiracies, a paranoid mind familiar with the practices of the court could view a newly-sovereign voting public as a flock of sheep at the mercy of conspiratorial manipulators.

After the success of the revolutionaries, many royalists explained the success of the French Revolution by describing conspiracies that involved the French Philosophes, Freemasons, Jansenists, Protestants, or groups of usurping aristocrats.[4] These conspiracy theories were rooted in ideas from before the French Revolution, like narratives drawn from the long traditions of court conspiracies and deceptive usurpations. The conspiracies described that involved the Freemasons had the most staying power. The Papacy had already published two bulls against Freemasonry in 1738 and 1786.[5] The idea that Freemasons were involved in political subversion and in favor of democracy was nothing new in 1789, and the Freemasons had already been banned in several places because of their association with political mischief and free-thinking. A French pro-Masonic pamphlet from 1744 demonstrates that Freemasons themselves were sensitive to these fears. It begins with a woman trying to penetrate the society

[4] James L. Osen, *Royalist Political Thought During the French Revolution*, (Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 51.
[5] J. M. Roberts, *The Mythology of Secret Societies,* p. 68.

believing they were working towards a universal democratic republic, but ends with her witnessing a meeting and seeing Freemasons drink to the health of the King.[6]

After the tremendous shock of the French Revolution some people turned back to these older rumors in search of an explanation. In 1791 a French clergyman named Lefranc published *The Veil Lifted for the Curious* which said that the French Revolution was a Masonic project, that the French National Assembly was in fact masonic,[7] that the Freemasons had "provided the heroes of the French Revolution" and had "taught France to contemplate death in cold blood, to boldly wield the dagger, to eat the flesh of the dead, to drink from their skulls, and to surpass the savage peoples in barbarism and cruelty."[8] Lefranc explained that the Freemasons were anti-Roman Catholic atheists who represented "the quintessence of all the heresies that divided Germany in the 16th century"[9] (the Reformation) and who were trying to found a new religion based on ancient Greek philosophy. They had plotted to start the French Revolution because they "want to overthrow the Throne, just as they have overthrown the Altar."[10]

It was in the German lands, however, where the most powerful myth linking the Freemasons to the French Revolution was forged. The villain for the narrative was already well known: the Bavarian Illuminati. This organization, normally just called the "Illuminati" was a secret society founded in 1776 by a professor at the University of Ingolstadt Adam Weishaupt.[11] The society was dedicated to influencing society in favor of egalitarianism and rationalism, and after a few years the members of the organization deliberately infiltrated Freemasonry to recruit fresh members.[12] The leaders of the society had grand plans to influence all of Europe with its agents acting secretly in concert to advance rationalism and the ideals of the Enlightenment, but it never gained anything close to this influence. It was suppressed by the Bavarian state in 1785 and its surviving correspondence and documents were published, including very private documents full of scandal fodder, to the embarrassment of the founder Weishaupt. The sensational confessions of former members of the society published in 1786 shocked German public opinion.[13]

Rumors circulated that the order had gone underground, and several books were published illustrating the order's continuing influence.[14] In one of the many letters published by the Bavarian authorities the Illuminati founder Weishaput bragged that "I have considered...every thing, and so prepared it, that if the Order should this day go to ruin, I shall in a year re-establish it more brilliant than ever."[15] A much-discussed 1786 epistolary novel *Exposure of the Cosmopolitan System* by a Weimar official named Ernst August Anton von

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[6] Roberts, pp. 86-87

[7] Jacques-François Lefranc, *Le Voile levé pour les curieux, ou le Secret de la Révolution révélé, à l'aide de la Franc-Maçonnerie,* (Veuve Valade, 1791), p. 56.

[8] Lefranc, p. 67.

[9] Lefranc, p. 31.

[10] Lefranc, p. 154.

[11] Roberts, p. 118.

[12] Roberts, pp. 118-123.

[13] Klaus Epstein, *The Genesis of German Conservatism,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 102.

[14] Roberts, pp. 127-130.

[15] John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against all the Religions and Governments of Europe*, Fourth edition, (New York: George Forman, 1798), p. 118.

Göchhausen claimed that the Illuminati had survived, totally infiltrated the Freemasons, and were now plotting to "advance deism and cosmopolitanism" and establish a "religion of reason" and dissolve all nations and states into one.[16] However, the author then went on to assert that in fact the Jesuits were behind the grand plot, and that this was all a plan to destroy the Protestant states while keeping the Catholic states in ignorance: "In the nations which are still subject to Rome the Jesuits continue to foster superstition and seek desperately to prevent the introduction of *Aufklärung* [Enlightenment]; while in "enlightened" nations they vigorously promote *Aufklärung* with the deliberate purpose of blinding the people through an excess of light."[17]

After the French Revolution two groups of state propagandists, one from the Austrian Empire and the other centered in the states of Germany, took up a version of this Illuminati conspiracy theory to explain the French Revolution. Unlike the examples previously mentioned in this chapter, the tone of this theory was neither Catholic nor Protestant (though the sectarian loyalties of individual authors usually shone through). In the end the adoption and development of the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory of the French Revolution by state-sponsored propagandists was the critical step that refined and standardized the main themes of this conspiracy theory and gave it enough "intellectual" heft and publicity to keep the narrative alive for subsequent generations as the core of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This will not be the only example of state propaganda adopting and spreading a conspiracy theory. State propaganda campaigns can provide consistency to a narrative and even produce fabricated or doctored evidence to support a conspiracy theory that would otherwise be forgotten or ignored.

"The Association" and the *Wiener Zeitschrift*

Leopold Alois Hoffmann (1760-1806) was a third-rate Austrian writer and editor who claimed to have been a Freemason and to have nearly joined the Illuminati in his youth. He got his start working as a kind of government spy in Vienna, where he was part of a team denouncing preachers who did not toe the Emperor's line.[18]

Hoffmann wrote in his autobiography that when he was 27 he read the Illuminati documents published by the Bavarian government and became a staunch opponent of the society and the Enlightenment.[19] He became a hack for Austrian imperial propaganda while working for the Emperor on Hungarian issues during unrest in Hungary in 1790.[20] Hoffmann's propaganda in Hungary was directed against the Hungarian nobility, who were demanding privileges from the Emperor as conditions of their consent of his official coronation as king of Hungary. The Emperor had Hoffmann publish two books anonymously that attacked the Hungarian nobility, and one of them specifically attacking the new coronation oath that was to be imposed on Leopold II. These books were published without the permission of the official

[16] Epstein, pp. 96-98.
[17] Ernst August Anton von Göschhausen, *Enthüllung des Systems der Weltbürger-Republik*. (Rome, [Leipzig], 1786), p. 276, Quoted in Epstein, p. 99.
[18] Denis Silagi, *Ungarn und der geheime Mitarbeiterkreis Kaiser Leopoldus II,* (Munich: Verlag R. Oldenbourg, 1961), p. 55.
[19] Epstein, pp. 518-520.
[20] Epstein, p. 520.

Board of Censorship and were circulated by the Emperor's agents.[21] An aspect of Leopold II's strategy in Hungary was to get the commoners to present their grievances to the Emperor and also to demand representation in the Hungarian diet (then dominated by the nobility) and also to reduce the privileges of the powerful Hungarian nobility. Hoffmann, among other agents, was instructed to get the people of Pest and Bratislava to petition the Emperor along these lines.[22] This ploy by the Emperor evidently worked, and a new and less activist leadership of the Hungarian diet accepted the traditional coronation oath without the additions.[23]

Having gained the favor of the Austrian emperor, Hoffmann moved back to Vienna with an appointment as professor of "practical eloquence"[24] where he continued to work directly for the Emperor as a propagandist and something of a spy. With the encouragement of Emperor Leopold II, Hoffmann created a secret society called simply "The Association"[25] that was supposed to be a pro-imperial version of the Illuminati project, with a secret, hierarchical membership with correspondents all over Europe.[26]

The stated purpose of "The Association" was:

> "To counteract French propaganda, demagogic principles, the heady wine of philanthropic libertarianism, irreligion and false Aufklärung (Enlightenment) as well as all secret orders, factions, and societies devoted to these goals. Furthermore: to define and spread true principles which lead to the planting of correct religious concepts in men's minds, the establishment of a proper equilibrium between moderate monarchy and democracy, and the security of unquestioned obedience to the laws of the state and the will of the prince."[27]

The society was also to play a role in foreign espionage.[28] Hoffmann received permission from the emperor to proceed with its formation in July 1791.[29] The society began with a budget of 1000 florins, a sum that Hoffmann complained was inadequate.[30]

"The Association" was an early example of two things that recur in the history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. First, a hatred of the Enlightenment and a fear of a secret super-powerful society that is promoting these Enlightenment ideals behind the scenes. Second, people who believe in this imaginary enemy sometimes create their own kind of secret societies to fight back.[31] "The Association" secret society had the Emperor at its head and was devoted to preserving the political order, but its plans involved a structure very similar to the conspiracy they wanted to defeat, including cover names, ciphers, a requirement to write reports about other people, and initiation ceremonies.[32]

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[21] Ernst Wangermann, *From Joseph II to the Jacobin Trials*, (London: Oxford University Press 1959), pp. 86-87
[22] Wangermann, pp. 87-88
[23] Wangermann, p. 88
[24] Silagi, p. 65.
[25] Roberts, p. 215.
[26] Silagi, p. 113.
[27] Silagi, p. 128, translated and quoted in Epstein p. 522.
[28] Silagi, p. 108.
[29] Silagi, p. 109.
[30] Silagi, p. 110.
[31] Roberts, p. 215.
[32] Epstein, p. 522.

The non-clandestine mouthpiece of this secret society was the *Wiener Zeitschrift.* This magazine was semi-official propaganda that spread the conspiracy theory that the French revolution was the work of the Illuminati, and that this secret society was intent on infiltrating other governments and spreading the false "enlightenment" throughout the world in order to establish a universal tyranny of the sect. According to one letter between the Prussian censor Wöllner and the Prussian King Frederick William II, the journal was financed by a 10,000 florin donation from Leopold.[33]

The articles in the *Wiener Zeitschrift* show an obsession with propaganda and a fear of the all-pervasive Illuminati conspirators, who could use the tool of propaganda, calumny, and assassination to remove troublesome writers or manipulate sovereigns and popular opinion. The article introducing the new journal described enlightenment writers this way:

> "These authors throw out their poison daily in every European country….Public opinion is completely in their hands. Their famous or rather infamous names, their brazen and unbridled loquaciousness, their flair for intrigue and manipulation, all combined with the terrifying omnipotence of secret societies, succeeds in giving their disastrous principles prestige, influence and tragic effectiveness everywhere… [Conservative] Authors must, therefore, take up combat against [subversive] authors...Nations must be instructed about their true interests, demagogues must be unmasked, and subversive political assassins must be exposed in the public arena with implacable determination…"[34]

Through the articles of the *Wiener Zeitschrift*, Hoffmann and his compatriots also emphasized that the state itself could become infected with the grand conspiracy, potentially turning censorship into a tool of the Illuminati.[35] The conspiracy could even work by manipulating governments into making policy that would lead to uprisings: "[The Illuminati] have been known to poison the cabinets of princes and their policies, so that the people, angered by these wrong policies and incited to sacrifice their king, will fall to angry insurrection."[36]

The *Wiener Zeitschrift* began with only thirteen subscribers, but it sold out its first issue of five hundred copies. The journal's circulation peaked at about 2000 but declined to around 1000 by the time the journal folded.[37] The journal denounced some well-known Europeans as being part of the grand conspiracy, and even viciously attacked the conservative journal the *Jenaische Allegemeine Litteratur Zeitung* because it had criticized the *Wiener Zeitschrift* for making false accusations against the innocent.[38]

"The Association" itself fell into infighting, as other men close to the Emperor seized some power in the organization from Hoffmann, leaving him only in charge of recruiting authors and journalists (not clergy or officials.)[39] The Emperor did not seem to have bought into Hoffmann's project entirely, despite his official sponsorship. He permitted an anti-Hoffmann

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[33] Epstein, p. 524.
[34] Leopold Alois Hoffmann, *Wiener Zeitschrift,* Vol. 1, (Vienna, 1792) pp. 2-6, translated and quoted in Epstein, p. 525.
[35] Hoffmann, *Wiener Zeitschrift,* Vol. 1, p. 233.
[36] Hoffmann, *Wiener Zeitschrift,* Vol. 1, pp. 102-3.
[37] Epstein, p. 524.
[38] Epstein, p. 528.
[39] Epstein, p. 523.

pamphlet written by the liberal Franz X. Huber to be published with censor approval.[40] According to the scholar Robert Roswell Palmer, Emperor Leopold II saw "The Association" as a way to strengthen and influence his own bureaucracy which had failed his elder brother and predecessor Joseph II. Leopold could use "The Association" to build a parallel network of the ultra-loyal within his own bureaucracy, who would spy on other bureaucrats, follow secret orders, and make sure the Emperor's policies were being carried out.[41] The scholar Denis Silagi observed that many of Leopold II's closest advisors were denounced as Illuminati, but they usually remained in office, which indicated the Emperor did not give that much credence to such slander.[42]

Hoffmann, on the other hand, appeared to be a true believer that the Illuminati was everywhere. He continued to spread this idea even after "The Association" fell apart. He saw the agents of Weishaupt constantly frustrating his ambitions and manipulating politics. While "The Association" was secret, Hoffmann liked to drop hints that he had official backing for his projects, and in a later book he claimed that the emperor was personally involved in some of his earlier writings: "He gave me several specific assignments and often insisted that I bring him manuscript drafts so that he could personally revise them. He frequently suggested improvements which I immediately made in his own presence."[43] The admiration was probably not mutual, and the Emperor is said to have once exclaimed "Hoffmann is as stupid as a donkey, but he nonetheless performs valuable services for me as a spy."[44]

The conspiratorial counter-conspiracy was stillborn when Leopold II died unexpectedly in early 1792 at the age of 44, just a few months after the first issue of the *Wiener Zeitscrift* was published. The government of the successor Francis II apparently did not have an interest in the continuation of "The Association" or the *Wiener Zeitschrift,* and Hoffmann could not attain the same close relationship with the new emperor that he had enjoyed under Leopold II.[45] The *Wiener Zeitscrift* ceased publication in 1793.[46]

Eudämonia

This German conspiracist project was revived two years later, in 1794. The new group pushing the conspiracy theory was called the "Association A-M" but they became known as Eudämonists after the name of their propaganda journal: *Eudämonia*. The group was primarily Protestant, but Roman Catholics like Hoffmann also joined the group and contributed to *Eudämonia.*[47] The writers of *Eudämonia* and their opponents both claimed that the journal was

[40] Epstein, p. 532.
[41] Robert Roswell Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: The Struggle*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 163.
[42] Silagi, p. 101.
[43] Epstein, p. 542.
[44] F. X. Huber, *Beytrag zur Charakteristik und Regierungsgeschichte der Kaiser Joseph II, Leopold II, und Franz II* (Paris [?], 1800), p. 117, translated and quoted in Epstein p. 521.
[45] Epstein, p. 523.
[46] Epstein, p. 524.
[47] Palmer, p. 454.

a continuation of the *Wiener Zeitschrift.*[48] This mistaken idea may have been marketing on the one side and slander on the other, as Hoffmann only published a single article in the new journal.[49] Another member of this group was Ernst August Anton von Göschhausen,[50] who had written the earlier epistolary novel about the subversive plans of the illuminati in 1786.

While *Eudämonia* was not a continuation of the *Wiener Zeitschrift* they were both state-sponsored propaganda journals dedicated to spreading the idea of a malign grand conspiracy of the Illuminati. *Eudämonia's* initial funders were Karl Friedrich, the Margrave of Baden and Ludwig X, the Landgrave of Hessen-Cassel, who agreed to subscribe to the new journal for a hundred copies each. One of Ludwig X's sons also got permission from his father to finance the journal.[51]

Eudämonia was certainly an anti-democratic publication, but it rarely had an article about the advantages of monarchy. Instead the publication fixated on pointing out the evil machinations of the Illuminati order.[52] The magazine regularly offered evidence that the Illuminati order was just underground and still influencing events, and made regular attacks against supposed Illuminati members. It even published private correspondence to "prove" the existence a conspiracy.[53]

This journal was published in the middle of the War of the First Coalition, but the journal was more concerned with ideology rather than the movements of armies. To the propagandists, unsurprisingly, the propaganda war was central, and even more important than the progress of arms against the French Revolutionaries:

> "The Jacobins fight the war of opinions, and their weapons of war… are basically nothing other than a diversion in which one makes large-scale gains to help the secret war of opinions. But as they say again to the monarch: they should only put their whole strength in the war of weapons, and regard the war of opinions as not even worthy of attention. This is the quintessence of Jacobin politics.[54]

The author of this quoted article emphasizes that the revolutionaries spent large sums on subsidizing their subversive publications while the monarchs did little.

Eudämonia changed publishers repeatedly during its short history, as its vituperative attacks against literary celebrities gained it influential enemies that attacked it in turn. The journal also managed to make enemies in the upper echelons of the anti-revolutionary establishment after they began denouncing the chief censor of Vienna[55] once calling him a

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[48] Max Braubach, "Die 'Eudaimonia' (1795-1798). Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Publizistik im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Revolution," in *Historisches Jahrbuch 47*, (Munich: Herder, 1927), pp. 309-339, p. 314.
[49] Epstein, p. 538.
[50] Gustav Krüger, "Die Eudämonisten: Ein Beitrag zur Publizistik des Ausgehenden 18. Jahrhunderts," *Historische Zeitschrift*, Bd. 143, H. 3 (1931), pp. 467-500, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27606592, p. 468.
[51] Epstein, pp. 539-40.
[52] Braubach, p. 317.
[53] Braubach, p. 324.
[54] *Eudämonia oder Deutsches Volksglück: ein Journal für Freunde von Wahrheit und Recht*, Vol. 4, (Frankfurt: 1797), pp 199-200.
[55] Roberts, p. 545.

"salaried Illuminati, and a man who cannot even write correctly."[56] As sometimes happens, the conspiracist propagandists outlived their usefulness to their backers. By 1798 the European political situation had changed and *Eudämonia's* two initial aristocratic backers Karl Friedrich and Ludwig X were busy trying to move closer to revolutionary France after the French victory in the War of the First Coalition in 1797.[57] The publication was banned in the Austrian empire at the end of 1797. The imperial decree banning the journal stated that while the journal published "much that is good and useful, yet they do not effectively refute the dangerous and false principles which they attack….and thereby do more harm than good…"[58] This quarrel with a censor of the leading reactionary state was turned into a small stab-in-the-back legend by the arch-conspiracy theorist of the era, Abbé Augustin Barruel:

> "A society of men of unblemished principles, (if we may judge by their publication, the Eudemonia, right genius) had consecrated their labors in that journal to the unmaking of the intrigues, cunning, and principles of the illuminees. Not a single prince encourages this publication; several have proscribed it in their state, while the most jacobinical publications are allowed a free circulation. The Eudemonia has just been forbidden in the Austrian States, under the specious pretext, that its object and views are good, but that it makes principles known that are not sufficiently refuted. As a proof, however, that they were much better refuted than the Illuminees could wish, we need only observe, that the Gazette Litteraire of Gotha, the leading paper of the Sect, announced the prohibition before it was even known in Vienna. - The reader will be less surprised at the artfulness of the pretext, when he learns, that two of the censors, who are to pronounce on the literary productions, are the well-known Illuminees Sonnenfels and Retzer, who, had it been for a journal of another stamp, would have reclaimed the liberty of the press in its favor."[59]

Analyzing The First Generation of modern Conspiracists

The writers of both *Eudämonia* and the *Wiener Zeitschrift* did not see their main task as the preservation of traditions and the status quo from the challenge of the Enlightenment. Instead, they were obsessed with exposing and combating the conspiracy that they believed was using the Enlightenment as a tool to usurp power. The writers of *Eudämonia* and the *Wiener Zeitschrift* did not really think they were ultimately fighting new ideas, but that they were fighting a group of usurpers. They believed their foes were of two kinds, dupes and liars. The ideas of representative government, freedom of the press, emancipation etc. were not really ideological threats in their own right but a smokescreen for a conspiracy.

For example, this first generation of Grand Conspiracy theorists not approach censorship as a tool to prevent decadence, as might be expected from traditional conservatives. To them censorship was primarily a defensive weapon to combat the scourge of Illuminati propaganda. They believed the Illuminati would craftily shapeshift and find new routes and arguments for propaganda undermining legitimate authority while its agents would worm its way into the very organs of censorship themselves. Therefore, a free press would not be a level playing field or a "marketplace of ideas" where defenders of the status quo could compete with

[56] *Eudämonia*, (Nuremberg: 1798) Vol. 6, p. 542.
[57] Epstein, p. 543.
[58] *Eudämonia*, (Nuremberg: 1798) Vol. 6, p. 281-287, translated and quoted in Epstein, p. 545.
[59] Baurrel, Vol. 4, p. 317.

the ideals of the Enlightenment, it was a fixed match. The other side was cheating and had nearly limitless power and resources to shape public opinion and slander its opponents.

If one believes one is fighting such a powerful enemy, all kinds of exceptions to rules of moral behavior are allowed, and a strong ruler with an all-pervasive secret police is necessary. Hoffmann decried the idea of secret societies, but he probably considered the clandestine nature of "The Association" as not hypocritical but as necessary to prevent its detection and infiltration by the nearly all-powerful Illuminati. Likewise *Eudämonia* while concealing the identity of its authors and publishers, repeatedly argued that anonymous authors or publishers should be strictly forbidden.[60] The Eudämonists would not have thought of this as hypocritical behavior, because they believed they were fighting a power that liberally used anonymity or pseudonyms. Before a state existed that could effectively oppose Illuminati propaganda, the Eudämonists would have regarded practicing what they preached as a kind of unilateral disarmament.

Barruel and Robison - the popularizers of the Grand Conspiracy

The two most famous writers of this first generation of modern conspiracy theories were Abbe Augustin Barruel (1741-1820) a French Jesuit and John Robison (1739-1805) a Scottish scientist and inventor. They wrote their first works independently, but came to similar conclusions. Both used the writings of Hoffmann and the Eudämonists as sources, believing them to be true. Both Barruel and Robison believed that a conspiracy infiltrated the French government to ease the path to revolution, manipulated the French king, and also controlled the French people with propaganda. They believed that this was not a one-off occurrence, but that the conspiracy was continuing its machinations throughout the world, and that it had to be exposed. The conspiracy they described used the powerful ideas of liberty and equality and the "tyranny of kings" to destroy the monarchy and the religion of France so that the conspirators could rule behind the scenes.

Barruel and Robison wrote the first great works of modern conspiracism. Their books injected belief in conspiracy theories into mainstream European thought. These ideas from Barruel and Robison were picked up and expanded on by propagandists and other conspiracy theorists. Their impact can still be seen today when present-day conspiracy theorists talk about the Illuminati or the "New World Order." Of the two authors, Barruel was the better known. As we have seen, Barruel was not the first person to claim that some kind of Freemason/Illuminati and/or Philosophe conspiracy was responsible for the French Revolution, but he was the most widely read author to promulgate these ideas. Before the Napoleonic era was over his *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* had been translated into English, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch,[61] and Polish.[62] The English conservative statesman Edmund Burke, sick and shortly before his death, wrote a letter to Barruel praising his first volume and offering to donate money to give the book "a great circulation in France.[63] This letter has been an embarrassment for non-conspiracist admirers of Burke ever since.

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[60] Braubach, p. 328.
[61] Roberts, p. 195.
[62] See Barruel, *Historia Jakobinizmu Wyjęta z Dzieł Księdza Barruel*, Karol Surowiecki trans., 1812.
[63] Edmund Burke, *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke: Volume 10, Index*, (Cambridge University Press / University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 38-39.

An example of Barruel's lasting impact in the early 19th century is the article on Œconomists (Economists) in the 1801 edition supplement to the Encyclopedia Britannica. The article begins: "Œconomists, a sect of philosophers in France, who have made a great noise in Europe, and are generally believed to have been unfriendly to religion."[64] This article quoted Barruel at length as he described the nefarious plot of the Œconomists to prepare the way for anti-Christian propaganda by spreading literacy in the French countryside, all under the guise of setting up state-funded schools to improve agriculture. The article was shortened in subsequent editions, but the pirating and plagiarism of this reference work in other encyclopedias ensured that Barruel's ideas were spread even further. By 1823 the sixth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica still kept the basics of the conspiracy theory intact in the much shorter entry on Œconomists:

> "a sect of French philosophers who obtained this name in consequence of directing their attention and researches to objects of political economy, and in particular to the improvement of the departments of finance. The views of these philosophers, among whom are reckoned the celebrated names of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Condorcet, have been variously represented; by some as directly hostile to all regular government, and by others as unfriendly to religion."[65]

The idea of an evil conspiracy of French anti-Christians called Œconomists was apparently widespread enough that William Playfair, the editor of the 11th edition of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations,* included a section in that book excusing Smith's acquaintance and agreement with some French economists.[66] Without citing Barruel he uses several passages to illustrate the Œconomists role in the conspiracy, but explains that the French Œconomists had not started out with evil intentions, but the evil philosophers "formed the design of uniting themselves with the œconomists, and of assuming the appearance of being œconomists themselves. This was very unfortunate for the œconomists, who did not see into the design, and who were soon absorbed into that great regular body of the illuminati…"[67]

In his first volume Barruel only focused on Voltaire's associates and the French Encyclopedists as the source of the French Revolution, and later in his second volume emphasized the Freemasons (though he did say he would address the Illuminati later in the introduction to his first volume.) Barruel read Robison's book, which was about the Illuminati, around when he published his first volume. Barruel was quite impressed with Robison's book, and the third and fourth volume of Barruel's work is an obvious attempt to splice much of what Robison wrote about the Illuminati into Barruel's earlier theory that involves the Philosophes and the Masons.

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[64] George Gleig, "Œconomists," *Supplement to the Third Edition of* the *Encyclopædia Britannica: Or, A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Miscellaneous Literature*, Volume 2, Part 1, (Edinburgh: John Brown, 1801), p 307.

[65] "Oeconomists," *Encyclopedia Britannica, Sixth Edition, Vol XV,* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1823), p. 124.

[66] William Playfair is credited as the inventor of the line graph, the pie chart, and the bar chart. He had previously written a tract against the Jacobins in 1796. (See article on him in the *Encyclopedia of Research Design*, Neil J. Salkind ed., (SAGE Publications, 2010.)

[67] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, (Hartford: Peter B. Gleason & co., 1811), p. xv.

Both Barruel and Robison's books point to the tools of the conspiracy as revolutionary propaganda combined with court intrigue and other clandestine subterfuge. They claim that all kinds of people were part of the revolutionary web: courtiers, publishers, tutors, naturalists, even members of the clergy. The Illuminati used freemasonry to place their agents in influential positions all over Europe, so they could all rise in unison when the time is right in a particular country. They wrote that the Illuminati had a vast network of informers all throughout Europe. The Illuminati's main weapon against detractors was calumny, though they did not hesitate to also use poison or the dagger.

For anyone who believed just a small portion of the story told by Barruel and Robison the political implications would be enormous. Not only would the French Revolution be the result of a preconceived plan, but the plan had been carried out by a vast and powerful network of subversives commanded by tyrants-in-waiting. This vast organization had mostly managed to stay concealed.

It is important to point out here that these books were not antisemitic, at least, no more antisemitic than any other work of the early 19th century. The beginning of the age of the anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was still a few decades away.

As with the earlier post-Revolution conspiracy theorists, a key role in bringing the French Revolution about was supposedly played by the evil advisors to monarchs who were actually in on the conspiracy. This is a clear continuation of the kind of court intrigue and monarchical conspiracies that history abounds with in the pre-democratic age. (According to Barruel's first volume, Frederick the Great himself was in on part of the evil plot.) The innovation popularized by Barruel and Robison was the idea of a manipulation of politics by the manipulation of public opinion. The idea that a sovereign could be manipulated by controlling the information presented to him was very old, as the previous chapter demonstrated. Barruel and Robison applied this same idea to the manipulation of a supposedly sovereign people by presenting them false information via a secretly controlled press. A people lacks the wise advisors, the intelligence services, and the dread responsibility to protect the realm that a king has, so they are (in Barruel and Robison's opinion) more easily swayed by conspirators.

To reiterate an idea mentioned earlier: the application of this age-old idea to the democratic age necessitated a belief in a super-powerful and super-competent conspiracy. A conspiracy to merely manipulate a monarch is within the realm of normal human experience; it is feasible with enough plotters who are close to the king and a bit of cash to bribe others into silence. In a country where sovereign power is diffused the challenge gets much more difficult. The larger and more complex a society the larger and more well-resourced and coordinated the conspiracy to control it must be. If an incredibly complex event like the French Revolution had been planned and coordinated, then the group which planned and coordinated it must be incredibly powerful. Rather than avoiding such an idea, the conspiracy theorists insisted that:

> "According to the plan contrived by the conspirators, we shall see that France was in the first place to be inundated with journals, all stimulating the people to complete the grand work of their liberty. By dint of libels and most odious calumnies against Lewis XVI and his queen; they were to eradicate every sentiment of affection from the heart of

> the subject. They next bethought themselves of stirring up the foreign powers, that Lewis XVI being engaged in war without, might fall an easier prey to intrigue within. …"[68]

Barruel's first two volumes: not sourced from state propaganda

It is useful at this juncture to discuss Barruel's first two volumes written before he too became obsessed with the Illuminati. Barruel is best known today for the first volume of his conspiracy theory series. This book, makes hardly any mention of the Illuminati and was apparently not sourced from German-language propaganda. In this first volume Barruel blames the French Revolution on a conspiracy of Philosophes, with Voltaire as the ringleader. The main source for his first volume is the collected works of Voltaire published by Pierre Beaumarchais. From reading the letters included in this collection Barruel believed he could detect coded language and trace the first signs of the plots that became the French Revolution. Barruel believed this discovery of his was made possible by a blunder of the plotters: "either the adepts, blinded by their success, were persuaded that the publicity of this monstrous conspiracy, could only add new lustre to its chief, or that the Editors themselves were ignorant of the fact, or in fine, that being scattered and dispersed through forty large volumes of letters, to all sorts of persons, and on all sorts of subjects, no man could at once seize the thread of a conspiracy, the work of many long years."[69]

The core of the conspiracy, according to Barruel, was the *Encyclopédie*, a massive work compiled between 1751 and 1772 which Barruel described as "a vast emporium of all the sophisms, errors or calumnies, which ever had been invented against religion, from the firsts schools of impiety, until the day of their enterprize; and these were to be artfully concealed, that the reader should insensibly imbibe the poison without the least suspicion."[70] Dennis Diderot, one of the most creative of the generation of Philosophes, was the chief editor of the *Encyclopédie*. The *Encyclopédie* was compiled to preserve knowledge of all kinds and make it accessible to any reader. It was full of contributions from intellectuals of many religious and philosophical backgrounds, and included many articles that were considered less than theologically sound. It was condemned by the Roman Catholic church, placed on the list of prohibited books, and suffered continuous censorship and threats of being totally shut down by elements of the French state. The last ten volumes of the first edition had to be published in Switzerland. The Encyclopedia used cross-references to skirt around censorship and send readers to articles with unexpected satirical asides or attacks on sacred cows, and identified the authors of articles in order to absolve Diderot and his co-editor Jean d'Alembert of responsibility for any literary subversion.[71] [72] Barruel saw a sinister purpose behind this playful method of avoiding censorship. Behind the popularity of the *Encyclopédie*, reaching 25,000 subscribers,[73] Barruel saw evidence of a plan to spread apostasy through Europe.

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[68] Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 260.
[69] The Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism*, Vol. 1 (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1799), p. 16.
[70] Barruel, Vol. 1, pp. 32-33.
[71] Walter E. Rex, "Diderot, Dennis" in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, Alan Charles Kors ed., (Oxford University Press, 2002), Online Edition, 2005.
[72] Raymond Birn, "Encyclopédie," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*.
[73] Ibid.

The plan of the Philosophes also involved the destruction of the Jesuits[74] the infiltration of the French academy[75] and then a coordinated plan to spread impious works throughout Europe.[76] Their plan involved spreading ideas about the earth's antiquity (to discredit scripture among the learned,)[77] surrounding the French king with atheistic and deistic advisors,[78] the assassination of Gustavus III of Sweden,[79] and duping and corrupting the public through scripted fake debates in coffee houses that ensured their side won[80] and impious propaganda spread by a supposedly "free" press that was actually under the conspiracy's control. The spread of literature "at first only impious, but latterly both impious and seditions."[81] was the last and largest phase of the conspiracy, and culminated in the previously mentioned plot of the Œconomists to spread literacy and then bad literature into the French countryside.

Barruel alleged that this last part of the conspiracy was the most decisive: "it is an incontrovertible fact that France owes the misfortunes of the revolution to the great abuse of the press."[82] Barruel was a firm believer in censorship, and saw it as an essential defense for true religion since "he who pleads for license and impiety, will carry more weight than the most eloquent orator, who vindicates the rights of virtue and morality. The religious apologist requires a serious and an attentive reading, with a steadfast desire of finding the truth, and such a study fatigues, whereas, depravity requires none…"[83] The French government did not censor this inundation of impious works because the censor Guillaume-Chrétien de Lamoignon de Malesherbes was a member of the conspiracy, or at least its protector.[84] The list of the conspirators Barruel believed were involved in Voltaire's conspiracy included almost every other luminary of the age whose work is read today by students of the French Enlightenment: Diderot, D'lambert, Rousseau, Condorcet, and Turgot.

Barruel did not come up with this idea of a Philosophe conspiracy on his own. The idea that a conspiracy of Philosophes was responsible for the revolution existed, in France in the first year of the Revolution,[85] and indeed the idea of a conspiracy of French Philosophes also predated the Revolution. The paranoid might have seen the merciless literary and social science of Paris, full of cliques and gossip, as a large conspiracy even before the Revolution. In fact a few years before his death an embittered Rousseau complained of an organized "philosophic sect" led by his enemies "who have become the arbiters of public opinion through

[74] Barruel, Vol. 1, p 57.
[75] Barruel, Vol. 1, p 77.
[76] Barruel, Vol. 1, p 79.
[77] Barruel, Vol. 1, pp. 79-80.
[78] Barruel, Vol. 1, p. 137.
[79] Barruel, Vol. 1, p. 123.
[80] Barruel, Vol. 1, pp. 101-102.
[81] Barruel, Vol. 1, p. 139.
[82] Barruel, Vol. 1, p. 139.
[83] Barruel, Vol. 1, p. 139.
[84] Barruel, Vol. 1, pp 139, 141.
[85] Nigel Aston, "Burke and the Conspiratorial Origins of the French Revolution: some Anglo-French Resemblances," in *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theory in Early Modern Europe*, Barry Coward and Julian Swann eds., (England: Ashgate, 2004), p. 215.

the art of intrigue."[86] Rousseau, one of Barruel's main bogeymen, complained bitterly that his enemies circulated fabricated writings under his name (while preventing him from seeing the documents)[87] He accused this "secret confederation" of deliberately manipulating the education of the young and turning them against Rousseau and his opinions. Just like the conspiracy Burrell describes, Rousseau wrote that the group masks the "blackness of their plot" with a "veneer of humanity"[88] and that they "kept the principal secret of it among a small number of conspirators. They let the remaining men see only what was necessary to get them to collaborate."[89]

> "In my explanation, a small number of clever, powerful, conspiratorial people, united for a long time, deceiving some people by false appearances and stirring up others by passions to which they are already only too inclined, brings everyone together against an innocent person whom they have carefully accused of crimes while depriving him of every means to absolve himself. The other explanation requires that the most hateful of all generations suddenly transform itself completely and without exception into as many celestial angels for the sake of the lowest scoundrels whom they insist on protecting...Which of these two assumptions appears the more reasonable and the more admissible to you?"[90]

In his second volume Barruel explained how and why this anti-Christian philosophe conspiracy managed to become an anti-monarchical conspiracy with coordinated cells and subversive activity all throughout France and indeed Europe: "the Occult Lodges of Freemasonry."

Barruel, having himself been brought into a lower-order of Freemasonry at one point,[91] was careful to avoid tarring the whole group as plotters. Instead he claimed that the Manicheans, a heretical and (according to Barruel) anti-monarchical movement from the 3rd century AD had cloaked its true origins with stories of the Mason's spiritual descent from the Templars or the Druids[92] and had spread Freemasonry through Europe to build a network to eventually accomplish their goal of destroying all monarchies and Christianity.

> "They are that motley crew followers of Manes, who during many ages, spreading from the East into the West, inundated France, Germany, Italy and Spain at the time of Frederick the Second; they are that horde of sectaries known by the names of Albigeois, Cathares, Patarins, Bulgares, Begars, Brabanters, Navarese, Bearnese, Coteraux, Henriciens, Leonists, etc. etc[93] ..."It is to be met in every age. Crushed at first time in Italy, France, and Spain, it spreads anew from the East in the eleventh century. The Knights templars adopt its mysteries, and the dissolution of the order lends a pretense to new-model their games. ..The times and manner of the age may vary the forms or modify the opinions, but

[86] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques: Dialogues (Collected Writings of Rousseau)*, Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly eds., (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2012), pp. 236-237.
[87] Rousseau, p. 177.
[88] Rousseau, p. 180.
[89] Rousseau, p. 181.
[90] Rousseau, p. 181.
[91] The Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism,* Vol. 2, (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1799), p. 152-153.
[92] Barruel, Vol. 2, p. 197.
[93] Barruel, Vol. 2, pp. 220-2.

> the essence remains; it is always the pretended light of Liberty and Equality to be diffused' it is the Empire of pretended Tyrants, whether religious or political, of Pontiffs, of Priests, of Kings, of Christ himself, which are to be destroyed...The degrees and mysteries are multiplied and precautions are redoubled (p. 232) lest they should be betrayed; but their last oath is always hatred to the God who died on the cross - hatred to the Monarch seated on the Throne.[94]

Using their connections all over Europe and America (Barruel calls Benjamin Franklin an "ancient adept" of the plot)[95] they coordinated insurrection and, having fused with the Philosophe conspiracy[96] (despite Voltaire's attachment to monarchy)[97] managed to bring down France.

After one reads the first two volumes of Barruel, one might be a bit disappointed at the motivations he gives to the leaders of the plots. Barruel relates that Voltaire, the ringleader of the Philosophe plot, supposedly orchestrated a grand international conspiracy to smash Christianity because he was jealous of the fame of the Christian philosopher Blaise Pascal and the French Bishop and preacher Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet.[98] In volume 2 Barruel says the plotting Freemason conspiracy was founded by an ancient slave who concocted the conspiracy to revenge himself on the world that had made him a slave.[99] Barruel asserts that the Freemasons are just the latest edition of a society of perennial revolutionaries "to be met in every age"[100] driven on by the abstract ideas of "Liberty and Equality;" but this does not sufficiently explain the sudden, coordinated subversive activities spanning a continent that brought down an empire.

If one accepts the premise that the French Revolution was brought about by a conspiracy, there ought to be a powerful centrally-coordinated group pulling the strings that emerged relatively recently, or at least something that motivated an older conspiratorial network to act suddenly after centuries of dormancy. Weishaupt's Illuminati are the group fingered by both Barruel and Robison that fill this role. Barruel and Robison described Weishaupt's Illuminati as driven by a very human lust for power. The illuminati are classic ruthless usurpers who make the dandy philosophes or Freemason idealists "appear like the faint imaginations of puerility."[101] Here one can clearly see the influence of the propaganda from Hoffmann and the Eudämonists on these two authors.

Sources for Barruel and Robison: Propaganda about the Illuminati

Robison only published one volume about his conspiracy theory of the French Revolution, and he placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Illuminati, working

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[94] Barruel, Vol. 2, pp. 231-232.
[95] Barruel, Vol. 2, p. 236.
[96] Barruel, Vol. 2, p. 236.
[97] Barruel, Vol. 2, pp. 4-8.
[98] Barruel, Vol. 1, p. 3.
[99] Barruel, Vol. 2, pp. 224, 231.
[100] Barruel, Vol. 2, p. 231.
[101] The Abbe Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism,* Vol. 3, (New York: Isaac Collins, 1799), p. 5.

through corrupted Freemason agents. Unlike the first two volumes of Barruel, Robison immediately presented a clear and compelling explanation behind the antics of the plotters:

> "Their first and immediate aim is to get the possession of riches, power, and influence, without industry; and to accomplish this, they want to abolish Christianity; and then dissolute manners and universal profligacy will procure them the adherence of all the wicked, and enable them to overturn all the civil governments of Europe; after which they will extend their operations to the other quarters of the globe, till they have reduced mankind to the state of one undistinguishable chaotic mass."[102]

According to Robison, Weishaupt wanted to destroy religion because it was one of the main obstacles to their plan "to rule the world by the means of his Order."[103] He wanted to destroy or subvert governments so he could rule unhindered, but always in secret: "By this plan we shall direct all mankind. In this manner, and by the simplest means, we shall set all in motion and in flames. The occupations must be so allotted and contrived, that we may, in secret, influence all political transactions."[104] Robison re-produced a lot of the published writings of the Illuminati and dwelled on the mechanisms of the conspiracy: an international group of plotters, headed by Weishaupt, with agents and adepts all over Europe, most of them believing that they were trying to spread the ideals of the Enlightenment. Only the highest levels of the conspiracy would have any knowledge of the true materialistic, deceptive, and usurping aims of the order. Robisom wrote that the republican propaganda spread throughout France because of the French support of the American Revolution created an opportunity for the Illuminati,[105] but the Illuminati ultimately caused the French Revolution. The Illuminati's main link between their base in Germany and the land of their greatest revolutionary success was the Comte de Mirabeau,[106] the onetime ambassador of France to Prussia. (Ironically, we now know that the Comte de Mirabeau was in fact secretly an Austrian agent during the French Revolution.)[107]

Robison claims to be greatly in the debt of Hoffmann for his ideas about the Illuminati[108] and he quotes long passages from Hoffmann's autobiography to describe their plots. Robison claims that the first time he learned of the all-important link between the Illuminati and the Paris Freemason lodge and the Duke of Orleans (who Robison credits as the main Freemason operative who acted during the French Revolution[109]) was when he read the book *Höchst wichtige Erinnerungen zur rechten Zeit über einige der allerernsthaftesten Angelegenheiten dieses Zeitalters* written by Hoffmann in 1795.[110]

As mentioned before, Robison's book was read by Barruel[111] and evidently greatly influenced his third and fourth volumes of *Memoirs illustrating the history of Jacobinism.* In his

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[102] Robison, p. 165.
[103] Robison, p. 168.
[104] Robison, p. 117.
[105] Robison, p. 278.
[106] Robison, pp. 214, 284-5.
[107] Munro Price, "Mirabeau and the Court: Some New Evidence," *French Historical Studies*, Winter, 2006, pp. 37-75.
[108] Robison, p. 316.
[109] Robison, pp. 291-292.
[110] Robison, p. 316.
[111] Barruel, Vol. 3, p. x.

last two volumes Barruel also claimed to have used the works of Hoffmann as a source, along with other German anti-Illuminist propagandists who worked with Hoffmann like Johann Stark.[112] Under the influence of Robison, Hoffmann, and others pushing the Illuminati conspiracy theory, the plot that Barruel proposed in his last two volumes closely followed Robison's, which has the effect of downgrading the Philosophes and Freemasons he described earlier into mere tools of Weishaupt's Illuminati. Barruel recanted a few things he had written in the first two volumes based on new evidence. Barruel came to believe that the Illuminati conspiracy had initially thought that France would be the last country to be successfully infiltrated, but the situation in France changed and the Illuminati conspiracy gained two valuable agents at the heart of the kingdom: Mirabeau and Talleyrand.[113] Barruel spent more time than Robison illustrating the extent and activities of the Illuminati conspiracy in Europe. For example, he claimed that they had enabled Napoleon's easy capture of Malta by infiltrating the Knights Hospitaller[114] and that their numerous brethren located in Philadelphia and Boston were also menacing the nascent United States and were involved in supporting a rebellion in Ireland.[115] [116] Barruel used the work of Hoffmann published in *Eudämonia* to claim that the Illuminati had stopped the anti-Illuminati work of Emperor Leopold II and a nascent alliance between the Prussians and the Austrians against the Illuminati by assassinating Leopold II.[117]

The birth of the Grand Conspiracy Theory:

The works of the post-French Revolution conspiracy theorists are a transitional stage away from the old historical narratives of conspiracies involving court intrigue and manipulating or replacing a king and into new, "democratic" conspiracy theories about ruling a country by manipulating a sovereign people. Monarchical deceptive-usurper narratives still play an important role in these theories, often as an early part of the plan of the conspirators to engineer a revolution. For example, Barruel highlighted a supposed statement by one Illuminee about old-style manipulation by a court:

> "...there ought to be but two Princes in Germany - these Princes should be Illuminees, and so surrounded and led by our adepts, that none of the profane could approach their persons. The greater and lesser offices of the state should be solely entrusted to members of our Order; and the advantages of the order should be attended to, tho' in direct opposition to the interests of the Prince."

Barruel felt the need to answer a possible objection: if the Illuminati were interested in placing all of Germany under two monarchs and were interested in "normal" courtly intrigue, did that not make them some type of monarchists? Barruel answered with the accusation that the

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[112] Barruel, Vol. 3, p. ix.
[113] Barruel, Vol. 4, pp 209-210.
[114] Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 298.
[115] Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 301.
[116] Leiden is among the places Barruel says were dominated by Illuminati: "Deputies from Leyden are delegated to the central committee; and the brotherhood at Leyden had made a greater progress in proportion, both in numbers and sedition, than it had at Amsterdam." (Barruel, Vol. 4 p. 291.)
[117] Barruel, Vol. p. 307-308.

Illuminati are being deceptive, and that higher levels of the Illuminati would still eventually carry out the final, "democratic" revolution: "as a preparatory step the illuminees only seek to destroy all the lesser powers in order to form one or two great states in Germany; but that will not change the fate decreed in the higher mysteries for these greater Princes of the German nation, or for all Princes and nations in general."[118]

If one believes in the existence of such a conspiracy, one that has superpowers of deception and has already managed to bring down one of the greatest states on earth, there is an obvious need for emergency measures to strengthen the state to resist them. The more powerful one's supposed enemy, the more powerful and all-pervasive the organizations to combat the threat must be. Censorship would be essential. Of course, there is always the danger that a powerful police force or surveillance system or state censor would itself be infiltrated and subverted by this all-powerful conspiracy and turned against the legitimate order, which is why this first generation of conspiracy theorists would tend to support absolutist states. To reiterate, the enemy these believers in this first version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory believed they were fighting is reactive and possesses amazing powers of deception, so therefore (though Barruel and Robison did not make this step explicit) the head of state must himself be powerful and capable of reacting to counteract this enemy, and strictures of laws and due process that might delay a leader's response would only help the conspiracy, which was not bound by laws.

An important consequence of a belief in the necessity of censorship and widespread surveillance is an aversion to republican government, as it lacks a strong center of authority to act with secrecy and dispatch to combat the grand conspiracy. An open government is an open invitation to secret conspiracies. Barruel made some nods towards the republics in the Netherlands and the United States and also tried to warn them about the Illuminati conspiracy, but he also advised that any country with a parliament should make sure its deliberations were always held in secret, lest they allow plotters to use the parliament as a propaganda tool by continually sending in petitions that bring up certain topics, which would then be printed in newspapers.[119]

Another important consequence of Barruel and Robison's conclusions is an aversion to accommodation or reform to appease liberals or restive interest groups and partially move towards Enlightenment ideals. The post-French Revolution conspiracy theorists did not believe they were fighting ideas but rather that they were fighting an organized, powerful, and ruthless group, who could not be appeased. The enemy could in fact engineer the kinds and intensity of dissent and grievances in society in order to pressure the government to reach a "compromise" that is in fact in line with the conspiracy plans.

Barruel summed up his fear of demi-reforms along with his fear of a free press in a passage warning the UK:

> "One species of illusion appears to be the favorite engine of Jacobinism, I mean that theory of essays in government, and those demi-reforms. No art has been more powerfully played off on the English nation than this; let the people be put on their guard against this illusion; let them be

[118] Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 158.
[119] Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 399-400.

> taught, that France also began by essays and demi-reforms; I need not hint at their consequences."[120]

Conclusion

The popular works of Barruel and Robison preserved a particular species of late 18th century German propaganda and spread it throughout the Western world. This chapter identified the narrative adopted by Barruel and Robison as the first generation of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The patterns of thought for analyzing the politics of court intrigue were applied to the new democratic age, and while their conclusions were obviously untrue, the stories these conspiracy theorists told were attractive. At this early state the outlines what would become standard tropes of the Grand Conspiracy Theory emerge: seeing an enemy plot behind the French Revolution and any other manifestation of republican revolution, an aversion to enlightenment thought and republican government, and a penchant towards supporting censorship. In this case, Austrian and later German state-funded propaganda incubated and encouraged the development of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, funding publications which spread the idea and provided "evidence" to back up claims of its reality. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, this was not be the last instance of state propaganda pushing (as was likely in the case of Leopold II, cynically) a version of the Grand Conspiracy theory that is taken up by a subsequent generation that truly and earnestly believes it to be true. The immediate political consequences of Barruel's and Robison's work were not very dramatic, but they laid the foundations for an ideology of conspiracism that eventually had an enormous impact on history.

The first signs of the decisive influence of this first generation of the Grand Conspiracy Theory on politics was not really evident until after the Napoleonic wars, when it was adapted to the new post-Napoleonic and post-French Revolutionary era, and when Metternich justified the expansion of police powers to fight what he believed was a nearly all-powerful international conspiracy that threatened civilization. This helped lay the ideological foundations for a style of the modern police state. These developments are the subject of the subsequent chapter.

[120] Barruel, Vol. 4, p. 384.

Chapter 4: Metternich, Paranoia, and the Police State

"I do not wish to imply that conspiracies never happen… They become important, for example, whenever people who believe in the conspiracy theory get into power."[1] -Karl Popper

"The Assassins were, themselves, as we have seen, a branch of the Ismailites, the proper Illuminati of the east. The institution of their lodge at Cairo; the various grades of initiation; the appellations of master, companions, and novices; the public and the secret doctrine; the oath of unconditional obedience to unknown superiors, to serve the ends of the order; all agree completely with what we have heard and read, in our own days, concerning secret revolutionary societies..."[2]
- Hammer-Purgstall, 1818

Very little new was added to conspiracist narratives between 1800 and 1814.[3] Perhaps this was the effect of the Napoleonic wars, which gave Europe real threats and real violence to worry the collective European mind. The myth of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that was propagated after the French Revolution did not die out, though, and it emerged with renewed vigor in a new form as soon as Europe was again at peace. In this form it influenced the thought and the policies of the most famous and possibly the most influential figure of the post-Napoleonic era, the Austrian diplomat and later chancellor Klemens von Metternich.

Metternich was chosen for an in-depth study in this chapter for three reasons: First, Metternich's life and correspondence has been meticulously documented. The Austrian archives from this period are open and much of his confidential correspondence has been published, allowing modern scholars to gain deep insight into his activities, motives, and beliefs. Second: Metternich played an important role in spreading the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory – specifically a Masonic plot against the throne and altar - by influencing the Roman Catholic church to adopt a version of it as an official belief. Finally, Metternich's life, particularly between the years 1819 and 1825, are an excellent case-study in the effects a leader's belief in a conspiracy theory can have on his decisions. Metternich's belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory resulted in him trying to extend censorship, systematic police surveillance, and political repression into as many countries as he could, with varying degrees of success, and ensured

[1] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), Kindle Edition, pp 306-7.
[2] Joseph Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, Oswald Charles Wood trans., (London: Smith and Elder, 1935), p. 217.
[3] Roberts, p. 248.

his permanent hostility to any change of government in Europe. His belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory made his European system brittle, and probably contributed to its shattering by nationalism later in Metternich's career. Metternich did not invent the Austrian police force, which had existed before he came to power, nor did he invent modern censorship, which he considered an essential instrument of influencing the press. Metternich had considered state influence over the press necessary to prevent revolution at least since he had been Austrian ambassador to Paris. He thought that non-revolutionary European governments, and especially the Habsburg Monarchy, had erred in not constantly communicating their views to the public, because they thought it was useless or undignified.[4]

This chapter will begin with a brief sketch of the Austrian police system before and during the era of Metternich and examine the changing justifications for the police and censorship under the influence of a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The chapter will then examine the life and opinions of Metternich particularly between the years 1817 and 1830, to chart the transformation of Metternich into a true believer in the Grand Conspiracy Theory and the effect this transformation had on his policies. Metternich may have been influenced by conspiratorial propaganda, but not necessarily the conspiratorial propaganda produced by the Austrian Empire in Metternich's youth (discussed in the previous chapter) which he never appeared to endorse. There is some evidence that one of his key influences was conspiratorial propaganda from the Islamic world, which a subordinate of Metternich fused with the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This chapter will then further illustrate the linkage between propaganda and the spread of the Grand Conspiracy Theory by describing Metternich's success in getting the Roman Catholic Church to endorse a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, which can be found in the 1821 papal bull *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo.* Finally, this chapter will examine the interesting case of the Salis-Soglio brothers, who under the influence of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, planned to start a revolution against the non-existent Illuminati, believing that the Austrian Empire was actually under their control.

Conspiracy theory and the Austrian police

Surveillance by state agents was not invented in 18th-19th century Europe. State surveillance organizations have existed since ancient times. The more paranoid a ruler, the more detail and reach he would demand of his agents. The innovation that took place in Europe around the time of the French Revolution was that the justification of a police surveillance network, censorship, and repression was no longer couched in terms of typical dynastic politics but instead as a defense against a kind of political/religious heresy, epitomized in the revolutionary French state. The development of this idea can be observed in the history of the Austrian police.

Even before the French Revolution, the Austrian Emperor Joseph II expanded the role of the police to include monitoring dissent and controlling public opinion, starting with the 1785 "Patent concerning Freemasons" which required all freemason lodges to be registered and enabled the police to supervise Masonic activities.[5] The Austrian police chief Pergen at the time

[4] Donald E. Emerson, *Metternich,and the Political Police,* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), p. 137.
[5] Wangermann, p. 37.

was agitating for the transformation of the Habsburg police forces from multiple bureaucracies aiming at general public order to a single organization whose main task was to defend the realm against internal enemies.[6] Pergen once wrote that police activities properly consist of three main tasks: 1. To monitor public opinion and "take measures accordingly, 2. To discover the "hindrances which secretly lie in the way" of the police. 3. To discover and eradicate the "dangerous enemies of internal security which undermine it."[7]

Censorship was an important part of the Austrian political apparatus after the French Revolution. An imperial Patent published in early 1790 by Joseph II stated: "It is generally recognised that books, the contents of which are calculated to undermine the principles of all religion, morality, and social order, to promote the disintegration of all ties uniting states and nations, are in fact dangerous in their effects, and it is therefore a duty towards humanity to prevent, as far as possible, the circulation of such books."[8] Censorship was established throughout the Austrian empire a few days later, with the Austrian chief of police instructing all governors to review the contents of the newspapers in their province before they were published.[9] In 1798-99 all lending libraries and reading rooms were shut down in Austria.[10]

The subsequent wars with France elicited an understandable further police response from the Austrians as they attempted to monitor all French agents and stop French propaganda.[11] However, the reign of Leopold II actually witness a roll-back of the powers and centralization of the Austrian police.[12] The fact that the emperor who did a great deal to spread propaganda about the Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy also reduced the ability of his police to cope with this supposed threat is another piece of evidence that he cynically sponsored this propaganda without really believing in the massive imaginary threat.

However, after Leopold's death in 1793 the police ministry was restored to its former power by his successor Francis I, who also gave it responsibility for censorship in 1801.[13] In the meantime Pergen, who was once again head of the police, had become convinced that secret societies were responsible for European revolutions. He stepped up surveillance and harassment of Masonic organizations, all of which basically ceased to exist in Austria by late 1793.[14] In March 1803, in the period of peace between the Treaty of Lunéville (1801) and The War of the Third Coalition (1805-1806) Pergen wrote to the Holy Roman Emperor: "...secret philanthropic societies are now pushing more than ever, they act according to certain plans, and, although scattered throughout Europe, but in close connection with one purpose, they change their tactics according to time and circumstance, direct all their efforts to shatter the foundations of the Christian religion and the monarchical constitution."[15]

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[6] Clive Emsley, *Gendarmes and the State in Nineteenth-Century Europe,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 153.
[7] Alan Sked, *Metternich in Austria, An Evaluation,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 124.
[8] Wangermann, p. 45.
[9] Wangermann, p. 48.
[10] Robert Justin Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe*, (Routledge, 2010), p. 51.
[11] Wangermann, pp. 64-65, 125.
[12] Wangermann, pp. 94-95, 98.
[13] Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, (Routledge, 2013), p. 47.
[14] Wangermann, p. 126.
[15] August Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress,* (Leipzig and Vienna: F. Tempsky and G Freytag, 1913) p. 7.

Here Pergen justified his repressive measures using the Grand Conspiracy Theory: that supposedly philanthropic secret societies were in fact deceptively planning to destroy legitimate authority. Pergen and those that agreed with him might have been influenced by Hoffman's propaganda campaign that spread conspiracy theories during the reign of Leopold II. As mentioned in the previous chapter, if one accepted the premise that this massive conspiracy existed, then a rational response would be the formation of a large police force to check this threat. However, the size of the Austrian force even under Pergen and later under the influence of Metternich was vanishingly small compared to modern police forces. In 1815 the size of the Austrian imperial police force was twelve men and thirteen censors. The ministry could call on a regular police department in Vienna that numbered about thirty five or on the district police forces throughout the empire, which around the capital numbered about 500. The basic structure of the Austrian police remained the same until 1848.[16]

Many scholars of the period have objected that this relatively small force hardly qualifies the Austrian empire as a "police state," and they have a point. Compared to the size of the police forces of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th and 21st century, the 19th century Austrian police force was miniscule, but this may simply have been because the techniques of police control and the systems of managing large bureaucracies had not yet been developed. The important change in policing during this period was a shift from justifying the control and surveillance of subjects as part of the "normal" defense against foreign agents or dynastic subversion to using the supposed existence of a hidden conspiratorial network trying to accomplish a usurpation-by-deception in order to justify inspecting and policing the political ideas of the populace and stepping up surveillance to ferret out this conspiracy. The realms of propaganda and of secret agents were seen as the main places of combat against a huge conspiracy (often associated with freemasonry) that was using modern political ideas as camouflage in its quest to seize power.

This conspiracy theorist justification of policing is different from a totalitarian-utopian justification for a police state, though both can be believed in and used alongside each other. The latter is concerned with reshaping society and totally controlling its population, the former is more a reaction to an emergency in the form of an immensely powerful and deceptive conspiracy. This does not immediately require total control, but as paranoia grows deeper and the conspiracy seemingly continues to persist even in the face of repression and censorship those who believe they are fighting a grand conspiracy require more and more police power and censorship to combat it, and possibly even police powers and censorship abroad to squelch the bases of the conspiracy that still lay beyond their reach.

One can observe this progression in the career of Metternich, particularly between 1815 and 1830. Metternich became convinced of an imminent threat to legitimate authority and supported increased repression and censorship to combat it. The conspiracy theory he believed in was in many ways an updated version of the version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory pushed by Barruel and Robison during the previous generation. In the rest of this chapter we will examine the origins of this post-Napoleonic conspiracy theory and observe the possible influence of conspiratorial propaganda on Metternich that may have catalyzed his belief in the

[16] Alan Sked, *Decline and Fall*, p. 47.

Grand Conspiracy Theory, and then trace the effects of this belief on the policies Metternich endorsed.

Carbonari and Tugendbund: post-Napoleonic updates to the Grand Conspiracy Theory

Napoleon rose to power through the opportunities created by the French Revolution. One might expect him to play an important role in the conspiracy theories that succeeded those of Barruel and Robison. Instead, partly due to the propaganda he used during his reign and partly due to events after his reign, he was generally considered an enemy of the "Jacobin cabal." Napoleon seized power in 1799 in the Coup of 18 Brumaire, and he justified his actions with the myth of a Jacobin conspiracy that was about to seize power again in Paris. Napoleon continued to play on fears of a Jacobin plot for the rest of his reign. In 1800 Napoleon blamed an assassination attempt on him on a Jacobin plot and deported 130 supposed plotters, even though it was known that the actual plotters against his life in this case were royalists.[17] The perception that the "Jacobins" were anti-Napoleon was important to the subsequent development of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Europe, particularly regarding Germany and Italy.

After the Napoleonic wars myths surrounding two anti-Napoleonic conspiracies in Germany and Italy played an important role in European political history and transmitted the tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to the next generation. Specifically, this was idea of a powerful and secretly anti-religious international conspiracy of usurpers that cloaked itself in liberalism and nationalism. The organizations identified as the main arms of the conspiracy in this second generation were the Carbonari (in Italy) and the Tugendbund (in Germany.) These two organizations were real, but the myths surrounding them may have had larger effect on European history than the actual organizations did. The Tugendbund no longer existed after the fall of Napoleon, but it served as an inspiration to one later secret society that played an important role in Russian history (the Decembrists) and would also be an important bogeyman for a generation of conspiracy theorists. The Carbonari by contrast was an actual secret network that existed after the Napoleonic wars, one that had some successes in Italy in the early 19th century. The Carbonari was an Italian quasi-Masonic secret society or movement (possibly lumping several different Italian societies together) that probably started around 1808, and whose numbers were estimated to have reached from between 4,000 to hundreds of thousands at the end of the Napoleonic era, depending on who was doing the estimation.[18] Being a secret society, the precise aims and motivations of the early Carbonari were somewhat obscure, but the events of 1820, which will be discussed later in this chapter, revealed that the Carbonari had a liberal, pro-republican bent.[19] While the recorded rituals of the Carbonari indicate that the organization either sprung from or imitated the freemasons, there are a number of other fanciful stories about their origins, ranging from surviving adherents of the Knights Templars or the ancient cult of Mithras, to simply an organization growing from a guild of charcoal-burners, the

[17] David Nicholls, *Napoleon: A Biographical Companion*, (ABC-CLIO, 1999), p. 131.
[18] Adam Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror*, (New York: Basic Books, 2015), Kindle Edition, Location 2904.
[19] Anthony H. Galt, "The Good Cousins' Domain of Belonging: Tropes in Southern Italian Secret Society Symbol and Ritual, 1810-1821," *Man*, New Series, Vol. 29, No. 4, December 1994, p. 786.

origins of their name.[20] They were probably a conglomeration of patriotic Italian networks that resisted Napoleon when his forces occupied Italy, and that continued to exist in Italy after his defeat. The early 19th century Italian historian Carlo Botta explained their origins in this manner, drawing attention to the fact that the "kings" of southern Italy at this point were Joseph Napoleon, Napoleon Bonaparte's elder brother, and Joachim Murat, Napoleon's brother-in-law, which added an anti-monarchical tinge to the anti-French resistance:

> "Some of the most zealous republicans having, during the persecution that raged against them, withdrawn themselves to the highest mountains and the deepest recesses of Abruzzo and Calabria, bore with them an extreme hatred to the Sovereign, not only because he had been their persecutor, but because he was likewise King: nor were they less inflamed with animosity against the French, as well because they had destroyed their own republic, and other similar governments… Thus, living amid steep rocks, hidden valleys, and wide solitudes, their hatred against kings and against the French continually augmented… The English, who kept possession of Sicily, were appraised of this angry spirit, and conjectured that it might serve to excite an insurrection against the French..."[21]

The Carbonari shared this anti-Napoleonic origin with the Tugendbund, the other supposed major "secret society" of the post-Napoleonic era. The stories about the Tugendbund after Napoleon were much more legendary than historical and even had an international flare that the Carbonari only acquired later. The German Tugendbund ("League of Virtue") was founded in 1807 or 1808 in Prussia as a society of German officers who openly aimed at a revival of morals in Germany, but who also secretly worked against Napoleon and French influence after Prussia was defeated by Napoleon and forced into an alliance with France. The society was declared illegal by Prussia in 1809 under pressure from Napoleon, but it continued its secret work preparing Germany for revolt against the French. The Tugendbund may have been instrumental in several risings against the French in Germany during the Napoleonic era.[22] [23] While the secret society seems to have gone defunct by the end of the Napoleonic era, the idea of a secret society that was at the same time intensely patriotic and acting against the express wishes of the Prussian government lived on.

After Prussia switched sides in 1815 and started fighting Napoleon again, a Prussian scholar and advisor to the king named Theodor Schmalz was accused of having been a member of the Tugendbund. This was basically accusing him of having been secretly working against the king, who had been an ally of Napoleon until recently. Schmalz responded with conspiracy-theory laden pamphlet that not only denied any serious involvement with the

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[20] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror,* Location 2898.
[21] Carlo Botta, *Italy During the Consulate and Empire of Napoleon Buonaparte*, (Philadelphia: Towar & Hogan, 1829), p. 199.
[22] *The Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. 9, A. W. Ward, G. W. Prothero, Stanley Leathers eds., (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1906), p. 328.
[23] Thomas Frost, *The Secret Societies of the European Revolution, 1776-1876*, Vol. 1, (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), pp. 182-208.

Tugendbund but also denounced the organization as a "secret vehmic police."[24] [25] Schmalz was referring to another semi-legendary secret society, the Vehmic courts, a.k.a the *Vehme* or *Fehm* or the "secret tribunals of Westphalia" which were courts that existed in some parts of Germany during the Middle Ages, particularly in the 14th and 15th centuries. It was said that these sometimes secret courts only dealt out the punishment of death. The members of these secret quasi-vigilante courts reportedly recognized each other by secret signs and the supposed penalty for stumbling upon a secret court session was death.[26] With these stories of vigilantism, secrecy, hidden signs, and swift death, legends of the Vehmic courts were easily attached to the same kinds of romantic and secret society narratives that were also attached to the Freemasons in the 18th and 19th centuries. The folklore scholar Thomas Keightley said that this organization "has been, by the magic arts of romancers, especially of the great archimage of the north, enveloped in darkness and mystery, and awe, far beyond the degree in which such a potential investiture can be bestowed upon it by the calm inquirer after truth."[27] Schmalz compared the Tugendbund to the Vehmic courts to emphasize the Tugendbund's independence from "actual" legitimate government. The Vehmic courts of the past could pass sentence against a noble who had abused his powers and punish him without recourse just as the Tugendbund could denounce a Prussian official for helping the French, even if the Prussian official was carrying out the king's orders.[28]

The most important and lasting impact of Schmalz' 1815 Tugendbund pamphlet was his accusation that the organization had reconstituted itself, and was influencing Germany through conspiracy and fear and trying to move towards the unification of Germany and the introduction of representative government:

> "The Bund was subsequently abolished by law… Other connections formed in silence afterwards, perhaps on the ruins of those mentioned earlier… But the existence of such connections spread fear among the citizens of all the Germans lands, and filled the legal citizens of the Prussian states with displeasure. Rabid propagandists [*Schmähreden*] against other governments go out from these groups and [also] those mad declamations of a union of all of Germany under one government (in one Representative-system as they call it)..."[29]

The pamphlet further alleged that this network of German nationalists was trying to get their people into positions to influence the government (which is an echo of the old "usurpation-by-deception" theme from previous ages). The pamphlet drew a direct parallel between the propaganda of the supposed German Tugendbund with the propaganda from the French Jacobins, and portended Jacobinical violence in the future: "(the Tugendbund) teach that real particular duties should be heinously breached in the name of dreamt up universal duties. As

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[24] C Edmund Maurice, *The Revolutionary Movement of 1848-9, in Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Germany,* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1887), p. 11.
[25] Theodor von Schmalz, *Berichtigung einer Stelle in der Bredow-Venturinischen Chronik für das Jahr 1808,* (Berlin: 1815), p. 7.
[26] Lynn Thorndike, *The History of Medieval Europe*, James Thomson Shotwell ed., (Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, 1917), pp. 534-535.
[27] Thomas Keightley, *Secret Societies of the Middle Ages*, (Charles Knight & Company, 1837), p. 332.
[28] Schmalz, p. 7.
[29] Schmalz, p. 11.

the Jacobins did earlier with 'humanity,' they conjure up 'Germanness' in order to make us forget the oath through which each of us is connected to his prince."[30]

In an echo of Hoffman, Barruel, and Robison, possibly even directly inspired by them, Schmalz was re-treading the Jacobin conspiracy theories for the post-Napoleonic era, with a secret group trying to usurp and then seize power after an upheaval:

> "These people want to bring German harmony into Germany by a German war; unite the government through bitter mutual hatred; and by means of murder, plunder, and rape (the latter even more plainly preached) of the old German honesty and breeding. They do not think of concord within the union, and of the endurance of the foundations of their constitutions. They want the new upheaval, they do not want a dormant state, they actually want nothing but themselves."[31]

The Prussian king agreed with the pamphlet and singled out Schmalz for honor. This pamphlet caused an angry response from some of the German writers implicated in Schmalz' smear campaign.[32] A craze against the Tugendbund started and caused quite a stir in Prussia. Later General Genisenau commented on the propaganda value of this Tugendbund craze: "I suspect that those who have made it their business to spread this notion, with the exception of one or two, do not believe in such a secret society themselves but have merely been trying to arouse alarm as a tool for their persecutions…"[33]

This idea spread beyond Germany. In France the police bureaucrat (and one-time secretary of Robespierre) Simone Duplay wrote a long report in 1823 describing his version of the history of anti-monarchical secret societies in France.[34] Duplay begins his history of these secret societies not with the Illuminati or the French Revolution (which he participated in) but with the patriotic reaction of groups of Germans to their legitimate monarchical governments allying with the "usurper" Napoleon. Duplay contrasts these anti-Napoleonic and anti-monarchy groups with French restorationist conspirators who fought against Napoleon in France. According to him, the former were responsible for the wave of secret societies.[35]

Simone Duplay was likely referring to the idea that the Tugendbund or some kind of inter-state conspiracy born out of the resistance to Napoleon was plotting to start a revolution. This idea, combined with evidence of the actual existence of secret networks of patriots who had resisted Napoleon, took root in the minds of some European leaders and persuaded them that they were facing a new wave of Jacobinism, though this time in a different guise.

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[30] Schmalz, p. 12, translated in Geoge S. Williamson's, "'Thought Is in Itself a Dangerous Operation': The Campaign Against 'Revolutionary Machinations' in Germany, 1819-1828," *German Studies Review*, Vol. 38, no. 2, (May 2015), p. 293

[31] Schmalz, p. 13.

[32] Maurice, p. 11.

[33] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror,* Location 3415.

[34] Alan B. Spitzer, *Old Hatreds and Young Hopes: The French Carbonari against the Bourbon Restoration*, (Harvard, 1971), p. 190.

[35] Léonce Grasilier and Simon Duplay, *Secrétaire de Robespierre. Simon Duplay (1774-1827) et son Mémoire sur les sociétés secrètes et les conspirations sous la Restauration*, (Paris, 1913). p. 18.

Metternich's initial non-paranoid response to the Carbonari/Tugendbund conspiracy theory

Metternich was undoubtedly aware of the Tugendbund scare in Prussia, and Austria's interest in Italian affairs and control of northern Italy made conflict with the Carbonari possible The initial the response of Metternich and other Austrian officials was guarded, in contrast to the claims of some officials from the Papal States. In mid-1816 a senior Papal official Ercole Consalvi warned Metternich about a malicious group of sectarians with extensive networks and numbers that is "most certainly directed against existing governments, especially in Italy, and that the independence of the peninsula is the goal of their maneuvers." Consalvi said that the group lacked sufficient resources to accomplish its plot, but that their numbers were growing. [36] Austrian officials were mostly unconcerned about this incipient post-war Carbonari movement. For example, in March 1817 the Papal secretary of State Cardinal Pacca told the Austrian diplomat Anton Apponyi that the Carbonari, along with the Masons and the Guelphs, were attempting to deceive the Austrians about the future succession of the Kingdom of the Two Sicily's. Apponyi told Metternich that the alarm of Pacca was premature, as they had insufficient real information about the state of this supposed Carbonari/Freemason conspiracy in Italy. Apponyi called the attention of Cardinal Pacca to a different problem that he required information about: the degree of British influence on the Italian revolutionaries, and whether any British involvement was a project of the British government or just of "a few exalted heads from the opposition."[37]

Like his subordinate Apponyi, in 1816-17 Metternich, while keeping a careful eye on Italy, was dismissive of these reports of an incipient uprising. He called the reports from the Vatican "the spectres of a madman." His police minister Count Sedlnitzky was similarly sanguine about Italy.[38] Still, Metternich was interested in discovering connections between Freemasons and these reported societies in Italy, and the Austrians continued their communications about these matters and dispatched two secret agents to Italy to investigate further.[39] One of these agents set up an intelligence network of six people in Italy and Switzerland to watch for unrest.[40]

The Austrians' stance of guarded vigilance combined with confidence seemed to have been justified in June of 1817. A group of Carbonari attempted to kick-off an uprising in the town of Macerata in the Papal States, but it was a total flop. Only some of the conspirators showed up for the revolt, and they scattered when they unexpectedly heard gunshots. The gunshots they heard had actually been fired by some members of the conspiracy. The authorities rounded up a large number of people believed to be involved in this failed revolt and ended up sentencing 10 to prison for life and 20 to the galleys.[41]

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[36] Charles Van Duerm, *Correspondance du Cardinal Hercule Consalvi avec le Prince Clément de Metternich*, (Leuven and Brussels: Polleunis & Ceuterick and Louis Lagaert, 1899), pp. 138-139.
[37] Van Duerm, p. 176-77
[38] Emerson, p. 61.
[39] Emerson, p. 62.
[40] Emerson, p. 69.
[41] Van Duerm, pp. 138-139.

Subsequently the idea that the ructions in Italy were part of a larger European conspiracy came to the attention of Metternich. In July 1817 Metternich forwarded to Sedlnitzky a report from the Dutch Police Minister that said a new secret society called "the League of Virtue" (in German:"*Tugendbund"*) was preparing to hold a meeting in Florence or Bologna in August 1817.[42] However, Metternich still did not believe that this organization was a serious threat. At some point in 1817 Pacca proposed a joint operation between all the governments on the Italian peninsula to simultaneously arrest and try all the ringleaders of the secret societies in one joint operation. Metternich rejected this idea not only because it was likely to create more enemies than it captured, but also because he thought there was insufficient evidence to bring these ringleaders to trial: "What court would convict without adequate proofs?"[43]

Metternich's first conspiracy theory: a fear of the sects

In June 1816 Pope Pius VII issued a bull against Bible societies, organizations devoted to disseminating copies of the Bible all over the world. Responding to questions about them from the bishop of Poland (which had been partitioned by Russia, Prussia, and Austria) the Pope called Bible societies "this most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined…"[44] The Pope requested copies of the Polish Bibles distributed by the Bible societies so that "it may be ascertained, after mature investigation, that certain errors lie insidiously concealed therein…"[45] This bull suggested that the Bible societies were a conspiracy to corrupt the people using subtly doctored translations of the Bible without commentary approved by the Roman Catholic Church. With Austria occupying a large portion of Poland, the Roman Catholic Metternich certainly knew of this bull, and it may have influenced his own conspiratorial reaction to the Bible societies.

Metternich had an audience in August of 1816 with the Scottish missionary Rev. Robert Pinkerton, who was working for the British and Foreign Bible society. Pinkerton described the meeting as cordial and Metternich, while politely raising the objection that disseminating scripture was not the Roman Catholic way, asked for a more concrete plan of the future activities of the society in the Austrian Empire that he could present to the Emperor for his approval.[46] What followed was an Austrian ban on the activities of all foreign Bible societies.[47] This ban caught the attention of the Russian Emperor Alexander I, who was a patron of the Russian Bible society. He inquired via his foreign minister as to why these organizations had been banned in Austria.[48] Metternich's saccharine and disingenuous reply told the Russian emperor that Bible societies could not be shut down in the Austrian domains because they

[42] Emerson, p. 75.
[43] Emerson, p. 79.
[44] Verney Lovett, *Remarks on the Pope's Bull Against Bible Societies, by a Friend of the Bible*, (Belfast: 1817), p. 3.
[45] Lovett, p. 4.
[46] *Thirteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, (London: Tilling and Hughes, 1817), pp. 87-88.
[47] Roger Steer, *Good News for the World*, (Monarch Books, 2004), p. 119.
[48] Nathan Feinberg, "The Jewish Question at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1818," in *The Progression of International Law, Four Decades of the Israel Yearbook on Human Rights,* Yoram Dinstein and Dr. Fania Domb eds., (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2011), p. 139.

never existed, and then explained that anyway the careless dissemination of scripture was contrary to Roman Catholic practice.[49]

At the same time that he sent this, Metternich penned a long letter to his representative in St. Petersburg revealing a very different set of reasons for his actions. This letter demonstrates that Metternich was thinking about the Bible societies as another aspect of the larger emerging problem of religious "sects which are beginning to threaten the peace of many countries, especially in Central Europe" and declared them "an object worthy to occupy the attention of Cabinets."[50]

> "The human mind generally revels in extremes. A period of irreligion, a period in which pretended philosophers and their false doctrines have tried to overturn all which human wisdom has recognized as intimately connected with the eternal principles of morality, has been necessarily followed by an epoch of moral and religious reaction. Now, every kind of reaction is false and unjust, and it is only given to wise and consequently strong men to be neither the dupes of false philosophers nor the sport of false religions. If anyone doubted the intimate connection which exists between the moral and material world, proofs would be found in the march and progress of certain maladies of the mind, which present all the symptoms of true epidemics. For some time the Methodists have made great progress in England and America; and this sect, by following the track of all the others, is now beginning to extend its proselytism to other parts of Europe. There are at the present moment, principally in Upper Germany and Switzerland, hundreds of thousands of individuals morally affected by mysticism… Some of these sects have an exclusively moral and religious object. Others betray decided tendencies towards a political malady, and as Jacobinism, even extreme as it is, still admits of further extremes..."[51]

This letter indicates that Metternich was already familiar with elements of the Grand Conspiracy Theory created during the French Revolution. He saw the Bible societies as a part of a larger movement that could potentially re-invigorate the revolutionary tendencies that had erupted with the French Revolution. This was in spite of the fact that this new movement was one of piety rather than revolutionary impiety. One of the most extreme examples Metternich wrote about in this letter were the Poeschlianers, a cult that preached that Napoleon was the forerunner of the antichrist and that the end of the world was at hand. They were said to have engaged in human sacrifice on one occasion and were subsequently suppressed by the government in the same year that Metternich wrote this letter.[52] Metternich described them as attracting "young men, and especially young women, [who] have given themselves up to the most frightful torments, and even to death, in order to render themselves worthy of Paradise."[53]

Metternich regarded these sects as a growing problem, and he even suggested that revolutionaries, indeed the same French revolutionaries that had overthrown the French kingdom not long before, would soon use these new movements to re-start the era of revolution:

> "It is doubtless, worthy of the wisdom of the great Powers, to take into consideration an evil which it is possible, and perhaps even easy, to stifle in its beginning, but which can only gain in intensity in

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[49] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, Prince Richard Metternich ed., Alexander Napier trans., (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1881), p. 65-70.
[50] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 58.
[51] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, pp. 58-59.
[52] Rev. Dr. John Alzog, *Manual of Universal Church History*, Vol. III, Thos. S. Byrne trans., (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1878), p. 910.
[53] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 59.

> proportion as it spreads. The Courts must not forget that there exist in Europe disturbers of the public repose... These men, desperate, and forced from their last intrenchments, regard as their own property all questions of disorder whatever, and it is perhaps reserved for us to see the editors of the '*Nain Jaune*'[54] and the '*Vrai LIberal*'[55] [two journals associated with revolutionaries] preach against the vanities of this world, and to see Carnot and Barere make themselves the apostles of the New Jerusalem. [*NB: Lazare Carnot and Bertrand Barère were two former members of the infamous French Committee of Public Safety,[56] one of whom {Barere} was also a Freemason[57] and an associate of the Duc d'Orleans,*[58] *and the other {Carnot} was accused of being a Freemason, a charge his son felt compelled to refute in Carnot's biography.[59]*] This subject deserves the most serious attention; it is connected with the well-being of society and the tranquility of States more closely than is supposed, and the great Courts should not be slow to take into consideration the means of checking the designs of these fomenters of a new kind of revolution."[60]

Metternich urged his representative to the Russian court to "sound the Russian Cabinet on this subject, and to inform us of its ideas" and reflected that police cooperation between states was necessary to stem this threat as "...Governments of small States...can only expel a dangerous individual from so small a territory, and who, if they endeavor to save their own people from the contagion, can only pass it on to their neighbors."[61]

In this letter one can observe Metternich's paranoia about these new religious movements, his belief that his old enemies the revolutionaries could use these new movements to their advantage, and his emphasis on international cooperation to shut down what he saw as a global threat, extending even to America. Metternich's mixing of themes from the Grand Conspiracy Theory with his own sectarian hatreds and fears was nothing new. Recall the 1791 *The Veil Lifted for the Curious* briefly discussed in the previous chapter that described the post-Revolutionary French National Assembly as Freemason-controlled, and the Freemasons as secret anti-Roman Catholic atheists who represented the quintessence of the Reformation,[62] or the pre-revolutionary 1786 novel *Exposure of the Cosmopolitan System* that described the Illuminati plot to destroy states as part of the long-term machinations of the Jesuits to destroy the more enlightened nations of northern Europe.[63] Metternich's fears illustrated in his 1817 letter shows that he was not primarily afraid that a sectarian enemy was at the core of a supposedly secular conspiracy, quite the reverse. He feared that these pietistic movements could be used by secular, even atheistic revolutionaries to accomplish their revolutionary ends.

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[54] This influential journal specialized in caricatures. See Robert Justin Goldstein, *Censorship of political caricature in nineteenth-century France*, (Kent State University Press, 1989), pp. 101-102.

[55] This Brussels-based journal was in fact edited by the Swedish Count Adolph Ribbing, who participated in the plot to kill Gustav III of Sweden. See Hildor Arnold Barton, *Scandinavia in the Revolutionary Era: 1760 - 1815*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 366.

[56] R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of Terror in the French Revolution*, (Princeton University Press, 2005).

[57] Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power,* Vol. 2, (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 192.

[58] Otto J. Scott, *Robespierre: The Voice of Virtue,* (Transaction Publishers, 2011), p. 254.

[59] Hippolyte Lazare Carnot, *Memories Sur Carnot Par Son Fils*, Vol. 1., (Paris: Pagnerre, 1861), p. 98.

[60] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 60.

[61] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, pp. 60-61.

[62] Lefranc, *Le Voile levé pour les curieux*, p. 31.

[63] von Göschhausen, *Enthüllung des Systems der Weltbürger-Republik*, p. 276, Quoted in Epstein, p. 99.

Propaganda as history becomes a conspiracy theory: the case of Hammer-Purgstall

Metternich would have been aware of the work of Robison and Barruel, as their books were popular at the time. There is no evidence that he put much stock in their theories. Metternich was stationed in Paris as a diplomat during the reign of Napoleon, and his memoirs give no indication that he believed in a sinister conspiracy that was responsible for starting and/or directing the French Revolution, be it Illuminati, Freemason, philosophe, or otherwise. However, as the letter to his subordinate in Russia about the danger of sects as well as other evidence indicates, by 1819 he had begun to think along the lines of what Barruel and Robison had written: that a coordinated international conspiracy of subversives working in secret societies were attempting to usurp legitimate authority. His restraint before 1819 in Italy indicates he had not given himself over to total paranoia, and while he believed there were Italian "subversives" possibly communicating with elements abroad there was no threat of imminent conflagration. By the early 1820s he was more paranoid and given to the belief that coordinated secret societies and their liberal propaganda were on the verge of destroying Europe's hard-won peace and stability. This change in attitude may be partly due to his exposure to a fusion of the Grand Conspiracy Theory with a different one, one that was hundreds of years old and from the Islamic world.

In 1819 the incredibly busy Metternich wrote that he had a "bad habit" of reading before going to sleep, and that this reading was strictly for pleasure "as a rule I read nothing that touches on my work. My spare time is taken up with scientific literature, discoveries, travel and even simple narratives."[64] On at least one occasion, however, we know that he read a historical book for pleasure, one that appears to have had an impact on the way he thought about the conspiracies he believed he was fighting. This book was the 1818 *Die Geschichte der Assassinen aus morgenländischen Quellen*[65] - "The History of the Assassins. Derived from Oriental Sources." The author of the book was Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, a diplomat who worked directly for Metternich in the Austrian diplomatic service. This work was written as history, but unfortunately it mainly regurgitated Middle Eastern conspiratorial propaganda from hundreds of years earlier. Perhaps partly under the influence of Metternich, or even attempting to please him, or perhaps merely under the influence of Barruel and other popular conspiracy theorists of the early 19th century, Hammer-Purgstall integrated the history of the Assassins, a.k.a the medieval Nizari Ismaili sect of Islam, into the Illuminati/Freemason/Jacobin conspiracy theory propagated by Hoffman and popularized by Barruel and Robison. This section will examine Hammer-Purgstall's biography and his connection to Metternich and then summarize medieval Muslim anti-Ismaili propaganda and analyze Hammer-Purgstall's text as a conspiracy theory, one created by interpreting medieval propaganda as history.

In addition to his work for the Austrian government, Hammer-Purgstall was a pathbreaking orientalist, one of the first European scholars dedicated to studying the languages, history, and culture of the Islamic world. He founded the first orientalist periodical the *Fundgruben des Orients.* His greatest scholarly work was a history of the Ottoman Empire

[64] G. De Bertier De Sauvigny, *Metternich and His Times,* Peter Ryde trans., (London: Darton, Logman & Todd, 1962), p. 7.
[65] Joseph Von Hammer, *Die Geschichte der Assassinen aus morgenländischen Quellen*, (Stuttgart, J. G. Cottaschen, 1818.)

which remained a standard text in the subject up to the mid-20th century.[66] Hammer-Purgstall was a popular historian, and he was able to independently get private financing to publish some of his works.[67] The historian Paula Sutter Fichtner has examined Hammer-Purgstall's relationship with Metternich in detail and her research shows a tense working relationship marred by personal friction as well as policy differences about how to approach the Ottomans.[68] According to his autobiography, Hammer-Purgstall was under the impression that Metternich was not a fan of his work. This is despite the fact that their views about the dangers of Freemasonry and liberalism became quite close. The historian Robert Irwin believes Hammer-Purgstall's negative take on the Freemasons might have been influenced by Metternich.[69]

According to Hammer-Purgstall's autobiography, Metternich read his history of the Assassins while traveling to the Metternich family estate in Bohemia in May 1818. Hammer-Purgstall recorded his surprise when Metternich praised his work when they met after this, and that Metternich even demonstrated that he had actually read it: "This is the only one of my works, about which he has ever said something obliging to me, but it is also, I believe, the only thing he has ever read from me... he praised both the treatment and the style…"[70]

Metternich may have enjoyed *The History of the Assassins* not only because the work is entertaining and exotic, but also because it tied together several different things that Metternich worried about, and suggested that they were all working in concert. It provided historical backing for the idea of an atheistic international revolutionary conspiracy capable of infiltrating governments, spreading seductive anti-state propaganda, coordinating disruptions over long distances, and even cynically using religious fanatics to accomplish their ends. The texts that Hammer-Purgstall used were part of a counter-Ismaili propaganda campaign that was hundreds of years old.

The ideological challenge of the Ismailis to medieval Islamic regimes was discussed in chapter 2. The core of the Isma'ili argument against the various Islamic regimes in the Middle Ages was that they were all usurpers, and that the Isma'ili imam was the only true leader of Islam. They developed a well-resourced propaganda effort to spread this message. In response to the ideological threat from the well-oiled Isma'ili propaganda machine, Sunni scholars and the Abbasid caliphate began an anti-Isma'ili propaganda campaign. In addition to attacking the claims of descent of the Isma'ili imams, the counter-campaign criticized their supposed libertinism and disregard for Islamic law, and eventually created a "black legend" that accused the Isma'ilis of being secret atheists who were infiltrating Islam in order to destroy it.[71] In 1095 AD the great Sunni scholar Al-Ghazali wrote about a secret, graded initiation system of the

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[66] Robert Irwin, "An Orientalist Mythology of Secret Societies," in *Orientalism and Conspiracy Theory*, Arndt Graf, Schirin Fathi, and Ludwig Paul eds., (I.B. Tauris, 2011), Kindle Edition, Location 1589.

[67] Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526-1850,* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), p. 146.

[68] Fichtner, p. 134.

[69] Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, (Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2004), p. 20.

[70] Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Erinnerungen und Briefe*, Herausgegeben von Walter Höflechner and Alexandra Wagner eds., (Online resource, University of Graz, 2011, version 1) available at http://gams.uni-graz.at/hp/pdf/5_Exzerpt.pdf, p. 123.

[71] Farhad Daftary, "The 'Order of the Assassins:' J. von Hammer and the Orientalist Misrepresentations of the Nizari Ismailis," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 39, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), p. 72

Isma'ilis, the last stage being atheist.[72] This legend appears to have been believed by many prominent non-Isma'ili Muslims, and the charge of secret atheism was regularly leveled against Isma'ilis for centuries. The most famous political writer of medieval Iran, Nizam al-Mulk, devoted the second part of his *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings* to describing the menace of the secretly-materialist Isma'ilis. (He was himself probably assassinated by one in 1092 AD.) He traced their ideological origin all the way back to the pre-Islamic Mazdakians[73] (a heretical sect of Zoroastrianism, c. 520 AD.)

> "From the foregoing it has been shown that the religions of Mazdak, the Khurrama-dins and the Batinis [Isma'ilis] all have a common origin; the constant object of them all is to overthrow Islam. At first, in order to lure the Muslims, they display themselves as truthful, virtuous, abstemious and faithful to The Prophet's family (upon him be peace); having gained power and acquired followers, they try to overthrow and destroy Muhammad's people and Muhammad's religion. Even infidels show greater mercy to Muhammad's people (upon him be peace) than they do."[74]

It is important to point out that there is no real evidence outside of Sunni and Shi'a propaganda that this charge of secret atheism was true. Even the fiercely anti-Ismaili historian Ata-Malik Juvaili (1226-1283 AD) who had access to the complete library and archives of the Nizari Isma'ili citadel at Alamut, Iran, did not back up this black legend, which he believed in, with an Isma'ili source, even though he evidently based most of his history of the Isma'ilis on authentic Isma'ili sources.[75]

This extended anti-Isma'ili propaganda campaign initially made its way into European history through stories brought back by the Crusaders and through the "Old man in the Mountain" legend related by Marco Polo. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall revived this propaganda, and unwittingly published it as history. The story told by the Medieval anti-Isma'ilis of secret atheism, graded initiations, coordinated deceptive propaganda, all leading to an international plot against religion and legitimate rulers is already uncannily close the first generation of the Grand Conspiracy Theory spread by Hoffman, Barruel, and Robison. [76] Hammer-Purgstall saw this similarity as evidence that the medieval Isma'ilis were the ideological ancestors of the Illuminati, the Freemasons, and the whole revolutionary movement in Europe.[77] Hammer-Purgstall also said that the Jesuits themselves "trod in the footsteps of the

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[72] Daftary, p. 73.

[73] Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al Muluk or Siyasat-nama of Nizam al-Mulk*, Hubert Drake trans., (Routledge, 2002), p. 190.

[74] Nizam al-Mulk,. p. 237.

[75] See Juvaini, *Genghis Khan*.

[76] Hammer-Purgstall's book on the Assassins was not even the most direct link he made between slanderous propaganda of the past and the troubles of his present age. Among modern day occultists, Hammer-Purgstall is mainly known for his even more fanciful article of 1818: "Mysterium Baphometis Revelatum." Echoing the accusation Barruel's made two decades earlier, he pointed to the Ophites, an ancient Gnostic sect, as the origins of the Templars (and therefore, the Freemasons). See Joseph Von Hammer-Purgstall, Mysterium Baphometis Revelatum, (Vindobonae [Vienna]: Antoni Schmid, 1818,) p. 37.

[77] Irwin, Location 1642.

Assassins"[78] but that the real parallel was with the Freemasons and the Revolutionaries: "...they (the Isma'ilis) were a kind of Freemasons, whose native country, as we have seen, may really be sought and found in Egypt...As in the west, revolutionary societies arose from the bosom of the Freemasons, so in the east, did the Assassins spring from the Ismailites."[79] He called the Assassins "the Illuminati of the East" [80] and even referred to the Isma'ili headquarters (under the Fatimids) in Cairo as a "lodge" (in German *loge*, as in *Freimaurerloge*.)[81] According to Hammer-Purgstall, the chiefs of the secret Ismaili sect believed "nothing was sacred and all was permitted"[82] like the atheist core of the Illuminati. Just in case the analogy was not clear Hammer-Purgstall spelled it out in a description of Europe's age of revolution:

> "The insanity of the enlighteners, who thought that by mere preaching, they could emancipate nations from the protecting care of princes, and the leading-strings of practical religion, has shown itself in the most terrible manner by the effects of the French revolution, as it did in Asia, in the reign of Hassan II; and as, at that period, the doctrine of assassination and treason openly proceeded from Alamut [*the headquarters of the Nizari Ismailis*], so did the doctrine of regicide produce from the French National Convention, in Jean de Brie, a legion of regicides...The dominion of the Assassins sank under the iron tramp of Hulaku [*the grandson of Genghis Khan*]… After him, the remains of the hydra of Assassination quivered in the remnant of the sect of the Ismailities, but powerless and venomless; held down by the preponderance of the government in Persia and Syria; politically harmless, somewhat like the juggling of the Templars of the present day [likely a reference to the Freemasons], and other secret societies watched by the vigilant eye of the police in France."[83]

While he never stated it explicitly (in this work) Hammer-Purgstall strongly suggests that the Templars were allied with the Assassins or even followers of their doctrine[84] and certainly that they carried on the "eastern" tradition of the Assassins to Europe:

> "We have, more than once, briefly pointed out the analogy which the constitution of the order of the Assassins presents with contemporary or more modern orders; but, although so many points of similarity are found, which can neither be accidental nor yet spring from the same cause, but which, probably, through the medium of the Crusades, passed from the spirit of the east into that of the west, they are still insufficient to make a perfect companion to the order of the Assassins, which, thank Heaven, has hitherto been without parallel. The Templars, incontrovertibly, stand in the next rank to them; their secret maxims, particularly in so far as relates to the renunciation of positive religion, and the extension of their power by the acquisition of castles and strong places, seem to have been the same as those of the order of the Assassins."[85]

Hammer-Purgstall even suggested that "traces of retribution immediately executed which fulfilled the sentence of the order…" could "be found in the proceedings of the Vehme, or

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[78] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 216.
[79] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 217.
[80] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 217.
[81] See the original 1818 German edition: Joseph Von Hammer, *Die Geschichte der Assassinen aus morgenländischen Quellen*, (Stuttgart, J. G. Cottaschen, 1818) pp. 52, 61, and 72 for example.
[82] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 33.
[83] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, pp. 217-218.
[84] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, pp. 129.
[85] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, pp. 216.

secret tribunal, although its existence only commenced two hundred years after the extermination of the order of murderers in Asia."[86] This is a reference to the Vehmic courts, which were also mentioned by Theodore Schmaltz in his attack on the Tugendbund in 1815.

In his history of the Assassins Hammer-Purgstall took centuries-old conspiracy-theory propaganda which he believed to be history and merged it with the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Hammer-Purgstall's tale was of atheistic manipulators using free-thinkers and religious fanatics to threaten a whole region. It held out the possibility that a similar thing might have been happening in Europe with their ideological descendants - that the Freemasons, the Jacobins, the religious fanatics, the "philanthropic" philosophers could in fact all be operating together, coordinated by a single, central group of cynical conspirators. Their main weapon was propaganda, but they could resort to assassination and open rebellion when they had to, drawing from a reserve of fanatics to serve as willing executioners. Purgstall even wrote that the "Old man in the mountain" myth of Marco Polo was given weight by the medieval Islamic sources. This myth related that in some castles in the medieval Middle East there were secret gardens full of all the delights of paradise, where the leaders of the sect would fool youths that they were actually visiting paradise and promise to return them there again if they carried out a suicide mission. Hammer-Purgstall writes that these fanatical killers were given the name "hashishin" (from which we derive the word "assassin") because they would take hashish to either enable the deception by their higher-grade master that they had entered paradise or to drive them on to "undertake anything or everything" due to the effects of hashish on the "fiery imagination of the Arab."[87]

As with all major conspiracy theories, the core of this medieval conspiracy theory related by Hammer-Purgstall was deception. The higher grades of the Isma'ilis were supposedly able to deceive their own followers about their true purpose and even secretly worm their way into influential positions in governments and religious orders. There was really only one remedy against them, they must be smashed and then "held down by the preponderance of the government..."[88] To Metternich and any other anti-revolutionary contemporaries who read and believed Hammer-Purgstall's work, Europe must have looked like a mirror image of the medieval Islamic world during the initial rise of the Assassins. Subversive free-thinkers abounded, propaganda against legitimate governments was everywhere, fanatical religious sects proliferated. There was everything but actual assassins working for a central conspiracy. This exception seemed to disappear in 1819.

The murder of Kotzebue and the Carlsbad Decrees.

Metternich's belief in Hammer-Purgstall's version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory and revolutionary history is most clearly demonstrated in his reaction to the murder of Kotzebue, a conservative German writer who was also working for the Russian government. Kotzebue's writings were popular in Germany, but he was also an outspoken opponent of the German nationalists and the Teutonic antics of students at universities. On March 23rd 1819 a German theology student named Karl Ludwig Sand called on Kotzebue at his home, and after speaking

[86] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 217.
[87] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, pp. 136-138.
[88] Von Hammer, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 218.

with him stabbed him to death before also stabbing himself several times. When the authorities searched Sand they found a proclamation he wrote justifying the murder and calling on the German people to rise up and also a warrant for the murder that had supposedly been issued by a fraternity at the University of Jena.[89]

Metternich's close aid Friedrich Von Gentz wrote to Metternich that the murder produced a sensation in Vienna.[90] Gentz forwarded to Metternich a report on the murder from Varnhagen von Ense, a Prussian minister-resident at Carlsruhe that evidenced the likely influence of the popular work of Hammer-Purgstall: "This statement leads to the supposition that there is some conspiracy and fraternity, which fills all hearts with horror and fear. What can be done against a man who kills himself? Shall the Order of the Assassins be reproduced in the West?"[91]

On April 9th 1819 Metternich, replied to Gentz and asserted: "I have, for my part, no doubt that the murderer did not act simply from motives of his own, but in consequence of a secret league. Here we find great evil and some good, for poor Kotzebue now appears as an argumentum ad hominem which even the liberal Duke of Weimar cannot defend. It will be my care to draw from the affair the best possible results…"[92]

Metternich then made an assertion that clearly indicates the influence of Von Hammer-Purgstall's version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, combining the myths of the Assassins with the idea of the Vehmic courts: "It appears to be quite certain that the murderer of Kotzebue has been the emissary of the vehmic court of Jena, that is to say, a veritable 'haschischin'"[93] Metternich continues, describing the way he believed the murder was carried out, "The University which was to carry out the plan may have been chosen by lot, and which of the fraternity was to follow up the deed by sacrifice of his own life may also have been chosen by lot; and there is no doubt that it was followed out. Many data go to establish this view."[94]

Metternich's aide Gentz saw political promise in the fallout from this assassination. Writing to Metternich in that April 1st letter he remarked how "When we lifted the first warning voice against the excesses at the Wartburg our mouths were stopped with allusions to 'the innocent virtuous efforts of German youth' and their 'meritorious teachers;' and this is what they have come to!" He added that he hoped a result of this "dreadful occurrence" would be that:

> "we shall for some years escape the debates on the freedom of the press in Germany. For I can hardly believe that any State of the Bund would be shameless enough now to expect the carrying out of the freedom of the press by those Governments who have not hitherto sanctioned it. And it is my firm conviction that Austria must seize the first occasion when such a word is uttered in the Bundestag to declare emphatically that she considers the article of the Bund (an article never to be pardoned) that speaks or dreams of uniform arrangements in this matter - which concerns the duties and rights of supremacy and sovereignty - once and for all impracticable and abolished…"[95]

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[89] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror*, Location 3524-3558.
[90] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 256.
[91] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 259
[92] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 260-261
[93] *Memoires Documents et Ecrits Divers Laisses par le Prince de Metternich,* Vol. 3., edited by Prince Rhichard Metternich, (Paris: E. Plon, 1881), p. 235. (Translated separately to highlight Metternich's use of the term "haschischin.")
[94] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 261.
[95] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 255.

Gentz was referring to Article XVIII section D of the 1815 constitution of the German Confederation, which reads "Upon its first meeting, the Diet shall frame laws for the liberty of the press in general…"[96] This document had been signed by Metternich himself just a few years earlier, but according to Gentz the new emergency situation made manifest by the murder of Kotzebue abrogated Metternich's and Austria's consent. Like Hoffman and the Eudaimonists of the previous generation, Gentz and Metternich viewed permitting freedom of the press in the face of an enormous conspiracy of skilled propagandists as a kind of unilateral disarmament. Censorship would be essential to keep subversive propaganda at bay, and the censorship had to be thorough and able to respond to new shifts in the conspirator's propaganda strategy. For example, if the Jacobins switched to pietistic religious preaching to destroy legitimate authority after open revolution had failed one would have to censor pietistic in addition to "liberal" tracts. Even good works that might have connotations useful to a conspiracy would have to be censored. (In 1830 Hammer-Purgstall was prevented from showing a play based on his history of the Assassins, even though Metternich said he saw nothing wrong with it, because the police chief Sedlnitzky objected to the mention of secret societies.)[97]

According to a report from Metternich's to the Austrian Emperor, in late July 1819 Metternich had an audience with the Prussian king in Teplitz, where he pushed him to support more repressive policies in response to the murder of Kotzebue and the attempted murder of another German official by a radical student earlier that month. At that meeting Metternich made a likely reference to the Tugendbund conspiracy theory when he chastened the Prussian king for partial responsibility for this conspiracy that resulted in the assassination:

> "Either the counsel which your Majesty receives is not good or it is badly carried out. The discovered conspiracy is nothing but the action which always follows the teaching. This conspiracy has its origin and its abode in Prussia; the subordinate conspirators are now known, the superiors are still undiscovered, but they are without doubt to be found in the highest region of your own servants."[98]

This accusation apparently linking the Tugendbund to the spate of assassinations, whether it was only a clever ploy by Metternich to make the Prussian King more pliant or represented Metternich's true beliefs, appeared to have worked. This meeting resulted in a joint plan of action where Austria and Prussia agreed to hold two conferences to deal with pressing security problem by rolling back the freedom of the press, supervising the universities, and establishing a central body to investigate the growing revolutionary conspiracy.[99] These conferences eventually resulted in the Carlsbad Decrees, which bound the entire German Confederation to a repressive set of laws designed to combat the clandestine revolutionary menace.

Metternich called delegates from all over Germany to meet at Carlsbad, now the Czech city of Karlovy Vary. This was outside the normal procedure for the German Confederation,

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[96] Douglas M. Gibler, *International Military Alliances, 1648-2008*, (Washington DC: CQ Press, 2009), p. 122.

[97] Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Erinnerungen und Briefe*, p. 209.

[98] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 297.

[99] Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22,* (Odyssey Editions, 2013), Kindle edition, p. 242.

which would have met at the Federal Assembly at Frankfurt. These delegates wrote the Carlsbad Decrees, which were then adopted with no dissent by the Diet.[100] This might have been irregular, but Metternich and his allies believed they were dealing with an emergency situation.

The Carlsbad Decrees included sections on a German-wide press censorship system to suppress any work ""contrary to the dignity of the Confederation, the security of its individual states, or the maintenance of peace and tranquility in Germany" and a section requiring that Universities submit to state surveillance and increased state control.[101] The section on universities specifically prohibited anyone who was a member of a secret society from holding any public office.[102]

The "emergency" nature of the decrees is most evident in the section on press censorship. Section 3 of the "Provisional regulations regarding freedom of the press" reads:

> "Since the current resolution was occasioned by the necessity of preventive measures against the abuse of the press recognized by the Federal Governments under current circumstances, the laws intended for judicial prosecution and punishment of abuses and offenses already committed, to the extent that they should be applicable to the classes of published writings designated in (section) 1, cannot be regarded as sufficient in any Confederal state as long as this resolution remains in force."[103]

These new censorship laws required that all books under 320 pages in length had to be reviewed by government censors before being published.[104] University professors, who were sometimes exempt from censorship in Germany previously, had to now abide by the same rules as everyone else.[105]

The core of the Carlsbad Decrees was the provision for a Central Investigative Committee headquartered in Mainz to investigate the "revolutionary intrigues and demagogic groups." [106] Article 6 stated that the Central Commission could order the immediate arrest of anyone in the German Confederation.[107] These decrees and associated laws extended police surveillance and political repression over all of Germany that hemmed in German political and intellectual development until 1848.[108] At a stroke Austrian-style police surveillance was

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[100] Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith 1820-1823*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), pp 17-18.

[101] George S. Williamson, "'Thought Is in Itself a Dangerous Operation': The Campaign Against 'Revolutionary Machinations' in Germany, 1819-1828, *German Studies Review,* Vol. 38, No., 2, (May 2015): p. 286.

[102] *Volk, Reich und Nation 1806-1918*, Gilbert Krebs and Bernard Poloni eds., (Asnieres: Institut d'Allemand d'Asnieres, 1994), p. 55.

[103] German Historical Institute, "Carlsbad Decrees: Confederal Press Law (September 20, 1819)", from *German History in Documents and Images*, available at http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/1_C_NS3_Confederal_Press_Law.pdf, pp. 1-2, accessed Jan 11, 2017.

[104] Goldstein, p. 123.

[105] T.M. Knox "Hegel and Prussianism," in *Debating the Political Philosophy of Hegel*, Walter Kaufmann ed., (AldineTransaction, 2010), p. 15.

[106] Faculty of Law, Heidelberg University, "Die Karlsbader Beschlüsse vom 20.09.1819," available at http://www.uni-heidelberg.de/institute/fak2/mussgnug/Karlsbad.doc, accessed January 11, 2017.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Williamson, p. 286.

required for all of Germany. The Carlsbad Decrees were followed by a "demagogue hunt" which saw 66 convictions and jail terms stemming from the Mainz Commission between 1819 and 1827. Liberals were purged from the Prussian government and several prominent German professors lost their jobs.[109]

The Carlsbad Decrees have been mainly interpreted as a strong blow by monarchical conservatism against liberalism, but the beliefs of Metternich and the text of the decrees themselves evidence the actual fears of the drafters and the promoters of the law. They feared not democracy or liberalism per se, but that these could serve as tools of a new revolution, bringing murder and chaos.[110]

From secret societies to the *Comité Directeur*

A leader's belief in a large powerful conspiracy can have international implications that go beyond constitutional ones. Even if Metternich believed that the Carlsbad Decrees had been effective enough to stifle any revolutionary rumblings in German lands, it stands to reason that such a large and effective conspiracy would have bases of operation outside of the German-speaking world, and redoubts where they could coordinate activity beyond the reach of police and sovereigns who were wise to them. After all, the Assassins still could contest power in Iran from their famous castle at Alamut even after the destruction of the old Fatimid base in Egypt. The concerns of the Austrians in Italy had already been linked to the murder of Kotzebue by Metternich. In his letter to Gentz after learning of Kotzebue's murder, Metternich wrote that he saw an opportunity to influence the liberal-leaning Russian Tsar's attitude towards Italy: "We shall now very soon see what the emperor of Russia will say… While in Germany Russian agents *propter obscurationem* are murdered, in Italy the Russian agents preside over the clubs of the Carbonari. This abomination will soon be checked."[111] The potential usefulness of this fictional connection between nationalist students in Germany and anti-Austrian subversives in Italy would have been a further reason for Metternich to push the idea, even if he did not initially believe in it himself.

Italy gave Metternich and the other Austrian officials further matters for concern while they were working on instituting the Carlsbad decrees. In contrast to their abortive attempt in 1817, in July 1820 the Carbonari managed to actually create a successful revolution in Naples and Sicily that forced the king of Southern Italy to become a constitutional monarch under a copy of the 1812 Spanish constitution. Metternich was surprised at how quickly the Carbonari succeeded in overthrowing the government in Naples, which showed that the Carbonari were more dangerous than he had previously believed.[112] This uprising happened hot on the heels of another revolution in Spain (starting in January 1820) and other unrest elsewhere in Europe. A conference between Russia, Austria, and Prussia convened at Opava in late 1820 resulted in a joint declaration that these powers "bind themselves, by peaceful means, or if need be by arms" to return any state undergoing a revolution back to "legal order and stability." Another

[109] Goldstein, p. 125.
[110] Williamson, p. 287.
[111] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 26.
[112] Alan Reinerman, "Metternich and the Papal Condemnation of the 'Carbonari' 1821", *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 54, No. 1, (April, 1968), p. 57.

conference in Ljublijana between these same powers authorized Austria to intervene militarily against the revolt in Naples.[113]

Metternich's initial attitude towards this revolution in Italy was different from his reaction to the revolution in Spain, which had started just months earlier. When the Spanish revolution broke out the Austrians sided with the British in discouraging the Russian Tsar from organizing an international intervention to restore the old Spanish regime. Metternich did not think that the revolution in Spain was a good thing, but he believed that foreign intervention would make the problem worse and distract the post-Napoleonic European alliance. He also was suspicious of Russia's true motives in militating for intervention, as the Tsar had been a proponent of liberalism for the last five years.[114] In addition to these diplomatic considerations, Metternich may have initially believed that the revolution in Italy was actually orchestrated by a secret society, unlike the one in Spain which was merely a military revolt that happened to have politically liberal results.

In August 1820 Metternich circulated a memorandum from the Austrian cabinet about the upheavals in Italy to all the courts in Italy. This remarkable document demonstrates that, at least as far as official statements were concerned, the Austrian government had not given itself over to Barruelian conspiracy theories that secret societies had been responsible for the French Revolution, nor that some international conspiracy had been responsible for the revolution in Spain earlier that year, but that they were convinced that the Carbonari-led revolution in Italy was the work of a secret society:

> "It is possible to admit that the French Revolution was the work of a large majority of the nation, that of Spain was the result of a military conspiracy, and that of Naples finally is the work of a secret society... The degree of perfection that this art (of revolution) has reached, unless energetic measures are taken, is even of a nature to make all governments unreliable and problematic, whether they be absolute, monarchical, constitutional, republican, or even radical. The means of calculating their duration of existence has a 'delta' of one day."[115]

It follows that, if a secret society had set off the insurrection in Italy, then similar tactics could be used by the same or similar organizations elsewhere, and it would be imperative not to allow them to have a safe-haven to plan their plots without interference or give other subversives an example to copy. The memorandum goes on to state that this new Naples revolution has a "particular character and is unquestionably the most threatening of all for any government, since the sect has prepared and designed this disaster in the shadows..."[116] The nature of this revolution meant that its success could not be allowed, for the good of all governments. "The triumph of a revolution, conceived and directed by a secret society, would be a death sentence to all governments."[117] The memorandum also states that this secret society threatened the settlement of 1814-15, the crowning achievement of Metternich's diplomatic career.

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[113] Goldstein, pp. 123-124.
[114] Schroeder, pp. 38-41.
[115] Van Duerm, p. 391.
[116] Van Duerm, p. 391.
[117] Van Duerm, p. 393.

By the time of this memorandum Metternich had certainly become paranoid about the specter of secret societies but he had not yet gone over to regarding nearly all major events around the world as part of a grand plot, and the corresponding belief in a central body or bodies that coordinate this grand plot. By the time he disseminated the August 1820 memorandum about Italy, Metternich's ideas about "secret societies" could be interpreted as a belief that multiple secret societies might exist, and that they are dangerous, but that their international connections mainly consisted of the ideas that linked them together: belief in constitutions, freedom of the press, nationalism, etc.

Starting around 1820 after bouts of unrest in Paris and the assassination of the heir to the French throne, an idea began circulating that there was a single coordinating committee that was orchestrating all the revolutionary unrest, a "*Comité Directeur*."[118] According to his foreign minister Ioannis Kapodistrias, the Russian Emperor Alexander I was an early convert to this idea.[119] Metternich appears to have also bought into this theory a bit later. When the Austrian armies marched into Naples to crush the revolt in early 1821 there was another liberal revolution in northern Italy, in Piedmont in the kingdom of Sardinia. To Metternich's mind (and it appears also to Alexander I's) this was not a coincidence. The revolt in the north was designed to distract attention or divert resources from the fight against the revolution in Naples. Metternich learned of the revolt in Piedmont on the 12th of March 1821, while he was still in Ljubljana along with the Emperors of Austria and Russia, after the conclusion of the congress there that had justified the Austrian invasion of Naples to suppress the revolution. Seven days later, according to a letter Metternich sent to one of his subordinates, Russian couriers arrived with the news of the Greek revolt on March 19th, 1821.[120] These two events, separated by nearly 1000 miles and with no actual link to each other were evidently interpreted as responses to the Austrian invasion of southern Italy, and Metternich began to use the phrase "*Comité Directeur"* to describe the imagined enemy that was coordinating this response. By March 24th he was writing about how the "people of the Directional committee [*Comité Directeur*] in Paris will be unpleasantly surprised"[121] by Austrian success against the revolutionaries in Piedmont and Naples. On the 26th he wrote to another senior Austrian official that "...this revolution (in Piedmont) is nothing but a sudden blow on the part of some hot-headed men, supported by the Committee of Paris with the intention of helping Naples."[122] The fact that the Greek rebels were organized by a quasi-Masonic secret society called the "Philiki Eteria" may have contributed to Metternich's opinion that these were linked. On March 25th he wrote to the Bavarian minister of foreign affairs about the Greek revolt, pointing out the Greek leaders' self-declared membership of a secret society and asserting "This society is the same as that of the Carbonari…"[123]

In a memorandum written sometime after the conference at Ljubljana to the Russian Emperor Alexander I, who had become a kindred spirit to Metternich on matters of the *Comité*

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[118] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror,* Locations 4044-4051.

[119] Ioannis Kapodistrias, "Записка графа Іоанна каподистріа о его служебной дъятельности" (Notes from count Ioannis Kapodistrias on his official activities), from *Сборник Императорского Русского Исторического Общества* (Digest of the Imperial Russian Historical Society)*,* Vol. 3, (St. Petersburg, 1868), p. 251.

[120] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 523.

[121] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 491.

[122] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 525.

[123] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 523.

Directeur, Metternich wove the Tugendbund conspiracy theory together with the ructions in Italy and came out with a story that looked like an updated version of the Illuminati myth. He wrote that a central group was orchestrating global revolution, sometimes using quasi-Masonic organizations and intending to usurp power under the guise of liberal principles:

> "The organisation of secret societies in France, such as exist now, does not seem to go further back than 1820… It was only after the measures taken at Carlsbad had forced the principal heads of the secret associations in Germany to seek a refuge in France, that many of them betook themselves to Paris, where they found little opportunity of coming to an understanding with the French Liberals… It was only after the year 1821 that direct relations could be established between the German and French revolutionists, and at the head of the former were the German Bonapartists…. The very secrecy of associations of this kind assists their rapid progress… If the Governments do not take vigorous measures not only to prevent its ultimate progress, but to restrain it within manageable limits, Europe runs the risk of falling under the ever-renewed attacks of these associations...The factions at present employ two means. One is the formation of secret societies and all kinds of sects; of these the most practical is that of Carbonarism… [they have] One end in view, and that clearly set forth in the higher grades of the association; simple means and plans, free from the metaphysical rubbish of Masonry; a government really reserved for its leaders; a certain number of grades to classify individuals; disobedience and indiscretion punished by the poignard as well as enemies - such is Carbonarism, which of all the political sects seems to have approached the most nearly to perfection in its practical organization. The factions have found a second means in the fusion of their interests and the establishment of a central point of direction. Nationality, political limits, everything disappears with the sect. The committee which leads the Radicals throughout Europe is, no doubt, at Paris, and every day will show this more and more."[124]

(Metternich also said in this memo that he now believed the Spanish revolution of 1820 had been the work of a secret society.) To use the analogy of the Assassins, Paris had become the Alamut or the Cairo of the new clandestine revolutionaries. The idea that this conspiracy could maintain a headquarters in restoration-era Paris, despite the anti-revolutionary government of the Bourbon king Charles X, smacks of Barruel's accusations of clandestine subversive headquarters and schools located in pre-revolutionary Paris that managed to bring about the French Revolution and pull strings all over Europe.

Metternich wrote that the remedy to this danger was unity and the establishment of a "central focus for information and direction" between Prussia, Russia, and Austria - that is, a central intelligence-collecting organ. Of course, such an organ would be based in Vienna. Metternich was proposing the extension of the police and surveillance system set up at Carlsbad over the whole of Christian Eastern Europe.[125] This proposal was never taken up.

In reality, the "revolution" in Northern Italy was not an attempt to distract the Austrians from their invasion of Southern Italy but an attempt by local nobles and artisans to force the abdication of the reigning king in favor of his young and (they thought) more nationalistic son Charles Albert. The revolutionaries managed to get the king to abdicate and declared the adoption of the Spanish constitution of 1812, which was a system of constitutional monarchy that had come to symbolize vague notions of "liberty" to liberals and vague notions of subversion to conservatives.[126] The Greek revolt was the fruit of planning by patriotic Greeks

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[124] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, pp. 668-673.
[125] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, pp. 672-674.
[126] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror,* Location 4581.

that went back to 1809 when three Greeks living in Odesa founded the secret society the Philiki Eteria - dedicated to freeing Greece from Ottoman domination. One of the founders, a Freemason and clerk named Emmanuel Xanthos, decided to model this organization on the Freemasons. [127] The coincidental timing of these two uprisings combined with the likely Carbonari connections of the revolutionaries in southern Italy and the quasi-Masonic structure of the Greek revolutionaries seemed to Metternich and others, such as Alexander I of Russia, to point to a grand Europe-wide coordinating conspiracy.

A belief in the existence of this group that had managed to secretly prepare sudden, simultaneous revolutions in three different locations opens the way for a belief that this organization was highly skilled in the art of deception and secret propaganda, able to enact far-flung and effective campaigns to prepare populations for revolution right under the noses of the legitimate powers of Europe. It appears that Metternich made a common error among conspiracy theorists: the less evidence there is for a conspiracy, the more it seems to point to the conspiracy's supreme powers of concealment and deception. In 1824 Metternich personally interrogated Count Federico Confalonieri, a captured leader of the Piedmontese rebels. The interrogation of the emaciated Confalonieri took place in Vienna during his transport from Milan, where he had been convicted, to his prison at the Spielberg fortress in what is today the Czech republic.[128] According to Confalonieri's memoirs, during the interrogation Metternich was supremely interested in the "Federation of Carbonari" or a "final grade" which coordinated activities internationally. Metternich insisted that they had already received information from other captured Carbonari, and he pressed the idea that the revolt of Northern Italy was part of a great pan-European plot, headquartered in Paris:

> "On the very even of the Revolution in Piedmont, in the documents that were taken to Prince Cisterna (a leader of the revolutionaries), and coming from the main center [*centro dirigente* a.k.a. *Comité Directeur*] in Pairs, together with revolutionary plans, a mountain of proposed reforms to the constitutions, with beautiful proclamations already finished, to light Lombard and the rest of Italy on fire."[129]

Confalonieri related that when he told Metternich that all these ideas of some grand deeper conspiracy were false, Metternich replied "You would be very clever if you succeed in persuading me of this."[130]

The interview went on for 11 hours, with Metternich continually offering Confalonieri clemency, reduced punishment, and the strictest secrecy of any information he could provide, presumably about the secret "higher grades" of the vast revolutionary conspiracy. Confalonieri continually insisted he had nothing further to reveal. At one point, perhaps as Metternich grew comfortable when talking to his prisoner or more likely in an attempt to give the prisoner some idea of the kind of people Metternich wanted information on, Metternich said that the revolutionaries like Confalonieri or even more radical people were not really a problem anymore

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[127] David Brewer, *The Greek War of Independence: The Struggle for Freedom and the Birth of Modern Greece*, (Overlook Press, 2011), Kindle Edition, Locations 628-645.
[128] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror,* Location 5396.
[129] Federico Confalonieri, *Memorie e Lettere,* Vol. 1, (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1889), p. 165.
[130] Confalonieri, p. 167.

outside South America. The real challenge Metternich was worried about (according to Confalonieri) were:

> "...so called moderates, the pure so-called liberals, the doctrinal philanthropists, associations for the progress of enlightenment [*associati pel progresso de' lumi*] of universal civilization… These are the men, the opinions, the propaganda that are harmful to governments in quiet times;... Their opinions are golden, and they are listened to and slowly creep, seduce, persuade, and corrupt even those people who abhor the most revolutionary ideas… And so are states secretly and silently mined, and prepared to desire change, new rearrangements, and vaunted regeneration… You have thought of making your apology, and you could help your sentence, if you could teach us something that we do not know already…"[131]

This strange interrogation does not seem to be an isolated occurrence. One of the ringleaders of the Russian Decembrist uprising of 1825 Nikolai Turgenev reported a similar incident in his memoirs. According to him after the Decembrist revolt Austrian authorities interrogated Italian prisoners in Spielberg about the uprising, even though they had been in prison for years.[132]

Metternich's fear of the Comité Directeur lasted beyond the 1820s, In 1833 Metternich sent official instructions to the Austrian diplomat stationed in Milan in which he clearly stated the idea of a central, organizing conspiracy that was directing all the agents of "Revolution" throughout Europe, and most obviously in Italy:

> "For many years, those who spoke about a *Comité Directeur* working secretly towards universal revolution were met everywhere with incredulity. Today it is demonstrated that this infernal propaganda exists; that it has its center in Paris, and that it is divided into as many sections as there are nations to regenerate. We have seen the works of the Spanish, Belgian, Polish, and German committees; last of all we have discovered the traces of an Oriental section; As to the actions of the Italian committee, it has revealed itself so many times that it cannot be ignored, unless one is blind."[133]

The ideology of paranoia

A belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory explains several of Metternich's positions and his continuing penchant for repression and censorship. He saw himself as leading the defense of civilization against a revolutionary conspiracy that sought to usurp all power via chaos and revolution, cloaked in the rhetoric of liberty or piety. Metternich spelled out who he believed the enemy was and what action was needed in a memo to the Tsar in May 1821 after the congress at Ljubljana: "The clear and precise aim of the factious is one and uniform. It is the overthrow of everything legally existing… The principle which the monarchs must oppose to this plan of universal destruction is the preservation of everything legally existing. The only way to arrive at this end is by allowing no innovations."[134] As he moved to the top of the political ladder in Austria, becoming Chancellor of Austria in May of 1821 and then the de-facto leader of the

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[131] Confalonieri, p. 174.
[132] N. Tourgueneff, *Le Russie et les Russes*, Vol. 1, (Paris: Guiraudet and Jouaust, 1847), p. 524.
[133] F. A. Gualterio, *Gli Ultimi Rivolgimenti Italiani,* Vol. 2, second edition, (Florence: Felice Le Monnieri, 1852), p. 286.
[134] *Memoirs of Prince Metternich*, Vol 3, p. 538.

Austrian Empire in many matters and especially foreign policy after the mentally disabled Ferdinand I became emperor in 1835, Metternich consistently opposed constitutionalism in Germany, continued to keep the universities under the threat of state repression, and ensured that the censorship regime was maintained.[135]

Despite his council to the Tsar of "no innovations" Metternich was actually not against reform per-se, only against reforms that could give an advantage to the imaginary *Comité Directeur* or other revolutionaries. He seemed most worried about political reform or any reform of press regulations that would make censorship less effective. He was not like a worried parent who will keep a gate locked because he fears that his child might wander off and get injured, or because he believes the outside world is inherently evil and dangerous. He was like one that imagines that there is a group of men outside the gate who are constantly trying to get in and set the house on fire. This kind of thinking can combine even highly educated and enlightened views with the kind of paranoia that produces a near-permanent state of emergency. This paranoia can eventually lead to a police state, and will prevent the believer from seeing the world as it actually is or making needed reforms that, to the paranoid, appear as opportunities for the conspiracy.

Metternich was in fact a proponent of reforms that improved government administration and that would rob the revolutionary conspiracy of willing followers. He believed that the actual revolutionary agitators were a relatively small group (though incredibly well-resourced and skilled in propaganda) who could only gain a real foothold and effect a regional usurpation if the legitimate rulers alienated the people through poor governance. Rulers should make reforms to actually improve the lives of their subjects, but not in response to popular demands.[136]

In the Papal States, for example, Metternich was a strong supporter of the reform efforts of Cardinal Consalvi to balance the budget of the Papal States, reorganize the police and the army, and adopt new measures in the fields of education and public health, all in the face of strong opposition from more reactionary Papal officials. In fact in mid-1821 after the collapse of the Italian revolutions under Austrian attack the Austrian ambassador to the Papal states told Consalvi that he was "authorized to insist" on reforms that would prevent future upheavals, and that the powers reserved the right to intervene and impose reforms if they believed there was insufficient progress.[137]

In this sense Metternich was not a "reactionary" like the hard-liners in the Vatican, but as a conspiracy theorist he could never allow an opening for the *Comité Directeur.* His behavior may have looked like that of a hyper-reactionary to a contemporary liberal, but it would have been a mistake to think that Metternich deliberately "sabotaged for half a century the onward march of progress."[138] Metternich even came up with the phrase "conservative socialist" towards the end of his career to describe his own combination of "conservative" political policies with spending on social welfare (such as in Lombardy in 1814-18) and to contrast his own class-

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[135] Mike Rapport, *1848, Year of Revolution,* (Basic Books, 2009), Kindle Edition, Locations 208, 261-266, 461

[136] Alan Reinerman, "Metternich and Reform: The Case of the Papal State, 1814-1848," *The Journal of Modern History,* Vol. 42, no. 4, (Dec., 1970) p. 526.

[137] Reinerman, pp. 537 - 539.

[138] Peter Viereck, *Conservative Thinkers: From John Adams to Winston Churchill*, (Transaction Publishers, 2006), p. 76.

harmonizing "social" values rooted in the organic legitimate relationships between, for example, the king and his subjects with the rapacious, anti-social individualism that he believed would eventually provide an opportunity for revolution.[139] Metternich dabbled a bit in supporting the establishment of regional representative bodies in the provinces. However, these bodies were never to be granted real power, and were mainly intended, as the scholar Alan Sked wrote, to "delude the provincial nobles that they still had some part to play in local affairs."[140]

In addition to preventing political liberalization in many countries, Metternich's policies also bankrupted the state. Between 1815 and 1848 40% of Austrian imperial expenditures went to the military and 30% to service state debts, to say nothing of expenditures on the police force and the systems of mail and physical surveillance. One of Metternich's chief rivals was the Austrian finance minister Franz Anton Kolowrat, who criticized his policies as using the wrong means: "I am an aristocrat by birth and by convictions and completely agree with you that people must strive for conservatism and do everything to achieve it. Yet we differ about means. Your means consist of a forest of bayonets and a fixed adherence to things as they are; to my mind, by following these lines we are playing into the hands of the revolutionaries… Your ways will lead us… not tomorrow or next year - but soon enough - to our ruin."[141] As far as we know Kolowrat never put forward an alternative security policy,[142] but perhaps Franz Kolowrat did not understand Metternich's belief in the real existence of a massive conspiracy, one that could not be diffused by concessions. Like Barruel or Robison, Metternich would have been extremely wary of playing into the hands of a revolutionary conspiracy by granting political reforms. Metternich believed he was facing an emergency created by a coordinated clandestine enemy, and so he acted in ways that, in the end, may have squandered the Austrian empire's chances at political reform, not to mention a great deal of money.

The Roman Catholic Church embraces the Grand Conspiracy Theory

Metternich made a major contribution to the spread of his version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, a Europe-wide plot against altar and throne, by influencing the Vatican to spread this idea. At the end of the previous century the support of the Austrian government for Hoffman's *Wiener Zeitschrift* and German princes to the Eudamonists in the late 18th century demonstrated how a state can spread conspiracy theories through the use of propaganda by funding publications. Metternich's pressure on the Pope is an example of how a state can also spread these kinds of ideas through influence, as opposed to just expending resources and direct propaganda campaigns. Barruel and Robison had already popularized and spread the Grand Conspiracy Theory across Europe. This section will describe how Metternich pressured the Roman Church to join in and spread it further, specifically through Papal bull *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* that committed the Roman Catholic church to a version of Metternich's conspiracy theory about the *Comité Directeur*. Metternich ensured that this version of the Grand Conspiracy

[139] Viereck, pp. 65-67.
[140] Alan Sked, "Explaining the Habsburg Empire, 1830-90," in *Themes in Modern European History 1830-1890,* Bruce Waller ed. (Routledge, 1990). P. 139.
[141] Sked, *Metternich in Austria, An Evaluation,* p. 117
[142] Sked, *Metternich in Austria, An Evaluation,* p. 117

Theory spread through one of the main arteries of Western Civilization and gave it the official sanction of Europe's largest religion.

In 1820 in order to arrange a spiritual attack to accompany the military attack that the Austrians were preparing against the revolution in Naples, Metternich reached out to the Papacy and pressured the Roman Catholic hierarchy to anathematize the Carbonari. This time, in contrast to the communications between them before 1820, Metternich was now the paranoid one while the Papacy was relatively restrained and skeptical. Rome was hesitant to attack the Carbonari and the Neapolitan revolution as heretics, not only because they feared armed retaliation from the Neapolitans, but also because there was no substantial evidence that the Neapolitan revolutionaries were actually heretics, rather than just political opponents of the Vatican's allies.[143] As the Papal secretary of State Cardinal Consalvi explained to Austrian officials: "as a spiritual ruler, the Holy Father can pronounce ecclesiastical penalties only against those societies whose institution is evidently contrary to the Catholic religion and which openly attack its principles."[144]

After Austrian armies marched into Naples to crush the revolt in March 1821 he pressed his case for the anathematization of the Carbonari with renewed vigor, this time getting support from the Prussian, French, and Russian ambassadors to the Holy See. The Vatican still resisted. Finally in early May 1821, after a diligent search, the Austrian diplomat Anton Apponyi presented the Papal Secretary of State with a book that supposedly contained the initiation ceremonies of the Carbonari which "enact the mysteries of the passion of Our Lord in the most impious way… in sum, the whole ceremony is no more than a tissue of blasphemes and insults against all that is most sacred in our religion."[145]

Apponyi's presentation of this document had the desired effect. He worked with the Papal secretary of State and the police throughout Italy to find further evidence of blasphemy among the Carbonari. The Austrian government and the Vatican tried to make sure their collaboration in preparing a Papal bull condemning the Carbonari stayed secret, partly to avoid weakening the effect of the denunciation and partly for fear of political reprisals against Roman Catholic officials.[146]

Pope Pius VII denounced the Carbonari as a clandestine anti-religious organization on September 13, 1821 in his bull *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*. He proclaimed anyone associated with the Carbonari, including those who merely read or possessed any "catechisms and books of the Carbonari" automatically excommunicated. Pope Pius VII warned his flock that the Carbonari were merely the latest incarnation of a string of sects, the core of which being the Freemasons, that had plans:

> "which had been devised secretly by them against Religion, indeed against civil society… [the Carbonari] simulate a singular respect and a certain extraordinary zeal toward the Catholic Religion and toward the Person and Doctrine of Jesus Christ Our Savior, Whom at times they also impiously dare to call the Rector and great Teacher of this society. But these ways of speaking, which are seen to be more slippery than oil, are nothing other than darts employed by crafty men, who come

[143] Alan Reinerman, "Metternich and the Papal Condemnation of the 'Carbonari', 1821," in *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 54, no. 1 (April, 1968) pp. 58-59.
[144] Reinerman pp. 58-59.
[145] Reinerman pp. 58-59.
[146] Reinerman pp. 63-64.

> in sheep's clothing but are ravenous wolves inside, for more securely wounding the too little cautious."[147]

The bull was clearly a form of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. It alleged that the conspirators were secretly anti-religious, and were actively plotting against the Church and all governments, indeed against society itself. The Carbonari was just this old anti-Christian anti-society anti-legitimate government Freemasonry in a new disguise. Any signs to the contrary were just camouflage.

The two previous papal bulls condemning Freemasonry by Clement XII (1738) and Benedict XIV (1751) mainly objected to the secrecy of Masonic organizations and the "strong suspicion" that these organizations were involved in depravity, as well as the fact that men of different faiths mixed freely during Masonic meetings. The 1738 bull alluded in passing to "serious damages, which generally are inflicted not only on the tranquility of the temporal State, but also on the spiritual health of souls from societies and associations of this kind..."[148] but did not specify what the Freemasons were up to under their veil of secrecy. The 1751 bull *Providas Romanorum Pontificum* said that these societies could be damaging to the "tranquility of the temporal Republic"[149] but the Pope again left open the question of to what exactly the Masons were up to by citing "other just and reasonable causes known to ourselves," that merited the denunciation. However, even after these bans Roman Catholics over most of Europe and America continued to join lodges, and the ban was mostly ignored or considered not "received" by local churches.[150] Additionally, these bulls were both specifically aimed at Freemasons, and not a more explicitly political organization like the Carbonari. Neither of them used the Grand Conspiracy Theory to justify the denunciation of the Freemasons. After *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* the Roman Catholic Church was officially spreading the idea of a clandestine anti-Christian network that masqueraded as patriotic or liberal.

The main charge leveled against the Carbonari in *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* was that they secretly taught vice while pretending to teach virtue, and above all that they sanctioned disobedience to governing authorities and even killing kings as a form of tyrannicide: "...that society teaches that it is allowed, once revolts have been provoked, to deprive of their power kings and other rulers, whom most unjustly it dares indiscriminately to call tyrants."[151]

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[147] Translation from *The Catholic Mass,* "Infallible Papal Apostolic Constitution "Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo" Condemnation of the Carbonari The Offspring of the Freemasons Automatic Excommunication Of Those Who Join the Carbonari Thursday, September 13, 1821," available at http://www.traditionalcatholicmass.com/home-m-423.html accessed January 15, 2017. Original document published as Pius VII Papa, *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*, This quote at pp. 5-6.

[148] Papal Encyclicals Online, *Quo Graviora, Apostolic Constitution of Pope Leo XII,* March 12, 1826, available at http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo12/l12quogr.htm, accessed January 17, 2017.

[149] Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, *Providas Romanorum ON FREEMASONRY Benedetto XIV,* available at http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/anti-masonry/papal/providas.html, accessed January 17, 2017.

[150] Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism, Poland, 1933 - 1939*, (Routledge, 2004) p. 47

[151] Translation from *The Catholic Mass,* "Infallible Papal Apostolic Constitution "Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo" Condemnation of the Carbonari The Offspring of the Freemasons Automatic Excommunication Of Those Who Join the Carbonari Thursday, September 13, 1821," available at http://www.traditionalcatholicmass.com/home-m-423.html accessed January 15, 2017. Original document published as Pius VII Papa, *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*, This quote at p. 8.

The Vatican sent a version of *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* to Metternich in advance for his approval. Metternich was very pleased with the document saying it was "perfectly suited to the purpose for which it is intended" and "it will make a profound impression everywhere, but above all in Italy, where this is most desirable… It will not, I hope, be less useful to the Temporal Power, which can henceforth act with still greater severity against a class of criminals so dangerous that the Church itself has expelled them…."[152] The Austrian government made sure the bull was well-publicized in Italy. Metternich had initially planned to have Austrian diplomats inform each court in Italy about the new bull. In the end it was decided that this would make the influence of the Austrian government on the bull too obvious. Instead papal legates made the presentation instead, supported by their Austrian colleagues.[153] Rumors that the Austrians had been behind the bull quickly followed its publication, and Italian patriots were embittered by the seeming pliancy of the Papacy in favor of a foreign emperor.[154]

Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo was the first of a series of Roman Catholic pronouncements against the "sects" (Masonic and associated movements) which were believed to be clandestinely plotting the overthrow of the Church and civil society. The accusations in *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* were reiterated in the 1826 apostolic constitution *Quo Graviora*, which also added a mention that the universities were the chief recruiting ground of one branch of this sect.[155] Mirroring Metternich's hatred of Bible societies and echoing the 1816 bull against Bible societies, the subsequent encyclical issued against the coalition of anti-religious and anti-social secret societies *Traditi Humiliati* (1829) added a section decrying those who "...print the Bibles in the vernacular and, absorbing an incredible expense, offer them free even to the uneducated. Furthermore, the Bibles are rarely without perverse little inserts to insure that the reader imbibes their lethal poison instead of the saving water of salvation."[156] This version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory has survived up to the present day, with many devout Roman Catholics still believing in this clandestine, Masonic, multi-generational plot that works to usurp kings and tear down the Church under the cover of promoting freedom and the values of the Enlightenment.[157]

Conclusion

Metternich's belief that he was combating a massive conspiracy influenced his own policies, which in turn influenced German law and even the course of European diplomatic history. He was probably influenced by the stories about the Tugendbund as well as by

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[152] Reinerman p. 65.
[153] Reinerman p. 66.
[154] Reinerman p. 66.
[155] Papal Encyclicals Online, *Quo Graviora, Apostolic Constitution of Pope Leo XII,* March 12, 1826, available at http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Leo12/l12quogr.htm, accessed January 15, 2017.
[156] EWTN, " TRADITI HUMILITATI (On His Program For The Pontificate) Pope Pius VIII Encyclical Promulgated 24 May 1829" available at https://web.archive.org/web/20030201235606/http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/p8tradit.htm, accessed January 15, 2017
[157] For a recent example of the persistence of this grand conspiracy theory of the Freemasons spreading apostasy see the online video "FBI Freemasonry" (posted September 26, 2013) produced by the US Roman Catholic news outlet "Church Militant" which regurgitates the accusations of Barruel and subsequent Roman Catholic conspiracy theorists. Available at https://youtu.be/86GrvQRThSk. Accessed April 8, 2019.

medieval Islamic conspiracy-theory propaganda, which had been fused by Metternich's subordinate Hammer-Purgstall onto the Grand Conspiracy Theory earlier spread by Hoffman, Barruel, and Robison.

Metternich's change between 1817 and 1830 offers a very well-documented case of the effect that a belief in the Grand Conspiracy theory can have on policy when it is believed by the powerful. Metternich extended the reach of the police, stepped up censorship, tamped down on universities, and centralized power as much as he could in order to combat the *Comité Directeur* but still supported "enlightened" non-political reforms which he saw as depriving the conspiracy of opportunities.

In addition to the policies he supported and his decisions concerning war and diplomacy in Europe, Metternich also affected history by pressuring the Papacy to endorse his version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory - of the Carbonari/Freemason plot. If the propaganda and conspiracy-theorists of the previous generation had popularized the idea across Europe of a Grand Conspiracy Theory, a cabal of secret atheists plotting to usurp power using enlightenment ideas as weapons and camouflage, by getting the Roman Catholic Church to publicly endorse these ideas Metternich injected this conspiracy theory into the bloodstream of Western Civilization.

Coda: The Salais-Soglio case - the first conspiracist counter-conspiracy?

While Metternich stood at the pinnacle of the Austrian government constantly warning against revolutionaries infiltrating governments and planning usurpations, he never actually accused another "legitimate" government of being under the control of the conspiracy, certainly not the Austrian government. However, if one accepts the idea of a powerful conspiracy with amazing powers of influence and deception, why would such a conspiracy not try to usurp a state via "traditional" courtly deception, manipulating a king or an emperor by infiltrating his court and his bureaucracy, a usurpation by proxy like the one portrayed in Shakespeare's Richard II. If one believes that a massive conspiracy has taken control of the government and the security services in addition to the press, then one way to deal with it is to organize clandestine networks to fight back, using propaganda and violence. The belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory resulted in the formation of a conspiratorial counter-conspiracy during the time of Metternich. It is briefly dealt with here for the sake of chronological consistency.

In early 1817 the Austrian police detected a plot to start a rebellion in the Austrian Alpine provinces of Tyrol and Voralberg and join them to Switzerland. The plotters were based out of the neighboring Swiss canton of Grisons and lead by a leader of the Canton, the Count Johann von Salis-Soglio. However, this was not a liberal plot against a monarchy, but an attempt by conspiracy theorists to conduct a counter-revolution against what they believed was a secret usurpation. The Count Salis-Soglio was deeply anti-Enlightenment, but he had also become convinced that the Austrian government had been infiltrated by the Illuminati. His brother the Anglo-swiss British officer Jerome, the 4th Count of Salis-Soglio was also involved in the plot.[158]

Metternich was probably surprised by his police reports of a plot from the Salis-Soglio brothers, and he initially disbelieved them and suggested that the police continue their

[158] Emerson, p. 103.

investigation discreetly.[159] Metternich had been involved with Johann von Salis-Soglio in 1813, when Johann had organized a group of Swiss patricians in communication with Metternich called the "Waldshut committee" that had supported the Austrian invasion of Switzerland during the war of the 6th coalition, the conflict that ended with the first fall of Napoleon.[160] The 1817 Salis-Soglio plot was probably partially inspired by another event during the Napoleonic wars: the Tyrolian uprising of 1809, when groups of Alpine patriots loyal to the Austrian Emperor and in contact with the Austrian government rose up behind Napoleon's army and managed to hold out against Bavarian troops for several months (at this time Bavaria was an ally of Napoleon.)[161] The fate of the rebels was sealed by Napoleon's victory over Austria at the battle of Wagram (July 5th and 6th, 1809) which forced Austria to sue for peace.

In early 1819 the Austrian police intercepted letters indicating that Jerome von Salis-Soglio was soon to return to Grisons and put the plot into action. Wisely, Metternich had an Austrian Field Marshal discreetly approach the Salis-Soglio brothers and tell them that the Austrians knew everything. Jerome confessed and promised to never dabble in inciting rebellion again. Metternich forgave the brothers and even suggested that they be recruited once more to work for the Austrian Empire.[162]

We only know about this curious event through the Austrian archives, as the conspirators never were able to do anything other than plan. It took merely a warning and some kindness to return them to the fold. However, this is the first incidence of what will become a pattern in the histories examined in this thesis: a group of believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory begins to believe that a state, even a "reactionary" or very conservative state, has in fact been secretly usurped by the conspiracy, and that the state in question is therefore illegitimate and evil. The more "reactionary" a state seems, the more all-controlling the police are, and the more personal politics are, the more this might add to the fears of true believers that their government has been secretly usurped.

To add to the historical irony, the conspiracy theory that the Salis-Soglio brothers believed in had been clandestinely spread earlier by the government they were planning to attack - in Hoffman's *Wiener Zeitschrift* sponsored by Emperor Leopold II. This will be seen again most directly in the late 20th and early 21st century, when conservative Sunni or Arab Nationalist governments were challenged by groups of Islamic extremists who believed their rulers were secretly illegitimate puppets of the "Zionists and imperialists." Many of these governments had pushed conspiratorial propaganda about the all-pervasiveness of a global Zionist conspiracy capable of amazing feats of deception and organization. We shall examine this phenomenon more in chapter 12.

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[159] Emerson, p. 103.
[160] Wilhelm Oechsli, *History of Switzerland, 1499-1914*, Eden and Cedar Paul trans., (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 362.
[161] John H. Gill, *With Eagles to Glory: Napoleon and his German Allies in the 1809 Campaign*, (Frontline Books, 2011), Second Edition, pp. 60 - 61, 323-326.
[162] Emerson, pp, 116-117.

Chapter 5: Anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories and the Grand Conspiracy Theory: from Paris to Moscow

"...a man need only confidently publish whatever he pleases against the Jesuits, to be assured that [an] abundance of people will believe it… [the Jesuits] turn the hatred of the world against them to their advantage,...Did they pay the authors for publishing such stories, they might be said to employ their money well." [1]

- Pierre Bayle, Historical and Critical Dictionary, 1697

"Intrigue, intrigue everywhere, treacherous Jesuit intrigue, Jesuit in its origin and in its character! … Everything in our society is still not recognized as it should be, and exists as if in secret - Everything that led it into the unclean, the corrupt, the erratic - they managed to get ahold of and arrange for their own purposes. Our pathetic revolutionaries have consciously or unconsciously become its instruments."[2]

- Mikhail Katkov, *Moskovskie Vedomosti,* 1863

"Moreover, the art of deflecting masses and individuals by means of cleverly manipulated theory and verbiage, by regulations of life in common and all sorts of other quirks, in all which the goyim understand nothing, belongs likewise to the specialists of our administrative brain…. In this respect the Jesuits alone might have compared with us..."[3]

- The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion

Thus far the versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory examined in this thesis have been associated with the Illuminati and the Freemasons. These versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, pushed by German propagandists and spread by Barruel and Robison and believed by

[1] Peter Bayle, *An Historical and Critical Dictionary selected and Abridged from the Great work of Peter Bayle*, Vol. 2, (London: Hunt and Clarke, 1826), pp. 180-181, 184.
[2] М.Н. Катков (M. N. Katkov), "Совпадение интересов украинофилов с польскими интересами" (The Coincidence of the interests of Ukrainophiles with Polish Interests), *Московские ведомости* (Moscovskie Vedomosti), No. 136, June 21 1863. Available at http://dugward.ru/library/katkov/katkov_sovpadeniye.html.
[3] Translation here from *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion with preface and explanatory notes,* Victor E. Marsden trans., 1934. See chapter 7 for a discussion of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Metternich in a modified form, emphasized that the spread of Enlightenment values was really the spread of deceptive propaganda from some kind of shadowy masonic cabal. There was also another strain of conspiracy theorising that broke out with renewed vigor in the early 19th century: anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories. Conversely to the anti-Freemason conspiracy theories, the backers of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories of the early 19th century usually believed that a shadowy cabal was bent on using deceptive propaganda to prevent the spread of Enlightenment values and truly republican government . The "right-wing" conspiracy theories, early variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, that identified the Freemasons and the Illuminati as the enemy emphasized their use of the free press to spread their propaganda, although they also were alleged to have infiltrated educational institutions. The major "left-wing" European conspiracy theory of this period identified the Jesuits as the enemy and emphasized their use of education to spread their propaganda and extend their influence, though they also purportedly made use of the press. However, the logic of a belief in a group with super powers of deception eventually led to these two seemingly separate and contradictory types of "left" and "right" conspiracy theories to increasingly mirror each other, and even to merge.

This chapter is mainly about how conspiracy theories against the Jesuits became integrated into a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, and how this version was used in very different locations by propagandists with radically different goals. This will demonstrate the flexibility of the Grand Conspiracy Theory for use in propaganda. Some key catalysts for the merger of anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories with the Grand Conspiracy Theory were the needs of propagandists, particularly those involved in two wars: the "Sonderbund" civil war in Switzerland and the 1863 January uprising in Poland against the Russian empire. Russian propaganda against the Polish insurgents imported anti-Jesuit propaganda from Western Europe, alleging an massive anti-Russian Jesuit plot that depicted the fight to suppress the Poles as a mortal combat with a super-powerful enemy intent on making Russia its slave.

Still central to this new version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was the theme of deceptive usurpation, but the secret conspiracy was a Jesuit one, rather than a masonic one. Concerns from the West-European left were reflected in many anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories which described the Jesuits as a secretive hyper-conservative organization that sought to perversely use the liberties granted to them by free societies in order to enslave these societies, and in some cases the Jesuits were accused of encouraging extreme revolution in order to prepare the way for a counter-revolution that suited their interests. These ideas were re-purposed by some Russian propagandists, who asserted that the Poles' aspirations for freedom, the ideas of Russian liberals, and even the Ukrainian and Lithuanian languages were all just part of an elaborate deception led by the usurping Jesuits. An important document discussed towards the end of this chapter that Russian propagandists used to support the idea of a grand Jesuit conspiracy against Russia was the *Polish Catechism*, a neglected precursor of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The earlier versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory examined in the preceding chapters usually depicted the conspirators as insurgent usurpers, seeking to overturn traditional Western society. The adoption of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory by Russian propagandists laid the groundwork for seeing the whole of Western civilization as already under the sway of a grand usurping conspiracy, which would become a trope of subsequent anti-Western versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

Anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories before the 19th century

Like the conspiracy theories found in Austrian and other "reactionary" propaganda that drew on older narratives about the Freemasons and the Illuminati, the 19th century anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories plugged into older narratives from the 17th and 18th centuries. The cultural historian Dr. Peter Burke has written that the perceived close connection between the Jesuits and the Spanish empire at the peak of its power contributed to a fear of the Jesuits in both Protestant and Roman Catholic countries that were wary of Spanish aggression and influence.[4] Protestant England and even Roman Catholic France were especially suspicious of the Jesuits, as they were enemies of Spain. In England Jesuits were often blamed for the famous Gunpowder plot of 1605, when a group of Roman Catholic conspirators attempted to blow up the House of Commons while the King was opening it.[5] This event contributed to the idea that English patriotism and a love for parliamentary government were almost synonymous with a hatred of the Jesuits and their subversive ways.

Conversely, in absolutist countries the early modern era Jesuits were sometimes associated with spreading unwanted democratic ideas.[6] This impression may have been encouraged by the Jesuits emphasis on a classical education, which necessarily meant reading texts from republican Rome and democratic Athens. Their emphasis on Latin rhetoric meant they were consistently teaching from texts of the master Roman rhetorician and arch-republican Marcus Tullius Cicero.[7] Also, as discussed in chapter 2, the Jesuits had been tied to the crime of regicide,[8] most famously via the Jesuit author Juan de Mariana, who helped to reintroduce Aristotle's teachings about tyrannicide to Western Europe and also justified the assassination of Henry III of France.[9]

The 17th century writer Pierre Bayle had a whole section on Juan de Mariana in his article on the Jesuits in his influential *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1679). Bayle was a Huguenot and he was highly critical of the Jesuits and repeated the accusations that they supported regicide and would destroy any possible religious peace, as they would encourage the violation of any oaths, compromises, or peace treaties made with "heretics."[10] However, Bayle was also skeptical of the many fantastical stories and obvious slanders about the Jesuits that circulated during the 16th and 17th centuries, writing: "It is undeniable that a great many condemn the Jesuits out of mere prejudice. Whatsoever is published against them is almost

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[4]Peter Burke, "The Black Legend of the Jesuits: An Essay in the History of Social Stereotypes," in *Christianity and Community in the West*, Simon Ditchfield ed., (Routledge, 2016,) Kindle Edition, Location 5334.

[5] Arthur F. Marotti, "Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies," in *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*, A. Marotti ed., (Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), pp. 11, 29 (note 52).

[6] Burke, Location 5226.

[7] "Introduction," in *Jesuit Education and The Classics*, Edmund Cueva, Shannon Bryne, and Frederick Benda eds., (Cambridge Scholars, 2009), p. ix.

[8] Dale K. Van Kley "Plots and Rumors of Plots: The Role of Conspiracy in the International Campaign against the Society of Jesus, 1758-1768," in *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context: Causes, Events, and Consequences,* Jeffrey Burson and Jonathan Wright eds., (Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 13.

[9] Juan de Mariana, p. 150.

[10] Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 186.

equally believed by their enemies, both Catholics and Protestants."[11] Bayle listed examples of slander, such as tales of the Jesuits refusing to accept the bishops the Pope himself sent to China,[12] Jesuits rampantly impregnating nuns,[13] Jesuits trying to poison the Holy Roman emperor at communion,[14] and even a report that the Jesuits had faked the conjuring of a spirit to torment a Duke until he agreed to exterminate the heretics under his rule.[15]

One of the anti-Jesuit documents with the most staying power was the 1614 *Monita Secreta*, a forgery purporting to be secret instructions to Jesuits about how to denigrate other Roman Catholic orders, infiltrate royal courts and weaken the power of princes, manipulate people via confession, and how to get funds by doting on wealthy widows and other such tricks.[16] It was written by a disgruntled former Jesuit and first published in Krakow, Poland. The Roman Catholic Church denounced it and placed it on its list of prohibited books,[17] but it has continued to be republished and referenced right up to the present day.[18]

In pre-Revolutionary France, a tradition of suspicion and antipathy towards the Jesuits was made permanent through the long running conflict between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, a Roman Catholic movement popular in 17th century France that emphasized the necessity of God's grace for salvation. The Jansenists became embroiled in conflict with the Jesuits over issues of grace vs. works, frequency of communion, leniency of confession, and even aspects of Church government.[19] The controversy was turned into a fixture of French literature by the writings of Blaise Pascal, one of the intellectual superstars of the age. Pascal became a Jansenist and wrote a series of essays called the *Lettres Provinciales* (1656-1657) under a pseudonym attacking Jesuit teachings and even accusing them of deliberately spreading calumny against Jansenists, enabled by their own flexible morality: "Let none, therefore, henceforth be surprised to find the Jesuits calumniators; they can exercise this vocation with a safe conscience; ...they have invented maxims for enabling them to do it without any fear of the justice of God."[20]

In this case the Jesuits were not merely innocent objects of a conspiracy theory. Jesuits were in fact actively campaigning against the Jansenists and the Jansenists believed (not

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[11] Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 177.
[12] Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 183.
[13] Bayle, Vol. 2, pp. 177-178.
[14] Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 180.
[15] Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 179.
[16] For an example English translation see W. C. Brownlee, *Secret Instructions of The Jesuits*, (New York: American and Foreign Christian Union, 1857.)
[17] Sabina Pavone, "The History of Anti-Jesuitism" in *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges*, Thomas Banchoff and Jose Casanova eds., (Georgetown University Press, 2016), pp. 116-117.
[18] For example, when the Jesuit Jorge Mario Bergoglio became Pope in 2013, the Indian tabloid the Mail Today published an attack on the Jesuits and the new Pope that brought up the *Monita Secreta* as a prime example of the kinds of methods that the Jesuits would use to gain power and enrich themselves. See Rohan Venkataramakrishnan, "WHIPLASH: For the greater glory (of the Church)," *Daily Mail, India* (14 March, 2013). Available at http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2293544/WHIPLASH-For-greater-glory-Church.html . Accessed January 31, 2017.
[19] Robert W. Shaffern, "Jansenist Controversy," in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism: A-L,* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), pp. 683-684.
[20] Blaise Pascal, *The Provincial Letters,* Thomas M/Crie trans., (University of Adelaide, 2014), Kindle Edition, Location 3389.

without justification) that the Jesuits were instrumental in turning king Louis XIV of France against them, resulting in the closure of the abbey of Port-Royal, the Jansenist stronghold.[21] Jesuits helped spread an anti-Jansenist conspiracy theory that presaged many of the attacks against the Jesuits themselves in later centuries. This conspiracy theory is based on the 1654 book *Relation juridique de ce qui s'est passe a Poitiers touchant la nouvelle doctrine de Jansenistes* (Legal relationship of what happened in Poitiers concerning the new doctrine of the Jansenists) written by the anti-Jansenist lawyer Jean Filleau.[22] Filleau claimed that several leading Jansenists had met in 1621 to plot the destruction of Christianity and "establish the sole creed of one God, but without Jesus Christ, without sacraments, and without his Gospel"[23] The leadership of the Jansenists, this document claimed, were not Christians but secret Deists. Like the conspiracy theories about the French Revolution involving the Freemasons and the philosophes, this deistic project was described as the work of a few top conspirators who were manipulating their credulous followers into accomplishing their hidden goal. (Indeed, this document may have inspired the Jesuit Barruel when he was writing his monumental anti-Freemason conspiracy-theory tomes.) The attendees at this secret conference decided to "...declare themselves the defenders of the doctrine of St. Augustine, whose authority would be a veil for the novelty of their doctrine, and a trap for weak minds."[24] Filleau wrote that just as the so-called "Reformation" was really just "the pretext of a reformation" which in fact allowed for the spread of heresy, i.e. the Jansenists were imitating the Reformers and particularly the Calvinists by spreading their heresy under the guise of reforming the church.[25] Later in the book the author even published the allegation that there was a clandestine "...union between Jansenists and the Calvinists…"[26] This was a dangerous accusation. During this time Calvinists were often considered to be enemies of the French state in addition to being heretics. The French government was stepping up persecution of French Calvinists, which culminated in the official revocation of their toleration about 30 years later. To tie the Jansenists to Calvinists was to mark them as enemies of the state and to open the way for their persecution. This accusation of a clandestine alliance was referenced and repeated by the Jesuit author Bernard Meynier a few years later in his 1656 *Le Port-Royal et Geneve D'intelligence, Contre le Tres-Saint Sacrament de l'Autel dans leurs Liures* (Port-Royal and Geneva in league against the most Blessed

[21] Brian E. Strayer, *Suffering Saints: Jansenists and Convulsionnaires in France, 1640-1799,* (Sussex Academic press, 2008), p. 148.

[22] C.J. Betts, *Early Deism in France: From the so-called 'déistes' of Lyon (1564) to Voltaire's 'Lettres philosophiques' (1734)*, (Springer, 1984), p. 38.

[23] Jean Filleau, *Relation juridique, de ce qui s'est passé à Poictiers touchant la nouvelle doctrine des jansénistes*, (Paris: Julien Thoreau and Jean Fleuriau, 1654), p. 16.

[24] Filleau, p. 13.

[25] Filleau, p. 17.

[26] Filleau, p. 46.

Sacrament of the Altar.)[27] [28] [29] In number 16 of his *Lettres Provinciales*, Pascal specifically denounced this book as slander.[30]

As mentioned earlier, the Jansenists were eventually suppressed by the French state, but the writings of Pascal and an idea that the truly Christian and truly French Jansenists had been wronged by the slandering and Rome-centric Jesuits percolated through France, eventually contributing to the expulsion of Jesuits from France in 1764. The tales surrounding the Jesuits eventually destroyed their reputation in many Roman Catholic courts, and the Jesuits were suppressed by papal decree in 1773, after coming under sustained attack by the governments of Portugal, France, and Spain.[31]

Jesuit Conspiracy Theories after the Restoration

Just as anti-masonic ideas pre-dated the French Revolution, but did not become a the major strain of modern European conspiracy theories until after the anti-revolutionary propaganda campaigns and the writings of Barruel and Robison, anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories were already circulating before the French Revolution, but they greatly increased in influence after the Restoration, and particularly in France during the reign of Charles X (r. 1824-1830).[32]

In 1814 the Jesuits were restored by the Pope, and by the 1820s there were about 500 Jesuits in France. They had managed to found eight Jesuit schools by 1828.[33] Some political opponents of the restored Bourbon monarchs Louis XVIII (r. 1815 - 1824) and Charles X suspected that there was a secret "Congregation" run by the Jesuits that actually controlled the government. Stories like these may have sprung from rumors about the actual hyper-Roman Catholic anti-Napoleon secret society the Chevaliers de la Foi,[34] which had organized public demonstrations in favor of Louis XVII before the Restoration.[35] These renewed stories of Jesuit intrigue were well received in Britain, where early-modern anti-Jesuit narratives had been circulating for almost long as Jesuits had existed. Anti-Jesuit innuendo also existed in the German speaking world. In his *History of the Assassins* mentioned in the previous chapter, Hammer-Purgstall drew parallels between the Assassins and the Jesuits, as well as with the

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[27] Bernard Meynier, *Le Port-Royal et Geneve D'intelligence, Contre le Tres-Saint Sacrament de l'Autel dans leurs Liures,* (Paris: Chez Antonie Pasdelov, 1656), pp. 14 - 16.
[28] Betts, p. 39.
[29] Translation of the title from *The Cambridge Companion to Pascal*, Nicholas Hammond Ed., (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 194.
[30] Pascal, Location 3645-3654.
[31] Jonathan Wright and Jeffrey D. Burson, "Introduction: Towards a New History of the Eighteenth-Century Jesuit Suppression in Global Context," in T*he Jesuit Suppression in Global Context: Causes, Events, and Consequences*, Jonathan Wright and Jeffrey D. Burson eds., (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-2.
[32] Geoffrey Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France*, (Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 58.
[33] Cibitt, pp. 19-20.
[34] Robert Tombs, *France 1814 - 1914***,** (Routledge, 2014)**,** p. 92.
[35] Thomas D. Beck, *French Legislators, 1800-1834: A Study in Quantitative History*, (University of California Press, 1974), p. 53.

Illuminati,[36] and was actually afraid that Metternich would be angered by his implicit criticisms of the Jesuits.[37] However, the hatred of the Jesuits and the creation of anti-Jesuit literature in Protestant countries did not reach the peak of intensity that they did in France. According to a Jesuit expert on their history Fr. John Padberg, the anti-Jesuit tradition in the English-speaking world can't hold a candle to what was spoken on the other side of the Channel: "...in no way does it rival in breadth and intensity that tradition in France. This was a phenomenon that engaged Beranger in libelous anti-Jesuit songs, gave Eugene Sue fame with his potboiler serial novel Le Juif Errant, intrigued Balzak, and turned the deservedly great historian Michelet into a vulgar anti-Jesuit propagandist." [38]

The volume and quantity of anti-Jesuit literature printed in France reached its peak between 1826 and 1828, when accusations of Jesuit direction of the state became a common trope in liberal opposition journals.[39] The Jesuits were in fact expelled from France again in 1828 after incessant attacks against them, but this new expulsion did not diminish these attacks.[40] After all, a society this powerful and secretive could continue its influence using clandestine contacts despite being officially banned from the country. These accusations hurled against the Jesuits by French liberals were the mirror image of the accusations hurled against liberals from conservative quarters that denounced them as part of a masonic conspiracy.[41] In the French popular imagination, the Jesuits became associated with counterrevolution, as asserted by the anti-Jesuit historian Michelet: "Take a man in the street, the first who comes along, and ask him: 'What are the Jesuits?' He will reply without hesitating: 'The Counter-Revolution'."[42]

One of the primary organs spreading anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories in Restoration-era France was the newspaper *Le Constitutionnel*.[43] *Le Constitutionnel* was one of the main daily newspapers in France, an opposition newspaper of the French center-left. It became an important mouthpiece for the Revolution of 1830 that unseated Charles X.[44] In addition to spewing out a stream of derogatory stories about the Jesuits and harping on their supposed influence and web of deception and conspiracy, *Le Constitutionnel* was also the publisher of the immensely popular novel *Le Juif Errant* (The Wandering Jew) which depicted a global, hyper-

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[36] Hammer-Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 60.
[37] Hammer-Purgstall, *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Erinnerungen und Briefe*, p. 123.
[38] Padberg, J. W. , S.J."*The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* by Geoffrey Cubitt (review)." *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 81 no. 1, 1995, pp. 89-90. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/cat.1995.0133 .
[39] Cibitt, p. 67.
[40] Tombs, p. 92.
[41] Geoffrey Cubitt, "Conspiracism, Secrecy and Security in Restoration France: Denouncing the Jesuit Menace," in Historical Social Research, (Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences) Vol. 38, No. 1 (143), Security and Conspiracy in History, 16th to 21st Century (2013), pp. 107-128, p. 108.
[42] From Geoffrey Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 23, quoting J. Michelet and E. Quinet, *Des Jesuites*, 7th edition, (paris, 1845), p. 22.
[43] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* p. 67.
[44] Maria Adamowicz-Hariasz, "From Opinion to Information: The Roman-Feuilleton and the Transformation of the Nineteenth-Century French Press," in *Making the News: Modernity & the Mass Press in Nineteenth-century France*, Dean De la Motte, Jeannene M. Przyblyski eds., pp. 167-169.

capable and ruthless Jesuit conspiracy that was especially interested in dispossessing a family of an immense fortune left by an ancestor who had been persecuted by the Jesuits.[45]

According to the French historian and politician Alphonse de Lamartine a popular rumor began circulating in France under Charles X that the king himself was a secular affiliate of the Jesuits, and had secretly handed the kingdom over to them in exchange for promised salvation.[46] (Stories like this would have been at home in the pre-modern monarchical era, along with other stories of deceptive usurpation discussed in chapter 2.) In addition to these older-style narratives, the new political realities of the democratic age encouraged new stories about the Jesuits attempting usurpation via the deception of whole populations and classes, using the new political reality to manipulate millions and seize power. Even the former royalist and emigre François Dominique de Reynaud, Comte de Montlosier, suspected that behind the restoration there was "an ambitious and invasive faction, creeping in the shadows under the inspiration of the Jesuits, an anonymous and illegal congregation, infiltrating the whole secular administration, affiliating to itself magistrates, suborning ministers, gaining and distributing all the favours …"[47] The Jesuits were accused of abusing the newfound freedom of the press, freedom of association, and (above all) the liberalization of education in order to usurp power. One anti-Jesuit book from 1844 described their sinister plans to usurp power using the press, education, and religiosity in a coordinated way:

> "After the Revolution of 1830, it was imagined that the Jesuits were expelled, the madmen said forever, the wise men said for a long time, and the Jesuits said nothing.... (the Jesuits) went back to work with the patience and tenacity of the spider, who, seeing for the hundredth time his web swept away by the brush of a broom, begins again without being discouraged, without hesitating...Their plan of attack after so many defeats was the largest and most audacious they had ever formed. It covered all parts of society at once. They first took over a newspaper… for they know that the press is the great power of our time… Their chief object is the invasion of public education: when they have taken this, they will be masters of the kingdom.... There exists in the masses a need for religiosity… the Jesuits had noticed; They resolved to exploit it…. Now they have divided society into several classes for each of which they have a system of seduction…."[48]

The description of this plot is obviously close to, and was perhaps even inspired by, the anti-Freemason/Illuminati/Carbonari conspiracy theories, the first versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, described in previous chapters, although with education displacing the press as the main tool of the deceptive usurpers.

The idea of Jesuits dominating the French education system became a fixation for anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists because education became a fixation of conservative French Roman Catholics. The secular system of the state monopoly on education set up by Napoleon in 1806 called the *Université* was kept in place after the Restoration, minimizing the power of the Roman Catholic church in education. During the restoration there were Roman Catholic efforts to bring the *Université* under its influence and in fact a bishop was the Grand Master of the *Université*

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[45] Theodore Ziolkowski, *Cults and Conspiracies, a Literary History*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), Kindle Edition, Locations 2546-2594.
[46] A. De Lamartine, *Historie de la Restauration,* (Brussels: 1853), Vol. 8, p. 4.
[47] Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror,* Location 5986. Quoting A. De Lamartine, *Historie de la Restauration,* (Brussels: 1853), Vol 8, p. 44.
[48] F. Genin, *Les Jesuites et L'Universite,* (Paris: Paulin, 1844), pp. 42-44.

from 1824-1828.[49] However, after the Revolution of 1830 deposed Charles X and installed Louis Philippe, the main thrust of conservative Roman Catholics in education policy in France was not towards attempts to influence the secular education system but attempts to free the educational system from state control. "Freedom of Education" became a Roman Catholic slogan and was promised in the new French constitution adopted after the Revolution of 1830.[50] As subsequent attempts to take education away from state control kept failing, Roman Catholic agitation about this issue became more organized and vituperative, with some accusing the state of using its monopoly on education to campaign against religion and morality. These efforts generated a response from French liberals, some of whom responded that organized efforts to "liberalize" education was merely an attempt by Jesuits to lower society's defenses against Jesuitism, which was ready to re-infiltrate French society.[51] These arguments turned supporters of liberalism into advocates of restriction and government control. To them, loosening the state's grip on education would not be "liberating" but would instead leave it to the mercy of the Jesuits, who were traditionally specialists in education. As the leading scholar on the subject Geoffrey Cubitt put it: "Anti-jesuitism helped reconcile the universalism appropriate to the construction of a new world with the dualism needed to sustain crusading revolution."[52] Through their conspiracy theories, these French anti-Jesuit liberals avoided Carl Schmitt's criticism of liberalism as unwilling to face the specter of a real enemy, of turning moral and ethical enemies into mere debating adversaries.[53] They manufactured a worthy enemy to combat, but at the price of believing in absurdities and championing the illiberal policies of discrimination against a particular religious association and supporting the state's control of education. The French state, anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists would argue, had to maintain control of education not because state control of education was necessarily a good thing, but because the alternative was de-facto Jesuit control of education, and subsequently Jesuit control of society after their pupils had become adult citizens. This argument is analogous to those in favor of censorship set out by anti-Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theorists discussed in the previous two chapters.

The mirroring of the Jesuit conspiracy theories with the Grand Conspiracy Theory

In his first volume of *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* the ex-Jesuit[54] Barruel claimed that the destruction of the Jesuits was an essential part of the Philosophe conspirators "plan of overwhelming the Christian religion…"[55] He portrayed the Jesuits as the citadel opposing the grand revolutionary conspiracy against the Throne and Altar that would ultimately resulted in bloodshed and chaos. The contemporary arch-conservative philosopher Joseph De Maistre also made this argument in a letter he wrote to the Russian authorities in 1810, saying that the "destruction of this order [the Jesuits] gave old France over to the

[49] Tombs, p. 136.
[50] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* p. 107.
[51] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* pp. 107-108.
[52] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* p. 147.
[53] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab trans., (The University of Chicago Press, 2007), Kindle Edition, Location 894.
[54] This was during the time when the Jesuits were suppressed.
[55] Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism,* Vol. 1, p. 57.

ferocious beasts that have devoured it" and that to reproach the Jesuits for their antipathy towards the Enlightenment was like "reproaching the dog for his aversion to the wolf."[56] Opponents of the Jesuits, many of whom were liberals who opposed both the *Ancien Régime* and the excesses and hyper-revolutionary program of the Jacobins during the French Revolution, found this argument disingenuous. As an 1824 article from *Le Constitutionnel* put it:

> "The Jesuits and their followers… say… 'But the French Revolution, but the revolutionary spirit which circulates in Europe is the consequence of the destruction of the Jesuits!' ...A single reflection will demonstrate the absurdity of this assertion; In 1789, up to the present day, revolution has broken out only in the Catholic states; The Protestant states have been exempt from it, and it is certainly not the Jesuits who have protected the latter."[57]

Other writers went further, not only attacking the idea that the Jesuits were necessary to prevent bloody revolution, but saying that they were in fact fellow-travelers or even the hidden hand behind the French Revolution and other bloody eruptions. One Jansenist author published a work in 1828 that tried to prove that the Jesuits and the Philosophes were in fact two sides of the same coin.[58] "...the Jesuits hold in all respects the same doctrine, the same morals, the same political principles and the same conduct as our so called philosophes, and that, despite the war between each other, they are alike…"[59]

While anti-Jesuit fervor mainly emanated from the French left, it was by no means exclusively a liberal attitude. Older concerns about regicide, the control of the French government over the French church, or just paranoia linked to anti-Jesuit tales, all seeded the imaginations of many French conservatives and some produced narratives linking the Jesuits with the Freemasons and the Illuminati.[60] The germ of this idea pre-dated the French Revolution. The first book to claim that the Illuminati had survived its supposed dissolution and were planning a grand revolution against Christianity and all states was the 1786 *Exposure of the Cosmopolitan System* by the Weimar official and future Eudamonist Ernst August Anton von Göschhausen. He wrote that the Jesuits were in control of the Illuminati, and were using them as a tool to destroy the more enlightened states of Northern Europe.[61] Perhaps in response to this idea, the ex-Jesuit Barruel asserted that the Illuminati had deliberately spread the lie that the Jesuits were in control of large parts of Freemasonry, as a way of driving more Freemasons into lodges under the control of the Illuminati.[62]

Some anti-Jesuit and anti-Freemason antagonists thought that the Jesuits protested too much. In the 1840s two university professors at the College de France Jules Michelet and Edgar

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[56] Joseph De Maistre, *Lettres et Opuscules Inedits Du Comte Joseph De Maistre,* (Paris: A. Vaton, 1851), Vol. 2, p. 341

[57] "Interieur," in *Le Constitutionnel*, (Paris) 11 December 1824, p. 2, column 2.

[58] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* p. 35.

[59] François Jacquemont, *Examen Impartial du Jésuitisme Ancien et Moderne,* (Lyon: De C. Coque, 1828), p. vii-viii.

[60] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* p. 62.

[61] Ernst August Anton von Göschhausen, *Enthüllung des Systems der Weltbürger-Republik*, (Rome, [Leipzig], 1786), p. 276, Quoted in Epstein, p. 99.

[62] Barruel, *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism,* Vol. 4, p. 183.

Quinet gave a course on the history of the Jesuits which was then published and acclaimed.[63] This influential text went through the standard litany of anti-Jesuit accusations and even accused the Jesuits in the Russian empire under Catherine II (where they continued to exist after they had been suppressed everywhere else) of being part of "a strange league, that of despotism, atheism, and Jesuitism, against all the living powers of opinion."[64]

The reach of this extreme version of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory extended to literature and popular culture. The poet and novelist Victor Hugo wrote a poem about the evil Jesuit conspiracy. The poem titled "Ad majorem dei Gloriam" ("For the greater glory of God" - the Jesuit motto) was dated November 1852 and portrays the Jesuits as plotting to dominate the whole world and opposing everything good that society has to offer like liberty, progress, and law.[65] This excerpt of three out of 11 stanzas shows their supposed secret religious indifference, their lust for power, their use of the most underhanded tactics, and their antipathy towards the Enlightenment:

"Priests, we'll have one high-hoist banner inscribed:
Order, Propriety, Faith, Family-Pride
What's more, should a bandit, Jew, Corsair or Pagan
Come offer us aid—one who's perjured and lied
Dirk in mouth, torch in hand, all bloody and wild,
To steal and to kill—we'll say 'that's just the way, man!'

When our victory's done, inside our mighty stronghold
We'll live arrogant, venerated—and we'll be strong, bold:
Giving due to Christ Jesus *or* Allah *or*—Mithras!
Power is our god; our method is gagging.
If no-one down here hears us laugh, heads a-wagging,
It'll still give mankind's hidden heart the jitters.

We'll garrotte the soul in the depths of our cavern
What of nation, the 'dream' of the people we govern?
That's the monk of old Spain, the Egyptian Fellaheen.
Down with Soul! Down with Right! And *long live* the sword!
And what *is* free-thinking? A stray dog, that's all
Chain up Jean-Jacques, slam Voltaire—lock all those fellows in."[66]

It is entirely possible to see the Jesuits as the shock-troops of reaction and despotism in 18th-19th century Europe without succumbing to conspiracy theories that involve their supposed all-pervasive influence or secret atheism. There is a difference between "normal" anti-Jesuitism

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[63] John T. McGreevy, "Restored Jesuits: Notes towards a Global History," in *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges*, Thomas Banchoff and Jose Casanova eds., (Georgetown University Press, 2016), p. 134.
[64] Jules Michelet, Edgar Quinet, *The Jesuits*, C. Cocks Trans., (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848), p. 119.
[65] John Andrew Frey, "Ad majorem dei gloriam," in *A Victor Hugo Encyclopedia*, (Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 4-5.
[66] Victor Hugo, *Ad majorem dei gloriam,* translated by Adam Roberts at "BOOK I, 'Society Saved' 7: Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam" *Translating Hugo*, June 21, 2008. Available at http://translatinghugo.blogspot.com/2008/06/book-i-society-saved-7-ad-majorem-dei.html, accessed May 9, 2017.

and the conspiracy theories about them just as there is a difference between anti-Freemasonry and the belief that the Freemasons and their associates are the main drivers of world revolution. This same difference distinguishes the Papal bulls of 1738 and 1751, which condemned the Freemasons in general terms, from the 1821 bull that decisively linked the Freemasons to the supposed international conspiracy, discussed in the previous chapter.

Some of the 19th century anti-Jesuit fervor may itself have been a reaction to pro-Roman Catholic and strongly anti-liberal propaganda, including the anti-Masonic Grand Conspiracy Theory pushed by the ex-Jesuit Augustin Barruel. Extreme conspiracy-theory laced propaganda can create an angry reaction from its targets, sometimes resulting in a response in kind (conspiracy theories against their conspiracy-theorist opponents.) A fine example of this is found in the important anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory book *The Jesuit Conspiracy, The Secret Plan of the Order* (1848) which pushed the idea that the Jesuits were a network of usurpers who only desired power, a secret society determined to "destroy all the ideas which the French revolution has bequeathed to the world...free inquiry, in order to bind every conscience with the chains of Catholic authority; they would strike down the principle of liberty, the source of all justice, in order to build up again the tyranny of times gone by."[67] (There will be further discussion of this document in a subsequent section.) Among the many pieces of evidence the author of *The Jesuit Conspiracy* uses for this argument are some quotations from the work of the conservative Roman Catholic jurist Mathieu-Richard-Auguste Henrion, a prolific author. Henrion was quoted approving the efforts of the Jesuits toward "the annihilation of a double class of principles to which the people are a prey - principles equally false in religion and in politics..."[68] and rejoicing that the Jesuits had been restored in 1814, "...a period when the people, delivered from a long-standing European war, remained prey to principles equally false in religion and politics... it could be nothing short of divine inspiration which suggested to Pius VII the thought of rallying around the apostolic throne a society so formed to trample down error." Henrion also praised the fact that the new liberty of association brought to France by the Revolution of 1830 would allow the "monastic state" to "speedily rise up from its ruins."[69] These statements contain phrases that could be useful to anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists in building their case. They could be interpreted in a way that supported the idea that the Jesuits were an organization specifically devoted to stamping out the legacy of the Enlightenment and that they were perversely using freedom of association to advance their agenda of repression, especially after 1830.

Henrion probably believed that a "society… formed to trample down error" was necessary because he believed the world was infiltrated by a society formed to build up error. He was a believer in the anti-Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory. He cited Barruel as one of his sources in his *Histoire générale de l'Église* (General History of the Church)[70] in which he repeated the idea that the Freemasons were just camouflaged Manichean heretics who had "...planted in Europe the first germs of the double revolt in religion and politics, which have since

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[67] Abbate Leone, *The Jesuit Conspiracy, The Secret Plan of the Order*, (London: Vizetelly Brothers and Co., 1848), p. 74.
[68] Leone, p. 74.
[69] Leone, p. 72.
[70] Mathieu-Richard-Auguste Henrion, *Histoire générale de l'Église, depuis la prédication des apôtres jusqu'au Pontificat de Gregoire XVI*, Vol. 10., fourth edition, p. iv.

developed;" and that the French revolution was a " triumph prepared so long, so long awaited by these *secret societies*."[71] To someone who believed they were facing such an immense, organized, transnational, and successful threat, the Jesuits were just the thing to counter them: an organized Roman Catholic transnational counter-conspiracy. To a liberal observer who did not believe in the conspiracy theories of Barruel and Robison, the pronouncements and acts of conspiracy theorists like Henrion appeared to confirm the basic tenants of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy. In this case, just as some Europeans on the right saw the atrocities of the French Revolution and believed the real cause for these events was a Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy, some on the left saw the counter-revolution championed by believers in a Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy and concluded the real cause behind political developments during the Restoration was a Jesuit conspiracy.

Switzerland and *The Jesuit Conspiracy, The Secret Plan of the Order*

The best example of the most extreme version of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory that clearly became one with the Grand Conspiracy Theory was a piece of propaganda attacking Jesuit involvement in Switzerland. This was *The Jesuit Conspiracy, The Secret Plan of the Order* (1848) which is a classic of conspiracy-theory propaganda. The background of the text was a civil war in Switzerland that had the Jesuit issue at its heart. In 1840s Switzerland the Jesuit issue became the focus of politics during the contest between the liberal and reforming northern cantons and the more conservative southern cantons. In 1841 Roman Catholics in the northern canton of Aargau "rioted" (or "protested," depending on the historian) and threatened secession after the cantonal legislature approved a new draft constitution. The government of the canton placed the blame for fomenting the unrest on the local monasteries.[72] [73] The canton government then shut down the convents despite constitutional guarantees on their inviolability. The central Swiss government later re-open several of the closed institutions, but by 1843 Roman Catholic leaders were already holding talks on forming an army and breaking away from the more anti-clerical cantons.[74] The more conservative Roman Catholic cantons eventually formalized an alliance in 1845 called the "Sonderbund" (special league). This was a violation of the Swiss Federal treaty of 1815 that banned separate alliances between cantons.[75]

The tension between the anti-clerical reformers and many of the conservative Roman Catholics continued to snowball, and the prospect of the reintroduction of Jesuits into the canton of Lucerne became the issue that eventually resulted in war. In October 1844 the canton of Lucerne invited the Jesuits to take over the canton's religious education. This was a highly provocative act to the northern cantons given the widespread antipathy towards the Jesuits. This move, combined with another initiative by conservative Swiss Roman Catholics to disenfranchise French-speakers and ban Protestantism in the southern canton of Valais,

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[71] Henrion, Vol. 10., p. 253.

[72] Marc H. Lerner, *A Laboratory of Liberty: The Transformation of Political Culture in Republican Switzerland 1750-1848*, (Brill, 2011), p. 270.

[73] Clive Church and Randolph Head, *A Concise History of Switzerland*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 157.

[74] Church and Head, p. 157.

[75] Jeremy Black, *War in the Nineteenth Century: 1800-1914*, (Polity Press, 2009) p. 45.

mobilized the Swiss liberals. Several canton governments were voted out or overthrown by anti-Jesuit radicals.[76] There was also a failed attempt to overthrow the canton government in Lucerne. After this, a group of 1000 radicals attempted a violent invasion of Lucerne. They defeated the federal Swiss troops sent against them but withdrew because they lacked support. In late March 1845 a second larger "volunteer" invasion force was defeated. This was followed by the assassination of one of the leaders of the Roman Catholic faction in Lucerne.[77] The central diet of Switzerland condemned the irregulars but the Jesuit issue did not go away, and the first Jesuit teachers arrived in Lucerne in the middle of 1845.[78]

These invasions and the murder served to further entrench the belief among conservative, pro-Jesuit Roman Catholic Swiss that compromise was impossible. There was talk of enlarging the Roman Catholic cantons and engineering a new majority. The Sonderbund reached out to potential foreign helpers and the budding political-military alliance of the southern Roman Catholic cantons was becoming impossible to ignore. In 1847 the Swiss diet decided to disband the Sonderbund and expel the Jesuits, and in response the Sonderbund prepared for war under the generalship of the protestant Johann-Ulrich von Salis-Soglio.[79] [80] Despite receiving funds from Austria and a few thousand guns from the French, the forces of the Sonderbund were trounced by the Federal forces. The Jesuits were expelled and the Swiss liberals went on to push through constitutional reform.[81]

This was the last war in Switzerland, and it resulted in only 93 deaths,[82] but the propaganda and conspiracy theories swirling around this war on the French left contributed to anti-Jesuit paranoia throughout Europe. *Le Constitutionnel* and other French papers with a liberal bent placed the blame for the war squarely on the Jesuit conspiracy, and published stories framing them as direct participants in the struggle.[83] The aforementioned *Secret Plan of the Order* was the most popular example of the anti-Jesuit propaganda this war produced, but it did not achieve European-wide popularity until after the Sonderbund War was over. Thematically, it mirrored the anti-Jansenist story about a secret conference of pseudo-Christian plotters planning to destroy Christianity (the one pushed by the Jesuit Bernard Meynier in 1656) and combined it with the anti-Jesuit *Monita Secreta* (1614). Conspiracy theorist literature had already produced examples of the confession of the repentant conspirator or the publication of supposed secret instructions from the conspiracy, like the *Monita Secreta*. *The Secret Plan of the Order* claimed to contain a verbatim transcript of a meeting to coordinate the grand Jesuit conspiracy, which the author just happened to overhear through a few twists of fate.

The Author of *The Secret Plan of the Order* Jacopo Leone was active in Geneva in 1846 in the run-up to the Sonderbund War. According to the socialist writer Victor Prosper

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[76] Church and Head, p. 157.
[77] Church and Head, pp. 157-159.
[78] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* pp. 121-122.
[79] Church and Head, p. 159.
[80] He seems to be a relative of the Salais-Soglio brothers who had attempted violent revolution against the Austrian empire decades earlier.
[81] Charles Seignobos, *A Political History of Europe Since 1814*, S. M. Macvane trans., (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. 268-269.
[82] Black, p. 45.
[83] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* pp. 122-123.

Considerant, the editor of the "official" printing of *The Secret Plan of the Order*, Leone's story was already circulating in Geneva by September 1846.[84] In the biography Leone included in *The Secret Plan of the Order* he wrote that he had been expelled from Geneva some time in 1846 by the pre-revolutionary government (that is, the government that was in place before the radically anti-Jesuit liberals overthrew it.)[85] An unauthorized edition of Leone's book was produced in 1847, much to his distress. Leone writes that the man responsible for this "bootleg" edition was Frederic Roessinger,[86] who was one of the revolutionaries that overthrew the Genevan government and who later served as a volunteer surgeon during the Sonderbund War.[87] This "bootleg" copy was likely published as a piece of anti-Jesuit propaganda to justify the overthrow of the Genevan government and the other actions of the anti-Jesuit/liberal side of this Swiss civil war. Leone was a participant in the anti-Jesuit agitation that eventually precipitated the Sonderbund War, but like several of the best-made works of conspiracy-theory propaganda, the narrative built for a specific conflict outlived the conflict. The version of Leone's *Secret Plan of the Order* that has come down to us was published in London in the aftermath of the failed French Revolution of 1848, and the socialist editor of the official edition included a bitter postscript blaming this failure on the defection of French liberals to the camp of the Jesuits.[88]

The editor of the 1848 edition could draw parallels between this text probably purposed as propaganda against the Jesuits in Switzerland and the "June days" of 1848 because *Secret Plan of the Order* was written in a way that lets the reader draw his own conclusions from the text. These conclusions might have a multiplicity of outcomes, but one certain enemy: the Jesuits. The book claimed to present verbatim dialogues from a secret conference, and this technique has its advantages. Vague statements were combined with commentary (written by the supposed eavesdropper) to either give the reader the pleasing feeling that he himself is also unravelling the mystery or to leave large swaths of the plan menacing but vague, with just enough information to tantalize a reader. These gaps can then be filled with the reader's fears and concerns.

Leone wrote that he was once a Jesuit novice in northern Italy. One day, quite by accident, he stumbled across a volume titled "Confession of the Novices" in the private apartment of his superior. This book included a record of his own confessions and a description of his character.[89] This would be a gross violation of the seal of confession in the Roman Catholic Church. He was about to examine another volume titled "Enemies of the Society" when he heard approaching footsteps and hid.[90] He then overheard a conference of Jesuits that takes place in the adjoining room, and he also happened to find a pen and paper close by and recorded the whole conference in shorthand.[91] The Jesuits were revealed to be a scheming

[84] Leone, p. ii.
[85] Leone, p. xxxviii.
[86] Leone, p. xl.
[87] Euene Borel and Louis Gulliaume, *Frédéric Roessinger: Esquisse Biographique*, (Neuchatel: Imprimerie Montandon Freres, 1863), pp. 82-83.
[88] Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth,* p. 147-148.
[89] Leone, p. 15.
[90] Leone, p. 19.
[91] Leone p. 27.

atheistic organization bent on dominating the world behind-the-scenes and achieving a universal usurpation-via-proxy by manipulating governments that only appeared to be sovereign. This was a planning conference for how to adapt the international conspiracy of the Jesuits to modern times:

> "We must first decide, then, what course to follow with the multitude who have been bewildered and fascinated by such fine-sounding words as 'right,' 'liberty,' 'human dignity,' and so forth. It is not by straightforward opposition, and by depreciating their idols, that we shall prevail. To prepare for men of all parties, whatever may be their banner, a gigantic surprise, that is our task... Let our first care, therefore, be to change, altogether, the nature of our tactics, and to give a new varnish to religion, by appearing to make large concessions. This is the only means to assure our influence over these moderns, half men, half children… Bear ever in mind that our great object, in the first place, is to study deeply and bring to perfection the art of rendering ourselves both necessary and formidable to the powers that be."[92]

Leone wrote that during the conference, several Jesuits rose to talk about particular aspects of the global plot. The narrative fused together the early-modern accusations against the Jesuits (that they are regicides and liars), the kind of supposed propaganda tactics of Illuminati and Freemasons, the stuff of the Grand Conspiracy Theory (the use of revolutions to further usurping political ends, the use of slander as a weapon) and the concerns of a mid-19th century Western European liberal (concerns about political reaction against liberalism).

The first step of this evil anti-liberal plan was to use the principles of liberalism against it. In order to get the leeway to carry out the plan the Jesuit conspirators intend to win freedom of religion and association: "Firstly, We will strive to obtain the same rights as those enjoyed by the Protestants: an easy conquest!"[93] Those liberal Protestants who supported religious toleration are portrayed as dupes: "Protestantism… completely disarmed itself when first it preached the doctrine of toleration, and declared that to persecute for the sake of religion, is a violation of the gospel."[94] The Jesuits planned to use this freedom of religion to destroy all freedom. They said that their main public enemy was Protestantism, and the Jesuits would teach their disciples that there would continue to be societal problems as long as Protestantism exists.[95] They ultimately intend to make the "multitude to sink back into the legends of the middle ages, which will chain down their imaginations to the worship of past times..."[96] A cornerstone of the Jesuit's plan was to be a campaign against the Bible Societies, and during the conference one Jesuit revealed his ultimate anti-Biblical nature by saying: "If I may tell you, openly, what I think of this book, it is not all for us; it is against us."[97]

However, the Jesuits were not portrayed as pure reactionaries in this text. They were not against Bible societies and Protestantism because they were good Roman Catholics, but because they saw them as their main obstacles to world domination. They had nothing against anti-papal thoughts as long as they remain in the upper classes and serve to lull people into a

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[92] Leone p. 24-25.
[93] Leone, p. 132
[94] Leone, p. 113
[95] Leone, p. 91
[96] Leone, p. 92
[97] Leone, p. 99

false sense of complacency.[98] Nobles were to be encouraged to believe that the Jesuits are useful propagandists who will make the people submissive,[99] but even this was part of the Jesuit plan to seduce the nobility and make them powerless to oppose the Jesuit usurpation. If the Pope himself did not cooperate with their plan, they would dominate the next conclave to elect the new Pope, and it was implied that they will facilitate this new conclave by killing the uncooperative Pope.[100] If all else fails the Jesuits would use their ultimate weapon: revolution: "In six months Rome would become the incendiary focus of those volcanic spirits who are themselves at present the objects of our hatred;..."[101] One of the participants gloried in the Jesuit ability to foment revolution, even though they portrayed themselves as the protectors of throne and altar against revolution: "Fools!...They are far from dreaming… that we alone know how to prepare a revolution, compared with which all theirs have been, are, and will be but pigmy insurrections."[102]

Here the Jesuits were portrayed as atheistical usurping revolutionaries like the Illuminati. The key difference is that according to the anti-Illuminati conspiracy theories the Illuminati planned revolutions as a path to global domination. In Leone's anti-Jesuit text the Jesuits plan revolutions as a way of resetting the clock and punishing those who put barriers in the way of their less dramatic but just as sure path to usurpation and world domination. Leone implied that the purpose of these revolutions was to remove those in power who oppose the Jesuits while also generating counter-revolutions that would play into the Jesuit's hands.

Jacopo Leone bracketed his narrative of the secret conference with quotes from other anti-Jesuit propagandists and used them to illustrate and clarify the sometimes vague speeches he reported. He also included innuendo about the sexual practices of the Jesuits, which keeps the book interesting for the prurient reader who might be fatigued by pages of full of repetitious anti-Jesuit accusations. This book concluded with the accusation that the Jesuits were in fact the authors of "Voltairianism" that is, anti-clerical and anti-religious doctrines. Leone asserted that the Jesuits had taught the anti-Christian doctrines in Rome that later became popularized by Voltaire.[103] This may be an indirect reference to the first volume of Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* which put Voltaire at the center of a vast anti-Christian conspiracy.

The anti-Jesuit Conspiracy Theory comes to the Russian empire

European conspiracy theorists in the mid-19th century who did not buy into the idea that the Jesuits and the Freemasons/Illuminati were linked could instead have seen them as two competing conspiracies, one fighting with the propaganda of Enlightenment and liberty and the other fighting with the propaganda of reaction and religion. There were usurpers/liberators of the left and usurpers/liberators of the right. One side was based in Protestant or "revolutionary" or "freethinking" areas like London, Paris, and Geneva and the other based in the more traditional

[98] Leone, p. 93
[99] Leone, p. 120
[100] Leone, p. 178
[101] Leone, p. 178
[102] Leone p. 94
[103] Leone, p. 260. He wrote a subsequent book along these lines.

and hard-core Roman Catholic areas like Rome or Madrid. Of course this is a caricature. After all, one of the most famous conspiracy theorists against the supposed Illuminati conspiracy was the Scottish Protestant John Robison, and the Abbate Leone, one of the most famous writers against the Jesuits, was a Roman Catholic priest. Nevertheless, these nuances may have been less obvious to observers not involved in the Roman Catholic / Protestant - Liberal / Conservative divides.

In the mid-19th century Orthodox autocratic Russia was a country mostly outside these divides. The Russian reading public in the early/mid 19th century was a small portion of the overall population, and the educated classes were steeped in French literature. Many educated Russians would have been aware of the anti-Jesuit and the anti-Revolutionary/Freemason conspiracy theories circulating in French during this time. During the revolutions of 1848 the Russian poet and essayist Fyodor Tyutchev observed that the "Revolution" already controlled 3/4ths of Western Europe, but that it was opposed by Roman Catholic propaganda. However, these two opposing forces were "united in a feeling of common hatred against Russia"[104] Tyutchev was certainly thinking about deeply Roman Catholic Poland, a nation with Republican traditions whose resistance against Russia was a cause célèbre among European liberals. Poland had ceased to exist as an independent nation at the end of the 18th century and been partitioned between Russia, Austria and Prussia. There had been regular rebellions against foreign rule.

In a later 1850 essay against the Roman Catholic Church, Tyutchev made a point of singling out the Jesuits as the epitome of a usurping Roman Catholic plot against the true head of the Russian Church - the Tsar. To Tyutchev, the root of the revolutionary ructions of the 19th century was not an anti-Roman Catholic impulse but an inevitable outgrowth of the usurping nature of the Western church, which had turned away from Orthodoxy. The Protestant Reformation was an earlier consequence of this usurping spirit, and the Jesuits were a distillation of the essence of that usurping nature: "The institution of the Jesuits will always be a problem for the West… It may be said with truth that the question of the Jesuits is too closely connected with the religious consciousness of the West, so that it can never be resolved in a fully satisfactory manner."[105]

Tutchev's attack on the Jesuits as the standard-bearers of the usurping West was not only informed by contemporary anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories he must have encountered. As mentioned in chapter 2 during the Time of Troubles (1598 - 1613) a pretender "false Dmitri" had seized the Russian throne with the help of the Poles, and some said the Jesuits.[106] The Polish king at the time had Jesuits in his court, and the perceived Jesuit involvement in the civilizational-level disaster of the Time of Troubles already made them an object of loathing for many patriotic Russian thinkers.[107]

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[104] Fyodor Tyutchev, "La Russie et la Revolution," (Dated April, 1848). Available at *tutchev.com*, http://www.tutchev.com/text/la_russie.shtml. Accessed May 10, 2017.

[105] Fyodor Tyutchev, "La Papauté et la question romaine au point de vue de Saint-Petersbourg," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Nouvelle période, Vo. 5. , 1850. Available at https://www.revuedesdeuxmondes.fr/article-revue/la-papaute-et-la-question-romaine-au-point-de-vue-de-saint-petersbourg/ . Accessed Jan 23, 2019.

[106] Massa, p. 137.

[107] James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, (Vintage Books,2010), Kindle Edition, location 2535.

The Jesuits were also missionaries active in Eastern Europe in the 17th-18th centuries, and Russian Orthodox believers had sectarian as well as political grievances to lay at their feet. The idea of a combined sectarian/political threat emanating from Poland and spearheaded by the Jesuits was used in pro-Russian propaganda during the partition of Poland, when Russia, Austria, and Prussia divided Poland between them in stages and absorbed the territory and the people of the Polish Republic into their empires. An interesting document concerning the takeover of Poland that looks like an early prototype of a whole chain of Russian anti-Jesuit, anti-Polish, and even anti-Jewish propaganda is *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia* that claims to be from 1768 or 1786, but was probably first written later. Something like this plan was first mentioned in print in 1805. This document purported to be an 18th century Jesuit plan to destroy Orthodoxy and the Uniate Church (Greek Catholic - a Roman Catholic offshoot loyal to the Papacy but retaining many of the Eastern Orthodox rites and customs) in Eastern Europe, presented to the Polish government. In 2013 the Polish scholar Dr. Maria Kałamajska-Saeed examined the supposed original document in the Russian archives and believes based on the penmanship that it is probably from the second half of the 19th century. She showed quite convincingly that it is forgery, based mainly upon anachronistic words and phrases in the text that suggest it is from the 19th century and indicate the writer (or writers) of this document had an imperfect knowledge of conditions in mid-18th century Poland. For example, there is a reference to "Volyn Province" which is a Russian, not a Polish term, and in the title talks of the "Greco-Russian" religion, a term that did not come into use until the beginning of the 19th century. The text is obviously written by a pro-Russian author who is perhaps attempting to present the destruction and suppression of Poland as a measure of self-defense against the machinations of the Jesuits and Poles. The key goal of the plot is to deliberately reduce Orthodox priests and parishioners to poverty and ignorance, opening the field for Roman Catholic missionary work and forcing those who want to be educated to get it from Roman Catholic institutions[108]:

> "...they will not be able to know their rites, how and when they were established, nor comprehend the reasons that they were introduced into the Russian Church, nor inspire the people that these rites are genuine, taken from the Greek Church…"[109]

The document also bizarrely looks forward to the ethnic cleansing of parts of Ukraine, after a rebellion caused by this push against the Uniate and Orthodox religion and an invasion by Tatars, who will depopulate the regions and allow them to be resettled by Poles.[110] This document also contains an important idea used in subsequent Russian anti-Jewish propaganda that will be discussed in later chapters. Among the tactics suggested in this Jesuit plan, according to this document, was the deliberate introduction of Jews into Russian towns. Priests were to enforce a Jewish monopoly on alcohol and use them to reduce prosperous Orthodox or Uniates to penury.

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[108] Maria Kalamajska-Saeed, "Ці сапраўды такімі падступнымі былі езуіты?" (Were the Jesuits really so insidious?), *Беларускі Гістарычны Агляд* (Belarusian Historical Review), December 2013, Vol. 20, No. 1-2, pages 43-79. Available at http://www.belhistory.eu/maryya-kalamajska-saed-ci-sapraŭdy-takimi-padstupnymi-byli-ezuity/. Accessed May 10, 2017.
[109] Kalamajska-Saeed.
[110] Kalamajska-Saeed.

> "For the Jews, by their natural cunning, will take into their hands all the means of acquiring income, and, having taken possession of everything in the city, will drive the Russian residents out of the city and force them to join the peasantry."[111]

Although this document presents a conspiracy theory, it does not seem to be linked to or inspired by the modern post-French Revolution conspiracy theories that arose from the new democratic political realities of the age. *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia* is almost purely sectarian, and it is in a way similar to other sectarian conspiracy theories like the black legend against the Isma'ili's discussed in the previous chapter.

Tyutchev's 1848-1850 references to the abstract unity between revolution, the Roman Catholic Church and the Jesuits could have been inspired by *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia* and it certainly echoed the Russian resentment against Jesuit involvement in the Time of Troubles and the fact that both the "liberals" and "conservatives" (led by the Jesuits) in Europe had their religious and cultural origins in Western, Latin, Christendom, the sectarian rival to Orthodoxy. Tyutchev did not, at least in these published works, make accusations against the Jesuits like those made in *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia*. Neither did he directly repeat the concrete slanders against the Jesuits made in Western Europe by the Abbate Leone and in *Le Constitutionnel*: that the Jesuits were the actual coordinating body for revolution, and were secretly anti-religious usurpers in the mold of (or perhaps even, the directors of) the Illuminati or other supposed revolutionary secret societies. Nevertheless, Tyutchev's writing presaged the use of direct anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories along with themes imported from the West hybridized with the ideas from the forged document *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia* that were used in Russian propaganda leading up to and during the Polish Uprising of 1863.

The Polish Uprising of 1863 and the anti-Jesuit propaganda campaign

The Jesuits had been permitted to continue to exist on Russian territory even when they were suppressed everywhere else. However, they were expelled in 1820 after they had opposed the Russian Bible society (which was favored by Tsar Alexander I), converted several leading citizens to Roman Catholicism, and been restored elsewhere in Europe in 1814. As long as they were suppressed everywhere but in the Russian empire they were not "foreign," but their restoration elsewhere in Europe meant they could now be more easily viewed as a suspicious foreign influence.[112]

In January 1863, after years of preparation, the Poles rebelled against Russian rule. The war became known as the "January Uprising." The first day of the uprising was a surprise, but tension had been building for years beforehand. Some Russians were placing blame on the Jesuits for any of the problems in their Western Empire even before the uprising broke out in

[111] Kalamajska-Saeed.
[112] J.T. Flynn, "The role of the jesuits in the politics of russian education *1801-1820," Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 56, no. 2, p. 249.

1863. An official publication of the Russian General Staff from late 1862, containing a survey of the peoples, histories, and conditions in certain provinces, described Jesuits as the core reason for trouble and discontent in Poland:

> "...the Jesuits made a deep ulcer: the doctrine of the Jesuits touched the conscience of every citizen, shaking belief, giving rise to noxious fanaticism, degenerating soon into bigotry… Jesuits put down deep roots and was the cause of the biggest disasters… (they) sprinkled poisonous seeds in secret that decomposed the health of the body and corrupted all parts of social, religious, and civil life."[113]

A journal called the *Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи* (*Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii*) the "Messenger of South-west and Western Russia" was started in Kyiv in mid-1862 in what is today Ukraine (and was once territory under the Polish commonwealth) possibly to try to counter rising Polish nationalism, justify increased repression, and to head off the threat of a wider rebellion in the Western provinces of the Russian Empire. The scholar John Doyle Klier asserted that it was among a group of publications specifically founded to help support the Russifying policies of the state.[114] The second article in the first issue of the new journal was a re-printing of *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia.*[115] The staff of the *Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii* were evidently also imbibing the works of Western European anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists, and they regularly made references to the Jesuit menace in the months leading up to the rebellion. They even translated the *Monita Secreta* into Russian starting in October 1862 and serialized it over several issues (supposedly translated from an edition published in Athens in 1852.) In the introduction to the translation of the *Monita Secreta* they mentioned that this work inspired the famous novel, the *Wandering Jew.*[116] The editors of the *Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii* may have been working on creating a narrative that the emerging nationalisms in what is today Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania were parts of a Roman Catholic plot against Orthodoxy, and therefore could be dismissed or even suppressed instead of accommodated.

The beginning of the January Uprising of 1863 changed the trajectory of this possible emerging ethnic/sectarian propaganda campaign. Polish guerrillas engaged in serious battles with the Russians in areas that are today in Poland, Belarus, and Lithuania, trying to liberate their country and to partially restore the old Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. In retrospect, the

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[113] Павел Осипович Бобровский (Pavel Osipovich Bobrovskii), *Материалы для географии и статистики России, собранные офицерами Генерального штаба*, Гродненская губерния (Geographical and Statistical Material of Russia collected by officers of the General staff, Grodno Governorate), Vol. 1, (St. Petersburg: Department of the General Staff, 1863) (Censor approved on October 4 1862), p. 669.

[114] John Doyle Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855-1881*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 185.

[115] "Проэктъ объ уничтоженіи православнаго и уніятскаго в*ѣроисповѣданій, а также и русской народности въ русскихъ областякъ, подвластныхъ нѣкогда Польшѣ"* (On the destruction of the Orthodox and Uniate faith, as well as the of the Russian People in the Russian Regions, which are under the control of Poland)*, Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи*, [Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii] (Messenger of Southwestern and Western Russia), Year 1, Vol. 1, pp. 17-60.

[116] "Тайныя Наставленія Общества Iезуитовъ" (Secret Instructions of the Society of the Jesuits), *Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи*, (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii), Year 1, Vol. 2, October 1862, pp. 1-2.

poorly equipped and outnumbered Polish forces were doomed to failure,[117] but this is not how it appeared to the Russians at the time. This unequal struggle between an enormous imperial power and bands of often aristocratic and intellectual insurgents was seen by the Russian public as a manifestation of an insidious and powerful Polish plot that could reach every part of the Russian empire, one that had sectarian overtones like those raised in *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia*. One Russian leader General Murav'ev believed that the situation was so dire that "holding the Kingdom [of Poland] was completely out of the question;..."[118] He would eventually crush the rebellion.

This fear was also spread by the Russian press, which published news of a network that managed to murder thousands of Russian soldiers in their sleep at the start of the uprising.[119] Fears in the Russian government of the possible consequences of a Polish victory were augmented by the involvement of the Russian opposition in exile with the Polish Rebels. There had been cooperation between Polish patriots and the recently-founded Russian organization "Land and Liberty" (Земля и Воля) starting in 1861. (This organization is not to be confused with the other, terroristic organization of the same name that started in 1876.) Before the uprising of 1863 Land and Liberty had attempted to infiltrate and propagandize the Russian officer corps in Poland to favor Polish independence, but the Russian opposition abroad and the Polish patriots could never get over their mutual suspicion of the other group's ultimate motives. In September 1862 emissaries of the Polish revolutionaries agreed that the future Polish state would guarantee freedom and land for the peasants, which were key concerns of the Russian opposition.[120] In the first heady months of the January Uprising two famous Russians in exile in London Alexander Herzen and Nikolay Ogarev proclaimed in a letter to a London newspaper "that all secret societies in Russia have now been united under the leadership of its Central Committee into one large organization called Land and Freedom, expressing all the desires of the Russian people: the right of everybody to have land and an elective and federal government."[121]

Partly because of this perceived association of the Uprising with liberalism and reform, the Polish cause also enjoyed popularity in parts of Europe. Exiles in Western Europe who had fled Poland after an earlier failed uprising against Russia in 1830-31 had courted public opinion and by 1862 they had established relatively sophisticated propaganda operations in England and France that fed pro-polish information to newspapers and even interacted with politicians.[122] During the early months of the January Uprising the English press was strongly pro-Polish.[123] Emperor Napoleon III of France was initially cold towards the Polish Uprising and too busy writing a history of Julius Caesar to pay it much attention. His attitude changed however after

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[117] Adam Zamoyski, *Poland,* (HarperPress, 2009), Kindle Edition, location 2475.
[118] Henryk Głębocki, *A Disastrous Matter, The Polish Question in the Russian Political Thought and Discourse of the Great Reform Age, 1856-1866*, Teresa Bałuk-Ulewiczowa trans., (Jagiellonian University Press, 2016), Kindle Edition, location 2958.
[119] Głębocki, location 2948.
[120] Adam B. Ulam, *Prophets and Conspirators in Pre-Revolutionary Russia,* (Transaction Publishers, 1998), pp. 118 - 121.
[121] Ulam, p. 124.
[122] John F. Kutolowski, "Polish Exiles and British Public Opinion: A Case Study of 1861-62," Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes, Vol. 21, No. 1 (March 1979), pp. 45-65.
[123] John F. Kutolowski, *The West and Poland*, (Boulder: Eastern European Monographs, 2000), p. 155.

the support of the French public for the Poles became obvious and after Prussia made it clear it was prepared to intervene against the Poles. In late February he tried to assemble a coalition to intervene in Poland and even disseminated a plan to liberate Poland and make an Austrian Archduke its ruler, compensate Russia with territory in Turkey, which would be dissolved "for reason of public benefit and Christian morality." His scheme would also have gained some territory on the left bank of the Rhine for France.[124] Napoleon III's government hinted to the Poles that they would send weapons and troops, and this encouraged the Poles to keep fighting.[125] Russia faced the possibility of foreign intervention to liberate Poland. Memories of the Crimean War (1853-1856) were still fresh - when a coalition of France and Great Britain united to defeat Russia and force humiliating concessions from it.

Russia was facing a national rebellion, supported by the ideological weight of liberalism and nationalism and an important part of Russia's political opposition, and now also saw the prospect of foreign intervention. While Russian troops went about crushing the revolt militarily, pro-Russian writers began a propaganda offensive that tried to head-off the possibility of liberal support for the revolution by portraying the Polish rebellion as a sinister plot by nobles to seize control of Western Russia and even subdue Russia itself. The rebellion was not a democratic revolt for national liberation against foreign autocracy, they said, but, as one Russian pamphlet described it, a collaboration between "Polish landlords and Latin priests"[126] who wanted to "destroy the Orthodox Faith,"[127] a clear echo of the message of the earlier forgery *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia.* The Polish rebels, they claimed, intended to seize Russian lands and re-establish serfdom, which had been abolished in Russia in 1861, all as part of a plot to re-establish the tyranny of the aristocracy and the Roman Catholic clergy.[128] Russian publicists harped on this theme in works intended for Russian and foreign audiences, claiming that "The Polish Revolution is much more an aristocratic revolution than a democratic revolution"[129] despite anything the Poles themselves might say.

The Western European anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories were a perfect complement for these ideas of a rebellion that was at the same time secretly reactionary and usurping, but operating under the pretense of desiring freedom. The Russian propagandists appropriated this conspiracy theory and used it as part of their effort against the Poles. The Jesuits had a well-established reputation for deception, and the accusation of their involvement would increase the perception that there was a big deception at the heart of the Polish uprising.

The first distillation of the conspiracy theory that the Jesuits were in fact behind the January uprising did not originate in Russia, as far as we know, but in the United Kingdom. A pamphlet appeared in London in early 1863[130] from an obscure author named J. H. Elliot titled

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[124] Kutolowski, pp. 253-257.

[125] Zamorsky, *Poland,* location 2484.

[126] Павел Иванович Мельников, *О Русской Правде и Польской Кривде* (On Russian Truth and Polish Guilt), (Moscow: July 15 1863), p. 17.

[127] Мельников, p. 18.

[128] Głębocki, location 4065.

[129] Русский инвалид, (Ruskii Invalid), 8 August 1863, no. 173, p. 2.

[130] While the book itself is devoid of any date other than "1863" it is mentioned in a London monthly magazine dated January 1863. See "The English Journal of Education: A Monthly Record and Review for Principals and Teachers of Collegiate and Middle-Class Schools" Vol. 22, no. 1. January 1863, p. 192.

Russia, Poland, and the Jesuits, or, The Roman Catholic Conspiracy Against the Liberty of Europe Examined. It declared that the rebellion in Poland was in fact the result of a Jesuit plot against Russia and ultimately against all Europeans who were not already under the mastery of the Pope. They were planning to make Poland independent in order to have "the huge fortress of Poland all to themselves, out of which they can make excursions or forays on men's homes, on their wives and daughters, and on their property too...:"[131] with the long-range goal of building "...a large army of one hundred thousand Polish soldiers, as ignorant as they are fanatical, and as priest-ridden as are the Irish themselves, sworn to obey their common chief, the Pope; and who will be, as they were before the much-abused partition, a cause of discomfort, alarm, and misery to all surrounding non-Catholic states."[132]

The pamphlet quoted the Abbe Leone on the first page: "We alone know how to prepare a revolution, compared with which all theirs (the protestants) have been, are, and will be but pigmy insurrections."[133] The fact that English public opinion was pro-Polish was "evidence of the skill of the Jesuits, who are judiciously distributed over our English press, and by that means master its policy,..."[134]The pamphlet also accused the Jesuits of having provoked the Sonderbund War[135] and of forcibly converting Jews in Poland.[136] [137]

This pamphlet came to the attention of Russian propagandists, who translated and published large sections of it in at least two prominent Russian newspapers in the summer of 1863. This translation also included the quotation from the Abbe Leone about preparing an ultimate revolution that will make the others appear like "pigmy insurrections" - though they removed the reference to Protestantism that J. H. Elliot added to Leone's text.[138]

It is unknown if this pamphlet in particular helped inspire Russian propagandists to borrow the Western European conspiracy theories and place a group of revolution-mongering Jesuits working clandestinely at the heart of the January Uprising or if the author of the pamphlet was influenced by earlier Russian writings or was just thinking along the same lines.

Polish and Russian revolutionary conspirators did indeed have plans to expand their war into Russia, but these never came to fruition.[139] Around April 1863 a group of Polish revolutionaries with the cooperation of one Moscow member of "Land and Liberty" (but to the horror of Land and Liberty's leadership) produced a faked manifesto from the Tsar which proclaimed total freedom of religion, free land for the peasants, the abolition of the Russian army and the draft, the abolition of the poll tax, and the devolution of power to local government.

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[131] J. H. Elliot, *Russia, Poland, and the Jesuits, or, The Roman Catholic Conspiracy Against the Liberty of Europe Examined, (London: G. J. Stevenson, 1863),* Second Edition, p. 12.

[132] Elliot, p. 17.

[133] Elliot, p. 1.

[134] Elliot, p. 9.

[135] Elliot, p. 23.

[136] Elliot, p. 22.

[137] In March 1863 the Jewish British politician Sir Francis Goldsmid, who had close ties to the community of Polish exiles, said that Russia was trying to play the Jews off the Poles in the contest of public opinion, and predicted their failure because both Jews and Poles were involved in the uprising. See John F. Kutolowski,*The West and Poland*, (Boulder: Eastern European Monographs, 2000), p. 170.

[138] "Голосъ Правды" (Word of Truth), *Домашняя Бесѣда* (Domashnya Beseda)*,* 1863, no. 32, (August 10), p. 119. This printing notes that it is a reprint from the official journal of the Russian Ministry of war, the "Ruskii Invalid."

[139] Głębocki, location 2291.

They distributed this fake manifesto in the Kazan, Nizhegorodsky, Tambov and Vyatsk districts, deep inside Russia.[140] The authors of this manifesto may have been trying to incite rebellion and trouble in Russia, which would have sapped resources from Russia's war on Poland. This open connection between Russian Revolutionaries and Polish rebels gave Russian propagandists an opportunity to cast Russian Revolutionaries as unpatriotic and under the sway of the Poles as well as to draw the kind of direct line between Jesuits and revolution that some Western European conspiracy theorists believed in. This was at the time that the "nihilist" movement was gaining adherents in Russia. Russian nihilism was a movement that rejected the established social order and state authority in Russia and instead relied on scientific materialism. The movement popularized by the 1862 novel *Fathers and Sons* by Turgenev[141] in which one of the main characters is an outspoken nihilist. The Russian writer Mikhail Katkov reviewed the novel in the *Russian Gazette* in 1862 (before the outbreak of the January Uprising) and stated that the amoral nature of the main nihilist character reminded him of the Jesuits: "He is in this respect completely in agreement with the Jesuit fathers, and he takes from them the famous rule that the end justifies every means."[142] In the spring of 1863 Russian propagandists would take these abstract parallels between the nihilist movement and the Jesuits and, through the use of a conspiracy theory, make this link direct and literal.

The *Polish Catechism* - A modern conspiracy theory for propaganda

In the spring of 1863 the *Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii* published a Russian translation of a short anti-Jesuit French "history" that had been appended to the end of a French translations of the *Monita Secreta.* [143] [144] This history was just a collection of the worst slanders against the Jesuits arranged chronologically with quotes illustrating their inherent duplicity. Towards the end the history emphasized their circumspection and their use of lay religious organizations as front groups: "...[The Jesuits] have acted with great caution. According to documents they are nothing and a negligible group, but they are everywhere. A lot of lay religious organizations are under their influence today, [associations] which today cover the whole world."[145] These accusations helped to explain how the Jesuits were still at the heart of

[140] Alexander Herzen, *A Herzen Reader,* (Northwestern University Press, 2012), pp. 204-206.
[141] John Paxton, *Imperial Russia: A Reference Handbook*, (Palgrave, 2001), p. 115.
[142] М.Н. Катков (M. N. Katkov), "О нашем нигилизме по поводу романа Тургенева" (About our Nihilism concerning the Novel of Turgenev), Русский вестник (Russkii Vestnik), 1862, Vol. 40, № 7, pp. 402-426.
[143] "Краткая Исторіа Іезуитовъ до Поселенія Ихъ въ Россіи" (A Brief History of the Jesuits Before their Arrival in Russia), Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii) March 1863, Year one, Vol. 3, March, (Kiev) (this printing approved by the censors May 18 1863), pp. 99-110.
[144] This short history was added to several editions of the *Monita Secreta,* but based on a slightly longer narrative and an extra section detailing a particular anecdote at the end, the one these Russian propagandists were working from appears to be *Monita Secreta Societatis Jesu - Instructions Secretes des Jesuites,* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1861).
[145] This is a translation from the Russian. Note some slight differences with the French version. "Краткая Исторіа Іезуитовъ до Поселенія Ихъ въ Россіи" (A Brief History of the Jesuits Before their Arrival in Russia), Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii) March 1863, Year one, Vol. 3, March, (Kiev) (this printing approved by the censors May 18 1863), p. 108.

the Polish uprising even though they had been banned from all Russian-controlled territory for decades, just as French conspiracy theorists still saw the Jesuits holding the strings even after they were expelled from France in 1828. The Jesuits would use lay religious organizations and brotherhoods to execute their plots where they could not venture openly.

Russian propagandists then apparently decided to give the world a glimpse into the workings of these "lay religious organizations" which the Jesuits supposedly used to clandestinely carry out their evil plans. They produced what they claimed was a list of instructions for an organization of Roman Catholic Poles under Jesuit tutelage, a plan for how they could to re-establish Poland and destroy Russia using deception and subterfuge, and then even rule the world "not with arms but with intellect, riches and knowledge."[146] This document called the *Polish Catechism* appears to have been first published in the official paper of the Russian Ministry of War, the Russky Invalid (Русский Инвалид).[147] It was also published shortly thereafter (or perhaps, was scheduled to be published before) in the *Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii* (the April issue of the Vestnik was not approved by the censors until June.)[148] Both publishers claimed that this document was found on the body of a dead Polish rebel. The thrust of the *Polish Catechism* was this: the Polish uprising was really an attempt by a small elite, the Polish nobility (which was in turn, controlled by the Jesuits) to seize control of Poland and turn Russia into a de-facto colony of Poland. The *Polish Catechism* is significant because it is a full importation of the Western European anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories into Russian literature. It is important to note that this version is a "merged" version in which the Jesuits can use revolutionary groups (in this case, liberals and nihilists) in addition to religious conservative Roman Catholic groups for their own ends, fully in the tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This was not merely an attack on the Jesuits or an attack on the Poles, it was an attack against everything that opposed the Russian autocracy - Poles, Roman Catholics, liberals, nihilists, and revolutionaries - and it supported the idea that these groups were all in fact just tools of the central, international, super-powerful conspiracy. The connections between the Russian exiles and liberal opposition and the Polish revolutionaries gave Russia an opportunity to paint the Polish rebellion as part of a larger plot, and point a finger at political opponents as merely one part of a grand conspiracy.

The document said that Poles would use a wide-ranging conspiracy to infiltrate and weaken Russia, make Poland free, and that this new Poland would become a superpower at Russia's expense - the land-based equivalent of England - with Lithuania and Ukraine slated to play the role of India in the British empire. The *Polish Catechism* recommended that Poles form cabals to harass and buy out Russian landowners in Poland, to divide Ukraine and Lithuania from Russia, infiltrate the Russian civil service, drain the Russian treasury, and by "acting systematically and assailing the weaker points of Russian society"[149] to make Russia agree to

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[146] W. A. Day, T*he Russian Government in Poland with a Narrative of the Polish Insurrection of 1863*, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1867), p. 9.

[147] The paper had been publishing since 1813 but became the official organ of the Ministry of War in 1862. See. "Русский Инвалид" in Большая Российская Энциклопедия (the Large Russian Encyclopedia), Vol. 29, Moscow: Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, 2015, p 64.

[148] "Польскій Катихизисъ" (Polish Catechism), Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii), Year One, Vol. 4, April 1863, Part III, pp. 23- 33.

[149] Day, p. 12.

an independent Poland. In a very modern twist, the Russian nation was not going to be destroyed or even broken up, but rather the Poles were to exploit Ukraine and Lithuania for profit while Russia continued to officially possess them. The Russians would have the expense and trouble of two unruly provinces while Poland would have the profits, and this all without the Russians realizing it: “Let greedy Russia think the Ukraine and Lithuania her property; but she won’t understand who will have the material profits of those provinces.”[150]

This massive act of deception was to be accomplished by the Polish network both infiltrating the Russian civil service to manipulate Russian policy directly[151] and by them becoming the “the moral arbiters of that dull nation”[152] and use this moral influence to tame Russia. The *Polish Catechism* looked forward to a time “When Russia is filled up with our agents, and covered with a network of our brethren united in action, it will be ours”[153] The Polish plot would work to make Russia weak and poor, and the implied Jesuit authors of the scheme assured their agents that anything was permitted to accomplish this goal: “Strive by all means to make a fortune at the expense of the Russian treasury; it is no sin and no crime, because, robbing Russia, you disable the enemy and enrich your country. The Holy Church will pardon you,...”[154]

The *Polish Catechism* was not presented as an overtly Jesuit document within the text, though there were references to Roman Catholicism throughout. Instead it was presented as an obviously Jesuit text - there was no need to have it spelled out. Likewise, “liberal” or “modern” ideas are not mentioned in the text, but the text states that the Jesuits are working on some kind of long-term plan to weaken Russia by leading it astray morally. The commentary surrounding the supposedly captured text is what actually informs the reader that these ideological tools are liberalism and the nihilist movement. Just as Jacopo Leone’s report of the secret Jesuit conference to plan the global revolution, the *Polish Catechism* used this vagueness as a way of drawing in the reader: presenting a vague-but-supposedly-authentic document and supplying the answer to who is responsible and how they are working in the commentary. The *Russky Invalid* wrote in the first publishing of the *Polish Catechism* that “reading this outrageous document, one involuntarily comes to the conclusion that it came from the pen of a reckless revolutionary master, working in collaboration with an equally desperate follower of Ignatius Loyola”[155] (the founder of the Jesuits.) A short commentary that followed the printing of the *Polish Catechism* in the *Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii* made explicit the implied origin of the document in the second sentence “It [the *Polish Catechism*] is flooded with such cynicism, such baseness, such fanaticism, which is so clearly reflected in the moral deformity and impotence of the dead nation, such deeply humiliated human dignity, that if there were not the order of Jesuits in the world we would not understand these mental initiatives and the

[150] Day, p. 10.
[151] Day, p. 11.
[152] Day, p. 11.
[153] Day, p. 12.
[154] Day, p. 11.
[155] “Польскій Катихизисъ” (Polish Catechism), Ruskii Invalid, 28 May 1863, no. 115, p. 490.

genealogy of this codex of various deceptions and subterfuge."[156] The commentary ends with the observation that "Every proletarian, servants without honor, ...most modern, petty gentry and Polish youth educated in the principles of nihilism and false patriotism belong to the confessors of the 'Polish Catechism.'"[157]

The *Polish Catechism* has every hallmark of being a propaganda forgery.[158] The timing, origin, and the language employed in the diabolical catechism, devoid of even any euphemisms that would indicate the writer was pro-Polish, indicate it was not actually written by a Jesuit or a Polish patriot. (There has even been an accusation that this text is itself a copy of a forged German text from 1846, published during a different Polish uprising, also supposedly found on the body of a dead Polish soldier.[159] Unfortunately this other text could not be located.) The message of the *Polish Catechism* is very suspect, as it is written to be a perfect compliment to some deep Russian fears, rather than merely a planning document for rebels. The analogy for Russians implied by the *Polish Catechism* is incredibly direct: The Jesuits and the Poles had once installed a fake Tsar, their puppet, and plunged Russia into a period of war and chaos during the Time of Troubles. Now they were trying to usurp power again, only this time they were going to make the deception complete, and they had started a long-term plan to infiltrate Russian education and the Russian state to accomplish this.

This kind of conspiracy theory might have been primarily intended to spur Russian support for the war, but if one accepts it as authentic, there are implications far beyond the battlefield. The deliberate spreading of the idea of a vast international conspiracy with amazing powers of infiltration and deception creates paranoia against the enemies identified in the conspiracy theory. In 1862 a spate of fires in Russian villages had been blamed on nihilists. A rumor began going around Russia that the fires were in fact Polish in origin, and another spate of fires in 1864-5 were mainly blamed on Polish deportees spread through Russia, though revolutionaries were also accused.[160] (If one believed the *Polish Catechism*, these two were really just part of the same large Jesuit-led conspiracy.)

A possible example of the consequences of belief in this Jesuit/Polish conspiracy in political philosophy can be seen in the writings of the very influential 19th century Russian writer and editor Mikhail Katkov. On June 21 1863 Katkov accused the budding movement to encourage the use of the Ukrainian language as being a part of a clandestine Jesuit conspiracy

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[156] "Польскій Катихизисъ" (Polish Catechism) Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii) April 1863, Year one, volume 4, April. (this printing approved by the censors in June 1863) p. 34

[157] "Польскій Катихизисъ" (Polish Catechism) Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii) April 1863, Year one, volume 4, April. (this printing approved by the censors in June 1863) p. 36

[158] Dr. Andrzej Walicki states simply that it is a forgery. Based on the source and its content it is evident that the *Polish Catechism* is a fake, but unfortunately no scholar has flawless material evidence of it being a forgery like the direct evidence available regarding its descendant, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. See Andrzej Walicki, "The Slavophile Thinkers and the Polish Question in 1863," in *Polish Encounters, Russian Identity,* David Ransel and Bozena Shallcross eds., (Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 93

[159] О. А. Пржецславскому (O. A. Przhetzslavskomy), "Нѣсколько Словъ по поводы 'отвѣта' Г. Берга на мои Замѣчанія" (Some words on the occasion of 'the answer' of G. Berg to my Notes) *Рускій Архив* (Russian Archive,) Vol. 156, 1872, Issues 5-8, (Moscow: V. Grachev and Co., 1872), p. 1570.

[160] Głębocki, location 3958-3975.

related to the Polish uprising. He made this accusation in an article in the major Russian newspaper *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*:

> "Intrigue, intrigue everywhere, treacherous Jesuit intrigue, Jesuit in its origin and in its character! Even before the armed uprising in Poland this intrigue had begun its action. Everything in our society is still not recognized as it should, and exists as if in secret - Everything that led it into the unclean, the corrupt, the erratic - it [the intrigue] managed to get ahold of and arrange for their own purposes. Our pathetic revolutionaries have consciously or unconsciously become its instruments. Our ridiculous materialism, atheism, every kind of emancipation… It gladly patronized all this depravity and spread it in every way. It was able to induce some administrative orders favorable to it. It is very able to use the utter anarchy in our educational system; it sat on the school bench, it climbed on the teacher's chair, and, without a doubt, it is often the case that a liberal mentor… preaching cosmopolitanism or unbelief, served as a finger of the Jesuit intrigue and in particular with regards to nationality, [it] dug around in the dark, digging through the roots of Russian public life… Two or three years ago, suddenly, somehow, Ukrainophilism erupted. It grew in parallel with the negative trends that suddenly possessed our literature, our youth, our progressive bureaucracy, and the various stray elements of our society. It erupted just at the very time when the Jesuit intrigue began to act in accordance with the rules of the famous Polish Catechism. Polish journalists began to prove to Europe with shameless effrontery that the Russian nation is a ghost and that Southwest Russia has nothing to do with the rest of the Russian people, and that it is much more inclined to Poland in their cultural peculiarities."[161]

This remarkable passage clearly binds together the Poles, freethinkers, nihilists, and liberals as all part of the same grand conspiracy against Russia, headed by the Jesuits. This is a clear illustration of a literal belief in what Tutchev spoke about earlier in a more abstract sense- that the two kinds of propaganda from the west - the reactionary and the liberal, were in fact just two wings of one larger conspiracy against Russia.

It is worth noting that before 1863 Katkov was considered a liberal, but he changed his tune after the 1863 uprising began (views on exactly why differ) and became a stalwart for Russian nationalism, transforming his newspaper *Moskovskie Vedomosti* into the main nationalist newspaper.[162] A symptom of this flip was his attack on Mykola Kostomarov, an intellectual who was attempting to encourage the use of Ukrainian. Katkov had earlier been mildly opposed to the encouragement of the Ukrainian language, but he had acknowledged opinions differ and had allowed fundraising appeals from Kostomarov's Ukrainian language program to be printed in his newspaper.[163] This all changed after the January Uprising and the *Polish Catechism*. The question as to whether Katkov actually believed in the *Polish Catechism* or in the international Jesuit conspiracy or was merely an opportunist cooperating with the new propaganda campaign is a topic for another study. It is not in doubt that the image of a "general European conspiracy against Russia" was at the heart of his rhetoric against Poland.[164] During

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[161] М.Н. Катков (M. N. Katkov), "Совпадение интересов украинофилов с польскими интересами" (The Coincidence of the interests of Ukrainophiles with Polish Interests), *Московские ведомости* (Moscovskie Vedomosti), No. 136, June 21 1863. Available at http://dugward.ru/library/katkov/katkov_sovpadeniye.html.

[162] David Saunders, "Mikhail Katkov and Mykola Kostomarov: A Note on Pëtr A. Valuev's Anti-Ukrainian Edict of 1863," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3/4 (December 1993), p. 366.

[163] Saunders, p. 370.

[164] Edward Thaden, *Conservative Nationalism in Nineteenth Century Russia*, (University of Washington press, 1964), p. 48.

the 1860s he also campaigned against any other nation attempting to gain greater autonomy in the Russian empire. And continued to reiterate the idea that liberals, nihilists, or "all kinds of emancipation" in Russia were instruments of a European conspiracy against Russia.[165]

Distillation of the theory: Count Tolstoy's *Romanism in Russia*

The *Polish Catechism* and the associated idea of a grand Jesuit conspiracy appears to have been mainly targeted at the population of the Russian Empire. There was some attempts to propagandize the "softer" version of Russian anti-Polish propaganda in the UK - reiterating the charges of secret aristocratic control and appealing to anti-Roman Catholic bigotry, but not directly mentioning the Jesuits. According to the scholar John Kutolowski three pamphlets titled *The Polish Question or an Appeal to the Good Sense of Englishmen by a Russian, The Polish question from an English Point of View,* and *The Polish Question: Russia & the Western Powers* were "inspired" by Russian agents.[166] None of these pamphlets mentioned the Jesuits, though they repeat the other tropes of the Russian anti-Polish propaganda campaign.[167] [168] [169] Perhaps there was no need to re-emphasize the work already done by J. H. Elliot in early 1863.

In France there was a more substantial and direct attempt by the Russians at pushing the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory. Count Dmitry Andreyevich Tolstoy was a senior official in the Russian Ministry of Education and an established historian, with previous experience in the Russian Department of "foreign" (non-Russian-Orthodox) religious affairs and with the naval department. He had already been writing a historical work on "foreign" religions in the Russian empire when the Polish uprising broke out,[170] but In October 1863 Count Tolstoy told Katkov that the purpose of his new work "was to acquaint foreigners with the Latin-Polish question in western Russia and to resurrect historical facts that have been deliberately distorted."[171] The book he eventually wrote was published in Paris in French in two volumes between 1863 and 1864 with the title *Le catholicisme romain en Russie études historiques.*[172] A decade later in 1874 it was published in English as *Romanism in Russia: An Historical Study*. It was also later translated into Russian. The first volume of the French edition was on sale in Paris by late August 1863, while there was still active fighting in Poland.[173]

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[165] Thaden, pp. 48-49.
[166] John F. Kutolowski, "Mid-Victorian Public Opinion, Polish Propaganda, and the Uprising of 1863," *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (May, 1969), p. 102. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/175218.
[167] *The Polish Question or an Appeal to the Good Sense of Englishmen by a Russian,* (St. Petersburg, June 1863), p. 13.
[168] *The Polish Question or an Appeal to the Good Sense of Englishmen by a Russian,* (St. Petersburg, June 1863), p. 11.
[169] *The Polish Question: From an English Point of View,* (London: Saunders, Otley & Co., 1863), p. 10.
[170] С. Рождественский, "Толстой, граф Дмитрий Андреевич" (Tolstoy, Graf Dmitrii Andreevich), *Русский биографический словарь* (Russian Biographical Dictionary), edited by V. V. Maikov (Майков) Aspent Press, Moscow, 1999, p. 49.
[171] Gregory L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter Reform,* (Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 300, footnote 8. Cite archival source as OR GBL, f. 120 [M.N. Katkov] k. 11, d. 17, II. 2-2 ob.
[172] Dmitry Tolstoy, *Catholicisme Romain En Russie*, Vol. 1, (Paris: Dentu, 1863).
[173] See the sales notice in *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires,* (Paris) 31 August 1863, p. 3.

The book does not directly deal with the 1863 January Uprising, finishing at the beginning of the reign of Emperor Nicholas (1825.) Nevertheless, Dmitry Tolstoy filled his work with wild slanders against the Jesuits, reiterating the idea of a clandestine multigenerational Jesuit conspiracy with super powers of deception. He even accused them of systematized sexual abuse: “Respect for morality does not permit us to publish here their unchristian and unnatural behavior towards their own confreres or the ignoble vices common to their schools;...”[174] The Jesuits only “pretended to be the most devoted servants”[175] of the Pope. In fact the Jesuits were “...the enemy to all true civilization, and to other Christian confessions, and even to Catholicism…”[176] In the early 19th century, according to Tolstoy, the Jesuits “...became the real masters of the Catholic hierarchy…” and were spreading their insidious web all throughout the Russian empire, as they had already done in the west.[177]

In Eastern Europe, he wrote, the Jesuits were engaged in reducing the peasant population to penury, as a means of making them susceptible to conversion.[178] On lands that had the misfortune to be controlled by the Jesuits, the peasants would be “little better used than beasts of burden. Some of them were entirely stripped of everything…”[179] It was the Jesuits who were responsible for the alienation of the population of the Western Russian empire from the embrace of the Muscovite state.[180] (The populations he was referring to would have been mostly Polish, Belarusian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian.)

Count Tolstoy said that the main tool of the Jesuit conspiracy was “the Propagand”[181] and they opened a “propagand” in Moscow and St. Petersburg specifically to target the aristocracy.[182] Tolstoy borrowed from French anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists the idea that the Jesuit education system was at the core of their grand conspiracy: “...the principal object of the institution of the Jesuits - the instruction of the youth - the system and the means of which they kept a profound secret.”[183] After their expulsion from St. Petersburg and Moscow the Jesuits supposedly continued their nefarious activity, based from their seat in the city of Polotsk, in present-day Belarus. “Discontented and soured, they became more dangerous; their experience taught them circumspection and dissimulation. They made use of their time to destroy every line of their correspondence and their activity in the interior…”[184] He claimed the Jesuits had covered over evidence of their plots inside Russia, but they continued their machinations even after they were expelled from all of Russia in 1820 by using lay brotherhoods, an idea earlier hinted at in the translations from French anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories in the *Vestnik Yugo*

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[174] Count Dmitry Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia, An Historical Study*, Mrs. M’Kibbin trans., Vol. 2, (London: J. T. Hayes, 1874), p. 130-131.
[175] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 103.
[176] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 131.
[177] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 42.
[178] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 106.
[179] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 108.
[180] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 130-131.
[181] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 106.
[182] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 109-110.
[183] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 35.
[184] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 122.

Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii.[185] [186] The *Polish Catechism* may have been an imaginative attempt to describe the plans and workings of this network of brotherhoods. In his book Dmitry Tolstoy also declared that many Roman Catholic "spiritual brotherhoods" or fraternities originally formed to praise God, maintain churches, bury the dead, reconcile quarrels, had been twisted by the Jesuits into a clandestine network of operatives:

> "...Their (the Jesuit's) fraternities remained indeed after the expulsion of the Jesuit Body from Russia, and were annexed to other Churches. But these fraternities, maintaining the most strict and yet secret ties with the Monastic Orders and the clergy in general, served as the agents of the Jesuits in society at large; and, acting according to the direction which they received from them dispersed throughout the whole country, mingling with all classes, and extending their influence with more facility, from the fact that their members wore no ecclesiastical dress, and not being suspected of self-interest, could make their way everywhere even in places which ecclesiastics generally found difficult of access."[187]

Dmitri Tolstoy's thought on this was not just fodder for foreign propaganda. He journeyed to Vilnius in late 1864 and presumably met with the Governor General of the province, the aforementioned General Mikhail Murav'ev.[188] In a contemporary chronicle of events in Vilnius, Count Tolstoy's is described as the man who wrote "the well-known work *Le Catholicisme Romain en Russie* which earlier had made a great impression and was recognized as one of the most serious works on that topic."[189] Dmitri Tolstoy became the Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia shortly thereafter,[190] making him one of the most powerful religious and political figures in the Russian Empire. An open proponent of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory was a top religious figure in Russian Orthodoxy.

Impact

It is difficult to measure the impact that this conspiracy theory - that the Jesuits were behind the January uprising - had outside of Russia, but it appears to have been minimal. Dmitry Tolstoy's work was published in French in Paris, but by the time it made it to the press the prospects for foreign intervention were almost gone. While Russia was initially afraid of foreign intervention, those fears subsided when it became clear that the other powers favored stability or had no real means of affecting the situation in Poland beyond stern diplomatic notes. As for the *Polish Catechism*, there is little evidence that it made much of an impact at all outside of Russia during the conflict.

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[185] "Краткая Исторіа Іезуитовъ до Поселенія Ихъ въ Россіи" (A Brief History of the Jesuits Before their Arrival in Russia), Вѣстникъ юго-западной и западной Россіи (Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii) March 1863, Year one, Vol. 3, March, (Kiev) (this printing approved by the censors May 18 1863), pp. 99-110.

[186] See discussion around footnote 141. The French document seems to be from *Monita Secreta Societatis Jesu - Instructions Secretes des Jesuites,* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1861)

[187] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 232.

[188] Михаил Долбилов (Mikhail Dolbilov), *Русский край, чужая вера* (Russian Border, Alien Faith), (Moscow: Новое Литературное Обозрение, 2014), Google Play edition, p. 429.

[189] А. Н. Мосолова (A. N. Moslova), *Виленскіе очерки, 1863-1865 гг: муравьевское время* (Vilnius Essays, 1862-1865, the time of Murav'ev), (St. Petersburg: А. С. Суворина, 1898), pp. 200-201.

[190] Dolbilov, p. 429.

While its effect in Europe turned out to be small, the narrative may have been partially purposed to help Russia prevent and wind down the intervention of the UK and France in the Polish question. Those political groups most likely to support an intervention in the name of liberalism and fighting against despotism and the restoration of the Polish republic also had a contingent of Jesuit-haters. During a parliamentary debate in July 1863, the rabidly anti-Roman Catholic MP George Hammond Whalley rose when his colleague introduced a motion for police monitoring of non-Church of England religious chapels and places of worship, and proclaimed that "The Jesuits had never been more active than they were now. They had drawn us into the Crimean war…. The secret organization in Poland was nothing but an organization of the Jesuit body. They made Poland the basis of their operations against Russia, and Ireland the basis of their operations against England."[191] An article about the debate records that there was laughter in the chamber.[192]

Within Russia, the impact of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory is more visible, but how much it affected politics is debatable. The January Uprising of 1863 was followed by a period of Russification in Russia's western provinces, when the Russian imperial government tried to weaken the power of the Polish nobility and clergy and prevent the spread of Polish culture. Russians were encouraged to settle in the Western Provinces of Russia and in some areas Poles were only allowed to acquire land through inheritance[193] (notice the way this policy is complimented by fears of Polish cartels buying land, found in the *Polish Catechism*.) Schools that taught in Ukrainian or Belarusian were banned, and most attempts to publish in these languages were censored.[194] (Remember, according to the *Polish Catechism*, the encouragement of these languages was a Jesuit plot.) While the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory chimed with these initiatives, it is doubtful that they actually impacted them or that the Russification policies following the January Uprising would not have been undertaken without the conspiracy theory. The Russian General who put down the uprising Mikhail Murav'ev earned the nickname "the hangman" for his repressive policies against the Poles.[195] He was certainly exposed to the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory and was probably a fan, but he had already been a radical anti-Roman Catholic since at least the earlier Polish rebellion of 1830, when he had advocated repressive policies against Poles and Roman Catholic "fanatics."[196] Perhaps the *Polish Catechism* and the associated anti-Jesuit ideas from the *Vestnik Yugo Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii* should be seen as a justification for the brutal policies of Murav'ev. The antipathy of many Russian Orthodox believers towards the Catholic Church lacked the nuance of the French anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists (who were often Roman Catholic themselves) or of Dmitry Tolstoy - a belief that the ultimate problem was not ultimately the Roman Catholic

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[191] *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Saturday 25 July 1863, page 7, column 6.

[192] Ibid.

[193] *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Dominic Lieven ed., Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 38.

[194] *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 38.

[195] Andrew A. Gentes, *Deluge: the Mass Deportation of Poles to Siberia, 1863-1880*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), Kindle Edition, location 41.

[196] See the earlier items in "Четыре политческия Записки Графа Михаила Николаевича Муравьева виленскаго" (Four Political notes of Graf Michail Nickolaevich Murav'ev of Vilnius), *Рускій Архив* (Russian Archive,) Volume 156, 1885, Issue 6, pp. 161-203.

church but the Jesuits, an “enemy of the human race” and even of the Roman Catholic Church itself.

The real effect of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory of 1863 on Russia was not during or in the immediate aftermath of the war, but on subsequent Russian propaganda and political thought. Like the Austrian and German Illuminati conspiracy theory propaganda after the French Revolution discussed in chapter 3, Russian anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory propaganda appears to have had a negligible effect on the course of the conflict it was made for, but the ideas nurtured by the conspiracy theorists and the stories created to justify them can have an enduring impact on politics even when they fail at their main goals. The main contributions of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory in Russia will be covered in more detail in subsequent chapter on Russian anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. In short: the subsequent “official” Russian anti-Jewish conspiracy borrowed the structure and the narrative of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory of the 1863 Polish Uprising (of course, with a Jewish conspiracy replacing the Jesuit one.) The Russian scholar Saveli Yurevich Dudakov who wrote one of the definitive books on the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in Russian history pointed out that the origins of the idea (in Russia) of a group of “zealots” waging a “holy war” against all mankind did not start with anti-Jewish ideas, but with the anti-Jesuit *Polish Catechism*.[197]

The core shift in the history of the grand conspiracy theory brought about by the adoption of the anti-Jesuit narratives by Russian propagandists in 1863 is the instantiation of what Tutchev spoke about abstractly in 1848-50 - that the European “right” and “left” were just two sides of the same coin, tools a Western-based conspiracy against Russia (this one, led by the Jesuits.) Russian history had left it largely outside the European left-right, Roman Catholic-Protestant split that had divided Europe. At this time Russians were capable of viewing western civilization as a negative thing overall - as a competitor and even as a usurper to the rightful reign of the Russian Tsar over Christendom as Caesar. Conspiracy theorists in Western Europe were always defending something European that they believed was an ideal - e.g. the Roman Catholic Church, the United Kingdom, the legacy of the French Revolution, etc. The Jesuit conspiracy theory could teach Russians that conservative religious Western Christianity could also be a tool of the grand conspiracy of deceptive usurpers, who were perhaps even secretly atheistic. The ideas of the anti-Freemason conspiracy theory pointed to the “enlightened” and the anti-religious as enemies. The Russian version of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory could include them as enemies, and also the conservative and the hyper-religious. Their combination in the Russian narrative of Jesuits using both pious Poles and “nihilists” to accomplish their ends completed the picture that a deceptive grand conspiracy could coopt two ends of the political spectrum. NB, this idea is very common today among Islamic extremists, which often believes that “Christian” and “secular” powers in the west are coordinated by a central Zionist conspiracy to destroy Islam.

The anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory has been greatly overshadowed in Russia by the subsequent Judeo/Masonic conspiracy theory, but it occasionally reemerges.[198] In Western

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[197] Saveli Yurevich Dudakov, *История одного мифа* (History of one Myth), (Moscow: Nauka, 1993) p. 96.

[198] For example, see this conspiracy-theory supporting paper, which was a valuable resource in finding older Russian anti-Jesuit sources: Александр Каплин (Alexander Kaplin), “Russian Orthodox thought about the Jesuits and their relation to Russia,” Русская народная линия (Russian National Line),

Europe and America, while today there are a few fringe anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists, they tend to be viewed as marginal even among conspiracy theorists. It is a concern of a previous century that has been superseded by other variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory as the counter-reformation and the French Restoration recedes from the collective memory.

Conclusion

In this chapter we observed the basic usefulness of conspiracy theorists to authoritarian regimes, and how propagandists can adapt conspiracy theories to their needs with relative ease, even, in this case, one that was mainly championed by liberals. The anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory that flourished in early/mid 19th-century France as a facet of certain kinds of liberal propaganda - as a narrative against a force that supposedly wanted to stymie the Enlightenment and roll back democracy and the independence of nations - was repurposed as a tool of despotic propaganda in Russia.

Also, we observed how a powerful persuasive conspiracy theory can lead even liberals to embrace illiberal policies. Liberals who believe in a conspiracy with vast powers of deception incline towards certain anti-liberal policies, believing that this conspiracy creates an exception (like the French liberals fighting against the free association of Jesuits or refusing to permit Jesuit-controlled schools.) One should also take note of the combination of “revolutionary” and “reactionary” conspiracy theories that the 19th century anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories made possible, as anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorists took elements from the earlier versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. These ideas, imported from Western Europe were also used by Russian propagandists in the *Polish Catechism* to claim that Jesuits, Poles, and Russian liberals and nihilists were all in cahoots. In this case, the idea that the far left and far right were both just tools of a Jesuit conspiracy was made a centerpiece of a Russian propaganda campaign. A belief in this variant of the Grand Conspiracy frame the political contest not as old vs new, or left vs right, but as us vs them, them being a group of conspirators that manipulate an army of dupes. This can allow the state to not pick a side on the right or left, but to claim its policies are against a conspiracy. Most importantly, the support for the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory that included an official Russian journal and the head of the Most Holy Synod spread the idea in Russia that the whole modern West is the enemy, not just those associated with the Enlightenment. The state can make a call for the support of an entire population in opposing an existential threat, one that also somehow includes all of its political opponents of every stripe.

These two tendencies, first observed in Russian propaganda against the January Uprising, will later have even more of an impact in Russian anti-Jewish propaganda discussed in the next chapter.

November 2, 2010. Available at http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2010/02/11/russkaya_pravoslavnaya_mysl_ob_iezuitah_i_ih_otnoshenii_k_rossii/. Accessed June 12, 2019.

Chapter 6: Jew-hatred and the Grand Conspiracy Theory, 1806 - 1870

"Masonry is Judaism masked under that name. All the Jews are consequently masons or liberals by nature. Many individuals there are, however, who, without being Jews, are Masons… the political object of the Masons and Jews can be no other than to re-establish themselves as a nation…" [1] - Portuguese propaganda pamphlet, 1824

"Righteous Jewish publicists warmly believe that the Golden Calf shall not desert the Jews, and they are not without its protection. And their faith is not in vain: the Golden Calf obviously, by his grace, truly had ordered through his priest Rothschild - Yes, let there be darkness everywhere, with the exception of the abodes of the children of Jacob, illuminated by the stock exchange, and all else covered in Egyptian darkness." [2] - Jacob Brafman, 1868

"If you let any conspiracy theorist rant long enough, eventually he will start on the Jews."

- A saying

This chapter is not a survey of Jew hatred, but a history and analysis of how anti-Jewish ideas were integrated into different versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This chapter summarize the European history of Jew hatred very briefly and give a few examples for background, but the study of Jew hatred before the French Revolution is beyond the scope of this thesis. Also, the conspiracy theories about "pure" Freemason and Illuminati plots that were partially endorsed by the Roman Catholic church and "pure" anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories embraced by many 19th century French liberals continued to develop in the 19th century, but this chapter will look past these to focus on the anti-Jewish and Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theories that were, in the end, more consequential to history and politics.

This chapter will examine the history of the anti-Jewish versions of these two different types of conspiracy theory: a Western anti-liberal, anti-revolutionary conspiracy theory that involves Jews (derived from the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory) and a Russian anti-Jewish conspiracy theory (derived from the Jesuit conspiracy theory.) The "revolutionary" version envisioned a secret Jewish conspiracy that was planning a sudden overthrow (or a

[1] Original "O Maçonismo DesMascarado," *Gazeta De Lisboa*, Quinta Feira 21, August 1823, No. 197. "O Maçonismo DesMascarado" pp. 1391-1394. Translation from "On the Freemasons, Jesuits, and Jews of Portugal," *The London Magazine*, Vol. I April-July 1828, p. 487.

[2] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), ***Еврейскія Братства мѣстныя и воемірныя***, (Jewish Brotherhoods, Local and Worldwide), (Vilnius: Printed by the Provincial Government, 1868) p. 117.

series of sudden overthrows) of Western civilization, prepared and brought about through using the Freemasons and liberal ideas. This version became associated with an eschatological streak that alleged that the Jews were preparing the way for the antichrist. The Russian version, modeled on the Jesuit conspiracy theory, instead saw a conspiracy of Jews slowly and methodically taking over and turning their target nations (and with Russia as the primary target) into hosts they could feed off of. The subsequent chapter will examine how these two different kinds of conspiracy theories rapidly merged.

Jew Hatred Before The Grand Conspiracy Theory

First, we shall summarize the history of Jew hatred in Europe before the French Revolution and the birth of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Jew-hatred has been a feature of Western Civilization since the Roman Empire. It was the major religious divide in Europe before the Protestant Reformation. The Justinian Code is full of anti-Jewish regulations and several of the early Church Fathers wrote extremely negative things about Jews. Jews were expelled from several European states during the course of the Middle Ages. They were associated with usury, especially after the Church conducted campaigns to ban Christians from charging interest (and therefore, opened up the lending market to the major non-Christian population.)[3] Jews were also often rumored to assist the Muslims in their wars with Christians.[4]

One of the more notorious accusations against Jews from the Medieval-era is the blood libel - the idea that Jews needed human blood for their religious rituals.[5] The blood libel is one of the enduring anti-Jewish myths, and resurfaces regularly in history. Even Voltaire lent credence to the idea that Jews regularly engaged in human sacrifice, using as evidence the story of Jephthah from the Biblical book of Judges, when an Israelite commander appears to sacrifice his daughter to fulfill an oath he made.[6] In the 16th century the Roman Catholic Church even made a saint of one of the alleged 15th century child victims of Jews searching for blood: Simon of Trent.[7]

European anti-Judaism had “scholarly” sources in addition to “folk” roots like the blood libel or rumors of Jews poisoning wells or being responsible for the Black Death. Serious European scholars spent time attacking the Jews, particularly the Jewish Talmud. The Talmud is the massive collection of Jewish Biblical commentary, oral law, and jurisprudence, mainly written down in the 6th century AD. It is an enormous, convoluted, and dense work, difficult to understand even for educated scholars.[8] Certain passages quoted out of context - and others in context, for there is an anti-Christian element, unremarkable for a classical Jewish text - were used to justify the destruction of copies of the Talmud and persecution of the Jews. In the mid-13th century Nicholas Donin, a convert to Christianity from Judaism (after being

[3] Robert Chazan, *Church, State, and Jew in the Middle Ages*, (Behrman House, 1979), p. 197.
[4] Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy,* (p. 56).
[5] Paul Lawrence Rose, *German Question/Jewish Question, Revolutionary Antisemitism from Kant to Wagner*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 46.
[6] Rose, p. 47.
[7] David Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism,* (Knopf Doubleday, 2002), Kindle Edition, Locations 2820-2821.
[8] Kertzer, (Locations 1812-1833).

excommunicated from Judaism,) convinced Pope Gregory IX that the anti-Christian Talmud should be destroyed. The Pope sent a circular to bishops and kings in Western Europe ordering that all Jewish books be confiscated. The Talmud, he wrote, was the "chief cause" of the infidelity of the Jews.[9] This idea contributed to a myth (one that might be considered one of the earliest anti-Jewish conspiracy theories) that the reason the Jews had not converted to Christianity was not because of real religious disagreements, but because a small cabal of anti-Christian (and therefore anti-messiah) Rabbis had hoodwinked the Jewish people in order to keep them in bondage. (A later version of this idea will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.)

Anti-Judaism was not only a Roman Catholic phenomena. As we have seen, even the vehemently anti-Roman Catholic Voltaire indulged in Jew hatred. The Jews also became a target of the greatest Protestant reformer Martin Luther. After his break with the Roman Catholic Church Luther expressed optimism that the Jews would soon convert to Protestantism as it had, he thought, done away with the Roman Catholic lies and corruptions that prevented sensible Jews from becoming Christians. However, later in life he radically changed his opinion and wrote what could be seen as a sectarian prototype for later modern anti-Jewish conspiracy theories: *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543). He portrayed the Jews as money grubbing conspirators in league with the Holy Roman Emperor in attempting to destroy Protestantism. He wrote that the sale of indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church, which had been the event that sparked the Reformation, was run by a converted Jew. Luther warned that his followers were in danger of being contaminated with "Jewishness." He called for the persecution of the Jews, the annihilation of Jewish heritage in Germany, and eventually the expulsion of all Jews from Germany.[10]

Unlike the Reformation, the Enlightenment did, on balance, improve the situation of Jews in Western Europe.[11] By the time of the French Revolution Jews had limited civil rights and toleration in some Western European countries, like the Netherlands and Great Britain, but they were still officially banned in Portugal and Spain and confined to ghettos in some places like in Frankfurt and the Papal States. After the French Revolution, Jews were given equal political rights as every other citizen for the first time.[12] This sudden gain in political rights made some speculate about a of link between the Jews and the French Revolution that went beyond the fulfillment of the promise of *liberte, egalite, fraternite.*[13]

The Simonini letter and the origins of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory

About 7 years after Barruel published his final volume describing the grand Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy that he believed had caused the French Revolution, he

[9] Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Antisemitism, The Dark side of the Church,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 61.
[10] Rose, pp. 4-8.
[11] Adam Sutcliffe, "The Enlightenment, French Revolution, Napoleon," in *Antisemitism: A History*, Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 107.
[12] Dominique Schnapper, Chantal Bordes-Benayoun, Freddy Raphael, *Jewish Citizenship in France: The Temptation of Being among One's Own*, Catherine Temerson trans., (Transaction Publishers, 2010), p. 109.
[13] Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy,* p. 73.

received a letter from an Italian officer named J. B. Simonini. This letter, known as the "Simonini letter" is remarkable because it presaged the next big development in the Grand Conspiracy Theory: injecting the Freemason/Illuminati myth with Jew hatred.

This letter was first published decades later in July 1878 in the Roman Catholic magazine *Le Contemporain*.[14] Simonin's letter applauded Barruel for uncovering "those infamous sects that are preparing the way for the Antichrist…"[15] Simonini then criticized Barruel for omitting the true source of the French Revolution and the other evil works of the Jacobins, the Freemasons, Illuminati, Sophists etc.: the Jews. Simonini claimed that he had earlier masqueraded a Jew in his native Northern Italy, and that the local Jews had taken him into their confidence. They had shown him large sums of gold and silver dedicated to destroying Christianity and tried to convince him to become a Freemason. Simonini wrote that they declared to him that Manes (the 3rd century heretic who Barruel credited as the ultimate founder of the movement that create Freemasonry)[16] and also the "Old Man of The Mountain" (the leader of the Assassins mentioned by Marco Polo) and the founders of the modern Freemasons and other "anti-Christian sects" were in fact Jews. The Jewish conspiracy theory described by Simonini included secret Jewish operatives masquerading as Christians, with forged baptismal certificates. Some of them were Christian clerics who were in fact clandestine supporters of the Jewish conspiracy (Simonini said they claimed 800 clerics in Italy alone). Their plan hinged on using their network to get full citizenship rights in European countries and then buying up as much land as they could and absorbing all the money and property of the Christians. The Bourbons, Simonini declared, were the greatest enemy of the Jews (which implied the true cause of the French Revolution that deposed the Bourbon dynasty.) Simonini said that the Jews "... promised themselves that in less than a century, to become masters of the world, to abolish all other sects in order to make theirs reign; to make many synagogues of the churches of the Christians, and to reduce the rest of these (Christians) to true slavery."[17]

According to the first publication of this letter in 1878, Barruel forwarded the original letter to Rome, and Pope Pius VII replied through his secretary that the letter was authentic and true.[18] Writers have speculated that the Simonini letter was a forgery, perhaps created by the Paris police chief to fool Barruel.[19] However, modern scholars have found three copies of the Simonini letter, two of them in Barruel's hand, and one of them (from the Jesuit Archives in London) containing commentary from Barruel that he wrote weeks before his death. These scholars also uncovered evidence that Simonini was an actual living person.[20] [21] Barruel

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[14] J. Gagarin, "Souvenirs Du P. Grivel sur Les PP. Barruel Et Feller," *Le Contemporain: revue d'économie chrétienne*, Series 3, Volume 16, June 1878, Paris,

[15] Gagarin p. 58.

[16] See Barruel, Vol. 2, pp. 231-232.

[17] Gagarin, p. 61.

[18] Gagarin, p. 62

[19] Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor about the Jews: Antisemitism, Conspiracy, and the Protocols of Zion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 73.

[20] Claus Oberhauser, *Die verschwörungstheoretische Trias: Barruel – Robison – Starck*, (StudienVerlag, 2013), p. 269.

[21] Claus Oberhauser, "Simoninis Brief, oder die Wurzeln der angeblichen," in Juden und Geheimnis Verborgenes Wissen und Verschwörungstheorien, *Jews in Central Europe*, Institut für jüdische

investigated Simonini's idea, but he appears to have remained convinced that the conspiracy was Masonic at its core, not Jewish.[22]

The Simonini letter might be the first "complete" version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, but the idea that the Freemasons were Jew-aligned was not entirely new. Barruel himself had speculated in a footnote in his second volume of *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* that "it may be very probable that the Jews had had a part in Masonry." Barruel cited as possible evidence a quote from the 1791 *The Veil Lifted for the Curious* by the cleric LeFranc, which had been one of the first books that said the Freemasons were responsible for the French Revolution.[23] Le Franc wrote that "*Jehovah"* the word that Freemasons use to describe God was "...taken from a fable invented by the Rabbins [Rabbis] to rob Christ of his divinity and power."[24]

This aside from Le Franc and Barruel points to what might be a key enabling factor to the rise of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy: many Masonic symbols and rituals are derived from the Old Testament or other Jewish history and custom. Every educated European would have been familiar with the Old Testament in the 18th century, and any 18th century gentlemen who had been classically educated would probably have come across some Jewish history [25] or perhaps just become familiar with "mysterious" and "eastern" Jewish-related lore. The founders of modern Freemasonry in 18th century Britain mixed and borrowed Jewish symbols and stories freely along with those from other legends that they would have come across, like the Templar legend or the mysteries of the Egyptians. For example, one of the core legendary figures in Freemason ritual and myth is Hiram Abif, the architect of the Temple of Solomon.[26] This story is probably drawn from a short passage out of the history book Antiquities of the Jews by the most famous ancient Jewish historian Titus Flavius Josephus (c. 37 - 100 AD.) He mentions: "...Solomon sent for an artificer out of Tyre, whose name was Hiram; he was by birth of the tribe of Naphtali, on the mother's side, (for she was of that tribe,) but his father was Ur, of the stock of the Israelites. This man was skillful in all sorts of work;"[27] A classically educated gentlemen in Britain around the time that modern Freemasonry was getting started may have been familiar with Josephus' work (as Josephus wrote in ancient Greek) and several English and French translations of Josephus' work were published between 1602 and 1737.[28]

Geschichte Österreichs. Available at http://www.injoest.ac.at/files/jme_2012_1.pdf . Accessed September 27, 2017.

[22] Claus Oberhauser, *Die verschwörungstheoretische Trias: Barruel – Robison – Starck,* pp. 270-271.

[23] See the brief discussion of this book in chapter 3.

[24] Barruel, Vol. 2, p. 201.

[25] A Portuguese pamphlet dealt with later in this chapter points to the Hebrew symbolism and imagery in Masonic symbols and traditions as evidence that Freemasonry is in fact Judaism "All the signs, dresses, rites, and ceremonies of the Freemasons are Jewish. Even the Masonic words are in Hebrew, which is the language of the Jews." see "On the Freemasons, Jesuits, and Jews of Portugal," *The London Magazine*, Vol. I April-July 1828.

[26] Albert G. Mackey, "Abif," in *An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences*, (Philadelphia: Jouis Everts, 1905), pp. 3-4.

[27] Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, William Whiston trans., (Wordsworth Editions Limited: 2006), p. 330.

[28] Gohei Hata, "A Note on English Translations of Josephus from Thomas Lode to D. S. Margoliouth," in *A Companion to Josephus*, Honora Howell Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers eds., (Wiley Blackwell, 2016), pp. 414-416.

Another aspect that linked Freemasonry to Judaism in the popular imagination was the Freemasonic tolerance of all religions, including Judaism, and Masonry's association with liberalism. The second papal bull against Freemasonry (1751) proclaimed that Freemasonry's practice of joining together people from any religion or sect was one of the reasons it threatened the purity of the (Roman) Catholic Religion.[29] However, while Jews were permitted to enter Masonic lodges in 18th century England and Holland, this was not usually the case elsewhere on the continent.[30] The Masonic lodges in France may have initially been open to Jewish members, but by the mid-18th century literature from the period explicitly excludes non-Christians from being members.[31] (The scholar Jacob Katz, who has extensively studied the history of Jews in Freemasonry suspects that this mid-18th century French emphasis on Christianity in Freemasonry was an attempt to defend against the Roman Catholic Church's charges that it permitted the mixing of people of different faiths.)[32]

Maistre links Illuminism and the Jews

Even if Jews were not welcome in continental Freemasonic lodges, the association of Freemasonry with liberalism (and therefore Jewish emancipation) could have made it automatically suspect to an 18th or 19th century Jew-hater like Simonini. One who believed in the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory could have seen a link between the plotters' supposed hatred of Christianity (camouflaged by the ideals of liberalism) and the interests of European Jews. In his letter, Simonini did not use the symbolism of the Freemasons as his main argument for the reality of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, but rather focused on the supposed common enemy both of the Jews and the conspirators identified by Barruel. Another early example of the use of this supposed link between the Illuminati and the Jews can be found in the work of the great anti-Enlightenment philosopher Joseph De Maistre. He wrote about the supposed link between liberalism and the Jews without referencing Masonic symbols or Simonini. In 1811 Maistre was serving as the ambassador for Kingdom of Sardinia in Russia. As an prominent well-educated arch-conservative with a razor sharp wit, Maistre was welcome in conservative Russian circles in St. Petersburg. Maistre also became the most influential advocate for the Jesuits in Russia (who still existed there while they were suppressed everywhere else.) He saw them as sharing his antipathy towards the Enlightenment and revolution.[33] In 1811 the Jesuits in Russia made a bid to get the government's permission to establish an official independent educational system in Russia. Maistre wrote an essay *Mémoire sur la liberte de l'enseignement public* (Memorandum on the freedom of public education) and presented it to the Procurator of the Holy Synod Prince Alexander N. Golitsyn. The text argued

[29] "Bull of Pope Benedict XIV Providas Romanorum," Website of the Holy See. Available at: https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedictus-xiv/it/documents/bolla--i-providas-romanorum--i---18-marzo-1751--il-pontefice-con.html, Accessed October 5, 2017.
[30] Johannes Rogalla von Bieberstein, "The story of the Jewish-Masonic conspiracy, 1776-1945," *Patterns of Prejudice* 11, no. 6 (1977), p. 2.
[31] Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939*, (Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 18-19.
[32] Katz, p. 19.
[33] J.T. Flynn, "The role of the jesuits in the politics of russian education *1801-1820," Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 56, no. 2, (Jul., 1970) p. 256.

that the Jesuits were a reliable bulwark against those revolutionaries and propagandists trying to overthrow the throne and altar. After the Russian Council of Ministers and the Tsar had already approved the independence of the Jesuit schools, Prince Golitsyn read Maistre's essay to the Emperor. The Emperor enjoyed the work, and asked Maistre to produce further writing on Russia.[34]

In response, Maistre penned the extended essay *Quatre Chapitres sur la Russie*. This work warned against freeing the serfs, against teaching science at the expense of religious education, against allowing Protestantism to spread, and finally against "Illuminism."[35] This final section on "Illuminism" contains a remarkable early use of the ideas of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. Maistre, a Freemason himself, wrote that the craft "is not bad in itself"[36] and he discusses and categorizes three types of "Illuminati:" The first: simple Freemasons. The second: some varieties of Christian mystics. But, he wrote, there was a third type of "Illuminati which Maistre warned was "very bad, very dangerous, very active, and on which governments cannot be called to too much attention." The core of this "third class" of Illuminati was "the True Enlightenment… modern philosophy grafted onto Protestantism, that is to say Calvinism;"[37] He claimed that this "Illuminism" was "much more ferocious in Germany than elsewhere, because the venom of Protestantism has its chief center in these (German) countries."[38] Maistre (who in his other writings was a critic of the paranoid imaginings of Barruel) favorably referenced Barruel as a source for information about the Illuminati's activities, and he quoted the letters of Voltaire, D'alembert, and Frederick II in the manner of Barruel to reveal the "Illuminating" goals behind the apparent "philanthropic" initiatives of these men. Maistre wrote that Illuminati networks were active in Italy and France and even in Russia. He even implied he had some personal knowledge of the machinations of the Illuminati, that once in a city where he used to live "a strange scoundrel, mortally ill in an inn,... summoned a priest, and before him and others in his room confessed aloud 'that he was a member of a society established for the overthrow of Christianity and monarchies.'"[39] Maistre warned the Emperor that the Illuminati would soon infect his realm as they have done in Western Europe if he allowed Protestant teaching to spread: "The constitutional and fundamental spirit of Protestantism has a natural affinity with modern anti-Christian and anti-monarchical systems, which are even a direct and evident production of Protestantism."[40] This threat was compounded at the time because of the excellent Protestant education available in Russia.[41]

Having made his attack on Protestantism as the great enabler of the Illuminati, he then turns on the Jews as their ally:

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[34] Richard A. Lebrun, *Joseph de Maistre, an Intellectual Militant*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) pp. 203-4.
[35] Lebrun, pp. 204-205.
[36] Joseph De Maistre, *Quatre chapitres inédits sur la Russie*, Rodolphe De Maistre ed., (Paris: Vaton, 1859), p. 92.
[37] Maistre, p. 101.
[38] Maistre, pp. 101-102.
[39] Maistre, pp. 103-104.
[40] Maistre, p. 106-107.
[41] Maistre, p. 110.

> "The Jews of whom we have just spoken deserve special attention on the part of all governments, but especially of that of Russia, which has many in its midst; We must not be surprised if the great enemy of Europe favors them in such a visible manner, they already possess immense properties in Tuscany and Alsace; Already they have a chief town in Paris, and another in Rome, whence the head of the Church has been driven out. Everything leads us to believe that their money, their hatred, and their talents are at the service of the great conspirators."[42]

Maistre concluded this section by reiterating the link between the Illuminati and the Jews: "The Sect, which makes use of everything, appears at this moment to draw a great deal from the Jews, of whom it is necessary to distrust a great deal."[43]

Unlike the Simonini letter which accuses the Jews of being at the core of the Illuminati conspiracy, Maistre's accuses the Jews of only being their ally, though a powerful and useful ally. The primary target of Maistre's bile in his writing on the Illuminati are the Protestants. However, this is an early case of the identification of the Jews with the supposed grand Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy not because of symbols but because of their supposed shared goals. Maistre viewed the Enlightenment, the revolutionary spirit that was leading Europe into the age of democracy and emancipation, as his ultimate enemy. The Jews were among the main beneficiaries of the changes in Europe, and if one believed that a malign force was behind these changes, it would stand to reason that they would make the Jews their allies. In a sense, the accusation of common goals is more insidious and more convincing than pointing to the symbols, myths, and rituals of Freemasonry as "giveaways" of their secret Jewish directors. After all, the core of the supposed conspiracy is deception. The Christian/Monarchist world must not become aware of the danger they face until it is too late. If a Jewish cabal were to found a secret society that would manipulate unwitting gentiles to do their bidding, why would they load it up with Jewish symbolism, leaving clues everywhere? However, if one believes one has identified a common interest between a grand conspiracy and a group, then even weak evidence can be integrated into a more deeply-rooted belief in ones cherished version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

Maistre's had earlier harshly criticized Barruel's conspiracy theorizing.[44] It is possible to interpret the Illuminism section of the *Four Chapters on Russia* as Maistre's disingenuous attempt at turning the Emperor against Protestantism, and especially against protestant educators, and that Maistre's references the Jews as only a prop to get the attention of the Emperor. However, Emperor Alexander I was not given to anti-Jewish beliefs early in his reign. Perhaps the reference to the Jews in this general attack on liberalism and Protestantism was an attempt to contradict the separate policies of Alexander I that favored liberalism, Protestantism, and greater toleration of the Jews by making it appear that the Emperor was unconsciously playing into the hands of a vast conspiracy. Despite containing this subtle rebuke of the Emperor's policies, Alexander I read Maistre's *Four Chapters on Russia* and was so impressed that he tried to take Maistre into his service, but as Maistre was a foreign diplomat, the

[42] Maistre, p. 111-112.
[43] Maistre, p. 128.
[44] Roberts, p. 296.

arrangement did not work.[45] Like the Simonini letter, the *Four Chapters on Russia* may have circulated as a manuscript, but it went unpublished for decades, until 1859.

The Judeo-Masonic Conspiracy in Public Propaganda - France and Portugal

The Simonini Letter and Maistre's memorandum to the Tsar were both not revealed to the reading public for a long time, well after the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy had become a common conspiracy theory in Europe. As demonstrated in the preceding section, if one hated Jews the basic points of early Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theories were logical extensions of the Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy theory, given the borrowed Jewish symbolism in Freemasonry and Freemasonry's association with political liberalism, and therefore with Jewish emancipation. This anti-Jewish extension of the Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy was used by anti-liberal propagandists in the early and mid 19th century just as the earlier version was used by propagandists in the wake of the French Revolution.

One of the earliest uses of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in propaganda is the 1815 French pamphlet *Le Nouveau Judaïsme: Ou la franc-maçonnerie dévoilée* (The New Judaism, or Freemasonry Unveiled.) The anonymous author of this work was a self-described supporter of the recent restoration of the French Monarchy. He mainly regurgitated the Masonic conspiracy theory popularized in the first two volumes of Barruel.[46] The text attacked the well-established targets of the pre-Revolutionary finance minister Jacques Necker, the Comte de Mirabeau (described in other conspiracist literature as the link between the German Illuminati and the French Revolutionaries,) and the Marquis de Lafayette (who was still alive and active in French politics when this pamphlet was published.)[47] The pamphlet accused Freemasonry of trying to overturn altars and thrones, and of specifically targeting the Jesuits - committing false-flag assassinations as Jesuits and then persuading the French king to outlaw them.[48] The main difference from the theory derived from Barruel's second volume was that the author says the origins of the Freemasons are not the ancient Manicheans, but the Jews. The author used the language of a Masonic initiation rite and the symbolism of Freemasonry to make this link. He claimed that the G in the symbol of Freemasonry stands for Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified, and that the Freemasons identified with the "Jews" who "persecuted the disciples like they persecuted the Master" [Jesus].[49] "Let us not be surprised if the Freemasons are such bold persecutors of the Church: they are Jews; they have confessed this…"[50]

The portion of this pro-restoration pamphlet dedicated to accusations against the Jews is quite small, really just a few paragraphs (apart from the title.) Besides its novelty as the one of the earliest pieces of published propaganda to use the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, there

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[45] C. Joyneville, *The Life and Times of Alexander I. Emperor of all the Russias*, Vol. II, (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1875), pp. 141-142. Also Lebrun p. 205.
[46] Alain Goldschläger, Jacques Ch. Lemaire, *The Conspiracy Revealed, Jews Freemasons, Illuminati*, Jeremy Worth trans., (Toronto: League for Human Rights, 2012,) p. 43.
[47] *Le Nouveau Judaism, ou la franc-maçonnerie dévoilée*, Jacques Ch Lemaire ed., (Pairs: Editions teletes, 2007), p. 47.
[48] *Le Nouveau Judaism,* p. 36.
[49] *Le Nouveau Judaism,* p. 44.
[50] *Le Nouveau Judaism* p. 44.

is not much notable about this pamphlet. Another, much more thorough, much more high-profile, version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory emerged in Portugal eight years later. This text is an early, complete example of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, emphasizing the Jewish symbolism in Freemasonry, the link between the aims of the supposed Jewish/Freemasonic plot and Jewish interests, and specifically equating liberalism with this plot.

The occasion for this piece of anti-liberal propaganda was a counter-revolution in Portugal. In the wake of the constitutional revolution of 1820 in Spain, a liberal/constitutional revolution also occurred in Portugal. Some of the key leaders of this revolution were members of a secret society that had been preparing for revolution, fatefully named the *Sinédrio* (Sanhedrin in English.)[51] This name was very probably drawn from scripture. It is the name of the Jewish high-court and governing body that is mentioned in the New Testament. The new liberal government in Portugal embarked on a moderate reform program and appeared to reach a modus vivendi with the Portuguese king.[52]

This new liberal government only lasted a few years. A French intervention against the constitutional regime in Spain in 1823 precipitated an absolutist counter-revolution in Portugal, led by the 21-year old prince Dom Miguel, the king's third son and the queen's favorite.[53] In the aftermath of this successful counter-revolution, a 19 page pamphlet was published, titled *Maçonismo Desmascarado* "Masonry Unmasked." Its author was an obscure professor named Joze Luiz Coelho Montiero.[54] The work is obviously written as a piece of propaganda against the liberal republicans and in support of the absolutist counter-revolution. The text of the pamphlet was republished in the Lisbon Gazette on August 21, 1823.[55] This was the official gazette of the government.[56] The pamphlet directly stated that Freemasonry was a Jewish project, and part of a larger conspiracy:

> "What is Masonry, and what is its object? Masonry is Judaism masked under that name. All the Jews are consequently masons or liberals by nature. Many individuals there are, however, who, without being Jews, are masons, for reasons which shall be explained. If, then, Masonry is identical with Judaism, the *political* object of Masons and Jews can be no other than to re-establish themselves as a nation, in spite of the anathema which condemns them to live to the end of time as wanderers and vagabonds on the earth, without country, without king, and without law. The political object of the Freemasons or Jews being the re-establishment of their nation, their religious one can be no other than the re-establishment of the law of Moses, or the Jewish law and consequently of the temple of Solomon, which symbolically represents it.[57] [58]

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[51] Ron B. Thomson, *The Concession of Évora Monte, The Failure of Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Portugal*, (Lexington Books, 2014), p. 33, footnote 18.

[52] Thomson, pp. 34-35.

[53] Thomson p. 48.

[54] "JOSÉ LUIZ COELHO MONTEIRO," in *Diccionário Bibliográphico Portuguez: Suplemento*, Volume 13, (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1885), p. 66.

[55] Jose Monteiro, "O Maçonismo DesMascarado," *Gazeta De Lisboa*, 21 August 1823, No. 197, pp. 1391-1394.

[56] *Official Publications of Western Europe,* Vol. 2*,* Eve Johansson ed., (Mansell, 1984) p. 154.

[57] "On the Freemasons, Jesuits, and Jews of Portugal," *The London Magazine*, 1828, Vol. I (April-July), No. III., p. 429.

[58] Jose Luis Coelho Monteiro, *Maçonismo desmascarado ou breve opusculo em que com factos e raciocinios se prova como o maçonismo he o judeismo*, (Lisbon: Maigrense, 1823), pp. 2-3.

Montiero's argument rested first on the symbols, language, and rituals of Freemasonry, pointing out their Jewish origins: "All the signs, dresses, rites, and ceremonies of the Freemasons are Jewish. Even the Masonic words are in Hebrew, which is the language of the Jews."[59]

Among other things that Montiero used as evidence of this, he stated that the accoutrements of Freemasonry were copied from the Levites, the Freemasons call non-members "profane" - which means Gentile, and that their patron is St. John the Baptist - the last Jewish prophet before Christ. He also alleges that Napoleon's failed expedition to Egypt (1798) "was nothing more than a masonic enterprise; with the object of getting possession of Jerusalem, as the head of the masonic empire." and that the Freemasons were involved in bringing back Jews to Portugal from Holland. In sum, "The declared hostility of Masons to the throne and the altar, is the necessary consequence of the object of their labours, which is the establishment of the temple of the Jews on the ruin of all Christian thrones and altars." [60]

Montiero did not confine his accusations to Portugal. He linked the Portuguese liberals with the Carbonari myth by claiming that the Portuguese Jewish conspiracy was just the local chapter of the same international conspiracy, which were called *Jardineiros* in Portugal, *Communeros* in Spain, and *Carbonari* in Italy.[61] He claimed that their plans eventually involved the denial of the immortality of the soul and the denial of the existence of God. Montiero pointed out the leaders of the Portuguese branch of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy by using their initials. They included Manuel Fernandes Tomás, José Ferreira Borges (two Portuguese liberals who actually had been among the founders of the Sinédrio)[62] and other members of the liberal post-1820 Portuguese government. He also suggested that the conspiracy had taken steps to ensure that the deception worked by deliberately distancing themselves from a few other Portuguese politicians associated with the 1820 revolution "who the whole world knows to be of the Jewish stripe." [63]

As for his sources: Montiero claimed to be the first one to unmask the connection between Freemasonry and Judaism,[64] but his conspiracy-theory was not developed in a vacuum. He was certainly familiar with anti-Carbonari literature, and as an educated man in a Roman Catholic country he was probably familiar with the Papal condemnation of the Carbonari/Freemasons and endorsement of the anti-Masonic conspiracy theory in the 1821 encyclical *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo*. He was probably also familiar with other popular anti-Masonic conspiracy theories.

This early and very "complete" version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory was probably quickened by Portugal's history of Jew hatred. All Jews had been forced to convert to Christianity in the late 15th century. Like in Spain, there was a Roman Catholic inquisition set up to investigate "New Christians" (the local phrase for a recent convert or his descendant) who

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[59] "On the Freemasons, Jesuits, and Jews of Portugal," p. 494.
[60] "On the Freemasons, Jesuits, and Jews of Portugal," pp. 494-495.
[61] "O Maçonismo DesMascarado," *Gazeta De Lisboa*, p. 1393.
[62] Thomson, p. 33.
[63] O Maçonismo DesMascarado," *Gazeta De Lisboa*, p. 1393.
[64] Jose Luis Coelho Monteiro, *Maçonismo desmascarado ou breve opusculo em que com factos e raciocinios se prova como o maçonismo he o judeismo*, (Lisbon: Maigrense, 1823), p. 1.

were accused of secretly practicing Judaism. Unlike in Spain, where an initial persecution of crypto-Jews was eventually eclipsed by persecutions of others (like Muslims and Lutherans) the Holy Inquisition in Portugal conducted a sustained repression of suspected secret Jews until the early 1700s and continued to mostly arrest "New Christians" for its entire existence.[65] The Portuguese state continued to impose legal inferiority and other restrictions on New Christians until 1774.[66]

This centuries-long demonization of Jews and the idea that Portugal was full of deceptive Jews who concealed their true nature coupled very nicely with the grand Masonic conspiracy theory that warned of secret freemasons hiding their true nature as they manipulated society. Montiero even went one step further and made a peculiarly Portuguese anti-Jewish reference in his pamphlet. Point thirteen of his proof of the Jewish origin of Masonry is: "In the profession of medicine there are many Masons, because they descend from the ancient physicians, who were, for the most part Jews. They now cover their rabbinical spirit with the forms of masonry."[67] This hearkens back to a forged letter purportedly from Jews in Constantinople to the New Christians of Spain and Portugal, recommending that they get revenge on the Christians by infiltrating the medical profession and poisoning their patients. A Portuguese document from 1642 listed 52 New Christian medical professionals who were accused of murder in Portugal and Spain, and Christians in Portugal were banned from studying to be apothecaries in the same year.[68]

Fortunately, Montiero's version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory had no evident lasting effect in Portugal. The content of his pamphlet and its re-publishing by an official organ demonstrates the perceived utility that propagandists found in conspiracy theories, and his anti-Jewish modification of the Freemason/Carbonari myth was well adapted for local conditions: a tried-and-true propaganda attack on liberals and revolutionaries with an added spice of Jew hatred to grab people's attention or ensure that any Portuguese who hated Jews would also support the new counterrevolution.

Prominent Jews, Real and Fictional: the Rothschilds and Sidonia

The Judeo-Masonic myth in its full form resurfaced again in Germany after the upheavals of 1848. A Berlin schoolmaster named Carl Didler began publishing a stream of anti-masonic pamphlets, recapitulating the now well-tried story of a Masonic plot to usurp power under the guise of republicanism. Didler argued that the Jews were behind this plot. The writings of Didler are sometimes erroneously considered the first version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory.[69] What is interesting about Didler's version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was that it appears to have been the fourth or fifth time the anti-Masonic conspiracy theory

[65] François Soyer, *The Persecution of the Jews and Muslims of Portugal: King Manuel I and the End of Religious Tolerance (1496-7)*, (Brill, 2007,) p. 294.
[66] Marvin Perry, Frederick M. Schweitzer, *Anti-Semitism: Myth and Hate from Antiquity to the Present*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 242.
[67] "On the Freemasons, Jesuits, and Jews of Portugal," p. 495.
[68] Soyer, pp. 292-293.
[69] Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *The Politics of Sociability: Freemasonry and German Civil Society, 1840-1918*, Tom Lampert trans., (University of Michigan, 2007), p. 74.

independently morphed into an anti-Jewish one, as there is no indication that any of the several different authors of separate Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theories knew about each other's work.[70]

These separate instances of the use of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory involved grafting anti-Jewish ideas onto the previously existing body of the Freemason/Illuminati myth. Unfortunately, these separate uses would not remain unconnected historical curiosities. Maistre's essay to the Russian Tsar accusing the Jews of being connected to the Illuminati was published in 1859, which meant that conservatives in Europe would have come across the idea while studying this grand philosopher of reaction, though this was probably not a primary cause of the idea's popularization. By the late 19th century the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory had transformed into a standard, coherent narrative using common pieces of evidence and tropes. This was in large part due to the work of a few prominent propagandists who will be discussed later in this chapter, but there are two other important events during this period that significantly affected the development of anti-Jewish conspiracy. These were the rise of the Rothschild banking family and also the appearance of the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy in fiction. One novel featuring such a conspiracy was written by a future British prime minister. These developments demonstrate the increasing prominence of some Jews in European affairs, leading to the easy inclusion of them in pre-existing conspiratorial narratives.

In the early 19th century the Rothschilds, a Jewish family from Frankfurt, set up an international banking network that spread across Western and Central Europe. During and after the Napoleonic wars the family made large amounts of money by facilitating intergovernmental payments, bullion shipments and, more lucratively, by engaging in arbitrage between the prices of different currencies in the different European cities, using the money they were transferring as their source of capital.[71] The family built up large reserves of capital and were instrumental in developing the international bond market, as well as doing business in many important sectors of the economy, railroads and mining for example.[72] After the Napoleonic Wars, the core of the family business was built on access to privileged information that would affect bond markets, and the Rothschilds performed "favors" for prominent European officials (bribes) to lubricate the flow of exclusive information and ensure that the Rothschilds remained the favored bankers of the major European powers, and also to influence opinion about their reputation.[73] A notable event illustrating their influence was the 1827 entry for "Rothschild" in a popular German encyclopedia. It was written by none other than Friedrich von Gentz, the secretary and confidant to Metternich (someone who had access to all sorts of information that the Rothschilds would have been interested in.) The article was read aloud to senior Rothschild clerk Leopold von Wertheimstein before publication, and ten days later Gentz received a reward from the head of the Viennese branch of the family- Salomon von Rothschild.[74]

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[70] Umberto Echo suggests that Barruel's spreading of the Simonini forgery among his confidants and in the church might have given the idea to others. See his *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, (Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 135-136.

[71] Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Volume 1: Money's Prophets: 1798-1848*, (Penguin Publishing Group, 1999), Kindle Edition, Locations 2346-2354.

[72] Ferguson, Locations 279-280.

[73] Ferguson, Locations 3873-3874.

[74] Ferguson, Locations 402-403.

The Rothschilds were often given a leading role in anti-Jewish, or anti-capitalist, or even anti-monarchist conspiracy theories, along with other supporting characters who were also influential 19th century Jewish bankers, such as the British Jewish banker Moses Montefiore or the Prussian Jewish banker Gerson von Bleichröder. It is true that any family with such wealth, access, and influence would likely have become a target of conspiracy theorists, but the fact that the Rothschilds were Jewish made them especially suited for this role, and a more attractive target for polemicists.

In the early 1840s France was attempting to develop its fledgling railway system. The political debate about how to finance and run this important new type of infrastructure divided between those who wanted the project to be state-run and those who favored private ownership. The Rothschilds were involved in the eventual construction of these new lines, though they were not at the forefront. After a railroad accident occurred on the Rothschild-owned Northern Line there was an outburst of anti-Rothschild/anti-Jewish pamphlets and books from French Socialists writers.[75] One socialist pamphlet made an accusation that would become a staple of anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists: The Rothschilds were the ruling dynasty of the Jews, and that the current sovereign, the Paris-based James Rothschild, had corruptly conspired to take advantage of the supposedly "free" auction of shares in the new railroad, using his London connections, and then handed out many of these shares to important politicians and journalists as bribes.[76] Another influential socialist writer Alphonse Toussenel wrote an influential book *Les juifs, rois de l'époque* (The Jews, Kings of the age) which attacked the Rothschilds, the Calvinist Genevese, the other money-lending Jews, the English, and all bankers as all kinds of "Jews" who were conspiring to foist a new form of "financial feudalism" on France.[77]

The Rothschild's prominence as bankers and their lineage as Jews made them potential targets of both the right and left. The 19th century German poet and acquaintance of some of the Rothschilds Heinrich Heine sketched the structure of the different kinds of blame heaped on the Rothschilds from both ends of the political spectrum. Heine described the ideas later to become a mainstay of conspiracy theorists on the left, that the Rothschilds (or bankers in general) were propping up old regimes and forestalling the coming of revolution (and therefore, some on the left would say, progress):

> "...without the Rothschilds' help the financial embarrassment of most states would have been exploited by subversives wanting to mislead the populace into upsetting whatever order or disorder constituted the status quo. Revolutions are generally triggered off by deficiency of money; by preventing such deficiencies, the Rothschild system may serve to preserve peace in Europe… Religion is no longer able to guarantee the governments that the people will remain peaceful; the Rothschild system of loans can perform the task much better…" [78]
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[75] Michael Graetz, *The Jews in Nineteenth-Century France*, Jane Marie Todd trans., (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 80.

[76] Georges Marie Mathieu-Dairnvaell, under the pen-name Satan, *Histoire édifiante et curieuse de Rothschild Ier, Roi des Juifs,* (Paris: 1846), p. 18.

[77] Alphonse Toussenel, *Les juifs, rois de l'époque: histoire de la féodalité financière*, in two volumes, (Paris: Librairie De L'ecole Sociétaire, 1845).

[78] Ferguson, Locations 5393-5403.

On the other hand, Heine recognized the importance of the financial revolution in Europe that the Rothschilds ushered in that downgraded the importance of the landed aristocracy, and therefore paved the way for further political "progress." This would help them fit snugly into conspiracy theories about a plot against tradition:

> "I see in Rothschild one of the greatest revolutionaries who have founded modern democracy. Richelieu, Robespierre and Rothschild are for me three terroristic names, and they signify the gradual annihilation of the old aristocracy…. Then came Rothschild and destroyed the predominance of land, by raising the system of state bonds to supreme power, thereby mobilising property and income and at the same time endowing money with the previous privileges of the land. He thereby created a new aristocracy, it is true, but this, resting as it does on the most unreliable of elements, on money, can never play as enduringly regressive a role as the former aristocracy, which was rooted in the land, in the earth itself." [79]

Both these ideas, re-cast as accusations, would be used to attack the Rothschilds as the directors of or major participants in vast Jewish conspiracies that were either inhibiting "progress" or a sinister hand behind supposedly progressive forces.

There was another well-known Jew who had a great influence on the history of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, but this one was a fictional character created by Benjamin Disraeli, a Jewish convert to Christianity. Before embarking on a political career, the future Prime Minister of Great Britain Benjamin Disraeli worked as a novelist. He continued to write after he had entered parliament. In 1844 he published the novel *Coningsby, or, the New Generation*. In snippets throughout the book within statements from the characters, the book contained a political program aimed at encouraging young English Tories. Disraeli said in the 1849 fifth edition of the novel that the purpose of the book was "to vindicate the just claims of the Tory Party to be the popular political confederation of the country."[80] One of the characters in this novel is Sidonia, an incredibly interesting, influential, and talented Jewish banker whose family had been clandestinely Jewish in Spain for generations.[81] The creation of Sidonia was partly inspired by Lionel Rothschild,[82] a member of the prominent Jewish banking family who was a friend of Disraeli.[83] In the novel, Sidonia's "pastime" was "the secret history of the world." "No Minister of State had such communication with secret agents and political spies as Sidonia."[84] In the novel Sidonia describe a fictional grand network of Jews who hold the most influential positions all over Europe: "So you see, my dear Coningsby, that the world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes."[85] As Sidonia asserts earlier in the novel:

> "The first Jesuits were Jews; that mysterious Russian Diplomacy which so alarms Western Europe is organised and principally carried on by Jews; that mighty revolution which is at this moment

[79] Ferguson, Locations 5425-5435.

[80] David Cesarani, *Disraeli: The Novel Politician*, (Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 94-96.

[81] Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby; Or, The New Generation* (Project Gutenberg, 2005), Kindle Edition, Location 3139.

[82] Ferguson, Location 4206.

[83] Cesarani, p. 116.

[84] Disraeli, Locations 3219-3227.

[85] Disraeli, Locations 3685-3686.

> preparing in Germany, and which will be, in fact, a second and greater Reformation, and of which so little is as yet known in England, is entirely developing under the auspices of Jews,..."[86]

The character of Sidonia is one of the most famous of Disraeli's literary creations,[87] but after Disraeli became prime minister and then one of the most influential men of his age some Jew-haters looked at his work of fiction in a new light. They used the character of Sidonia to support the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy. One biographer of Disraeli has pointed out that while he fashioned Sidonia as a hero, a super-influential, super intelligent Jew who was well-versed in operations behind the scenes, "...after a century and a half of Jewish history that Disraeli could never have foreseen, Sidonia looks like nothing so much as an anti-Semitic hate figure." [88] To the eyes of a paranoid Jew-hater, Sidonia is an example of a conspirator who has many of the attributes that would become standard: he is an international man of mystery, he is a resident of England (a stronghold of liberalism and parliamentarism and a force against authoritarianism), he is a banker, and he believes strongly in the genetic superiority of the Jewish race.

Sidonia's statements about the hidden hands that drive history have cropped up again and again in conspiracy theorist literature,[89] and we shall take a look at a prime example in a few pages. This is an example of the curious relationship conspiracy theorists often have with fiction, which goes beyond the use of fictional works portrayed as non-fiction by propagandists. The scholar of conspiracy theories Jovan Byford pointed this relationship out:

> "..it (the novel Coningsby) illustrates the *fact-fiction reversal* commonly found in conspiracy literature. The conspiracy theorist believes not only that 'what the world at large regards as fact is actually fiction', but sometimes also the reverse, namely that 'what seems to be fiction is actually fact.'" [90]

Cretineau-Joly and *The Roman Church in the Face of the Revolution*

The attitude of senior figures in the Roman Catholic Church also helped foster the idea of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. In addition to periodic recapitulations of "traditional" anti-Jewish ideas such as the blood libel and the idea that the teachings of the Talmud require Jews to be dishonest swindlers, some clerics and writers with the support of the Church began to write about the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in the mid-19th century. An example of this is the two-volume book *L'église Romaine en Face de la Révolution* (The Roman Church in the Face of the Revolution) by the famous French pro-Roman Catholic historian J. Cretineau-Joly. It was published between 1858-1859, right before the Second Italian war of Independence when the Papal States were absorbed by the kingdom of Sardinia. It updated the Carbonari legend and added an anti-Jewish twist. Supposedly based on information from documents obtained by the Roman Catholic Church, Cretineau-Joly laid out the Jansenist/Masonic/Carbonari plot to destroy the Church, unify Italy, and spread republicanism.

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[86] Disraeli, Locations 3663-3666.
[87] Cesarani, p. 96.
[88] Adam Kirsch, *Benjamin Disraeli,* (Schocken Books, 2008) p. 131.
[89] Jovan Byford, *Conspiracy Theories: A Critical Introduction*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 48.
[90] Byford, pp. 48-49.

Cretineau-Joly's conspiracy theory was in the mold of De Maistre's (whom Cretineau-Joly praised and referenced)[91] - a conspiracy that was not Jewish per-se, but one that recruited the Jews, along with Protestants and secret societies, to accomplish the destruction of the throne and altar, though the Jews had a special role: "The Revolution led all the sects into battle against Rome. The academy and the agora, the secret societies, and the princes, nations, and armies, the Jew and the Evangelical Christian, she summoned everything under her flag."[92] Portions of this narrative would have been familiar to Barruel, Jean Filleau and his fellow 17th century anti-Jansenists, and Metternich and his anti-Carbonari contemporaries. In his second volume Cretineau-Joly introduced the character of a key Jewish leader in the Carbonari known only by the code-name of "Piccolo Tigre" - little tiger.[93] Piccolo Tigre was supposedly one of the main agents of the *Comite Directeur* in Italy, and large parts of the second volume were based on what Cretineau-Joly claimed were captured correspondence between Piccolo Tigre and another Carbonari leader with the code-name Nubius. Cretineau-Joly went beyond just accusing a particular Jew of being a Carbonari. He wrote that Jewish bankers were core drivers of the conspiracy, the ones who financed it and made sure that it lasted and that the Carbonari/Freemason leaders were maintained in comfort. Their motive was revenge against Christendom:

> "It is not very difficult in history to catch-out the hand or the gold of certain Jews, Germans or Italians, exciting revolts and facilitating any career in anarchic passions… These eternally-outcast have penetrated into the bosom of the secret societies. They have supplied them in times of scarcity and encouraged them in days of prosperity; They have incessantly supplied their leaders with subsidies to satisfy their thirst for material happiness. The number of Jews who undertake this trade of hatred and vengeance is very limited; But, by dint of patience and prodigality, they enclosed the Secret Societies in the circle of Popilius….The Jews have contracted a market; They have made a deposit; This market must be executed. This market must fall back upon the social order with all the weight of the curse to which they know they themselves are condemned." [94]

Cretineau-Joly was not just an over enthusiastic Roman Catholic conservative spinning conspiracy theories, he had the full support of the Vatican. The 1861 third edition of *L'église Romaine en Face de la Révolution* began with a blessing from Pope Pius IX. The Pope had just endured being on the losing side of the Second Italian War of Independence, and the Papal states had lost most of their territories. Addressing Cretineau-Joly the Pope wrote:

> "You acquired special rights to Our gratitude, when, two years ago, you formed the project of composing this work, now completed and again delivered to print, to show through documents that the Roman Church always has the envy and hatred of the wicked in the midst of the political revolutions of our ever-triumphant century. So it is with happiness that We have received the copies of which You have paid homage to us, and of this most affectionate attention We give you just thanks."

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[91] Jacques Crétineau-Joly, *L'église Romaine en Face de la Révolution*, Vol. 1, (Paris: Henri Plon, 1859), p. 50.
[92] Jacques Crétineau-Joly, *L'église Romaine en Face de la Révolution*, Vol. 2, (Paris: Henri Plon, 1859), p. 534.
[93] Crétineau-Joly, Vol. 2, p. 120.
[94] Crétineau-Joly, Vol. 2, p. 386-386.

The "Bible of Modern Anti-Semitism"

Cretineau-Joly's work was apparently quite popular in his day, but it has faded from historical memory as a contributor to the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. This is partially because it was overshadowed by another, much more emphatically anti-Jewish, sensational, and influential work endorsed by senior members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy that was published a decade later. This was the 1869 *Le Juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens* (The Jew, Judaism, and the Judaization of the Christian Peoples) by the French author Gougenot des Mousseaux. This work, called the "Bible of Modern Anti-Semitism" by the scholar Norman Cohn, asserts that a society of Satan-worshiping Kabbalistic Jews was behind the grand conspiracy against the throne and altar, and that they were clandestinely driving the world towards their ultimate goal: the reign of the Antichrist.[95] The Freemasons play an important role in this plan, but they are just the latest edition in a long line of Jewish intrigue stretching back to the early Christian heresies.

> "... on all the points of this globe where a Jew's heart is beating, that this Jew testifies of his most ardent sympathies with Masonry, upon which the Church of Christ has thrown the wrath of his anathemas. For Masonry, which sprang from the mysterious doctrines of the cabal, which the nineteenth-century philosopher *cultivated behind the thickness of its walls*, is only the modern and principal form of occultism, of which the Jew is the prince, because he was in all ages the prince and the great master of cabal. The Jew is therefore naturally, and we add that he is necessarily, the soul, the chief, the great and real master of masonry,..."[96]

Mousseaux spun together "traditional" anti-Jewish ideas like the blood libel and the evil of the Talmud with ideas about the ancient heretical origins of Freemasonry and its anti-Christian and anti-societal aims. He tied together beliefs about the Freemasons like those espoused by Barruel, beliefs about the Assassins and Templars like those espoused by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, beliefs about the Carbonari believed by Metternich and espoused by Cretineau-Joly, and the conspiracy theories surrounding the Rothschilds and other Jewish bankers. His accusations are often backed up by copious selective quotations from contemporary sources, particularly the French Jewish periodical *Archives Israélites*, in a manner reminiscent of Barruel's selective quotations from Voltaire. The book begins by quoting the character of Sidonia from Disraeli's novel. Mousseaux selectively strung two quotes together and also implied that Disraeli himself made this statement as one of fact, instead of the words he put into the mouth of a fictional character. (He also edited out the accusation from Sidonia/Disraeli that the first Jesuits were Jews):

> "The world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes… that mysterious Russian Diplomacy which so alarms Western Europe is organised and principally carried on by Jews; that mighty revolution which is at this moment preparing in Germany, and which will be, in fact, a second and greater Reformation, and of which so little is as yet known in England, is entirely developing under the auspices of Jews, etc." - Disraeli, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, son of an Israelite. See in this book, chapter X."[97]

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[95] Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide,* p. 47.
[96] Gougenot Des Mousseaux, *Le juif: le Judaïsme et la Judaisation des Peuples Chrétiens*, (Paris: Henri Plon, 1869), p. xxiii.
[97] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* title page.

One of the biggest ideas that Mousseaux popularized was the mixing of traditional anti-Jewish themes with themes of the occult and devil-worship, and this in a work of ostensible non-fiction. (There was at least one mention of a occult Jewish conspiracy in fiction published in German in 1868, a year before Mousseaux's work. See the discussion of the *Rabbi's Speech* in next chapter.) Using this idea of a central Jewish-satanic cabal (with one of its main outposts in Paris) he merged the narratives of Maistre and Cretineau-Joly, - of a Illuminati/*Comité Directeur* allied to the Jews because of a common interest in the spread of liberalism - with an idea like those of Montiero and Simonini (though there is no evidence Mousseaux read them) that a clique of Kabbalistic Jews were at the center of the conspiracy. He claimed that Jewish mysticism (the Kabbalah) disguises secret evil eastern doctrines that are the core of Freemasonry and all the other anti-Christian secret societies around the world.

His evidence for the existence of a satanic cabal at the center of all these plots were selected excerpts from a few works of contemporary occultists and amateur Freemason-historians. His key sources were the works of David Paul Drach, a former Rabbi who had converted to Roman Catholicism[98] and most importantly the books *Histoire de la Magie* (History of Magic) and *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (Dogmas and Ritual of High Magic) by Éliphas Lévi, an "eminent cabalist" (according to Mousseaux's description.)[99] Mousseaux had briefly mentioned this magician Éliphas Lévi in his own previous work on magic *Les hauts Phénomenes de la magie, Précédés du Spiritieme Antique* (The High Phenomena of Magic, Preceded by Ancient Spiritualism.) In *Le Juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens* he quoted selectively from Éliphas Lévi (mixed with general statements derived from Drach) pointing to proofs that ancient Judaism had been corrupted by evil rabbis, who adopted demonic doctrines from the east and deceived their people and fought Christianity. This group of Jewish leaders eventually created Freemasonry as a tool to fight their Christian enemy and bring about a world revolution: "The Kabbalistic doctrine, which is the dogma of the high magic, is contained in the Sepher-Jesirah, the Zohar and the Talmud" [100] "The great kabbalistic association known in Europe under the name of Masonry suddenly appears in the world at a time when the protest against the Church comes to dismember Christian unity."[101]

Mousseaux concludes his work by stating his belief in a sudden revelation and unification of all occult societies under the control of the Jewish cabal, before they achieve victory with the coming of the antichrist:

> "There will arrive, bursting forth one fine evening, one of those great, one of those formidable crises that shake the earth, and which these societies of occultism have long prepared Christian society for, and then perhaps suddenly we shall see appearing in the open, all over the world, all the militias, all the sects, both fraternal and unknown, of the Cabal….They will rally eagerly under one chief. More than one voice of high masonry, i.e. cabalistic masonry, will perhaps then remind us a bit brutally that the Cabal, finally victorious on all sides, is, in the words of its present apostle 'the

[98] Henry Hyvernat, "Drach, David Paul," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, Isidore Singer ed., (New York and London: Funk and Wagnall, 1907), p. 647.
[99] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. 99, footnote 2.
[100] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. 99. Quote can be found in Éliphas Lévi, *Historie de la Magie*, (Cambridge, 2011), p. 273.
[101] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. 101. - Quote can be found in Éliphas Lévi, *Historie de la Magie,* p. 399.

> science of the sciences and the religion of religions' (Eliphas Levi, *Dog., And Rit.,* Pp. 244, ii., 1854.)" [102]

The accusation of a clandestine Jewish cabal orchestrating everything was at the heart of Mousseaux's conspiracy theory. However, Mousseaux believed that there was one high-profile, visible operative of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy: the Jewish French statesmen Adolphe Crémieux, the founder of the philanthropic organization the Universal Israelite Alliance.

Crémieux was one of the most influential liberals of his era. He was a brilliant orator who served as Minister of Justice for France during the short-lived Second Republic.[103] He was a prominent advocate for the interests of persecuted Jews all over the world, as well as for any other persecuted minority. In 1860 he was instrumental in founding the Universal Israelite Alliance, an organization dedicated to assisting persecuted and impoverished Jews all over the world that still exists today. He became president of that organization in 1863 and as such was an internationally recognized Jewish figure.[104] Given his connections and high profile, he regularly communicated with members of the Rothschild family as well as other prominent European Jews and gentile statesmen. To top it all off, he was a well-known Freemason.[105]

Such a man at the head of such an organization was an ideal fit for Mousseaux's Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. The influence of Crémieux and his Universal Israelite Alliance in France and Western Europe combined with his activities in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and his association with Freemasonry made him the perfect anchor-point for Mousseaux's fantasies. Mousseaux considered an incident when Crémieux's interceded to assist the Jews of Romania when they were not going to be granted rights as citizens as a particularly egregious example of the power of international Jewry to usurp the prerogatives of sovereign nations.[106]

To Mousseaux, common ideals of liberalism shared between many Freemasons and the Universal Israel Alliance, which hearkened back to the same sources in the Enlightenment and worked towards the same goals, were not evidence of a similar ideology penetrating different groups but evidence of a single conspiracy using the same kind of propaganda:

> "Do we hear? Do we understand? Do we not see these doctrines as clearly formulated by the official organs of the Universal Israelite Alliance as by the organs of Freemasonry? And whenever one of these *universal* associations expresses herself, are we at all surprised to hear her repeat, in variations, the language of her sisters? *This is the anti-Christian philosophy of the eighteenth century, the Universal Israelite Alliance ,* and the *universal* society of masonry… animated by one

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[102] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. 554.

[103] Joseph Reinach, "Crémieux, Isaac Adolphe," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1916), pp. 345-348

[104] For a narrative of Crémieux's career and his role in the founding of the Universal Israelite Alliance see Simone Mrejen-O'Hana, "Isaac-Jacob Adolphe Crémieux, Avocat, homme politique, président du Consistoire central et de l'Alliance israélite universelle," in *Archives Juives*, 2003/2 (Volume. 36) pp. 139-146. Available at https://www.cairn.info/revue-archives-juives-2003-2-page-139.htm. Accessed October 8, 2017.

[105] Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends: Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile, 1840-1859*, (Brill, 2011), p. 54.

[106] See in particular Mousseaux, *Le juif,* pp. Xxxvii - xxxix - which quotes an article from the Russian newspaper Golos that makes this point.

> and the same soul! And the masonry of the *senior* adepts, that *of the serious initiates ,* finally allows us to see - through the meaning of its manifestos - that it is ultimately only the *latent* organization of militant Judaism, just as the Universal Israelite Alliance is one of its parent organizations." [107]

Like *L'église Romaine en Face de la Révolution* by J. Cretineau-Joly, *Le Juif, le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des Peuples Chrétiens* was produced with the apparent cooperation of prominent Roman Catholic figures. A forward to *Le Juif, le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des Peuples Chrétiens* was written by one R. P. Voisin, the director of the Seminary for foreign missions in Paris. Mousseaux's anti-Jewish work was part of a larger anti-Freemason conspirascist push that took place within the Roman Catholic church in the runup to the Vatican Council of 1870 which tried to discredit Freemasonry and other progressive forces.[108] Mousseaux was inducted into the Roman Catholic "Order of Pius IX"[109] in recognition, it was said, for writing this anti-Jewish tome.[110]

Le Juif, le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des Peuples Chrétiens is rightly regarded as the most influential work asserting the existence of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy until *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was first published 34 years later. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was obviously heavily influenced by this book, or at least, its authors were under its heavy indirect influence via those who had read and believed Mousseaux.[111] Mousseaux seemingly wove together every scrap of anti-Masonic and anti-Jewish information he could find into one giant tapestry demonstrating the influence and perfidy of the Jews. This ambitious project had flaws that were obvious on inspection, but the text itself is full of footnotes and the book has an air of erudition. When read as excerpts by a credulous person already given to Jew-hatred, Freemason-hatred, and hatred of the ideas of liberalism and republicanism, this book could be persuasive enough, as long as one does not research too much further. For example, weaving together the history of the Carbonari as related by Cretineau-Joly with the politics of 1869, Gougenot des Mousseaux claimed that the Carbonari leader with the code-name Nubius (whose correspondence with the Jewish Carbonari "Piccolo Tigre" is recorded in Cretineau-Joly's work) is none other than the then British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli.[112] If Gougenot des Mousseaux took Cretineau-Joly's chronology seriously, and there is every indication he did, then this would mean that the precocious Benjamin Disraeli assumed control of the Italian Carbonari at the age of 19.

Even more discrediting than this questionable chronology is the key source for Mousseaux's claim about the Kabbalistic Jews: Eliphas Lévi. In his previous work on magic, Mousseaux indicated that he knew the name Eliphas Lévi was a pseudonym, but speculated "Perhaps he [Lévi] wanted to write Levite [the Jewish priestly tribe] for he wore the sacred robe."[113] Despite what his pen-name implies Lévi was not Jewish, but was in fact a gentile

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[107] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. xxiii.
[108] Cohn, p. 50.
[109] *Pontifical Catholique*, Year 8, (Paris: Maison de la Bonne Presse, 1905).
[110] See the excerpted quote in *Journal General De L'imprimerie et de la librairie,* series 2, volume 15, 1871, (Paris: cercle de l'imprimerie, de la librairie et de la papeterie, 1871), p. 189.
[111] Cohn, pp. 48-49.
[112] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* pp. 372-373.
[113] Gougenot Des Mousseaux, *Les hauts phénomènes de la magie, précédés du spiritieme antique*, (Paris: Henri Plon, 1864), p. 242.

Frenchman named Alphonse-Louis Constant. Constant had gone to seminary but departed from the path a week before he was to be ordained, had been convicted in France in 1841 of writing a book that preached impiety and subversion. He had spent time in prison. He switched careers from that of a failed politically-radical priest and become a successful writer about the occult. He adopted the name Eliphas Levi and abandoned "the Abbee Constant." It is a great historical irony that Mousseaux's work, endorsed by the Pope, which made a big contribution to one of the most murderous ideologies in history and harmed the reputation of the Roman Catholic Church, was dependent on the work of such a poor source who obviously should not have been knowingly trusted by any Roman Catholic.[114] In a single footnote in *Le Juif, le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des Peuples Chrétiens* Mousseaux describes Levi as "anti-Catholic"[115] but evidently did not mind taking everything he wrote at face value. One generally positive contemporary review of *Le Juif, le Judaïsme et la Judaïsation des Peuples Chrétiens* complained that "... it would nevertheless have much more authority if M. des Mousseaux did not constantly quote the works of M. Eliphas Levy. Does this not give this forgotten author undue importance?"[116]

Analysis: the first generation of the Judeo-Masonic Conspiracy theory

The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory was used in public propaganda in French and Portuguese, and the works of Cretineau-Joly, Mousseaux, and Maistre allowed this idea to spread throughout Europe, and only began to noticeably affect politics and popular opinion in the late 19th century. The addition of Jew hatred to the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory did not change many minds among the reading public from 1806-1870. Perhaps this was because there was so little novel in these earlier versions of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, apart from the addition of Jews on top of the old anti-Freemason stories. The narrative was still the same: political liberalism, forms of republicanism, and Enlightenment ideas were just camouflage and propaganda for a group of anti-Christian deceptive usurpers intent on making revolution to overthrow established (mainly monarchical) governments and destroy the Christian religion.

The Russian Empire - a separate variant of the anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy theory

The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy did not make a direct impact on the Jews in the Russian Empire in the mid 19-century. Of course, some Russians were aware of this Western conspiracy theory but in the mid-19th century a separate anti-Jewish conspiracy developed in the Russian Empire, with some support from elements of the Russian state. Like the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, this Russian one asserted that there was a secret network of Jews who were trying to manipulate society for nefarious ends. Unlike the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, this one derived its structure from the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory that had been used by

[114] See the biography of Constant by Christopher McIntosh, *Eliphas Levi and the French Occult Revival*, Second Edition, (State University of New York, 2011), particularly pp. 71-72, 77, 82.
[115] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. 231.
[116] Firmin Boissin, Review of "Le juif: le Judaïsme et la Judaisation des Peuples Chrétiens," *Polybiblion : revue bibliographique universelle*, volume 5, January, 1870, (Paris: bureau de la Revue, 1870), p. 188.

Russian propagandists during the 1863-1864 Polish rebellion. The development of this separate conspiracy theory indigenous to the Russian empire prepared the way for the Western Judeo-Masonic myth to be seamlessly adopted by elements of the Russian state and a not-insignificant portion of the Russian population at the beginning of the 20th century. This mix of two different complementary conspiracy theories would contribute to one of the deadliest ideologies in history.

First, let us begin with a short history of the Jews of Russian Empire, which really begins with the Jews of Poland. When Jews were being persecuted in and evicted from many Western European states In the late Middle Ages, Poland offered them sanctuary. King Casimir III of Poland (1310-1370) encouraged Jews to come to Poland and set the stage for further Jewish migration from Western Europe. He granted them special privileges and Jews started performing important functions such as the minting of currency and tax farming.[117] Over the centuries Jews became integrated into the Polish economy as the middlemen between nobles and peasants. One scholar of Jewish economic life in 19th century Poland described it as a "noble-Jewish symbiosis," with nobles leasing many of their important assets to Jewish middlemen or just encouraging Jewish settlement in their lands because of their reputation as hardworking taxpayers who could provide credit.[118] Polish nobles would collaborate with their Jewish leaseholders and business partners to avoid state interference in local businesses, most notably by facilitating the Jewish black-market liquor trade.[119]

This created resentment among the lower classes of Christians. A 1751 Papal Bull from Pope Benedict XIV described some standard complaints Roman Catholics living in the Polish Commonwealth would bring to the Pope's attention:

> "Because the Jews control businesses selling liquor and even wine, they are therefore allowed to supervise the collection of public revenues. They have also gained control of inns, bankrupt estates, villages and public lands by means of which they have subjugated poor Christian farmers. The Jews are cruel taskmasters… although the power to punish lies with the Christian official, he must comply with the commands of the Jews and inflict the punishments they desire. If he doesn't, he would lose his post. Therefore the tyrannical orders of the Jews have to be carried out."[120]

This resentment of the Jewish middlemen was even more acute in Ukraine, then mostly under Polish rule. Ukrainians often saw the Jews as a link in the chain of Polish (and therefore Roman Catholic) domination of the oppressed Orthodox Ukrainians.[121] A Ukrainian folk song shows this link:

> "Would it not be better,
> Would it not be more beautiful,
> If in the Ukraine,

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[117] Heiko Haumann, *A History of East European Jews*, James Patterson trans., (Central European University Press, 2002), p. 4-5.

[118] Glenn Dynner, *Yankel's Tavern, Jews, Liquor, and Life in the Kingdom of Poland,* (Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 6.

[119] Dynner, p. 7-8.

[120] *The Papal Encyclicals: 1740-1878*, "A Quo Primum," Padraig M. O'Cleirigh trans., (Perian, 1990), p. 42.

[121] John Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question 1855-1881*, (Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 207.

There was no Jew,
There was no Pole,
There was no Union." [122]

During the Khmelnytsky Uprising of 1648-1657, a revolt by some Ukrainians against their Polish rulers, an estimated 14,000 to 20,000 Jews were killed. In his letters to Polish authorities justifying the revolt its leader mentioned grievances against Jews alongside grievances against Polish officials.[123]

The Russian empire inherited this large Jewish population and their resentful neighbors during the partitions of Poland in the 18th century. Before Russia acquired these new territories and populations the Russian state had no experience dealing with Jewish local self-governing religious bodies, called *Kahal*. The Russian state under Catherine the Great left these untouched, and also allowed Jews to continue their special economic activities, like selling alcohol.[124] However, an influx of Jewish merchants to Moscow caused an outcry among Russian merchants, and Catherine decreed that Jewish merchants could not operate outside of the newly annexed territories. This and subsequent decrees banned Jews from settling in most of the Russian Empire and established the "Pale of Settlement" - areas of the Western Russian empire where Jews were allowed to reside, often with restrictions even within these areas. The Pale of Settlement reached its final form in an 1835 decree of Tsar Nicholas I that also further restricted Jewish movement and automatically stripped any Jew who went abroad of his Russian citizenship.[125] This restriction of movement was combined with other legal discrimination against Jews and government bans on them practicing their traditional rural trades - dealing in alcohol and innkeeping. When Tsar Alexander II liberated the serfs of the Russian Empire in 1861, allowing peasants to move freely and own their own land, Jews were no longer needed to play their traditional role as the intermediaries between landowners and their serfs. Consequently Jews became increasingly impoverished and were pushed into overcrowded towns.[126]

The resentments against the Jews in the population of Russia's Western borderlands did not diminish, and suspicion of Jews and Jewish institutions contributed to the state's creeping discrimination against them. The institution of local Jewish self-government, the *Kahal*, was formally abolished by the Russian government in 1844 The Jewish community continued to have the collective responsibility of providing military recruits for the Russian army and collecting taxes, only now it was supposedly under state supervision.[127]

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[122] Klier, p. 207.
[123] Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (Basic Books, 2017), Kindle Edition, pp. 98-99.
[124] Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Antisemitism in Russia and the Soviet Union," in *Antisemitism: A History*, Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy eds., (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 167.
[125] Nicholas I, "Delineation of the Pale of Settlement (April 1835)", in *The Jew in the Modern World*, Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz eds., I Sachs trans., (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 379.
[126] Anne Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1666-2000*, (Routledge, 2004), pp. 41-42.
[127] I. Michael Aronson, *Troubled Waters, Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia,* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990) p. 13.

By the mid-1860s some Russian writers would complain of the oppression of Orthodox people by the Jews, and sometimes hinted that the evil Poles were ultimately behind this oppression. Recall from the previous chapter the document "*On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia*" which claimed to detail the supposed Jesuit/Polish plot against Russia which involved the clever use of Jews to impoverish the Russians by taking "into their hands all the means of acquiring income" and then "drive the Russian residents out of the city and force them to join the peasantry."[128] The prominent Russian conservative I. S. Aksakov reiterated these fears in 1867:

> "...the contemporary structure of the Jews constitutes, we repeat, a status in statu in the western region, where the wisdom of Polish kings and the Polish szlachta strengthened the Jewish domination long ago… this is a question not about the emancipation of the Jews, but about the emancipation of the Russian population from the Jews, about the freeing of the Russian people in the west, and partly in the south of Russia, from the Jewish yoke."[129]

In 1866 the *Vilenskii Vestnik*, the official paper of the Vilna Governorate (situated in what is today Lithuania, Belarus, and Latvia) began a discussion of the "Jewish Question" in an effort, the editor wrote "... to discover the most hopeful course for the improvement of the life of the Jewish race, in order to liberate the people of West Russia from the harmful influence of Jewry…"[130] The first set of articles were written by an assimilated and educated Jew named Lev Levada. He used a story of Polish oppression as a way of explaining the "backwardness" of the Jews. The Poles, he wrote, were hostile to the Jews, and the Polish nobility had cynically used them to their own economic advantage. Jews had responded to this exploitation by turning inward and developing the institution of the *Kahal* to increase solidarity and protect members of the Jewish community. Now that Polish oppression was a thing of the past, Russia should open its arms to the liberated Jews and fully emancipate them, and the new generation of Jewish youth would flock to the Russian banner and the Jewish question would be resolved.[131] The use of the Polish factor to explain Jewish backwardness was a clever way of placing the Jews on the side of Russia. The 1863 January Uprising of the Poles had ended just a few years ago, and the areas around Vilnius had seen a fair bit of fighting and subsequent repression.

The response to Levada's articles was overwhelmingly negative. Judeophobes filled the *Vilenskii Vestnik* with accusations about the parasitism of the Jews and their essential alien-ness.[132] A recurring theme was the Jewish connection to the Poles and the danger this held for Russia. One article accused the Jews of not only being a tool of Polish plots against Russia, but a potential tool for anyone who wanted to harm Russia in the Western borderlands- the Prussians, for example.[133]

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[128] Kalamajska-Saeed.
[129] John D. Klier, "Kievlianin and the Jews- A Decade of Disillusionment," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (March 1981) p. 92.
[130] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* pp. 166-167.
[131] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*. p. 167.
[132] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* pp. 167-168.
[133] Смолякъ, (Smolyak), "Еврей и Сѣверо-Западный Край Россіи" (Jews and Northwestern border of Russia), *Виленский вестник* (Vilnis Vestnik,) No. 152, 16 July, 1866.

During this debate, a Jewish convert to Russian Orthodoxy and missionary named Jacob Brafman wrote a series of articles describing a conspiracy theory that was to have an immense impact on Jews in the Russian Empire. The essence of his idea was the adaptation and re-direction of ideas from the anti-Jesuit Russian propaganda campaign used against the Polish uprising in 1863 towards a Jewish target. He did not make this link explicit, but it becomes evident once one examines Brafman's accusations. He charged that the Jews ran a clandestine government, a "Talmudic kingdom" based on an oppressive religious hierarchy, the *Kahal*. This meant that the *Kahal* had not really been abolished in 1844, but had gone underground (just like the Jesuits had been banned from the Russian empire in 1820, but according to Russian propaganda, still managed to orchestrate the Polish Uprising of 1863.) Like the supposed Jesuit conspiracy to keep Russian Christians ignorant and pliable, this *Kahal* was supposedly deliberately keeping the Jewish masses in ignorance and poverty in order to exploit them. Brafman made an oblique criticism of Judeophobes who made the "error" of focusing on the Talmud as the root of the Jewish evil. These Judeophobes, some of them well-meaning (according to Brafman) were attacking the obviously insane Talmud but ignoring the real enemy: the *Kahal*.[134] Local agents of the Russian government were playing into the hands of the secret *Kahal* by allowing the collection of taxes by the Jewish religious hierarchy, and turning a blind eye as they skimmed off the top to finance their clandestine *Kahal* government.[135] Brafman maintained that the *Kahal* sought to deceive educated opinion in Russia and Europe (similar to the accusation of what the Jesuits supposedly did in the discussed anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory.) 19th century European Jews, Brafman claimed, using their new-found wealth, were waging a campaign to improve Judaism's image and encourage the idea of a Jewish "enlightenment" that would integrate Jews with European civilization: "...many foreign publicists and writers… suddenly recommend Judaism…the facts appeared in print proving that the fanaticism of the Jews was not so potent that European civilization could not have a powerful influence on them."[136] He claimed that all this positive spin and promises of a Jewish enlightenment that would transform Jews into "normal" members of society was a ruse: the educated Jews calling for emancipation were really just tickling the fancy of European public opinion.[137] In fact, he wrote, the "Talmudic kingdom" still reigned over the Jews[138] and even the "emancipated" liberal Jews were still really under the control of their local *Beth Din* (rabbinical court.)[139] Towards the end of his last article, Brafman made an appeal to the Tsar-

[134] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), "Взглядъ Еврея, принявшаго православіе, на реформу въ бытѣ еврейскаго народа въ россіи" (The view of a Jew who converted to Orthodoxy on reforming the way of life of the Jewish people in Russia) Part 3, ***Виленский вестник*** (Vilnis Vestnik,) No. 173, 16 August 1866.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), "Взглядъ Еврея, принявшаго православіе, на реформу въ бытѣ еврейскаго народа въ россіи" (The view of a Jew who converted to Orthodoxy on reforming the way of life of the Jewish people in Russia) Part 1, ***Виленский вестник*** (Vilnis Vestnik,) No. 149, 13 July 1866.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), "Взглядъ Еврея, принявшаго православіе, на реформу въ бытѣ еврейскаго народа въ россіи" (The view of a Jew who converted to Orthodoxy on reforming the way of life of the Jewish people in Russia) Part 2, ***Виленский вестник*** (Vilnis Vestnik,) No 151, 15 July 1866.
[139] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), "Взглядъ Еврея, принявшаго православіе, на реформу въ бытѣ еврейскаго народа въ россіи" (The view of a Jew who converted to Orthodoxy on reforming the way of life of the Jewish people in Russia) ***Виленский вестник*** (Vilnis Vestnik,) No. 149, 13 July 1866.

Liberator, Alexander II, who had freed the serfs, to free the Jews from their secret captors. He ended this article with a translation of an 1825 document he claimed showed the kinds of penalties the *Kahal* meted out to Jews who resisted it.[140]

This was an innovative attack on Judaism. This secret Jewish shadow government, not the Talmud or poor government policy, was blamed for the poverty and "backwardness" of the Jews.[141] The day after Brafman's article describing the secret Kahal appeared in the *Vilenskii Vestnik,* the head of the Vilnius educational district Ivan Kornilov wrote to the Russian ministry of education about the secret *Kahal*. He was obviously impressed by Brafman and managed to get him appointed as Censor of Jewish books in Vilnius and got him 2,500 rubles to translate some *Kahal* documents.[142] (It should be noted that Kornilov had previously written privately about his belief that the Jews were oppressing the local population.)[143]

Brafman was now a state-subsidized conspiracy theorist. He would publish his first book about this grand Jewish conspiracy in 1868, but he began to enjoy influence and get more government attention before this. His conspiracy theory, not apparently based on racial or Orthodox religious antipathy against the Jews, got the attention of the governor general Eduard Baranov, a Lutheran.[144] Under the influence of Brafman, in August 1867 Baranov issued a circular to all the governors of the Northwest Region of the Russian Empire on how to fight Jewish isolation, which he claimed:

> "...creates many abuses and hardships for the Jews themselves since it facilitates the preservation, in secret, of the kahal institution of the Jews which has been abolished by the government. This isolation, which placed the Jews in a position independent from Christian society, gives them [the Jews] the opportunity to abuse their relationship with Christians because every Jew is well aware that in the case [of wrongdoing] he will receive protection and defense from his communal institutions." [145]

Baranov proposed that Jews were to be integrated into their local peasant *volost*, and take part in peasant self-government. In this way they would be tied to the local government and no longer view the peasantry as something to be exploited.[146] However, the *Kahal* would not

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[140] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), "Взглядъ Еврея, принявшаго православіе, на реформу въ бытѣ еврейскаго народа въ россіи" (The view of a Jew who converted to Orthodoxy on reforming the way of life of the Jewish people in Russia) Part 3, ***Виленский вестник*** (Vilnis Vestnik,) No. 173, 16 August 1866. Also Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 169.

[141] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* pp. 265, 267

[142] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* pp. 266

[143] М. Золотоносов (M Zolotonosov), "У истоков сра-идеологии (Из книги 'путеводитель по субкультуре русского антисемитизма')" (The origins of SRA-ideology, from the book "guide to the subculture of Russian antisemitism), ***Труды по иудаике*** (Works on Judaica), Issue 3. Petersburg Jewish University, St. Petersburg 1995. Available at http://jhistory.nfurman.com/lessons9/rus_antish.htm, Accessed October 9, 2017.

[144] Darius Staliūnas, *Making Russians*, (Rodopi, 2007) p. 142.

[145] Baranov's 1867 Circular was republished in Volume 1 of the First edition of the Kniga Kagala, see Яковъ Брафмань (Jacob Brafman), ***Книга Кагала*** (Book of the Kahal), Volume 1 (Vilnius: Press of the Vilnius Provincial Government, 1869), pp. 156-158. This section's translation from Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 172.

[146] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* pp. 171-172

simply disappear, and there was the threat that, at least in some areas, Jews could seize control of local government:

> "...there is possibility of such a case: That in some towns and cities the number of Jews will exceed the number of Christians, and then the public administration of the latter could fall under the rule of the Jews."[147]

Baranov's solution was a sectarian division in local government. No matter the population of any community, two-thirds of the Christian voters had to agree on any proposal if it was to be agreed upon. This subordination would have meant that even in majority-Jewish areas, the local Christian peasantry would have had control.[148] Baranov requested that regional authorities provide him with a complete census of Jews and Christians, as well as information "about all charitable Jewish institutions, such as: Talmud-Torah [schools], hospitals, almshouses, etc., with an explanation of where they are located and on what account they are held [how they are paid for.]...On all movable and immovable property belonging to Jewish societies and the income received from them...on their spare capital, the results of collection, as well as copies of their current estimates… about the funds and their tax debts which are registered in Jewish societies, including about recruitment arrears."[149]

The local state was not only going to hand over Jewish communities to the mercies of the local peasant voters, but also going to intrusively gather information on the structure and finances of Jewish institutions. This information was probably going to be acted on to harm their communities. However, if one had accepted the truth of Brafman's accusation about the secret *Kahal*, then Baranov was just taking steps against these clandestine tyrants: gathering information about the true nature of the threat and taking steps to rob the *Kahal* of its power. A few years later, Brafman would describe Baranov's proposal as "a well-known circular...on the destruction of the Jewish Kahals…"[150] This project would not have been "totalitarian," but certainly would have expanded the reach of the state into the lives of Jews. Fortunately for the Jews of the Russian Empire's western borderlands, Baranov was suddenly replaced in 1868.[151] Baranov's proposals were debated, and in the end the proposals were scrapped and had no real impact.[152] However, the influence of Brafman's conspiracy theory continued to spread. The Governor-General of the Southwestern Russian Empire also asked for similar reports about the Jewish community in 1868.[153]

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[147] Baranov's 1867 Circular, republished in Volume 1 of First edition of *Kniga Kagala*, p. 157. See footnote 145.

[148] John Klier, "Traditions of the Commonwealth: Lithuanian Jewry and the Exercise of Political Power in Tsarist Russia," in *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews*, Alvydas Nikžentaitis, Stefan Schreiner, Darius Staliūnas eds., (Rodopi, 2004), p. 10.

[149] Brafman, *Kniga Kagala*, Volume 1, p. 158.

[150] Brafman, *Kniga Kagala*, Volume 1, p. VI.

[151] Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*, (University of California Press, 2002) p. 175.

[152] Nathans, p. 180.

[153] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 172.

Brafman and the *Kniga Kagala*

Before he converted to Christianity, Brafman had clashed with the local Jewish leaders while he was living in Minsk. There is a story that the members of the local Jewish burial society harassed his family for payment when his daughter died, with one of them snatching a pillow from his dead daughter's bed as collateral for Brafman's "debt." (The scholar John Klier suggested that Brafman's subsequent specific focus on the Jewish burial society as the primary agents of the *Kahal* was his revenge for this humiliation.) In danger of being conscripted, he fled his native village and eventually converted to Orthodoxy, becoming a missionary to the Jews. He was given the post of a teacher of Hebrew at the Russian Orthodox Seminary in Minsk.[154] According to his son, during the Polish uprising he worked on a "commission on the analysis of papers in Jewish languages."[155] There was active fighting in the area around Minsk during the Polish Uprising of 1863, and Brafman probably experienced the war firsthand, and was certainly exposed to the anti-Polish/anti-Jesuit propaganda used during that war. As mentioned in the previous section, Brafman stole themes from that anti-Polish/anti-Jesuit propaganda campaign for use in his own anti-Jewish conspiracy theory. This will become even more clear as his work is further analyzed.

After publishing his conspiracy theory in the *Vilenskii Vestnik* in 1866 and permanently moving to Vilnius with a government subsidy, Brafman began working on his magnum opus, a book that described and gave evidence supporting his conspiracy theory: the *Книга Кагала* (*The Book of the Kahal*, transliterated as the *Kniga Kagala*). This book was initially published in two parts, the first titled *Еврейскія Братства, Мѣстныя и Всемірныя* (*Jewish Brotherhoods, Local and International*) and the second part titled *Kniga Kagala* that included supposed translations from *Kahal* documents. The book achieved its final, unified form later in 1888. The first editions of these books were published with financial assistance facilitated by the Vilnius Education district director Kornilov.[156]

The first part of this work, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* appears to have been rushed into print before the complete work was finished to counteract another pamphlet written by an assimilationist Jew who had written against Jewish religious brotherhoods, but only that they negatively impacted the general welfare of the region.[157] Brafman wrote that the local Jewish religious brotherhoods were not merely retrograde and harmful and instead insisted that they were a global threat against Russia and all of Christian civilization. The Jewish brotherhoods, Brafman claimed, were of two kinds - local and international.[158] He wrote that each local Jewish brotherhood that focused on a particular industry or religious function usually had the *Kahal* standing behind it. On the economic side: wherever Jews existed the *Kahal* and its Jewish brotherhoods were always engaged in a local conspiracy to squeeze out competition. For

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[154] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 263-4.

[155] Н. Н. Покровский (N. N. Pokovskii, "Брафманъ, Яковъ Александровичъ" (Brafman, Jacob Alexandrovich), in Русский биографический словарь (Russian Biographical Dictionary), Vol. 3, А. А. Половцова (A. A. Polovtsova) ed., (St Petersburg, Главного Управления Уделов [Chief Administrator of the Units] 1908), p. 334-335.

[156] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* pp. 266-267.

[157] Zolotonosov.

[158] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 20.

example, if the Jews in a particular region were intent on monopolizing local bathhouses, then every attempt by a Gentile to start a bathhouse would be met with the organized, clandestine resistance of the *Kahal* network:

> "With each such attempt, the business meets obstacles from a holy [Jewish] brotherhood, behind which, usually, stands the Kahal. In the fight against such powerful opponents as the brotherhood and the Kahal, it is difficult for an individual to resist…" [159]

This accusation is parallel to the accusation from the anti-Polish/Jesuit document *On the destruction of the Greco-Russian Faith in the regions isolated from Russia* discussed in the previous chapter, when the Poles/Jesuits were supposedly using Jews to drive the Russian peasants into poverty, as Jews would use their "natural cunning" to "take into their hands all the means of acquiring income."[160] In Brafman's version these Jewish plots to take over local economies were not part of a larger Jesuit conspiracy, but local Jewish conspiracies to squeeze out competition.

Furthermore, Brafman's obsession with Jewish brotherhoods to explain the influence of the *Kahal* even after the *Kahal* had been banned in 1844 is an apparent copy of the accusation that Jesuits had continued their operations in the Russian empire after they were banned in 1820 by using Roman Catholic fraternities (i.e. brotherhoods.) As Count Dmitry Tolstoy wrote in 1864:

> "...Their [the Jesuit's] fraternities remained indeed after the expulsion of the Jesuit Body from Russia, and were annexed to other Churches. But these fraternities, maintaining the most strict and yet secret ties with the Monastic Orders and the clergy in general, served as the agents of the Jesuits in society at large; and, acting according to the direction which they received from them dispersed throughout the whole country,..."[161]

Like the supposed machinations of the Jesuits, the *Kahal* was not just an economic plot against Russia, but also an attempt to usurp the prerogative of the government and govern their own (in this case, Jewish) society secretly through the influence of religion and the brotherhoods, based on fanaticism and coercion:

> "Each of the handicraft brotherhoods, in fact, is a separate closed world - a separate small kahal, inaccessible to the influence of state laws and the control of local authorities and before which a separate individual is nothing. At the bottom of this small, original world lie the beginnings on which the Kahal is built, under the tutelage of which all fraternities exist: brute force and idle fanaticism;"[162]

The Jewish Brotherhoods, Brafman claimed, were a normal tool of the "highest Jewish class" in any area, and designed to:

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[159] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods*, p. 53.
[160] Kalamajska-Saeed.
[161] Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia,* Vol. 2, p. 232.
[162] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 81.

> "...turn the masses into a profitable article for itself (the highest Jewish class), a blind tool for its own purposes, retaining in itself the same impregnable pride,...and contempt for its lower brethren, whom it leeched, exploited and despised."[163]

This parallels the idea from the Jesuit conspiracy that the Jesuits were a class of priests who were positioning themselves as the highest caste in Roman Catholic world, and who were trying to dominate and order society in order to satisfy their own greed.

What made the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories so frightening was that they usually had some kind of global aspect. The Jesuits were said to be everywhere and their plots crossed continents. Brafman's gave his anti-Jewish conspiracy theory a similar global aspect by creating the idea of a "Worldwide Brotherhood"[164] of Jews that had only been created recently, when "... the Jewish horizon became illuminated with light of modern science,... telegraphs, railroads and steamboats [now] facilitate communication by members of the Jewish people, scattered across the globe."[165] This nefarious global Jewish brotherhood was enabled by a global network of wealthy and influential Jews. They had managed to capture the imaginations of European progressives by pretending to support enlightenment and education among the Jews: "...It is not surprising that they, that is, the new Jewish brotherhood, has found sympathy among well-intentioned Christians. Identifying themselves as progressives, indeed, it was difficult not to be charitable, sympathetic for a good cause…" But the true cause of these unions was not to promote enlightenment among the Jews but to "prepare Jews for citizenship for a non-existent kingdom."[166]

And what kingdom would this be? A new dark age under the Jews (but not worshiping the God of Abraham, but the Golden Calf), sustaining itself on finance and ruled by the Rothschilds:

> "Righteous Jewish publicists warmly believe that the Golden Calf shall not desert the Jews, and they are not without its protection. And their faith is not in vain: the Golden Calf obviously, by his grace, truly had ordered through his priest *Rothschild* - Yes, let there be darkness everywhere, with the exception of the abodes of the children of Jacob, *illuminated by the stock exchange*, and all else covered in Egyptian darkness." [167] (Emphasis in the original.)

As this passage suggests, Brafman was probably familiar with the anti-Rothschild themes that emanated from Western Europe starting in the 1840s.

The fronts that this global *Kahal* worked through were international Jewish philanthropic organizations, "new Jewish Brotherhoods"[168] Brafman identified several organizations, including the "Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews in Russia," a Russian organization founded in 1860 by wealthy Jews in the Russian Empire and dedicated to spreading secular knowledge among Russia's Jews and getting more of them into Russian

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[163] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 19.
[164] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 96.
[165] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 96.
[166] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* pp. 102-103.
[167] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 117.
[168] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 102

universities.[169] He also singled out the Universal Israelite Alliance, the Paris-based organization founded by Adolphe Crémieux which was the target of Gougenot des Mousseaux's anti-Jewish book published in France a year later in 1869, discussed earlier in this chapter.[170] [171]

The second book which Brafman published in 1869 called the *Kniga Kagala* detailed the supposed history of this secret government "which has existed for over 2000 years, and is harmful to the local Christian population and despotic over the Jewish masses."[172] [173] Kosher regulations, the Sabbath, Jewish religious brotherhoods in charge of education and especially funerals - virtually every aspect of Jewish religious life was represented as another link in the chain of oppression of the Jewish people by their evil *Kahal* masters. This book included hundreds of pages of translations from supposed *Kahal* documents that Brafman had gotten a hold of that showed the operation of this clandestine religious-based government of the secret Jewish upper class, oppressing both Jews and also the masses of peasants and using underhanded practices to out-compete Gentile tradesmen.

According to the *Kniga Kagala* Gentiles were secretly bought and sold between clandestine Jewish overlords, making them the "rightful" objects for exploitation by their owners. As one Russian writer summarized the book:

> "We learn that each Christian landowner is sold by the kahal to a Jew. Yes, sold like an investment, both in his person and in his property. It is not just a way of speaking, but a legal term because the transaction is sealed by a special sales contract. Similarly, villages, whole sections with their inhabitants (Christians, of course) are bought and sold. Under the cover of our civil laws there exists a radically different legal code, secret, and negative, that rules over and subjects to the jurisdiction of the Jews not only the Jews but also the Russians, without their knowledge."[174]

This conspiracy theory is an outstanding example of the idea of usurpation-by-deception except that instead of just manipulating the ruler like in pre-modern ideas about how a king can be usurped via manipulation, this usurpation occurs at nearly every level of Russian society. The idea that Russians were secretly exploited, bought and sold, and bled dry to enrich the *Kahal* is also an idea Brafman got from the anti-Polish/Jesuit conspiracy theory expounded in Russia propaganda during the uprising of 1863. According to the *Polish Catechism* discussed in the previous chapter, the Jesuit plot involved making Poland independent. Ukraine and

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[169] Brian Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment in Late-Tsarist Russia*, (University of Washington Press, 2009), p. 7-8.

[170] Brafman, *Jewish Brotherhoods,* p. 97.

[171] See Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 271.

[172] Яков Брафман (Jacob Brafman), *Книга Кагала* (Kniga Kagala), (Ukraine: MAUP, 2004), p. 98.

[173] The text of the *Kniga Kagala* changed significantly over several editions, with material being added to respond to new concerns and hot topics. See Klier's book *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question, 1855 - 1881* for a detailed analysis of the differences between these different editions. Subsequent quotes from the *Kniga Kagala* in this chapter are from the 2004 re-printing of the book by the University Press of the Ukrainian University MAUP, which is well-known for pushing anti-Jewish literature. The American anti-Semite and conspiracy theorist David Duke is an alumnus of this school. See: Per Anders Rudling, "Organized Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Ukraine: Structure, Influence and Ideology", *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, Vol. 48, No. 1/2 (March-June 2006), pp. 81-118.

[174] Quotation is from Sergey Aksakov "About the Articles by Brafman on the Kahal", Complete Works, 3: p. 747. Translation from Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism, Volume 4: Suicidal Europe, 1870-1933*, George Klin trans., (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 85.

Lithuania were to remain part of the Russian empire, but were to be secretly colonized and exploited by Polish/Jesuit agents, with Russia incurring the costs and the burden of administration and the Poles and Jesuits reaping the profits: “Let greedy Russia think the Ukraine and Lithuania her property; but she won’t understand who will have the material profits of those provinces.”[175]

Brafman’s anti-Jewish conspiracy theory supposedly involved almost all Jews, but it was really only a small group of Jews who had full knowledge of what was going on. Many were complicit, most were ignorant, but all had a role to play and only a few knew the grand plans. Brafman emphasized that it was only this small Jewish upper caste that was responsible for this grand conspiracy, and that he, Brafman, really had the best interests of the Jewish masses at heart.[176] The consequences of this idea are analogous in nearly every variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory: Does one know a good Jew? Well, he is probably not in on the secret - but he could have been manipulated by those who are. Is there a lack of evidence that an international Jewish *Kahal* was operating in one’s country? Well, that is in fact evidence that the deception was working. This belief that the lack of evidence is itself evidence is exemplified in Brafman’s campaign against the Universal Israelite Alliance and the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews in Russia (which used the Russian acronym OPE.) While Brafman’s first book described the Universal Israelite Alliance and the OPE as two arms of a global *Kahal* network, later editions of the *Kniga Kagala*, probably under the influence of western anti-Jewish polemics, upgraded the Universal Israelite Alliance into the “Central Committee” of the global *Kahal*. The Russian-based OPE was described as merely the cover for the activities of the Universal Israelite Alliance in Russia.[177] [178] The fact that the Universal Israelite Alliance appeared to have no operations in Russia is evidence that they were in fact clandestinely operating the OPE:

> “Despite the fact that the Central Committee [The Universal Israelite Alliance] in each of its reports speaks about Jews in Russia, it nevertheless keeps silent about the existence of the Regional Committee of the Society in Russia, knowing that such an open committee… would not be tolerated by the Russian government, as a real implementation of the principle of ‘state in the state’...But it takes little insight to see that the [OPE] formed in Russia in 1863, that is, 3 years after the emergence of the ‘World Union of Jews’, is nothing more than the Regional Committee of the Union in Russia.."[179]

This went back to the theme Brafman had begun in his 1866 articles in the *Vilenskii Vestnik*. While it might have seemed that there were many different types of Jews in the world: Russian, French, American, and also conservative, unassimilated Jews who were poor and backward and new, educated, assimilated Jews like those in the OPE, Brafman insisted that they were just different parts of the grand Jewish conspiracy of the global *Kahal*, organized by the Universal Israelite Alliance. Here again, we see an idea inherited from the anti-Polish/Jesuit conspiracy theory of the Polish Catechism: groups that hold seemingly opposing ideals are

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[175] Day, p. 10.
[176] Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question,* pp. 273
[177] Klier, *Imperial Russia’s Jewish Question,* pp. 282-283.
[178] See chapter XXVII of the 2004 MAUP edition of the *Kniga Kagala*.
[179] Brafman, *Kniga Kagala,* (MAUP, 2004), p. 315-316.

actually operating in concert (like Jesuits and nihilists.) Using this deception, the *Kahal* was capable of simultaneously deceiving the Jewish masses and Russian government and society, not to mention the rest of educated European opinion. Brafman seemed to suggest that this global conspiracy had gotten away with this deception until he had unveiled it. The global *Kahal*, he maintained, would go to any lengths to deceive people and keep the Jewish masses in suppression while plotting their global parasitic plot, mirroring the accusations against the Jesuits. Brafman made the thematic connection between his anti-Jewish conspiracy theory and the older anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory clear in an 1876 article attacking the OPE that he wrote titled "The Jesuits of Jewry."[180]

The impact of Brafman's work

The first editions of the *Kniga Kagala* and *Jewish Brotherhoods* were serialized in the *Vilenskii Vestnik* in 1868 and 1869.[181] The books were said to have been dispatched to government offices throughout Western Russia to help officials understand the "reality" of Jewish communities.[182] The *Kniga Kagala* was not an "official publication" of the central Russian government, but it was published with the assistance of the head of the Vilnius Educational district with money taken from a candle tax levied on Jewish communities.[183] It should also be noted that the first edition of the *Kniga Kagala* and *Jewish Brotherhoods* were printed by the press of the Provincial government.

The work's impact can be partially judged by the vehemence of Jewish opposition against it within the Russian Empire. The Jewish press in Russia attacked the *Kniga Kagala* persistently, pointing out how in his translations of the *Kahal* documents that substantiate his conspiracy theory Brafman cut out text, or would sometimes slide two fragments together in his translation. Some critics said he did not understand Hebrew that well.[184] For example in his translation of the Hebrew documents supposedly demonstrating the machinations of the *Kahal* through Jewish courts, Brafman (or rather, he and his small team of translators) routinely translated the phrase for "the residents of the town" as "the local *kahal*."[185] This error would produce predictable consequences by skewing the meaning of judicial decisions.

Brafman's major contribution to the history of the grand conspiracy theory is that he helped make an anti-Jewish conspiracy theory an acceptable, respectable, even common opinion among the educated classes of a major power. Brafman later became a writer at the liberal Russian newspaper *Golos*, and helped transform it into one of the most Judeophobic publications in the Empire.[186] The great Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky took interest in the work of Brafman, and there are three editions of the *Kniga Kagala* in Dostoyevsky's personal library, the last one (the third edition, 1875) was presented to Dostoyevsky by Brafman himself,

[180] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 261.
[181] Klier, "Kievlianin and the Jews- A Decade of Disillusionment, 1864-1873," p. 95.
[182] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 266.
[183] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 266.
[184] Dudakov, p. 50.
[185] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 279.
[186] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 380.

with an inscription.[187] The influence of Brafman's ideas on Dostoevksy's opinions about Jews is clear from Dostoevsky's non-fiction *Writers Diary* where a Brafman-tinged Jew-hatred is a recurring theme.[188] Like Brafman, Dostoevsky maintained that that it was the Jews who were oppressing Russia, and not the other way round.

Brafman's conspiracy theory provided a convenient key to explain Jewish behavior, the failure of Russian government policies, and much else. Was a particular government policy not working? The *Kahal* must have bribed someone.[189] It was also a persuasive argument against Jewish emancipation. Those against Jewish emancipation could now couch their arguments as measures in defense of the common people of the Empire. As one Russian article in 1867 put it, to impose legal equality while the *Kahal* endured would be like giving the Jews a revolver and the non-Jewish peasants a switch.[190] The Jewish community was conducting a massive conspiracy against Christian interests. The Jewish intellectuals who did not denounce the *Kahal* conspiracy were accused of being secretly in cahoots with the *Kahal*.[191]

The scholar John Klier called Jacob Brafman "the grandfather of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*" and that his work "encapsulates the evolution of Russian attitudes towards the Jewish Question from vague distress at the perceived disorder of Jewish religious and economic life to the paranoid obsession with international Jewish conspiracies."[192] Brafman did not invent Russian Jew-hatred any more than Simonini invented Western European Jew-hatred. The "scheming Jew" was nothing new, and the idea that Jews were hostile to Christians is older than the New Testament. Brafman's contribution was not just a recapitulation of the idea that Jews engage in conspiracies, but a secular conspiracy theory that identified Judaism itself as a conspiracy. The whole "religion" was not really a religion but a scam by a clique of Jews to manipulate their lesser brethren and eventually to take over the world. This, combined with the other themes he borrowed from the Russian anti-Polish/anti-Jesuit propaganda campaign of 1863 and his normalization of anti-Jewish conspiracies in Russia certainly earns him the title of one of the "grandfather[s] of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*"

As mentioned, Brafman's conspiracy theory was also entirely secular, meaning there were no occult, mystical, or Christian sectarian elements to it.[193] As such, his conspiracy theory could be believed by Russian Orthodox people, as well as by Lutherans, and even Roman Catholics (and there were many Lutheran ethnic Germans in the service of the Tsar.)

The intersection of the theories

It is interesting that the works of Jacob Brafman and Gougenot des Mousseaux both settled on the same main villain: the Universal Israelite Alliance. The work of Adolphe Crémieux,

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[187] В. А. Шнирельман (Victor Schnirelmann), *Лица Ненависти* (the Face of Hate), (Moscow: Academia, 2010,) p. 168.

[188] Kenneth Lantz, "Anti-Semitism," in *The Dostoevsky Encyclopedia*, (Greenwood Press, 2004), pp. 17-18.

[189] Klier, "Kievlianin and the Jews," p. 95.

[190] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 275.

[191] Klier, "Kievlianin and the Jews," p. 100

[192] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* p. 263.

[193] Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question,* 417

and other prominent western European Jews to improve the lot of the Jews of the Middle East and Eastern Europe had been grabbing the attention of the European reading public for some decades, starting with the Damascus Affair of 1840. During that widely-covered incident Crémieux and Moses Montefiore traveled to the Ottoman Empire to assist in the defense of some Syrian Jews who had been accused of the blood libel.[194] By 1869, the *annus horribili*s of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories that saw the publication of Brafman's *Kniga Kagala* and Mousseaux's *Le Juif,* Crémieux was a Jewish political celebrity, and a hate figure for judeophobes. In fact, in his introduction, Mousseaux includes a translation of a 1869 anti-Crémieux article from the Russian newspaper *Golos* (a newspaper which later featured many articles written by Brafman) purportedly demonstrating the global reach of the Universal Israelite Alliance.[195] (It is not inconceivable that the author of this article had read Brafman's *Jewish Brotherhoods*, which had come out the previous year.) Both Mousseaux and Brafman make much of the involvement of the Universal Israelite Alliance in Romania, where Crémieux had been engaged in a high-profile pressure campaign to force the nascent independent Romanian government to grant full citizenship to its Jews. The coincidence of both Brafman and Mousseaux fixating on the same figure as an important part of an international Jewish conspiracy helped these two separate anti-Jewish conspiracy theories to merge, and eased the introduction of western anti-Jewish narratives into the Russian mainstream.

Conclusion: The setup for convergence

This chapter examined the emergence of two separate anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Each of these was based on different, perhaps even opposing, previously existing variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, anti-Masonic and the anti-Jesuit. Both the Western Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory and Brafman's conspiracy of the *Kahal* shared these common facets: 1. A small group of powerful Jews are manipulating Gentile society mainly through the use of propaganda, deception, and bribery. 2. This Jewish Cabal is intent on overthrowing Christian society and usurping power. 3. They have been very successful so far. 4. The Universal Israelite Alliance, Crémieux, and the Rothschilds are involved in key parts of the conspiracy. Both of these versions shared many of the hallmarks of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, its universal scope, the idea that spreading ideas of liberty and equality was part of the evil master plan, and that the conspiracy works under the command of a small cabal that is manipulating a larger group of duped operatives. These similarities are partially because the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories which Brafman's *Kahal* conspiracy theory is based on had already absorbed a lot of the facets from the "competing" Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theories in the early 19th century, as described in the previous chapter.

The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory was used in propaganda as early as in the 1820s. It had the ability to re-invigorate the old anti-Masonic conspiracy with a fascinating new twist and that perhaps could rope judeophobes into supporting a conspiratorial narrative targeting one's enemies. One might even view the works of Mousseaux and Cretineau-Joly as Roman Catholic propaganda against liberalism. Brafman's *Kniga Kagala* was funded by state support, though it

[194] For a full account of this incident see Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: 'Ritual Murder', Politics, and the Jews in 1840*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[195] Mousseaux, *Le juif,* p. xxxvii.

itself might not fit a strict definition of “propaganda” and was instead a kind of pseudo-scientific work, an informational book that “helped” Russians to “understand” their Jewish neighbors. Nevertheless Brafman used themes derived from the anti-Polish/anti-Jesuit Russian propaganda during the Polish uprising of 1863, demonstrating the indirect impact of that propaganda campaign.

This chapter has focused on the evolution of the conspiracy theory and its use in propaganda, and less so on its effects on politics. The subsequent two chapters will deal with the further development of the anti-Jewish variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory and their political effects, as well as cover how Western anti-Jewish conspiratorial ideas found fertile ground in the Russian Empire. Brafman’s ideas had prepared the educated public of the Russian empire for western anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. This eventually resulted in the adoption of a version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory by an influential segment of Russians, who engaged in a propaganda campaign to stifle liberalism and stave off reform and revolution.

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.

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[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-Ismaili 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 operation[5] 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

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[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

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[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.

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[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 Тодоровapp, 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 Jews[22] 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

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[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 Stöker.[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 Cretineau-Joly described Jewish financiers as the secret funders of the masonic conspiracy in order to get revenge on Christianity[36] 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

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[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 Toussenel 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 Toussenel, *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 Toussenel 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 Toussenel-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

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[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 Systémes Juifs," *L' Anti-Semitique*, (Montdidier, France), No. 24, 1883, 10 November 1883, p. 187-188.
[46] L. Guillemain, "L'Élection de lodéve," *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 Aprés 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 party 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 Péril 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

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[53] G. H. D. Gossip, "L'Alliance Jésuitico-Judaique 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 Интернаціоналка 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 hated, 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 Molay[65] 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., (Colombia 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 Illustreé*, (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

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[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

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[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

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[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 Juve.*[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

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[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

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[104] Major Osman-Bey Kibrizli-Zadé, *Révélations sur L'Assassinat D'Alexandre II*, (Neuchatel, Attinger Fréres, 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, *Révélations,* p. 44.
[107] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 46.
[108] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* 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 that epidemics, wars, or even earthquakes have ever done.“[112]

He wished to see Russia at the head of this crusade. Millingen 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]

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[109] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 25.
[110] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 104.
[111] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 212.
[112] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 213.
[113] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* pp. 215-216.
[114] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 217.
[115] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 136, 142.
[116] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 157.
[117] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 151.
[118] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* 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: Millingen 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, *Révélations,* pp. 158-160.
[120] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* pp. 161, 165.
[121] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 160.
[122] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* p. 173.
[123] Osman-Bey, *Révélations,* 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. Сыромятниковь (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

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[135] С. Шарапов (S. Sharapov)*, Двѣ записки Сергѣя Шарапова о русскихъ финансахъ* (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 "Умирающій 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 "Умирающій 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 ructions 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

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[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 *Мырнй 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*

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[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 Россія* (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 unnamed[161] 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

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[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 человѣчества" (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

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[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 завоеванья міра евреями" (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]

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[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 demagogy 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

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[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, *Révélations,* 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.

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[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,

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[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]

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[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 P*olish 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.

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[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 Toussenel'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.

Chapter 8: The Revolution of 1905 and the Judeo-Masonic Conspiracy Theory

Poor Russian people! It was hard for you to once carry the Tatar yoke; but it is much easier than the yoke of the Jew, and this yoke will inevitably fall on your shoulders with all gravity, if you obey the sweet speeches of the various "liberators"![1]-
Pamphlet published by the monastery Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, Russia, 1910

This chapter will chart the adoption of the conspiracy theory expounded in the *Protocols* as the semi-official ideology of the supporters of the Tsar during and after the Revolution of 1905 and show some of its political effects. This chapter is one of the most important in the thesis because while it covers a relatively short span of history when compared to the preceding ones, it contains two excellent examples for both parts of the thesis: the use of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in propaganda against liberalism and representative government, and violence inspired by the ideas carried by this propaganda. Specifically, this chapter will examine the content of the pro-autocracy anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy Theory propaganda subsidized by the Tsar's government and also detail the strain of violent extremism found in one of the main organizations that spread this propaganda. This organization was the Union of the Russian People, which is discussed at length in this chapter. While this organization may be relatively unknown today, this chapter and subsequent chapters reveal that it is the first in a line of violent extremist organizations that have lashed out at their imaginary enemies who they believe are controlling or about to control the world, the imaginary enemies at the center of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

The two men most identified with the creation of the *Protocols* and discussed in the last chapter, Grigori Butmi-De-Katzman and Pavel Krushevan and their organization the Russian Assembly play important roles in this chapter, though they were all superseded as the ideas they created were taken up by more powerful people and organizations. This chapter is, in a way, about how Butmi and Krushevan's ideas were "weaponized" by the Russian state and used on a massive scale in propaganda.

This chapter will also be relevant in framing several subsequent chapters that deal with the various offshoots of the version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory expounded in the *Protocols*, as this chapter explains how the *Protocols* and the conspiracy theory associated with it were popularized in the Russian Empire and became associated with an influential political faction. In a way, the anti-revolutionary propaganda campaign discussed in this chapter is a much grander-scale repeat of the Austrian anti-revolutionary propaganda campaign discussed

[1] *Простыя беседы с простыми людьми. Беседа вторая, о томъ, Кому Нужно "освободительное двиюеніе"?* (Simple Conversation with Simple People. Part two. Subject: Who needs the 'liberation movement?") Trinity People's Conversation, book 36, (Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius monastery, 1910), p. 15.

in chapter 3, which was the main origin many variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed in other chapters. The difference in scale between the Austrian/German propaganda campaign discussed in chapter 3 and the Russian one discussed in this chapter will be discussed later, but we should note here that there is more and more varied material available today from this campaign. This is partly the result of changes in technology which allowed information to be printed and disseminated more cheaply and surely partly also because this Russian propaganda campaign happened relatively recently, just over a century ago. As they were printed on cheap paper many of the propaganda newspapers used as sources in this chapter are disintegrating, and one suspects that unless they are preserved many will not last another few decades. Perhaps other materials from earlier propaganda campaigns have met this fate. This chapter will offer a few visual examples of the use of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in propaganda, as well as a few examples from literature meant to be consumed by the common man, perhaps read aloud. One of them is in fact a sermon.

The Grand Conspiracy Theory and the Russian autocracy in crisis

At the turn of the 20th century some supporters of the Tsarist autocracy created anti-Jewish/anti-Banker conspiratorial propaganda in response to increasing demands for self-government and a budding of new revolutionary terrorist groups in the Russian empire. The *Protocols* were written during this time. By the end of 1904 the Russian Empire was obviously in a serious crisis. There had been growing discontent in the non-Russian border areas against the Empire's policy of Russification.[2] Terrorist groups had continued to sprout. This violence was not entirely of an internationalist socialist/revolutionary nature, many of the most active groups were nationalist - more rebellions of subject nations against an oppressive empire than part of a global revolution. For example, in the Caucasus the violent Armenian revolutionary group Dashnaktsutin, having earlier enjoyed the support of the Russian government in campaigns against the Turkish Empire, turned on its erstwhile ally after the Russian government seized all Armenian church property in 1903. Recruiting among networks of Armenian refugees from Turkey who had been resettled in the Russian empire, the group organized numerous active fighting groups all throughout the Caucasus. Other rebellious groups also sprang up on the edges of the empire, Georgian, Muslim, and Polish. In Poland a powerful revolutionary organization called the Polish Socialist Party focused its attacks on Russian officials and sympathizers of the autocracy, and not on the bourgeoisie except when they were directly linked to the Russian police or military. Between 1905 and 1906 Polish rebels killed 790 Russian soldiers, gendarme, and policemen and wounded 864 more.[3]

The demands for self-government grew louder and the opposition was organizing. Russian liberals and Socialist Revolutionaries along with Finnish and Polish nationalists resolved in late 1904 at a Paris conference to work together against the autocracy.[4] The political crisis became acute in February 1904 when the Japanese launched a surprise attack on the Russian base at Port Arthur in China, starting the Russo-Japanese war. The Japanese laid siege to this base and began to attack other points of the poorly-defended Russian positions in

[2] Harcave, pp. 44-45.
[3] Geifman, pp. 23-28
[4] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution,* (Vintage, 2011), Kindle Edition, Location 847.

Manchuria. To the great surprise of the Russians and many other Europeans, the Japanese won victory after victory.[5] As reports of Russian defeats came back from the front, enthusiasm for the war waned, especially among the peasantry. The military embarrassments were compounded by economic crisis. The Empire was still recovering from the depression of 1900-1903, and the war put more pressure on the economy as reservists were taken out of the labor force and sent to war. Not only did this turn a lot of consumers and producers into soldiers, but wages did not go up - and going on strike was illegal.[6]

Leaders in various *zemstvos* (Russian organs of local self-government) tried to form an all-*zemstvo* organization to care for the sick and wounded and the families of the war dead. National *zemstvo* meetings that dealt with politics had been banned in 1902, probably for fear of facilitating a nationwide self-government movement. The Minister of the Interior demanded that he personally approve everyone involved in this project. When he was ignored, he refused to confirm the election of a new *zemstvo* chairmen. The relationship between the *zemstvos* and the government deteriorated, with the government suspicious that the liberals were trying to use the war to increase their power.[7]

The Russian naval base at Port Arthur surrendered in December 1904, further embarrassing the Imperial government.[8] Relations between workers and factory owners also deteriorated. The crisis got dramatically worse after Russian troops fired on several columns of peaceful petitioners and an unorganized crowd in front of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in January 1905. The petitioners, led by an Orthodox Priest named Grigori Gaupon, had asked Tsar Nicholas II to call for a constituent assembly, legalize organized labor, end the war, and decree an eight-hour work day, among several other requests. According to the official government figures, the day of protest claimed 130 dead and 299 wounded. The real number of dead and wounded was probably higher. One group of journalists claimed they could account for a total of 4,600 dead and wounded.[9]

This event shocked the Russian public and protests and strikes took place all over the Empire against “Bloody Sunday” as this event was named. After Bloody Sunday, St. Petersburg newspapers demanded an elected national assembly. In Poland the protests took a nationalist tinge as Poles demanded an end to Russian-only language instruction. Some of the protests turned violent.[10] Pressure mounted on the Tsar to make serious reforms, including introducing some kind of national elections. In February the Tsar issued a decree reiterating that his subjects had the right to petition the government and calling for a consultative body to be formed, elected by the people, “to undertake the preliminary examination and consideration of legislative measures.”[11] This was a major concession for the Tsar that he hoped would calm the growing unrest. Instead his concession emboldened the protesters.[12]

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[5] Simon Montefiore, *The Romanovs: 1613-1918*, (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2016) Kindle Edition, p. 517.
[6] Harcave, p. 42.
[7] Harcave, pp. 32-33, 44.
[8] Harcave, p. 67.
[9] Harcave, pp 80-93.
[10] Harcave, pp. 103-109.
[11] Harcave, p. 130.
[12] Harcave, pp. 130-133.

Pro-Tsarist conspiracy theorists like Grigori Butmi-de-Katzman could easily see these compounding problems - the strikes, the protests, the massacre of Bloody Sunday, the concession of February - not as signs of political and economic crises and a loss of confidence in the Tsar's government, but as parts of a Jewish conspiracy to further enervate the power and unity of the Russian government. A January 1905 article originally published in the Russian journal *Море и его жизнь* - "the Sea and its Life" - explained revolution in this way, summarizing the anti-Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy theory through an abridgement of a French pamphlet by an anti-Masonic novelist named Maurice Talmeyr.[13] The article cities Barruel as a source, among other European sources. The Russian article was signed only with the initials "N. L." possibly identifiable as a member of the Russian Assembly named Nikolai Lvovich Mordvinov and/or the director of the Chancellery of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. [14] [15] (If these are one and the same person, the use of "N. L." would perhaps make sense for a high government official not wishing to open himself up to criticism for writing articles about politics in the popular press.) The article concluded with an obvious reference to the growing trouble and revolutionary ferment in Russia, slightly modifying the French original:

> "And so does the revolution, which is not to be confused with evolution, represent a great social movement, inevitable and beneficial, naturally brought about by deep causes, interests and needs, as many honest people believe ... But then where does our moral malaise come from, our worries and troubles increase, instead of diminishing as revolutionary ideas succeed and grow? What explains this?
>
> Or ... revolution is nothing but a giant, artificially created fraud, directed against Christianity and statehood by their sworn enemies! And then our troubles, strife, and confusion are explained."[16]

This was a full importation of the conspiracy theories spread by Hoffman and the Austrian government during the French Revolution, used once again to defend an autocracy by explaining revolution as the work of a gang of usurping Freemasons.

Wherever the Anti-Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory goes, the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory will not be far behind, especially in a country already full of anti-Jewish ideas. The *Protocols* had been published years earlier, and believers in an international Jewish

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[13] Maurice Talmeyr, *La Franc-Maçonnerie et la Révolution Française*, (Paris: Perrin and Co., 1904)

[14] Notes to letter of Stolypin to Prince PD. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, 15 March 1903: Archives of the Russian Federation. F. 1729. Op. 1. D. 1371. L. 5-7., "Mordvinov Nikolai Lvovich - 1902-1908. Director of the Chancellery of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for the affairs of the nobility. Avilable at http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stolypin/stpn_mirski.html, Accessed Mar 27 2018.

[15] A well-connected attendee of Alexandra Viktorovna Bogdanovich's conservative St Petersburg salon was named N. L. Mordvinov. He appears to have been a believer in some more outlandish ideas about Jewish conspiracies. The entry in her diary for 19 April 1906 that "Mordvinov also said that he had received news from England from a special agent that the Bund (a Jewish socialist group) had decided to cut off communication between St. Petersburg and Tsarskoe Selo, kidnap the Tsar and the heir, and take them to Finland." Available at http://az.lib.ru/b/bogdanowich_a_w/text_0010.shtml. Accessed March 27, 2018.

[16] Н. Л. (N. L.) and Г. Бутми (G. Butmi) , *Фран Масонство и Государственная Измена* (Freemasonry and State Treason), St. Petersburg 1905, (from the article "Масонство и Французкая Революція" (Masonry and the French Revolution), in Море и Его Жизн (The Sea and its life), From January 1905), p. 33.

conspiracy could very easily adapt the ructions of the Revolution of 1905 to their narrative. An example of the kind of thinking present in some conservative Russian circles during this time can be found in an article by Mikhail Menshikov, the same journalist who first mentioned the existence of the *Protocols* in 1902. In an April 1905 article, a few months after Bloody Sunday, Menshikov reports on a speech he claimed to have heard from the mouth of Ivan Theodotich, a member of the Russian Assembly. In it one finds some major themes similar to those in the *Protocols*: that liberalism is a ruse of a grand illiberal plot, the theme of a Jewish plot to start a revolution in Russia in order to soften up the autocracy and manipulate the Russian government (In this case, the speaker assumes their goal is the end of the Pale of Settlement - restrictions on where Jews were allowed to live - in order to oppress Christians elsewhere in the Russian Empire.) Also present is the idea of an inherent Jewish conservatism that oppresses Christians and some Jews (related to the Kahal conspiracy theory of Brafman). According to Ivan Theodotich, cries against the oppression of the Jews in the Russian Empire were a ruse to hide a Jewish political offensive:

> "The side on the offensive - the Jews - pretend to be on the defensive and pretend so skillfully that unsophisticated Russians believe them… they cry...that in the name of humanity and the covenants of Christ, the Pale of Settlement should be removed and the Jews should have equal rights… this attitude towards Jewry has become a criterion not only of liberalism, but even of Christianity itself… I have never come across a more foolish looking fish on a line, a sharp hook hidden inside tasty bait. Liberalism, Humanism, Christianity! Inside all these sacred words sits the hook of the predator, snagging his victim… Who is protected by the Pale of Settlement? It does not protect the Jews from an invasion of Christians but the Christians from an invasion of Jews… if there is a persecuted tribe in this matter, it is us, not them… It was on Jewry that the stinking Russian liberalism allowed itself to be fooled the most… The liberals do not see that it is Jewry that is the most predominantly conservative, the oldest and mustiest in the world. The true ghetto where Jewry suffocates is Judaism. Greater national exclusiveness and more intolerance is not known in another religion... They raise revolution to remove the Pale of Settlement… If the Jews live among our native populace, like in Poland, and if they completely take over trade, the press, the stock exchange, the theater, the justice ministry, and finally the parliament, that will be the end of Russian life. Honest Jews will agree that they are hostile to all nationalities, except for theirs… If it were not for cowardice and self-interest, the vast majority of liberals would be against Jewish domination: only ignoramuses or political adolescents can deny it… cohabitation between a Jew and a Russian leads to the domination of the first…"[17]

This speaker also explains the reasons why this idea was not more widely held: censorship (from a government not eager to spread ideas which could lead to further unrest and violence) and the supposed grip of the Jews on the Russian press - which they used to manipulate public opinion:

> "Not all the public knows, but she needs to know that our press, in addition to censorship, is under the pressure of parties whose oppression turns into a terror against those who dare to have an independent judgment. Particularly intolerant are the radicals, and especially the Jewish newspapers. ... [Here Theodotich begins speaking as a Jew] we will drag your name through the most fetid mud, we will slander you, we shall defile you, we will forever kill your reputation in the eyes of the crowd. Do you think the crowd has its own judgment? She has ours. The choral

[17] М Меньшиковъ (M. Menshikov), "Письма къ Ближнимъ, Раздоръ" (Letters to the Near, Discord), Новое Время, no. 10445. 3 (16) April 1905, (St. Petersburg, Russia) pp. 3-4.

> hypnosis is omnipotent. If a hundred idiots from day to day began screaming that Pushkin is an idiot, a million intelligent people will believe it. We, the Jew, are the strength, we are the power, because we have the throats, try to shout over us!"[18]

The government censorship mentioned in this speech was apparently insufficient to stop the spread of anti-Jewish ideas and the suspicion that Jews were somehow responsible for the crisis. According to a contemporary Jewish-American yearbook, 54 pogroms took place in the Russian Empire between January and early October 1905.[19] In May 1905 in Zhitomir, in present-day Ukraine, a pogrom was organized by pro-monarchist elements in the city. This is said to be the first sighting of the "Black Hundreds."[20] The Black Hundreds were a generic name for the various pro-Tsarist, radical Russian Orthodox, Russian chauvinist groups that sprang up all over Russia during this time of crisis and revolution. As they grew in size and geographic reach these groups received encouragement and support from local police and clergy.[21] They were named after organizations of merchants who had supported the Tsar during some of the darkest days of Russian history in the 17th century.[22] These groups were sometimes reported as leading pro-Tsar processions and instigating attacks against Jews.[23] These groups had a variety of different names, and most confined their activities to printing pro-Tsarist anti-Revolutionary pamphlets. The Jews were a prime target for these anti-revolutionary broadsides, along with intellectuals, students, Poles, Finns, and the Japanese.[24] Senior police officials adopted a hands-off policy to these groups. A circular from the director of the central police department instructed police to confiscate fliers produced by these groups as "undoubtedly undesirable and even extremely dangerous" but also instructed his subordinates to not bring charges against these anti-revolutionary groups, despite the fact they were all illegal, unregistered, and inciting violence.[25] An example of the fliers produced during this time, retrieved from the Russian State Archives, encourages readers to kill Jews, members of the *zemstva* (local government), and students:

> "Beat the damned traitors everywhere and all over, wherever you find them and with whatever [you can], beat the yids, destroyers of the Russian tsardom, beat the bloodthirsty robbers [in] the *zemstva*, beat the instigators of the sedition and strikes, beat… the school youth, even if he would be your son, brother, or relative, all the same he's a traitor, don't pity [him], beat him, he's a complete wretch and is the destroyer of the people and the Russian land, the more of them we destroy, the better for Russia and [for] the people, the more of them we kill, the less sedition there will be in Russia and Russia will be on the path to redemption."[26]

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[18] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[19] Shlomo Lambroza, "The pogroms of 1903-1906" in *Pogroms, Anti-Jewish violence in modern Russian history*, John Klier and Shlomo Lambroza eds., (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p 223.
[20] Ibid., pp. 223-224.
[21] Harcave, pp. 150-151.
[22] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 103.
[23] Lambroza, p. 225.
[24] Jacob Langer, "Corruption and the Counterrevolution: The Rise and Fall of the Black Hundred" (PhD Diss., Duke University, 2007), p. 46.
[25] Langer, p. 48.
[26] Langer, p. 47.

Unsurprisingly, given the tone of this anti-Jewish anti-democratic propaganda, the *Protocols* re-emerged from obscurity during this period. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the *Protocols* is a piece of pro-autocracy anti-republican anti-liberal propaganda. It would never have spread all through Russia and then the world if it had not been found useful by pro-Tsarist propagandists. The network provided by the Russian Assembly likely facilitated this re-emergence and solidified the reputation of the *Protocols* in pro-autocracy anti-Jewish circles during this time. Before 1905 the *Protocols* had only been published in Krushevan's 1903 newspaper edition and as part of another minor anti-Jewish book in early 1904. For over a year there was no further publishing of the document, and it may have forever remained in obscurity if it were not for the outbreak of Revolution in 1905. Then, an abridged and modified version of the Protocols was published in the official journal of the Russian Assembly: *Mirni Trud.* The text was presented almost without commentary, but the ideology it was targeting with slander was obvious from the title: "Report of N. L. Mordvinov: The Secrets of Politics, its ways of operation, and the results achieved by it with the help of science and false liberalism."[27] (N. L. Mordvinov might be identifiable with the N. L. mentioned earlier.) Subsequently a volume containing the abridged and altered *Protocols* was cleared for publication by the censor in late September 1905.[28] [29] This edition of the *Protocols* was published part of a larger work of mysticism titled *The Great in the Small: Antichrist considered as an imminent political possibility*. This edition was later to become the "standard" version of the *Protocols* internationally. It was published by the press of the Red Cross located near one of the imperial residences. Norman Cohn believes this edition was published to influence the Tsar himself.[30]

From the point of view of pro-autocracy conspiracy theorists, the Tsar would certainly have needed some advice. His situation had continued to deteriorate, in spite of the February concessions. As the Japanese had laid siege to Port Arthur in China the Tsar had dispatched part of the Russian Baltic Fleet to reinforce the Pacific fleet. In May 1905 the entire Russian fleet of 38 ships and almost 10,000 men was annihilated or captured in the battle of Tsushima. This was an incredibly embarrassing defeat.[31] A humiliating peace agreement followed this 18-month-long series of battlefield disasters. The strike movement in Russia got bigger and bigger. The idea of a country-wide general strike to demand a constituent assembly spread and became a real possibility. A general strike of the railroads shut down the entire rail network in Russia in October 1905. A simultaneous strike of typesetters shut down printing and therefore the dissemination of news. Lawyers and hospital workers and other professionals joined the strike, creating "a union of forces in a general display of contempt for the regime." [32] In addition to the violence on the borderlands, by mid-October 1905 armed revolt within Russia itself seemed imminent, and on October 14th officials in the capital once again prepared to use

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[27] Langer, p. 130.

[28] Interestingly, this version names US president McKinley as a discarded tool of the Jewish conspiracy.

[29] "Докладъ Н. Л. Мордвинова: Тайны политики, способы ея дыйствій и результаты, достигнутые ею при помощи науки и лжелиберализма" (Report of N. L. Mordvinov: The Secrets of Politics, its ways of operation, and the results achieved by it with the help of science and false liberalism), *Мирный Трудъ* (Peaceful Work), No. 8, 1905, Kharkov (based on Censor's mark), p. 130

[30] Cohn, p. 73.

[31] See Constantine Pleshakov, *The Tsar's Last Armada: The Epic Journey to the Battle of Tsushima*, (Basic Books, 2008).

[32] Ann Healy, *The Russian Autocracy in Crisis 1905-1907*, (Connecticut: Akron Books, 1976) pp. 28-30.

deadly force against Russians. When news of these preparations got out it strengthened the case against the Tsar made by revolutionaries.[33] As chaos mounted the bishop of Moscow gave a sermon on October 16th that defended the autocracy, made direct reference to the *Protocols*, and repeated the theme that all revolutionary ideas are just camouflage for anti-Christian satanic usurpers.

> "Oh, if our unfortunate workers knew who was in charge of them, who sends the instigating rabble-rousers, then they would turn from them in horror… the so-called 'social democrats', are revolutionaries who have long renounced God… Their main nest is abroad: they dream of enslaving the whole world for themselves; in secret protocols they call us, Christians, the beasts that God gave them, they say we have the human image only so that they, the supposed elect, would not be disgusted to use our services... With Satanic cunning, they catch in their networks people who are frivolous, and promise them an earthly paradise, but carefully hide from them their secret purposes, their criminal dreams. By deceiving an unfortunate, they push him to the most horrible crimes allegedly for the sake of the common good and really turn him into an obedient slave."[34]

Notice how the bishop avoids the word "Jew" - perhaps he was trying to work around censorship. This sermon later came to be known as the "Pogrom Sermon of 16 October." The sermon was read out to all churches in Moscow and published in the major newspaper *Moskovskie Vedemosti*.[35]

Unbeknownst to the bishop and many other pro-Tsarist activists throughout the Russian Empire, the Tsar was about to reluctantly make major concessions in an attempt to pacify the country. Sergei Witte, the former Economy Minister despised by Butmi for introducing the gold standard to Russia, had returned from peace negotiations with the Japanese and managed to persuade most of the court to pressure the Tsar into accepting the need for major reforms. The concession document known as the "October Manifesto" was signed on the evening of October 17. It included three major concessions: 1. "...genuine personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly, and association" 2. Suffrage for "those classes of the population that are now completely deprived of electoral rights, leaving the further development of the principle of universal suffrage to the new legislative order" and 3., a most shockingly for an autocrat: "to establish as an inviolable rule that no law may go into force without the consent of the State Duma…" [36]

One can imagine the effect of this manifesto on Pro-Tsarist subjects who had earlier abhorred the very idea of a parliament and believed the Tsar was weak enough already. If any believed, like Butmi, that countries governed by parliaments and constitutions are inevitably prey of the international Jewish conspiracy, then the October Manifesto was the prelude to the final success of this conspiracy. Alexander Dubrovin, a member of the Russian Assembly who was

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[33] Harcave, p. 190.

[34] Архиепископ Никон (Рождественский) (Archbishop Nikon (Rojdesvenskii), *Козни врагов наших сокруши… Дневники* (Thou shalt Crush the plans of our Enemies… Diary), (LitResm, 2017) p. 1242-1243.

[35] Cohn, pp. 73-74. Norman Cohn says that this happened because Sergey Nilus was "much in favour at the imperial court." It is more likely the bishop, whose later works show him to be a true believer in the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, wrote the sermon of his own accord.

[36] Harcave, pp. 192-195.

later to play a leading role in Russian right-wing politics, wrote that he was terrified when he heard about the October Manifesto:

> "On the morning of the 18th I did not have time to get out of bed again, as a newspaper was being printed with the word 'Constitution' in huge letters. I was stupefied. Russia is given over to enemies. Russia had perished. But how could this happen? Has the Tsar betrayed his people? No, it cannot be. The Russian Tsar will not yield a single inch, the Russian Tsar will never betray the Russian people."[37]

The initial reported reaction of the urban public in the Russian Empire was positive, even euphoric. A burst of pro-Manifesto, and sometimes anti-Tsar and even violent anti-Russian demonstrations in non-Russian parts of the European empire followed the publication of the October Manifesto on the 18th. There were also "patriotic" counter-demonstrations that occurred all over the Russian Empire following the announcement of the October Manifesto. When pro- and anti- Manifesto demonstrations met, there was often violence. There was also an enormous spate of pogroms. [38]

Rumors circulated in some regions of the Pale of Settlement that Jews had insulted the Tsar and were going to massacre all the Christians.[39] Sectarian tensions were exacerbated by a loss of confidence in the government's ability to keep order, and even the perception of minority rule. In Odesa, for example, a terrible pogrom was preceded by the local Prefect ordering all police and troops to quarters, and armed members of student militias and Jewish self-defense units maintained order on the streets instead. When a Russian patriotic demonstration on the 19th was fired on by revolutionaries the marchers began crying "Beat the kikes" and indulged in a three-day pogrom that killed at least 500 people, the worst in the city's history up till that point. Some reports say the Prefect of the city refused to put the soldiers and police back on duty.[40] Others say the soldiers joined in and led the mobs, and that some soldiers were killing Jews involved in the self-defense groups. A delegation of Jews is said to have approached the Prefect for protection and got the response "You wanted freedom. Well, there's your freedom."[41]

The Russian government and the Pogroms of 1905

The pogroms that followed the October Manifesto all across the Empire have often been blamed on the secret machinations of the Russian government, attempting to get revenge on the revolutionary movement by attacking the supposed base of the movement: the Jews. However, despite intense scholarly scrutiny, no smoking gun has ever been found in the Russian archives linking the Russian government to the pogroms of October 1905, or indeed any previous pogroms in the Russian Empire. In fact, the archives show that the central

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[37] А. И. Дубровин (A. I Dubrovin,) "Какъ начался Союзъ Русскаго Народа на Руси," *Поцчаевскія Извѣстія* (Pochaiv Izvestiya), No.22, Monday, 28 January, 1908, pp. 1-2.
[38] Lambroza, pp. 229-230. Also Healy, p. 19. Also Harcave, p. 202.
[39] Lambroza, 223.
[40] Harcave, pp. 202-204.
[41] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 244.

government was continually trying to restrain the pogroms.[42] The ultimate causes of these pre-1906 pogroms, or indeed any kind of mass sectarian violence, is a worthy subject for further research.

While it appears to be true that the Russian government did not instigate the pogroms of October 1905, the Russian government did itself no favors in creating this impression. There was an official attempt to blame the pogroms on the October 16th Moscow sermon that had mentioned the *Protocols*. The official newspaper of the central government published a rebuke from the Synod, that linked the sermon with the pogrom:

> "...the deplorable events that occurred among the population of Moscow after the reading on the 16th of October of the of the sermon printed and circulated by the Moscow church administration with the title: 'What shall we do in these troubled days.' ...seeing in some parts of this teaching a kind of call to the local population for self-defense in the field of political beliefs, which, if interpreted unilaterally, could be the cause of internecine strife among the population…"[43]

The clergy were admonished to "use all its pastoral impact on the elimination of civil strife among the population."[44] It is possible that embarrassed elements of the government were trying to blame the pogroms on this sermon.

The attitude of the government and the Tsar towards pogroms is perhaps typified by a statement by the father of Tsar Nicholas II, Alexander III. He hated the Jews deeply, but once remarked to the governor of Poland: "I am very glad when they beat up Jews, but nevertheless it can't be allowed."[45] The central government would have been against pogroms for reasons other than the international embarrassment and the destruction of property. In an autocratic government disorganized violence and civil strife are unpredictable and dangerous things, even if the mob does initially attack the "right" targets. This is especially true in areas which might not be loyal to the central government. Studies of the Russian Imperial government archives in Poland shows that the Russian government there consistently opposed pogroms,[46] but not because of any special love for the Jews.

Nevertheless, the impression that the Russian government instigated the pogroms of October 1905 persists. One should keep in mind that Russia was just emerging from autocracy, and the idea that major pro-government political events could happen without the government's blessing was still novel. The fact that the Russian state was in near collapse in October of 1905 and unable to successfully control the capital city or communicate with its officials across the empire (because of the telegraph and rail strike) did not make the idea of the super-powerful state disappear. One liberal Russian newspaper in October 1905 demonstrated this attitude by stating: "The very scope of the Russian-wide organization of the counter-demonstrations with all of their scandalous variations shows that this was the business of the authorities, who had the

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[42] John Klier, "Unravelling of the Conspiracy Theory: A New Look at the Pogroms," *East European Jewish Affairs,* Vol. 23, Issue 2, 1993, p. 86,.

[43] "Опредѣленіе свяѣйшаго синода" (Decision of the Holy Synod), Правительственный Вѣстникъ (Pravitelstvennii vestnik) No. 227, 23 October (5 November) 1905, p. 1, column 1.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Montefiore, p. 463.

[46] Klier, "Unravelling," p. 82, footnote 10.

means to arrange it; it was not done by feeble private organizations."[47] There is one single piece of documentary evidence that implicates the Russian government in the pogroms immediately following the October Manifesto. There is a February 1906 report given to the Russian Prime Minister stating that a secret printing press at Police headquarters at St. Petersburg had printed reams of anti-Jewish, anti-revolutionary propaganda pamphlets in October and November 1905.[48] According to this report, this had been ordered by Pyotr Rachkovsky, the vice-director of the department, and organized by the gendarme officer M. S. Komissarov.[49] Even if this report is accepted uncritically, pamphlets themselves could not create the sectarian hatred necessary for a pogrom overnight, nor could pamphlets printed in St. Petersburg have made it down to Odesa or Vilnius and been distributed within 48 hours, especially with a rail strike and telegraph strike underway. Nevertheless, the various pro-Tsarist "Black Hundreds" groups scattered throughout the Empire probably were involved in a predictable reaction to the major concessions in the October Manifesto, and contributed to the violence. They had already been participating in pogroms and printing anti-Jewish pro-Tsarist pamphlets.

Propaganda after the pogroms of October 1905

While the accusation that the Russian government created the pogroms of October 1905 is in great doubt, there is no doubt that the Russian government tolerated and then later funded the printing and distribution of large amounts of propaganda featuring anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Many examples have survived to this day, and anyone who wishes can go and see the newspapers and pamphlets that are available in archives and libraries. Later in this chapter two government-funded anti-Jewish publications will be studied as examples.

If the Russian government opposed pogroms in general (at least before 1905) how does one explain large amounts of anti-Jewish propaganda published before and especially after the October Manifesto? The change in the political structure of the Russian government announced in the October Manifesto changed the way pogroms would have been perceived by senior politicians. Rather than disorganized rabble threatening public order, or even Russian peasants getting "revenge" on their local *Kahal*-led oppressors, the pogroms after the October Manifesto could be seen as a patriotic response to Jewish troublemakers. This view was stated by the Tsar himself, the man who signed the October Manifesto, in a letter to his mother:

> "In the first days of the Manifesto the subversive elements raised their heads but a strong reaction set in quickly and a whole mass of loyal people suddenly made their power felt… the revolutionaries had angered people once more; and because nine-tenths of the troublemakers are Jews, the People's whole anger turned against them. That's how the pogroms happened. It is amazing how they took place simultaneously in the towns of Russia."[50]

There was an undeniable counter-revolutionary aspect to the pogroms following the October Manifesto. One report from a gendarme officer about a violent action that took place in Nizhyn, in present-day Ukraine, in late October 1905 described a violent pro-Tsarist event in

[47] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 238.
[48] Lambroza, p. 235.
[49] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 161.
[50] Lambroza, p. 234, note 114.

which Jews were not even peripherally involved: “The people roamed the streets looking for any Russian democrats, dragged them from their apartments, forced them to stand in front of portraits publicly, to swear oaths, to join processions, and to sing hymns. The people sobbed. The Jews were not present.”[51]

This grassroots pro-Tsarist sentiment was now a valuable political resource. The October Manifesto had called for elections and a Duma to pass laws. These elections were going to be incredibly consequential for the political future of Russia. The feelings among the populace that produced pogroms could be harnessed for political ends in the new more democratic age. This hatred of the October Manifesto could be especially useful to those interested in limiting the power of the new Duma (Russian Parliament.) Anti-Jewish conspiracy theories used in propaganda could be a means to not only fight revolutionaries by calling them secret usurpers, but could also be used to turn out voters for the conservative cause.

A surviving early example of this use of an anti-Jewish conspiracy theory in an attempt to inflame and harness anti-Jewish sentiments towards a political end is a pamphlet authorized by the censor on 19 February 1906 (March 4th in the modern calendar). It has been preserved because it was included as evidence in a 1907 book attempting to blame the Russian government for instigating the pogroms. The authors of the pamphlet seem to have been familiar with the *Protocols.* The pamphlet argued that there was a secret Jewish plot to take over Russia and oppress the people:

> “Do you know brethren, workmen and peasants, who is the chief author of all of our misfortunes? Do you know that the Jews of the whole world… have entered into an alliance and decided to completely ruin Russia… They would then, by means of lies and craft, take away the land from the Russian peasant, make him the slave of the Jew, do away with our priests, and convert the Orthodox churches and monasteries into Jewish stables and pig-styes. The first thing they did to ruin Russia was to incite the Japanese against us… now they have made up their minds to do away with the only defenders of the Russian people and of their faith - the Orthodox landed proprietors and the merchants and manufacturers… it is not only the Jews and other people of non-Russian origin who detest Russia, but also many Russians and dishonest Poles, who have lost their God and their honor… [they] pose as friends of the people, smuggle themselves into factories and villages,... deceive you by specious promises, and incite you to all sorts of strikes… as well as to pillage and burn the houses of the landed proprietors.... Learn, therefore, poor trustful people, that by obeying these cowardly agitators you will only dig for yourselves a pit… [the Jews] will make you work night and day, and pay you just enough to keep you from dying of hunger.... In the courts of law there will be only Jews and their mercenary Russian hangers-on whom they have bought… There will be no one to take your side, since your natural defenders, the Orthodox landowners, manufacturers, and merchants will have been ruined by yourselves… Do not believe the honeyed words and the promises of the Jews and of their mercenary tools… These mercenaries are helping the Jews to ruin Russia, helping them to buy this ruined country for a mere song, and to found in it a Jewish Kingdom.”[52]

After this extended harangue, similar to that the previously quoted Black Hundred pamphlet, this pamphlet turned to instructing the readers in politics. Notice how the pamphlet did not criticize democracy and elections, this would have been difficult after the Tsar himself had signed a manifesto calling for them. Instead, it mixed an exhortation to deadly violence against

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[51] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 238.

[52] Eugenia Semenoff, *The Russian Government And The Massacres: A Page Of The Russian Counter-Revolution (1907)*, Kessinger Publishing, 2009, pp. 99-102.

the Jews and their “helpers” with political advice. Sergei Witte, the politician hated by many right-wing Russian subjects (people like Butmi) for introducing the gold standard, negotiating peace with the Japanese, and getting the Tsar to sign the October Manifesto, had been appointed prime minister. Witte had also married a converted Jewish divorcee. His appointment, and his wife were directly referenced in this pamphlet, along with advice about how to vote in the coming election:[53]

> Whenever those betrayers of christ come near to you, tear them to pieces, kill them. At the present time all honest Russians, those who love Russia, are endeavouring to induce the Emperor to dismiss as soon as possible from his post as Prime Minister the principal enemy of the Russian people, the principal collaborator of the Jews, with his Jewish wife… At present the order is given to elect to the Duma representatives who will approach the Tsar in connection with your affairs.... Endeavour to elect peasants who are not drunkards, who believe firmly in God, and who are honest.”[54]

The *Protocols* was reprinted again during this time. In addition to the edition published by the Russian Assembly and also the version published by the press of the Red Cross near the Imperial Palace before the October Manifesto, two other editions of the *Protocols* were published in 1905: one in Moscow sometime after October and another as a pamphlet from a press at the headquarters of the military district of St. Petersburg.[55]

As for the report of a press churning out anti-Jewish pamphlets at the St. Petersburg police headquarters, no official was ever prosecuted for spreading slanders during this rash of pogroms. The Tsar intervened to make sure the man accused of running the press was not punished. Instead he was given 25,000 rubles.[56]

Institutionalizing paranoid hatred

Having looked at an early example of anti-Jewish right-wing but democratic (i.e. intended to energize voters) propaganda, this section will examine how this kind of propaganda became a normal part of the Russian political landscape after the revolution of 1905.

Right-wing, pro-Tsarist groups in the Russian Empire had a big ideological problem engaging in democratic politics, because a pillar of their political beliefs was that democracy itself was poison.[57] Supporters of the Tsar had to square their belief in autocracy and hatred of parliamentary government with the reality of the October Manifesto. The Tsar himself had declared that he wanted elements of a republic introduced into Russia! The path of resolving this contradiction was to deny that the October Manifesto had really instituted parliamentary government, and to insist that in no way did Russia have a constitution. Rather, the Tsar had merely invited his people to select representatives to gather and advise him on governing the

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[53] Sidney Harcave, *Count Sergei Witte and the Twilight of Imperial Russia: A Biography,* (Routledge, 2015), p. 46-47.

[54] Semenoff, pp. 102-103.

[55] De Michelis, p. 9-10.

[56] Lambroza, p. 237.

[57] Hans Rogger, *Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia*, (University of California Press, 1986), p. 190.

country. Remember, the *Protocols* had declared that one of the strategies of the Jews was to prevent kings from having contact with the people, which allows kings to be manipulated by corruptible bureaucrats and the people to be separately deceived by demagoguery: "We have made a gulf between the far-seeing Sovereign Power and the blind force of the people so that both have lost all meaning, for like the blind man and his stick, both are powerless apart."[58] What better way to smash this strategy than to institute a parliament-like body to advise the king? The important point to insist on was that there was no constitution. A constitution would mean the Tsar's powers could be hemmed in by law and by the votes of a corruptible parliament. Dubrovin, the right-wing activist who was quoted earlier in the chapter, stupefied by the newspaper reports about the introduction of a constitution, demonstrated this rationalization when he described his reaction to the first news of the Manifesto:

> "I began to reread the manifesto, to disassemble it from all sides and came to the conclusion that no constitutions were given and the way of publishing laws was simply changed: first there was one institution; The State Council, but now there will be two; The State Duma would be added. I was frightened, and I imagined that a constitution was introduced in Russia, only because I did not manage to wake up after a dream."[59]

This attitude was not entirely without grounding. The Tsar had signed the October Manifesto under duress. The country was imploding and, at the last moment the Tsar had tried to make his cousin a military dictator instead of signing the October Manifesto, but his cousin refused, drawn his revolver, and threatened to kill himself right there in front of the Tsar if he did not accept Witte's program.[60] Despite the newspapers shouting about a "constitution" the Tsar had deliberately avoided using the word in the October Manifesto and in public. He believed he could continue to have arbitrary power over the laws that the Duma enacted.[61]

Seen in this light, the celebration by the public and the press of the "constitution" after the October Manifesto could be viewed as another step in a long-term subversion. The revolutionaries had gotten their Duma and their civil rights, now they wanted to take Russia a step further and establish a constitution. Perhaps this step would be the first thing the Duma would do when it met. This anti-constitutional fear gave men who were resolutely pro-autocracy, like Butmi and Dubrovin, a reason to engage in mass politics in an attempt to dominate the parliament and forestall it voting for the next great calamity: a constitution.

Unlike the socialist and pro-constitution parties that had been organizing among the people for years, the supporters of the autocracy were inexperienced in democratic politics. They had no party organization to turn out votes for the upcoming elections. The Russian Assembly, previously an ostensibly cultural organization, now attempted to engage in mass politics and published its own election manifesto in late 1905. It insisted that the autocracy continued: "Tsarist autocracy was not abolished by the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, and continues to exist in Russia, and under a new form…" This program insisted that the new State Duma could not affect the fundamental laws of Russia or impact the prerogatives of the Tsar,

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[58] *Protocols*, p. 153.
[59] А. *И*. Дубровин (A. I Dubrovin,) "Какъ начался Союзъ Русскаго Народа на Руси" *Поцчаевскія Извѣстія* (Pochaiv Izvestiya), No.22, Monday, 28 January, 1908.
[60] Montefiore, p. 526.
[61] Pipes, location 1410.

and was merely a body for discussion and for conducting oversight of officials. Nevertheless, the Russian Assembly considered "it its duty to facilitate the selection for the State Duma of all who share this view and the following provisions."[62]

There followed a list of 12 statements, reiterating the necessity of the autocracy, the supremacy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian language, the importance of agriculture and self-sufficiency to the Russian economy, - statements similar to those which could have been made by almost any kind of European nationalist in the 19th century. However, point number 9 made the belief in a Jewish conspiracy a plank of their manifesto:

> "IX. The Jewish question should be resolved by laws and management measures, separate from other ethnic issues, because of the continued elemental hostility of Jewry to Christianity and non-Jewish nationalities and the desires of Jews to dominate the world."[63]

Although it issued this election manifesto, the Russian Assembly was still a noble-oriented club of high-caste Russians, hardly an ideal instrument for waging a democratic political campaign. Several members of the Russian Assembly formed a political party proposed to reach out beyond the elite circles and paradoxically, to engage in mass politics in favor of autocracy. This party was named the "Союз Русского Народа" - the Union of Russian People (hereafter just URP). It was a group designed to attract the kind of people who encouraged or took part in the pogroms following the October Manifesto - including the groups called the "Black Hundreds." The main founder and leader of the URP was Alexander Dubrovin, the physician and member of the Russian Assembly quoted earlier in this chapter.[64] He continually insisted that the URP was not a political party, but had "broader tasks, higher goals" like serving as the link between the Russian people and the Tsar, opposing the narrow interests of bureaucrats and parties.[65] Other people who got involved early in the URP were the two likely authors of the *Protocol*s: Butmi, who was part of the Council of the URP[66] and Pavel Krushevan, who reported that he attended the inaugural meeting and who soon became an active member.[67] The Russian Assembly did not disappear. It came to be considered the more respectable, if less popularly influential, branch of the Russian pro-Tsarist movement.[68] The URP grew rapidly and soon overshadowed the Russian Assembly.[69] The URP absorbed many of the smaller Russian pro-Tsarist groups and made appeals to all social classes. By 1907 the URP and other similar monarchist groups were estimated to have about 400,000 members. These other groups

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[62] ПРОГРАММА Русского собрания избирателям в Государственную думу (Program of the Russian Assembly for voters for the national Duma), 1905, E-resources, Pacific National University, Available at http://pnu.edu.ru/ru/faculties/full_time/uf/iogip/study/studentsbooks/hist-sources1/ioio79/. Accessed March 25, 2018.
[63] Ibid.
[64] А. Степанов (A Stepanov), "ДУБРОВИН Александр Иванович" (Dubrovin, Alexander Ivanovich), in *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia,* p. 178.
[65] Rawson, p. 59.
[66] А. Степанов (A Stepanov), "ДУБРОВИН Александр Иванович" (Dubrovin, Alexander Ivanovich), in *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia,* p. 178.
[67] А. Степанов (A Stepanov), "КРУШЕВАН Павел (Паволакий) Александрович," in *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia*, p. 267.
[68] Rogger, p. 193.
[69] Rogger, p. 207.

sometimes had a contentious relationship with the URP, but in the early period immediately during and after the Revolution of 1905 the URP was certainly the dominant group.[70]

The URP's political program predictably included demands to limit Jewish civil rights, insisting that there be a maximum of three Jewish deputies in the parliament. It also included demands that favored the interests of the peasantry and the rural masses. The party decried big businesses and anyone who might do business with foreign and Jewish capital.[71] One can even detect the influence of ideas like Butmi's in the URP's call for cheap credit and a Ruble not backed by gold.[72] To explain the difficult conditions for Russian workers during this period, the URP claimed that this was partly the result of Jewish ownership of many factories, and urged the creation of mutual aid unions for workers. Local URP branches worked on getting jobs for fired URP factory workers.[73] The legislative program of the URP even included a proposal to establish a Jewish state, (so as to have a place to expel the Jews to.)[74]

The URP appears to have originally been a private initiative of supporters of the Tsar,[75] but it quickly acquired a semi-official character. The Tsar received a delegation from the URP in December 1905.[76] The Tsar also made public statements of support for the URP, which the URP made use of in their propaganda.[77]

The URP split up after a few years, but did not entirely disappear until the end of Tsarism. Rampant corruption within the organization as well as the ambitions of various right-wing leaders contributed to its decline and fragmentation and the proliferation of various different pro-Tsarist groups.[78] At one point the Russian secret police reported the existence of at least 47 right-wing groups across Russia.[79]

Even with the constant division of these groups, the government continued to subsidize the main ones. The major activity of the URP and other "Black Hundred" monarchist groups and the reason they received most of their subsidies[80] was their publication of pro-Tsarist newspapers. An estimated 89 different monarchist periodicals existed in the Russian Empire at the beginning of 1906.[81] Nearly every "Black Hundred" newspaper received some government subsidies.[82] Starting from shortly after the first Duma election, the URP received subsidies of up to 100,000 rubles at a time directly from the treasurer of the central police department. The URP and other monarchist groups also received subsidies from the Russian government's Main Board for Press Affairs. The ultimate source of these monies was the secret personal fund of

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[70] Langer, p. 62-64.
[71] Rogger, p. 209.
[72] Rogger, p. 209.
[73] Langer, pp. 69-70.
[74] Rogger, p. 209.
[75] Rogger, p. 215.
[76] Rogger, p. 215.
[77] Langer, p. 78.
[78] This is the theme of Langer's PhD dissertation "Corruption and the Counterrevolution: The Rise and Fall of the Black Hundred."
[79] Rogger, p. 221.
[80] Langer, p. 93.
[81] Langer, p. 71.
[82] Langer, p. 25.

the Tsar. In 1909 the government was secretly giving out between 600,000 and 700,000 rubles to various "Black Hundreds" groups, and by 1916 this had grown to 1,400,000 rubles a year.[83]

Despite this secret state support for this propaganda, officials still fined these publications regularly [84] and they faced other retributions from the Tsarist government. As we shall see, the URP and other pro-Tsarist groups produced very inflammatory propaganda that would have increased social tensions, and they sometimes even directly attacked officials for being insufficiently dedicated to the eradication of the Jewish conspiracy.[85] This is a similar phenomenon to when the anti-French Revolution magazine *Eudämonia* denounced the censor of Vienna as being an Illuminati agent, which made it no friends (see the discussion on this in chapter 3).

Despite all this propaganda, in 1906 the initial results at the ballot box for the URP and other right-wing groups were disappointing.[86] It was said that the Tsar was shocked by such a poor showing.[87] Only six "Rightist" deputies were elected out of 448. URP members claimed the Jews had funded the parties opposing them, or that the government itself (that is, bureaucrats) had deliberately held the election at the worst possible time to benefit one party, the Constitutional Democratic party (known as the Kadets.)[88] This party became one of the main targets of the propaganda of the URP and other right-wing groups.[89] Not only was it the major party in the first Duma, but it also had the dreaded word "constitutional" in its name. This party will be discussed further in the section on the kinds of right-wing propaganda directed against them.

The First Duma collapsed in less than 100 days. The elections held for the Second Duma showed that the Russian right had some promise. It did slightly better at the national level in these elections and made significant gains in local elections.[90] The URP spent the period after the election trying to sabotage the Second Duma, maneuvering to keep things chaotic, even siding with the Left when it was necessary to maintain gridlock, and continually petitioning the Tsar to dissolve the Duma.[91] In the Third Duma in October 1907, after the Tsar changed the system of electing deputies to favor his supporters, right wing groups did much better, with the URP finishing with 32 deputies. Combined with allies from other similar groups, the extreme right constituted 51 deputies in the Third Duma,[92] a third of them members of the clergy.[93] This was the last Russian national election until 1912.

According to the analysis of the scholar Don Rawson, who wrote the definitive study of right-wing Russian groups and the duma elections after the Revolution of 1905, the rightists did particularly well in the central Russian provinces, where they emphasized law and order, and along the Western borderlands of the Empire, where they played on religious and national

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[83] Langer, pp. 91-92.
[84] Langer, p. 25.
[85] Langer, p. 89.
[86] Healy, p. 131.
[87] Healy, p. 173.
[88] Rawson, p. 168.
[89] Rogger, p. 220.
[90] Rawson, p. 172.
[91] Rogger, p. 222.
[92] Rogger, p. 223.
[93] Rogger, p. 219.

issues.[94] The province where rightists got the most political support was Volyn, which covered parts of what is today Western Ukraine. There they benefited from the network associated with the Pochaiv Monastery. This monastery located close to the border with Austria had long served as a bastion of pro-Russian sentiment in the region. The abbot of the monastery firmly believed that the pre-1905 order had to be defended and threw his monastery's resources into supporting the URP. He became the chairman of the local branch of the URP. The virulently anti-Jewish, anti-Polish, and anti-constitutional URP newspaper produced by this monastery, *Pochaiv Izvestiia*, will be discussed in the subsequent section as it contains many excellent examples of conspiracist propaganda from this period.[95]

Black Hundred Propaganda

This section will examine some major themes and targets of Russian right-wing propaganda from this period, 1905-1917. Unfortunately, much of the voluminous pro-Tsar, anti-Jewish, anti-constitution conspiratorial propaganda material produced in this period has been lost due to a neglect in preserving cheap pamphlets and newspapers, and perhaps a reluctance of Soviet archivists to preserve the propaganda of their former opponents. Fortunately, enough Black Hundred propaganda from this period has survived in the form of published books to get a sense of the major themes. In addition to drawing from books published by URP members in this period, this section has made use of available copies of two URP newspapers which are available at the Ukrainian National Library. The library holds many copies of one of the flagship newspapers connected to the URP: *Вѣче* "Veche*"* ranging from mid-March 1906 (immediately before the first Duma elections) to May 1907 and a more complete set of editions of *Pochaiv Izvestiia* ranging from February 1907 to April 1908.

Before embarking on a discussion of conspiracy theories in Black Hundred propaganda it should be pointed out that the propaganda was not exclusively conspiratorial, although one might get that impression from perusing a few pages of *Veche* or *Pochaiv Izvestiia.* This propaganda was useful to the Tsar and pro-autocracy officials who subsidized it because it advocated for autocracy and denigrated the idea of a constitution. These appeals could just take the form of a religious admonition for the divine right of the Tsar to rule, which would not have been significantly different from the propaganda of any Christian absolutist regime in the 15th-19th centuries. Take this example from a Pochaiv publication from December 1909 describing

[94] Rawson, p. 224.
[95] Rawson, pp. 92-95.

the proper political views of “a faithful *soyuznik*” [meaning a member of the URP, the word for union in Russian is “soyuz”]:

> A faithful *soyuznik* professes himself and teaches to his brother that the autocratic power of the King is sacred, for the Tsar is an envoy of God, elevated to the throne according to the special favor of God, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are abundantly shed upon Him. Who would go against the King - goes against God, who encroaches on the power of the Tsar, dares to resist the will of God. Without the Autocratic Tsar there is no indivisible Russia, there is no Father and Defender of the Russian people, there is no happiness and prosperity of the Motherland. The personal salvation of each Christian depends on how much he has worked to protect this second foundation.”[96]

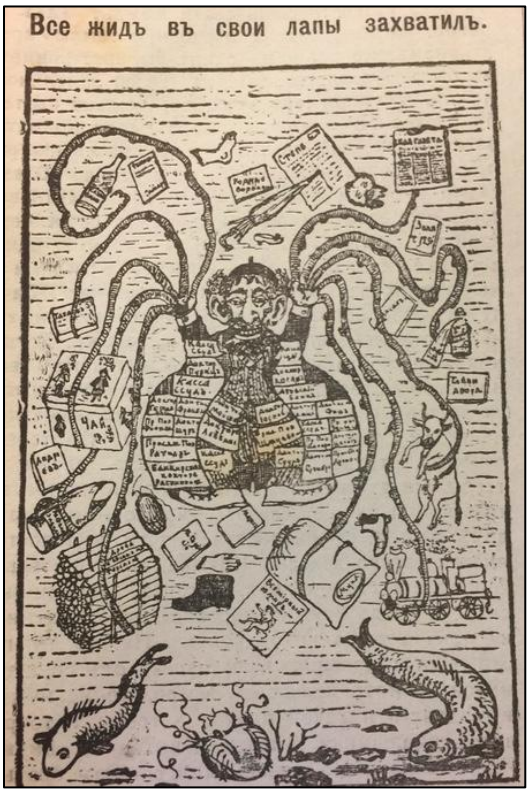

Figure 1

There was also an economic populism aspect of URP propaganda, one that upset many of the Tsar’s upper-crust supporters. One minister at the time later complained in his memoirs that the URP had adopted policies very close to the leftist revolutionaries: advocating the redistribution of private property and actions to save the poor from oppression (though this was the oppression of Jews and Jewish capitalists not capitalists in general.)[97] In a foreshadowing of the Communist state propaganda still a decade away, one article spotted in this sample of Black Hundred propaganda railed against “kulaks” - relatively wealthy peasants - who were called the brothers of the Jews.[98] There was a report that URP activists in the Western Russian empire had been implying that URP members would be first in line to receive land when the government seized and re-distributed the estates of the congenitally disloyal Polish gentry.[99]

While there was plenty of standard religious appeals and economic appeals, Black Hundred propaganda mainly dealt with the identification of enemies and their plots, and exhortations to loyal subjects to support the Tsar at the ballot box or even use violence against his enemies. The overriding enemy in Black Hundred propaganda were the Jews and their Masonic and constitutionalist servants. This fear of the Jews and Freemasons dovetailed with sectarian hatred of Jews and fears of supposedly anti-Christian Enlightenment doctrines. A pillar of this propaganda was a narrative that was essentially a copy of the Western European Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory that one can trace all the way back to the early 19th century, to ideas like those in the Simonini letter and the 1821 Portuguese Judeo-Masonic propaganda pamphlet. This Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was salted with concerns for the general welfare of the peasantry, soon to be crushed under Jewish domination, which was reminiscent and likely

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[96] “Свои и чужіе” (Yours and strangers), *Прибавленіе къ почаевскому листку* (Supplement to the Pochaiv Sheet), 11 December 1909, no 834, p. 22.
[97] Rogger, p. 217.
[98] *Поцчаевскія Извѣстія* (Pochaiv Izvestiya), 7 May 1907 , no 103, p. 1.
[99] Rogger, p. 218.

ultimately derived from Brafman's *Kniga Kagala*. A concise statement laying out the perceived ultimate enemies of Russia and the associated sectarian fears was given in the previously quoted testament of the URP's founder Dubrovin:

> "Our enemies are mainly foreign aliens and Jews, who have flooded all of Russia and are sucking our blood. They are united with our enemies, who live abroad, in a Jewish-Masonic union. Their main goal is to break the power of Russia, and for this they first need to shake and weaken what is strong - the ORTHODOX RELIGION… In all of Europe and even in all the world, the Masons are eager to destroy Christianity. In some countries, for example, France, the Churches have already been destroyed, instead of the Divine Liturgy, on the altars desecrated by Masonry there are already black masses held in honor of Satan. At the head of the government there stands Jews [zhidi] and their henchmen, and the common people groan under economic oppression, worse and more severe than serfdom."[100]

The familiar trappings of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, the story of an organization capable of recruiting well-meaning gentiles and Jews who don't know the whole plan, was useful in tarring anyone as an agent of the Elders of Zion in their campaign to destroy Russia and take over the world. The vast deceptive powers of the conspiracy could explain all contrary evidence and any grievances against the Tsarist government. The powers of this conspiracy also provided a way to explain that all the different groups that were against the Tsar were in fact secretly united, with the ultimate goal of seizing global power and oppressing the common people.

Themes from Brafman and the Rothschild conspiracy theory of a Jewish plot to seize all economic power are all over the pro-Tsarist propaganda from this period. The ideas of Brafman, that Jews in the Pale of Settlement had seized the economic commanding heights and were oppressing the people, were combined with the ideas of Butmi and other Russian anti-constitutional Jew-haters who believed in a conspiracy to bring all of Russia under the domination of the Jews. The Revolution of 1905 was portrayed as the event that kicked off the Jew's attempt to gain full equality, end the Pale of Settlement, and impose a constitution on Russia that would lead to their total domination. As one article from *Pochaiv Listok* (a sister publication of *Pochaiv Izvestiia*) put it: "There was once groaning in Ukraine from the yoke of the Jews, but now almost our whole fatherland is groaning, and this groan becomes more and more loud and more painful every day."[101] A cartoon from *Veche* from 23 Feb 1907 (no. 23) warned under a picture of a poor peasant being swindled by Jews: "Look, as it was in Malorossiya [Ukraine], so it will be in all of Russia, if the Jews get equal rights." See Figure 1 for an illustration from *Pochaiv Izvestiia,* (No. 74, April 1 1908) of a greedy Jewish octopus with tentacle fingers seizing railroads, newspapers, cattle, flour, tea, tobacco etc. The caption reads: "The Jew seizes everything with his paws." For a period in 1907 the banner at the top of each issue of *Pochaiv Izvestiia* had this slogan, just to the right of the symbol of the URP: "*Russian, and not Polish-Jewish-Armenian.* Particular attention is paid here to peasant needs and how to

[100] А. И. Дубровин (A. I Dubrovin,) "Какъ начался Союзъ Русскаго Народа на Руси," *Поцчаевскія Извѣстія* (Pochaiv Izvestiya), No.22, Monday, 28 January, 1908, pp. 1-2.
[101] А Полеяукъ (A Poleyayuk), "Жиды думать" (Zhid thought), *Прибавленіе къ почаевскому листку* (Supplement to the Pochaiv Listok), 11 December 1909, no 832.

facilitate peasant life."[102] This portrayed the rebellions in Poland and the Caucasus as part-in-parcel of a grand Jewish plot, and also linked the struggle against the Jews to the welfare of the peasantry.

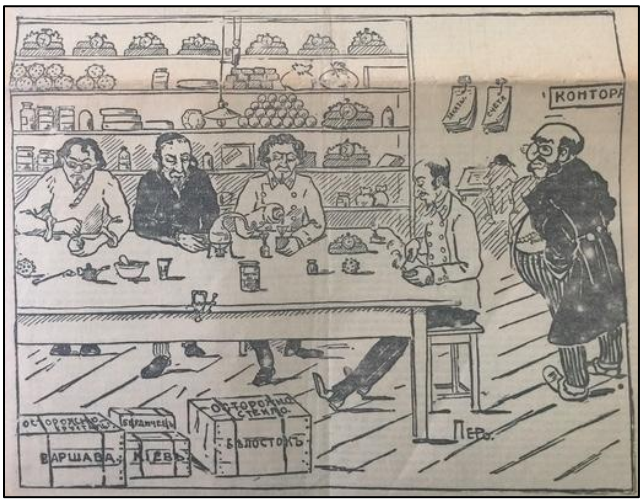

Figure 2

Revolutionary violence actually got worse after the October manifesto.[103] From October 1905 to October 1906 3,611 Russian officials were killed throughout the empire. By the end of 1907 at least 9,000 people had been killed in "terrorist" attacks, including civilians.[104] Between the October manifesto in 1905 and February 1908, 1,967 people were killed by Polish revolutionary terrorists, both civilians and civil servants.[105] It is true that the linkage of Jews to terrorist violence was facilitated by the relatively high number of Jews working at senior levels in some revolutionary terrorist organizations. (It should be reiterated that during much of this period the head of the SR [Socialist Revolutionary] Combat Organization, the most feared revolutionary terrorist group, was a Jew and also an informant for the Russian secret police.)[106] The idea of a Jewish source for terrorist violence and strikes (the other great disruptive force during this revolutionary period) was a standard part of the propaganda campaign. Figure 2 is an image from the 27 August 1906 edition of *Veche,* (No. 54) which shows a caricature of a Jewish businessman supervising other Jews who are making and stockpiling bombs. The crates on the ground are stamped with their destinations: Kiev, Warsaw and Białystok, suggesting a link between the rebellion in the Western Empire and a Jewish conspiracy.

This linkage of various struggles for independence or autonomy with revolutionary terrorism and the supposed Jewish conspiracy was combined with a call to violence against these rebels and their Judeo-Masonic masters, justifying the violence as self-defense. Here is a translation of a poem from the 21 April 1907 edition of *Pochaiv Izvestiia* (no. 92), slightly shortened:

The Freemasons have gone too far,
They begin to devour Russia,
All the foreigners
Sign up for this battle

[102] See many issues from 1907, but for a specific date see Pochaiv Izvestiya, no 169, August 1 1907, p. 1.
[103] Geifman, p 19-20.
[104] Geifman, p. 21.
[105] Geifman, pp. 23-28.
[106] 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.

They play at revolution
Ransacking the rebellious Rus
Bomb-making is taught
To unschooled children.

And the Jews they dance - they skip
Singing vile songs
They have fooled all the officials
They gave them gifts.

And the Georgians, and the Armenians
The Poles, and the Fins[107]
Are chattering about their rubbish
-That they need autonomy.

Do not threaten us, enemy children
With the fire of insurrection-
Our songs, our whips
Are worse than a sharp knife!

...The Cossacks will judge you
In your diabolical affairs,
You will get your autonomy
Hanging on the branches of an aspen.

Note in this poem the line: "They [the Jews] have fooled all the officials, They gave them gifts." This is an example of another pillar of this propaganda campaign: the idea that the bureaucracy of the Tsarist government, the king's ministers, had been corrupted by the Jewish conspiracy. The fact that the Tsar had already made serious compromises regarding religious toleration, civil rights for non-Russians, and of course, by issuing the October Manifesto was evidence that the Tsar was being manipulated or coerced behind the scenes, and that he needed to be publicly defended from his own government.[108] This theme was in some ways an echo of the old "the Tsar is good but the nobles are bad" idea that Russians used for centuries to explain problems within the Russian Empire without criticizing the Tsar - only in this iteration bureaucrats and ministers replaced the nobles as the supposed source of manipulation and evil. The kingpin of the evil men who were said to surround the Tsar was still the hated Sergei Witte, the first Prime Minister under the new republican, or quasi-republican, government.

An example of the use of this idea in propaganda is this short item from the *Pochaiv Izvestiia* from January 1908 "Who brings the Constitution to Russia"[109] about the constitutional revolution in Iran. The article took a report that the Russian ambassador agreed with the British ambassador in urging the Shah of Iran to accept a constitution as evidence that there the pro-constitutional conspiracy reached the highest levels of the Russian government:

> "...it is clear who wants to establish a constitution in Russia: Not the Tsar, but the government, high officials, ministers. They surrounded the Tsar, saying that the people wanted a constitution, and the

[107] Literally, the "Chukhna."
[108] Gilbert, p. 98. Also Langer, p. 89.
[109] "Кто заводитъ конституцію въ Россіи" (Who brings the Constitution to Russia), *Поцчаевскія Извѣстія* (Pochaiv Izvestiya), No. 18, 23 January 1908, p. 3.

people were being told that the Tsar wanted a constitution. But in reality neither Tsar nor the people want a constitution, only the ambitious or foreigners." [110]

One can see in this item the hatred of the very idea of a constitution, which some supporters of the Tsar believed would allow the Jewish conspiracy to manipulate and eventually destroy the Tsar. Black Hundred propaganda is peppered with references to the evils of constitutions and warnings that doom awaits the nations that adopt them. The main political enemy in this regard was the Constitutional Democratic party, the Kadets. They were the main political target of URP propaganda, and were so hated that during the first few Dumas the URP even sometimes threatened to ally with the socialists in the Duma just to beat the Kadets.[111] This party was founded during a 1905 Moscow conference between leftist *zemstvo* leaders and other liberals who wanted a constitutional monarchy, civil liberties, and a national assembly. The conference was still in session when a journalist brought them the text of the October Manifesto, and those gathered formed a party to contest the upcoming elections.[112] In the elections of 1906 the Kadets' platform promised an autonomous region for the Poles, the restoration of the constitution for the Grand Duchy of Finland (which had been suspended in 1903),[113] and the establishment of other autonomous regions later. With a platform like this, the Kadets did very well in the border regions of the Empire. They formed electoral blocks with pro-constitution groups from Ukraine and the Baltics. Jews in the western borderlands tended to support the Kadets, and the Kadets formed an important alliance with the "League for the Attainment of Full Rights for the Jewish People of Russia" which greatly helped the Kadets in wining urban elections.[114]

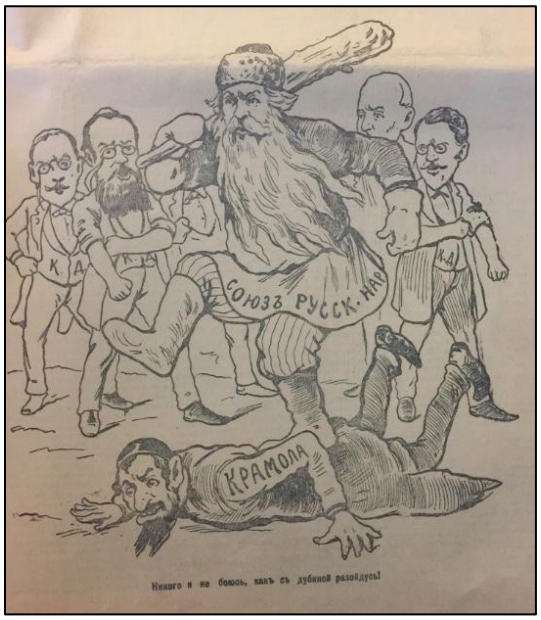

Figure 3

URP propaganda against the Kadets painted them as the cat's paw of the Jewish conspiracy against Russia. Figure 3, from the March 6 1907 edition of *Veche* (no. 26, p. 1) is a representative example of the way the Kadets were depicted: the URP, dressed in traditional Russian garb, is stomping on a Jew labeled "Rebellion." Behind him stand well-dressed men labeled "K.D" (Kadets) their expression aghast as they roll up their sleeves to intervene and help the Jewish "rebellion." The caption reads "I'm not afraid of anyone, I'll disperse them with a club!"

[110] Ibid.
[111] Rogger, p. 220.
[112] Healy, p. 17.
[113] Raymond Pearson, *The Longman Companion to European Nationalism 1789-1920*, (Routledge, 2014), p. 86.
[114] Healy, pp. 128-131.

The fact that the hated Kadets were even allowed to exist in Russia worried URP members and other Black Hundred activists. This tied back to the previously mentioned anti-government/bureaucracy aspect of their propaganda. If the bureaucracy and ministers who should be protecting Russia and the Tsar were allowing an obviously anti-Russian political party to exist and operate freely, it indicated that the bureaucracy was in on the conspiracy. This item from an August 1906 edition of *Veche* complained that the government allowed the Kadets to openly organize and spread their deceptive propaganda:

> "In recent days in Moscow there have been several meetings of the People's Freedom Party [another name for the Kadets] ...mainly about how and with what to intimidate the government so that it makes concessions, i.e. so that instead of a Tsar reigning in Russia there would be a president from among the Jews or from their henchmen…Local authorities do not interfere with these meetings, but demand only that they occur in the presence of police authorities, so as to prevent rebellious speech. But this does not achieve the goal at all, because rebels speak in a language that is not always able to be understood by ordinary people, and the police officers almost always have to present themselves as witless dolls. It would have been more expedient to completely stop these gatherings of rebels."[115]

The *Protocols* served as an important part of the ideological foundation to this propaganda, but its direct role in mass propaganda was limited. Only six printings of the *Protocols* were made in Russia before the 1917 Revolution.[116] This is unsurprising, as the *Protocols* is a literary document, written to be read by an educated elite - not for mass consumption. However, while there may not have been a campaign of publishing the *Protocols*, it was often referenced as the key piece of evidence supporting the idea that Russia was resisting a grand Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. Like the reference to the *Protocols* in the October 16 1905 Moscow sermon known as the "Pogrom Sermon of 16 October" - the *Protocols* did not have to be read and understood by the masses in order to have an effect as an ideological loadstone and as "proof" of the conspiracy that could be referenced in other works. Its reputation would have spread even among people who had not or could not read it.

Butmi himself published another edition of the *Protocols* in 1906, dedicated to the URP.[117] This edition makes an important change from previous editions: The earlier editions of the *Protocols* had a line where the narrator promises violence and terrorism in the future: "We will show one of them our strength by means of violence, that is, by terrorism." Butmi, publishing his edition after the violence of the Revolution of 1905 had died down, turned this statement into a retrospective, using the past tense: "We have shown one of these governments our powers by assassination, by terrorism."[118] During this time Butmi was also busy publishing a number of works along the same lines as the *Protocols*, with titles like: *Freemasonry and High Treason* and *Jews in Freemasonry and in the Revolution* (and it seems like he had an ongoing

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[115] "Московскіе гадюки (Кадеты) зашевелились" (The Moscow vipers [Kadets] stirred), *Вѣче (*Veche), no. 44, 3 August 1906, p. 4.
[116] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 203.
[117] Г. Бутми (G. Butmi), *Враги Рода Человѣческаго* (Enemies of the Human Race), (St. Petersburg: Printers of the School for the Deaf, 1906).
[118] Herman Berstein, *The History of a Lie*, (New York: J. S. Ogilvie Publishing Company, 1921), p. 83.

collaboration with the mysterious "N. L.")[119] The first publisher and likely other co-author of the *Protocols* Pavel Krushevan also continued his anti-Jewish conspiratorial writing and also for a time stayed involved with the URP. He was even elected as a representative to the second Russian Duma in 1907. He was disappointed with the Duma, which was in line with his obvious antipathy towards a national representative government made very clear in his previous work and with his publication of the *Protocols*.[120] [121]

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the key ideological element of the *Protocols* was its indirect assertion that gold standards, constitutions, freedom of the press, and other accoutrements of liberalism in that era were not merely bad ideas that the system of Tsarist absolutism was competing against, they were poison concocted by Jewish absolutists to usurp the rightful power of legitimate absolute rulers. This accusation allowed propagandists arguing against liberalism to proclaim that the Jews who created these ideas do not even believe them themselves. This would allow a propagandist to bypass much argument about good and bad ideas and go straight to a discussion about friends and enemies.

A prime example of this kind of argument, which includes a reference to the *Protocols*, is the 1910 pamphlet, *Simple Conversations with Simple People. Part two. Subject: Who needs the 'liberation movement'?* As the title suggests, the pamphlet is written in clear and easy-to-read Russian, intended for a wide audience. It was published by the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius monastery, located just outside of Moscow. The pamphlet places the question of support for Tsarist power in a sectarian light, and blames the Masons for spreading the false idea of liberalism. Notice here how it cites the *Protocols* as evidence of a Judeo-Masonic plot, but without quoting the complicated document at length:

> "Satan directs all his efforts to destroy this Tsarist power. If it is impossible to destroy it at once, at least first to limit, to undermine full confidence in it, to settle mutual distrust between the King and his subjects, and there he already managed to completely abolish-not only the Tsarist, but all Christian power, and his servants will completely take over the world. And he will then plant his faithful servant and elect the Antichrist over the whole world… Tricky, experienced in the affairs of all kinds of evil, Satan has already found his own servants for his destructive business. In Western countries… a society was formed, which set itself to fight against Christianity, to undermine the holy faith in Christ everywhere, to sow enmity and malice between Christians in order to subordinate them to their power... The members of this God-resisting society are called 'Masons', they are scattered all over the world and carefully conceal their membership in this criminal, satanic society. They publish godless writings, publish godless newspapers, everywhere start trouble by preaching socialism, anarchy… In alliance with them are the sworn enemies of Christianity - the Jews.... it's not easy to find out their secrets. Five or six years ago it was possible to get these protocols 'of the Elders of Zion' and - my Lord, what was written there!.. It was an entire, very clever and comprehensive plan for the conquest of the whole world, with the whole purpose of establishing one king over all the earth – an Israelite, but, according to Christianity - the Antichrist."[122]

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[119] Н. Л. (N. L.) and Г. Бутми (G. Butmi) , *Фран Масонство и Государственная Измена* (Freemasonry and State Treason), St. Petersburg 1905. Н. Л. (N. L.) and Г. Бутми (G. Butmi), *Иудеи в масонстве и в революции* (Jews in Freemasonry and the Revolution) (St. Petersburg: 1906).

[120] He had a falling out with the Right-wing faction in the Duma. He returned to Bessarabia, where he died in 1912. See *Black Hundreds, Historical Encyclopedia*, pp. 267-268.

[121] А. Степанов (A Stepanov), "КРУШЕВАН Павел (Паволакий) Александрович," in *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia*, pp. 267-268.

[122] *Простыя беседы,* pp. 7-9.

The pamphlet points out that although there were not obvious Jews or Masons everywhere in Russia, it makes the point that Russians can be unwittingly recruited into Jewish plots. It also hints at the possibility of hidden Jews. This network uses all kinds of tools, but especially "books and newspapers" The target the pamphlet chooses is the *Zemstvo* movement - those who believed in strong local self-government:

> "You will say: But where are these Jews? We can see, we know who seduces, embarrasses, teaches socialism, incites revolts: they are not Jews, they are Russians, they are teachers at *zemstvo* schools, *zemstvo* doctors, statisticians, midwives, nurses, different students, engineers ... Are these Jews?
>
> This is the great cunning of the Jews and their Masonic allies: they know how to use their books and newspapers with their nonsense to quash people who are not hard in the Christian faith, that these Russian people give themselves completely to the service of Jews and Masons, without knowing it."[123]

Towards the end the pamphlet turns to a direct attack on representative government and a constitution, as this form of government is least able to defend the nation against the massive Jewish conspiracy. (This theme is quite similar to with the attacks from Austrian propaganda against representative government after the French Revolution as unable to defend against the Illuminati, also discussed in chapter 3.) It directly attacks the Kadets, with another direct reference to the *Protocols*, and enlists the idea of a massive deception that had drawn the naive liberal Kadets into a Jewish plot to destroy Russia:

> " ...in elections, bribes, unrealizable promises, flattery and deception are often used: all means are good, if only to get a place in the "parliament", as these "representatives" called our State Duma. And it turns out that under a constitution, it's not the Tsar, God's Anointed One, [but] these "representatives", more simply, the more skillful people [who] begin to write laws,... there is a game of darkness between these parties: the Constitutional Democrats, or, as they were nicknamed for ridicule and brevity: 'Kadets,' are flirting with revolutionaries and socialists and those with them, and all of them, those and others, invisible to them, are led by the enemies: Masonry and Jewry... The Kadets serve not the fatherland, not the native people, but the Jews and Masons. And in vain our educated people want to assure themselves that they wish Russia well when they seek to limit Tsarist power: they only help the enemies of Russia, they only lead Russia to destruction. Whoever read the above-mentioned Protocols of the Elders of Zion knows that the Jews themselves consider autocracy the best form of state government; their future king of the world will be an autocrat; so they are trying all over the world to destroy the autocratic form of government, and if they cannot immediately arrange a republic somewhere, they try to get the constitution first. Read about this in their famous protocols: in there they simply laugh at the irrationality, the unreasonableness of Christians who, by their secret direction, set up constitutions. Are we Russians proceeding according to their instructions? The Jew wants us not to have the autocracy: so [shall we] listen to what he orders? He will then demand that we have a republic: so is it necessary to obey him in this too? But our Kadets, our supposed guardians of people's freedom, are leading to this! Of course, this is the case: although we must again make the reservation that most of them, these Kadets, work for the Jews unconsciously, imagining that they serve the people ..."[124]

Black Hundred propaganda and violence

As mentioned earlier, no link between the central Russian government and the pogroms of October 1905 or earlier pogroms has ever been established.[125] However, after the 1905 October Manifesto and the preparations for the elections of the First Duma, the Tsar began

[123] *Простыя беседы,* p. 13.
[124] *Простыя беседы,* p. 17-19.
[125] Klier, "Unravelling."

subsidizing publications that encouraged people to blame their troubles on the Jews, accused the Jews of carrying out a massive deceptive usurpation and called for violence. Even if no one in the central government ever gave an order to carry out a pogrom, the massive anti-Jewish propaganda campaign makes it impossible to completely absolve the Russian government of responsibility for subsequent pogroms. Even if the purpose of this propaganda was not to incite violence against the Jews, but rather to harness anti-Jewish sectarian feeling in the service of Tsarist political ends, - if one subsidies publications which repeatedly call for blood, one cannot be absolved when blood is shed. Additionally, Black Hundred groups were armed by the state. During the Revolution of 1905 the Black Hundred movement was also used by the state as a kind of auxiliary police force. In February 1906 the Russian Minister of Interior ordered that anyone who presented a certificate from the URP be automatically given a permit to carry weapons.[126] These same groups were calling for vigilante violence in their state-subsidized publications.

Despite the calls for violence and the obvious anti-Jewish incitement that is contained in this state-subsidized pro-Tsarist propaganda, the number of pogroms sharply declined before the anti-Jewish pro-Tsarist propaganda campaign could get any real traction, falling from a peak of 600 pogroms in November 1905 to less than 5 by February 1906. There were no reported pogroms from February to May 1906.[127] However, in June 1906 one of the most intense pogroms from the period killed between 83 and 200 Jews in Białystok. A report from the Duma said that local officials and soldiers working with Black Hundreds had orchestrated the pogrom, and there were multiple reports that soldiers in the area had directly participated in killing defenseless Jews and that the Governor had made threats to use soldiers against Jews.[128] [129] According to this Duma report, before the pogrom: "... the Organization of the so-called Genuine Russian Men was continually propagating the idea that Jews are the enemies of Tsardom, and that all the evils and the whole confusion in the country emanate from the Jews or from the Jewish agitation: that therefore the struggle with the Jews was a struggle with the conspiracy which was ruining the country, and that in conquering the Jews the conspiracy would be combated, and then there would be peace and quietness… Proclamations began to circulate among the soldiers stating that one must kill the conspirators, that the Imperial Duma was Jewish, that the revolutionaries were opposed to the Czar, and so on."[130] The response of the Imperial government to these reports of incitement by a Black Hundred organization and of participation of troops in the pogrom was to issue a statement giving thanks to the troops for their "splendid service, and their glorious, self-sacrificing, untiring, just and honest devotion to duty during the Białystok Pogrom." A police chief fingered as an organizer of the pogrom was promoted.[131]

After this apparent-but-short period of favorably towards sectarian violence, the Imperial government again changed its attitude towards the pogroms by late 1906. Any mass gathering

[126] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 104.
[127] Lambroza, p. 229.
[128] Lambroza, p. 237.
[129] Rawson, p. 138.
[130] "Report of the Duma Commission on the Bialystok Massacre," *American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 8 (1906-1907), pp. 70-71.
[131] Lambroza, p. 238.

or outbreak of violence was potentially destabilizing.[132] The last pogrom of the era took place in September 1906.[133] Also, the continued violence of the radical rightists embarrassed the more moderate rightists and harmed the reputation of the whole movement.[134] The right-wing hooliganism and pogroms began to get out of hand, particularly in the southwestern Russian Empire, and the government began to curb their activities. Foreign ambassadors were complaining of Black Hundred harassment of expatriates and stories of violence in Russia appeared in European newspapers.[135]

Some have argued that, as far as police action was concerned, based on documentary sources and the logic of containing unrest, the Tsarist government attempted to limit anti-Jewish violence after 1900, not promote it.[136] However, when one takes into account that after 1905 the Russian state was heavily subsidizing the publication of the most vile anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, including in publications that advocated "retaliatory" violence, a more complex picture emerges. This picture does not excuse the Tsarist government nor support the ideas of a central conspiracy of Tsarist officials to start pogroms. Rather, it seems that propagandists, funded by the government, were using these conspiracy theories to direct the sectarian hatred of Jews in specific directions favorable to the goals of Tsarist hardliners: propagandizing against a constitution, the Kadets, and any revolutionary organizations. Any related anti-Jewish violence would have been the cost of doing business.

Black Hundred violence went beyond mob violence and organizing pogroms. The URP began to imitate the violent tactics of far-leftist terrorists. According to an interview of the secretary of the URP council given during the investigation conducted by the 1917 Russian Provisional Government, the leadership of the URP formed a secret department within the organization to fight the revolution with deadly force - or as they would have seen it: a conspiracy against the conspiracy. This organization was led by the head of the URP Dubrovin himself and had a task to "fight the leftist parties with weapons, and naturally the extermination of prominent left-wing figures."[137]

According to the testimony of other former URP members the weapons for this operation were secured from Finland, and Dubrovin kept photographic plates of the intended targets. One witness said there were cells in other cities as well.[138] The existence of this organization became an open secret. They engaged in burglaries and extortion, which even included extorting money from Jews by threatening to incite pogroms.[139]

If one places oneself in the conspiratorial mindset of a URP member in this period, what were the logical conclusions do draw from URP propaganda? URP and other right-wing propaganda emphasized that the government had been infiltrated by the Jewish conspiracy. Sergei Witte, married to a Jew and a main advocate of constitutionalism, had even been the

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Rawson, p. 141.
[135] Ruud and Stepanov, pp. 108-110.
[136] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 213.
[137] *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), p. 33.
[138] Ibid., p. 41-42.
[139] Langer, p. 82.

Prime Minister for a time! He had retired by May 1906 but remained a member of the State Council. Some URP members would have viewed the success of the Kadets in elections as evidence that Jewish groups were taking over.[140] Scholars of the period have pointed out that the attitude of the groups on the Russian right towards the state was often ambivalent or even somewhat hostile.[141] Given these assumptions, stoked by state-subsidized propaganda, is it at all surprising that members of the URP would think that state action was insufficient, or even counterproductive, and start "freelancing" by building clandestine networks for political terror - though this terror was in support of Tsarist autocracy, not against it?

In July 1906 a URP death squad traveled to the Finnish city of Terijoki and assassinated Mikhail Gertsenshtein, a Jew and member of the Duma from the Kadet party. Two of the assassins were arrested and tried for murder in a Finnish court, but were then pardoned by the Tsar. When the court tried to also charge Dubrovin as the instigator of the murder, the Russian government declared that he was outside the jurisdiction of any Finnish court.[142]

In early 1907 two bombs that had failed to go off were discovered in the home of former prime minister Witte. The well-known hatred of the URP towards Witte and the fact that the bombs were built differently than the ones commonly made by left-wing revolutionaries caused blame to fall on the URP, which denied involvement. Not long afterward a former liberal Duma deputy and newspaper editor was murdered, and further suspicion fell on the URP. The suspicion was compounded by the fact that the murder happened not far from the place where the flagship Black Hundred newspaper *Veche* was published. This paper had earlier made several death threats against the victim. In March 1907 a URP operative in Moscow fooled two would-be left-wing revolutionaries into murdering G. B. Illos, the editor of the newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti* and former Kadet member of the Duma. The URP member had told the assassins that Illos was a Black Hundred member who had been marked for death by revolutionaries.[143] In April 1907 Russian Prime Minister Stolypin ordered all Black Hundred fighting groups to disband and ordered the police to make sure officials complied with the ban.[144]

The suspicion that the Tsar secretly supported these URP death squads and pogrom instigations while he was claiming to be pushing for reform and striving for reconciliation was highly embarrassing to the Imperial government. After the Tsar dissolved the second Duma in June 1907 the socialists began a public campaign against the URP and its attempts at terrorism.[145] After the murderer of the deputy Gertsenshtein in Finland and the pardon of the murderers, the Kadet party started its own investigation. They identified two former members of a URP "fighting squad" who were still in prison in Finland.[146] They collected derogatory information about two URP death-squad leaders from the prisoners, and in late 1907 the Kadets had gathered enough evidence to have the Russian interior ministry arrest them. They had been

[140] Rogger, p. 213.
[141] Rogger, p. 212.
[142] Langer, p. 82-83, citing from *Союз русского народа* (investigation), pp. 42, 65, 87, 48-49, 54-55, 428
[143] Langer, p. 84 citing from *Союз русского народа* (investigation), pp. 53-62
[144] Ruud and Stepanov, pp. 108-110.
[145] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 111.
[146] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 115.

hiding out in the Pochaiv monastery, in the heartland of the URP. After they were arrested, accusations surfaced that the assistant chief of the *Okhrana* had sent them there.[147]

While these terrorist actions were few in number when compared to the wave of revolutionary terrorism that Russia had just passed through, they caused a sensation. The URP was credited with terrorist capabilities far beyond its actual capacity, and was still credited with this capacity long after the state had ordered and enforced the disbandment of its fighting groups. The URP may have tried to make use of this reputation by intimidating politicians with threats of violence.[148]

It should be noted that the URP terrorist organization did not "strike back" at left-wing terrorist or terrorist-supporting groups, but instead targeted the Kadets and Witte. This might be chalked up to capabilities - the URP would have lacked the intelligence network to go after secret terrorist organizations like the SR Combat organization, but the political "mother" of the SR Combat organization, the Socialist Revolutionary Party, participated openly in the second parliamentary election of February 1907 in order to "utilize the State Duma for organizing and revolutionizing the masses."[149] The party had a delegation of 34 deputies in the second Duma. One of their delegates even openly defended the use of terrorism against "carriers of arbitrary rule and violence."[150] One might suspect that these delegates would be prime targets for URP violence. Instead the target selection of the short-lived URP terror campaign was in line with the main political enemies identified in their propaganda campaign: Witte and the Kadets. The Socialist Revolutionaries, the Social Democrats, and other socialists in the second Duma had entered the parliament in order to sabotage it and spread propaganda while enjoying parliamentary immunity. They did not want bourgeois parliamentary democracy, they wanted revolution.[151] In this way the revolutionaries were indirect allies with the URP and other anti-constitutional right-wingers. If the terrorist organization of the URP had lasted, this quasi-revolutionary anti-revolutionary organization, it may have eventually gotten around to assassinating socialist politicians, but in the second Duma the URP in fact sometimes allied with leftists to ensure gridlock.[152] The target selection of the URP death squads seems to show an attempt to intimidate the politicians pushing for a constitution, as the URP believed that the introduction of a constitution in Russia was the next big political project of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy.

The terror campaign of the URP was not only cut short by a government crackdown on their fighting groups. By mid-1907 the "necessity" of attacking leftist Duma members had dissolved along with the Tsar's dissolution of the Second Duma. The new election law, which violated the fundamental laws made after the October Manifesto, unilaterally changed the qualifications and process for getting elected to the Duma to favor landowners, higher-class individuals, i.e. people more likely to support the Tsar. The representation of the Kadets in the parliament was brought down to just 54 seats and the faction of right-wing representatives grew

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[147] Ruud and Stepanov, p. 117.
[148] Langer, pp. 85-86.
[149] Pipes, locations 4734-4735.
[150] Manfred Hildermeier, *The Russian Socialist Revolutionary Party Before the First World War,* (Lit Verlag, 2000), p. 166.
[151] Pipes,location 4736.
[152] Rogger, p. 222.

to 147 of whom 51 were from the extreme right (out of 422 total seats.)[153] The Tsar was now much more secure in his power, and the URP became less potentially useful as an violent counter-revolutionary force, and more of just what those who subsidized their newspapers intended: a state-subsidized propaganda organ supporting the Tsar.

The ideology of the URP - radical anti-liberalism

The URP and other Black Hundred groups were something new in Russian history, and perhaps in the history of the world. The URP has been called a forerunner of fascism.[154] Even if calling it a forerunner of fascism is a bit of an anachronism, coming as it did before WWI, the "conservative" URP certainly contained elements alien to the old style of Russian conservatism. There was a huge difference between Black Hundred groups and even the most hardline "conservative" pro-Tsar pro-autocracy organizations of the old model, which eschewed popular opinion and placed the emphasis on stability and obedience. Rather than emphasizing obedience to the king and his government, deference to authority, and prudence, the URP sought to increase and harness the angry mobs of looters, sectarian murderers, and rapists and turn them into "useful" elements of a movement to protect autocracy. Black Hundred propaganda eschewed prudence and instead emphasized that radical action was necessary to stave off the victory of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. The hour was late, they claimed. The conspiracy had already infiltrated the bureaucracy and turned Russia over to the power of Jewish international capital by adopting the gold standard. They maintained that the Jews were sponsoring terrorism and rebellion all over the Empire - and if they managed to secure a constitution then their triumph would be almost irreversible.

An obsession with the supposed powers of deception of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy is the foundation for the extremism-baiting rhetoric of Black Hundred propaganda. An organization capable of twisting the policies of the Tsar, of deceptively maneuvering the mighty Russian Empire to the point of near defeat, of destroying Christianity and sovereign governments in Western Europe - in the "constitutional" countries - is capable of accomplishing almost anything through such trickery. This kind rhetoric encourages people not to stem the tide or just to roll it back a bit, but to violently overthrow the system that had brought the world to this state - including elements of staid and respectable institutions that had perhaps been "infiltrated" by Jewish agents. This rhetoric could, as the Russian government once said about the October 16 1905 sermon in Moscow that mentioned the *Protocols*, serve as a "kind of call to the local population for self-defense in the field of political beliefs, which, if interpreted unilaterally, could be the cause of internecine strife among the population…"[155] URP propaganda suggests they believed what was needed was not just political self-defense, but a total overthrow of the old ways of governing and even some radical changes of existing social structures in order to purge out the Judeo-Masonic disease: like expropriations of land in the West, and the exclusion of Jews from public life, or even their expulsion. In the words of one Black Hundred publicist, "We

[153] Pipes, Locations 4774-4790. Also Rogger, p. 223.
[154] Rogger, p. 213-214.
[155] "Опредѣленіе свящѣйшаго синода" (Decision of the Holy Synod), Правительственный Вѣстникъ (Pravitelstvennii vestnik) No. 227, 23 October (5 November) 1905, p. 1, column 1.

are revolutionaries of the right."[156] The contrast between the old conservatism and this attitude was recognized by one contemporary liberal writer:

> "But can this spiteful desire to overthrow all sorts of beneficial public undertakings have something in common with conservatism, that is, with the desire to protect and strengthen the foundations of communal life? Was Attila, who boasted that the grass ceased growing where his horses' hooves had trod, a conservative?... Conservatism presupposes a feeling of respect for a certain kind of cultural success achieved by society, and a desire to protect these from premature and risky upheavals. Conservatism presupposes some moral capital previously acquired by society, along with the ability and dignity to assess its significance… these large and small Attilas, ...breathing with malice against all the achievements of culture, can equally have nothing in common with progress or with conservatism. They are just born *oprichniki* [thugs],[157] whose minions' deeds do not spare either the beneficial shoots of novelty nor the venerable monuments of antiquity."[158]

The main thing keeping the lid on the radicalism of the URP and other conspiracy-theorist monarchist groups was their proclaimed slavish devotion to Tsar Nicholas II, who they considered God's representative on Earth. While on the surface a belief in the divine right of kings and the belief in a nearly all-powerful satanic conspiracy are perfect complements to each other, there is a misalignment between these two ideas, based in the nature of monarchy and the belief in a super-conspiracy. As illustrated in chapter 2, there were ways that a conspiracy could usurp power even within a strict monarchy. What if the king himself had been so manipulated that he has effectively lost power? What if the king is unwilling to face the fact of the existence of this super-powerful international conspiracy. Even if the URP could have remained steadfastly loyal to Nicholas II, what would have happened when there was a succession or another crisis, if the dynasty had collapsed and been replaced by another? Remember, this had all happened before during the Time of Troubles (1598-1613) and many Russians would have pointed to the hand of the Jesuits behind that catastrophe. Had the Tsarist regime not collapsed in 1917, eventually there may have been a "Salais-Sogio effect" - conspiracy theory inspired right-wing activists turning not just against the bureaucracy but against the empire itself. Actually there was some talk among URP activists about the need for a coup against the government to restore the pure autocracy in Russia.[159]

Beyond a few assassinations and perhaps instigating a few pogroms the political effects of the URP, the Russian Assembly, and similar groups was mostly limited in the time immediately following the Revolution of 1905. Their biggest effect was probably in popularizing the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, making sure the *Protocols* did not just remain as an obscure piece of propaganda published in an obscure right-wing newspaper. The size and

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[156] Gilbert, p. 99.

[157] The word *oprichniki* refers to the organization used by Ivan the Terrible to enforce his reign of terror over part of Russia in the late 16th century. They arbitrarily tortured and murdered the perceived enemies of the Tsar. One of their most heinous acts was the sack of Novgorod at the orders of the Tsar. Novgorod is one of the oldest and most storied Russian cities, one of the cradles of Russian civilization. It never recovered from its sacking by the oprichniki. See chapter 13 of *Reign of Terror: Ivan IV* by Ruslan G. Skrynnikov, Brill (Leiden), Eurasian Studies Library, Volume: 6, 2015.

[158] А. Кизеветтер (A. Kizevetter), "Консерватизм и наши „правыя" партіи" (Conservatism and our "right" parties), *Свобода И Культура* (Freedom and Culture), No. 1, 1 April 1906, p. 3.

[159] Rogger, p. 223-224.

duration of this conspiracy theory propaganda push ensured that these ideas survived long after the government which sponsored them was long gone. In comparison, think of the effect of the first generation of grand conspiracy theorists after the French Revolution: Hoffman's newspaper the *Wiener Zeitschrift*, sponsored by the Austrian Emperor and spreading anti-French Revolution propaganda making liberal use of the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory lasted less than 2 years (1792-1793.) The following propaganda journal that took up this theme, *Eudämonia*, only lasted about 4 years (1794-1798). These newspapers had limited circulation, but still managed to set up a solid foundation of conspiracy-theory narratives and "evidence" that subsequent writers like Barruel and Hoffman were able to make use of. The anti-revolutionary, anti-liberal conspiracy theory propagandizing in the Russian empire lasted nine years, with dozens of newspapers, and many books and pamphlets. This large and varied effort ensured that the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy dedicated to spreading representative government, destroying Christianity, and taking over the world was eventually spread all over Europe after the Russian revolution.

Coda: anti-Jewish conspiracy theories after the revolutions of 1905 and 1917

After the Third Duma election and the apparent success of the counter-revolution, the URP declined in prominence along with other far-right groups, which continued to splinter into various different factions and engage in infighting and corruption. The subsidies did not cease however, and the URP continued to exist right up till WWI.[160]

During WWI, the URP did not discard the imaginary Judeo-Masonic enemy, and portrayed the war as another attempt to extract concessions from the Tsar. This example of a piece of URP propaganda from WWI shows their continuing obsession with fighting Jews, constitutionalists, and parliamentarians. Notice how it praises the autocratic German form of government even though Russia was at war with Germany:

> "Taking advantage of the temporary and transitory difficulties in supplying our gallant army with shells and weapons, the internal enemies of our homeland: constitutionalists, parliamentarians, revolutionaries, and especially Germans and Jews, try to deceive the Russian people in every way… the Jews want to reduce the rights of the autocrat of all Russia...they demand from the tsar appointing ministers from their midst, ministers responsible to the political parties that have clashed, and not to the tsar, ministers appointed by foreigners and Jews, and not by the anointed sovereign, the emperor… The Masonic Jews are silent that in England and in the defeated Belgium the ministers are responsible to the parliament, they keep silent that the ministers of the republic, all socialists and democrats, did not interfere with the defeats of France, that riots, abuses and embezzlements in the supply of arms to the French army were found constantly and remain unpunished.
>
> The Masonic Jews are maliciously silent and that in Germany, which is still the strongest of the powers, the ministry is responsible to the Kaiser and is not responsible to the German parliament…"[161]

[160] The slow death and increasing irrelevance of the URP and other rightist groups after 1905-1908 is a major theme of Dr. Langer's PhD dissertation cited often in this chapter. See also *Союз русского народа* (investigation) for information on subsidies paid to Black Hundred newspapers on the eve of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

[161] *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), p. 99.

The idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy came back with a vengeance in White propaganda after the collapse of the Russian Empire during WWI. A Provisional Government, a republic, was briefly established before the October 1917 coup by the Communists that deposed it. Those who believed the message of the *Protocols* saw the Jewish plan behind this rapid evolution from autocracy to republic to a communist despotism (with a Jew, Lev Davidovich Bronstein aka Leon Trotsky close to the top of the Bolshevik hierarchy.) Among the former supporters of the autocracy who saw the machinations of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was the former Tsar himself. In an entry from his diary written while under arrest in March 1918, a year after he was deposed and several months since the Communist coup, the Tsar wrote about the *Protocols* as an explanation for Russia's troubles: "...I began to read aloud the book by Nilus about the anti-Christ, with a supplementary 'report' on the Jews and Masons. It was very contemporary reading."[162]

It should be noted that while it was true that Trotsky and many other prominent Bolshevik Communists were Jews, Jews were much more numerous in the Menshevik faction than the victorious Bolshevik faction of the Communists.[163] Be that as it may, the Russian Civil War saw unprecedentedly severe pogroms that were exceeded only by the Holocaust during WWII.[164] Communist troops were also responsible for anti-Jewish violence during this period. Jews could be viewed as anti-socialist capitalist oppressors.[165] However, the undeniable preponderance of violence against Jews as Jews during this period was inflicted by anti-Communist troops, many of whom adopted the points of URP and other pro-Autocracy propaganda as their ideology.

After the Ukrainian nationalists lost Kyiv in January 1919 a spate of pogroms broke out in the area they still controlled. The worst one was in February 1919 where 2000 Jews were murdered after an attempted Communist uprising in Khmelnytskyi, in present day Ukraine.[166] It is probably not coincidental that this violence took place in the territory that was once the heartland of the URP, where its anti-Jewish propaganda had penetrated most deeply and achieved its greatest electoral success. The Tsar was no more (he had been murdered in July 1918) but the idea of a Jewish conspiracy lived on, and elements of pro-Russian propaganda were easily appropriated by others, in this case anti-Russian nationalists, demonstrating again the utility of conspiracy theories for all kinds of ideologies. Even though the Ukrainian nationalists government made moves to emancipate the Jews and their leader denounced the pogroms, the killings continued, and the leadership did little to actually halt them.[167]

Another force fighting the Communists during this time, the White Russian "Volunteer Army" also extensively used anti-Jewish propaganda, and after they suffered decisive defeats in late 1919 they engaged in their own spate of pogroms. Many Jews had been supporters of the Volunteer Army before this point and were bitterly disappointed. Indeed, White violence was

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[162] Kent de Price, "Diary of Nicholas II, 1917-1918, an annotated translation" (PhD Diss., University of Montana, 1966), entry for March 27/April 9 Tuesday 1918, p. 195. In translation Nilus is rendered "nilusa."
[163] Cohn, p. 133.
[164] Peter Kernez, "Pogroms and White ideology in the Russian Civil War," in *Pogroms, Anti-Jewish violence in Modern Russian history*, John D. Klier and Shlomo Lambroza eds., (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 293.
[165] Kernez, p. 294.
[166] Kernez, p. 295.
[167] Kernez, p. 296.

probably a major factor in increasing Jewish support for Communism among Ukrainian Jews. Estimates of the total number of Jews killed during this period range from tens of thousands to 200,000.[168] A scholar who has examined the surviving archives of the Volunteer Army states that their leaders were "obsessed with antisemitism. Secret reports, obviously not meant as propaganda, make it clear that this antisemitism, full of paranoid delusions, bordered on the pathological."[169]

In Siberia, where there were fewer Jews to feel the brunt of pro-Tsarist-conspiracist "retribution", the *Protocols* still appeared to play some sort of role in anti-Communist propaganda. A few new editions of the *Protocols* were published in Vladivostok and Khabarovsk in the Russian Far East.[170]

The *Protocols* even spread to other continents during this period. An edition was published by White Russian refugees in Japan. According to one report by the leader of the World Zionist organization, the first time he saw part of the *Protocols* was when he was shown an abridged edition acquired by British officers who had accompanied some White units, presumably with the Volunteer Army. This edition was reportedly given to every White officer and N.C.O., propaganda for the troops.[171]

In the subsequent chapter we will examine how these ideas, summoned and spread to support the Russian autocracy, were spread all through the world, and specifically in Germany by refugees from the Russian empire and their propaganda. These ideas bore fruit when planted in other climates and encouraged a strain of "revolutionary reaction" in Central Europe and later in the Middle East.

[168] Kernez, p. 297-302.
[169] Kernez, p. 304.
[170] Cohn, p. 130.
[171] Cohn, p. 130.

Chapter 9: The Grand Conspiracy Theory and the birth of Nazi ideology

"As the root of all evil in contemporary European life, the National Socialists regard [it to be] the so-called democratic or parliamentary constitution, which has seized power everywhere. The nature of the objections to parliamentarism is well known to anyone who has only a little insight into the political events of the post-war period. Parliamentarism, … emerged as the sole victor of the World War... International Jewry, which has an unlimited power over it, still keeps it; but this can not last for long, as experience in the other countries proves, in which the fascists seized power and retained the parliaments as historical relics of dubious interest."[1] - Anonymous Russian, 1923

"The Russian people are also awakening. And also there are awakening Italians, awakening Englishmen, awakening Spaniards and - thanks to God - finally awakening Germans… these awakening Russians will settle accounts with their international government, just as the awakening Germans will do, or- in a few years' time there will be no Russians and no Germans, no national peoples at all, but under the scepter of The International a mixture of the races… Völkish Germany is prepared to take up this struggle in faith in the German people, to whom a new prophet has arisen in Adolf Hitler, who has understood [how] to rouse the German soul and free it from the shackles of Marxist thought…"[2] - Ludwig Maximilian Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, 1923

This chapter will argue that the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory imported from the collapsed Russian Empire greatly influenced Hitler and became a cornerstone of Nazi ideology.

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[1] Metlow "Parlamentarische und nationalsozialistische Verfassung" (Parliamentary and National Socialist constituion), Said to be a translation of an article in "Ruskaia Tribuna," *Aufbau-Korrespondenz über Ostfragen und ihre Bedeutung für Deutschland* (hereafter just *Aufbau-Korrespondenz),* Munich, 9 November 1923, Year 3, no. 45, p. 2.

[2] Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, "Der Bolschewisierung Deutschlands" (The Bolshevization of Germany), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* 21 September 1923, Year 3, no. 38, p. 3.

Focusing on the lead-up to the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, it will present Hitler and his acolytes as revolutionaries, but revolutionaries against what they believed was a long-term conspiracy slowly bringing the whole world under its control. They wished to destroy both "poles" of Western Civilization in the 1920s - both Communism and capitalism, as they saw them both as tools of a Jewish conspiracy. This was in line with the anti-Jewish conspiracy theory used in Tsarist propaganda after the Revolution of 1905 and its "classic" encapsulation in the *Protocols* that identified both capitalism and socialism as just two tools in a grand Jewish plot. The importance of this specific variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Nazi ideology is perhaps the most direct and dramatic example of a conspiracy theory spread by propaganda "escaping" its original context, finding a new audience, and causing havoc in a totally different context. This transmission was facilitated by refugees from the Russian empire who imported conspiracy theory narratives to post-WWI Germany and helped adapt them to this new German context, along with nationalist and racist Germans who were themselves searching for an explanation for the recent German defeat.

This chapter will not deal in detail with the larger questions about why so many Germans supported the Nazis and their participation in the Holocaust, though the scale of the atrocities and their resonance with turn-of-the-century Russian propaganda requires some comment. This chapter will not dwell on Nazi racialism, but does not wish to minimize the impact of Western European racialist ideas on Nazi ideology at the expense of emphasizing the influence of the Russian-origin Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory. This chapter will show how Hitler and his mentors wedded the Russian-origin conspiracy theory with racialist ideas, specifically with German *Völkisch* ideas. This fusion was facilitated by an abandonment of the aspects of the turn-of-the-century vintage Russian Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory that were anachronistic by the early 20s in Germany. A later section in this chapter will describe how early Nazis could abandon the *Protocols,* not really believing that it was authentic, but still embrace the idea of a massive Jewish conspiracy very like the one described in the *Protocols*. This chapter will also include a discussion of Hanna Arendt's erroneous ideas about the relationship between conspiracy theory and the Nazis: that they chose anti-Jewish agitation as propaganda to justify their march to power, rather than being actual believers in an anti-Jewish conspiracy theory.

Russian anti-Jewish ideas come to Germany

In chapter 7 we discussed the anti-Semitic movement in Europe in the 1880s. However, by the first decade of the 20th century this kind of antisemitic agitation had died down in Germany, though it never disappeared. German anti-Semitism became less a movement to rouse the rabble and turn out voters and more of a set of "scientific" ideas involving the anthropological analysis of racial types and cultural differences.[3]

By 1919 the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory had been circulating in Europe for almost a century, and the earlier "pure" Masonic conspiracy theory for even longer, predating the anti-Semitic movement. European readers could have come across the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in any number of sources, including the ones described in chapters 6 and 7. After the

[3] George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, (Howard Fertig Pub, 1999), pp 134-135.

defeat of the Central Powers in November 1918, some Germans turned to versions of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory to explain their loss. One book published in Munich in early 1919 rehashed some old tropes of heavy Jewish involvement in Freemasonry, then explained that Freemasons had assisted the Allied victory because their aims were the same:

> "The war aims of the Entente [the Western Allies] are strikingly in line with Masonic aspirations and ultimate goals. Protection for small nations, liberation of peoples from 'despotism', the elimination of Prussian imperialism, the struggle for justice and civilization, the fight against barbarism, the establishment of a League of Nations (World Republic!) were already slogans of the world Freemasonry for decades..."[4]

There was also accompanying talk that "Jewish finance" was fighting Germany. Even before the German defeat, in January 1918 a right-wing German magazine declared that a meeting of Jewish bankers in 1913 in Paris had engineered the War in order to weaken Germany and prepare it for revolution.[5] In August 1919 Prince Otto zu Salm-Horstmar gave a speech before the Prussian Diet that declared that a Jewish conspiracy working through the freemasons had weakened Germany by spreading the democratic philosophy.[6]

These ideas may have come from "indigenous" sources in Western and Central Europe, like the writing of Drumont for example. On the other hand it is likely that the propaganda campaign of the URP and other Black Hundred groups after the Revolution of 1905 had some effects outside Russia's borders. One suspects texts like the *Protocols* would have eventually wormed its way into every corner of Europe during the normal comings and goings of people and ideas from the Russian Empire. The *Protocols* had been published in the Czech language as early as 1906.[7] The Russian Revolution of 1917 accelerated the dissemination of this Russian version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. To some Russians the fact that the Russian constitutional revolution of February 1917 was followed several months later by a Bolshevik takeover, including the murder of the Russian royal family and civil war, seemed to confirm everything the *Protocols* had prophesied. (By the way, the Russian Revolution of 1917 will be discussed at length in the next chapter.) Some Russians fleeing their home took the *Protocols* with them. Copies of the *Protocols* are said to have circulated among some of the delegates of the postwar Versailles peace conference in 1919, and there were two reported attempts by exiles from the Russian Empire to extort Jewish organizations in Europe by offering to destroy the "evidence" contained in the *Protocols* in exchange for cash.[8]

The *Protocols* was published and widely distributed in German during the postwar period. It was made known to a publisher through the efforts of a URP activist fleeing from revolutionary Russia. Peter Nikolaevich Shabelsky-Bork (b. 1893) was a URP activist, a member of other Black Hundreds groups, and the godson of some prominent URP activists and publishers, friends of the URP's founder Alexander Dubrovin. After serving in the Russian army during WWI Shabelsky-Bork was involved in a plot to assist a coup attempt, the "Kornilov

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[4] Dr. Friedrich Wichtl, *Weltfreimaurerei Weltrevolution Weltrepublik* (World Freemasonry World Revolution World Republic), (Munich: J. F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1919) p. 175.
[5] Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide,* p. 144.
[6] Ibid.
[7] N.L. Mordvinov, *Tajemství židovské politiky*, (Prague, 1906).
[8] Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide,* pp.138-139.

putsch" that tried to topple the Russian provisional government after the February revolution. He appears to have gotten involved in other counter-revolutionary schemes after the Bolshevik coup in October 1917. He was imprisoned but then amnestied several months later. According to his own account he then went undercover and traveled to Ekaterinburg, Russia, and attempted to assist his Tsar who was imprisoned there. By the time he arrived the Tsar had been murdered. He then began working for a German-supported Ukrainian government. When this government collapsed he was arrested and scheduled for execution by his Ukrainian nationalist captors, but the Germans negotiated his release and he fled to Berlin, taking with him a copy of the *Protocols*.[9]

In Berlin, Shabelsky-Bork made the acquaintance of Ludwig Muller von Hausen, a conservative German publisher who happened to know Russian. Von Hausen was also the founder of an antisemitic group *The Organization Against the Presumption of Jewry.*[10] Von Hausen was the ideal German recipient for the *Protocols,* and after Shabelsky-Bork gave him a copy in February 1919 he was apparently quite convinced it was real. He tried to investigate the origins of the document [11] and had it translated into German and published in July 1919. This translation seems to have sold well, as it was in its eighth edition by 1923.[12]

The *Protocols* was also getting new attention in Europe outside of Germany. An English translation of the *Protocols* had also been published in early 1920 and gained much attention.[13] But this heightened profile for the document also lead to heightened scrutiny. In 1920 *The* T*imes of London* published some articles about the *Protocols* and was non-committal about its authenticity. Then in 1921 an anonymous Russian landowner in exile approached the correspondent for *The Times* in Istanbul and showed him the similarity between passages in the *Protocols* and Joly's 1864 *The Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu.* The anonymous Russian claimed that he had just noticed the similarity by chance*.* This report was published in *The Times* and was a serious blow to the credibility of the *Protocols*, at least in the English speaking world.[14]

Unfortunately the core idea of a grand Judeo-Masonic conspiracy would not be so easily diminished in Germany, and in a little over a decade a political party built around the core idea of combatting the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy came to power. This was the Nazi party and its leader Adolf Hitler conducted affairs of state under the influence of the version of the anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory from the Russian Empire. However, it is not as if Hitler one day picked up the *Protocols* and immediately embarked on conquest and genocide. For one thing, he first persuaded of millions of Germans to consent to his leadership and endorse and participate in his actions. Also, it was not the *Protocols* that inspired millions of Germans to

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[9] А Иванов (A Ivanov), "ШАБЕЛЬСКИЙ-БОРК" in *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia, pp.* 586 - 587. Also Michael Kellogg, *The Russian Roots Nazism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 40, 44-45, 59-62.

[10] Kellogg, p. 64.

[11] Kellogg, pp. 65-66.

[12] Esther Webman, "Introduction, Hate and absurdity: The impact of *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion,"* in *The Global Impact of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, A Century-Old Myth,* Esther Webman ed. (Routledge, 2011) p. 22. According to Webman In 1929 the Nazi party acquired the rights to the German translation of the *Protocols* and published the ninth edition.

[13] Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, 1876-1939, (Routledge, 2016), pp. 148-151.

[14] Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* pp. 78-80.

follow Hitler. Before discussing the rise of the Nazis and Hitler's belief in the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory it is wise to discuss some of the precursors that made Hitler and his rise possible. These precursors were *Völkisch* ideology, a set of far-right and nationalist ideas that had permeated German society before the Nazis appeared; and also Hitler falling in with a group of refugees from Russia in 1919 who truly believed in the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. These exiles, joined with some native Germans, merged ideas about a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy promoted in previous decades in pro-Tsarist propaganda with a form of German nationalism - a set of ideas called *völkisch*, creating a modified conspiracy theory suited for Germany during this period.[15]

Völkisch ideas

Völkisch ideas involved the embrace of a racial identity for German society, rather than class-based identities, the lionizing the countryside over cities, and a general opposition to socialism, to international capitalism, and often to Jews. *Völkisch* ideologues often opposed parliamentary government, favoring instead the idea of a single charismatic leader, a *Führer*, who would emerge from the people, the "*volk,"* and lead it.[16] *Völkisch* thinkers often preferred the "natural" instinct of a peasant to the cold, rational calculus associated with the Enlightenment.[17] A strain of *völkisch* writers were expansionist and chauvinist, embracing a social-Darwinist vision of politics.[18]

Anti-Jewish conspiracy theories were present in *völkisch* writings. One of the "founders" of *völkisch* thought Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891) saw the forces of modernity tearing down all that he loved about the German *Volk,* and the Jew as the epitome of this modernity.[19] He bitterly hated Jews, writing in support of accusations of Jewish ritual murder and at one point calling for their extermination.[20] Many but not all of his intellectual successors also took up anti-Jewish themes -one later *völkisch* thinker even ridiculed the idea that a small group of Jews could corrupt 50 million Germans.[21] Be that as it may, anti-Jewish themes were well entrenched in *völkisch* thought by the early 20th century, and *völkisch* writers contributed to the respectability of gross anti-Jewish stereotypes even in polite parts of German middle-class society.[22] According to the historian Daniel Goldhagen, *völkisch* ideas involving German racial superiority became so widespread in Germany that they undermined the basic Christian teaching that everyone could be saved through conversion to Christianity, as this would mean Jews could be welcomed into the Christian (that is, German) community. Some *völkisch* Germans even saw Christianity itself as a Jewish deception.[23] These kinds of extreme anti-Jewish attitudes made fertile soil for the expansion of new versions of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory coming out of the Russian empire, shorn of the Orthodox Christian eschatological elements. As mentioned

[15] Kellogg, p. 16.
[16] Guy Tourlamain, *Völkisch Writers and National Socialism*, (Peter Lang, 2014), pp 24-25.
[17] Tourlamain, p 40.
[18] Tourlamain, pp 43.
[19] Mosse, p. 36.
[20] Mosse, pp. 36-39.
[21] Mosse, p. 49.
[22] Mosse, p. 143.
[23] Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, (Vintage, 2007), Kindle Edition, p. 68.

earlier, the *Protocols* was particularly flexible in this regard, as it is not an apparently sectarian document, apart from its condemnation of Judaism and its implication in some versions that Protestantism was part of a Jewish plot. Ludwig Muller von Hausen, the man who organized the translation of the *Protocols* into German, was a *völkisch* publisher.[24]

Anti-capitalist and anti-Jewish ideas had resonance because of the perceived link between Jews, money-lending, and capitalism, personified in the role that the Rothschild family played in European banking. On at least one occasion, anti-capitalist ideas were used to contrast the German *völk* with the decadent and capitalistic American and British nations, which also shared Germanic ancestry but who were under the spell of Jewish bankers. The following text was published during WWI, sometime in 1918 before the end of the war. It is from a racist article titled "Halte Dein Blut Rein" (Keep Your Blood Pure):

> "This struggle is actually comprised of representatives of two opposing world views - two opposing races. On the one hand, the Germanic, the creative, and on the other hand, the parasitic and capitalistic race.
>
> One will object to the fact that the English and Americans are also of Germanic origin. This is true. However, this is not decisive, but rather dependent on who controls these nations, who leads them and who guides them. Our enemy's secret ruler which also continues to strive for world dominance is without a doubt international capital. The representatives of big business are the undisputed enemies of our national traditions. This enemy is the Jew."[25]

While *völkisch* ideas had penetrated much of the German establishment by 1914, it did not produce a mass movement. It remained, as one historian put it: "an intellectual affair of relatively small groups and circles."[26] Speaking of small circles, there was even a quasi-Masonic society formed around *Völkisch* ideals in the early 20th century. In 1912 a group called the *Germanen Orden* appeared and after faltering refashioned itself as the *Thule-Gesellschaft* (Thule Society) in 1918. It was dedicated to combating the menace of Jewish conspiracies against the *volk*.[27] Its small membership printed pamphlets and tried to set up "lodges" in different parts of Germany to push *völkisch* ideas. One of its members Rudolf Glandeck von Sebottendorff was the publisher of the newspaper the *Münchener Beobachter*, which printed the anti-Jewish anti-capitalist article quoted above.

After WWI the Thule Society had a few hundred members in Munich. It attempted to engage in clandestine preparations for a counter-revolution during the succeeding socialist and communist revolutions that erupted in Bavaria. This conservative and antisemitic society was of course against any leftist revolution, particularly one with Jews among the leadership like the revolutionaries in Bavaria. However, when the moment of action came during an attempted counter-revolutionary putsch against the "Bavarian Soviet Republic" in April 1919 the leader of

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[24] Kellogg, p. 64.
[25] Jay Hatheway, "The Pre-1920 Origins of the National Socialist German Workers' Party," Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 29, 1994, p. 454. Original German from Rudolf von Sebottendorf, *Bevor Hitler kam: Urkundlich aus der Frühzeit der Nationalsozialistischen Bewegung*. (Munich: Deukula-Grassinger, 1933), p. 44.
[26] Avraham Barkai, "Volksgemeinschaft, 'Aryanization' and the Holocaust," in *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*, David Cesarani ed., (Routledge, 1994), p. 34.
[27] Mosse, pp. 228-229.

the Thule Society promised six hundred men for the effort, but could only muster twelve. Still, this ineffective organization got the attention of the short-lived Bavarian Socialist Republic, and seven members of the Thule Society were captured and shot.[28]

This event temporarily elevated the Thule Society in the perception of Munich society it went from being perceived as a marginal collection of upper-class enthusiasts of German folklore to a defender of the city against revolution.[29] A few Thule Society members tried to capitalize on this perception by reviving a defunct political party they had founded in early 1919, the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or DAP (the German Workers Party.) The party was not a success at first, and the DAP became an only occasional meeting of twenty-or-so people that was sometimes addressed by *völkisch* notables.[30] This party eventually became the NSDAP, the Nazi party, but *völkisch* ideas alone were not enough to galvanize support for it and make it what it was to become. Russian exiles who believed in the Judeo-masonic conspiracy provided the core ideology and the necessary connections to make the Nazis the Nazis. As the historian Michael Kellogg put it: "[Russian Emigres] influenced National Socialist ideology by adding White emigre conspiratorial-apocalyptic anti-Semitism to existing völkisch-redemptive notions of Germanic spiritual and racial superiority."[31]

Alfred Rosenberg and the banker / Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theories

At the turn of the century the Russian Empire had many ethnic Germans living within it. One prominent group of Germans in the Russian Empire were the Baltic Germans, Germans from what is today Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. While they were just a small part of the population of the Empire, Baltic Germans were disproportionately represented in the Imperial civil service and the Russian officer corps.[32] Baltic German nobles enjoyed special privileges and powers in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire. The expansion of reformed, popularly elected *zemstvos* (local self-government) in the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries threatened to erode the power and status of German nobles.[33] The establishment of a popularly elected Russian parliament would have been even more threatening to the power of the Baltic German minority. This may explain the curious affinity some pro-autocracy Black Hundred groups had for Baltic Germans. The statutes of the Black Hundred group "Union of Archangel Michael" (a splinter group from the URP) put "particular trust in the German population of the Empire." [34] In 1916 The American Jewish Chronicle reported that the liberal press in Russia jokingly referred to the Black Hundred paper the "Black Banner" as the

[28] Mosse, pp. 245-253.
[29] Thomas Weber, *Becoming Hitler*, (Basic Books, 2017), p. 134.
[30] Weber, p. 117.
[31] Kellogg, p. 16
[32] Michael H. Haltzel, "Triumphs and Frustrations of Administrative Russification, 1881-1914," in *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*, Edward C. Thaden ed., (Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 151.
[33] Haltzel pp. 66, 206.
[34] Kellogg, p. 41.

"Prussian Banner" (though of course this report might have been influenced by the ongoing war, an attempt to attack supporters of the autocracy as German sympathizers.)[35]

The flight of some of these Baltic Germans with Tsarist sympathies into Central and Western Europe as the Tsarist state collapsed and the Bolsheviks seized power was an important factor in the spread of the Black Hundred variant of the anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy Theory to Germany. One of the most important, arguably the most important, individual in transmitting the Black Hundred-style belief in an anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy Theory to the nascent Nazi party was Alfred Rosenberg. Born into a Baltic German family in Estonia, he spent his entire youth in the Russian Empire. According to his memoirs, Rosenberg had not paid much attention to the "social question" in Russia before World War One.[36] He would have been about 12 years old when the Revolution of 1905 broke out, and he probably came in contact with some URP or URP-like conspiracy-theory propaganda discussed in chapter 8.

According to a volume of his works published during WWII, Rosenberg was already writing that socialism had become "a political weapon in the hands of the Jews" in May 1918, about 6 months after the Bolshevik coup.[37] While we cannot be certain that he had perused the *Protocols* at this point, he was already repeating themes similar to those found in the *Protocols,* perhaps picked up from other pro-Tsarist propagandists. For example, Rosenberg described the essence of Socialist doctrine as "the bringing to fruition of a peoples' chaos on an unprecedented scale."[38] Compare this to this selection from Protocol V of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*:

> "The second secret requisite for the success of our government is comprised in the following: To multiply to such an extent national failings, habits, passions, conditions of civil life, that it will be impossible for anyone to know where he is in the resulting chaos, so that the people in consequence will fail to understand one another. This measure will also serve us in another way, namely, to sow discord in all parties, to dislocate all collective forces which are still unwilling to submit to us…"[39]

Even in 1918 Rosenberg saw the Russian Revolution as a transitional phase, a major step in some larger Jewish plan. Despite his proximity to the Russian Revolution, he rejected the truth that Russia had been seized by a clique of fanatical communists who were determined to transform Russia and the world into a socialist paradise. Rosenberg was evidently an early believer in the conspiracy theory of "Judeo-Bolshevism" touched upon at the end of chapter 8, the idea that the same grand Jewish conspiracy that had been presented as the force behind socialist and liberal political parties was also behind the totalitarian Bolshevik revolution. Something like this idea is touched on in the *Protocols,* when the narrator declares that the communists, along with the socialists and anarchists, are the "fighting forces" of the grand

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[35] "The Crisis in Russia" *American Jewish Chronicle*, December 1, 1916, Vol. 2. No. 4, New York, New York, p. 104.

[36] Alfred Rosenberg, *Alfred Rosenberg's 'Memoirs' Composed in Spandau*, 1945, (Skull Press, 2013), p. 8. Available at https://archive.org/details/AlfredRosenbergMemoirsAndNurembergTrial/page/n7. Accessed April 12, 2019.

[37] Alfred Rosenberg, *Schriften und Reden, mit einer Einleitung von Alfred Bäumler,* Vol. 1, (Munich, Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1943) p. 75.

[38] Rosenberg, *Schriften und Reden,* pp. 74-75.

[39] *Protocols*, p. 163.

Jewish conspiracy. In another passage the narrator of the *Protocols* describes the communists as one in a number of groups that are actually working for the Jewish conspiracy:

> "It is from us that the all-engulfing terror proceeds. We have in our service persons of all opinions, of all doctrines, restorating monarchists, demagogues, socialists, communists, and utopian dreamers of every kind. We have harnessed them all to the task: each one of them on his own account is boring away at the last remnants of authority, is striving to overthrow all established form of order. By these acts all States are in torture; they exhort to tranquility, are ready to sacrifice everything for peace: but we will not give them peace until they openly acknowledge our international Super-Government, and with submissiveness."[40]

The post-Russian-Revolution Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory was different from this earlier conception of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. The *Protocols* speaks of the communists being used as one instrument among many to torture states into surrendering. By liberalizing and perhaps by bringing socialists and communists into government, these states would be succumbing to the pressure of Jewish secret super-government and hastening the coming of the Jewish universal monarchy, to be brought into power by an enormous global coups d'etat "prepared everywhere for one and the same day..."[41] Instead the Bolshevik coup was seen as major intermediary step along the way towards the domination of the Jews, and the purpose was not to force states to liberalize and accept parliamentary government (which was obviously not part of the Bolshevik plan) but for some other purpose. It stands to reason that if the Jewish conspiracy was behind the French Revolution, according to the *Protocols,* and other revolutions and consequential events, it would also be behind the Russian Revolution. The core idea remained - a Jewish conspiracy was behind it all. Liberalism and capitalism and republicanism and communism were all just different poisons used by the same fiend. In 1918 Rosenberg cited the Jewish ancestry of many of the Russian revolutionaries as proof of the Bolshevik link to the Jewish conspiracy:

> "...although the utopian Lenin is a Russian Tatar, Trotsky-Bronstein is a real Jew [*rasseechter Jude*] from the Yekaterinoslav Governorate… with him works his friend Zinoviev-Apfelbaum, Nakhamkis-Steklov. As you can see, they adopted Russian pseudonyms,... and so behind Slavic names almost everywhere where there was treason, [there was] a real Jew."[42]

Rosenberg reported that his personal observation of low-level Bolshevik agitators also indicated that the Jews were behind it: "I saw Jewish students with the Bolshevik 'Pravda' under their arms lecturing in soldier's hospitals. The Jew stands like a closed wall behind the instrument of social destructiveness."[43]

Rosenberg would certainly have known about the accusations that the Bolsheviks he so hated had actually been supported and funded by the Germans in order to knock Russia out of the war (a topic discussed at length in the subsequent chapter). These accusations had been widely circulated in the Russian press before the 1917 Bolshevik coup. This accusation would have complicated the picture for anti-communist Baltic Germans like Rosenberg living in Estonia

[40] *Protocols*, p. 170
[41] *Protocols*, p. 192.
[42] Rosenberg, *Schriften und Reden,* p. 112.
[43] Rosenberg, ,*Schriften und Reden,* p. 77.

during this time. While Rosenberg was producing these statements about the Jewish origin of the Soviet Union he was living in German-Occupied Estonia. After the Coup of October 1917 the Bolsheviks had declared an end to the war, just what the Germans had wanted. When peace negotiations between the Germans and the Bolsheviks broke down for a spell in February 1918 the Germans quickly seized the Baltic states, Ukraine, and Belarus, forcing the Bolsheviks to sign the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March.[44] How would Rosenberg have explained this chain of events that had brought his new protectors, the German army, into his homeland of Estonia? By blaming the Russian Revolution on a Jewish conspiracy Rosenberg could exonerate his German protectors from the charge of having facilitated the Bolshevik takeover. Later on in an article published in 1919 Rosenberg mentioned the idea that the Germans had financed the Communist Revolution, noting that large sums of money had been transferred to the Bolsheviks from abroad, and that many people were convinced the source was Germany. Rosenberg stated that "...the Jew Fürstenberg-Ganezky provably paid large sums of money to the St. Petersburg Soldiers Council…" Rosenberg is here referring to Yakov Ganetsky, a trusted aide to Lenin who had indeed been instrumental in sending money to the Bolsheviks in 1917. We now know that he was the main contact between the Bolsheviks and German intelligence operatives in Stockholm, from whom he received money to finance the Bolsheviks.[45]

In one small section in his Estonia writings from June 1918, Rosenberg went even further than blaming the Russian revolution on a Jewish conspiracy. He insinuated that there was a similar German-Jewish plot to wage war on Germany emanating from America, which had entered the war just two months earlier: "From America comes the news that the Germans had spoken out for an inexorable war against Germany. The Representatives of these "Germans" were Mr. Cahn, Mr. Schiff and Mr. Cohn."[46]

Rosenberg was likely referring to statements made by some American bankers of German-Jewish descent who had loudly proclaimed their support for the Allied cause after America joined the war. Specifically Rosenberg might have been referring to an event on April 12, 1918, six days after America declared war on Germany, the prominent German-Born Jewish-American banker Jacob Schiff gave a speech in New York promoting the purchase of war bonds. According to the New York Times: "He said that peace could not be assured except by the utter destruction of the Prussian military power,... Even if the war lasted so long that this country was impoverished, both in material resources and in young manhood, the sacrifices would prove worthwhile if it ended in victory which guaranteed freedom and peace to the generations to come…"[47] The insinuation of Rosenberg implied that the Jewish conspiracy was the main problem for both Russia and Germany, who had recently been enemies.

Interestingly, Jacob Schiff had German sympathies earlier in the war. He had some residual loyalty for the land of his birth and also bitterly hated Russia because of its anti-Jewish

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[44] Annemarie H. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border: Germany and the East, 1914–1922*, (Cornell University Press, 2010) p. 38.
[45] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution,* Locations 10298, 10308.
[46] Rosenberg, *Schriften und Reden,* p. 77.
[47] "DESTROY PRUSSIANISM, JACOB H. SCHIFF URGES: Banker Says Our Impoverishment Would Not Be Too High a Price to Pay for Peace Guarantee," New York Times, 12 April 1918, p. 5.

policies.[48] However, after the fall of the Tsarist regime in early 1917 and the entry of the United States into the war he changed his tune. His new opinion was used by Rosenberg as evidence that the Jews who had destroyed the Russian Empire were now gunning for the German Empire.

Rosenberg did not have time to write much more anti-Communist, anti-Jewish, pro-German things in Estonia. The failure of the final German offensives in the west and the American entry into the war led to the collapse of the German Empire, and along with it the German position in Estonia. Rosenberg fled West before the Soviets arrived in Tallinn, eventually making it to Munich in January 1919. There Rosenberg was introduced by another refugee from the Baltics to one Dietrich Eckart, a German writer and member of the Thule Society who was launching an anti-Semitic magazine.[49]

Rosenberg was soon working for Eckart on his new magazine *Auf Gut Deutsch*, and one can possibly detect Rosenberg's influence early in the journal's publications. While Eckart was obviously deeply anti-Jewish, his earlier articles were more in the vein of a metaphysical anti-Semitism: In a series called "Das Judentum in und außer uns" (The Jew in and Around Us) he called the Jews a "world affirming" people, materialists who did not believe in the afterlife or ideals, and opposed to the non-Jewish essence of "negation of the world." While Eckart decried the fact that the Jewish people "triumphs as never before" he also wrote that the Jews were a necessary part of humanity:[50]

> "...one or the other of these [non-Jewish] peoples can perfectly well be destroyed what is important will live on in their heirs. But if the Jewish people were to perish, there would no longer be a nation that cherished affirmation of the world: the end of time would have come… It follows from all of this that Jewishness belongs to the organism of mankind as, let us say, certain bacteria belong to the human body, and just as necessarily as these. As we know, the body contains a lot of small organisms without which it would be destroyed, although these organisms feed on it; and similarly mankind needs the Jewish presence in order to remain vigorous until the fulfillment of its earthly mission. In other words, the affirmation of the world, pernicious in itself, which is present in the purest form in Jewishness, is the condition of worldly existence as long as there are men and cannot be imagined away; only with the salvation of all mankind will it collapse.
>
> Thus we must accept the Jews among us as a necessary evil for who knows how many centuries to come. But as our body would atrophy if those bacteria developed to more than a healthy extent, so also, to make an analogy, would our people gradually succumb to a permanent spiritual infirmity if the Jew got to be too much for it. That which Zionism wants or at least pretends to want, to leave completely, would be just as fatal as the Jew ruling us."[51]

These pseudo-philosophical quotations are certainly anti-Jewish, but seem weirdly philosemitic compared to what was to come. They were printed in *Auf Gut Deutsch* in late January and early February 1919 in the first issues of the magazine. Rosenberg's first article

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[48] Naomi Wiener Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership*, Brandeis University Press, 1999, pp. 191-192.
[49] Laqueur, p 73.
[50] Dietrich Eckart, "Jewishness in and around Us", Barbara Miller Lane and Leila J. Rupp trans., In *The Third Reich Sourcebook,* Anson Rabinbach and Sander L. Gilman eds., (University of California Press, 2013), p. 10.
[51] Ibid, pp. 10-11.

"Die Russisch-Jüdische Revolution" (The Russian-Jewish Revolution) appeared in the magazine on February 21 1919. In contrast to the earlier articles by Eckart, this article was concrete, direct, and dealt with what Rosenberg presented as an indisputable fact:[52] the Bolsheviks were a secretly Jewish project, and if there had once been any authentically Russian aspects of the Russian Revolution, they had been hijacked by Jews. Trotsky and Zinoviev were the Jewish rulers behind Lenin's throne. Rosenberg wrote that this secretly-Jewish Soviet government only stayed in power through using the harshest repressive measures:

> "...for it knows perfectly well that the hatred of the unarmed population, which is still impotent, could be terrible if it is not prevented on a daily basis. According to data from "Pravda" (Truth) the official newspaper, more than 13,000 'counter-revolutionaries' have been shot in recent months."[53]

Rosenberg then predicted that the Russian people might rise up against their Jewish rulers if they had a chance, and that perhaps the Jews would be exterminated or forced to flee: "... all the recent news agree with the fact that hatred of the Jews in Russia, despite all the terror, is increasing... If the present government falls, then no Jew will remain alive in Russia…"[54]

A month after Rosenberg's first article was published Eckart decided to discontinue publishing his rambling philosophical series of articles "The Jew in and Around Us" in his journal, because "...factual material seemed to me to be more important."[55] This could have been a reference to Rosenberg's much more "concrete" writings about the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy, or it could have been an acknowledgement that conditions in Munich in the spring of 1919 were not right for publishing such "philosophical" musings when violent revolution was all around. Germany's defeat in 1918 had been followed by an attempted communist revolution in Berlin. Another short-lived attempt at establishing an independent Bavarian Socialist Republic also failed at the ballot box during elections to the Bavarian Parliament, but the assassination of the leader of the Bavarian revolutionaries (while he was on the way to deliver a resignation speech) galvanized his supporters. Two of them retaliated by entering the Bavarian Parliament and opening fire. Another communist revolution had started in nearby Hungary.[56] Revolution was in the air in Munich.

On April 5 1919, a day before a Soviet-inspired "Bavarian Soviet Republic" was proclaimed, Rosenberg and Eckart distributed a pamphlet in Munich with the title "To All Working People!" According to Eckart the pamphlet was directed against the soon-to-arrive Bavarian Soviet Republic. The pamphlet is a denunciation of interest a.k.a. "loan capital" and of banking. The pamphlet attacked interest and the Rothschilds along with other Jewish bankers, the "...great number of such 'Rothschilds.' The *Mendelssohns*, the *Bleichröders*, the

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[52] One might even have called it world-affirming.
[53] Alfred Rosenberg "Die russisch jüdische Revolution" (The Russian-Jewish Revolution), *Auf Gut Deutsch,* Munich, 21 February 1919, p. 123.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Dietrich Eckart, "Notiz" (Notice), *Auf Gut Deutsch,* 28 March 1919, p. 160.
[56] Mark Jones, *Founding Weimar, Violence and the German Revolution of 1918–1919*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 288-289.

Friedländers, the *Warburgs*, to name only a few of the most important."[57] The pamphlet concludes with an attack on socialists and leftist-revolutionaries, stating that the Rothschilds and other Jewish bankers, the "real" enemy, were funding the revolutionaries. The pamphlet alleges that the plan of the Jewish bankers involved getting people to listen to revolutionary propaganda and attack landowners, which would divert them from fighting loan capital:[58]

> "…it is precisely the landowners whom our "saviors of the people" brand as the worst, even the only, exploiters, while the true vampire is never mentioned even in a whisper. We are intentionally diverted to the far lesser evil so that we will not see the greatest evil, all-consuming loan capital. And this is the way it's been done from Marx and Lassalle up to Levien, Landauer and Mühsam. Haven't you opened your eyes yet?…"[59]

Once again, while one cannot credit these ideas to the *Protocols* or to any other specific piece of anti-Jewish or anti-banker conspiracy-theory literature, one can see the obvious similarity between what this document says and a message common to many versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory: the supposed battle between two political poles is really just an ersatz battle between two groups ultimately working for the same side. Just as in the *Protocols*, a shadowy cabal of Jewish financiers was stroking a supposedly socialist revolution as part of a larger plan. In this case they were distracting the German people from the "real fight" - which should be against that cabal of bankers.

The idea that Jews were behind socialists political movements was not imported by Rosenberg, it was already present in Germany before his arrival. In January 1919 right-wing Germans had tried to tar the elections to the new German National Assembly as Jewish. They circulated posters saying that prominent Bolsheviks, Catholics, and other politicians were secretly Jewish, with the slogan "Their star is subversion! Make Germany free for Germans!"[60] As we have seen, the idea of a powerful cabal of bankers manipulating world politics had emerged in the nineteenth century. It was evidently also popular in *völkisch* circles in Germany as well as in White Russian circles, which added a heavy Jewish element. In fact, the *völkisch* proto-Nazi Eckart hated bankers so much that later when he was arrested during a Bavarian Communist raid on a Thule Society meeting, his bitter hatred for loan capital convinced the Communists that he was friendly.[61] Rosenberg attended meetings of the Thule Society in Munich during this time, and got involved with the establishment of the Thule Society's attempt at a working class party, the DAP.[62]

Conspiracy theories from this Munich milieu did not have to include this obvious Jewish element in order to be embraced in *völkisch* circles in Munich. Another Thule Society member[63]

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[57] Barabara Lane and Leila Rupp, *Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation*, (University of Texas Press, 2014) Kindle Edition, Locations 1102-1157.
[58] The pamphleteers were obviously not referring to *Imperialism: the Highest form of Capitalism.*
[59] Lane and Rupp, Locations 1158-1163.
[60] Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism,* (Harvard University Press, 2018), Kindle Edition, Location 272.
[61] Reginald G Phelps. "Before Hitler Came: Thule Society and Germanen Orden," The Journal of Modern History, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sep., 1963), pp. 245-261, p. 260.
[62] Kellogg, p. 70-72.
[63] Lane and Rupp, Location 3445.

[64] and early member of the DAP named Gottfried Feder wrote a pamphlet sometime between November 1918 and the summer of 1919. Feder attacked the "international financial superpowers, the supranational financial force which rules over all the rights of self-determination of individual peoples, the golden international;..."[65] This cabal had invented loan interest which "makes possible the lazy drone life of a minority of financially powerful people at the cost of the productive peoples and their labor."[66] Feder proposed abolishing all obligations to pay interest, to totally revolutionize the German monetary system, to subordinate the entire monetary system to the state treasury and make all private banks branches of the treasury, and above all to recognize that money is just "exchange for labor."[67] It was only through this radical program that people could escape "the golden nets of the international plutocracy."[68]

This early version of this anti-capitalist pamphlet was devoid of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories which were added in a later version, but it was a conspiracy theory nonetheless. Feder made it clear that the international banker cabal was actively disguising the true nature of interest, and distracting them from the fact that the interest ordinary people might receive from banks was negligible, much less than the state takes in taxes (much of which went to pay the interest on loans from big capital.) "The all-powerful money powers work industriously to keep us forgetting, that with the exception of a few financially important people the supposedly so nice interest, so beloved by the thoughtless, is eaten up by taxes."[69]

Aufbau and the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory

Evidently different variants of overlapping anti-Banker, Judeo-Masonic, and Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theories were present in Germany at this time. Though it is likely that Rosenberg was influenced by White Russian propaganda and earlier Black Hundred propaganda, there is actually no good evidence that he had specifically read the *Protocols* before he moved to Munich. Another group of Russian exiles, a number of former officers, propagandists, and participants in the Russian Civil war, that included some Baltic Germans like Rosenberg, settled in Munich in the period following the end of WWI and the German Revolution. This group was the most direct link between the pro-Tsarist groups that spread conspiracy-theory propaganda in the Russian Empire and the Nazis.

The key figure from this group is Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter. His father was a German subject and his mother was a Baltic German.[70] Scheubner-Richter spent most of his youth in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire. He was studying chemistry in Riga when the Revolution of 1905 broke out. During the Revolution Latvian and Estonian nationalists joined with socialists and started a local rebellion. Scheubner-Richter joined a Baltic German Selbstschutz (Self-Protection) unit and was wounded in action against the rebels.[71] He

[64] Sebottendorf, p. 62 seems to indicate he was a member of the Thule Society by late 1918.
[65] Lane and Rupp, Locations 1049-1050.
[66] Lane and Rupp, Locations 1057-1058.
[67] Lane and Rupp, Location 1096.
[68] Lane and Rupp, Location 1102.
[69] Lane and Rupp, Locations 1102-1103.
[70] Kellogg, p. 41.
[71] Kellogg, p. 42.

emigrated to Germany after 1910. During WWI he served on the Western front for a time before being sent to Turkey to work as a German diplomat.[72] Later in the war Scheubner-Richter returned to the Baltic region after it was occupied by advancing German forces, and worked for a press office of the German army in Riga and also for the Political Section of the German army General Staff. During this period he was decorated with the Iron Cross, First Class, and his competence got him the attention and favor of General Ludendorff, one of the top German commanders.[73] After the armistice and the German withdrawal from the Baltic states, Scheubner-Richter stayed behind and was involved in organizing German volunteers to fight the Communist advance into the Baltic States. His work also involved disseminating anti-Communist propaganda in the region. Scheubner-Richter traveled to Munich some time in 1919 and met up with Rosenberg, who was trying to raise funds for the White armies still fighting in the ruins of the Russian Empire. Scheubner-Richter also met Eckart, and linked him up to Otto von Kursell, a Baltic German refugee in Munich who had known Scheubner-Richter since high school and had worked for Scheubner-Richter in Riga during the German occupation.[74] He also got in contact with M. S. Komissarov, a former member of the Russian police who had been accused of secretly printing pamphlets inciting pogroms in the run up to the issuing of the 1905 October Manifesto. (See chapter 8).

In 1920 Scheubner-Richter along with Komissarov, Rosenberg, Ludendorff (who had also moved to Munich) and others began to set up an organization to provide war materiel and manufactured goods to anti-Communist forces still fighting in Ukraine (presumably in return for Ukrainian agricultural goods).[75] Upon returning to Munich after a trip to Crimea to set this up, Scheubner-Richter established an organization to continue this clandestine relationship with the non-Communist forces in Ukraine.[76] The organization was called “Aufbau” (reconstruction). Aufbau claimed to be concerned with establishing commercial links with southern Russia after the USSR had collapsed, but it was in fact a conspiratorial organization dedicated to overthrowing the Soviet Union and fighting a non-existent Jewish enemy. The organization sought to put the Russian Grand Prince Kirill Romanov on the Russian throne.[77]

While much of its activity was secret, Aufbau leadership made no secret of who they believed was their real enemy. Aufbau published a periodical: *Wirtschafts-politische Aufbau-Korrespondenz über Ostfragen und ihre Bedeutung für Deutschland (*Economic-Political Reconstruction Correspondence on Eastern Questions and Their Significance for Germany*)*[78] (hereafter, *Aufbau-Korrespondenz.)* The periodical interpreted events through the lens of the Grand anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theory. It published articles stating that there was an international Jewish organization bent on world domination usually referred to as “the

[72] Walter Laqueur, *Russia and Germany; a century of conflict*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1965), p. 59.
[73] Kellogg, pp. 80-81.
[74] Kellogg, pp. 42, 82, 89.
[75] Kellogg, p. 116. Despite his credentials, Kommissarov was suspected by some fellow emigres of being a Bolshevik agent. They were right. Kommissarov had been recruited by the Soviet secret service in 1920. Komissarov defected to the Communists while accompanying Scheubner-Richter’s delegation sent from Germany to set up the relationship with White forces in Ukraine. See Kellogg, p. 119.
[76] Kellogg pp. 124-125.
[77] Kellogg pp. 122-124.
[78] Kellogg, pp. 128-129.

International." This was distinct from the Communist Third International, which was also often mentioned, and appeared to be sometimes merged with "international capitalism" or "high finance."

> "International high finance has invited the 'proletarian leaders' and the henchmen of 'democracy ' (i.e. the Plutocracy) together at a table… the peoples who do not yet serve the stock exchange will show up in the future."[79]

The publication often carried conspiracy-theory laden articles produced by Russian exiles, possibly translated. It reiterated the themes of Black Hundred propaganda, with a newer Judeo-Bolshevik twist. Talk of Freemasons is almost totally absent from available editions of Aufbau. Their role was mostly taken by the Bolsheviks, though the democrats and socialists also played a part. The *Protocols* had tried to show that a conspiracy of Jews had used Freemasons to spread the poison of liberalism in order to prepare for its coming autocracy. *Aufbau-Korrespondenz* usually argued that the Soviet Union and the communist international were just parts of some grander Jewish plan, and that behind it all lurked Jewish international finance: "In view of the Bolshevik plague, the nationals of all countries would have every reason to look on the crooked fingers of the leading forces of today's world politics - high finance and its world-revolutionary helpers."[80]

Aufbau's use of themes from a Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory similar to what Rosenberg had written before he came to Germany is not coincidental, he was a member. Aufbau also included two other propagandists who had spread anti-Jewish propaganda in Ukraine during the Russian Civil War. One, Gregor Schwartz-Bostunitsch, was an ethnic German who had been born in Kyiv. He became a propagandist for anti-Bolshevik forces in Crimea, continuing in the tradition of Black Hundred propaganda by spreading the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy involved with the Bolsheviks. (By the way, Schwartz-Bostunitsch later became an SS officer.)[81] The other one Nemirovich-Danchenko also worked as a press chief and propagandist for an anti-Bolshevik army in Ukraine.[82] Aufbau's membership also included Major Josef Bischoff, a German who had been involved in the post-armistice intervention of German "volunteers" in Latvia, and who had set up a secret anti-Bolshevik propaganda operation in Odesa.[83]

Aufbau was exclusive, requiring from its ordinary members a 100,000 mark admission fee and 20,000 marks a year after that. Any prospective members of Aufbau were given background checks.[84] This is unsurprising, given that Aufbau members believed they were up against a super-powerful conspiracy. Scheubner-Richter managed to recruit a wealthy noble Baron Theodor von Cramer-Klett to be the official head of the organization and to help bankroll it.[85] The official vice president of the organization was Vasily Biskupsky, an ambitious former

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[79] "Washington", *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* 17 November 1921, Year 1, no. 21, p. 1.
[80] "Loyd George und die Russen!" (Lloyd George and the Russians!), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* November 29 1922, Year 2, no. 48, p. 1.
[81] Kellogg, p. 117,
[82] Kellogg, p. 117-118.
[83] Kellogg, p. 116.
[84] Kellogg, p. 123.
[85] Kellogg, p. 126.

general in the Tsarist army who was admired by Ludendorff.[86] Perhaps just as important as this further connection to Ludendorff, Biskupsky had a cousin, Vladimir Keppen, who donated a large amount of money to *Aufbau*.[87] Scheubner-Richter's old friend Otto von Kursell was also a member of Aufbau.[88] Peter Nikolaevich Shabelsky-Bork, the man who had transmitted the *Protocols* to Ludwig Muller von Hausen for publishing in German, was also a member.[89]

Ludendorff is an important figure to remark upon when discussing the reiteration of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in 1920s Germany. Ludendorff joined Aufbau along with his political advisor Colonel Bauer.[90] Ludendorff had been the de-facto ruler Germany for much of WWI[91] and he was still a major public figure with a following despite his wartime failure. At the end of WWI he had demanded an armistice along with his superior Paul von Hindenburg, surprising the civilian German government which resisted his calls for an immediate ceasefire for some weeks. After the war he engaged in some revisionism and became a proponent of the "stab-in-the-back" myth, the idea that the German army had not been defeated in the field but had instead been betrayed by forces behind-the-lines. This myth became widespread in Germany in the period between the wars.[92] Ludendorff eventually discovered the villain behind his stab in the back myth - the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. In a memoir published in 1922 Ludendorff made several references to it. He said that the Jews had for quite some time been seeking sovereignty over the entire world and concocted the "seductive words of 'liberty, equality, fraternity'"[93] in order to weaken their target (a reference to liberalism being a Jewish plot). Ludendorff directly blamed the Zionists, the Freemasons, the Universal Israelite Alliance, and the Jewish organization B'nai B'rith with participating in the "stabbing" in order to fulfill their plans to gain Palestine:

> "Covetousness, jealousy, distrust, mistrust were spurred on,... With the deterioration of the war situation on the German front, this was preached ever more forcefully and the blessing of the revolution were praised....In this fight against national feeling in Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Jewish people stood out in their masses on the side of the Entente and intensified their promotional work. B'nai B'rith, the Universal Israelite Alliance, Zionism, and international Freemasonry worked with them."[94]

It cannot be said with any certainty that Ludendorff got these idea from his new Baltic German and Russian associates. He might have derived it entirely from German sources. His Aufbau associates would not have discouraged these beliefs, and Ludendorff's engagement with Aufbau probably greatly increased the prestige and capabilities of the organization.

As part of its mission, Aufbau also tried to build anti-Soviet resistance in Ukraine, mainly via its member Colonel Ivan Poltavets-Ostranitsa and his organization the *Ukrainian Cossack*

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[86] Laqueur, p. 120.

[87] Kellogg, p. 131.

[88] Kellogg, p. 129.

[89] А Иванов (A Ivanov), "ШАБЕЛЬСКИЙ-БОРК" (Shabelsky-Bork), in *Black Hundreds, historical encyclopedia, pp.* 586 - 587. Also Kellogg, pp. 40, 44-45, 59-62, 64.

[90] Kellogg, p. 132.

[91] William L. Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, (Simon & Schuster, 2011), p. 34.

[92] Shirer, pp. 31-32.

[93] Erich Ludendorff, *Kriegführung und Politik*, (Berlin: E. G. Mittler & Gohn, 1922), p. 42.

[94] Ludendorff, pp. 189-191.

Organization.[95] For a time Aufbau gave considerable assistance to a competing White Russian emigre organization the "Union of the Faithful" which had been created by a URP leader and set up a clandestine network among Red Army officers in the early 1920s.[96]

The conspiracy-theory laden outlook of *Aufbau* members was not confined to Russian affairs. The exiles from the Russian Empire grounded their political analysis in the pre-revolutionary idea that Jewish conspiracy deliberately set up republics in order to make them ripe for a complete Jewish takeover. This was the belief espoused by Butmi and enshrined in the *Protocols*. This idea places any republic automatically under suspicion as just being a transitional phase in the Jewish conspiracy. The success of the Bolshevik coup in Russia so soon after the establishment of the republican Russian Provisional Government seemed to confirm this interpretation. *Aufbau-Korrespondenz* described Alexander Kerensky, the final Prime Minister of the 1917 Russian Provisional Government as "a docile tool of Anglo-Jewish Democracy…"[97] Kerensky was also a Freemason,[98] which would have contributed paranoia about his role.

Germany had also become a republic at the end of the war, the Weimar Republic. This republic survived attempts at Soviet-inspired communist revolution in 1918, but a mind convinced of a grand Jewish conspiracy would see this success as just part of a deception. This suspicion would have been compounded by the new German Republic's rapprochement with the USSR. In December 1920, not long after the organization's founding, Scheubner-Richter approached the German foreign office and asked for support for Aufbau. This request was rejected. At this time the German government was attempting to improve relations with the USSR, and they could not be seen to be working with an organization dedicated to overthrowing the USSR.[99]

Subsequent articles in *Aufbau-Korrespondenz* make it clear that Aufbau's leaders considered the Weimar Republic to be itself part of a grand Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy, at one point making a direct comparison to Russia under Kerensky:

> "The government of the Reich is in a position for which Russians have long coined the term "Kerentschina," that is, the Kerensky period… one hears the cries of anarchy and believes that only by yielding can one stop the chaos. It goes downhill step by step, until one day the red tide flows over everything and causes misfortune for millions. The symptoms have long been unmistakable to any unbiased eye, the forces of chaos are the same in Russia and Germany…"[100]

Nor did *Aufbau-Korrespondenz* only attack the German government as just a transitional phase. Recall that a common element in the pre-Revolutionary Russian Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was that the governments of the west were *already* under the control of the

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[95] Kellogg, p. 130.
[96] Kellogg, p. 144.
[97] "Rückblicke und Parallelen," (Looking Back and Parallels), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* no. 29, year 2, 19 July 1922, p. 1.
[98] Nathan Smith, "Political Freemasonry in Russia, 1906-1918: A Discussion of the Sources," *The Russian Review*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Apr., 1985), p. 160.
[99] Kellogg, p. 127.
[100] "Dem Bolschewismus Entgegen" (Against Bolshevism), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* no. 9, year 1, 9 September 1921, p. 1.

conspiracy. A September 1921 issue of *Aufbau-Korrespondenz* warned that there were two dangers, international capitalism (which dominated in the west) and communism (growing to the east) and that if Germany "...wishes to maintain its independence, it must reject both the dictatorship of the proletariat and international capitalism, and elect a government which, filled with national spirit, can compensate for all class contradictions and guarantee internal peace."[101] This interpretation made the situation even more urgent - Germany might be the last hope! As one anonymous Russian journalist put it in *Aufbau-Korrespondenz:* "In Russia, the International has won. In France as well, only in a different guise. The sequence is now in Germany, where the decisive battle of the Jewish star with the Christian cross will take place."[102] One may see here again an echo of the old anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory that was used in the Russian Empire: the two opposing poles, capitalism and communism, were actually just two poles of the same grand conspiracy, just as the Jesuits supposedly controlled both the reactionary Roman Catholic church and the liberals and nihilists.

Like with the URP death squad in Russia discussed in the previous chapter, some members of Aufbau began to take matters into their own hands and engaged in political violence. Initially some members of Aufbau sought revenge against the figures who they believed had facilitated the Jewish takeover of Russia, that is, Russian liberals and socialists who had been overthrown by the Bolsheviks. Some of these former members of the Russian republican government were in exile in Europe, and therefore could be targeted by members of Aufbau. According to a report from a Russian emigre organization, Biskupskii and another member of Aufbau paid for the assassination of Alexander Kerensky sometime around May 1921.[103] This assassination was never carried out. In another incident Aufbau members and Russian exiles Peter Nikolaevich Shabelsky-Bork and Sergei Taboritskii attempted to assassinate the Kadet leader and former foreign minister of Russia Pavel Milyukov.[104] Recall, Shabelsky-Bork was a former URP activist, and the Kadets were presented as the main Jewish tool in Black Hundred propaganda.

Shabelsky-Bork and Taboritskii tried to kill Milyukov while he was addressing a Russian audience of about 1,500 in Berlin on the topic "America and the Restoration of Russia." Taboritskii rose while Milyukov was speaking and began firing, shouting "For the Tsar's family and Russia!" Vladimir Nabokov, the father of the novelist and a former Kadet, lept up and grabbed Taboritskii. Shabelsky-Bork then shot Nabokov dead. Milyukov escaped unharmed.[105]

There is evidence that more senior members of Aufbau, including Scheubner-Richter, knew about this assassination attempt in advance and may have helped plan it.[106] Aufbau's leadership may also have had foreknowledge of (and perhaps been complicit in) the assassination of the Jewish foreign minister of Germany Walther Rathenau in June 1922.[107] Unfortunately, unlike with the URP death squad in Russia, there was never a comprehensive

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[101] "Die Lehren Der Russ. Revolution" (The Lesson of the Russian Revolution), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* no. 10, Munich, 14 September 1921, p. 5.
[102] "Ave, Hilverding, morituri te salutant!" (Hail, Hilverding, we who are about to die salute you!), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* no. 36, year 3, 7 September 1923, p. 2.
[103] Kellogg, p. 167.
[104] Kellogg, p. 130.
[105] Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*, (Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 190-191.
[106] Kellogg, pp. 169-170.
[107] Kellogg, pp. 177-179.

investigation of the assassinations possibly linked to Aufbau. The organization engaged in clandestine activity, this is for sure, and it certainly included as members individuals who engaged in assassinations. There was no Tsarist state to reign Aufbau in, no authority they considered legitimate that they would willingly obey if ordered to stop. The ideas Aufbau publications espoused publicly, imported from Tsarist Russian propaganda, made a counter-conspiratorial revolution a necessity if one took them seriously in the different German environment. A few assassinations of former Russian parliamentarians or a Jewish member of the Weimar government would not be enough to stem the coming Jewish-led Communist revolution in Germany, or alternatively the coming Jewish domination of Germany through a plutocracy. A truly radical solution was needed to change the course of German history. Scheubner-Richter believed there had to be an awakening and a revolution to stop the inevitable slide into Jewish domination, and this revolution would not be without violence. Scheubner-Richter and other anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists believed they found the man to lead this revolution in Adolf Hitler As Scheubner-Richter wrote in 1923:

> "The Russian people are also awakening. And also there are awakening Italians, awakening Englishmen, awakening Spaniards and - thanks to God - finally awakening Germans… these awakening Russians will settle accounts with their international government, just as the awakening Germans will do, or- in a few years' time there will be no Russians and no Germans, no national peoples at all, but under the scepter of The International a mixture of the races… This fight in Germany is near the door… the day is not far off when against this another, a völkish Germany will rise up… This völkish Germany knows that the fight will be a difficult one, a relentless one, and a cruel one. It knows that at the same time it will have to fight on different fronts, that it will fight against the lukewarm… that it will have to fight against German national comrades seduced by Marxism and blinded… often ready to protect their Jewish seducers with their bodies. It knows that perhaps at the same time it will have to fight against the Frenchmen… Völkish Germany is prepared to take up this struggle in faith in the German people, to whom a new prophet has arisen in Adolf Hitler, who has understood [how] to rouse the German soul and free it from the shackles of Marxist thought… For the outcome of this struggle will decide whether national culture, *völkish* characteristics, and Christianity will still hold, or whether all this will be merged in an international mush. And the fight will be fought under the slogan "Here is the Soviet Star - here the Swastika." And the Swastika will win!"[108]

Hitler and the NSDAP

Scheubner-Richter eventually became a close collaborator with Adolf Hitler, and we see him in 1923 in the above text declaring Hitler a "new prophet" who would lead the fight against the Jewish conspiracy. Both Scheubner-Richter, hailing from the Russian Empire and a believer in the Black Hundred Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, and Alfred Rosenberg, a Baltic German who also believed in a "Judeo-Bolshevik" variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, greatly influenced the development of Hitler's thought. Hitler is perhaps the most famous conspiracy theorist in history. The Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory was central to his thinking and evident both in his writing, his public statements, and even elements of his diplomatic and wartime decisions.

[108] Dr. von Scheubner-Richter, "Die Bolschewifierung Deutschlands," (The Bolshevization of Germany), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* no. 38, year 3, Munich, 21 September 1923, p. 3.

Earlier biographers of Hitler often accepted his own narrative, related in *Mein Kampf,* of how he became an anti-Semite in his youth in Austria. After all, there was a strong populist antisemitic movement in Vienna while he was living there. However, more recent scholarship indicates that while Hitler certainly was familiar with the antisemitic vocabulary from Vienna at this time, he did not seem to be an antisemitic radical in his youth. Hitler also claimed to draw a great deal of inspiration from the 19th century German-speaking anti-Semites who had also built a political program around hating the Jews, the source of capitalism, liberalism, and socialism and from Georg von Schönerer who believed in a biological distinction between the Jewish and German races.[109] This Viennese variant of anti-Semitism "was anti-Catholic, anti-capitalist, anti-modernist, neo-pagan, and pan-German, as well as purporting to represent the disenfranchised masses."[110] There were also some conspiracy-theory elements to the anti-Semitism of that era, as discussed in chapter 7. However, contemporary acquaintances of Hitler from before he was 30 don't record any antisemitic obsessions, in fact he was even been described as mildly philosemitic! Hitler's autobiography in *Mein Kampf* was written with the purpose of showing that Hitler's ideas came to him early and were self-taught. The truth seems to be that while he may have been exposed to turn-of-the-century Viennese anti-Semitism and maybe even harbored some antisemitic thoughts, he became an extreme anti-Jewish activist only in post-war Munich.[111]

In late 1918 Hitler was a German soldier stationed in Munich. He had turned down the option to demobilize after the war, and instead opted for wages, housing, and provisions while serving the new German socialist, republican government.[112] Hitler had heard a speech by Gottfried Feder during an army propaganda course in July 1919, when Feder had given a version of his anti-capitalist conspiracy theory. Hitler later wrote glowingly about this speech in *Mein Kampf*.[113] Hitler heard Feder again in September, at a meeting of the DAP which Hitler attended as part of his duties as a political officer. Feder was not yet a member of the party but was a guest speaker. Hitler got the attention of the other DAP members when he verbally attacked another speaker at the meeting who had argued for Bavarian independence. After Hitler had read a DAP pamphlet he was given at this meeting against international capitalism, Jews, Freemasons, and socialism, the leaders of the DAP convinced him to join their small party. [114]

Adolf Hitler made the acquaintance of party members Eckart and Rosenberg in the fall of 1919, probably not long after joining.[115] Eckart became a mentor to Hitler.[116] According to some friends of Hitler, Hitler greatly esteemed Rosenberg during this time. Rosenberg related to Hitler the story that the Bolshevik Revolution was part of a global plot by Jewish bankers to take over the world.[117] In 1922 Hitler wrote of Rosenberg "He is the only man whom I always listen to. He

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[109] Wistrich, p. 43.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*, Thomas Thornton trans., (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 346-353.
[112] Weber, p. 10.
[113] Weber, p. 86.
[114] Weber, pp. 112-113.
[115] Kellogg, p. 72.
[116] Weber, p. 142.
[117] Weber, pp. 219-221.

is a thinker."[118] Scheubner-Richter met Hitler through Rosenberg sometime in November 1920. Scheubner-Richter first heard Hitler speak on November 22, 1920 and shortly thereafter joined the Nazi party.[119] Scheubner-Richter later introduced Hitler to Ludendorff.[120] Hitler's emerging worldview was formed under the influence of these three men, one of whom was a former leader of Germany, and all of whom believed in an anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Hitler may already have been antisemitic by the time he fell into this company, but they imparted to him the specific Black Hundred version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Scheubner-Richter gave to Hitler much more than ideas. He channeled funds from Aufbau and other White Russian-friendly sources to the Nazis, probably including funds donated by the American industrialist Henry Ford.[121]

Interpreting the changing world, beyond the *Protocols*

Before discussing the specifics of this Russian-origin conspiracy theory that Hitler adopted, we ought to discuss Rosenberg's approach to these conspiracy theories in Germany, and specifically his approach to the *Protocols*. Earlier in this chapter we examined Rosenberg's belief in the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory before he came to Germany, but he made no references to the Freemasons or to the *Protocols* in his earliest available writings. Instead, Rosenberg pointed to the Jewishness of people at the pinnacle of Soviet power and the activities of Jewish-American financiers like Jacob Schiff as evidence of this grand conspiracy. Eckart (and therefore Rosenberg) had first mentioned the Protocols in *Auf Gut Deutsch* in October 1919. In December 1919 Eckart printed a review of the new German edition of the *Protocols* proclaiming it as authentic.[122] Rosenberg eventually fully adopted elements of the "older" Judeo-Masonic idea, but he also updated it a little. Rosenberg wrote about the *Protocols* as authentic in 1923:

> "The publication [of the *Protocols*] had a tremendous importance because the Protocols were demonstrably not a program put together after the fact, but the reproduction of a paper which concerned men had delivered as a warning, decades ago, to persons active in political life, without the paper ever having received the necessary consideration…"[123]

However, as a former Russian subject, Rosenberg would probably have been aware of and have experienced cognitive dissonance about the anachronistic elements of the *Protocols.* He would have been aware of recent Russian history and seen the obvious anti-autocracy, pro-nobility sections of the *Protocols* as answering the specific concerns of a section of landowners in the Russian Empire around the turn of the century, before the Revolution of 1905. The reference in the *Protocols* to the sinister true purpose of subway lines as a revenge weapon of the Jews would have seemed especially bizarre: "the undergrounds, metropolitains, - those

[118] Weber, p. 219.
[119] Kellogg, p. 124.
[120] Kellogg, p. 128.
[121] Kellogg, pp. 203-204.
[122] Kellogg, p. 73.
[123] Barbara Miller Lane and Leila J. Rupp, *Nazi Ideology before 1933: A Documentation,* (Kindle Locations 1428-1430). University of Texas Press. Kindle Edition.

subterranean corridors which, before the time comes, will be driven under all the capitals and from whence those capitals will be blown into the air with all their organizations and archives."[124] When the *Protocols* were written at the turn of the century, subways were a novel technology in continental Europe, but by 1919 the idea that they were secretly a weapon of mass destruction would have seemed ridiculous.[125]

Even in this 1923 text Rosenberg hedged about the authenticity of the *Protocols*, saying that "no *legally* conclusive evidence either of absolute authenticity or of forgery can be furnished."[126] Rosenberg maintained that even if the *Protocols* was not a totally solid, believable Jewish document, it still was in line with the truth, as there were "documents from earlier times and from the most recent present which spring from the deepest Jewish subconsciousness as well as from power-conscious arrogance, documents which reveal the same meaning as the reviled Protocols of the Elders of Zion."[127] In an earlier 1921 book about what he believed was the massive Jewish conspiracy behind the Russian Revolution, Rosenberg mentioned the *Protocols* and described it as being contested, (perhaps a response to the debunking of the *Protocols* in the London Times) but then referred to other "obvious" facts that proved the truth of the message of the *Protocols*:

> "This whole swarm of Jewish criminals is welded together by instinct and plan… this instinct has long condensed into a plan. I need not point out the contested [*angefeindeten*] 'Protocols of the Wise men of Zion.' It was proudly hailed by the Jews after the death of the world-banker Jacob Schiff that he himself had financed Japan's war against Russia, provided the [Russian] prisoners of war with revolutionary propaganda, and that he also stood behind the Russian Revolution of 1917. Today, these things are so transparent to everyone's eyes that they need no further explanation…"[128]

Again, Rosenberg references Jacob Schiff - a powerful and influential American Jewish banker who had nursed a special hatred for the Tsarist regime. Schiff had indeed helped to finance the Japanese war effort during the Russo-Japanese war, and had given money to spread revolutionary (though not Bolshevik) propaganda amongst Russian prisoners of war with the approval of the Japanese government.[129] He had done this partly out of his hatred of the anti-Jewish policies of the Tsarist regime. Schiff was a high-profile and powerful anti-Russian Jew, and his biography fitted perfectly into the conspiracy theory framework of the *Protocols* in the way that Adolphe Crémieux fit snugly into the earlier versions of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. Like with Crémieux, a closer examination of his actual activities destroys the myth.

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[124] *Protocols*, p. 158.

[125] Dr. Randall L. Bytwerk makes a similar statement about the anachronistic nature of this claim by the outbreak of WWII. See his article "Believing in 'Inner Truth': The Protocols of the Elders of Zion in Nazi Propaganda, 1933–1945," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, Vol. 29, Issue 2, Fall 2015, pp. 212–229. Available at https://academic.oup.com/hgs/article/29/2/212/562402. Accessed June 2, 2019.

[126] Lane and Rupp, Location 1427.

[127] Lane and Rupp, Locations 1433-1435. See also Bytwerk, ""Believing in 'Inner Truth...'"

[128] Alfred Rosenberg, *Pest in Rußland* (Plague in Russia), (Munich: Deutscher Volksverlag, 1922), p. 24.

[129] "Pacifists Pester till Mayor Calls Them Traitors," *New York Times*, 24 March 1917. Available at https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1917/03/24/102324302.pdf. Accessed Feb 9, 2019. Also Adam Gower, *Jacob Schiff and the Art of Risk: American Financing of Japan's War with Russia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 101-103.

Schiff's Russian strategy and purposes were actually the polar opposite of the strategy and purposes portrayed by the Russian conspiracy theorists. Far from being part of a Jewish plot to entice Russia into the international financial system in order to dominate it, (as the *Protocols* asserted) Schiff had consistently refused to get financially involved at all in Russia because of his objection to Russia's egregious anti-Jewish policies. The Russian government had tried to entice him to do business, even at one point around 1900 sending a representative to meet with him in person to suggest that if Schiff did business with Russia, the Russian Minister of Finance (Count Witte) would be inclined to lobby for the repeal of some Russian anti-Jewish legislation. According to Schiff's own account, related by a member of the Rothschild family, Schiff replied "promises were cheap, and that action would have to precede Russia's application to the American money markets before our cooperation could be had, and that until then we should bring all the influence we could command to bear against Russia getting a foothold in the American money markets."[130]

Ironically, Schiff at one point had also spoken disdainfully of "Jewish high finance" - meaning the Jewish European bankers who *had* done business with Tsarist Russia. He wrote that they had possessed the ability to pressure Tsarist Russia to treat the Jews of the Empire better, but had "instead closed its eye to make a despicable profit, and rendered service to the Russian Government selling her Jewish subjects for a few pieces of silver."[131]

Schiff was in fact anti-communist, which is to be expected given that he was a major capitalist. Nevertheless, Schiff became a centerpiece of the conspiracy through a further bit of slander, which Rosenberg probably knew of, that was circulating in Russia in September 1919. A document claimed that Schiff had financed the Bolshevik Revolution with millions of dollars.[132] This was probably based on a secret intelligence report from the United States, in which a single anonymous source had made this claim. This secret report had been shared with America's allies, and was eventually leaked and published as fact.[133] Thus a single piece of slander, laundered through a single intelligence report became a key piece of the evidence supporting the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory.

Holding a belief in a conspiracy with superpowers of deception not only allows one to slide easily between categorizing something as truth or fiction but also allows one to easily find new points of evidence that can be added to sustain one's belief, even when the original "proof" has been debunked. Rosenberg and Eckart's belief "that the world is governed solely by Judaism, and this is not a superstition"[134] requires the existence of massive secret infrastructure to govern the world. A global conspiracy may occasionally be revealed by a leak (like the *Protocols* or the *Polish Catechism*) but much more convincing than this kind of "solid" evidence is a stream of constant insinuations and interpretations of world events through a conspiracy-theory framework. As we examined in earlier versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, even a total lack of direct evidence can itself be part of the confirmation that there is a powerful deception at work. We can see this in some words Eckart placed in the mouth of Hitler in a

[130] Naomi Wiener Cohen, p. 130.
[131] Naomi Wiener Cohen, p. 135.
[132] Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* p. 138
[133] Kenneth D. Ackerman, *Trotsky in New York, 1917: A Radical on the Eve of Revolution*, (Counterpoint, 2016), p. 319.
[134] Dietrich Eckart, "Die rote faden" (The red thread), *Auf Gut Deutsch,* 20 March 1918*,* p. 152.

posthumously published pamphlet that presented an apocryphal conversation about the Jewish conspiracy:

> "Consider how an astronomer would handle a similar situation. Suppose that he has been carefully observing the motion of a certain group of celestial bodies over a long period of time. Examining his records, he suddenly notices something amiss: 'Damn it!' he says. 'Something's wrong here. Normally, these bodies would have to be situated differently relative to one another; not this way. So there must be a hidden force somewhere which is responsible for the deviation. And, using his observations, he performs lengthy calculations and accurately computes the location of a planet which no eye has yet seen, but which is there all the same, as he has just proved. But what does the historian do, on the other hand? He explains an anomaly of the same type solely in terms of the conspicuous statesmen of the time. It never occurs to him that there might have been a hidden force which caused a certain turn of events. But it was there, nevertheless; it has been there since the beginning of history. You know what that force is: the Jew."[135]

The conspiracist's path to power

After joining the DAP Hitler discovered he had a gift for oratory, and he began working as a staple speaker for the party By mid-October 1919, not even two months after Hitler had joined the party, he was giving rousing speeches against the Jews and the "Jewish papers" that distorted the news.[136] Hitler's earliest known reference to the *Protocols* is in a speech from August 12, 1921, when he remarked on how the *Protocols* touches on the Jewish conspiracy's use of starvation as a weapon.[137] However, the foundation of his evolving worldview was not based in the *Protocols* alone. Hitler was close to Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter, two men who interpreted the world through the prism of the Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory and provided Hitler with a stream of evidence for the existence of this conspiracy. Hitler probably read *Aufbau-Korrespondenz*, which was full of conspiracy-theory laden articles about the Jewish, Bolshevik, high-finance conspiracy sometimes written by exiled Russians, along with other articles offering an ongoing interpretation of events that was dependent on the idea of a vast deception. While Hitler did mention the *Protocols*, especially earlier in his career, his belief in a grand Jewish conspiracy like the one described in the *Protocols* was grounded on more than its testimony alone.

Hitler's version of the Grand anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theory included the traditional hatred for democracy that most variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory also tend towards. This was probably partially inspired by Scheubner-Richter's and his companions' belief that the Weimar Republic was a transitional stage to a Bolshevik (that is, Jewish) revolution. Hitler also came to believe that real democracy is impossible in the face of such a powerful deceptive force, just as Butmi and others had concluded before. Here is an excerpt from a speech Hitler gave in 1922, castigating right-wingers who willingly participated in the democratic process of the Weimar Republic:

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[135] Deitrich Eckart, *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin: A Dialogue Between Adolf Hitler and Me*, Dr. William Pierce trans., Available at: http://library.flawlesslogic.com/eckart_1.htm. Accessed Feb 13, 2019.
[136] Weber, p. 135.
[137] Kellogg, p. 74.

> "And the right has further completely forgotten that democracy is fundamentally not German: it is Jewish. It has completely forgotten that this Jewish democracy with its majority decisions has always been without exception only a means towards the destruction of any existing Aryan leadership. The Right does not understand that directly every small question of profit or loss is regularly put before so-called 'public opinion,' he who knows how most skillfully to make this 'public opinion' serve his own interests becomes forthwith master in the State. And that can be achieved by the man who can lie most artfully, most infamously; and in the last resort he is not the German, he is, in Schopenhauer's words, 'the great master in the art of lying' - the Jew."[138]

Hitler's conspiratorial anti-Jewish, anti-capitalist, anti-communist speeches were the mainstay of the increasingly popular DAP gatherings in Munich. The DAP later changed its name to the NSDAP, the "National Socialist German Workers' Party" - a.k.a. the Nazis - and Hitler began to take control of the party. Under Hitler's leadership the earlier vision of the party as a kind of *völkisch* secret society for the working class was sidelined, and instead the NSDAP tried to become a mass party that appealed to all Germans.[139]

While it was seeking to be a mass party, the Nazis were not at this point seeking to come to power through elections. The Republic was the enemy in a different guise. On August 6 1922 Hitler warned of the "...approaching Jewish-Bolshevism under the protection of the Republic."[140] Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter proposed that Hitler lead a revolution in Munich by kidnapping a few leading less-radical right-wing politicians and forcing them to back a coup against the government in Berlin, with Ludendorff as a figurehead.[141] The Nazis got inspiration from Italy. In October 1922 Benito Mussolini had been invited by the Italian king to form a government. Mussolini's supporters invented a legend of a "march to Rome" when the fascists had come to power. Actually the pro-Mussolini marches that had occurred dispersed outside of Rome. The Nazis embraced this myth, but having no king to invite them to form a government, they instead had to seize power.[142]

In preparation for a coup the Nazis appeared to have readied a draft emergency constitution. The document laid out an extreme program of declaring an immediate state of siege in Germany, the imposition of "emergency" police measures such as restrictions on personal liberty, and surveillance, extensive property confiscation, bank and stock market closures, the immediate dissolution of all parliaments and representative bodies, and a ban on owning weapons without a license. The freedom of the press was to be revoked and any printed statement that was determined to be "detrimental to the state" was to be punished with a fine and the expropriation of the printer. All movable and immovable Jewish property was to be confiscated, along with that of any war profiteers. Anyone who resisted or helped those who resisted these measures was to be killed.[143] "Dangerous persons" and "useless eaters" were to

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[138] Jon Hilden, *The Weimar Republic*, (Routledge 2014) p. 90.
[139] Weber, pp. 131-133, 148.
[140] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936 Hubris*, (W. W. Norton & Company; Reprint edition 2000), Kindle Edition, 2014, p. 177.
[141] Shirer, pp. 66-67.
[142] Kershaw, p. 180.
[143] Hanns Hubert Hofmann, *Der Hitlerputsch*, (Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1961), p. 288. The full text of the program can be found in pp. 284-294.

be rounded up and placed in camps for forced labor. Anyone who tried to escape or resisted internment was to be executed.[144]

As we observed with Metternich's expansion of police powers and the 1867 Baranov circular imposing a harsh regime on Russian Jews, this Nazi emergency constitution contained many "rational" responses to the irrational fear of a massive conspiracy: expanded police powers, surveillance, and a state of emergency. The closure of the stock markets and banks and the restrictions on the press shows that this emergency constitution was targeted at the main instruments of the purported Jewish conspiracy. The emphasis on dispossessing the Jews and making them do forced labor in camps is an unambiguous early sign of the anti-Jewish and eventually genocidal Nazi plans enacted after they finally seized power in 1933.

The attempted Nazi coup took place in November 1923, and it was a fiasco. Hitler became afraid that another leader in Bavaria was about to declare Bavarian independence and the restoration of the Bavarian monarchy (which would throw a monkey-wrench into his plans to control all of Germany) so he acted two days before the planned date of the coup. Hitler and his core followers took over a meeting in a Munich beer hall and captured some reluctant Bavarian politicians. Scheubner-Richter fetched an angry Ludendorff, who had not been informed of their actions. When Hitler ran off to investigate a report of a fight between soldiers and his own men, Ludendorff allowed the captured politicians to walk away, over Scheubner-Richter's objections. The coup-plotters, now without hostages or any clear plan, decided to march. Ludendorff lead the Nazi marchers into a line of armed soldiers who opened fire, and the Nazis returned fire. Sixteen Nazis were killed, including Scheubner-Richter. The Nazis dispersed. Hitler tried to flee, but was arrested.[145]

During the trial of the failed revolutionaries Hitler seized the limelight and used the trial to raise his profile and paint himself as a selfless patriot who was willing to sacrifice it all for the sake of Germany. Earlier Hitler had decried democracy as Jewish, but in a speech at the trial, Hitler emphasized that the particular form of government was of little importance to him. In fact, Hitler even claimed to be a republican! What mattered was the opposition of the government to the conspiracy:

> "I am no monarchist, but ultimately a Republican… The fate of Germany does not lie in the choice between a Republic or a Monarchy, but in the content of the Republic and the Monarchy. What I am contending against is not the form of a state as such, but its ignominious content. We wanted to create in Germany the precondition which alone will make it possible for the iron grip of our enemies to be removed from us. We wanted to create order in the state, throw out the drones, take up the fight against international stock exchange slavery, against our whole economy being cornered by trusts, against the politicizing of the trade unions…"[146]

If Hitler had been shot during the attempted coup like Scheubner-Richter, or if he had not made such a successful spectacle at his trial and remained just another obscure German radical, his story to this point would still be an important example of the influence of conspiracy

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Shirer, pp. 67-74.

[146] Hitler's Speech at the Putsch Trial (February 1924), German History in Documents and Images, German Historical Institute. Available at: http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3913, Accessed Feb 13, 2019.

theories on politics. Inspired by conspiracy theories spread by supporters of the Russian autocracy decades earlier, a German had attempted to overthrow his own republican government. Unfortunately, Hitler was allowed a second act in which his debt to conspiracy theories concocted by the likes of Gregori Butmi-de-Katzman is even more evident.

For his attempt at violent revolution, a sympathetic court gave Hitler a lenient sentence of five years in prison. He served less than a year. Hitler had made Rosenberg chairman of the NSDAP in his absence. Hitler's performance at the trial had made him a celebrity in some *völkisch* circles and he received hundreds of guests during his comfortable imprisonment.[147] While he was in prison he began dictating his first book, *Mein Kampf*. This long and rambling book provides an interesting snapshot of Hitler's thinking during this time. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler reiterated many of the main ideas from earlier iterations of the Judeo-Masonic / Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theories and presented a putative Jewish plan that had a goal of enslaving Germany to Jewish finance capital. The conspiracy would first soften Germany up with a French invasion and then have communist foot soldiers take over the country.[148] Hitler presented the Jews as natural conspirators, but he also traced the path of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy that began, Hitler believed, with the arrival of modernity, - when Jews were able to grasp at the "old goal, which was promised to [them] in ancient times, namely world-rulership…"[149] Hitler wrote that the conspiracy had worked hard to advance the ideas of universal rights, as a way of finally gaining legal equality with the Gentiles. Its main tool in this endeavor was, of course, the Freemasons:

> "...in the freemason organization, which had fallen completely into his [the Jews] hands, he found a magnificent weapon which helped him to achieve his ends. Government circles, as well as the higher sections of the political and commercial bourgeoisie, fell a prey to his plans through his manipulation of the masonic net, though they themselves did not even suspect what was happening."[150]

Hitler believed that when the Jewish conspiracy was unable to take over the world using the Freemasons, they decided to also dominate the press.[151] Hitler repeated the classic Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theorist idea that to facilitate their goal of world rule, the Jews had encouraged the emergence of democracy, which makes states more open to manipulation by the conspiracy:

> "During this phase of his progress the chief goal of the Jew was the victory of democracy, or rather the supreme hegemony of the parliamentary system, which embodies his concept of democracy. This institution harmonizes best with his purposes; for thus the personal element is eliminated and in its place we have the dunder-headed majority, inefficiency and, last but by no means least, knavery."[152]

Later, Hitler wrote, the Jewish conspiracy had used the stock market to dominate economies,[153] and therefore whole peoples danced to their tune, following what they believed to

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[147] Kershaw, Locations 4969-5168.
[148] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, James Murphy Trans., (This electronic edition by "Whte Wolf" however, it is evidently a copy of the 1939 edition. This edition dates from 2014) Kindle Edition, p. 260
[149] Ibid., p. 136.
[150] Ibid., p. 137.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Ibid., p. 138.
[153] Ibid., p. 137.

be the dictates of the market. Hitler believed that the conspiracy's goal was to destroy all nations, all national economic independence and "…on its ruins triumphantly erect the structure of the International Stock Exchange."[154]

In line with the teachings of Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter and other emigres from the Russian Empire, Hitler also stated his belief that the Jews had created Marxism and communism, supposedly the ultimate forms of socialist anti-capitalism, as tools to enhance their capitalist takeover of the world: "While on the one hand he organized capitalistic methods of exploitation to their ultimate degree of efficiency, he curried favor with the victims of his policy and his power and in a short while became the leader of their struggle against himself... Without knowing it, the worker is placing himself at the service of the very power against which he believes he is fighting."[155] Hitler believed that a major propaganda campaign, or perhaps rather a counter-propaganda campaign, was necessary to educate the workers about the true Judeo-capitalist ends of their supposedly "socialist" leaders. Hitler also suggested that the same results could be achieved if "the government authorities would get rid of the Jew and his work… " [156] Hitler did not elaborate further on what he meant by this, but in retrospect it is quite ominous in light of the Nazi emergency constitution of 1923 and the later genocide of the Jews during WWII.

A change from the earlier Russian version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that is evident in *Mein Kampf* is a much more pronounced racialism. Butmi-de-Katzman, Frederick Milligen, et. al. saw the struggle as essentially religious, not racial. The Jewish conspiracy was against Christian civilization and Christianity, and it sought to replace them with Judaism and a Jew-dominated civilization. The *Protocols* makes it clear that the goal of the Jewish conspiracy is a universal Jewish monarchy, with Judaism supplanting Christianity as the main religion. Racial theory does not play much of a role. Hitler mixed the Judeo-Masonic / Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory with racialist *völkish* ideas. He described the conspiracy of Jews as racially self-aware, one that had long recognized the importance of racial purity. They had conspired to use racial pollution as a weapon to undermine their racial competitors by deliberately mixing with gentiles and destroying "enemy" races by making them part-Jewish:

> "He [the Jew] poisons the blood of others but preserves his own blood unadulterated. The Jew scarcely ever marries a Christian girl, but the Christian takes a Jewess to wife. The mongrels that are a result of this latter union always declare themselves on the Jewish side. Thus a part of the higher nobility in particular became completely degenerate. The Jew was well aware of this fact and systematically used this means of disarming the intellectual leaders of the opposite race. To mask his tactics and fool his victims, he talks of the equality of all men, no matter what their race or color may be. And the simpletons begin to believe him."[157]

Hitler declared that the conspiracy went beyond just adulterating other races with Jewish blood, "The Jews were responsible for bringing negroes into the Rhineland, with the ultimate idea of bastardizing the white race which they hate and thus lowering its cultural and political level so that the Jew might dominate."[158] This racial mixing was deliberate and conscious, and "systematically practiced by the Jew…"[159] Hitler believed that behind a screen of deception the "Jew is destroying the racial basis of our existence and thereby annihilating our people."[160]Something like this idea had already been mentioned in the pages of *Aufbau-*

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[154] Ibid., p. 139.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid., p. 141.
[157] Ibid., p. 138.
[158] Ibid., p. 142.
[159] Ibid., p. 236.
[160] Ibid., p. 237.

Korrespondenz, for example when in 1923 Scheubner-Richter warned that "...in a few years time there will be no Russians and no Germans, no national peoples at all, but under the scepter of The International a mixture of the races…" [161] - but this racialism had not been a major aspect of the earlier Russian iterations of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. An important consequence of Hitler's fusion of racialist beliefs with the Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory was the eventual Nazi disdain for Slavs. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler still called the Russians a "great people"[162] but by the end of his rule Hitler was responsible for the deaths of millions of Russians, to say nothing of Ukrainians, Poles, and other Slavic peoples. Though the conspiracy theory at the core of Hitler's belief came directly from Russia, Hitler eventually saw the Slavs as slaves of the Jews, poor-quality racial material that could be dispensed with. Hitler's racialist retreading of a conspiracy theory that had earlier been believed and spread by Russians reminds us of the flexibility of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, discussed in chapter 7. The central idea is the existence of a conspiracy with massive powers of deception. What the deception has as a goal, or who they supposedly believe their ultimate enemy is can change without too many leaps of logic. After all, any evidence to the contrary may be disinformation.

The Nazis in power

After leaving prison Hitler resumed his political activity and eventually led the Nazis to power through the ballot box, although he never abandoned his determination to establish a dictatorship and a police state. This chapter is not about the Nazi electoral strategy, but it should be mentioned that deceptive propaganda was an important part of their repertoire. The Nazis toned down their advocacy in anti-Jewish conspiracy theories between 1923 and 1933 though they never repudiated their previous statements. When they finally achieved power in 1933 the old themes reemerged. After Hitler became the undisputed leader of Germany the *Protocols* was often cited in Nazi propaganda,[163] unsubtly demonstrating the Nazi's debt to propaganda themes from Tsarist Russia.

After achieving power the Nazis closed or took over papers that they considered hostile, expanded the press holdings of the Nazi party, and gave detailed orders to publishers that were not directly under Nazi control.[164] Nazi books encouraged the belief that Western capitalism and Marxism were two sides of the same Jewish coin, "...two powerful bastions behind which they could work unfettered and untroubled to bring their plans for world domination ever closer to perfection."[165] The work this quote is taken from was a 1933 book titled "Das ist Nationalsozialismus: Organisation und Weltanschauung der NSDAP" (This is National Socialism: the Organization and Worldview of the NSDAP) and it included a detailed history of the Jewish conspiracy the Nazis believed in, which identified the Jews as the main enemy, and

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[161] Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richter, "Der Bolschewisierung Deutschlands" (The Bolshevization of Germany), *Aufbau-Korrespondenz,* 21 September 1923, Year 3, no. 38, p. 3.
[162] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, James Murphy Trans, p. 142.
[163] Lane and Rupp, Location 1407. Also Wolfram Meyer zu Uptrup, "*Why the Jews? The Impact of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion on Nazi Ideology and Policy,*" in *The Global Impact of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Esther Webman ed., (Routledge, 2011), pp. 89-90.
[164] Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, (Belknap Press, 2006), Kindle Edition, pp. 17-20.
[165] Engelbert Huber, "The Anti-Semitism of the NSDAP," In *The Third Reich Sourcebook,* Anson Rabinbach and Sander L. Gilman eds., (University of California Press, 2013), p. 194.

the main ideological tools of the Jews as liberalism - which the Russian propagandists of 1905 believed to be their main adversary - and Marxism - which White Russian propagandists of the civil war and exile identified as the main adversary:

> "What was behind the Freemasons' propagandistic exhortation of *individualism* and *liberalism* was the Jew, who saw in the doctrine of Freemasonry his free ride to economic and world supremacy. It was the doctrine of Freemasonry that engendered the *Enlightenment*, which engendered the *theories of liberalism* that paved the way for the [French} Revolution of 1789...The *Freemason's sermon of liberalism* engendered Jewish capitalism, the consolidation of many assets in a few Jewish hands… it was the brainchild of the Jews...All this brought the ancient Jewish scheme for world domination appreciably closer to fruition. Ever since the plot for Jewish world domination was first laid out at the fifth kabbalistic Sanhedrin in Prague in 1851, it was methodically advanced throughout the nineteenth century.
>
> ...Assuming leadership of the proletarian masses of workers was paramount to Jewish plans for world domination. The Manifesto that Karl Marx thrust upon the world in 1848 from London was merely the reiteration of the "social-anarchist program" set forth by world Freemasonry in 1843. That same year, this Freemasons' program was distributed to lodges throughout the world with the authoritarian directive to use the principles outlined there as a way of gathering, dominating, and leading the revolutionary proletarian masses in a unified movement in such a way as to prevent them from posing any detriment to capitalism. In this manner, the Jew Karl Marx concocted the intoxicating brew that poisoned the minions of workers into a drunken stupor to the point that they finally fell in line behind the Jews and Jewish capitalism. They allowed these Jewish leaders to strip them of their socialism and to supplant it with the surrogate that is Marxism; they let the social struggle be steered into the straits of politics and, rather than strive for that socialism which had been toppled by the Jewish economic monopoly that is capitalism, they stooped to the level of becoming sentinels for Jewish capitalism."[166]

The conspiracy theory was not just for public consumption, the Nazis taught it to their police, activists, and operatives. A visual example of this is Figure 1, a chart of a Nazi vision of the structure of the Grand Jewish conspiracy, published in 1936 as a training aid to the SS political curriculum. It shows the American Joint Consultative Council and the American Jewish committee at the very top. Below these the chart is divided into the informational - propaganda - section (Western/Sephardic) and the executive - force - section (Communist/Ashkenazi.) Freemasonry is under the western section and also there, on the right, is the "demoted" Universal Israelite Alliance, which decades earlier anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists believed was the beating heart of the Grand Conspiracy.[167]

[166] Ibid., pp. 192-194.
[167] Meyer zu Uptrup, p. 92.

Even with these changes and additions, the conspiracy theory promoted in Nazi propaganda was still at its core the same one championed by the Black Hundreds and transmitted to Hitler by Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter. In the 1930s one man recognized and tried to publicize the origins of this conspiracy theory in Tsarist propaganda. Henri Rollin was a French intelligence officer with experience in Russia. Rollin had married a Russian Jewish emigre, and perhaps her familiarity with the kinds of state-subsidized anti-Jewish conspiracy theories common in Russia before the 1917 Revolution helped Rollin see the origins of Nazi ideology more clearly.[168] In 1939 he published the book *L'Apocalypse de Notre Temps* (The Apocalypse of our Time) which laid out the origins of the *Protocols* in Russia, and identified the URP and other Black Hundred groups like the Union of the Archangel Michael as the main publicizers of this strain of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in Russia. He even identified by name some of the former subjects of the Tsar who "went to Berlin, then to Munich, to revive the flame of Austrian and German racism, and to complete his [Hitler's] theories" - including Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter.[169] Rollin got some individual facts wrong but the probity of his analysis in 1939 was incredible, especially given that he was probably not aware of the existence of *Aufbau*. Rollin wrote this book because he believed that unmasking "the colossal mystification of Nazi propaganda seemed to [him] the best way to reduce its effects."[170] Rollin

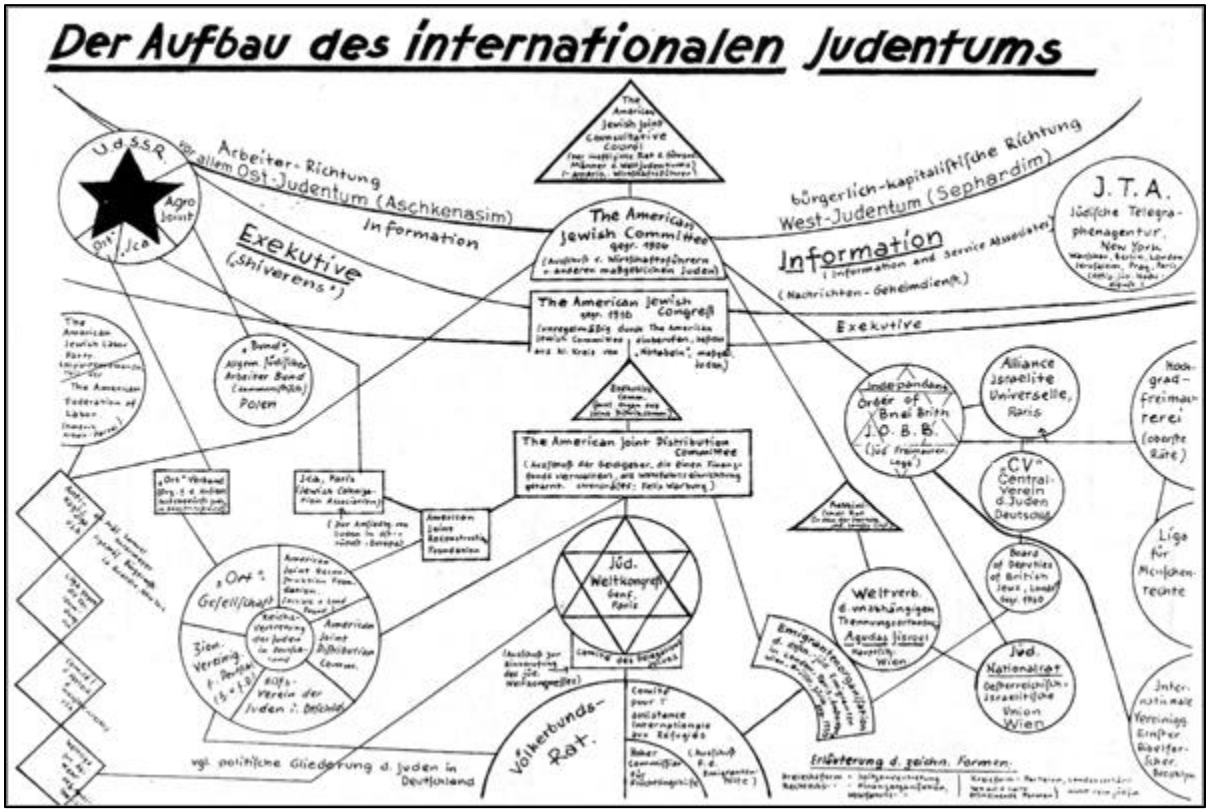

Figure 4

[168] Matthew Cobb, *The Resistance: The French Fight Against the Nazis*, (Pocket Books, 2009), p. 113.
[169] Henri Rollin, *L'Apocalypse de notre temps : Les dessous de la propagande allemande d'après des documents inédits*, (Allia, 2006), p. 209.
[170] Rollin, p. 22.

wanted to show the world that the core of Nazi ideology was not some authentically German idea from the brain of a German genius-leader but a thinly-disguised retread of an outdated Tsarst propaganda campaign. Unfortunately his book was published in 1939, and it did not have time to make an impact before the Nazis conquered France. The book was banned in occupied France[171] and in the libraries where it survived it languished mostly forgotten until long after the Nazis were defeated.

World War II and the Holocaust

Given his belief in the Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy, Hitler naturally would seek to disable liberalism (under the control of the Jews) and destroy the USSR (Bolshevism under the control of the Jews.) The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact between the USSR and Germany was an temporary ruse that allowed Hitler to concentrate his forces against the Western allies and gather his forces to strike at the USSR. Even with a massive state and several intelligence agencies at his service, Hitler and other leading Nazis continued to interpret the world as under the control of a vast secret conspiracy that was *really* pulling the strings. Hitler once pooh-poohed the idea of understanding England, the homeland of some of his primary antagonists, to his closest circle: “At present, England no longer interests me. I am interested only in what's behind her.”[172] Upon the fall of France Rosenberg, still a leading Nazi, immediately sent lieutenants into occupied France to loot the archives of Freemason lodges, searching for evidence of the real levers of Western activity.[173]

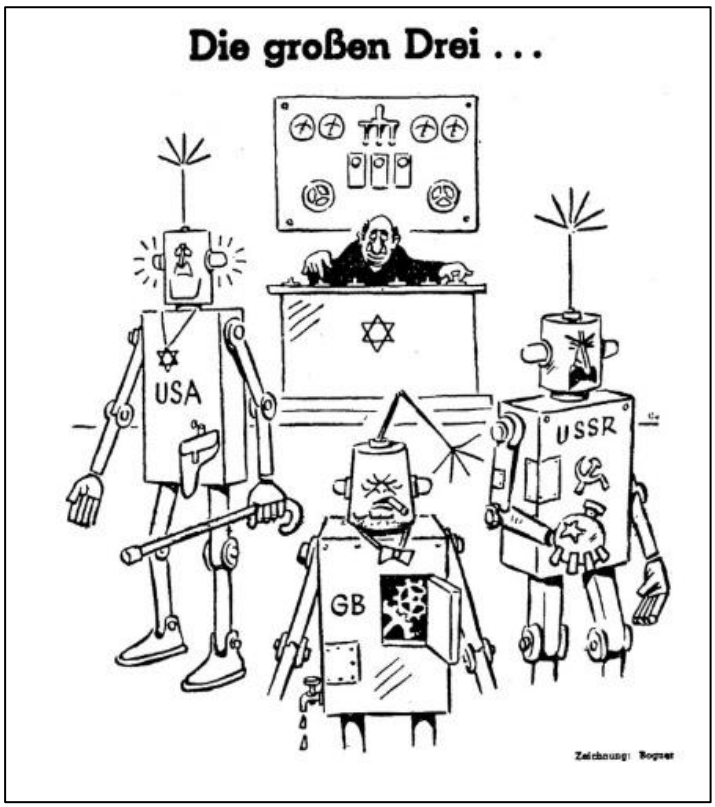

Figure 5

This idea, that the Allies battling Germany were just the tools of a deep global Jewish plot, was also a major theme of German propaganda during the war. Figure 2 is an illustration from a 1943 Nazi publication depicting the USA, the USSR, and Great Britain as robots under Jewish

[171] Simon Kitson, *The Hunt for Nazi Spies: Fighting Espionage in Vichy France*, (University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 142.

[172] H.R. Trevor-Roper ed, *Hitler's Table Talk 1941-1944: Secret Conversations*, (New York: Enigma Books, 2007), p. 93.

[173] Anders Rydell, *The Book Thieves: The Nazi Looting of Europe's Libraries and the Race to Return a Literary Inheritance*, (Viking, 2017) pp. 129-130.

remote control.[174] This belief in a grand conspiracy may have been a factor in the German underestimation of the Allies, and especially of Hitler's underestimation of the USSR. If the USSR was just a tottering Jewish colony supported by deception and terror, then an invasion by a determined army really would make the whole rotten structure collapse. The invasion of the USSR ended up being the strategic blunder that broke the back of Hitler's empire.

We ought to also briefly deal with the mass-murder of the Jews known today as the Holocaust. Hitler's genocidal policies can be explained on racialist grounds, after all the German state also attempted to annihilate the Romani, but the anti-Jewish conspiracy theory also played a role in shaping the genocidal policies of Hitler and other senior Nazis. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler had written that the Jewish conspiracy had weaponized racial mixing, and if one believed this and in the importance of racial purity it would make sense to remove the ability of a conspiracy to destroy one's race by destroying the aggressor race. In private, Hitler himself framed the extermination of the Jews as an act of racial self-defense: "Any and every nation which fails to exterminate the Jews in its midst will sooner or later finish by being itself devoured by them."[175]

This thesis attempts to show how the idea of a Grand Conspiracy Theory, often spread by state propaganda, can affect small groups of people who form their own counter-conspiracies and sometimes engage in violent extremism and plot revolution against the non-existent usurper. In this chapter this pattern is exemplified by Hitler and the core Nazis around him. The scale of the atrocities of the Holocaust, however, are enough to justify a small detour to speculate on the possible effects of the grand conspiracy on a whole population led by this small group of conspiracy theorists. There had been plenty of anti-Jewish violence in both medieval and early-modern Germany, but by the late-19th century the violence was almost gone, especially when compared to Russia. The last major pogrom in Germany before the coming of the Nazis had been in 1819.[176] To explain Holocaust as just an extension of "traditional" German anti-Jewish attitudes is insufficient. The Russian Tsarist regime was also anti-Jewish, and subsidized some extreme anti-Jewish propaganda and organizations that carried out pogroms. However, in general, the regime was anti-pogrom, not because the Tsar and his servants had any special love for the Jews, but because they were anti-chaos, and feared the reputational and unintended consequences of sectarian violence. The purpose of the subsidies and propaganda was to prop up the autocracy, and autocracies are not assisted by pogroms and assassinations, so they were reined in. As Alexander III once said in an earlier era: "I am very glad when they beat up Jews, but nevertheless it can't be allowed."[177]

The Nazis, on the other hand, sometimes relished chaos that resulted in Jewish deaths and encouraged the most extreme anti-Jewish attitudes in the German population. Eventually the campaign went well beyond just controlled chaos. Not only were pogroms and violence against Jews officially encouraged, most notably the 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom, but state bodies directly organized the mass extermination of Jews, which ordinary German soldiers,

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[174] Meyer zu Uptrup, p. 104. Citation there from SS paper *das Schwarz Korps* (the Black corps) July 8 1943, p. 1.

[175] Trevor-Roper, p. 678.

[176] Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, Helmut Walser Smith, "Introduction", in *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, Helmut Walser Smith eds., (University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp 1-2.

[177] Montefiore, p. 463.

bureaucrats, and policemen willingly participated in. The Nazis were not attempting to defend an establishment, a monarch, they were trying to revolutionize the world and destroy what they believed was a an enemy that was intent on destroying their race. They managed to convince a large enough portion of the population to willingly go to foreign lands and murder Jews. This was partially justified through appeals to self-defense against a Judeo-Bolshevik enemy. The post-war Nuremberg court judgement against the Nazi press chief Otto Dietrich expressed this idea when it condemned him of organizing:

> "a well thought-out, oft-repeated, persistent campaign to arouse the hatred of the German people against Jews was fostered and directed by the press department and its press chief, Dietrich….they were not aimless expression of anti-Semitism, and they were not designed only to unite the German people in the war effort . . . Their clear and expressed purpose was to enrage Germans against the Jews, to justify the measures taken and to be taken against them, and to subdue any doubts which might arise as to the justice of measures of racial persecution to which Jews were to be subjected…"[178]

The invasion of the USSR expanded the possibilities for the organized mass-murder of Jews by Germans led by a Nazi government convinced that they were combatting a racial enemy that had been engaged in a massive conspiracy to destroy the German race. One of the earlier mass killings of the Holocaust was on 29-30 September 1941 in Kyiv, at the ravine called Babi Yar. Retreating Soviet forces had hidden bombs along the main street in Kyiv that destroyed a large section of central Kyiv five days after the Germans had occupied the city. This provided the justification for a mass shooting of 33,771 Jews at Babi Yar, including women and children.[179] Mass murder at this scale could not be hidden or ignored, and the commander of Army Group South Field Marshal Walter von Reichenau issued an official explanation for the massacre. He proclaimed that the German army was attacking the USSR as part of its mission of "liberating the German people from the Asian-Jewish danger once and for all" and exterminating the "the Jewish-Bolshevist system..." He called for the continuation of these kind of atrocities, as there was a "need for hard but just atonement for Jewish subhumanity." While Reichenau mainly referenced these massacres as revenge for partisan warfare (and therefore justifying the killing of the race that he believed were the "true" wire-pullers of resistance against the German army) he also referenced the need for revenge "for all bestialities that were inflicted on German and related ethnicities…"[180] This appears to be a reference to Hitler's idea that the Jewish conspiracy having practiced deliberate clandestine racial destruction over the long term.

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[178] Herf, *The Jewish Enemy,* p. 22.

[179] Karel C. Berkhoff, "Dina Pronicheva's Story of Surviving the Babi Yar Massacre: German, Jewish, Soviet, Russian, and Ukrainian Records," in *The Shoah in Ukraine: History, Testimony, Memorialization,* Ray Brandon, Wendy Lower eds., (Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 291-292.

[180] "Das Verhalten der Truppe im Ostraum" October 12, 1941, further sourced from John Mendelson, *The Holocaust, Selected Documents in Eighteen Volumes* (New York/London:1982) Vol. 10, Einsatzgruppen, p. 7ff. Available online at: https://www.ns-archiv.de/krieg/untermenschen/reichenau-befehl.php#begleit. Accessed Feb 21, 2019.

Arendt on Nazi methods

Once they had taken over the German government, the Nazis sought direct and indirect control over the press in order to engage in propaganda campaigns. They worked to ensure that Nazis dominated the universities and other cultural institutions. They eventually attempted to re-arrange the political economy of an entire continent, used starvation as a weapon, and practiced a strategy of racial destruction. In other words, they did the all the things Hitler had accused the Jewish conspiracy of doing. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Hannah Arendt wrote that the Nazis used the *Protocols* as a "textbook for global conquest" and she asked "why the totalitarian claim to global rule, to be exercised by members and methods of a secret society, should become an attractive political goal at all." She believed the answer to this lies in previous imperial practices combined with the ideology of the "so-called pan-movements."[181] Arendt identified of the legacy of European imperialism outside Europe as a major influence on how the Nazis attempted to engage in imperialism in Eastern Europe.

This chapter offers an alternative answer to Arendt's question about the apparent similarities between the Nazi's plans and methods and the actions they believed the Jewish conspiracy was taking. The Nazis used the "methods of a secret society" and aped their imaginary foes in what they believed were defensive measures and "retaliation" against their non-existent enemy. They were acting in a manner similar to Leopold II of Austria when he formed "The Association" secret society to fight the Illuminati, or to the Tsar's secret funding of the Black Hundred press to fight the press that was believed to be controlled by a Jewish conspiracy. Unlike these two earlier examples, the Nazis had no legitimate authority to rein them in, no king or *ancien régime* that was using the "secret society" or the political movement for his own purposes, and could withdraw its support and move on. In this way the Nazis are like the Salis-Soglio brothers, but on a grander scale. The Salis-Soglio brothers believed that the Illuminati had managed to secretly seize control of the Austrian empire and so they organized a violent revolt against that Empire. Rosenberg, Scheubner-Richter, and Hitler believed that the Weimar Republic was a sinister front for a Jewish plot to destroy Germany, so they tried to overthrow it. After they took over in 1933, senior Nazis continued to be motivated by the belief that a sinister conspiracy had taken control of nearly the entirety of Western civilization through seemingly antagonistic ideologies of liberal capitalism and Marxism. They then set out to destroy both. Hitler came to believe that the foundation of the grand conspiracy was racial, and so he set out to destroy the "opposing" race.

Arendt went too far by indicating that the Nazi's discovered their own program for governing by examining the *Protocols* and imitating it: "The Nazis started with the fiction of a conspiracy and modeled themselves, more or less consciously, after the example of the secret society of the Elders of Zion…"[182] Actually the Nazis received the core of their ideological inheritance not from a fictional tale but from *Aufbau,* an actual secret society dedicated to combating the Judeo-Bolshevik menace. The crucial difference between the fictitious Jewish conspiracy depicted in the *Protocols* and the program of the Nazis was that the conspiracy supposedly operated behind the scenes, while the Nazi empire acted in broad daylight. The

[181] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, Location 187.
[182] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 378.

Jewish domination of the world was said to be through a clandestine "peaceful conquest" and the Nazis attempted an actual armed conquest.

Arendt seemed to believe that the Nazis chose the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy as a propaganda tool, a story to help shore up Nazi power. She discussed this as part of her broader analysis of the similarities between Nazi and Soviet propaganda in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, specifically with how they "choose those elements from existing ideologies which are best fitted to become the fundaments of another, entirely fictitious world."[183] This world was "fit to compete with the real one, whose main handicap is that it is not logical, consistent, and organized."[184] Arendt wrote that lies that support this "fictitious world" were placed at the center of totalitarian ideologies, which meant that they had to be maintained in order for these ideologies to keep their internal integrity. She accused Hitler and Stalin of having "clung to their original lies in the face of absurdity"[185] in order to maintain these ideologies.

Arendt did not seem to understand that to Hitler and other Nazis the "real world" was the product of a massive deception. To the Nazis, the ideological contest was not some battle between their fictional world vs the real world. Instead the Nazis saw it as their task to unmask and destroy of the massive Jewish deception that encompassed the whole world. This hermeneutic trick allows true believers to dismiss any individual piece of contrary evidence as just an aspect of this grand deception. To the Nazi true believer, the important thing is not the truth or falsity of the *Protocols*, but the "truth" of the existence of the conspiracy. This provides a framework that allows one to interpret all of reality through the prism of a massive deception.

In a section dealing with the "elite formations" of totalitarian movements, such as the SS and SA, Arendt wrote that these men "are not even supposed to believe in the literal truth of ideological clichés."[186] Doubtless the Nazis attracted many power-hungry cynics to their elite bodies, especially after they were in government. The successful Nazi party attracted many careerist, corruptioneers, and cynics like any other party in power. Arendt also marveled at the suddenness with which the German population dropped Nazi ideology the moment that they were defeated, and concludes:

> "The moment the movement, that is, the fictitious world which sheltered them, is destroyed, the masses revert to their old status of isolated individuals who either happily accept a new function in a changed world or sink back into their old desperate superfluousness. The members of totalitarian movements, utterly fanatical as long as the movement exists, will not follow the example of religious fanatics and die the death of martyrs (even though they were only too willing to die the death of robots)."[187]

In 1923 Scheubner-Richter did die the martyr's death, and he left behind a terrible legacy in the form of Hitler and the Nazi party. They continued to fight Scheubner-Richter imaginary enemies long after he was dead and his *Aufbau* went defunct. There was an elite, a pre-Nazi anti-Jewish elite, that did ardently believe in a Jewish conspiracy. This was the hard-core, the group that attempted the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923, and who built the Nazi party and

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[183] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 362.
[184] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 362.
[185] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 362.
[186] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 384.
[187] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 363.

formed the cadre that drove it towards power. The Nazis did manage to attain power, but what if they had not - but instead engaged in acts of terror, other failed coups, or what if Hitler had not shot himself in Berlin at the end but had instead fled to an alpine redoubt and carried on an insurgency? The attitude of the postwar German population after WWI and WWII may have been very different in both cases.

Arendt saw the "lying statements"[188] of totalitarian leaders as evidence of cynicism. In fact, at least in the case of Hitler, his "lies" appear to have been a combination of necessary dissembling during war (whether that be a war against the Allies or a war against the Jewish conspiracy), and a deep belief that the "obvious truth" believed by others was actually a deception. The writings of Hitler's mentors before the 1923 coup demonstrate that there was a dedicated group, inspired by Tsarist propaganda from decades earlier, that truly believed in a massive Jewish deception long before they dreamed up the Nazi state. Indeed, it appears that these beliefs inspired the 1923 attempted coup and the structure of the conspiratorial-authoritarian government they were planning to impose on Germany after they succeeded.

These same beliefs persisted after Hitler gained power. The historian Stephen Kotkin has spoken of the greatest secret of the Soviet Archives, which show that "...behind closed doors when these guys didn't expect anyone to overhear, they talked like Communists: of class warfare, kulaks, global imperialism, finance capital. It was not just about personal power, careerism, and control. They were to a great degree true believers…"[189] The same thing is true for Hitler. We have a record of some of Hitler's private conversations with his closest subordinates between 1941 and 1944 from a collection known as *Hitler's Table Talk.* In these records Hitler appears to be a true believer in the conspiratorial capacity of Jewry, saying that the Jews had "...seized the levers of control in the Anglo-Saxon world (the press, the cinema, the radio, economic life), ...in the United States he is the entire inspiration of the populace, especially of the negroes…"[190] Churchill was just a "puppet of the Jewry that pulls the strings."[191] Freemasonry was "...a handful of men who are responsible for the war."[192]

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the transfer of the Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory from the disintegrating Russian empire to post-war WWI Germany, and how the narrative of a super-powerful Jewish conspiracy adapted to the German environment, and specifically to völkish ideology. This was assisted by a few former residents of and refugees from the Russian empire who imported themes and texts from Black Hundred propaganda to Germany, and a group of whom formed an organization to clandestinely carry on the fight against the non-existent Jewish conspiracy in Munich. Hitler was indoctrinated by two men associated with this circle early in his political career, Rosenberg and Scheubner-Richter. Inspired by the belief that

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[188] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Kindle Edition, p. 382.
[189] "Interview with steven kotkin - author of the Pushkin Prize 2015 shortlisted book 'Stalin Volume I: Paradoxes of power, 1878-1928,'" interview by Andrew Jack. Available at http://www.pushkinhouse.org/author-interviews-2015-1. Accessed February 21, 2019.
[190] Trevor-Roper, p. 394.
[191] Trevor-Roper, p. 72.
[192] Trevor-Roper, p. 184.

the German government was part of a grand Jewish conspiracy preparing the way for a Jewish-lead communist revolution in Germany, they collaborated to overthrow the Weimar Republic in the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923. This places Hitler's beliefs in the tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory stretching back to the 18th century. It also demonstrates that the early Nazis followed a path towards violent extremism that had been followed at least twice before, with the Salais-Soglio brothers and the URP.

Using the writings of Rosenberg and some material written by his first German employer Dietrich Eckart, we examined Rosenberg's evidently tepid attitude towards the classic conspiracy-theory text the *Protocols* compared to his enthusiastic embrace of the idea of a grand Jewish conspiracy. Rosenberg referred to the text as "contested" but nevertheless ardently believed in a grand Jewish conspiracy, based on other "evidence" and a conviction that a massive deception was at work. This belief enabled him to interpret nearly any new piece of information in a way that aligned with this belief. The writings in *Aufbau* also demonstrated this same hermeneutic agility. This worldview was also Hitler's after he came to power and during the war, as evidenced through his *Table Talk.*

This chapter dealt with Arend's ideas that downplay the importance of "true belief" in the inner core of the Nazi party. By documenting the foundations of a pillar of Nazi ideology in pro-Tsarist propaganda, and demonstrating how true believers in the idea of a Jewish conspiracy migrated to Munich and indoctrinated Hitler, this chapter demonstrates the importance of a core of "true believers" in the formation of the Nazi party. Many of these people from the Russian empire were originally concerned with fighting the enemies and imaginary enemies of the Tsarist autocracy, and were willing to engage in violence and make significant sacrifices to combat these enemies.

Chapter 10: Lenin and the Grand Conspiracy Theory

When the financial oligarchy think it advisable to get parliamentary cover for their acts of violence, the bourgeois State has at its disposal for this purpose all the manifold instruments inherited from centuries of class rule and multiplied by all the miracles of capitalist technology—lies, demagogy, baiting, calumny, bribery, and terror.

To demand of the proletariat that like meek lambs they comply with the requirements of bourgeois democracy in the final life-and-death struggle with capitalism is like asking a man fighting for his life against cut-throats to observe the artificial and restrictive rules of French wrestling, drawn up but not observed by his enemy."[1]
- Leon Trotsky

"...the truly scientific (though in my opinion too deterministic) approach of Marx has been forgotten by his latter-day followers, the Vulgar Marxists, who have put forward a popular conspiracy theory of society which is no better than the myth of the Learned Elders of Zion."[2] - Karl Popper

Introduction

In the previous century Soviet propaganda was responsible for spreading some of the most influential conspiracy theories. This is somewhat incongruous as Marx's determinist - or as Karl Popper describes it "historicist" - ideology should be immunized against the idea of small groups of conspirators having a significant effect on the course of history. This chapter will attempt to explain how Lenin, while following Marx, still managed to incorporate a major conspiracy theory into communist ideology in the form of his theory of imperialism.

After a brief discussion of non-Marxist socialist conspiracy theories, this chapter will focus on Soviet communism and describe the two main kinds of arguments about why the Communist party of the USSR became such a remarkable producer of conspiracy theories in spite of their determinist Marxist intellectual background. The remainder of the chapter will be dedicated to the narrative of how and why Lenin adopted a variant of the anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy Theory (though shorn of its Jewish elements) and to examining the use of this variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Bolshevik ideology and propaganda in the lead up to

[1] *The Communist International: 1919-1943- Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922*, Jane Degras ed., (Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 44.
[2] Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, (Routledge Classics, 2002), p. 167.

the October 1917 coup, and then briefly examine its subsequent use in early Soviet propaganda. This chapter mainly covers the period between 1914 and 1924, between the beginning of WWI and the death of Lenin - the "first phase" of the USSR's history.

Because of their ideological rigidity and easy use of repression against populations under their control or violence against anyone standing in their way, Lenin's Bolshevik faction were classic left-wing extremists. Unlike with some other examples of violent extremists examined in this thesis, this thesis will not argue that the Grand Conspiracy Theory made a contribution to the emergence of the Bolshevik strain of extremism. Time and space constraints prevent us from examining the emergence of Lenin's faction and his vision for them, but suffice it to say that by 1914, when he incorporated a modified version of John Hobson's anti-Jewish conspiracy theory into Leninist ideology, Lenin was already a violent subversive at the head of a conspiratorial group dedicated to revolution. This chapter does not focus on how this new Leninist conspiracy theory may or may not have affected the evolution of Soviet policy. This thesis is more interested in how this conspiracy theory was integrated into Leninist ideology, subsequently allowing the theory to spread globally because of the propaganda apparatus of the USSR.

Discussing Soviet conspiracy theories is more difficult than discussing the other more "reactionary" conspiracy theories described earlier in this thesis because of the Soviet tendency to load texts with Marxist vocabulary which can muddle the narrative. This chapter will be full of very long quotes and sometimes repeated examples of the same kind of rhetoric, often chosen because they contain somewhat less ponderous prose, but which still demand careful attention. Most of the example conspiracy theories discussed in this thesis so far include direct-enough explanations from their believers, relatively short statements that distill their conspiracist beliefs. Unfortunately, when examining the topic of Lenin's variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, a great deal of patience is demanded from both the researcher and the reader.

Socialism, Marxism, and conspiracy theories

Socialists could be just as susceptible to believing or being tempted to use conspiracy theories as supporters of the Throne and Altar. Recall the discussion of the work of the socialist Toussenel and the magazine *L'Anti-Semitique* in chapter 7. Also recall from that chapter that the socialist Bakunin privately toyed with the anti-Rothschild conspiracy theory by speculating that the family of Jewish bankers were funding his ideological foe within socialism, Karl Marx.

Socialist conspiracy theorists did not need to take up anti-Jewish ideas to believe that there is a nearly-all-powerful network of the privileged who deceive and manipulate the masses for their own ends. Bakunin, for example, was not usually given to anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, but did preach the idea that the entire structure of Western civilization, church, state, and civil society, was the self-consciously deceptive project of a group of oppressors. Take this passage he wrote around 1870 attacking the church` as agents of the state for perpetuating the oppression of the people by the few through deliberate deception:

> "…robber and robbed, oppressor and oppressed live side by side, ruled by a handful of people, in whom one recognizes the real oppressors. It is always the same type of men, who, free of all political and religion prejudice, consciously torture and oppress the rest of the people. In the l7th and l8th centuries, until the advent of the great revolution, they ruled Europe and did as they liked.

They do the same to-day... History teaches us that the chief priests of Church and State are also the sworn servants and creatures of these damnable institutions. Whilst consciously deceiving the people and leading them into disaster, these persons are concerned to uphold zealously the sanctity and unapproachability of both establishments. The Church, on the authority of all priests and most politicians, is essential to the proper care of the people's sons; and the State is indispensable, in their opinion, for the proper maintenance of peace, order, and justice. And the doctrinaires of all schools exclaim in chorus: 'Without Church or Government, progress and civilization is impossible.'"[3]

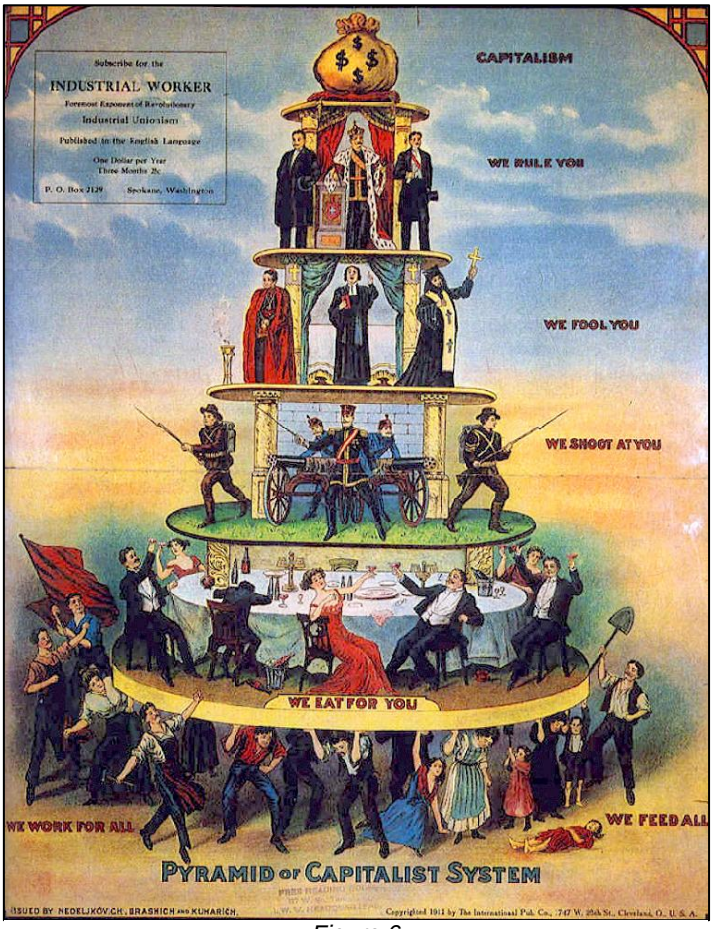

Figure 6

Another more demotic example of Socialist propaganda that emphasized deception, and suggesting some kind of conspiracy theory, is the famous image the "Pyramid of Capitalist System" published in the United States in 1911 (Figure 1). This image attacks the capitalist system by depicting it as a pyramid whose base is supported by miserable workers ("We Work for All / We Feed All.") Above them are the rich ("We eat for you"), above them are soldiers ("We shoot at you"), above them are the clergy ("We fool you") above them kings, presidents, politicians, etc. ("We rule you") and at the very top of the pyramid sits a bag of money - "Capitalism."[4] The layer with the clergy is the one that concerns us here - it shows a Roman Catholic cardinal, a protestant preacher, and an orthodox priest. This makes a point similar to Bakhunin's, that the clergy are nothing more than "servants" of the rulers whose purpose is to "fool" the oppressed people, to keep them in line and keep them from rebelling.

[3] Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, *The Selected Works of Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin*, (Library of Alexandria, 2009). Also available at https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/writings/ch11.htm.

[4] Eric Triantifillou, "The Pyramid's Reign", *Signal: 05: A Journal of International Political Graphics & Culture,* Alec Dunn and Josh MacPhee eds., (2016).

This image is in turn based on a 1901 image the “Pyramid of Autocracy” produced in Geneva by Nikolai Lokhov, an artist working for the Russian Union of Social Democrats Abroad, an organization of Russian exiles. [5] [6] The “Pyramid of Autocracy” attacked Russian autocracy by depicting Russian society as a similar pyramid, with the Imperial Eagle at the top instead of “Capitalism.” In this image there is also a tier for clergy with “We fool[7] you” which also implies a message like that of Bakhunin’s, that the Russian clergy were agents of the tyrannical rulers of Russia, used to befuddle the people and keep them enslaved to the Tsar. Unlike in the United States in 1911 where there were a multitude of denominations and religious dissenters, the idea of a monolithic and controlled clergy was not a fantasy in the Russian Empire. In Russia there was an official church - the Russian Orthodox Church. It was subordinated to the state and clergy were basically part of the state bureaucracy.[8] In this situation it was at least conceivable that the state could order the clergy around, perhaps even to “fool” the people. The import of this image from the Russian Empire to describe the situation in the United States is an example of the larger phenomena of conspiracy theories. Just as was discussed in chapter 3, the use of ideas of influence and conspiracy that might actually work in a monarchy - manipulating and deceiving the sovereign, when applied to a democracy necessitate the existence of a conspiracy large and powerful enough to deceive the whole mass of the “sovereign” people. Analogously, while it might have been possible for the Russian government to “fool” the people via its state-controlled church, the idea that “capitalism” in the United States could do something similar suggests the existence of a vast network of secret levers of control stretching into the major religious denominations - a conspiracy theory. The 1911 image “Pyramid of Capitalist System” was probably the work of Serbian immigrant artists. In 1912 this image made it onto the pages of the newspaper of a major union Industrial Workers of the World, which partially accounts for its fame.[9] However, while this image may have become famous, it does not represent any kind of organized propaganda campaign.

Socialists conspiracy theorists did not have access to state-level propaganda apparatuses until after the Russian Revolution of 1917. The remainder of this chapter will examine how Lenin, the first leader of the Soviet Union, became enamored of a conspiracy theory derived from the grand anti-Jewish conspiracy theory, and how this theory became a core part of Bolshevik ideology and therefore of Soviet propaganda.[10]

Claiming that a variant of communism has a conspiracy theory at its core is incongruous on the surface, because communists broadcast their adherence to Marxism, which should be resistant to conspiracy theories. The root of Karl Marx’s thought was his belief in economic determinism. The economic structure, which is in turn based on concrete “relations of

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[5] Ibid.

[6] As Triantifillou mentions, this image is based on a Belgian caricature from 1885 that depicts King Leopold of Belgium at the top. However, the 2nd rung, the clerics has “Je prie pour vous” I pray for you - instead of an accusation of deception. See John Grand-Carteret, *Popold II, Roi des Belges et des Belles*, Louis-Michaud ed., (Paris, 1908) p. 64.

[7] “морочимъ.”

[8] Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, (Penguin, 1993), p. 243.

[9] Triantifillou.

[10] The core of this analysis is dependent on the unfortunately short commentary on this topic from Daniel Pipes, see Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy*, p. 82.

production," is what the rest of society is based on. All other aspects of society, political, intellectual etc., are based on economic conditions:

> "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."[11]

The idea that a group of conspirators could derail the determined, economically rooted, process of history and "usurp" political power is ridiculous in such a system. As Karl Popper wrote, Marx:

> "...saw in such phenomena as war, depression, unemployment, and hunger in the midst of plenty, not the result of a cunning conspiracy on the part of 'big business' or of 'imperialist war-mongers', but the unwanted social consequences of actions, directed towards different results, by agents who are caught in the network of the social system. He looked upon the human actors on the stage of history, including the 'big' ones, as mere puppets, irresistibly pulled by economic wires— by historical forces over which they have no control. The stage of history, he taught, is set in a social system which binds us all; it is set in the 'kingdom of necessity'. (But one day the puppets will destroy this system and attain the 'kingdom of freedom'.)"[12]

In other words, the "strings" controlling society and creating so much misery were not the work of men, but of history. It was not a conscious conspiracy but an unconscious process that would be overcome. However, by the mid-20th century it was obvious that many avowed followers of Marx had become believers in a kind of anti-capitalist conspiracy theory. Karl Popper, who greatly admired Marx even as he criticized his thought, lamented this change. Popper compared Marx's thought with what he called the "vulgar Marxism" which:

> "...believes that Marxism lays bare the sinister secrets of social life by revealing the hidden motives of greed and lust for material gain which actuate the powers behind the scenes of history; powers that cunningly and consciously create war, depression, unemployment, hunger in the midst of plenty…"[13]

Popper bemoaned the fact that Marx's doctrine of determinism which should be immune to conspiracy theorizing had been "abandoned by most of his followers" by the 1940s, calling it a sad intellectual come-down "from the level of *Capital* to that of *The Myth of the 20th Century.*"[14] (Popper is referring here to the book *The Myth of the 20th Century* written by the Nazi ideologist Alfred Rosenberg, who received much attention in the previous chapter.) Popper

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[11] Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, N. I. Stone trans., (Chicago: Charles H Ker & Company, 1904), p. 11.
[12] Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 312.
[13] Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 311.
[14] Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 312.

speculated that this change might have been done for “propagandist reasons” or because many of Marx’s followers did not really understand him.[15]

Soviet Communism: leftist extremist ideology, a perfect marriage with conspiracy theories?

The obvious agent responsible for the spread of “Marxist” conspiracy theories was the Communist party of the USSR. Popper’s speculation about “propagandist” motivations for the use of Marxist[16] conspiracy theories is a reference to the massive use of conspiracy theories in Soviet propaganda. During the period before Popper wrote about “vulgar Marxism” Stalin’s propaganda organs had pumped out tales of a massive conspiracy of his former colleagues that threatened the USSR, culminating in show trials where captured “members” of this made-up conspiracy of “Trotskyites” confessed their crimes and told of the reach of the conspiracy into every level of Soviet society. Soviet iconography often portrayed malign figures, capitalists, fascists, etc. “fooling” the masses (and of course, eventually being destroyed by the revolution.) The release of some classified material since the collapse of the Soviet Union has revealed that the Soviet Union was responsible for spreading some of the more popular conspiracy theories in circulation today as propaganda, especially against the United States, such as the idea that the CIA had assassinated president Kennedy, or that the AIDS virus was secretly concocted by the US government.[17]

Why did this party founded on determinist Marxist ideology turn to conspiracy theories? Two persuasive arguments have been advanced to explain how this happened, one based on the utility of conspiracy theories in propaganda and the other based on the realities of power after the Bolsheviks seized it - i.e. that there was something inherent in the structure of the Soviet Communist party or in Bolshevik ideology that transformed them into conspiracy theorists after they seized power and started to govern.

Turning first to the utility argument: the use of even the most outrageous conspiracy theories in support of Soviet goals would not have been out of character for the USSR. A group or an individual which decides on deliberately spreading fabricated conspiracy-theory propaganda makes a moral choice that this lie is serving a greater good, such as fighting the radicalism of the Jacobins, or defending Holy Russia from losing its western provinces to the Poles, or even (if one believes a massive evil conspiracy actually exists) as part of the effort to fight off a powerful a-moral Illuminati, or Jesuit, or Jewish conspiracy which itself has no morals and continuously makes use of lies. Lenin however made clear that there is no moral line to cross. The only thing that mattered was the good of the revolution and the party that served that revolution.[18] As he put it in a speech to the Russian Young Communist League in 1920:

> “We reject any morality based on extra-human and extra-class concepts. We say that this is deception, dupery, stultification of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landowners and

[15] Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, p. 312.
[16] Or as Popper would have probably categorized them: pseudo-Marxist.
[17] Robert W Pringle “Active Measures,” in *Historical Dictionary of Russian and Soviet Intelligence*, (Scarecrow press, 2006) p. 15.
[18] Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: The Founders - The Golden Age - The Breakdown*, (W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), p. 769.

> capitalists… We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the working people around the proletariat, which is building up a new, communist society…. To us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle….When people tell us about morality, we say: to a Communist all morality lies in this united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose the falseness of all the fables about morality. Morality serves the purpose of helping human society rise to a higher level and rid itself of the exploitation of labour."[19]

The scholar of Marxism Leszek Kołakowski pointed out that this passage and others like it are difficult to interpret in a matter different from "everything which serves or injures the party's aims is morally good or bad respectively, and nothing else is morally good or bad."[20] This sanctions aggression and conquest,[21] and also torture, robbery, and even spreading the most vile lies, as long as they helped the revolution along. This line of thinking leads inevitably to justifying lies told in the service of the programs or even just the tactics of the leaders of the revolution - and not only concerning lies. If one believes the only moral "good" comes from the good of the party then even the "truth" must be made to conform to the needs of the party. Conspiracy theories could perform this function of making the "truth" correspond to the reality required by the party by alleging an enormous deception has taken place to distort the supposed observed "truth."

A splendid example of how this brand of purposeful amorality can lead to conspiracy theories cropping up in Soviet propaganda was pointed out by Hannah Arendt. She examined how propaganda under the conditions of Stalin's totalitarian police state had to bend to the demands of: "…Stalin's method of accusing a fictitious enemy of the crime he himself was about to commit."[22] So, according to Arendt, when Stalin was about to kill off large sections of the senior ranks of the Communist party of the USSR he invented the idea of a clandestine network of Jewish doctors who had been secretly killing off large sections of the Communist party of the USSR.[23] Unlike any act by Stalin, who had at his disposal a party apparatus, a secret police, an army, etc., any group of conspirators capable of doing such consequential acts under the noses of the Soviet authorities would require a vast clandestine network with amazing powers of concealment and deception and nearly limitless resources – which requires a conspiracy theory to explain their continued influence and ability to evade detection. This concocted conspiracy theory was then used to justify the purge that Stalin was intending to carry out.

By the time Stalin achieved absolute power it was evident that the post-history paradise was not arriving promptly after the 1917 Revolution. A conspiracy theory was a route that Soviet propaganda could take to explain this "failure" as well as justify future failures, shortages, and the state's use of repression. Karl Popper referred to this kind of post-utopian conspiracy theorizing in a short passage in *The Open Society*:

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[19] Vladimir Lenin "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," From October 2, 1920, first published in Pravda, re published in Vol. 31 of Lenin's Collected Works, available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm. Accessed May 20 2018.
[20] Kołakowski, p. 769.
[21] Kołakowski, p. 769.
[22] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Location 611.
[23] Ibid.

> "...people who sincerely believe that they know how to make heaven on earth are most likely to adopt the conspiracy theory, and to get involved in a counter-conspiracy against non-existing conspirators. For the only explanation of their failure to produce their heaven is the evil intention of the Devil, who has a vested interest in hell."[24]

Here Popper speaks of a "counter-conspiracy" that conspiracist revolutionaries can organize in order to fight for a utopia and defend it against the conspiratorial forces preventing its rise. This points to the second kind of argument about the Soviet use of conspiracy theories, that there was something inherent in the nature of the Bolshevik faction of the Communist party that caused it to embrace conspiracy theories, especially after it seized power. Before the Soviet Revolution, Lenin's Bolshevik faction of communists was a kind of secret society itself - a hierarchical clandestine network of amoral, anti-religious revolutionaries who used propaganda and subversion in a quest to seize power - quite similar in some respects to the secret societies that existed in the imaginations of Barruel, Metternich, and others. This conspiratorial structure was not built in a vacuum nor was it directly inspired by the myths of secret societies from the 19th century. The materialism and accompanying amorality were from Marx, but the top-down conspiratorial methods grew from Lenin's belief that the revolution needed a revolutionary vanguard, a group of professional revolutionaries commanded from a single center who would conduct the revolution.

After seizing power, such a deeply un-democratic and secretive system would be the perfect incubator for a re-manifestation of the old practices of the most repressive absolute monarchies, including a secret police and rampant rumors of networks ready to seize power or attempting to influence and deceive the "king" (or, in this case, the leaders of the party). This tendency, the argument often goes, would have been compounded by the necessarily clandestine nature of revolutionary parties before the Revolution. Because it was trying to operate in what was, by the standards of its day, a repressive police state (Tsarist Russia), the Bolshevik faction had to adopt clandestine, conspiratorial tactics.[25] The kind of veteran Bolsheviks who excelled in secretive political work before the revolution would have carried their old experience into the new government. As Arendt put it:

> '...conspirators have an understandable tendency to think that the most efficient methods in politics in general are those of conspiratory societies and that if one can apply them in broad daylight and support them with a whole nation's instruments of violence, the possibilities for power accumulation become absolutely limitless."[26]

A party/government that operates in this manner is liable, like any group of humans, to "mirror imaging" a term used by contemporary intelligence analysts to describe the mind's tendency to assume that the motives and actions of others are similar to one's own.[27] So, a top-down conspiratorial organization that uses deception and subterfuge could see its opponents as similar top-down conspiratorial organizations using subterfuge and deception, and denounce them as such.

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[24] Popper, *The Open Society*, p. 307.
[25] Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy*, p. 175.
[26] Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 379.
[27] Richards J. Heuer Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (US Government Printing Office, 1999), p. 70.

The former US intelligence officer and scholar of the history of Soviet intelligence Dr. Jack Dziak combined this structural argument with the previous utility argument in his concept of "conspiracy come to power" which he used to describe the government of the Soviet Union. The Bolsheviks were a conspiracy to seize power, and after they seized power they naturally used conspiracy theories to justify their power: "Conspiracies presuppose enemies, and a conspiracy come to power must perpetually justify itself by exposing threats to its own exclusive claims."[28] As he explained elsewhere, the nature of this kind of organization, once it got into power, made its leaders and their servants churn with "counterintelligence" paranoia and fears of conspiracies to overthrow the state and seize power:

> "The Soviet Union was a 'counterintelligence state,' that is, an enterprise in which the premier function of the "organs" was to preserve the exclusive claims to power of the Communist Party and its ruling cadres. This "counterintelligence state" fixated on enemies, real and imagined, domestic and foreign. From the very first days of the USSR the intelligence services, as they were mistakenly labeled in the west, were imbued with a counterintelligence character, as was the whole of state and society. Soviet foreign intelligence had the demeanor and feel of external counterintelligence, a characteristic inherited in part from its Okhrana predecessor of Tsarist days."[29]

There is much merit to both of these kinds of arguments, as will be demonstrated later, but many commentators on Soviet history commit the error of focusing on Soviet ideology and propaganda after Lenin seized power. Lenin's Bolshevik faction embraced a variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory before their 1917 coup, and it was an important element of Bolshevik propaganda during their quest to seize power. The Soviet Communist party was tied to a variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory because Lenin used this idea in two of his major works written immediately before the Bolshevik seizure of power. Therefore, it became an important part of Soviet ideology after 1917. This points to a third ideological factor in the Soviet embrace of conspiracy theories that must also be examined. The remainder of this chapter, while taking elements from both the "post-revolutionary" explanations for communist conspiracy theories mentioned above, will examine the circumstances of Lenin's pre-Revolution concoction of his own version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, describe Lenin's major source for this conspiracy theory, and chart its use in early Bolshevik/Soviet propaganda and some of the ideological consequences of this idea.

Communist ideology and deception

In most of the variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that we have examined thus far the ideas of illegitimacy and usurpation have been of chief importance. Usually, there is the idea that the legitimate government (a "rightful" king, for example) was (or is about to be) replaced or superseded by a very powerful conspiracy with superpowers of deception (the Jews, Freemasons, etc.) who have duped the people with propaganda. Using ideas similar to this would not work in Soviet ideology, because Soviet communism had no use for the idea of legitimacy. Lenin and other Bolsheviks were strong believers in the maxim of Marx's friend and

[28] John J. Dziak, *Chekisty: A History of the KGB*, (Lexington Books, 1988), p. 51.
[29] John J. Dziak, "Islamism and Stratagem," in *Cultural Intelligence for Winning the Peace*, Juliana Geran Pilon ed., (Institute of World Politics Press, 2009), p. 288.

collaborator Friedrich Engels: “the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy.”[30] States were just organized violence supporting a class, law was just a weapon of class struggle.[31] There is no room for the idea of usurpation when there is no legitimacy.

However, notice Engels’ emphasis that the democratic republics were similar to monarchies, in that both are “nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another.”[32] Elsewhere Engels stated that in a democratic republic, wealth “employs its power indirectly, but all the more surely” working through corruption and “an alliance between the government and the stock exchange.”[33] Engels wrote that under universal suffrage “the possessing class rules directly through the medium of universal suffrage. As long as the oppressed class… is not yet ripe to emancipate itself, it will in its majority regard the existing order of society as the only one possible…”[34]

How does the ruling class rule directly through the medium of universal suffrage? Here deception can play a role. In an 1880 essay Marx wrote about the importance of a distinct political party of the working class which can then transform universal suffrage “...from the instrument of deception that it has been until now into an instrument of emancipation”.[35] These two ideas, that the people are ruled by the upper classes despite universal suffrage (using an element of deception) and that this rule can only be overcome by a disciplined party contributed to Lenin’s crucial idea of “combating spontaneity” - that absent a revolutionary party every working class movement would inevitably- spontaneously- come under the spell of the upper classes, for example via trade unionism - which diverts the proletariat towards seeking better conditions instead of revolution. This cycle will persist until a revolutionary vanguard emerges which could effectively resist this cycle:[36]

> “There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology… for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism… and trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is *to combat spontaneity, to divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social Democracy.”[37]

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[30] Frederick Engels, *The Civil war in France*, Postscript, (published in 1871, English edition 1871, Translated and edited by Zodiac & Brian Baggins). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/postscript.htm . Accessed May 30 2018.

[31] Kołakowski, p. 663.

[32] Engels, *The Civil war in France*. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/postscript.htm . Accessed May 30 2018.

[33] Frederick Engels, *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Alan West trans. in 1942, p. 93. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/origin_family.pdf. Accessed June 4, 2019.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Karl Marx and Jules Guesde, *The Programme of the Parti Ouvrier*, 1880. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/05/parti-ouvrier.htm. Accessed June 4, 2019.

[36] Kołakowski, pp. 665-666.

[37] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, Section II, Joe Fineberg and George Hanna trans., (edition published in Lenin’s Collected Works, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961, Moscow, Volume 5,

In his earlier work Lenin still saw the parliamentary governments in the West as "better" than the absolutism that still existed in his home country, that is, they were developmentally closer to the coming proletarian revolution. After writing about the tribulations experienced by German socialists under anti-socialist laws in the late 19th century, Lenin wrote: "The Russian proletariat will have to undergo trials immeasurably graver; it will have to fight a monster compared with which an anti-socialist law in a constitutional country seems but a dwarf."[38] Lenin evidently believed that exposing the deceptions of the ruling class was easier in republics than under Tsarism. In 1901 Lenin gave praise to the ability of liberal western societies to uncover deceptions foisted on the people by the rulers:

> "In our times, guns, bayonets, and whips are not a sufficiently reliable guardian; it is necessary to convince the exploited that the government stands above classes, that it does not serve the interests of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, but those of justice, that it is concerned with protecting the weak and the poor against the rich and the powerful, etc. Napoleon III in France and Bismarck and Wilhelm II in Germany exerted no little effort to play up to the workers in this way. ***But in Europe, where there is a more or less free press, a representative government, electoral campaigns, and well-established political parties, all these hypocritical tricks were quickly exposed.*** In Asia, however, which includes Russia, where the masses of the people are so wretched and ignorant, and where there are such strong prejudices fostering faith in Our Father the Tsar, tricks of this kind are quite successful…."[39] [Emphasis not in original]

Note that here Lenin wrote that it was easier to expose "hypocritical tricks" in the more democratic West, not that these tricks weren't also used there and therefore didn't have to be actively exposed. In 1908, after Russia had gotten a Parliament and had its own liberal (Kadet) party that enjoyed serious electoral success, Lenin wrote that "Bourgeois politicians, one and all, in all parliamentary countries, have always paid lip-service to democracy while betraying it."[40] Lenin decried the other Russian socialists who, at a London conference in the previous year, had insisted that "it was not Marxist to speak in the resolution about the liberals' 'deception' of the people…"[41] In Lenin's view denouncing bourgeois deception was an important part of Marxism.

If merely a concern about "deception" was enough to make one a conspiracy theorist, then nearly everyone who has ever thought about politics would have to be labeled a conspiracy theorist. To be classified as a conspiracy theorist one must believe that there is an enormous and successful, or almost-successful, conspiracy that deceives most people, and Lenin's ideas of "combating spontaneity" does not approach this. However, a crisis arose that shocked Lenin so deeply and made him so apprehensive of "bourgeois" deception that he appropriated an anti-

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pp. 347-530). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/ii.htm. Accessed June 4, 2019. See also Kołakowski, p. 667.

[38] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, Section I. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/i.htm. Accessed June 4, 2019.

[39] V. I. Lenin, *A Valuable Admission,* First published in *Iskra*, No. 6, July 1901. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/may/11.htm. Accessed June 4, 2019.

[40] V. I. Lenin, *Deception of the People by the Liberals*, Bernard Isaacs trans., (First published in *Proletary*, No. 25, March (25) 12, 1908. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/mar/12b.htm. Accessed May 20, 2018.

[41] Ibid.

Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to explain it. The trigger for this crisis was the beginning of WWI.

Lenin and socialist "traitors" - the outbreak of WWI

For years Lenin had been waiting for a great crisis of capitalism to initiate the hoped-for Europe-wide socialist revolution. When war broke out in 1914 he believed the crisis had arrived. Before the war the international socialist movement had agreed that the proletariat must never agree to engage in wars between the capitalists states. The two socialist schools of thought at the time believed either that socialists should use all their political power to push for a quick end of a war or that socialists should try to transform a big war into an international revolutionary civil war. Lenin was an advocate of the second school.[42] Lenin was shocked at the response of most European socialists towards the great European war after it actually broke out. Instead of opposing the war, many socialist leaders rallied to their flags and voted for measures supporting mobilization. The most surprising defection of all in Lenin's eyes was probably that of Karl Kautsky, the leader of the German Social Democrats, whom Lenin described as the " biggest authority in the Second International..." [43] [44] Lenin had even written the preface to the Russian edition of Kautsky's 1906 work *The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution.*[45] In August or September 1914 Lenin wrote: "To the socialist it is not the horrors of war that are the hardest to endure...but the horrors of the treachery shown by the leaders of present day socialism."[46]

Lenin defined this horrifying betrayal using two terms, "social-chauvinism" and "opportunism." Social-chauvinism was what non-Leninists might define as patriotism, i.e. the "acceptance of the idea of the defense of the fatherland in the present imperialist war, justification of an alliance between socialists and the bourgeoisie and the governments of their "own" countries in this war, a refusal to propagate and support proletarian revolutionary action against one's "own" bourgeoisie, etc."[47] Lenin saw this "social-chauvinism" as linked to a trend he had identified earlier - opportunism. Lenin defined "opportunism" like this:

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[42] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution,* Locations 9390-9397.
[43] James Ryan, *Lenin's Terror, The ideological origins of early Soviet state violence*, (Routledge, 2012), p. 49.
[44] V. I. Lenin and G. Y. Zinoviev, "Socialism and War", (From *Lenin Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, 1970, Peking, Volume 21, pages 295-338). Available at https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/lenin/works/1915/s+w/ch01.htm#s15 . Accessd May 21, 2018.
[45] V. I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of K. Kautsky's Pamphlet: The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution," (from Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1965, Moscow, Volume 11, pages 408-413). Available at https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/lenin/works/1906/dec/00b.htm. Accessed May 21, 2018.
[46] V. I. Lenin, "The European War and International Socialism," (From Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1974, Moscow, Volume 21, pages 20-24.) Available At https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/aug/x02.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[47] V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International*, Chapter 7, (From Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, [1974], Moscow, Volume 21, pp. 205-259.) Available at https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/lenin/works/1915/csi/vii.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.

> "Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers or, in other words, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directed against the mass of the proletariat"[48]

Lenin took the term "opportunism" from Marx, but made it his own through repeated use as an insult. According to the communist philosopher György Lukács: "For Lenin, opportunism is a phrase which characterizes anyone who surrenders the hope of abolishing the capitalist class and the capitalist system and therefore ceases to be Marxist."[49] In 1915 Lenin wrote that this "opportunism" was made possible by the emergence of a privileged strata of workers whose interests aligned with the bourgeois:

> "...the comparatively peaceful and cultured life of a stratum of privileged workingmen 'bourgeoisified' them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalists, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses"[50]

This a version of the Marxist idea of the "labor aristocracy." Lenin believed that the defection of socialists from the cause of international revolution to support their own countries during WWI demonstrated that opportunism and social-chauvinism were "*one and the same* tendency":[51]

> "In the conditions of the war of 1914-15, opportunism leads to social-chauvinism. The idea of class collaboration is opportunism's main feature. The war has brought this idea to its logical conclusion, and has augmented its usual factors and stimuli with a number of extraordinary ones; through the operation of special threats and coercion it has compelled the philistine and disunited masses to collaborate with the bourgeoisie. This circumstance has naturally multiplied adherents of opportunism and fully explains why many radicals of yesterday have deserted to that camp."[52]

Lenin's polemics against the "social-chauvinists" and against Kautsky in particular used the language of deception. In 1915 Lenin, using some standard Marxist vocabulary, described "Kautskyism" as a "social product of the contradictions within the Second International, a combination of loyalty to Marxism in words and subordination to opportunism in deeds."[53] By late 1914 Lenin was already writing about how the German, French, and English bourgeoisie had "hoodwinked" or fooled, ("*одурачивает" / "одурачить"*) the working class in each of their countries to support the war, including in advanced parliamentary democracies like in France and the UK, by using "false phrases about patriotism" and distracting them from " the only

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Georg Lukacs, *The Process of Democratization*, Susanne Bernhardt and Norman Levine trans., (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 16.
[50] V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International*, Chapter 7.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] V. I. Lenin, *Socialism and War*, Chapter I, (From *Lenin Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, 1970, Peking, Volume 21, pages 295-338). Available at https://marxists.architexturez.net/archive/lenin/works/1915/s+w/ch01.htm#s15. Accessed May 31, 2018.

genuine war of liberation, namely, a civil war against the bourgeoisie both of its 'own' and of 'foreign' countries…"[54]

As was mentioned earlier, the idea of deception was not alien from Lenin's thought before 1914, but here he was implying that a massive deception (or a series of massive deceptions) had taken place all across the "developed" and most democratic European countries. Recall Lenin's earlier statements that it was easier to uncover lies aimed at the workers in the advanced countries than in autocratic Russia. 17 years after writing this Lenin wrote that his socialist opponents in the freer West had been "bribed" in order to corrupt the labor movement as part of a massive bourgeois plot:

> "the *opportunists* (social-chauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of a certain strata of the working class who *have been bribed* out of imperialist superprofits and converted to *watchdogs* of capitalism and *corruptors* of the labour movement."[55]

Hobson's anti-imperialism: The Grand Conspiracy Theory's path into Leninism

Soon after the outbreak of war, Lenin's new bitter enemy Kautsky published an essay titled "Ultra-Imperialism." While some other socialists held that capitalism inevitably led to wars of imperial expansion, in this essay Kautsky argued that warlike imperialism was not necessary for the continued growth of capitalism. In fact, he believed that ill-conceived competition for colonies and the growing grievances of the colonized might lead capitalism to an early death. He suggested that after the war, realizing this danger, the states of Europe might cry "capitalists of all countries, unite!" and renounce the arms race and band together to form a kind of international imperialist cartel to continue developing and exploiting the "agricultural zones" (i.e. colonies) for the benefit of industrialized Europe.[56]

Kautsky wrote that socialists "must struggle against [ultra-imperialism] as energetically as we do against imperialism…"[57] but Lenin was not persuaded that Kautsky was speaking honestly. In his polemical manner Lenin derided Kautsky's ideas of an ultra-imperialist future as a "a petit-bourgeois exhortation to the financiers that they should refrain from doing evil"[58] and also that it was part of a plot to console the enslaved proletariat. The workers of Europe are told that their troubles would be ameliorated once the future ultra-imperialist cartel ends war and proceeds to manage the world in an ultra-imperialist manner, with the workers of Europe serving as a kind of global middle class. Using this idea, workers could be persuaded that European

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[54] V. I. Lenin, "The War and Russian Social-Democracy," D. Walters and R. Cymbala trans., (from Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, [197[4]], Moscow, Volume 21, pages 25-34). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/sep/28.htm. Accessed on May 31 2018.
[55] V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," M. S. Levin, The Late Joe Fineberg and and Others trans., (From Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1964, Moscow, Volume 23, pages 105-120). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/oct/x01.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[56] Karl Kautsky, "Ultra Imperialism," First published in Die Neue Zeit, September 1914. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/kautsky/1914/09/ultra-imp.htm. Accessed May 3, 2018.
[57] Ibid.
[58] V. I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International*, Chapter 5, (From Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1974, Moscow, Volume 21, pages 205-259.) Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/csi/v.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.

revolution was unnecessary, and if they behaved they would become an important, privileged, and wealthy part of a global ultra-imperialist system. Lenin compared this consolation to that of a priest who consoles slaves with religion, reducing the likelihood of revolt and benefiting the slave owner.[59] In a 1915 pamphlet *The Collapse of the Second International* Lenin called ultra-imperialism "The most subtle theory of social-chauvinism, one that has been most skillfully touched up to look scientific and international…"[60]

Lenin decided to address what he believed was an attempt to harm the prospects of revolution head-on. Lenin had all the tools and plenty of ideas to spin his own propaganda narrative and conspiracy theory to denounce Kautsky and his other ideological enemies, but Lenin instead adopted (with some significant modifications) the conspiracy theory elaborated by John A. Hobson, an English liberal who wrote one of the most influential books of the early 20th century: *Imperialism: A Study* (1902).[61] [62] In his writing on the topic, Lenin acknowledged his debt to Hobson. Before Lenin's writing on imperialism is discussed, it is wise to examine Hobson's thought on the subject, as this helps to situate Lenin's thought in the chain of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories.

Years before Lenin read Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study*, the liberal newspaper the *Manchester Guardian* dispatched Hobson to South Africa in 1899 as a correspondent during the run-up to the Second Boer War. The articles he wrote were later published in a book *The War in South Africa. Its Causes and Effects* (1900). Hobson was very much against the Second Boer War and believed it was the work of a conspiracy of bankers, miners, and businessmen. Hobson had a particular kind of banker, miner, and businessman in mind: Jewish ones.[63] In a chapter titled "For Whom Are We Fighting?" Hobson lays out a conspiracy theory clearly in debt to the kind of anti-finance, anti-Rothschild conspiracy theory popularized in the 19th century by people like Toussenel and organs like *L'Anti-Semitique*.

> "The gold-mines of the Rand, are almost entirely in their [Jewish] hands… First comes Wernher, Beit & co., more commonly known by the name of the managing director as the 'Eckstein Group'... Next in size comes Neumann.. Two other important groups of mines, largely repositories of German capital, Goetz & Co. and Albu & Co. The financial connection, according to my information, consists in the fact that Brassey, representing Rothschild, has a controlling interest in Goetz & Co. ...These statements are made to me on evidence which I am naturally unable to check, but I believe them to be correct, and even if only approximately true, they indicate a close consolidation of the great part of the Rand mining industry…. But while the power of this capitalism is based on gold, it is by no means confined to it. Whatever large or profitable interest we approach, we find the same control. The interests are often entirely severed from, and even hostile to, the mining industry, but they are in the hands of the same class. This is the case with the dynamite monopoly. Every name connected with the present and past of this scandalous economic episode is significant: Lippert, Lewish and Marks, Vorstmann, Phillip, Nobel. The rich and powerful liquor trade, licit and illicit, is entirely in the hands of Jews… That greatest of gambling instruments, the

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Lars Magnusson, "Hobson and Imperialism: An Appraisal," in *J.A. Hobson after Fifty Years: Freethinker of the Social Sciences*, John Pheby ed., (St. Martin's Press, 1994,) p. 143.
[62] Paul Johnson, "Marxism vs. the Jews", *Commentary*, April 1984. Available at https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/marxism-vs-the-jews/. Accessed June 14, 2019.
[63] Harvey Mitchell, "Hobson Revisited," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1965), University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 397-416.

> Stock Exchange, is, needless to say, mostly Jewish… The press of Johannesburg is chiefly their property… Nor has the Jew been backward in developing those forms of loan and mortgage business which have made his fame the world over. A rich and ably organized syndicate exists which operates through branches in all the little towns, lending sums of money or furnishing credit through retail shops which they control, to the neighbouring Boers, and thus obtaining mortgages upon their farms. I am informed that a very large portion of the Transvaal farmers are as entirely in the hands of Jewish money-lenders as is the Russian moujik or the Austrian peasant."[64]

Hobson's believed that this Jewish oligarchy was clandestinely manipulating Britain into war in Southern Africa to assist their own parasitic business interests. His ultimate evidence was a *cui bono*: "...since half of the land and nine-tenths of the wealth of the Transvaal claimed for the Outlander are chiefly theirs [the Jewish businessmen], they will be chief gainers by any settlement advantageous to the Outlander."[65] Their chief instrument for propelling British public opinion towards favoring war was the press:

> "What I am describing is nothing else than an elaborate factory of misrepresentations for the purpose of stimulating British action… when it is understood that the great London press receives its information almost exclusively from the offices of the kept press of South Africa the mystery is solved… this great confederation of press interests is financially cemented by the fact that Rand mining magnates are chief owners of at least two important London daily papers and of several considerable weekly papers, while the wider and ever-growing Jewish control of other organs of the press warrants a suspicion that the direct economic nexus between the English press and Rand finance is far stronger than is actually known, we shall have a clear comprehension of the press conspiracy which has successfully exploited the stupid Jingoism of the British public for its clearly conceived economic ends."[66]

Nor did Hobson believe that this conspiracy to start the Second Boer War would be a one-off event. The methods the Jewish financiers had used to manipulate politics and public opinion to engineer a war, combined with the nature of their business interests in South Africa and the need for constant government intervention and protection, would lead to a permanent usurpation of political power in South Africa:

> "...while this class of financiers has commonly abstained in other countries from active participation in politics, they will use politics in the Transvaal. They have found the need for controlling politics and legislation by bribery and other persuasive arts hitherto: the same need and use will exist in the future. Politics to them will not merely mean free trade and good administration of just laws. Transvaal industry, particularly the mining industry, requires the constant and important aid of the State. The control of a large, cheap, regular submissive supply of labour, the chief corner-stone of profitable business, will be a constant incentive to acquire political control: railway rates, customs' laws, and the all-important issues relating to mineral rights will force them into politics, and they will apply to these the same qualities which have made them so successful in speculative industry. In a word, they will simply and inevitably add to their other businesses the business of politics… the judicious control of the press and the assistance of financial friends in high places will enable them to establish and maintain a tolerably complete form of boss-rule in South Africa."

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[64] J. A. Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, *Its Causes and Effects*, (London: James Nisbet & co., 1900) pp. 191-194.
[65] Hobson, *The War in South Afric*a, pp. 11-12.
[66] Hobson, *The War in South Afric*a, pp. 216-217.

Before traveling to South Africa Hobson did not obviously evince anti-Jewish beliefs. Hobson had earlier written some articles that warned of the negative effects of large number of poor Jewish refugees from the Russian Empire flooding into Britain and bringing down the price of labor. However, these articles were not anti-Jewish per-se, as he was warning of an influx of cheap labor in general (at the time of his writing the poor immigrants happened to be Jewish, driven from their homes by persecution in the Russian Empire and the spate of pogroms there in the late 1880s.) Notably, while he warned of the possible effects of a sharp decrease in the price of labor, he was unsure how to proceed, and he did not recommend that the government take steps to restrict immigration, Jewish or otherwise.[67]

It is not known from where Hobson picked up the anti-Jewish conspiracy theory he wrote about. Perhaps he gathered it from reading or hearing anti-Semitic ideas from Europe, or perhaps he picked it up from anti-Jewish agitation among contemporary British socialists,[68] or from unsophisticated, sectarian interpretations of politics that may have been circulating in Afrikaner circles.[69] Regardless, it is certainly a modified form of the anti-banker anti-Jewish conspiracy theory of the Toussenel type (though perhaps, anti-rich-Jew is a more apt description)[70] adapted for the specific situation of the run-up to the Second Boer War. Like Toussenel and some other adherents of an anti-banker/anti-Jewish conspiracy theory Hobson emphasized that he held nothing against Jews as Jews, but rather insisted that the "stress which my analysis lays upon the Jew has reference to the class of financial capitalists of which the foreign Jew must be taken as the leading type."[71]

Hobson was not a socialist or a Marxist, as he is sometimes mistakenly identified (though he attempted to synthesize socialist ideas with liberalism.)[72] As we have seen, a conspiracy theory can easily cross ideological divides as long as the identified target and/or agent is right. Hobson's idea that the British public had been hoodwinked into an unnecessary war needed a villain, and the Jewish businessmen, with the Rothschilds among their chiefs, fit the role.

In his later, much more influential 1902 book *Imperialism: A Study* which Lenin read, Hobson toned down the idea of a Jewish conspiracy orchestrating the war in South Africa but applied the idea of a conspiracy of business interests tricking and manipulating his native country into imperialist expansion much more broadly. In contrast to his earlier opinion about the war in South Africa, in *Imperialism: A Study* Hobson did not assert that this was a new phenomenon for Britain and warn of a future of usurpation by manipulative Jewish South African business interests. Instead Hobson wrote that such a conspiracy operated in every imperialist country and that the various conspiracies had succeeded in tricking their countries into aggressive imperial ventures. For Hobson in 1902, conspiracies of financial interests manipulating politics and public opinion was the main explanation for the phenomenon of

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[67] John Allett, "New Liberalism, Old Prejudices: J. A. Hobson and the 'Jewish Question,'" *Jewish Social Studies,* Vol. 49, No. 2 (Spring, 1987), pp. 99-114, Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/4467370. pp. 102-104.

[68] Wistrich, p. 203.

[69] Mitchell, pp. 403-404.

[70] Allett, p. 104.

[71] Hobson, *The War in South Africa*, p. 189.

[72] Jules Townshend, *J.A. Hobson*, (Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 138.

imperialism at the turn of the century. Finding the imperialist practices of Britain self-evidently wasteful and dangerous, Hobson again resorted to a *cui bono* to explain it:

> "Seeing that the imperialism of the last three decades is clearly condemned as a business policy, in that at enormous expense it has procured a small, bad, unsafe increase of markets, and has jeopardised the entire wealth of the nation in rousing the strong resentment of other nations, we may ask, "How is the British nation induced to embark upon such unsound business?" The only possible answer is that the business interests of the nation as a whole are subordinated to those of certain sectional interests that usurp control of the national resources and use them for their private gain."[73]

According to Hobson, the core of this imperial system was a response to the demands financial interests, who are able to override the needs of the rest of the country in the pursuit of immense profits overseas:

> "Aggressive Imperialism, which costs the tax-payer so dear, which is of so little value to the manufacturer and trader, which is fraught with such grave incalculable peril to the citizen, is a source of great gain to the investor who cannot find at home the profitable use he seeks for his capital, and insists that his Government should help him to profitable and secure investments abroad."[74]

By his reckoning, advanced nations were putting more and more capital to work in areas outside the home countries, where it could reap enormous profits and interest from loans.[75] Hobson noted that the Imperialist ventures allowed financial interests to reap £90,000,000 or £100,000,000 every year in "pure profit" while the income the British state received from taxing the foreign and colonial trade was estimated at only £18,000,000 per year in 1899.[76] Hobson estimated £60,000,000 was the "minimum expenditure on armaments in time of peace."[77] So, just taking into account the expenditure on weapons alone, to say nothing of expenditures on diplomats, colonial officers, secret agents, etc. - Hobson calculated that imperialism was an enormous loss-making venture. He believed that modern imperialism would be impossible in any democracy "if every citizen was made to realise their cost by payments of hard cash."[78]

Hobson made the point that financial interests were not the only beneficiaries of this "parasitic" imperial policy. There were adventurers and bureaucrats who had careers in their empires, shipbuilders, builders, manufacturers of weapons, all of whom would also be in favor of imperialism.[79] But who exactly manipulated public opinion to satisfy these financial interests and how did they do it? Hobson believed that the "central guiding and directing force" of these interests was "in the power of the general financier."[80] "The wealth of these houses, the scale of their operations, and their cosmopolitan organization make them the prime determinants of

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[73] J. A Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, (Endeavour Press, 2015), Kindle Edition, Location 1051.
[74] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1248-1251.
[75] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1130.
[76] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1256.
[77] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1088.
[78] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1808.
[79] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1545.
[80] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1328.

imperial policy."[81] Imperialism might satisfy a large group of investors, dock workers, administrators, etc., but "the enthusiasm for expansion which issues from these sources, though strong and genuine, is irregular and blind; the financial interest has those qualities of concentration and clear-sighted calculation which are needed to set Imperialism to work."[82]

As mentioned earlier, Hobson was not as verbose and explicit in his identification of the ethnic background of these "cosmopolitan" financiers in *Imperialism: A Study* as he was in his earlier *The War in South Africa*, but in one revealing passage early in the book he let his readers know what group he was mainly concerned with, without spelling out the word "Jew":

> "United by the strongest bonds of organisation, always in closest and quickest touch with one another, situated in the very heart of the business capital of every State, controlled, so far as Europe is concerned, chiefly by men of a single and peculiar race,[83] who have behind them many centuries of financial experience, they are in a unique position to control the policy of nations. No great quick direction of capital is possible save by their consent and through their agency. Does any one seriously suppose that a great war could be undertaken by any European State, or a great State loan subscribed, if the house of Rothschild and its connections set their face against it?
>
> Every great political act involving a new flow of capital, or a large fluctuation in the values of existing investments, must receive the sanction and the practical aid of this little group of financial kings. These men, holding their realised wealth and their business capital, as they must, chiefly in stocks and bonds, have a double stake, first as investors, but secondly and chiefly as financial dealers. As investors, their political influence does not differ essentially from that of the smaller investors, except that they usually possess a practical control of the businesses in which they invest. As speculators or financial dealers they constitute, however, the gravest single factor in the economics of Imperialism."[84]

The main tools Hobson said this cosmopolitan cabal of (primarily Jewish) high-finance used to manipulate the government and public opinion would have been familiar to Toussenel, Butmi, or almost any other 19th or 20th century propagandist of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. First and foremost was the supposedly-free press: "the entire dependence of the Press for its business profits upon its advertising columns involves a peculiar reluctance to oppose the organised financial classes with whom rests the control of so much advertising business."[85] Hobson went beyond just pointing out common business interests, but made the accusation that direct and effective manipulation of public opinion by financial houses was commonplace:

> "the final determination rests with the financial power. The direct influence exercised by great financial houses in "high politics" is supported by the control which they exercise over the body of public opinion through the Press, which, in every "civilised" country, is becoming more and more their obedient instrument. While the specifically financial newspaper imposes "facts" and "opinions" on the business classes, the general body of the Press comes more and more under the conscious or unconscious domination of financiers… this policy of owning newspapers for the sake of manufacturing public opinion is common in the great European cities. In Berlin, Vienna, and Paris

[81] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1300-1301.
[82] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1307-1308.
[83] The 1927 Soviet edition of this work uses the word породы - breed, as opposed to раса - race. See Джон Гобсон (John Hobson), *Империализм* (Imperialism), V. B. Belenko trans., Leningrad: Priboi, 1927, p. 64.
[84] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1270-1280.
[85] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1321-1322.

> many of the influential newspapers are held by financial houses, which use them, not primarily to make direct profits out of them, but in order to put into the public mind beliefs and sentiments which will influence public policy and thus affect the money market."[86]

Hobson held that this financial power also influenced teaching at universities: "The millionaire who endows Oxford does not buy its men of learning outright, need not even stipulate what should be taught… No formal tests are necessary; the instinct of financial self-preservation will suffice."[87]

The reach of this financial cabal into international politics enabled their profiteering by encouraging and taking advantage of aggressive imperialist ventures and ensuing crises by loading down states with debts and profiting off of war production:

> "To create new public debts, to float new companies, and to cause constant considerable fluctuations of values are three conditions of their profitable business… A policy which focuses fears of aggression in Asiatic states, and which fans the rivalry of commercial nations in Europe, evokes vast expenditure on armaments, and ever accumulating public debts, while the doubts and risks accruing from this policy promote that constant oscillation of values of securities which is so profitable to the skilled financier. There is not a war, a revolution, an anarchist assassination, or any other public shock, which is not gainful to these men…""[88]

Hobson saved his angriest denunciation for the liberals who may not have been "conscious traitors or hypocrites" but who nevertheless "sold the cause of popular reform, which was their rightful heritage, for an Imperialism which appealed to their business interests and their social prepossessions."[89] Hobson was furious against liberals who still supported imperialist ventures, as he saw the patriotism and jingoism ginned up by imperial ventures and wars as a tool used by the government (i.e. the tool of the [mostly Jewish, remember] financial cabal) to distract the masses and blunt demands of the people for social reform at home. The cause of social reform had been derailed by appeals to patriotism, ginned up by imperialist ventures: "Every social reform involves some attack on vested interests, and these can best defend themselves when active Imperialism absorbs public attention."[90] Hobson saw imperialism as a two-pronged tool "by which the ruling State has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence."[91]

> "Governments use national animosities, foreign wars and the glamour of empire-making, in order to bemuse the popular mind and divert rising resentment against domestic abuses. The vested interests, which, on our analysis, are shown to be chief prompters of an imperialist policy, play for a double stake, seeking their private commercial and financial gains at the expense and peril of the commonwealth. They at the same time protect their economic and political supremacy at home against movements of popular reform."[92]

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[86] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1310-1318.
[87] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 3457-3461.
[88] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 1282-1290.
[89] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 2395-2396.
[90] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 2364-2365.
[91] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 3100.
[92] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 2370-2374.

Therefore according to Hobson, the so-called liberals who supported imperialist ventures and who accepted being distracted and "bribed" by the financial cabal were the worst of the worst, "they were 'hirelings,' destitute of firm political principle, gladly abandoning themselves to whatever shallow and ignoble defences a blear-eyed, raucous 'patriotism' was ready to devise for their excuse."[93] Hobson did not elaborate here on how exactly the pro-imperialist "liberals" became "hirelings" other than via appeals to patriotism, or perhaps by their self-interest in cabal-funded universities or writers in cabal-owned newspapers. However, in another section he explains how some of the bribes of the financial cabal trickled down to other groups. Landowners were bought off by "grants in aid of local taxation," churchmen by the "relief of rates on tithes and increased grants for Church schools," the liquor industry by "a policy of masterly inaction in the matter of temperance reforms and special consideration in regard to taxation."[94] There were also "special classes of the workers" who worked in industries dependent on government expenditures supporting imperialism, such as at "metal and shipbuilding centers."[95] These bought-off interest groups, combined with the manipulation of public opinion through the bought-off press, was enough to guarantee imperialist policies favorable to the Rothschilds and their ilk.

Hobson also warned that imperialism sowed the seeds of its own destruction. Following that single line on bribery, Hobson wrote that the "bleeding of dependencies, while it enfeebles and atrophies the energy of the imperial people, irritates and eventually rouses to rebellion the more vigorous and less tractable of the subject races;"[96] Hobson believed that the imperialist conspiracy was storing up wrath among the colonial peoples that would one day explode, perhaps leading to a collapse of the whole system.

In later years Hobson would back away from the analysis he gave in *Imperialism,* stating: "When I wrote my volume on Imperialism I had not yet gathered into clear perspective the nature of the interaction between economics, politics, and ethics, needed for anyone who might wish to claim the title of Sociologist."[97] He hedged, but he never recanted.

Lenin modifies and applies Hobson

The belief that financial cabals were decisive in determining the imperialist policy of Western powers was not new to Lenin or to the Russian Communist party in 1915-1917. For an example from earlier times, see this article from a 1912 edition of their propaganda organ *Pravda* about a conspiracy of bankers to financially enslave the newly-minted Chinese Republic*:*

> "International capital immediately sensed the possibility of a large profit. In order not to quarrel… the bankers of five countries (Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Russia)... enlisted the support of the government and worked out the terms of the Chinese loan. These conditions amounted to the fact that China had to recognize foreign control over their own finances, that is, to abandon independence; it goes without saying that, in addition to a good interest, international capital meant all sorts of beneficial concessions, that is, the right to organize various enterprises, which, in

[93] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 2397-2399.
[94] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1777.
[95] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Location 1782.
[96] Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study*, Locations 3099-3101.
[97] J. A. Hobson, *Confessions of an Economic Heretic*, (Routledge, 2012), pp. 83-84.

> general, would lead to economic enslavement of China. It is self-evident that the international union of bankers is not acting without the support of governments."[98]

This item possibly reflect the influence of Hobson, who had published *Imperialism: A Study* a decade earlier, or the works of other socialists, perhaps also influenced by Hobson, who were critical of predatory foreign lending to China and the influence of European and Japanese banks there. Lenin had first read Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study* in 1904, and an unpublished article he wrote after this time about imperialism already shows a debt to Hobson, writing about the corruption of parts of the proletariat using the wealth stolen from the colonies.[99]

What Lenin seized on in Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study* when he returned to it after the outbreak of WWI were the passages that could be used to attack Kautsky and the other "defecting" socialists. The notebook Lenin kept while reading Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study* has the notation "cf. K Kautsky" next to quotes from Hobson against the economic inevitability of imperial expansion and quotes about Imperialism developing into a feudal system supported by "uncivilized dependencies"[100] Hobson's warning that imperialism sowed the seeds of its own destruction was music to Lenin's ears while he was searching for reasons to attack Kautsky's idea of ultra-imperialism. Lenin's later writing shows that he became particularly attached not only to these arguments about inevitable imperialist warfare but also to Hobson's arguments that allowed Lenin to attack the integrity of Kautsky and the "opportunists" and all the socialists who had shown their loyalty to their home countries at the outbreak of war. In *Imperialism: A Study* Hobson had elaborated the supposed mechanisms of the (mostly Jewish) financial cabal's control over Western democracies, their "bribery" of lower-class supporters using the proceeds of empire. Lenin appropriated these conspiracy-theory-based mechanisms of control derived from anti-Jewish/anti-Rothschild conspiracy theories. Ignoring Hobson's anti-Jewish elements, Lenin fashioned these ideas into what became one of the central pillars of Soviet ideology and therefore of Soviet propaganda - Lenin's theory of imperialism.

Lenin codified his Hobson-derived theory of imperialism in the book *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). He acknowledged his debt to Hobson in this book in the preface: "...I made use of the principal English work on imperialism, the book by J. A. Hobson, with all the care that, in my opinion, that work deserves."[101] Lenin also cites many other writers on imperialism, most notably the German socialist Rudolf Hilferding. *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (hereafter, just *Imperialism*) is generally considered one of his most important works - in the top three along with *What is to be Done* (1902) and *State and Revolution* (1917).[102] Lenin added Marxist language and his brand of Marxist analysis to Hobson's conspiracy theory. Most conspicuously, Lenin took Hobson's idea that a financial

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[98] Ал. Дмитрие (Al. Dmitrie), "В Китае" (In China), *Pravda*, No. 43, June 19, 1912, p. 5.
[99] James W. Roberts, "Lenin's Theory of Imperialism in Soviet Usage," *Soviet Studies,* Vol. 29, No. 3 (Jul., 1977), pp. 353-372. p. 354.
[100] V. I. Lenin, *Notebook K*, (From Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1976, Moscow, Volume 39, pages 405-436). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/ni-kappa/hobson.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[101] V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Preface. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref01.htm. Accessed September 1, 2018.
[102] Adam B. Ulam, *The Bolsheviks*, (Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 310.

cabal was actively manipulating sections of democratic society and used it as an attack against his "opportunist" opponents, and against Kautsky in particular, maintaining that a capitalist cabal had used the "super-profits" from imperialism to bribe them into abandoning the cause of the revolution:

> "...*within* the working-class movement, the opportunists, who are for the moment victorious in most countries, are 'working' systematically and undeviatingly in this very direction. Imperialism, which means the partitioning of the world, and the exploitation of other countries besides China, which means high monopoly profits for a handful of very rich countries, makes it economically possible to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, and thereby fosters, gives shape to, and strengthens opportunism."[103]

In the preface to the French and German editions of his *Imperialism* Lenin was even more direct in his accusation of bribery:

> "As has been shown in this pamphlet, capitalism has now brought to the front a *handful*... of very rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by 'clipping coupons.'… Obviously, out of such enormous *superprofits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their "own" country) it is *possible to bribe* the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy. And that is just what the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are doing: they are bribing them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert."[104]

In his push to emphasize that the ills of socialism, indeed of the entirety of Western society, were the result of calculated conspiracy, Lenin abandoned Hobson's idea that universities might support imperialism out of a nearly-unconscious sense of self interest, to preserve the flow of grants from pro-imperialist capitalists. Lenin insisted that scholars and publicists consciously and intentionally conceal facts about imperialism:

> "Bourgeois scholars and publicists usually come out in defence of imperialism in a somewhat veiled form; they obscure its complete, domination and its deep-going roots, strive to push specific and secondary details into the forefront and do their very best to distract attention from essentials by means of absolutely ridiculous schemes for "reform", such as police supervision of the trusts or banks, etc."[105]

Lenin gave a name to the financial cabal to replace Hobson's general intimations of a "particular race" or of certain capitalists like the Rothschilds. The term that Lenin used is one he got from the socialist economist Hilferding: "Finance Capital" or "Monopoly Capitalism." Borrowing from Hilferding, Lenin posited that this financial elite arose at the top of a new stage of capitalism caused by the increasing involvement of banks in industry and their increasing consolidation, which according to Lenin causes them to "grow from modest middlemen into

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[103] V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapter 8, (from Lenin's Selected Works, Progress Publishers, 1963, Moscow, Volume 1, pp. 667-766). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch08.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[104] Lenin, *Imperialism*, PREFACE TO THE FRENCH AND GERMAN EDITIONS. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref02.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[105] Lenin, *Imperialism* Chapter 9. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch09.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.

powerful monopolies having at their command almost the whole of the money capital of all the capitalists and small businessmen and also the larger part of the means of production and sources of raw materials in any one country and in a number of countries."[106] Lenin wrote that this evolution of a group of financial middle men into commanders of the economy is "one of the fundamental processes in the growth of capitalism into capitalist imperialism…"[107]

According to Lenin these bankers eventually become a "financial oligarchy" in every advanced country, and he cites various writers complaining against "financial oligarchy" in the West.[108] Lenin stated that this financial oligarchy "...throws a close network of dependence relationships over all the economic and political institutions of present-day bourgeois society without exception…"[109] Lenin described this financial oligarchy as the group that actually orchestrates the bribery of sections of the proletariat and influences erstwhile "democratic" governments to engage in imperialist ventures and then to export surplus capital to the colonies in order to extract super-profits and secure resources. Lenin gave several examples of how "finance capital" had managed to manipulate their home-governments to subjugate supposedly independent countries, forcing them to give up control over their economies and become part of an imperialist system, for example Portugal and Argentina were under the thumb of the UK's imperialist system, according to Lenin.[110]

Lenin devoted large parts of his *Imperialism* to direct attacks on Kautsky, attacking his integrity often via his ideas about ultra-imperialism. "Whichever way one turns Kautsky's argument, one will find nothing in it except reaction and bourgeois reformism."[111] An important point that Lenin insisted on was that imperialism was an entirely new stage of capitalism, and that any other way of talking about the development of capitalism, especially Kautsky's, was just part of propaganda in favor of imperialism:

> "Kautsky's theoretical critique of imperialism has nothing in common with Marxism and serves only as a preamble to propaganda for peace and unity with the opportunists and the social-chauvinists, precisely for the reason that it evades and obscures the very profound and fundamental contradictions of imperialism: the contradictions between monopoly and free competition which exists side by side with it, between the gigantic "operations" (and gigantic profits) of finance capital and "honest" trade in the free market, the contradiction between cartels and trusts, on the one hand, and non-cartelised industry, on the other, etc."[112]

Another idea of Hobson that Lenin took up with relish was the idea that imperialism was sowing the seeds of its own destruction. As all of these empires, each commanded by a

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[106] Lenin, Imperialism, Chapter 2. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch02.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[107] Lenin, Imperialism, Chapter 2. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch02.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[108] Lenin, Imperialism, Chapter 2. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch03.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[109] Lenin, *Imperialism* Chapter 10. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch10.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[110] Lenin, *Imperialism* Chapter 6. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch06.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[111] Lenin, *Imperialism* Chapter 9. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch09.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[112] Ibid.

financial oligarchy, compete for markets and resources, there would be increased friction between them and consequently increased chances of conflict (WWI being the obvious contemporary example for Lenin.) Also, the different imperialist powers would face increasing resistance from the colonized peoples. In a separate essay Lenin reiterated the idea of financial cabals, fighting amongst each other, but (for now) benefiting from the misery of the colonized and thieving from them to prop up their rule at home through bribery. Note how he accused Kautsky of "glossing over" the "profound contradictions" of imperialism:[113]

> "Imperialism *is* monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every giant bank is a monopoly. Superprofits have not disappeared; they still remain. The exploitation of all other countries by one privileged, financially wealthy country remains and has become more intense. A handful of wealthy countries—there are only four of them, if we mean independent, really gigantic, "modern" wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany—have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain superprofits running into hundreds, if not thousands, of millions, they "ride on the backs" of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among themselves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.
>
> This, in fact, is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky glosses over instead of exposing.
>
> The bourgeoisie of an imperialist "Great" Power can economically bribe the upper strata of 'its' workers by spending on this a hundred million or so francs a year, for its superprofits most likely amount to about a thousand million. And how this little sop is divided among the labour ministers, 'labour representatives' (remember Engels's splendid analysis of the term), labour members of war industries committees, labour officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question."[114]

Lenin's collusion with "imperialists" and the Revolution of 1917

Using the idea of conscious, financial cabals in every "imperialist" state orchestrating the deception of the public to support imperialist ventures, Lenin accused Kautsky and other socialists who supported their countries during the war of treachery, of being bribed to betray the revolution. Lenin did not accuse Kautsky of being weak and pliable, of having given up "true" revolutionary Marxism because he had turned soft or wanted to please rich potential patrons (like the motivation of pro-imperialist University professors described by Hobson). Lenin was adamant: Kautsky and the other "social-imperialists" were bribed agents of imperialist bankers, an "upper section of petty-bourgeois scoundrels who have been bribed by the capitalists"[115] Here is an excerpt from an article Lenin wrote in 1916, after he had written but before he had published *Imperialism*:

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," from *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol 23 (Marx to Mao digital reprints, 2011) p. 115. Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/cw/pdf/lenin-cw-vol-23.pdf. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[115] V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, "How Kautsky Turned Marx Into A Common Liberal," Jim Riordan trans., (From Lenin's Collected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 28, 1974, pages 227-325). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/prrk/common_liberal.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.

> "...all that is now being glossed over by the *hypocritical Kautskyites* of various countries, namely, that the *opportunists* (social-chauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of a certain strata of the working class who *have been bribed* out of imperialist superprofits and converted to *watchdogs* of capitalism and *corruptors* of the labour movement."[116]

Lenin wrote about this "unity" between the different "social-chauvinist" camps all over Europe, while each was supporting their own countries on opposite sides of the war, they were united in their strategy of deceiving the proletariat at the behest of their "national bourgeois" masters. Here Lenin attacks the German socialist (and later finance minister) Albert Südekum along with Kautsky:

> "Everybody knows that Sudekum's friends and adherents met in Vienna and acted entirely in his spirit, championing the cause of German imperialism under the cloak of "defence of the fatherland." The French, English and Russian Sudekums met in London and championed the cause of "their" national imperialism under the same cloak. The real policy of the London and Vienna heroes of social-chauvinism is to justify participation in the imperialist war, to justify the killing of German workers by French workers, and *vice versa*, for the sake of determining which national bourgeoisie shall have preference in robbing other countries. And to conceal their real policy, to deceive the workers, both the London and the Vienna heroes resort to the *phrase:* We "recognise" the "independence of nations," or in other words, recognise the self-determination of nations, repudiate annexations, etc., etc.
>
> It is as clear as daylight that this "recognition" is a flagrant lie, despicable hypocrisy, for it justifies participation in a war which *both* sides are waging, not to make nations independent, but to enslave them. Instead of exposing, unmasking and condemning this hypocrisy, Kautsky, the great authority, *sanctifies* it."[117]

Lenin may have been especially interested in describing Kautsky and other socialists as paid agents for their governments because Lenin himself had begun a relationship with a government, the German government. Lenin had been arrested by the Austrians right after the outbreak of war, but he had been released after he was identified as "an enemy of tsarism."[118] The Germans reached out to Lenin not long after this and eventually established cooperation with him and his Bolshevik faction. Lenin was in contact with the Estonian nationalist and German agent Alexander Kesküla starting in October 1914. Kesküla provided him with funding to publish Bolshevik propaganda in Russia, and Lenin used his revolutionary network to collect information on internal conditions in Russia for Kesküla, information which was forwarded to the German General Staff. An official in the German General Staff described this relationship as an "extremely useful contact with Lenin" and recommended a subsidy of 20,000 marks a month for the operation.[119]

In addition to the use of the Bolsheviks as an intelligence network, the Germans funded Lenin because, despite his continuing calls for revolution in Germany, he was openly defeatist with regards to Russia. In 1914 Lenin had drawn a moral equivalence between both belligerent

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[116]V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/oct/x01.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[117] V. I. Lenin, "The Peace Programme," (From Lenin Collected Works, Volume 22, Moscow, pages 161-168), Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/mar/25.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[118] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 9383-9384.
[119] Ibid., Location 9480.

camps but then opined that the defeat of Russia would be a “lesser evil” -at least from the standpoint of Russian workers:

> “In the present situation, it is impossible to determine, from the standpoint of the international proletariat, the defeat of which of the two groups of belligerent nations would be the lesser evil for socialism. But to us Russian Social-Democrats there cannot be the slightest doubt that, from the standpoint of the working class and of the toiling masses of all the nations of Russia, the defeat of the tsarist monarchy, the most reactionary and barbarous of governments, which is oppressing the largest number of nations and the greatest mass of the population of Europe and Asia, would be the lesser evil.”[120]

The Bolsheviks did not stop calling for revolution in Germany. They could hardly have paused given the importance of a revolution in Germany in Marxist ideas about the future, but their propaganda did push for Russia to break its alliance with France, Italy, and Britain and try to end the war on its own, and so the Germans could continue to take an interest in supporting their propaganda.

German involvement with the Bolsheviks was most obvious after the Russian February Revolution of 1917. After a series of military failures and bread riots and mass protests put down by violence that were reminiscent of those during the Revolution of 1905, the garrison of the Russian capital city mutinied. Lacking any means to suppress unrest in the capital and also believing that the incompetent rule of the Tsar was an obstacle to victory against the Germans, some Russian generals pressured Tsar Nicholas to abdicate. Nicholas designated his younger brother Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich as his successor. The leaders of a Provisional Government hastily put together by members of the Duma and socialist leaders in the capital met with Grand Duke Michael and convinced him to also abdicate. Power was now nominally in the hands of the Provisional Government until a constituent assembly could be convened to construct a new government.[121]

This was an enormous opportunity for the Germans. The original German war plan had been to quickly take France out of the war and then turn all efforts against Russia, but this plan failed. Instead the Germans found themselves fighting a two-front war of attrition. The political chaos in Russia raised the tantalizing possibility of reversing their initial strategy - taking Russia out of the war and enabling the Germans to turn their full force against their enemies to the west. Unfortunately for the Germans, the new Provisional Government of Russia was committed to continuing the war. As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons Russian generals had forced the Tsar to abdicate was because they thought he was botching the fight that they still intended to win. The new government was so pro-war that some Germans speculated that the British had engineered the February Revolution.[122] The Germans chose a strategy of sowing chaos in order to destroy the Russian war effort and force it to make a separate peace. As a contemporaneous German official cabled to Berlin:

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[120] V.I. Lenin, “The War and Russian Social-Democracy,” (From Lenin Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1974, Moscow, Volume 21, pages 25-34). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/sep/28.htm. Accessed May 31, 2018.
[121] *The Cambridge History of Russia: Volume 2, Imperial Russia, 1689-1917*, (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 655- 658.
[122] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution,* Location 9765.

> "We must now unconditionally seek to create in Russia the greatest possible chaos.… We should do all we can … to exacerbate the differences between the moderate and extremist parties, because we have the greatest interest in the latter gaining the upper hand, since the Revolution will then become unavoidable and assume forms that must shatter the stability of the Russian state."[123]

As an obstreperous and divisive leftist who supported the immediate termination of the "imperialist" war, Lenin was a perfect candidate to receive increased German support; but he was still in exile in Switzerland. The German envoy in Switzerland called Lenin's cause to the attention of his government, and the German Chancellor issued instructions to arrange for the transport of Lenin and other Russian exiles across German territory to neutral Sweden, where they could then cross into Russia. Lenin and 32 other exiles, including 19 Bolsheviks, made the journey back to Russia with German assistance.[124]

As part of this chaos strategy, the German government funded the Bolsheviks in order to spread Bolshevik anti-war propaganda. A German Social-Democrat estimated that the Germans spent 50 million deutsche marks in total to support the Bolsheviks, which at the time was the equivalent of about nine tons of gold.[125] According to the German military archives, the German government spent 40 million deutsche marks for propaganda in Russia before January 31 1918, and an additional 10 million after that. (Not all of this was destined for the Bolsheviks.)[126] A report from the German State Secretary in December 1917 described what he claimed had been the strategy:

> "Russia appeared to be the weakest link in the enemy chain. The task therefore was gradually to loosen it, and, when possible, to remove it. This was the purpose of the subversive activity we caused to be carried out in Russia behind the front - in the first place promotion of separatists tendencies and support of the Bolsheviks. It was not until the Bolsheviks had received from us a steady flow of funds through various channels and under different labels that they were in a position to be able to build up their main organ, Pravda, to conduct energetic propaganda and appreciably to extend the originally narrow basis of their party..."[127]

Of course, this German official was bragging after the Bolsheviks had seized power in October 1917. He could have been exaggerating the success of his work with Lenin. The scholar Dr. Peter Kenez has argued that while German funding for propaganda certainly existed, it was not critical and that the "political fortune of the revolutionaries" would not have been fundamentally different without them.[128] This may be true but it is at this point undeniable that the Germans subsidies existed and that they were substantial enough that Lenin risked it all in order to accept them. How would Lenin's ideas about Kautsky and other socialists being paid agents of imperialism have looked if convincing proof had emerged that Lenin was himself being paid by the same government he was accusing Kautsky of being in cahoots with? More importantly, the reaction of the Russian public, and especially of soldiers and sailors, to

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[123] Ibid. Locations 9781-9784.
[124] Ibid. Locations 9803-9804.
[125] Ibid. Locations 10296-10297.
[126] Ibid. Locations 10939-10945.
[127] *The Russian Revolution and the Soviet State 1917–1921: Documents*, Martin McCauley ed., (Palgrave Macmillan 1980), p. 138.
[128] Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929*, (Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 32.

revelations of Lenin's collaboration with Russia's enemy would have been (indeed, was) very negative.

Lenin tried to carefully avoid any paper trail that would implicate him or his followers in this clandestine collaboration,[129] and doubtless he and his successors tried to destroy any evidence of it after they had seized power. However, one of Lenin's documents slipped through the cracks. The historian Richard Pipes has identified a short letter Lenin sent to his representative in Switzerland in August 1918 where, after admonishing him to spend more money on Bolshevik propaganda in several languages, Lenin writes: "The Berliners will send some more money: if the scum delay, complain to me **formally**."[130]

Using the funds they had available the Bolsheviks re-started their flagship paper *Pravda* which, except for a brief interlude before Lenin returned to Russia, took a hard line against the Provisional Government and against continuing the war. The Bolshevik propaganda the Germans subsidized had a consistent anti-war theme. Take this example from *Pravda* March 31, 1917, which carried what claimed to be a resolution from a company of the famous Semenovsky Guards Regiment saying: "The war was not begun by the people, but only through the will of the people can it be stopped and will it be stopped" and included a resolution supposedly from another regiment that declared "The root of evil lies in war. This war has upset our economic life... Each additional day of war brings the country to ruin. There is one way out of this turmoil - the immediate cessation of the war. That is why we appeal to the Provisional Government…"[131]

Lenin arrived in Russia in early April 1917. One of the first things he did upon his arrival was publish *The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution* aka *The April Theses*. In this document, published in *Pravda*, he included familiar Bolshevik demands and ideas, such as the nationalization of all land and the banks, the notion that the Revolution was passing from the first, bourgeois, phase to the second proletarian phase, etc. Lenin also demanded that all power be given to the soviets (workers councils) and taken away from the Provisional Government, which Lenin denounced as "impermissible, illusion-breeding… a government of capitalists… an imperialist government." Lenin denounced the war as imperialist "owing to the capitalist nature of that government..." He also demanded the "Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy" which would of course have been rather helpful to German war aims.[132]

Lenin's idea of "imperialist" cabals of bankers driving countries to war was a useful idea for Bolshevik propaganda that attacked the idea of continuing to fight and attacked the Provisional Government which had pledged to continue the war. This idea was used to argue that there was moral equivalence between Germany and its allies and the supposedly more "democratic" allies of Russia: France and Britain. According to this narrative, Allied slogans about fighting the war to "make the world safe for democracy" or to "defend Belgian neutrality" were all just imperialist deceptions. Lenin's *Imperialism* was published in Russia in late April

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[129] *The Unknown Lenin: From the Secret Archive*, Richard Ppes ed., (Yale University Press, 1999), p. 12.
[130] Ibid., letter from Lenin to Ya. A. Berzin, 14 August 1918, p. 53.
[131] *Pravda*, No.22, March 31, 1917, p. 5 (p. 247).
[132] V. I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution [a.k.a. The April Theses], From Lenin's Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1964, Moscow, Vol. 24, pp. 19-26. Available At https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/apr/04.htm. Accessed June 1, 2018.

1917 [133] (though many ideas codified in *Imperialism* had been spread by other Bolshevik publications earlier.)

For an extended example of this line of argument used in propaganda, take this two-part article published in *Pravda* in March 1917 by the Bolshevik leader Grigory Zinoviev. He wrote that Russia should break its agreements and try to exit the war, arguing that any agreements made by the despot Nicholas II were illegitimate as they were made in secret with the imperialist British, French, and Italians. He argued that there was moral equivalence between the Allied governments and the Central Powers (both of whom were just dancing to the tune of their capitalist overlords), and that peace was necessary for the future of the revolution, which faced threats from the faux-democratic imperialist Allies in addition to the imperialist Germans:

> "Comrades, but who concluded these agreements? Is it not the same bloody Nicholas with his gang?!
>
> Do the people know, does the working class know the content of these treaties, which are 9/10ths secret treaties? Does Milyukov [the Russian foreign Minister] and his ilk know these contracts in all their details? And if they know, why do not they publish them in general information, so that the people themselves can judge and say: I approve or reject?... Of course, we did not read these secret treaties and do not know their details. But the real aims of the war of modern governments are well known. Germany (that is, the German imperialists) wants to plunder Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, the Belgian and French Congo, the Netherlands India, the Portuguese colonies, Morocco.... Austria needs the eastern coast of the Adriatic...But the goals of the imperialists of the other side are not any better.
>
> England (that is, the British government, the British imperialists) wants to turn Africa all over into the English part of the world, or at least to pillage in Africa everything except that which belongs to the French imperialists… France (that is, the sharks of French imperialism) wants to plunder Syria, part of Asia Minor, German possessions in Africa.... Italy (the Italian capitalists) wants to plunder in Africa… And Russia?
>
> Russia (ie, the Russian capitalists, the Russian imperialists) wants to pillage Constantinople, make their way to the straits, capture Asia Minor, Persia, Mongolia, strangle Galicia, grab a bigger piece in East Prussia, and so on… This is also suggested by Mr. Milyukov, for whom the treaties concluded by Nicholas II are sacred… The actual goals of the current war, these are predatory purposes. And the words about 'culture', 'law', struggle for freedom, the 'salvation of noble Belgium' - are only a seasoning, only loud words for gullible people… the Guchkovs and Miliukovs will in every possible way disrupt the questioning of the soldiers on this issue, although they were compelled (under the pressure of the revolution) to promise soldiers freedom to participate in the political struggle ...
>
> The new government proposes this to us: in the field of domestic policy, let everything be done in a new way, and in the sphere of foreign policy let it remain in the old way. This is a counter-revolutionary plan… The foreign policy of the tsarist government was a continuous policy of blood and mud. This policy made from the old Russia an 'international gendarme'. This policy led us to a shameful war with Japan in 1904-1905. This policy has led to... Russia being in the imperialist war of 1914-1917. And this new foreign policy of tsarism, the new government invites us to continue!...

[133] Lenin, *Imperialism*, Preface, Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref01.htm. Accessed June 1, 2018.

> We are well aware that German imperialism is a danger to the final victory of the Russian revolution. But it is in danger also from the side of British and French imperialism." [134]

This anti-war agitation that threatened the stability of a major ally could hardly have avoided the attention of the other powers fighting Germany. In June French intelligence handed over to Russian authorities a number of intercepted communications between Bolshevik leaders and their German handlers in Stockholm.[135] The Russian government acted on July 1, ordering the arrest of 28 Bolshevik leaders, but it was too late to prevent a putsch. On July 3 soldiers near the capital mutinied, intent on beating up the *burzhui* (bourgeois). After a short period of hesitation, the remaining Bolsheviks in the capital decided this was the moment to seize power. They called an extraordinary session of the executive committee of the Petrograd Workers' Council (the Petrograd Soviet) and "passed" a resolution (after the other Menshevik and Social Revolutionary [SR] factions had walked out) indicating their intent to overthrow the Provisional Government. On July 4 the Bolsheviks attempted a coup, marching mutinous troops into the city accompanied by pro-Bolshevik workers. For reasons that are unclear, the coup failed. One reason may be that anti-Bolshevik members of the Provisional Government released some information on Lenin's connection to the Germans. Angry troops scattered the Bolsheviks in the capital. The Provisional Government ordered the arrest of all the Bolshevik leaders and the printing press for Pravda was destroyed.[136] Lenin went into hiding.

The State and Revolution

During this period in hiding Lenin wrote what is arguably his most important work *The State and Revolution.*[137] This book is a collection of quotations from the works of Marx and Engels selected by Lenin along with Lenin's extended commentary urging violent revolution. It was an attack against the idea of about any kind of accommodation with any of the then-existing states. If the workers have a vote in a "bourgeois" democracy, Lenin wrote, it is not a sign of progress but a tool for the ruling class to mollify its slaves and maintain power.[138] Lenin reiterated the ideas expounded in *Imperialism: the Highest State of Capitalism* about "Imperialism - --the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state- monopoly capitalism..."[139]

Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* after the Tsar was deposed, and in this book the focus of his attack was republican government, and the Russian Provisional Government in particular. Lenin held that modern republics are merely tools of imperialist cabals of bankers: "At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have 'developed' into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic

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[134] Г. Зиновьев (G. Zinoviev), "Война и революция" (War and Revolution), *Pravda*, No.17, March 25, 1917, 187-189.
[135] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 10516.
[136] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 10521 to 10806.
[137] Tamás Krausz, *Reconstructing Lenin: An Intellectual Biography*, Balint Bethlenfalvy trans., Monthly Review Press, 2015, p. 177.
[138] Kołakowski, p. 755.
[139] V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution The Marxist Theory of the State & the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*, (From Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 381--492), p. 21. Available at https://www.marxists.org/ebooks/lenin/state-and-revolution.pdf. Accessed June 1 2018.

republics of all descriptions."[140] This power was exercised by secret cabals out of sight of the voting public. Without a violent proletarian revolution all so-called democracies were really just "democracies for the money-bags..."[141] And the nascent Russian republic was no exception:

> "...from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth-- in these countries the real business of 'state' is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries, and General Staffs. parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the 'common people'. This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois - democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism came out at once, even before it managed to set up a real parliament. The heroes of rotten philistinism… have even succeeded in polluting the Soviets after the fashion of the most disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism, in converting them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the 'socialist' Ministers are fooling the credulous rustics with phrase - mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent shuffle is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist - Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may in turn get near the 'pie', the lucrative and honorable posts, and that, on the other hand, the 'attention' of the people may be 'engaged'. meanwhile the chancelleries and army staffs 'do' the business of 'state'."[142]

Lenin was not just criticizing the nascent Russian republic as corrupt, or attacking this or that republic as shams, he was claiming that every single parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, were deceptive screens for the real "secret" governors. Elections just gave the people an opportunity to participate in a delusion: "To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament -- this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics."[143]

Lenin wrote that "Imperialism-- … has clearly shown an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries." These repressive measures included the deception of Kautsky and the other "social-chauvinists" were "covering up the defense of the predatory interests of 'their own' bourgeoisie with phrases about 'defence of the fatherland', 'defence of the republic and the revolution', etc.!"[144]

Lenin never finished *The State and Revolution* because he was interrupted by the crisis that the Bolsheviks then used to catapult themselves to power.

The October coup

After the attempted Bolshevik coup in the summer of 1917, the Minister-Chairman of the Provisional Government ordered Kornilov, a well-respected general, to ready his men to march on the capital in the case of another attempted Bolshevik coup. Kornilov got the impression that he was destined to become military dictator and tried to march on the capital uninvited. When the Provisional Government ordered him to stop, Kornilov refused. This attempted coup/misfiring counter-coup fizzled, but it marked a turn in the fortunes of the Bolsheviks, who

[140] Ibid., p. 10.
[141] Ibid., p. 51.
[142] Ibid., p. 29.
[143] Ibid., p. 23.
[144] Ibid., p. 9.

were allowed to re-arm their paramilitaries and were treated by other socialists as potential allies against the threat of military coup.[145]

During this time Lenin and his followers did not cease denouncing the Provisional Government and calling for its ouster. Once again, the theme of “imperialism” was an element of this anti-government anti-war propaganda. On September 1st the Provisional Government officially declared that Russia was a republic, and by September 8th Lenin was complaining that the Bolsheviks were “persecuted by the agents of Russian republican-democratic imperialism...”[146] Here is Zinoviev again, in an article titled “The Imperialist Republic” from the Bolshevik newspaper *Proletarii* in September 1917, commenting on a report that the Provisional Government was considering dispatching some leading businessmen and politicians as ambassadors to Britain and France:

> “This short message… gives us the most perceptive idea of what the real character of the modern Russian republic is. Paris and especially London are the most important centers of world politics. The questions of war and peace are now most dependent on London. London bankers and industrial kings hold half the world in their hands, they turn the "allied" governments like puppets. In particular, the fate of not only the external, but to a very large extent, the domestic policy of the new-born Russian republic depends on them. The main knots of world imperialist policy converge in Paris and London. The significance of the Russian ambassador in London and Paris is sometimes much greater than the significance of the Russian foreign minister.... Konovalov is a millionaire, a big industrialist and banking tycoon, a representative of big capital, a former member of the Progressive Party, now a member of the Kadet Party, which are both thoroughly imbued with imperialism, ...Nabokov is a rich landowner, a member of the Central Committee of the Kadet Party, of this General Staff of the counter-revolution, a protege of Milyukov, who does not even make a secret of the fact that he ponders the service of English imperialism…”
>
> “...But after all, Russia is still not monarchy, but a republic! Yes, reader, Russia is now a republic. But there are republics and republics. Today's Russia is an imperialist republic. And that's the whole point. The imperialist republic means the absolute power of the bankers and kings of industry, it means - a war without end, it means - servility to London and Paris (that is, to the billionaires of London and Paris), it means - a crackdown on the workers and soldiers, it means - high prices and hunger for the masses, It means - reaction as the entire domestic policy of the country, it means - the death penalty for soldiers, prison for the revolutionary proletariat, it means - leaving the land in the hands of the landowners - it means, in one word, a noose around the neck of ten million workers, soldiers, and peasants… yes long live the Imperialist Republic! - this is in fact the slogan of the Mensheviks and SRs.”[147]

The war continued, and Russian losses mounted on the battlefield. The Provisional Government was losing confidence of the people and the Bolshevik Central Committee decided on a strategy of deception and provocation. They would goad the government into retaliating against them and then conduct a coup while pretending they were defending the Congress of

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[145] Ulam, pp. 357-358.

[146] V. I. Lenin, “The Stockholm Conference”, (from *Lenin Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1977, Moscow, Volume 25, pages 269-277.) Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/sep/08b.htm. Accessed June 1 2018.

[147] Г. Зиновьев (G. Zinoviev), “Империалистская республика” (Imperialist Republic), *Proletarii*, no. 9, , September 05, 1917, (Petrograd) p. 5.

the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly from Kornilov, the Provisional Government, and the Germans.[148]

In October 1917, fearing a repetition of the June experience when the Provisional Government had called out troops to crush the Bolshevik coup, the Bolsheviks focused their attention on disabling the Provisional Government's ability to issue orders. They circulated a false statement that the garrison had chosen the Bolshevik Military-Revolutionary Committee as their representative, and that the Russian Military Staff had refused to recognize this and had instead become a "weapon of counterrevolutionary forces."[149] After some desultory attempts at negotiation, on October 24 The Provisional Government and the Russian Military Staff ordered some troops into the center of the city and that the bridges across the Neva be raised to prevent the Bolsheviks from getting into the city center. They also ordered the disconnection of phone lines leading to Bolshevik HQ at the Smolny institute and the closure of the two major Bolshevik newspapers. The Bolsheviks responded by sending their troops to seize the telegraph offices, while claiming that they were just defending against the counterrevolution. That night Bolshevik troops seized the railroad stations, the banks, telephone exchanges, etc., and the next morning Lenin wrote a declaration that the Provisional Government had been deposed by the Military-Revolutionary Committee.[150]

That morning, October 25th 1917, the Bolshevik propaganda paper *Rabochii Put* (the temporary cover-name of the illegal *Pravda*)[151] lead with the slogan "Peace, Bread, Land!" and carried an announcement from the Military-Revolutionary Committee that the "counter-revolution had raised its criminal head. Kornilovites are mobilizing forces to cross the All-Russian Congress of Soviets and disrupt the Constituent assembly." The second article warned of a "noble-banking counter-revolution" and justified the actions of the Military-Revolutionary Committee. At this critical juncture, perhaps the most crucial hour of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Bolshevik propaganda conjured up twin threats, a classical "reactionary" threat of the nobility seizing power and that of the "bankers" i.e. the "imperialist" governments of the Western Allies which were themselves under the control of "finance capital." It was they who wanted counter-revolution in order to continue the war, and who were lying when they claim the war was not fought for imperialist aims:

> "The Provisional Government is falling apart. It fraudulently assured the army that it had agreed to obtain and would obtain from the 'allies' -a full 'renunciation of seizures.' But the 'allied' bosses of bandit capital (in complete agreement with the Russian bourgeoisie) resolutely refuse to take into account, to any extent, the requirements of the Russian revolution (nothing else could be expected from them!). American, British and French bankers decide: 'The war continues!'
>
> Let millions of peasants and workers perish, let the Russian revolution perish, - the "allied" bourgeois applaud its death in advance … behind the ministry [of war] is hidden the real power... The collapse of the Provisional Government leads directly to the power of the henchmen of the noble-bank counter-revolution…"[152]

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[148] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 12056-12065.
[149] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 12096-12131.
[150] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 12168 to 12250.
[151] Roger Pethybridge, *The Spread of the Russian Revolution: Essays on 1917,* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1972), p. 121-122.
[152] "Перед решением" (Before decision), *Rabochii Put*, No.179, November 07 (25 October), 1917, p. 1.

The last bastion of the Provisional Government, a few ministers barricaded in the Winter Palace, surrendered early the next morning.[153] Bolshevik fighters seized Moscow by November 2nd.[154]

While the October 1917 coup is the traditional date that marks the start of Bolshevik rule in Russia, the Bolsheviks actually engaged in several months of activities to consolidate their power. The biggest political threat to their power was the Constituent Assembly, which everyone still expected to convene and establish a new government, and which would surely remove the Bolsheviks from their new position of extra-legal power.[155] This probability was increased after the elections for candidates to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, when the Bolsheviks received only 24% of the vote despite interfering with the election process.[156] The Bolsheviks had no intention of letting go of power. Lenin now denounced the Constituent Assembly as a tool of the counter-revolution and troops loyal to the Bolsheviks fired on protesters who tried to prevent the Bolsheviks from dispersing the Constituent Assembly.[157] On the day when the Bolsheviks finally dissolved the Constituent Assembly, they again conjured the idea of bankers and reactionaries in alliance against the revolution, this time with the specific addition of the influence of the "American Dollar," a clear reference to American "finance capital."[158] Their attack was focused on a faction of the SRs - the socialist party that had received the most votes in the elections for the Constituent Assembly:

> "THE HIRELINGS OF BANKERS, CAPITALISTS, AND LANDLORDS, THE ALLIES OF KALEDIN, DUTOV, THE SLAVES OF THE AMERICAN DOLLAR, THE BACKSTABBERS—THE RIGHT SR'S—DEMAND IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ALL POWER FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR MASTERS—ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE.[159]

Among the first orders of business for Bolsheviks after finally consolidating power was to do what their Germans benefactors had been hoping for: end the war. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk negotiated between December 1917 and March 1918 gave the Germans not only peace but a new eastern European empire. In addition to ceding an enormous amount of territory to the Germans and agreeing to demobilize, the new "Soviet" state agreed to allow Germans to maintain private enterprises in newly-communist Russia.[160] In other words, the government of Germany had managed to secretly support a socialist faction within Russia that had come to power and proceeded to make the old Russian Empire into Germany's colony.[161] The mirroring of the interaction between the Germans and the Bolsheviks with Lenin's depiction of the interaction between the "imperialist" governments of Europe and Kautsky and other socialists is remarkable.

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[153] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 12326.
[154] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 12467.
[155] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 12891.
[156] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 13414.
[157] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 13521 and 13656.
[158] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Location 13727.
[159] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 13722-13725.
[160] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 14722 - 14739.
[161] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution*, Locations 14739.

After the war: Soviet ideology and propaganda and "imperialism"

Despite this massive success on the Eastern front, Germany was unable to prevail over the Western Allies. This obviated the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Especially after Germany and Austria had been defeated, Lenin could describe the victorious Allies as a unified grand conspiracy, which was consciously organizing and conspiring against the Soviet Revolution. Kautsky and the other German "social-chauvinists," who had previously been accused of working for the German government, were instantly accused in Soviet propaganda of being hirelings of Western imperialism in the emerging "civil war" between the imperialist countries and the Soviet revolution:

> "...the world bourgeoisie has organised and is waging a civil war against the revolutionary proletariat and, accordingly, is supporting Kolchak and Denikin in Russia, Mannerheim in Finland, the Georgian Mensheviks, those lackeys of the bourgeoisie, in the Caucasus, the Polish imperialists and Polish Kerenskiis in Poland, the Scheidemanns in Germany, the counter-revolutionaries (Mensheviks and capitalists) in Hungary, etc., etc.
>
> But Kautsky, like the inveterate reactionary philistine he is, continues snivelling about the fears and horrors of civil war! All semblance of revolutionary understanding, and all semblance of historical realism (for it is high time the inevitability of imperialist war being turned into civil war were realised) have disappeared. This is, furthermore, directly abetting the bourgeoisie, it is *helping* them, and Kautsky is *actually on the side of the bourgeoisie* in the civil war that is being waged, or is obviously being prepared, throughout the world."[162]

As Kautsky did not cease his criticism of the Bolsheviks, especially against their repression and their international aggression, Lenin attacked him for advocating democracy instead of Lenin's top-down revolution. After all, "bourgeois" democracy is just a tool of the financial oligarchy:

> "The Scheidemanns and Kautsky's speak about "pure democracy" and "democracy" in general for the purpose of deceiving the people and concealing from them the *bourgeois* character of *present-day* democracy. Let the bourgeoisie continue to keep the entire apparatus of state power in their hands, let a handful of exploiters continue to use the former, bourgeois, state machine!"[163]

Like in other conspiracy theories examined in this thesis, the depicted tools or tactical goals of the "imperialists" could change, but the ultimate enemy of the Revolution - the oligarchy of finance capital - would remain the same. "Anti-imperialist" propaganda was also useful for the Soviet Union during the desultory interventions of Western powers in the Russian Civil War and their attempts to support non-Bolshevik alternatives in the ruins of the Russian Empire. Soviet propaganda presented the various efforts by non-Bolshevik forces to fight the expanding Bolshevik realm as the attempts of a clique of Western capitalists to protect their imperialist system. For a visual example see Figure 2, a 1920 poster issued by the Red Army in Kyiv. It depicts a gleeful Red Army soldier vaulting forward with his bayonet and about to skewer the enemy - a fat banker labeled "Imperialism" and "Entente and Co." (the Western Allies in WWI.)

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[162] V. I. Lenin, "How the Bourgeoisie Utilises Renegades," George Hanna trans., (from Lenin's Collected Works, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Volume 30, pages 27-37). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1919/sep/20.htm. Accessed June 1 2018.

[163] V. I. Lenin, "'Democracy' and Dictatorship," (from Lenin Collected Works, Volume 28, p. 368-72). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1918/dec/23.htm. Accessed June 1 2018

Figure 7

In front of the banker stretches a long line of his failed attempts to destroy the Revolution, starting with the crown of the Tsar, several attempts to start alternative governments that were crushed by the Bolsheviks, and ending with a panicked-looking "white Poland" (referencing the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1920.)[164]

To be clear, there were British, French, and American intelligence officers, diplomats, etc. in the Soviet Union during the Russian Revolution and the Civil War. Given the open claims of Lenin and other Bolsheviks that they were going to destroy Western society and turn the world communist, and also their links to Germany and constant demands that Russia exit the war, it is unsurprising that the Western powers conducted intelligence operations against the nascent USSR. However, keep in mind that according to Lenin's theory of imperialism these were not intelligence officers, soldiers, and diplomats who were ultimately working for their country. According to Lenin's theory they were ultimately just servants of imperialism, meaning servants of the finance-capitalist cabals that controlled their supposedly free countries.

The activities of the Bolsheviks were not confined to Russia. In anticipation of more revolutions they formed the Communist International in early 1919 to coordinate the global revolution.[165] This venture abroad was both offensive and, in the Bolshevik interpretation, defensive. Defensively, the Bolsheviks expected that the "imperialist" powers would combine forces to crush the revolution in Russia, and therefore they had to spread the revolution to Europe and destroy the imperialist powers and annihilate the source of the threat. Offensively, they believed that the era of the world revolution was nigh, and that it was their duty to spread this socialist revolution,[166] - to "combat spontaneity" all across the world.

Lenin's "imperialist" conspiracy theory also had an important role to play in post-revolutionary propaganda, especially since the "chief task" of the Communist International according to a July 1920 resolution was "to fight bourgeois democracy and expose its falseness and hypocrisy…" According to this resolution the Communist International (usually just abbreviated as "Comintern") had to strive to fight against the massive deception which "imperialist" actors had successfully foisted on the world, which included the creation of independent states that were in fact secretly in total submission to some financial clique that

[164] "25 Октября 1917 года - 7 ноября 1920 года. Третья годовщина коммунистической революции в России - крах мирового империализма" *October 25, 1917 - November 7, 1920. The third anniversary of the Communist Revolution in Russia - the collapse of world imperialism) Kyiv, 1920. Available at http://redavantgarde.com/collection/show-collection/1328/print/. Accessed June 1, 2018.

[165] Jon Jacobson, *When the Soviet Union Entered World Politics*, (University of California Press, 1994), p. 32.

[166] Ibid., p. 13.

controls some imperialist country. The resolution included the idea of Zionism as an example of this kind of deception:

> "...bourgeois-democratic lies which conceal the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by a small minority of the wealthiest and most advanced capitalist countries that is characteristic of the epoch of finance capital and imperialism...It is essential constantly to expose and to explain to the widest masses of the working people everywhere, and particularly in the backward countries, the deception practised by the imperialist Powers with the help of the privileged classes in the oppressed countries in creating ostensibly politically independent States which are in reality completely dependent on them economically, financially, and militarily. A glaring example of the deception practised on the working classes of an oppressed nation by the combined efforts of Entente imperialism and the bourgeoisie of that same nation is offered by the Zionists' Palestine venture (and by Zionism as a whole, which, under the pretence of creating a Jewish State in Palestine in fact surrenders the Arab working people of Palestine, where the Jewish workers form only a small minority, to exploitation by England). In present international conditions there is no salvation for dependent and weak nations except as an alliance of Soviet republics."[167]

These amazing powers of deception that the imperialists had at their disposal could also be used to explain propaganda attacks against the USSR, such as criticizing the mass repression taking place in Soviet-controlled lands, or accusing leading Bolsheviks of having colluded with the Germans during the war, or decrying the USSR's attempt to conquer other countries as "imperialistic" (in the older, pre-Lenin, sense of the term.) For example, take an excerpt from this article that appeared on the front page of *Pravda* on January 29, 1919:

> "Three days ago the Tsarskoye Selo radio station received a new… text of the declaration of the Allies on the Russian question… it contains one highly significant phrase.. The phrase "fighting Bolshevik imperialism"...this is a new slogan… The Allies obviously hope that by this new word and this new slogan they will be able to deceive and intimidate the masses, and draw the masses into a new bloody adventure… This is one of the many... forgeries, on which the allied "statesmen" have long been gaining experience. It used to be said that the 'Bolsheviks - are the allies of German imperialism' the 'secret documents' proving the connection between Lenin and Trotsky with [Kaiser] Wilhelm… were fabricated. Now there is no German imperialism…. Everyone now knows that this was a forgery - insolent and vile - and also, very tone-deaf and unsophisticated. What is there left to do? Declare that the Bolsheviks themselves are imperialists. Lenin and Trotsky are no longer accomplices of the imperialists, they are the imperialists themselves! Isn't this absurd? … Everybody knows that the Bolsheviks are the ultimate arch-enemies of all imperialism…"[168]

Lenin's idea of imperialism remained important after it had become obvious that the hoped-for world revolution would not take place anytime soon. Marx had predicted that the proletarian revolution would break out in the most advanced nations, but Lenin's theory of imperialism could explain that this had not occurred because the masterminds of finance capital, using their profits gained through imperialism, had been able to bribe enough of their proletariat:

> "...despite the objectively revolutionary situation, political and economic . . . the majority of the workers are not yet under communist influence; this is particularly true of those countries where

[167] *The Communist International: 1919-1943 - Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922*, p. 144.
[168] А. Меньшой (A. Menshoi), "Большевистикий империализм" (Bolshevik imperialism), *Pravda*, No. 17, January 29, 1919, p. 1

> finance capital is very powerful and where consequently large strata of workers are corrupted by imperialism (e.g. England and America), while real revolutionary mass propaganda has only just begun."[169]

According to this idea, the financial oligarchy had successfully used a strategy of conquest and decadence in the most advanced countries. This idea that the loot from the empires enables the oligarchs who rule Western nations to bribe their people and forestall the revolution points to one of the important implications of Lenin's theory of imperialism, which did not really come to the fore until decades later: a possible strategy of supporting revolts against European imperialism as a means of preparing the way for revolution in Europe.[170] If the financial oligarchy in the West is dependent on super-profits from colonial exploitation to bribe their working class, then a strategy to choke off these super-profits by ending imperialist domination could help finally bring about the predicted proletarian revolution in Europe. This in turn suggests a policy of making the possession of colonies so painful to the populations of imperialist states that they will compel their oligarch rulers to abandon them, which would consequently rob the rulers of their ability to bribe their workers - and therefore lead to socialist revolution.

Another central implication of Lenin's theory for Soviet ideology was the identification of these rulers - the "ultimate" kind of enemy, especially after the Revolution - as the lords of finance capital. This kind of enemy shared many of the aspects of the Jewish enemy identified in Black Hundred propaganda: international, incredibly manipulative and deceptive and powerful, using its control of international finance, the press, and the manipulation of supposedly democratic politics to exert clandestine control of the "free" societies of the West. So at least for a short time in the early 20th century there lived in Russia two influential conspiracy theorists: Lenin and Butmi. They were diametrically opposed politically but they believed in uncannily similar conspiracy theories. Lenin posited that a *few small groups* of unscrupulous bankers bent on world domination had gained control of Western countries which they were manipulating for their own ends. Butmi posited that *one* group of unscrupulous *Jewish* bankers bent on world domination had gained control of Western countries which they were manipulating for their own ends. As has been demonstrated in the section on Hobson, this similarity between Lenin's imperialist and Butmi's anti-Jewish conspiracy theory of the "Black Hundred" type was not a coincidence or convergent evolution. In fact, these conspiracy theories came from some of the same roots: Western finance-focused anti-Jewish conspiracy theories.

As stated in the introduction, this chapter does not argue that Lenin's extremist violence may have been precipitated by a belief in a conspiracy theory. Lenin was already quite clear about his desire for violent revolution long before he wrote *Imperialism.* The version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that he adopted via Hobson was initially used by Lenin to explain why so many of his fellow socialists suddenly seemed to turn against global revolution after the beginning of WWI and instead defended their homelands. It then became a convenient idea for propaganda, accusing the Bolsheviks' opponents of being paid agents of foreign powers (while the Bolsheviks were accepting money from the Germans), promoting moral equivalence

[169] *The Communist International: 1919-1943 - Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922,* p. 243.
[170] Ulam, pp. 311-312.

between the Allies and the Germans during WWI and generally giving the Bolsheviks the ability to label any opponent as a tool of the imperialist conspiracy against the Revolution.

This propaganda tool was not only used tactically. Because it was enshrined in two of Lenin's three major works his idea of imperialism could not be ignored in Soviet ideology (though it could be de-emphasized in Soviet propaganda from time to time - for example, when the USSR was allied with the Western democracies during WWII.) The demands of this Leninist ideology and the fact that among the greatest ideological threats to Soviet communism were the democracies in Western Europe and America meant that denunciations of "imperialism" became a standard Soviet line. It is important to emphasize that this denunciation was not primarily a denunciation of European expansionist policies - capturing foreign lands, enslaving peoples, stealing things, etc. - but was instead a denunciation of advanced capitalist democracies themselves. As one analyst put it: "Imperialism is not something the Western countries do: it is a state of being, it is what they are. They have reached the stage of monopoly-capitalism; this, by definition, is imperialism. It has nothing to do with pursuit of this or that line of action in their foreign transactions; no matter what they do, it will be by definition 'imperialist.'"[171] Any anti-revolutionary movement could be tied to the "imperialists" - even, for example, the nascent Polish Republic.[172]

Mirroring the anti-Jewish conspiracy theories of the Tsarist era, Lenin's theory of imperialism was used against the idea of republican government. Just as reactionaries and supporters of tsarism argued that republics were just a tool of the Freemason or Jewish conspiracy and that a free press was the tool of the conspiracy before the Russian Revolution, Bolsheviks used the chimera of an imperialist conspiracy to attack the idea of republics and a free press after the 1917 Revolution. "Real" republics, like the Roman Republic or perhaps some from early-modern Europe, didn't exist anymore, modern republics were just the camouflage that ruthless, clandestine, oligarchic dictators used to cover their actions. To ask the Soviet Union to be more "democratic" was, using this analysis, demanding that the Revolution play by rules written by the enemy - rules the enemy did not deign to follow. Here is an excerpt from the Comintern manifesto that included this idea, written by Trotsky and adopted 1919:

> "When the financial oligarchy think it advisable to get parliamentary cover for their acts of violence, the bourgeois State has at its disposal for this purpose all the manifold instruments inherited from centuries of class rule and multiplied by all the miracles of capitalist technology—lies, demagogy, baiting, calumny, bribery, and terror.
>
> To demand of the proletariat that like meek lambs they comply with the requirements of bourgeois democracy in the final life-and-death struggle with capitalism is like asking a man fighting for his life against cut-throats to observe the artificial and restrictive rules of French wrestling, drawn up but not observed by his enemy."[173]

In 1919 Lenin attacked the idea of freedom of assembly in his 1919 "Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship Adopted By the First Comintern Congress" :

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[171] Roberts, p. 371.
[172] See the headline from *Pravda*, No. 99, 9 May 1920.
[173] *The Communist International: 1919-1943- Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922,* p. 44.

"...even in the most democratic bourgeois republic 'freedom of assembly' is an empty phrase, for the rich have the best public and private buildings at their disposal, have also enough leisure for meetings, and enjoy the protection of the bourgeois apparatus of power. The proletariat of town and country, as well as the small peasants, that is the overwhelming majority of the population, have neither the first nor the second nor the third. So long as this is true, 'equality', that is, 'pure democracy', is a deception."[174]

Immediately following this section on how "pure democracy" is "deception" Lenin attacked the idea of a free press as a form of ideological unilateral disarmament in the face of capitalism:

"Freedom of the press' is another leading watchword of 'pure democracy'. But the workers know, and the socialists of all countries have admitted it a million times, that this freedom is deceptive so long as the best printing works and the biggest paper supplies are in capitalist hands, and so long as capital retains its power over the press, a power which throughout the world is expressed more clearly, sharply, and cynically, the more developed the democracy and the republican regime, as for example in America. To win real equality and real democracy for the working masses, for the workers and peasants, the capitalists must first be deprived of the possibility of getting writers in their service, of buying up publishing houses and bribing newspapers. And for that it is necessary to throw off the yoke of capital, to overthrow the exploiters and to crush their resistance. The capitalists have always given the name of freedom to the freedom of the rich to make profits and the freedom of the poor to die of hunger. The capitalists give the name of freedom of the press to the freedom of the rich to bribe the press, the freedom to use wealth to create and distort so-called public opinion. The defenders of 'pure democracy' reveal themselves once more as defenders of the dirty and corrupt system of the rule of the rich over the means of mass education, as deceivers of the people who with fine- sounding but thoroughly false phrases divert them from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capital. Real freedom and equality will be found in the system the communists establish, in which there will be no opportunity to get rich at the expense of others, no objective possibility of subjecting the press, directly or indirectly, to the power of money,..."[175]

For one final example of an attack on liberal democracy by invoking the specter of an aggressive enemy who would take advantage of this freedom, take this scathing letter Lenin wrote to a left-wing communist who had written a few articles in which he called for press freedom:

"All over the world, wherever there are capitalists, freedom of the press means freedom to buy up newspapers, to buy writers, to bribe, buy and fake "public opinion" for the benefit of the bourgeoisie.

This is a fact.

No one will ever be able to refute it….

The bourgeoisie (all over the world) is still very much stronger than we are. To place in its hands yet another weapon like freedom of political organisation (= freedom of the press, for the press is the core and foundation of political organisation) means facilitating the enemy's task, means helping the class enemy.

We have no wish to commit suicide, and therefore, we will not do this.

[174] *The Communist International: 1919-1943 - Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922,* p. 10.
[175] *The Communist International: 1919-1943 - Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922,* p. 10.

> We clearly see this fact: "freedom of the press" means in practice that the international bourgeoisie will immediately buy up hundreds and thousands of Cadet, Socialist Revolutionary and Menshevik writers, and will organise their propaganda and fight against us.
>
> That is a fact. 'They' are richer than we are and will buy a 'force' ten times larger than we have, to fight us.
>
> No, we will not do it; we will not help the international bourgeoisie…
>
> Freedom of the press will help the force of the world bourgeoisie. That is a fact, 'Freedom of the press' will not help to purge the Communist Party in Russia of a number of its weaknesses, mistakes, misfortunes and maladies (it cannot be denied that there is a spate of these maladies), because this is not what the world bourgeoisie wants. But freedom of the press will be a weapon in the hands of this world bourgeoisie. It is not dead; it is alive. It is lurking nearby and watching. It has already hired Milyukov, to whom Chernov and Martov (partly because of their stupidity, and partly because of factional spleen against us; but mainly because of the objective logic of their petty bourgeois-democratic position) are giving 'faithful and loyal' service."[176]

Conclusion

The Soviet embrace of conspiracy theories may have been incongruous with its Marxist roots, as Popper argued, but Soviet ideology was influenced by the charismatic leader of the Russian Revolution, Vladimir Lenin. By 1917 Lenin was a full-blown conspiracy theorist, and a proponent of his own brand of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Lenin's emphasis on the importance of deception opened the way for his adoption of Hobsons anti-Jewish conspiracy theory to explain imperialism and the "defection" of Lenin's former socialist allies during WWI. Lenin removed the anti-Jewish elements when he adopted it, but he adopted the basic narrative of a small group of bankers (finance-capital) who exert control over Western society through amazing powers of deception and manipulation. The proximate cause of Lenin's embrace of Hobson's conspiracy theory may have been his conflict with Lenin's nemesis Kautsky. But Lenin did not adopt this idea as a just a debating tactic. He integrated it into two of his three major works, thereby assuring that this conspiracy theory would be exported all over the world in Soviet ideology and Soviet propaganda. Lenin's *"*imperialism*"* conspiracy theory was also useful in Bolshevik/USSR propaganda against the Western allies in WWI (and to mask his own collusion with the Germans) and eventually against the idea of republican government. Just like in Austrian propaganda after the French Revolution, in the propaganda of the Portuguese counter-revolutionaries in 1823, and in Black Hundred propaganda, in Bolshevik propaganda a variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was used against the idea of republican government and freedom of the press.

Part of the similarities between Soviet and Nazi propaganda and ideology may be explained by their common roots in anti-Jewish Grand Conspiracy Theories, though Lenin's lack of anti-Jewish bile and perhaps his ignorance of Hobson's anti-Jewish beliefs have obscured their close heritage.

[176] V. I. Lenin, "A Letter To G. Myasnikov," Yuri Sdobnikov trans., (from Lenin's Collected Works, 1st English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Volume 32, pages 504-509). Available at https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1921/aug/05.htm. Accessed June 1 2018.

Chapter 11: The Grand Conspiracy Theory Comes to the Middle East

Introduction

This chapter will examine the early spread of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the Middle East. It will emphasize the role of state-sponsored propaganda and briefly survey the evolution of some of the more influential variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the Middle Eastern context. Subsequent chapters will deal with the role of these ideas on two extremist ideologies from the Middle East in greater depth, but this chapter will only touch on these later developments in order to provide historical context. This chapter will mainly focus on the anti-Jewish strain of the Grand Conspiracy Theory because as we shall see, the Soviet attempts to spread Lenin's ideas about imperialism in the Middle East reacquired anti-Jewish themes that Lenin had removed from Hobson's ideas. This chapter is not seeking to prove that these propaganda campaigns were the sole reason that the Grand Conspiracy Theory spread in the Middle East, just that they likely contributed to the spread, especially via radio-propaganda, and are exemplars of the kind of conspiratorial rhetoric that was circulating in the region during this time.

The first part of this chapter will lay out some background analysis on the major similarities and differences between Europe in the 19th century and the Middle East in the 20th century with regards to the spread of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The second part will describe three major state propaganda campaigns that helped spread the Grand anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theory in the Middle East in the mid-20th century.

Court politics and proto-conspiracy theories

Both Europe in the 19th century and the Middle East in the 20th century had a common historical experience of monarchical court politics and accompanying political and sectarian "proto-conspiracy theories" – tales of court intrigue. Also, both regions had long traditions of Jew-hatred. Daniel Pipes has pointed out that there is very little evidence of conspiracy theorizing in the Middle East before the year 1800.[1] This thesis argues that there was very little conspiracy theorizing, in the sense that we usually understand it today, anywhere in the world before the year 1800 because before the democratic age the type of narratives that are the precursors of most conspiracy theories were court intrigues, and these often just described the way politics could actually work in monarchies. The capitals and *divans* of the Middle East certainly had just as much court intrigue and rumors of skullduggery and monarchical illegitimacy as the capitals and courts of Europe. Indeed, probably the closest thing to a grand conspiracy of usurpation that overthrew a monarch via long-term intrigue took place in this region. This was the Abbasid Revolution of 750 AD, which was preceded by "prolonged, persistent, sophisticated and, on the whole, clandestine propaganda."[2] This revolution

[1] Daniel Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 296-297.
[2] Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners From the East*, (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem/Brill, 1983), p. 19.

overthrew the Ummayad dynasty which had ruled the Muslim world since the early days of Islam. The revolution arguably began some time before 718 AD, when Abbasid propagandists began clandestinely arguing among Shi'a for their legitimacy as potential rulers of the Muslims because of their family connection to Mohammed.[3]

The literature of the Middle East also contains plenty of narratives that involve subterfuge, espionage, and deception that changed history. To take just one accessible example, examine Persian epic poem the *Shahnameh*. This well-known and well-loved work is littered with references to spies, concealed identities, and deception. Ferdowsi, the author of the Shahnameh, may have included so many stories like this to please his patron Mahmud of Ghazni (971-1030 AD). In addition to being a warrior, Mahmud was a consummate spymaster. Mahmud had spies he sent to other lands (*mushrifs*) and also a separate spy service dedicated to keeping an eye on the members of his court (the *Mushrifan-i- Dargah*).[4] The 15th century historian Saifu'd-Din Hajji states that Sultan Mahmud received information even about the private meetings of his ministers.[5]

In Europe before the French Revolution there was another kind of narrative which is very similar to the modern conspiracy theories we have been studying, namely: sectarian propaganda that strives to blacken the reputation of another religion by arguing that the leaders of that religion are malevolent liars. Martin Luther's screed against the Jews and the early-modern anti-Jesuit and anti-Jansenist conspiracy theories in Europe are the best-known examples of this type from Europe. In an age where monarchical politics and religion were very closely intertwined there was a great deal of overlap between stories of Jesuit intrigue and stories of court intrigue. Like Europe, the Middle East also had its own versions of narratives which are recognizably sectarian conspiracy theories. In chapter 4 we discussed the medieval propaganda polemics against the Isma'ilis, the black legend that accused the Ismaili leadership of being secret atheists bent on destroying Islam and taking over the world.[6]

While the peoples of the Middle East had access to their own kinds of themes and tropes that were the precursors of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Europe, Middle Eastern conspiracy theorists did not independently develop their own strains of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that attacked the idea of liberalism and democracy. Instead Middle Eastern conspiracy theorists adapted European narratives. After all, liberalism and modern democracy developed in Europe first, and by the time the ideas penetrated the Middle East there were already some very serviceable and well-developed conspiracy theories that could also be imported and used to attack them. This was first seen, very briefly and it appears inconsequentially, when opponents of the 1908 Young Turk revolution in the Ottoman Empire accused the pro-parliamentary revolutionaries of being aligned with a secret Jewish plot.[7] At around the same time during the Constitutional Revolution in Iran a leading cleric Shaykh Fazollah Nuri denounced the pro-republican revolutionaries as being secret Freemasons and *babis* (a variant of Baha'i) among

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[3] Ḡ. Ḥ. Yūsofī, "Abu Moslem Korasani," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/4, pp. 341-344. Available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abu-moslem-abd-al-rahman-b. Accessed on August 28 2018.
[4] Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 144-5.
[5] Nazim, p. 145.
[6] Farhad Daftary, "The 'Order of the Assassins:' J. von Hammer and the Orientalist Misrepresentations of the Nizari Ismailis," *Iranian Studies*, vol. 39, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), p. 72.
[7] Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites,* (W. W. Norton & Co., 1999), Kindle Edition, p. 138.

other accusations. He excommunicated the leaders of the Constitutional Revolution and accused them of capital offenses.[8] Both of these uses of anti-Freemason and anti-Jewish conspiracy theories to attack pro-republican revolutions may have been inspired by the Black Hundred propaganda from their northern neighbor Russia. As mentioned earlier, these propaganda themes seem to have petered out rather quickly.

Jumping forward a century, it may appear at first glance that conspiracy theories are uniquely prevalent in the political culture of the Middle East today. A quick comparison at news bulletins coming out of Iran and Syria compared with those coming out of Europe and America might give one the impression that the Middle East is inherently "more conspiratorially-minded" than the West. A Norwegian analyst who was a PhD student studying in Jerusalem in the 80s complained that "...in Arab political analysis and rhetoric, conspiracy theory comes close to serving as a general, all-purpose explanation of history and international politics."[9] However, as Daniel Pipes correctly pointed out, the idea that conspiracism is a major factor in Middle Eastern politics and only a minor, marginal factor in European politics is disproven by European history. The atrocities and massive cataclysms committed or induced by the arch-conspiracy theorist Nazis should be enough to refute this idea, to say nothing of the other examples illustrated earlier in this thesis. While it may be true that at the present time the peoples of the Middle East are more prone to conspiracy theorizing than are most people in Europe and the Americas, this was certainly not the case in the recent past and may not be so in the near future. This relative lack of conspiracy theorizing in the West may be a temporary anomaly, caused by the discrediting of the Nazis and the Soviets and their associated conspiracy-theory propaganda.[10] One wonders how an opinion poll about a belief in the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory conducted in present day Tehran or Cairo would compare to a similar poll taken in early 20th century Paris, Berlin, or Moscow.

This chapter does not make any kind of argument that there is anything inherently "conspiratorial" in Arab/Persian/Turkish/Muslim etc. culture or thought or that conspiracy theories became popular in the Middle East solely through the efforts of Nazi or Soviet or Arab Nationalist or Islamist propaganda. Indeed, information on the popularity of conspiracy theories in the Middle East over time is spotty and sometimes contradictory. This chapter is not concerned with the effectiveness of propaganda in the Middle East on entire populations, but rather will show how successive waves of propagandists, both European and Middle Eastern, adapted the Grand Conspiracy Theory to their own purposes and ensured it was spread through the whole region. Discussing the effectiveness or popularity of a certain conspiracy theory pushed by propagandists is interesting but is ultimately beside the point when it comes to the effects these ideas have had on the Middle East in their role of inspiring violent extremism there (This will be discussed in the subsequent two chapters.) The fact that a certain conspiracy-theory used in a piece of political propaganda may be rejected by the overwhelming majority of the target audience is not important for our purposes. If this piece of propaganda convinces and inspires a minority, perhaps an extremely small minority, who, driven by their belief in the conspiracy theory, go on to organize and significantly affect politics, it can have more impact

[8] Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, (University of California Press, 1993), pp. 92-93.
[9] Tore Björgo, *Conspiracy Rhetoric in Arab Politics: The Palestinian Case*, (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo 1987) p, 103.
[10] Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, pp. 8-9.

over the long-term than the contemporary effect of the initial propaganda campaign. Indeed, a "second-generation" conspiracy theorist can be all the more effective at spreading a conspiracy theory, as he is not bound by the constraints of a state propagandist who is working towards a concrete political goal. In the case of the spread of the anti-Jewish variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to the Middle East, a prominent figure who took part in the crafting of the Nazi-sponsored "first-generation" spread of this theory in Middle East was also a major driver of the "second-generation" dissemination of the conspiracy theory after the Second World War. This was the Palestinian leader Hajj Amin al-Husseini. We will discuss his special role later in the chapter.

Jew hatred

The ancient and medieval Christian communities of the Middle East had similar Christian anti-Jewish traditions that were common to Europe. Islam, the dominant faith in the region, also had anti-Jewish traditions dating back from Islam's earliest days. A few sections of Islam's holy book, the *Quran*, reference the conflict between their prophet Muhammad and Jewish tribes on the Arabian peninsula. These conflicts were fleshed out in hadiths and early histories of Islam. As the great 9th century Quran commentator Al Tabari wrote:

> "In my [Tabari's] opinion, [the Christians] are not like the Jews who always scheme in order to murder the emissaries and the prophets, and who oppose God in his positive and negative commandments, and who corrupt His scripture which He revealed in His books."[11]

In the Christian gospel story, a group of Jews manage to have the Messiah arrested and killed (but he rises again after three days.) The *Quran*, on the other hand, mentions a Jewish plot to stymie Islam and harm Muhammed, but the plot was ineffective, they utterly failed. A Christian could read the gospels and get the impression that the Jews were malevolent and powerful capable of even killing the son of God. Anti-Jewish Muslims reading the Quran traditionally thought of the Jews as evil but ineffectual, powerless to stop the rise of the Prophet.[12] Before the modern era the strains of anti-Jewish thought in Islam emphasized the insignificance of the Jews, their weakness and impoverishment.[13] They might be hostile to Islam but they had inevitably and ignominiously failed early on, and were now relegated to the margins, perhaps as a living example of the cost of opposing Islam. As the second surah (chapter) of the Quran puts it:

> "And they [the Jews] were covered with humiliation and misery, and they drew on themselves the Wrath of Allâh. That was because they used to disbelieve the *Ayât* (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations etc.) of Allâh and killed the Prophets wrongfully. That was because they disobeyed and used to transgress the bounds..."[14]

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[11] Andrew G. Bostom, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History* (Prometheus Books, 2008), Kindle Edition, locations 984-986.
[12] Lewis, *Semites and anti-Semites*, p. 129.
[13] Lewis, *Semites and anti-Semites*, p. 218.
[14] *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language,* Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Dr. Taqi Ud Din Hilali trans. *Holy Quran Translation in English*, (Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Quran, 2000?) Sûrah 2. Al-Baqarah, Verse 61, Part 2, p. 13.

Despite its incongruity with anti-Judaism of the more Christian type, this pre-existing Islamic-style Jew-hatred provided a foundation on which clever propagandist could establish imported anti-Jewish conspiracy theories from Europe. While acknowledging this, it is important to recognize how modern European themes now dominate the anti-Jewish Islamic diatribes. The idea of the evil-but-ineffective Jew has been replaced by that of the nearly all-powerful Jewish menace.[15]

Radio

Now to deal with three factors that made the environment for the spread of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the 20th century Middle East significantly different from its spread in Europe in the 19th century. We will discuss one technological difference and two political differences: the invention of radio, the impact of European imperialism, and Zionism.

First, radio: In all the propaganda campaigns discussed so far in this thesis with the exception of the campaigns of the Nazis and the Soviets after they had taken power, the main medium for their spread was newspapers, written material, posters, and books. Of course there was certainly an important role played by word-of-mouth and rumor, but these were less enduring and are nearly impossible to document. Newspapers and pamphlets allowed a state or a group to put out a uniform message across wide areas without worrying about a "whisper-down-the-lane" effect of having the message distorted. However, printed propaganda requires physical access to the target population and that enough of the population be literate (though images can get *some* of a message across.) If a propagandist was denied access to an area, clandestine newspapers could be printed in secret or smuggled into the denied territory, but the necessity for secrecy was still very limiting. The invention of the radio and especially the short-wave radio allowed propagandists to bypass these limitations. Not only could a message be beamed across national borders and even across continents, directly to a target audience, but the target audience did not even have to be minimally educated to receive the message. Radio allowed foreign states to conduct mass propaganda efforts with relatively little investment, apart from radio equipment and linguistic and cultural experts.

Radio allowed propagandists to spread their messages with unprecedented rapidity and over a large area, but unfortunately radio propaganda is more difficult to document and analyze than newspaper propaganda, without tapes or transcripts there is no real "primary source." After the invention of radio scholars can no longer rely so much on libraries and newsprint to show the course of conspiracy theories, and consequently their particular pathways of transmission are less discernible. This chapter will examine three times when propagandists from different regimes used radio to spread conspiracy theories in the Middle East. Later sections of this chapter will examine some records that are available, reports of radio broadcasts written by American monitoring of Nazi, Soviet, and Arab nationalist propaganda.

[15] Lewis, *Semites and Anti-semites*, p. 134-136.

European imperialism

A major factor that influenced the perceptions of narratives derived from the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the Middle East, one that can hardly be understated, was the role of European imperialism. During the modern era large sections of the Middle East have been either directly ruled by European powers or, perhaps more importantly for our purposes, indirectly ruled by European powers. The most notable example of this was Egypt, which was never formally part of the British Empire. In fact, for the first 32 years of British rule Egypt was formally a semi-autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire. Egypt was of crucial importance to the British because of its location at the main choke point on the way to India, the gem of the British Empire. Therefore Britain invested enormous amounts of resources and attention to ensure that Egypt remained safely within the fold of the British Empire even while on paper it was part of the Ottoman Empire. British tactics involved coopting local elites and attempting to direct Egyptian popular opinion away from anti-British, more nationalist, ideas.[16] Egypt supposedly became independent in 1922, but really it was still under British domination. After living in such a situation for decades, one where a supposedly independent country is actually under the heavy manipulative influence of an outside Western power, it was not a stretch for some Egyptians, along with other non-European denizens of the various European empires, to see some conspiracy theories as consistent with the political reality they experienced: a few alien men in an embassy wielding enormous influence over their supposedly independent or autonomous government. The versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed in this thesis harp on the idea of a small group of manipulators using guile and deception (sometimes backed up by force) to subdue whole peoples, and in the case of Egypt this is close to what actually happened, though on a smaller scale and with less success than what is described in the Grand Conspiracy Theory.[17]

It should be noted here that the era of European imperialism was not the first time that an outside power had come in and taken direct and indirect control of the peoples of the Middle East. After all, the Ottoman Empire had conquered Egypt in the 16th century, and even before this parts of the Middle East and indeed almost every corner of the globe had come under the control of foreign empires at some point. Large sections of the Middle East had come under the rule of the Mongols, Ghurids, Seljuks, etc. at one point or another. One of the things that made the era of 19th-20th century European imperialism different, however, was the insistence of many of the European powers that they believed in universal values, in liberty, in representative government, rule of law, etc., even while they conquered foreign populations and manipulated supposedly sovereign governments. This contrast between word and deed would have been seen as hypocritical at least and perhaps even deceptive in the extreme, especially among the peoples under the rule of the French and British empires.

Also, as we have noted, in the early 20th century new technology allowed the rivals and enemies of these empires to reach their subject populations directly, through radio. Nazi and Soviet propagandists against the British and French empires could point out the aforementioned

[16] For an extended study on this issue see James Whidden, *Egypt: British Colony and Imperial Capital*, (Manchester University Press, 2017).
[17] Hannah Arendt made a point similar to this, though dealing more with domestic US politics. See *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Location 270.

hypocrisy of these powers and attack them using the tried-and-true conspiracy theory narratives.

Zionism

A new factor that entered the Middle East in the late 19th/early 20th centuries that was not relevant in Europe in the 18th and most of the 19th century was Zionism. Zionism is a movement that in the late 19th and early 20th century advocated and organized for the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in the Biblical "promised land." Zionism was born in Europe, well after the anti-Jewish variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was established, and its effect on conspiracy theories in a Middle Eastern context dwarfs its effect on the development of conspiracy theories in Europe in the 19th and early 20th century.

Most historians date the beginning of Zionism with the 1896 publication of the book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) written by the playwright and journalist Theodor Herzl. There had been a few efforts at Jewish settlement in Palestine before Theodor Herzl, but he transformed these desultory efforts into a political force.[18] Herzl called a well-publicized congress in Basel in 1897 where the participants resolved to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, organize "the whole of Jewry in suitable local and general bodies, in accordance with the laws of their respective countries…" and to get the consent of the relevant governments to accomplish these aims.[19]

This call to organize Jewry all over the world made the Zionist Congress a kind of mirror image to the paranoid imaginings of anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists, especially their imaginary version of the Universal Israelite Alliance. However, Zionism was a movement to get Jews *out* of Europe and put them in a single place far from the seats of power, not a move to take over Europe and the World. This means there was a bit of cognitive dissonance for anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists who observed prominent Jews organizing and lobbying not take over their countries and destroy monarchy and Christianity but instead to get Jews to leave Europe and start farming in an Ottoman province. The Black Hundred ideologue and likely author of the *Protocols* Gregori Butmi-De Katzman referenced Zionism in an October 1905 introduction to some works of the pseudonymous "N. L." (written during the Revolution of 1905.) Butmi insisted that Zionism was just a cover organization for revolutionary activity in Russia, and that Zionists were only pretending to be interested in emigration to Palestine:

> "For a more complete understanding of the events that are taking place, we consider it appropriate to point out that the so-called 'Zionism', so widespread among the Jewish intelligentsia in Russia, has a plan for the relocation of Jews to Palestine only as an outward pretext, in fact it is a revolutionary organization, merged with the Jewish 'Bund.' - England, through its agents, the Russian Masons, contributes to the internal enslavement of Russia by the Jews; The Jewish Zionists, by instigating internal turmoil, paralyze the possible resistance of Russia to the machinations of English foreign policy. The agreement on this case between Zionism and Freemasons took place, apparently, in the year 1900, at the initiative of Dr. Hertzel, the founder of modern Zionism. Thus, Jewish Zionism, acting in Russia under the aegis of Russian freemasons,

[18] Walter Laqueur , *A History of Zionism*, (Tauris Parke Paperback, 2003), p. 81.
[19] Lawrence J. Epstein, *The Dream of Zion: The Story of the First Zionist Congress*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), p. 84.

> and in agreement with English Freemasonry, is a well-organized, Russia-wide, treacherous agent of English foreign policy that is always hostile to Russia."[20] [21]

Hitler professed a similar idea in *Mein Kampf.* He wrote that the Jews were still aiming for world domination, and the talk of a Jewish state was just camouflage for building their global conspiracy and gaining a piece of ground for use as a safe-haven and training center:

> "When the Zionists try to make the rest of the world believe that the new national consciousness of the Jews will be satisfied by the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, the Jews thereby adopt another means to dupe the simple-minded Aryan.
>
> They have not the slightest intention of building up a Jewish State in Palestine so as to live in it. What they are really aiming at is to establish a central organization for their international swindling and cheating.
>
> As a sovereign State, this cannot be controlled by any of the other States. Therefore, it can serve as a refuge for swindlers who have been found out, and at the same time, a high school for the training of other swindlers ..."[22]

The Soviets also viewed Zionism as a kind of demi-conspiracy to a larger conspiratorial project. They did not think Zionism was part of a plot by the Jews to conquer the world but was a local initiative of the "imperialist conspiracy." Take this 1920 example from the Comintern, also used in the preceding chapter:

> "...A glaring example of the deception practised on the working classes of an oppressed nation by the combined efforts of Entente imperialism and the bourgeoisie of that same nation is offered by the Zionists' Palestine venture (and by Zionism as a whole, which, under the pretence of creating a Jewish State in Palestine in fact surrenders the Arab working people of Palestine, where the Jewish workers form only a small minority, to exploitation by England). In present international conditions there is no salvation for dependent and weak nations except as an alliance of Soviet republics."[23]

While the Soviet Union spread propaganda all over the world and eagerly pressed every international advantage it could against "imperialism," the Middle East (and therefore Zionism) was not a priority target for Soviet propaganda until later in the 20th century. A 1946 US intelligence analysis of Soviet radio propaganda stated that the Soviets broadcast in Persian and Arabic only about 60 minutes a day each, equal to the effort expended on Japanese and Swedish broadcasts and well behind the 345 minutes of broadcasting in English, 300 of German, and 120 each for Chinese and French.[24]

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[20] Н. Л. (N. L.), *ФРАНК-МАСОНСТВО и ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ ИЗМѢНА* (Freemasonry and State Treason), (St. Petersburg: Printed by the newspaper "Russia," 1906, Introduction by G. Butmi dated October 27, 1905, p. 14.

[21] Butmi then says he "recently" got ahold of information about the alliance between Zionism and Freemasonry. He is probably not referring to the *Protocols* here, as it had already been published several times even years earlier, though it is possible he is referring to it.

[22] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf / My Struggle* (Stalag edition, reprint of the 1944 English edition) (Ostara Publications), pp. 363-364.

[23] *The Communist International: 1919-1943 - Documents, Vol. 1: 1919-1922*, p. 144.

[24] "Analysis of Soviet Foreign Propaganda Broadcasts," Central Intelligence Group, 23 July 1946, ORE 2. Available at https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000256976.pdf.

Unlike the Soviets and the early Nazis in the 1920s and 30s, who were focused on Europe, the Arab Palestinians could not ignore the increasing Jewish settlement in their region. The Zionist movement was increasingly successful in the first decades of the 20th century. By 1908 there were about 10,000 "Zionist" Jewish settlers in Palestine. These settlers were noticeably different from the Jews which already inhabited the region, in language, custom, and attitude.[25] By the turn of the century there was increasing anti-Jewish feeling among Palestinian Arabs, mainly connected to fears about increased Jewish immigration and land purchases.[26] The Ottoman rulers of Palestine were aware of Zionism and they tried to limit this movement which promised to exacerbate tensions in their already fractious empire and attract the unwanted attention and involvement of European powers whose Jewish citizens and subjects where emigrating to Palestine. Ottoman administration was not very effective, and their restrictions on immigration and land sales were unable to halt the immigration.[27]

Zionism, European imperialism, and the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The Ottoman loss in WWI dramatically shifted the situation in favor of the Jewish settlers in Palestine. While the war was still raging the British government had publicly pledged its support for a national home for Jews in Palestine in the "Balfour Declaration." The British reasons for making this statement were probably a combination of sympathy for Zionism and an effort to shore up Jewish support for the war.[28] When the Ottoman Empire was dismembered by the victors, the British took Palestine, ostensibly administering the territory on the behalf of the League of Nations. Under British rule the Jewish population continued to increase, and Jewish settlers spent millions of pounds purchasing land from the local Arab nobility.[29]

After the Balfour declaration leading Zionists pressed their cause hard, and this elicited predictable resistance from the local Arabs, and eventually armed resistance.[30] The Jews in Palestine formed armed groups to defend their settlements from Arab attacks, and the main armed organization, the *Haganah,* also became involved in assisting further Jewish immigration.[31] To mitigate the hostility of the Arabs against them, the British also imposed immigration restrictions on Jews trying to enter Palestine, but with limited effect. With the increased persecution Jews faced in Hitler's Germany, many German Jews who could emigrate did, and many of these went to Palestine.[32] This did not go unnoticed in the Arab world. One Arab commentator noted in 1933 "Hitler's victory is a dangerous development for the Arabs in Palestine, his plans regarding the Jews are well known. He will not hesitate to realize these plans and we will witness waves of refugees."[33]

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[25] Neville J. Mandel, *Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, (University of California Press, 1976) p. 34.
[26] Mandel, pp. 40-44.
[27] Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites,* pp 167-168.
[28] Matthew Gray, *Conspiracy Theories in the Arab World, Sources and Politics*, (Routledge, 2010), p. 55.
[29] Colin Shindler, *A History of Modern Israel*, (Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 32.
[30] Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall*, (Penguin, 2015), Kindle Edition, p. 10.
[31] Mark Tesser, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,* (Indiana University Press, 2nd edition, 2009), p. 186.
[32] Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, (Telos Press Publishing, 2009) Kindle Edition, Location 585.
[33] René Wildangel, "The Invention of 'Islamofascism'. Nazi Propaganda to the Arab World and Perceptions from Palestine," *Die Welt des Islams*, 1 January 2012, Vol.52(3/4), pp.526-543, p. 540.

Paradoxically, given the fact that Nazi and Tsarist anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists were partially responsible for the increased Jewish settlement in Palestine by increasing the persecution of Jews in Europe, some Arabs would adapt and adopt the Anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, and use it to rail against that settlement. It appears that Arab Christians in and around Palestine were the first to import these ideas. It is important to emphasize that at this point the number of residents of the Middle East who endorsed this conspiracy theory by the mid-1930s was probably quite small, just a part of the literate population. We lack any reliable hard data on the spread of this idea, but we do have various Arabic editions of the *Protocols*. Anti-Jewish conspiracy theorists don't have to believe in the truth of or even to read the *Protocols* to believe in a version of the conspiracy theory it describes, but its role as the "classic" document of anti-Jewish conspiracy theory means that it can serve as a barium meal to help chart the spread of the idea of the Grand anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theory.

The first editions of the *Protocols* in Arabic were published by Christians in the 1920s. This may have been a translation of a mid-1920s French version. Another contender for first translation into Arabic was an article published in January 1926 in the Roman Catholic periodical *Raqib Shayun.* By 1929 the leader of the Palestinians Hajj Amin al-Husseini referenced the *Protocols* while inveighing against Jewish settlement in Palestine, warning that Jewish colonization of the region was part of the global Jewish plot.[34] Al-Husseini played such an important role in the assimilation of European anti-Jewish conspiracy theories into the Arab context that we will examine his biography and beliefs more deeply in the subsequent section.

The Mufti

Hajj Amin al-Husseini was a former officer in the Ottoman army who had defected and joined the British-sponsored Arab revolt in 1917.[35] While still working for the British after the war, al-Husseini became a strong opponent of Jewish settlement in Palestine and in 1920 he took part in the formation of al-Fidiya, the first anti-Jewish military organization in the region. He pushed for the creation of a "Greater Syria" under British protection which would include Palestine.[36] Perhaps because they trusted this Arab nationalist firebrand who had nevertheless worked for them, the British appointed al-Husseini as the "Grand Mufti" of Jerusalem in 1921 when he was only 24, despite his lack of training as a religious scholar. Perhaps by placing someone so inexperienced who had worked for them in such an influential position, British officials were trying to replicate some of their success with indirect rule that had worked in Egypt. Instead they ended up promoting the career of the man who would become a major thorn in their side.

Al-Husseini was tasked by the British authorities with creating a "Supreme Muslim Council" in Palestine that would be in charge of all Muslim charities, courts, foundations, etc.

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[34] Esther Webman, "Adoption of the Protocols in the Arab Discourse on the Arab-Israeli Conflict, Zionism, and the Jews," in *The Global Impact of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Esther Webman ed. (Routledge, 2011), p. 202.
[35] Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, (Yale University Press, 2014), p. 63.
[36] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 63-65.

This British decision gave this nationalist neophyte an enormous amount of power and funds.[37] In the 1920s al-Husseini constructed a militant network to oppose Jewish settlement and support Pan-Arab nationalism, rooted in Islamism.[38] Al-Husseini traveled widely to build support for his cause, from India to Geneva. Fatefully, he had a good relationship with Muhammad Mustafa al-Maraghi, the rector of the renowned al-Azhar University in Egypt and a leader in a new movement in Egypt: the Muslim Brotherhood.[39] Somewhere along the way al-Husseini picked up the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy, and he used it in anti-Zionist propaganda.

In the 1930s al-Husseini, via the Palestinian Muslim Council, funded a violent Palestinian Islamist group the "Black Hand." This group carried out attacks against Jews and British soldiers.[40] There is no evidence that this move was motivated by the Mufti's belief in any anti-Jewish conspiracy theory, and is more likely it was just an unfortunately normal human response to escalating political/religious conflict. At around the same time there were also violent Jewish groups that attacked both the British and Arabs.

Regardless of one's opinion about the methods used by some Jews during the creation of Israel and the methods used by some Palestinians, the right or wrongness of Israel's creation, the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Palestine as a state (as opposed to an extension of Syria or Jordan), etc., the kinds of fighting discussed so far in this chapter have been "normal" - that is, not linked to any belief in a massive imaginary enemy. There were two groups of people, both of whom believe they have a right to the same piece of land. Unfortunately, in this kind of situation violent conflict is unexceptionable. As stated by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, a Zionist leader and one of the founders of the Jewish militant organization the Irgun: "Every indigenous people will resist alien settlers as long as they see any hope of ridding themselves of the danger of foreign settlement. This is how the Arabs will behave and go on behaving so long as they possess a gleam of hope that they can prevent 'Palestine' from becoming the Land of Israel."[41] That being said, one does not have to be in favor of the French Revolution to recognize the Austrian tales of Illuminati were false, nor does being against republican government require one to adopt the Black Hundred tales of an international Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. Likewise one does not have to be pro-Israel to recognize that tales of a vast international conspiracy to dominate the world are false. Unfortunately, for al-Husseini and his followers being against the Jews in Palestine came to mean that one had to oppose them all over the world, engage or enable atrocious violence against them, and to label them as evil conspirators.

Enter the Nazis

Al-Husseini was deeply anti-Jewish, and when the Nazis came to power in Germany he saw in them a potential ally against the Jews and his former patrons the British. In 1933 al-Husseini approached the German Consulate in Jerusalem just a few months after Hitler became

[37] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 67-68.
[38] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 78.
[39] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 87-88.
[40] Shaul Bartal, *Jihad in Palestine: Political Islam and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,* (Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-2.
[41] Avi Shalim, p. 14.

chancellor. He told the German representatives that he was against the "current Jewish influence on economy and politics" that was "damaging everywhere and needed to be fought."[42] Al-Husseini was apparently so enamored with the Nazis and their anti-Jewish ideas that he overlooked the 1933 deal made between some Zionists and Hitler to allow 60,000 Jews to immigrate to Israel in exchange for a third of their property.[43]

After a failed general strike against British Rule and Jewish immigration, in 1937 al-Husseini initiated a Palestinian revolt. His armed followers attacked Jewish settlements, destroyed crops, and mined roads. Al-Husseini had managed to get the backing or tacit consent of some surrounding Arab states and also support from Italy. The German government dispatched Adolf Eichmann, who was later to become one of the architects of the Holocaust, to meet this up-and-coming anti-Jewish leader, but Eichmann was denied entry into Palestine by the British and instead met with al-Husseini's representatives in Cairo. He reported back to Berlin that these Arabs may have been ignorant of Nazi ideology, but they had a deep hatred for Jews.[44]

Al-Husseini's rebellion managed to get Hitler's attention. In 1938 Hitler urged the German minority in soon-to-be invaded Czechoslovakia to "Take the Arab Palestinians as your ideal. With unusual courage they fight both England's British Empire and the world Jewry. They have no protector or helper. I give you the means and weapons, and all of Germany is behind you."[45] The German government also provided direct aid to al-Husseini's revolt, shipping thousands of rifles to fight the Jews and British. According to a US intelligence analysis completed after the war, captured German documents indicated that al-Husseini's revolt had been dependent on Nazi support, it would not have continued without it.[46]

Realizing that war with Germany would soon break out, the British tried to concede to most Arab demands in order to end the Palestinian trouble. They promised bans on Jewish immigration and the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the Arab hardliners led by Al-Husseini refused to accept even these drastic concessions. Instead they ended up collaborating with the Nazis. After all, if the Germans won the coming war, they would have no need of any British agreements.[47]

Al-Husseini's advocacy for the Palestinian cause and jihad against the Jews made him a star in the Arab world. When he visited Iraq in October 1939 he was feted as a hero and granted large subsidies. He also became involved in Iraqi politics.[48] His 1936 general strike in Palestine had also galvanized the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which experienced rapid growth between 1936 and 1938 when it championed Palestinian cause in Egypt.[49] In 1938 there was a well-publicized "World Parliamentary Congress for the Defense of Palestine" held in Cairo. Western diplomatic reports state that Arabic translations of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*

[42] Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p. 16.
[43] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 93.
[44] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 96.
[45] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 96-97.
[46] Rubin and Schwanitz, p. 97.
[47] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 100-105.
[48] Rubin and Schwanitz, p. 107.
[49] Küntzel, Location 588.

and *Mein Kampf* were distributed to attendees, though one of the reports about the conference notes that these had no impact on the attitudes of the general Egyptian public.[50]

Nazi propaganda

Nazi interest in cultivating Muslim allies in the Middle East was initially not focused on Palestine and Zionism, but they were recognized early on as an important tool with which to rally Arab popular opinion to the Nazi side. After enduring a 1933 anti-German boycott let by Egyptian Jews, a group of Germans in Cairo wrote a memo to the German Foreign office about how the "broad masses" of Egyptians could be awakened to the "Jewish threat." They concluded that direct anti-Jewish publicity campaigns in Egypt were probably of limited value, but suggested that Germany "...focus far more on the point where real conflicts of interest between Arabs and Jews exist: Palestine. The conflict between Arabs and Jews there must be transplanted to Egypt."[51]

Nazi success in this quest for Arab (and also Persian) allies would have had obvious advantages for German strategy, especially after war broke out. If the Arabs revolted successfully then the main source of oil for the British would be jeopardized, and therefore the economy of the British Empire and the capacity of the British fleet would be threatened. Unrest in the Arab regions and in Persia could pave the way for the German conquest of these regions, and German propaganda and secret activity there could cultivate future collaborators for a Nazi-occupied Middle East.

However, Nazi racialism was a formidable ideological obstacle to these kind of alliances with Arabs. The Nazis loudly declared their "anti-Semitism," and Arabs are Semitic. Hitler had made his contempt for the other "lower" races quite clear in *Mein Kampf.* In one passage, immediately after discussing how he as a Teuton "would far rather see India under British rule than under that of any other nation..." he continued his denigration of the non-European peoples and pooh-poohed the idea of a successful Egyptian revolt against the Teutonic Britons: "The hopes founded on a legendary rising in Egypt were just as chimerical. The 'Holy war' may give our German nincompoops the passing illusion that others are now prepared to shed their blood for them...but in actual fact the 'Holy War' would soon be brought to a sanguinary conclusion under the withering fire of British machine-guns…" Hitler concluded this section deriding the very idea of an alliance with any of the worlds subject peoples, including the Arabs: "I, as a nationalist, who estimate [sic.] the worth of humanity according to racial standards, must, in recognizing the inferiority of the so-called 'oppressed nations', refuse to link the destiny of my own people with the destiny of theirs."[52] Passages like these were used in British propaganda during the war to discredit the idea of an Arab alliance with Germany.[53]

In 1934 the Nazi diplomat Fritz Grobba suggested modifying sections of *Mein Kampf* in its forthcoming Arabic translation to make it more appealing to Arabs. Hitler agreed to these changes, such as changing "anti-Semitic" to "anti-Jewish." This project ran into trouble and

[50] Gudrun Krämer, *The Jews in Modern Egypt, 1914-1952*, (I.B. Tauris, 1989), pp. 146-147 and also footnote 96 on p. 260.
[51] Küntzel, location 586.
[52] Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Stalag edition, p. 742.
[53] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 34.

bureaucratic wrangling, some of it connected with the difficulty of translating the obviously anti-Egyptian passage. The Germans shelved this project.[54] Nevertheless this attempt was an early sign that the Nazis were willing to modify their ideology for propaganda purposes, at least when presenting it to Arabs.[55]

Nazi racialism became a real problem for German diplomats after the passage of new German laws banning marriage between Arians and non-Arians and stripping non-Arians of German citizenship. The diplomats managed to muddle through this without too many embarrassments. One German diplomat wrote a memo blaming the "Jewish press" for spreading the idea that the German race laws applied to Egyptians. The German diplomats had similar difficulties with trying to reassure Turks and Persians that Nazi ideology was not against them, though as Turks and Persians were not "Semites" it was less glaringly problematic.[56]

Racial issues aside, some Nazis saw much promise in the Muslim world as a source of potential allies. One Nazi journalist and member of the SS who had visited Egypt and Palestine in 1936 and 1939 praised the effect that the Palestinian revolt had had in Egypt. He commented on the "return to the religions traditions of Islam" and praised their "fierce hostility to Western liberalism… Recent developments in Egypt… Show how strongly this theocracy is able to revive itself after the first onrush of liberalism."[57] For some residents of the Middle East the feeling was mutual. Some Arab politicians imitated Hitler, for example the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (PPS) which was modeled on the NSDAP and had a swastika in its banner, and the "Young Egypt" party, which had torchlight processions and used direct Arabic translations of Nazi slogans. The future leaders of Egypt Gamal Abdul Nasser and Anwar Sadat were both onetime members of Young Egypt.[58]

The obvious issue that brought the Nazis and the radical Muslims aligned with al-Husseini together was Jew-hatred. While the Nazis had at one point permitted Jews to emigrate to Palestine, the regime did not intend to just evacuate the Jews from Europe. In 1937 a German foreign ministry report ominously warned that Germany's Jewish question would "not be solved when there are no more members of the Jewish race left on German soil."[59] Echoing Hitler's ideas about Zionism professed in *Mein Kampf,* the report warned that a Jewish state could function as a sort of Jewish Vatican, and that such a state "rooted in international law... could have a fateful impact on German foreign policy."[60] A subsequent memo recommended that Germany should prevent the emergence of a Jewish state, to include lending ""direct support for the Arabs with weapons and money, whether in Palestine itself or via other Arab countries such as Iraq."[61]

[54] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* pp. 24-26.
[55] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 26.
[56] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* pp. 18-22.
[57] Küntzel, Locations 635, 2635.
[58] David Patterson, *A Genealogy of Evil,* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 98.
[59] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 29.
[60] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 29.
[61] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 29.

Nazi radio propaganda

As mentioned earlier, the Nazis supported al-Husseini directly with weapons and as war drew near they began to take a greater interest in creating and disseminating propaganda in Arabic. In late April 1939, about five months before war broke out, the Germans began transmitting propaganda in Arabic via shortwave radio broadcasts.[62] Much of the Nazi records of this propaganda campaign were destroyed during the war, but fortunately for historians US diplomats in Cairo under Alexander C. Kirk regularly translated, summarized, and forwarded the contents of Nazi Arabic propaganda to Washington. Kirk had previously served as the charge d'affaires in Berlin, where he had reported on the Nazi's anti-Jewish policies.[63] There were also broadcasts in Persian, but these are less well-documented.[64] These broadcasts continued until close to the end of the Nazi regime.[65] The radio campaign (accompanied by printed materials which were less likely to ever be read by their intended recipients in Allied-occupied lands) hammered home the idea of a massive Jewish conspiracy, in addition to other topics meant to spark hatred of the British and later hatred of the Soviets and the Americans. One American listener in September 1941 noted how Nazi propaganda in Arabic was "mainly concerned with creating an atmosphere of distrust in regard to the British promises to the Arab world." but also noted that "...Interwoven into every program is the 'Jewish menace.' The Zionist question provides the basic theme." [66] The linking of Britain to the Jews was a standard part of the propaganda repertoire.[67]

The content of the propaganda will be discussed more later, but first we should note contemporary evaluations of its reach. A US report from 1942 estimated that there were about 130,000 shortwave radios in Egypt and the Arab speaking nations to the east of it. Shortwave radios were often listen to in public places, such as cafes. Shortwave propaganda programs allowed Nazi propaganda to reach even the illiterate, which at that time were still a significant portion of the Arab population.[68] According to a British intelligence report from 1942 German radio propaganda was "widely listened to in Egypt…"[69] An American intelligence report from August 1942 stated that "It may be safely stated that upwards of three-fourths of the Moslem world are in favor of the Axis." explaining that Muslims wanted to be on what they thought would be the winning side of the war. The report also described German propaganda as "excellent" [70]

However, it should be noted that a poll conducted in 1943 by Stuart C Dodd of the American University in Beirut noted that only 13% of Palestinian radio listeners said they tuned in to German Arabic broadcasts, and only 5% of them listened at least daily. He found it was one of the most unpopular radio stations in Palestine. The Arabs interviewed by Dodd who had listened to German broadcasts had an understanding that it was war propaganda.[71]

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[62] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 37.
[63] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 10.
[64] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 157.
[65] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 232.
[66] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 71.
[67] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* pp. 104-105.
[68] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 9.
[69] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 136.
[70] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 138.
[71] Wildangel, p. 543.

So, evidence for the effectiveness of this Nazi propaganda campaign is mixed, but the long-term effects of this propaganda might best be measured not in the number of Middle Easterners it convinced at the time but how the themes that were boosted and spread by this propaganda have persisted in radical Islamist circles long after the war. In the same way the effects of Tsarist anti-Jewish conspiracy theory propaganda should not be judged so much by the electoral results of the URP but in the resonance of its themes in later Nazi ideology.

The Nazis had an important ally in their propaganda efforts, al-Husseini. Now operating out of Iraq, al-Husseini had written to Hitler early in the war proposing to orchestrate a massive German-backed Arab revolt. He proposed the creation of an Arab super-state along Nazi lines and asked for assistance in wiping out the Jews of the Middle East. The Germans viewed al-Husseini as the legitimate spokesman for the Arabs and accepted these proposals. Al-Husseini was also in clandestine contact with the King of supposedly British-aligned Saudi Arabia and also the King of Egypt, who were both prepared to switch sides if they believed Germany was about to win. In April 1941 al-Husseini and his pro-German allies in the Iraqi government attempted a coup against the pro-British regime in Baghdad, without informing their German allies beforehand. The Germans attempted to render effective support to this coup, but the British moved decisively and squelched the incompetently-run uprising.[72] This uprising was accompanied by a pogrom in the Jewish quarter of Baghdad that killed at least 180.[73] After their failed coup al-Husseini and many of his collaborators escaped to Axis-controlled territory. Al-Husseini placed his network at the disposal of the Germans for gathering intelligence and began to work in shaping German propaganda. In keeping with his own beliefs, he advised the Germans to emphasize Jew hatred in their broadcasts. In a 1942 memo al-Husseini recommended playing up Hitler's statements about his religious faith and specifically recommended telling the Arabs that President Roosevelt was a Jew.[74]

The Content of Nazi Propaganda in Arabic

Of course, Nazi propaganda broadcasted its anti-Jewish, anti-British (and other Allies,) and anti-democratic messages in many languages, not just to Muslims in the Middle East.[75] What probably made their propaganda campaign there more effective in the long-term was the combination of the involvement of al-Husseini and his allies in creating and spreading this propaganda and the hatred of Zionism and British imperialism in the region. Nazi propaganda in Arabic made no distinction between hating Jews and hating Zionism[76] and they skillfully knitted together the idea of a grand Jewish conspiracy to support the British (or vice-versa) and a Jewish conspiracy to destroy Islam.

Interestingly Nazi propagandists targeting Muslims did not directly draw on the *Protocols* or the writings of Hitler. (Though in at least one broadcast Jewish support for "masonic institutions" is mentioned.)[77] Instead the propaganda had an extremely Islamist bent, focused on

[72] Rubin and Schwanitz, pp. 124 - 131.
[73] Rubin and Schwanitz, p. 132.
[74] Rubin and Schwanitz, p. 137-138.
[75] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 37.
[76] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 13.
[77] "Axis Broadcasts in Arabic for the Period June 26 to July 2, 1942," Enclosure to dispatch from Alexander Kirk file no. 820.02 RAH/icg, no 492, Cairo July 13, 1942, US National Archives, Roll 982 124, page 2 b.

citations from the Quran and exhortations for Muslims to be more religious (and therefore, they maintained, more anti-Jewish and pro-Axis.)[78] One of the topics repeated "ad nauseam" according to a US analysis of the broadcasts was that "the Jews, backed by Britain and the U.S.A., are the arch-enemies of Islam."[79] Nazi Arabic propaganda regularly exhorted their listeners to "Believe in God and his prophets and fight for God with your goods and your soul."[80] The Nazi core leadership, were not religious, but Nazi radio repeatedly tried to appeal to Muslims by calling for a religious revival,[81] a revival that necessitated fighting against the British and the Jews. The mark of the Mufti and his allies probably shows through here. Nazi Arabic propaganda depicted the Jews as the persistent enemy of Islam, one that worked in secret to introduce innovations into Islam.[82] The Germans were depicted as the friends of Islam. The British were also depicted as being against Islam. In the words of one broadcast, they "... know that they cannot exist with a flourishing Islam. They want therefore to exterminate this religion from the world."[83]

The most extreme of the accusations leveled by the Nazi Arabic propaganda broadcasts was that a Jewish conspiracy had already succeeded in clandestinely corrupting Islam. A broadcast from February 1941 excoriated those "who secretly fight against Islam" by introducing superstitions into Mohammed's pure religion. These enemies are "...above all the Jews, who in the past pretended to have adopted Islam but in fact were very far from it."[84] (This seems to imply the idea of secret Jews living as Muslims and deliberately infecting Islam.) The broadcast cited some of the anti-Jewish passages of the Quran: "You will find that those who are most hostile to the believers are Jews and idol worshipers!... Jews who have always been and are also today the enemies of Islam and the Muslims and who try with all means to wage war against both Islam and the Muslims."[85]

By emphasizing the anti-Jewish parts of the Quran and mixing them with stories of present-day successful Jewish conspiracies against Islam, Nazi propagandists and their radical Muslim collaborators engaged in what the historian Jeffrey Herf calls "selective tradition" - emphasizing some elements while diminishing others.[86] This was an attempt to overcome the old image of the Jew as the despised loser of history and replace it with the image of the super-powerful Jewish conspiracy that was responsible for the sorry state of Islam. For many of the Nazi officials involved in creating this kind of propaganda, this project amounted to the cynical manipulation of religious feelings to bend them in an anti-Jewish and anti-Allied direction. For al-Husseini and his allies, who appeared to have been true believers both in Islam and in the existence of an super-powerful international Jewish conspiracy, this accusation could lead to revolutionary conclusions - revolutionary not just against the British Empire or European domination but against status-quo Islam itself which had been infiltrated and corrupted by the Jewish conspiracy. Note also the lack of any identification in the above examples of what

[78] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 197
[79] Kirk, "General Summary", p. 4
[80] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 51.
[81] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 52.
[82] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 53.
[83] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 142.
[84] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* pp. 52-53.
[85] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 53.
[86] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* pp. 3-4.

exactly the Jewish-introduced innovations were. This would have allowed all manner of Arab Muslims who may have listened to the broadcast, Sunni or Shi'a, to decide for themselves exactly what these evil innovations were.

The propaganda campaign was not only concerned with spiritual matters. Political Zionism was another obvious target, and the campaign sometimes used language that would be familiar to future anti-Zionist campaigners: "The greedy Jews, not content with seizing Arab land, intend to turn Palestine into the industrial center of the Middle East to establish further their claims to dominion of that part of the world."[87] The broadcasts translated the idea of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy into constant political attacks on the Allies, and especially the British. This propaganda tack began before the war, as related by a 1937 British dispatch that Nazi propaganda in Arabic was trying to "undermine the confidence of the public in the strength of the democracies and to associate the latter with the sinister machinations of the Jews."[88] After war broke out the Nazis blamed the war on these Jewish machinations, portraying the conflict as a struggle of self-defense against Anglo-Jewish "peaceful conquest." Take for example this spring 1942 broadcast that warns of the consequences of peace on Allied terms:

> "Jewish Capitalism and British Imperialism shall dominate the world. If anyone tries to get rid of these two evils, he is immediately accused by the Anglo-Saxons that he is working against peace. We do not understand such a peace, and we want war, a destructive war which will liberate us definitely from such evils."[89]

Nazi propaganda in Arabic often included the idea that the leaders of American and Britain were in fact under control of the Jews. According to a May 1942 broadcast the Jews always acted "behind the scenes. They supported Churchill and had "elected Roosevelt…" Now these stooges were yielding to Jewish demands, enabling the Jews "to extend their domination throughout the world." In a frank admission of the genocide occurring in Europe, Nazi radio declared: "The National Socialist Government, realizing the danger and realizing the evil consequences which the world would suffer from the Jews, immediately set about annihilating them before it was too late. History will record this action as one of the wisest steps ever taken."[90]

These two accusations against the Jews, of corrupting Islam and of controlling the Allies, were not separate. After all, an organization powerful enough to deliberately corrupt Islam over generations would certainly be powerful enough to control a government or two. In a March 1943 broadcast al-Husseini declared that there was "hardly one Moslem country that is spared the control and tyranny of aggressive enemies, be it directly or indirectly." and that Jews "had control over England and the U.S.A."[91] The interests of the rulers of the Western Allies were presented as intertwined with the Jews, a result both of their imperial ambitions and also their subservience to Jewish interests (especially regarding Zionism) and this was declared to be directly related to the supposed Allied and Jewish campaign against Islam. The broadcasts

[87] Kirk, "General Summary", pp. 4, 5.
[88] Martyn Frampton, *The Muslim Brotherhood and the West: A History of Enmity and Engagement*, (Harvard University Press, 2018), p. 49.
[89] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World, p. 106.*
[90] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World, p. 106.*
[91] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World, p. 170.*

were not consistent in describing the Allied powers as either tools or partners of the grand Jewish conspiracy. Take this broadcast that seems to say that the British were the allies of the Jews but the Americans were the toy:

> "The Zionist world movement depends on Britain in order that this movement may realize its oppressive hopes, and the Jews have plotted with Britain to strangle Islam. Not only that, but the Jewish movement also enjoys great support from the U.S.A. and the Jews in America have supreme influence. President Roosevelt is a toy in Jewish hands and he has dragged his country to war bowing to Jewish orders."[92]

While Britain was sometimes declared a servant of the Jews and sometimes declared their ally, America was always just a tool. Perhaps in response to the increasingly obvious dominance of America over Britain in the conduct of the war, even in the Middle East, an August 1942 broadcast declared "that when the Americans seize the British Empire they intend handing over Palestine to their masters - the Jews."[93] In September 1941, before Germany declared war on America but when Roosevelt was taking increasingly aggressive measures to help the Allies a Nazi propaganda broadcast in Arabic declared that "Jews control American finance and commerce and are influencing the President to pursue an aggressive policy." and that the US had "a direct interest in encouraging aggression in the Middle East because of American 'interest in oil fields and even more so in the Jews in Palestine.'"[94] A 1942 broadcast claimed that America came to the "orient...in service of the Jews. He is sent here by the Jews, even if he does not know it. The Jews are the wire-pullers of the Americans."[95]

The "wire-puller of the Americans" line is a manifestation of the tried-and-true argument of conspiracy theory propaganda: if a super-powerful conspiracy exists, then democracy is merely one of their tools. A Nazi broadcast declared that democracy was just a "sweet word" that the British used to fool the Muslims.[96] In a likely indirect reference to the *Protocols* and other such documents, one broadcast spoke of "a number of Jewish documents have been found dealing with the Jewish plan to control public opinion throughout the world." The Jews had plans to "dominate all the governments of the world secretly by means of controlling public opinion." As expected, this control over public opinion was to be exercised via control of the press.[97] Nazi radio told Arabs that the Jews owned 97% of US newspapers, 90% of American radio stations, all the cinemas, and 98% of the banks.[98] A different broadcast also made the familiar argument that the Jewish conspiracy could use money to bribe and make campaign donations to pliant politicians and usurp power indirectly. An August 1942 broadcast said that Roosevelt had stated "that one of his reasons for entering the war was to support and strengthen Judaism. There is nothing strange about this, since the highest American officials are puppets of the Jews. They have reached their high places of office through Jewish money and thus the Jews are able to dominate public opinion through them."[99] A different broadcast

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[92] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World, p. 103.*
[93] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World, p. 102.*
[94] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 72.
[95] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 127.
[96] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 108.
[97] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 176.
[98] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 105.
[99] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 134.

from 1942 emphasized that the US was the most Jewish country in the world, with 7 million Jews: “One influential Jew… [was] enough to demoralize a whole country to say nothing of what 7 million will do. They could demoralize the whole world and the rest of the planet as well. The low level to which the U.S. society has sunk can be clearly attributed to the influence of the Jews and this is instanced in American films where prostitution, immorality and crime are depicted as acts of heroism and encouraged in the film industry. Furthermore the Americans are well known to be slaves to money making to satisfy their physical appetite and their gluttony for food and drink.”[100]

After Hitler broke his pact with Stalin and invaded the USSR, the Arabic broadcasts also attacked communism. Nazi propaganda targeted towards Muslims harped on communist atheism and the oppression of Muslims in the USSR. Radio broadcasts claimed that the communists had killed four million Muslims (likely a reference to the Muslims who died in the massive famines caused by Soviet collectivization in Central Asia)[101] and told their listeners that England would soon turn over Iraq, Iran, and other Arab countries to be ravaged by the Bolsheviks.[102] The Judeo-Bolshevik canard was useful in this context as well: “The Jews are the biggest enemies of the Arabs. Bolshevism is mere Judaism. Therefore the Bolsheviks are the enemies of the Arabs and Moslems.”[103]

This propaganda campaign also directed its listeners to oppose their Allied-aligned governments and routinely spread the idea that the reason governments in the region were Allied-aligned was not because of strategic calculation or personal ties or even (as in the case of Iran) the coercive actions of the Allies, but because of Jewish machinations. According to an April 1942 summary of German Propaganda in Arabic prepared by Alexander Kirk, the Germans depicted the Iranian government as Jew-dominated: “There are 6 Jews in the Iranian Cabinet which accounts for the Jewish exploitation in Iran” [104] “The Iranian Cabinet is full of Jews and Jewish greed is devouring the country...”[105] British imperialism was combined with the now-familiar story of Jewish rule through financial dominance: “The Jews have penetrated into other Arab countries to take over the control of their financial affairs…”[106]

In late 1942 as Axis troops fought their way across North Africa towards the Nile the propaganda became especially concerned with the supposed Jewish menace in Egypt, and told its listeners that the Jews ran the country. This broadcast from April 1942 is a good example of the standard theme that Zionism is about much more than a homeland in Palestine, but was really about usurping power in other countries, and in Egypt in particular. Note at the end the accusation that the reason the Jews have been so successful in Palestine is because they have managed to corrupt the government of Egypt:

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[100] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 82.
[101] Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-famine*, (Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 190.
[102] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 100.
[103] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* pp. 219-220.
[104] Kirk, “General Summary”, pp. 4-5.
[105] Kirk, “General Summary”, pp. 5, 9-10.
[106] State Department translation of the Voice of Free Arabism, 7:30 PM, April 24, 1942, in “Broadcasts in Arabic for the Period April 23-April 30” Cairo, May 5 1942, No 366, US National Archives, Roll 982, 166, p. 2

> "We feel it our duty to keep the Arabs informed of the activities of the Jews, so that they may unite in their struggle against them… In the first place it must be admitted that Egypt has never fully realized the Jewish danger and has never fulfilled her obligations to her Arab cousins. In fact, the Egyptians allow the Jews to plunder their country and to lay their hands on Egypt's wealth and trade. They allow the Jews to worm their way into Egyptian administration to such an extent that the whole country became nothing more than an appetizing meal for them. Whether as doctors, lawyers, merchants or public servants, the Jews are controlling the destiny of Egypt. They dominate the Egyptian Press and the large industrial concerns.
>
> It is inevitable that the Jews with their enormous power should exercise a great influence on the internal and foreign policy of the country. This is not astonishing as Zionism has been trying for some time to occupy not only Egypt, but also the other Arab countries. Their aim of establishing their national home in Palestine is not confined to Palestine alone but extends also to the neighboring countries. As Egypt, however, is the richest of the Arab countries, they have naturally focused their attentions on her…. There is little doubt that, had Egypt offered determined resistance, the Arabs of Palestine would have been successful in their struggle against the Jews and neither the Jews nor the British could have made of Palestine a Zionist colony."[107]

In the summer of 1942, as Rommel's army entered Egypt, Nazi propaganda urged Egyptians to "write down the names of the owners of Jewish firms and those belonging to the traitors, de Gaullists, British and Americans. In this manner, we shall be able to put our fingers upon those who have sucked the blood of the nation and enslaved our country."[108] This was likely propaganda preparation for a massacre of Egyptian Jews. Around the same time the SS was preparing to dispatch one of their mobile death units to North Africa, expecting to annihilate the Jews living in Palestine after Rommel conquered it. The *Einsatzgruppe Afrika* unit consisted of seven officers and seventeen enlisted men, and included an SS specialist in Arab issues who had recently served as the liaison between Himmler's office and al-Husseini. The unit was commanded by Walter Rauff, one of the SS officers behind the invention of the mobile gas vans used to massacre Jews in Eastern Europe.[109] This seems like a relatively small unit given the size of the German and British armies preparing for the decisive battle in Egypt, but it was probably just an advanced team that would have grown as the mission grew. Besides, these genocide operations recruited and organized local collaborators as a matter of course. For example, an 8 - 10 man equivalent SS unit organized the murder of 137,346 Jews in Lithuania.[110] After Rommel's defeat at El-Alamein the unit was instead deployed to Tunisia.[111]

As the fortunes of the Axis waned a German Arabic broadcast in April 1943 declared "The British have not won the war yet; but we must confess that we have to prepare ourselves for the obscure future awaiting us, should the British, the Jews and their Allies emerge from the war as victors. It is our duty to prepare for the future and to be ready to fight those imperialists who would make of man, animals, and of life, a hell."[112]

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[107] State Department translation of the Voice of Free Arabism, 9:15 PM, April 30, 1942, in "Broadcasts in Arabic for the Period April 23-April 30" Cairo, May 5 1942, No 366, US National Archives, Roll 982, 166, pp. 22-23

[108] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 112.

[109] Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüpper, *Nazi Palestine: The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine*, (Enigma Books, 2005), p. 118-119.

[110] Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüpper, p. 124.

[111] Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüpper, p. 172.

[112] Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüpper, p. 172.

After the war

Argentina is usually thought of as the primary destination for Nazis fleeing defeat, but between 4 and 8 times more Nazis escaped to the Middle East than to Argentina.[113] More importantly, a few Arabs who had worked with the Nazis on their propaganda campaign made their way home as well, where at least two of them continued to work in propaganda. According to a 1948 American report, a group calling itself the "Palestine Liberation Army" (not to be confused with the entity founded in 1964) had started broadcasting a radio program in English, Hebrew, and Arabic directed by one Sa'adi Basbous, who had worked for Nazi propaganda during WWII.[114] The most famous Arab returnee from Nazi Germany was al-Husseini.

Al-Husseini had fled to Switzerland as the Third Reich collapsed, and the Swiss authorities handed him over to the French. The British could have prosecuted him for collaborating with Nazi intelligence, subversion, and propaganda efforts, not to mention his work in establishing a Bosnian Muslim SS Division, but they did not.[115] A 1945 OSS report stated that the British would probably decline to prosecute the Mufti and his Arab companions, as they would not want "to risk antagonizing Palestine Arab public opinion…"[116] Al-Husseini made his way back to Palestine and continued to cultivate relationships with some of the governments in the region. During this period al-Husseini was still considered the leader of the Palestinians.[117] In 1946 the recently-formed Arab League established a special committee to represent Palestinian interests called the Arab Higher Executive. Al-Husseini was chosen as the head of this committee,[118] but his reputation soon went into decline. The league began to organize an "Arab Liberation Army" to storm into Palestine after the expected British withdrawal and prevent the emergence of a Jewish state. However, the Arab governments that made up the Arab League sidelined al-Husseini from a role in organizing this army, and instead he formed his own parallel force, the al-Jihad al-Muqaddas. This "The Army of the Holy War" was commanded by his loyal supporters who had participated in his revolt in the 1930s and those who had followed him to Iraq and Europe during WWII.[119] The forces were disorganized and quarreled with the forces sent by the Arab League. Eventually al-Jihad al-Muqaddas was disarmed by the other Arab forces. Al-Husseini's reputation suffered because of this and because he remained in Egypt during this time and did not make a return to Palestine.[120] In September 1948, in the middle of the war, he attempted to set up a Palestinian government in Gaza, but the Egyptians forced him to return across the border after only eight days.[121]

In the period following the failure of the Arab governments to crush Israel, al-Husseini continually worked to create a united anti-Israeli front under his leadership. During this period al-

[113] Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, p. 209.
[114] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 253.
[115] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 233.
[116] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 237.
[117] Zvi Elpeleg, T*he Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement*, David Harvey trans., (Routledge, 2007), Kindle Edition, location 1682.
[118] Elpeleg, Locations 1752-1763.
[119] Elpeleg, Location 1822.
[120] Elpeleg, Locations 2015-2062.
[121] Elpeleg, Location 2151.

Husseini was also involved in Saudi-sponsored Palestinian raids into Israeli territory.[122] His popularity with various Arab governments changed with the shifting political alignments, and this was especially true with regards to the most populous Arab country, Egypt. Initially popular with the nationalist officers who overthrew the Egyptian government in 1952, and in particular with the future president Gamal Abdul Nasser whom he had known since before 1948, al-Husseini fell out with them because of his close ties to Saudi Arabia, the bitter enemy of the Egyptian Revolutionaries.[123] Later, after Israeli retaliation against raids based out of Gaza connected to al-Husseini, the Egyptian government embraced him and his cause for a time, only to vilify him in 1959 after he became closer to the Iraqi government, a rival of Egypt for regional dominance.[124] Disappointed with the antics of the various Arab governments, al-Husseini cultivated his ties with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which had gone underground after falling out with the victors of the 1952 Revolution.[125]

All during this period al-Husseini continually propagandized his belief in a massive Jewish threat to Islam, and insisted that this was directly connected to the plight of the Palestinians: "If the enemies of Islam remain the rulers of Palestine, the day will come when they will try to conquer other Muslim countries."[126]

Al-Husseini's friendship with many Nazis is sometimes fingered as a critical link that brought Nazis to the Middle East, and therefore also brought Nazi ideas there. While the importance of Nazis in the Middle East is difficult to measure, it appears that the extent of the influence of these Nazis linked to al-Husseini has been exaggerated. There was no Arabian *Aufbau*. Take for example the case of Johann von Leers, who was once a leading Nazi propagandist against the Jews. Leers had become acquainted with al-Husseini at some point during the war.[127] In 1952 al-Husseini invited him to come to Egypt. Leers accepted the invitation and left Argentina in 1956. His going away party was attended by many notorious Nazis living in Argentina, including Josef Mengele and Adolf Eichmann.[128] Leers got a job as a translator at the Egyptian Ministry of Information and appeared to generally live an unostentatious life as an exile and converted to Islam under the teaching of his old acquaintance al-Husseini.[129] The residence of such a prominent Nazi ideologue in Cairo during this period and his public conversion to Islam made many contemporaries suspect that there was some kind of Nazi plot behind the increasingly vitriolic anti-Jewish/anti-Israel/anti-Anglo-Saxon propaganda coming out of Egypt, but recent scholarship suggests that this was not the case. The talk in the international press about Leers even got the attention of the Mossad, which dispatched an agent to investigate him. They lost interest after discovering that he was politically isolated and poor.[130]

Probably much more important than anything al-Husseini or his Nazi friends did after the war was the continuing effect of their wartime propaganda campaign and their successful

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[122] Shlaim, p. 86.
[123] Elpeleg, Location 2662.
[124] Elpeleg, Locations 2726-2818.
[125] Elpeleg, Location 2589.
[126] Elpeleg, Location 2604-2605.
[127] Marco Sennholz, *Johann Von Leers*, (Bebra Verlag, 2013), p. 325.
[128] Sennholz, p. 312-313.
[129] Sennholz, p. 316.
[130] Sennholz, p. 335-336.

interpretation of European anti-Jewish conspiracy theories through an Islamic lens. This, combined with Jewish success in establishing Israel in the face of Arab opposition, likely assisted in the transformation of the image of the Jew in the minds of many Middle Easterners away from a traditional one of the Jew despised and powerless minority into an image of a super-powerful band of conspirators.

An example of how easily post-war propagandists could become involved with rhetoric and ideas from Nazi propaganda without any direct link to Nazism was a US-assisted anti-communist campaign conducted by the Iraqi government in 1952. At the request of the Iraqi Director General of Propaganda, the United States Information Service (USIS) provided anti-communist materials for the Iraqi government to feed into the local press. The resulting campaign became quite anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist, rehashing the old Judeo-Bolshevik myth. The USIS was wary of this, as anti-Zionism could also be easily linked with anti-Americanism, but according to their analysis at the time, the only way to get outlets independent outlets in Iraq to participate in anti-communist propaganda was to appeal to anti-Israeli ideas.[131]

Al-Husseini spent the rest of his life moving between different Arab capitals looking for more support in his anti-Israel campaigns, weaving among the shifting Arab enmities and alliances. He continued to receive the support of Saudi Arabia through thick and thin. By the 1960s his influence among the Palestinians had shrunk, and he was eventually overshadowed by the Palestine Liberation Organization, which he opposed.[132] He died in Beirut in 1974.

Nasser - Arab nationalism spreads the Grand Conspiracy Theory

The 1952 Revolution in Egypt eventually brought the Nationalist officer Gamal Abdul Nasser to power. He was a staunch opponent of British imperialism, which had dominated his country for 70 years, and of the corrupt Egyptian monarch, and initially Nasser was staunchly anti-communist and nominally pro-American.[133] His beliefs were reflected in his regime. At first the Americans saw him as a potential ally in the Cold War, despite his hostility towards the United Kingdom. Some US strategists believed his brand of Arab nationalism could have served as an antidote to communism in the region.[134] The CIA gave Nasser a powerful radio broadcasting system that allowed his propagandists to beam their messages across the entire Arab world and sent experts in propaganda psychological warfare to train Egyptian propagandists.[135] Despite these American efforts to consolidate an alliance Nasser eventually rejected one with the United States and instead made an alliance with the Soviet Union, and his propaganda embraced radical anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, though of a more “anti-imperialist” variety. (Though it should be noted that variants of the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory were broadcast before the deterioration of Egypt’s relations with the United States.)[136] A

[131] Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War,* (University of Kansas Press, 2018), p. 136.
[132] Elpeleg, locations 3153, 3128, 3114.
[133] Peter Mansfield, “Nasser and Nasserism,“ *International Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 4, The Arab States and Israel (Autumn, 1973), pp. 670-688, p. 670.
[134] Michael Doran, *Ike's Gamble: America's Rise to Dominance in the Middle East*, (Free Press, 2016), p. 3.
[135] Doran, p. 10, 83.
[136] See for example ZIONISTS FURTHER SPREAD OF COMMUNISM, Source Cairo, Voice of the Arabs Date 25 June 1955, Translated into English and published in: Report DAILY REPORT. FOREIGN RADIO

September 1955 Egyptian radio broadcast declared that Israel "...was conceived and delivered in order to give vent to imperialist desire… to tear apart the great Arab homeland and to create a state which will constitute a barrier cutting the road linking the Arab countries, keeping them from exerting efforts for what is good and beneficial to the Arab nation and the whole world…"[137]

Nasser's propaganda seemingly re-iterated many of the anti-Jewish themes from Nazi propaganda along with the common anti-Zionist-imperialist themes that harmonized with the ideology of his new patron, the USSR. Egyptian propaganda during this period emphasized that Israel was a tool of Western imperialism, designed to drain "the energy of the Arab nation" and prevent its rise.[138]

On one occasion the first post-Revolutionary president of Egypt Mohammed Naguib accused the imperialists of engaging in a conspiracy against Islam:

> "The imperialists realized that Islam is the religion of honor and fraternity, the religion of dignity and strength, and that if the people had access to such a source of power, they would rid themselves of the despots and crush them. Therefore, the first arrow they thrust into the heart of the region was to divest it of its ultimate truth… the imperialists exploited religion to bring forth practices prohibited by religion itself. [139]

This echoed the wartime Nazi propaganda that the British were conspiring to corrupt Islam in order to weaken and exploit the Muslims.

Nasser's regime did welcome some Nazis as technical experts or just as refugees, like Von Leers, but it would be a mistake to draw a direct line between Nazism and Nasserism. Nasser's championing of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories was not inevitable and was not initially an inherent part of his regime. The adoption of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories may have taken some inspiration from Nazi propaganda and the ideas of al-Husseini, but Nasser's propaganda machine went beyond their ideas. For example, the *Protocols* had not played a major role in Nazi Arabic propaganda, however it was adopted by propagandists working for the Egyptian government. The *Protocols* was already available in Arabic and circulating before the Second World War, and as mentioned before, believers in an anti-Jewish conspiracy theory would likely eventually seek out the "classic" text of anti-Jewish conspiracy theory. A prominent Egyptian writer named 'Abbas Mahumd al-'Aqqad had already written about the *Protocols* in articles about the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and again in his 1956 book *International Zionism* published as part of an series of books put out by the Egyptian government. Abbas Mahumd al-'Aqqad had been a critic of Nazism, and in this work he used the *Protocols* to point out what he thought were similarities between Nazism and Zionism.[140]

BROADCASTS (FBIS-FRB-55-124) Date 27 June 1955 or NASIR ATTACKS REACTIONARIES, COMMUNISTS Source Cairo, Egyptian Home Service Date 30 April 1954 + show more detail Translated into English and published in: Report DAILY REPORT. FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS (FBIS-FRB-54-085) Date 03 May 1954.

[137] "The Jews," FBIS DAILY REPORT. FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS (FBIS-FRB-55-176), 09 September 1955, page A4.

[138] Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 146.

[139] NAGIB ASSAILS IMPERIALIST EXPLOITATION, Source Cairo, Egyptian Home Service Date 23 January 1954 + show more detail Translated into English and published in: Report DAILY REPORT. FOREIGN RADIO BROADCASTS (FBIS-FRB-54-016) Date 25 January 1954, p. mm2.

[140] Webman, pp. 202-203.

Promotion of the *Protocols* was also carried out via Egyptian radio at least once (and likely many more times that have not been recorded.) Unfortunately most of the records of the Egyptian radio propaganda service "Voice of the Arabs" were destroyed after Nasser's death.[141] However, in September 1958 a US monitoring service recorded an interview of Nasser with an Indian journalist, broadcast (presumably in Arabic) that dealt with many subjects.[142] Nasser blamed the continuing strife and disorder in the region on imperialism saying 'It does not want us to build or raise the standard of living. Therefore, imperialism is untiring in its attempts to threaten stability in the area by creating an atmosphere of dismemberment and disorder and by fabricating crises and problems."[143] He held that all the major problems of the region were the result of an imperialist plan to bring "the Arab East, which had revolted against imperialism, back into its sphere of influence."[144] When the journalist questioned him about Western accusations that he had imperialist ambitions himself, portraying "him as a Hitler in Arab dress" Nasser responded not only that "imperialism and Zionism go side by side" (as he says later in the interview) but that there was a grand Zionist conspiracy which itself manipulated the imperialist nations, and that the *Protocols* is a description of this conspiracy:

> "I am surprised that educated people who are supposed to be civilized believe such nonsense. This comparison is unreasonable. Therefore, we must look for the reasons and for the sources of such campaigns. In fact, they are the work of world Zionism which desires to create hatred against us. This is the real danger which threatens the establishment of a new Hitlerism. We are not the cause. A French journalist recently told me how France is gradually coming under Zionist influence, while the Americans themselves complain of Zionist control of their propaganda. The same situation is true with respect to the British… I do not know if you have seen a book called 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' or not, but I consider it to be an important book. I will give you a copy of it in English. What is published in it will show clearly to you that the fate of the European continent is in the hands of 300 Zionists, each of whom knows all the others, and that they choose their allies from their followers…"[145]

The translator noted that a shortened version of same interview (including this section) was rebroadcast in Iraq later that day.[146]

The *Protocols* became useful for Arab propagandists and radicals of all stripes.[147] Before the Six-Day War the *Protocols* were known all throughout the Middle East. By 1967 there were at minimum nine Arabic translations of the *Protocols* and in Egypt there were at least 50 books which referenced the *Protocols*. The *Protocols* was taught in the curriculum of the Egyptian army. On at least one occasion it was personally handed out by Nasser to a journalist. It had

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[141] Anas Alahmed, "Voice of the Arabs Radio: Its Effects and Political Power During the Nasser Era (1953-1967)," Paper for The Joint Journalism Historians Conference at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, New York University, March 12, 2011, p. 4.
[142] "NASIR LINKS CRUSADES, ZION PROTOCOLS," Cairo, Egyptian Home Service, 29 September 1958, Translated into English and published in: DAILY REPORT. Foreign Radio Broadcasts (FBIS-FRB-58-190), 30 September 1958, UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC.
[143] Ibid. p. B2.
[144] Ibid. p. B4.
[145] Ibid. p. B6.
[146] Ibid. p. B10.
[147] Ibid. p. 203.

also become well known in countries opposed to Nasser and it was distributed by Saudi Embassies and used as evidence in a trial in Baghdad, [148]

Soviet propaganda against "Zionist-imperialism"

Early Soviet anti-Zionism presented Zionism through Lenin's conspiracy-theory of Imperialism. In 1947, however, the USSR briefly became pro-Zionist, in a way, when the USSR voted at the UN in favor of the Palestine partition plan that would result in the founding of Israel as an independent state. Stalin may have believed that Israel could be molded into a Soviet ally,[149] or that the Israelis would be a wedge against the British and their Arab allies and clients in the region.[150] After a few years the USSR was back to calling Zionism an evil imperialist plot and proclaiming that Zionist plotters exist almost everywhere there were Jews. The public turning point for this was the Doctors Plot, when Soviet intelligence under Stalin's orders "uncovered" a plot of murderous Jewish doctors supposedly working for Anglo-American intelligence. Soviet anti-Zionist (or anti-Jewish) rhetoric dropped off a bit after Stalin's death, but it did not totally dissipate.[151]

Soviet ideologues and propagandists dealt with the cognitive dissonance of obviously anti-Jewish conspiracy theories existing alongside an ideology that officially rejected "anti-Semitism" and associated it with the Tsarist past by resurrecting Brafman's *Kahal* conspiracy theory: the idea that Jews qua Jews were just like anyone else, but that in Judaism there exists a clandestine, traditional, tiered system of oppression, with a small group of exploiters at the top who deliberately keep the Jewish masses isolated and ignorant in order to satisfy their own ends. These Jewish exploiters of Jews were linked to efforts to establish a Jewish state (Zionism) and to the machinations of the Anglo-American imperialist conspiracy. Take these quotations from the article on Jews in the second edition of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia, published in 1952. The article includes sections on anti-Semitism and makes sure to point out the oppression of Jews in the United States, where: "Under the conditions of intensified fascism, American imperialists use anti-Semitism as one tool of racist ideology… (Jews) are not allowed in state service; in educational institutions there is actually a percentage rate for admission of Jewish students, the Jewish poor, like the poor of other national minorities, live in special quarters in the conditions of extreme crowding…" It also expounds Brafman's 19th century idea of the "oppressive" *Kahal* conspiracy and names Zionism as a tool of a neo-*Kahal*, and a tool of Anglo-American imperialism:

> "Exploitative elements among the Jews sought to preserve and develop the national isolation of the Jews. The tool in their hands was religion. Until the middle of the 19th century the self-governing body of the Jews was the kahal organization, grouped around the synagogue and the rabbi, the interpreter of religions laws. Through the kahal community the Jewish bourgeoisie and clergy cruelly exploited labor. The Jewish community, led by the rabbi, played an extremely reactionary role in relation to the working people of the Jews, artificially creating their isolation from the working

[148] Webman, p. 203.
[149] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World was Going our Way : the KGB and the Battle for the Third World*, (Basic Books, 2005), pp. 222-223.
[150] Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy,* p. 97.
[151] Andrew and Mitrokhin, p. 224.

> people of other nationalities. The leaders of the Jewish communities sought to obscure class stratification and the class struggle among the Jews, to weaken the class consciousness of the Jewish proletariat and the working poor. The most harmful role in obscuring class antagonisms was played and is still played abroad by Zionism - reactionary bourgeois nationalism. The supporters of which, while advocating the unification of the Jews in the territory of Palestine, deny the class struggle and try to isolate the Jewish working masses from the common struggle of the proletariat… Imperialists of the United States and other countries use Zionism in order to blunt the class struggle of the Jewish workers. Zionists kindle nationalism even among those Jewish groups which were almost assimilated with the local population during the Middle Ages (e.g. in Northern Africa). Zionists are agents of the American / English imperialists…"[152]

In the Soviet Union the same kind of themes and ideas and some of the symbolism that are present in explicitly anti-Jewish versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory were used in Soviet conspiracy theories of imperialist finance capital, though anti-Semitism was officially condemned. Soviet campaigns against Jews were couched as "anti-Zionist" or as general anti-religious activity. The themes they used in these campaigns may have been directly inspired by the *Protocols* and similar documents, but they were not directly cited.[153] Even though the USSR officially condemned anti-Semitism, as demonstrated in the preceding chapter Lenin's ideas about imperialism were heavily influenced by Hobson's anti-Jewish conspiracy theory, and there might be an element of convergence here as latter-day Leninists returned to their "roots" and attacked "Western finance" with a wink, knowing who was "really" in charge of Western finance.

Middle Eastern populations had already been plied with Nazi and Nasserite and other propaganda campaigns describing Zionist perfidy and links to Western imperialism. The Soviet description of Lenin's theory of imperialist conspiracy could fit snugly into the flows of these narratives, though with finance capital as the "ultimate" enemy and Zionism as a tool. For a very direct example take this Arabic broadcast from Moscow in December 1959:

> "Why is Zionism hampering the cause of peace in the Near East? Why should a small country such as Israel, with so few people and such a small area compared to the Arab countries, pursue an aggressive policy towards the Arabs?... Who is pushing Israel towards this heinous path of adventures? The people of Israel, as all peoples of the world, want peace and hate war. However, the policy of this small country is not dictated by the people. There are other forces which are pushing this small country on to the path of aggression. These forces are the representatives of the new Israeli capitalism… Israeli capitalism is nothing but an agency which is working in the service of the original owners of capital, the imperialists of the West.
>
> The links between Zionism and imperialism were established with the birth of Zionism… The international Zionist organization fell under the influence of the millionaires of London and New York as soon as it was established. They financed it... [the imperialist bankers] saw that the Near East would soon become a profitable market for employment of capital and the source of huge

[152] "ЕВРЕИ" (Jews), in *Большая Советская Енциклопедия* (Great Soviet Encyclopedia) Vol. 15, Б. А. Введенский ed., Second edition, 1952, p. 378.
[153] Bernard Lewis "The Arab World Discovers Anti-Semitism," in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz eds., (New York University Press, 1991), p. 343.

> profits for imperialism. The Zionists, in the view of the British and American capitalists, were very suitable agents and salesmen for penetration in the Near East."[154]
>
> The final conspiracy between Zionism and imperialism did not come about until the third decade of this century. The whole world began to smell the oil of the Near East… The millionaires then became in greater need than ever before of trustworthy agents to work for them in the Arab east. The international Zionist organization offered its services, and a deal in every meaning of the word was concluded. This took place in 1929. The executive committee of the international Zionist organization was reorganized to include a group of prominent monopolies in Britain, America, and Germany… This joint organization came to be known as the Jewish Agency."[155]
>
> "...Why are the extremist leaders of Zionism dangerously playing with the fate of their people and why are they following an adventurous aggressive policy? The answer is that they do not represent the people, but the owners of coffers in America and Western Europe."[156]

Several observers noted an increase in the intensity of Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda after the 1967 Six Day War.[157] Zionism was soon regularly portrayed in Soviet propaganda as the shock troops of international finance capital, involved in all manner of imperialist plots to destroy socialism.[158] A *Pravda* article from 1971 succinctly described the Soviet view of the relationship between Zionism and imperialism: "This kind of Zionist activity, anti-Soviet, anti-Communist in nature, is completely satisfied with the forces of imperialism. That is why the ruling circles of the largest imperialist powers support the Zionists in every possible way, using Zionism as one of their political tools."[159] [160]

Sometime before March 1970 the Central Committee of the Soviet Union codified a "Plan for Basic Organizational and Propaganda Measures Connected with the Middle East and Intensifying the Struggle with Zionism." which has never been made public.[161] We know of it through a March 1970 report from the head of the Soviet Propaganda Department to the Central Committee discussing a plan to hold a well-publicized press conference against Zionism.[162] A 1971 document from the Deputy Head of the Department of Propaganda to the Central

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[154] "SERIES OF TALKS EXPOSES ZIONIST LINKS" Moscow, Soviet Near Eastern Service, 18 December 1959, Translated and published in the FBIS DAILY REPORT. Foreign Radio Broadcasts (FBIS-FRB-59-248), 22 December 1959, Page BB8.
[155] Ibid. p. bb9.
[156] Ibid. p. bb10.
[157] Baruch A. Hazan, *Soviet Propaganda, a case study of the middle east conflict*, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1976), p. 148.
[158] William Korey, *Russian Antisemitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism*, (Harwood academic publishers, 1995), p. 19.
[159] В. Большаков, "БАНКРОТЫ ИЗ СИОНИСТСКОГО КОНЦЕРНА" (Bankrupts from the Zionist Concern,) *Pravda,* No.131, May 11, 1971, Moscow.
[160] As witnessed in earlier eras, conspiracy theorists and propagandists pushing conspiracy theories often borrow conspiracy theory narratives from sources outside their ideological "home" and modify it to suit their needs. The main organ of the Young Communist league published an article in October 1967 that described the sinister Zionist influence all over the world and especially in the United States, both in the media and with those "engaged in secret work on the preparation of weapons for mass destruction." This document was based on an Egyptian pamphlet from 1957. See Korey, p. 17.
[161] Åsmund Borgen Gjerde, *Reinterpreting Soviet "Anti-Zionism,"* MA Thesis prepared for the University of Oslo, 2011, p. 96.
[162] Ibid., also "Memorandum from V. Stepakov to the CPSU Central Committee", March 3, 1970, in *Documents on Soviet Jewish Emigration*, Boris Mozorov ed., (Frank Class Publishers, 1999), p. 71.

Committee of the Soviet Communist Party reported that they had published books "which unmask the reactionary, anti-Soviet essence of the theory and practice of contemporary Zionism" and reported that these books were disseminated in multiple languages, including Arabic: "In 1970-71, 59 books were published with a total circulation of more than 2 million copies, in Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, English, French, German, Spanish and Arabic."[163]

While these anti-Zionist Soviet books in Arabic were probably disseminated by loyal communists all throughout the Middle East, the Soviets used radio to reach a much larger audience without the need of local networks of agents. Soviet Radio in Arabic regularly pumped out the lines about the plots of international imperialism using Zionism as a tool. For example, Moscow radio in Arabic told its listeners on December 19, 1973 that "the chief reason for the U.S.A.'s continued support for Israel lies in the fact that the U.S. imperialist monopolies try with all their power to maintain the exploitation of the natural resources in the Arab countries."[164]

Other communist parties under the USSR's influence or control also contributed to this propaganda. In October 1973 the clandestine radio station of the *Tudeh* party, the Iranian Communist party, broadcast a message during the Yom Kippur war:

> "The Israeli aggressors and their imperialist supporters thought they could forever occupy the occupied Arab territories by force alone, that they could trample on the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and that they could ignore the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and ridicule world public opinion… In their sacred and just war, the Arab people enjoy the support of the socialist community and progressive and anti-imperialist forces throughout the world… The Iranian people have always followed with great interest the just struggle of the Arab people against imperialism and Zionism."[165]

The propaganda broadcast took this opportunity to attack the Iranian government for being in league with imperialism and Zionism:

> "The Iranian people have always followed with great interest the just struggle of the Arab people against imperialism and Zionism...reactionary Iranian ruling quarters, despite their intentions, have never dared to take an open political stand in support of the Israeli Aggressors and their imperialist supporters… [in] their cooperation with imperialism and Zionism, Iranian ruling quarters have repeatedly shown their real faces and actual intentions."[166]

While the anti-Zionist/anti-imperialist propaganda activity of the USSR may not have been as intense as the anti-Jewish propaganda of Nazi Germany during World War II, it was more sustained. Like with Nazi propaganda, certain kinds of Soviet propaganda that harped on anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist themes could find eager audiences in the Middle East, where many had first-hand experience of real European imperialism or felt a connection to the Palestinians or (in the case of Palestinians) had been first ruled by the British and then had direct experience of conflict with Jews.

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[163] *Documents on Soviet Jewish Emigration*, p. 126-127.
[164] Hazan, p. 185.
[165] "TUDEH PARTY HAILS ARAB FIGHT AGAINST ISRAELIS," Radio Iran Courier (Clandestine), 19 October 1973, From Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) Report, Translations on Near East : No. 1058 (JPRS-60469), 06 November 1973, p. 28.
[166] Ibid. p. 29.

Conspiracy theories about Zionism

Nazi propaganda, Nasserite Propaganda, and Soviet propaganda all supported the idea that "Zionism" or the "Jews" were connected with imperialism. The Nazis tended to place the Jewish conspiracy as the master or the partner of imperialists. The Soviets on the other hand emphasized that Zionism was a tool of an imperialist conspiracy, and based on surviving material, Nasserite propaganda seemed to take either position depending on the circumstances. **"**Imperialists" and "imperialism" in these cases were almost always associated with England and America.[167] A researcher writing in 1987 noticed the ubiquity of talk about an Imperialist-Zionist conspiracy in the Middle East. In this kind of rhetoric Zionism is described as the right hand of imperialism and the "reactionary" (anti-communist) regimes as the left hand, both working in tandem as part of a grand imperialist conspiracy against Arab nationalism.[168] The Nasserite Egyptian National Charter declared that "Israel is the base of imperialism, [and] was brought into existence by means of plots with the object of intimidating the Arab Nation and tearing it apart."[169] Article 22 of the Palestinian National Covenant reads "Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism… Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement, and a geographical base for world imperialism placed strategically in the midst of the Arab homeland to combat the hopes of the Arab Nation for liberation, unity and progress."[170] One Palestinian scholar described the conspiracy theory of imperialist Zionism in narrative form:

> "…the 'dangers' of an independent [Arab] state... [and] the spread of Arab nationalist sentiment… prompted the major imperialist figures to propose the idea of creating a client Jewish settler state in Palestine, primarily designed to block the fulfilment of unity and independence in that important area of the world, and to serve the interest of the imperialist sponsors and protectors of the state. The events of the latter part of the [nineteenth] century were conducive to the creation of what amounted to a consensus of opinion among the imperialist and western politicians, with the cooperation of western Jewish capital and anti-semites everywhere in favour of Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine."[171]

All this talk of conspiracies could lead the suspicion that anyone who interacted with Israel or its "imperialist" bosses/allies could be part of the conspiracy. Some even went further and held that even those who did not fight Israel and/or the imperialists in the correct way were in fact working as a part of the conspiracy. As Nasser wrote in 1958:

> "Imperialism always coveted the Middle East. Sometimes they used violence and sometimes cunning intrigues… It was always the rulers who surrendered. They were puppets of the imperialists, and served as a means by which imperialism overcame the people. The imperialists created artificial barriers and unnatural frontiers. They fomented discord whenever unity arose and cunningly sowed dissention…"[172]

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[167] Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 103.
[168] Björgo, p. 107.
[169] Björgo, p. 104.
[170] Björgo, p. 104.
[171] Abdul Waab Kayyali, "Zionism and Imperialism: the Historical Origins," J*ournal of Palestine Studies,* Spring 1977, pp. 98-99, from Björgo.
[172] Björgo, pp. 108-109.

Conclusion: mixing conspiracy theories in the Middle Eastern context

In this chapter we examined three major propaganda campaigns, Nazi, Nasserite, and Soviet, that used variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory revolving around the Jews, Zionism, and imperialism. Each of them came from different contexts, but all of them emphasized the idea that there was a massive conspiracy of Jews/Zionists and western imperialists that had the Middle East in its grip. The Nazi campaign spread Islamist-based anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and the Soviet and Nasserite campaigns focused on anti-Imperialist agitation that also eventually included conspiracy theory narratives that closely mirrored the Nazi ones. While the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory and the Leninist "imperialism" conspiracy theory were both of European origin, the 20th century propaganda campaigns ensured that these narratives were spread far and wide.

An important theme from Nazi propaganda directed towards Muslims in this period was the idea that the Jews and their tools or allies (America and Britain) were involved in a conspiracy to deliberately weaken Islam in order to make the people of the region more pliant. These imperialist conspirators were also interested in the oil resources of the Middle East. Soviet propaganda (being overtly atheist) did not seem to make much commentary on Islam, but it did emphasize the importance of oil and the other natural resources of the Middle East to the grand imperialist conspiracy, of which Zionism was a very important tool. All shades of these conspiracy theories emphasized deception and the incredible powers the conspirators had to manipulate politics and opinion, in their home countries and in the Middle East. In subsequent chapters we will examine how believers in different strains of these conspiracy theories would adopt these ideas as justifications for, and perhaps as the ultimate motivations for, extremist violence.

Chapter 12: Conspiracy Theory, Qutb, and Sunni Extremism

"After September 11, 2001, [Qutb's] books were dusted off in Western, particularly U.S., libraries, and thumbed by scholars searching for clues to the inspiration and motivations of jihadist groups like Al Qaeda. In addition to Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, Qutb has become a household name in America as a supposed "philosopher of terror." In this context, too, he has been terribly misunderstood, presented as a caricatured image."[1] - Fawaz Gerges

"...[Qutb] greatly helped the Islamic movement to know and define its enemies. It also helped it to realize that the internal enemy was not less dangerous than the external enemy was and that the internal enemy was a tool used by the external enemy and a screen behind which it hid to launch its war on Islam..."[2] - Ayman al-Zawahiri

"Never, Never, and in no way can the formation of a society based on Islam be tolerated anywhere in the world, even on one of the most remote islands in the ocean, and in this way they [the Zionists and colonialists] will mobilize all the visible and invisible, massive global forces."[3] - Sayyid Qutb

This chapter will examine the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the thought of radical Sunni Islamists and their ideological godfather Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Specifically, this chapter will illustrate how these beliefs may have contributed to and/or informed the creation of a strand of violent Sunni extremist groups, particularly Al Qaeda. This chapter will argue that a belief in a global conspiracy theory derived from material from Tsarist-era and probably also the propaganda campaigns of the Nazis and others is an essential part of Qutb's theory of *jahiliyyah* and therefore of his view of history and his prescription for revolutionary action. In fact, this Sunni Muslim variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory forms a pillar of Qutb's ideas about the state of Islam, and colors his interpretation of the Quran. This chapter will also trace the subsequent effects of Qutb's ideas on the leadership of Al Qaeda, arguably the most successful violent Sunni extremist groups in terms of body count and global political effect.

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[1] Fawaz Gerges, *Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East,* (Princeton University Press, 2018), Kindle edition, p. 18.
[2] Zawahiri, *His Own Words*, p. 47.
[3] Sayyid Qutb, ادعانامه ای علیه تمدن غرب و دورنمائی از رسالت اسلام (An Indictment of Western Civilization and the Prospects of Islam), Ali Khamenei trans., (Qom, Iran: Tebyan Cultural Institute, 2008). Available at https://library.tebyan.net/fa/Viewer/Text/92016/274, p. 274. This book is a selection of Qutb's writings that Khamenei translated. This quote is from Qutb's essay "The Way of Salvation."

This chapter does not have space to deal with the wider phenomenon of *jihad,* and the religious motivations of many Sunni Muslim fighters in Kashmir or Afghanistan today or in the Balkans and Sudan in the 19th century or in earlier eras of Muslim expansion. These do not concern us here. It is not unusual, historically speaking, for Muslims to wage "holy war." It may be the case, as some have argued, that the idea of holy war has a particular attraction to Muslims in a way that it does not have in Christianity (or perhaps vice-versa?) but this chapter does not deal with these kind of comparisons. What this chapter is interested in is the effect of the European-origin Grand Conspiracy Theory in parts of the Islamic world, and perhaps even suggest some similarities between these effects and the earlier effects the Grand Conspiracy Theory had in 20th century Europe.

There are any number of reasons why a Sunni Muslim might decide to engage in holy war, acting in combinations that are different for each individual: religious, financial, patriotic, emotional, even just family ties. The different motivations of different individuals and local fights means that the modern Sunni jihadist movement, if it can be called a movement, is riven with all sorts of rivalries, based on theology, personalities, strategy, tactics, ethnicity, financial matters, and politics.[4] This chapter is about a particular strain that identifies a vast anti-Islamic conspiracy as its primary opponent. This strain, the leading example of which is Al Qaeda, has engaged in the most spectacular terrorist attacks in the West and also advocated the overthrow of some of the most "conservative" Sunni states in the Arab world. This chapter will examine how Qutb's ideas influenced the decisions of some Sunni radicals, and also discuss their attempts to justify their decisions using certain Sunni traditions and interpretations of Islamic law.

Qutb's path to *jihad*

Sayyid Qutb is a monumental figure in the history of radical Islamic ideology. An Arab biographer called him "the most famous personality in the Muslim world in the second half of the twentieth century."[5] His main works cross the sectarian divide. The Supreme Leader of the Khomeinist Shi'a government of Iran Ayatollah Khamenei translated portions of Qutb's work into Persian.[6] Some scholars have even named him the "founder" of radical Islam.[7] After a brief summary of his biography and historical context, this section will examine the role of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Qutb's thought, mainly through examining a collection of his works from the early 1950s *Our Struggle With the Jews* and his monumental Quran commentary *In the Shade of the Quran*, both of which are now available in English translation.

Sayyid Qutb was born and grew up in rural southern Egypt. His father was a landowner who was involved in incipient liberal and nationalist movements in Egypt.[8] Sayyid Qutb received

[4] Fawaz Gerges, *The Far Enemy*, (Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 102.
[5] Ronald L. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations, A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews*, (Pergamon Press, 1987), p. 25. [Nettler is quoting MahdI Fagl Allah, *Ma'a Sayyid Qutb Ff Fikrihf al-Siyasf wa al-Dini (With Sayyid Qutb in His Political and Religious Thought)* (Beirut, 1979).]
[6] For example, Sayyid Qutb, ادعانامه ای علیه تمدن غرب و دورنمائی از رسالت اسلام (An Indictment of Western Civilization and the Prospects of Islam), Ali Khamenei trans., (Qom, Iran: Tebyan Cultural Institute, 2008).
[7] David Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, (Second Edition, University of California Press, 2015) p. 102.
[8] Gerges, *Making the Arab World,* p. 12.

a solid education at a teacher-training college in Cairo and eventually became employed at the Egyptian Ministry of Education. He did not show signs of radical Islamist beliefs before the 1950s, and in his young adulthood he was a supporter of parliamentary democracy and a budding poet.[9] In 1949-50 Qutb spent some time in the United States, an experience he did not seem to enjoy.[10] This sojourn in the West coincided with a more religious turn in Qutb's literary output.[11] After he returned to Egypt Qutb became involved with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, perhaps initially as a writer for some of their publications.[12] He officially joined the movement in 1953.[13]

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (often referred to as just the "Brotherhood") had been founded in 1928 by the teacher Hassan Al-Banna. The organization was dedicated to returning Egypt and the whole Muslim world to conservative Muslim roots. It also opposed British colonialism and bitterly opposed Jewish immigration to Palestine and the idea of a Jewish state there. The Muslim Brotherhood was mentioned in the previous chapter, mainly in connection with its relationship with the Nazi collaborator and Palestinian leader Amin al-Husseini. As was also mentioned in the previous chapter, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had greatly expanded its size and appeal through a vociferous "Palestine campaign" in the late 1930s. This campaign included denunciations of British imperialism which was allowing Jewish immigration to take place and fighting the Palestinian revolt. The campaign included fundraisers, leaflets, boycotts against Jewish merchants, and strident attacks against Zionism as a "social cancer." Nevertheless, even during the Palestinian Revolt many writers of the Muslim Brotherhood maintained a real distinction between the Jews of Egypt and the Jews in Palestine. There were even soccer matches between Muslim Brotherhood teams and Jewish teams associated with the Maccabi World Union in 1939. There were no anti-Jewish articles in the publications of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood between 1933 and 1936.[14]

By the time Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1950s things had changed. Possibly influenced by various propaganda campaigns, the founding of Israel, and the relationship between members of the Brotherhood and al-Husseini, the Brotherhood began to engage in more strident, conspiratorial, anti-Jewish conspiracy theorizing, and Qutb's writing from this period is an example of this trend. There is insufficient clarity about Qutb's role in the ideological evolution of the Brotherhood on this issue, whether he was mainly an "influencer" or an "influencee", whether he acquired his ideas about the Jews and then joined the Brotherhood, or if the Brotherhood encouraged these ideas in him. In his groundbreaking work on Nazi propaganda in Arabic, Dr. Jeffrey Herf speculated that Qutb might have been exposed to Nazi propaganda broadcasts and/or had become familiar with the Nazi anti-Jewish conspiracy theory when he was in contact with the "Pro-Axis intellectual milieu of the radical Islamists in and

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[9] Gerges, *Making the Arab World,* p. 180-182.
[10] Robert Siegel, "Sayyid Qutb's America," NPR, May 6, 2003. Available at https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1253796. Accessed October 7 2018.
[11] Gerges, *Making the Arab World,* p. 214-220.
[12] Adnan A. Musallam, *From Secularism to Jihad, Sayyid Qutb and the Foundations of Radical Islamism*, (Praeger, 2005), p. 130.
[13] Gerges, *Making the Arab World,* p. 222.
[14] Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928-1942*, (Ithaca Press, 1997), p. 243-244.

around Al Azhar University."[15] As demonstrated in the previous chapter, during the periods from 1939-45 and in the early 1950s Qutb and other Egyptians were being bombarded with anti-Jewish conspiracy theories via radio propaganda, and Qutb could have heard some of these narratives directly from a radio broadcast or from a secondary source. Qutb may also have been introduced to the *Protocols* before he turned to Islamism through his mentor 'Abbas Mahumd al-'Aqqad, the Egyptian polymath and writer who had written about the *Protocols* in 1948 and who in 1956 produced a propaganda text for the Egyptian government that discussed the *Protocols*.[16] Qutb's uncle introduced the young Qutb to Mahbud al-'Aqqad and they remained close associates into the mid-1940s.[17]

The question of precisely why and how Qutb embraced the anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory is ancillary to this chapter, and sources that could provide an answer may not exist. What is clear is that by the early 1950s Qutb was spouting some of the most extreme anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, alleging a grand plot against Islam. What is undeniable is that Qutb took the idea of a massive Jewish conspiracy against Islam (and therefore against the whole human race) very seriously, and he viewed the *Protocols* as an authentic testimony of the machinations of this Jewish conspiracy. The important role that this idea plays in his thought and in the thought of his disciples is evident from a review of his major work or a glance at the rhetoric of his followers today. The continuing popularity of his work ensures that the idea of a grand Jewish conspiracy against Islam and the "proof" of the *Protocols* is constantly re-circulated in radical Islamist circles that take Qutb's work seriously.

The similarity of Qutb's anti-Jewish writings and the propaganda spread by the Nasserist propaganda machine, which will become evident when we examine them in closer detail, is not coincidental. Immediately after the 1953 Revolution the Free Officers and the Muslim Brotherhood were on very good terms and mutually supported each other. Qutb, at that time already a recognized Egyptian intellectual, also supported Nasser and the Free Officers, and along with other members of the Brotherhood believed the Egyptian Revolution would eventually lead to an Islamic State. Following the Revolution, Qutb was given an office in the building of the Egyptian Revolutionary Command Council and was assigned the task of creating a new educational curriculum. He may have even been expecting a cabinet position in the new government, though in the end he was just offered the secretary-generalship of the official party of the Revolution, the "Liberation Rally." Qutb turned down this appointment, probably as a result of his increasing suspicion of the motives and goals of the Free Officers.[18] [19]

The Free Officers refused to relinquish power to a civilian government and ignored the Brotherhood's demands to implement sharia and ban alcohol. The Free Officers refused the demand of the Guidance Bureau of the Brotherhood to give them veto power over any new legislation and they even made a deal with the British to keep some troops in the Suez Canal

[15] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, p. 259.
[16] Esther Webman, "Adoption of the Protocols in the Arab Discourse on the Arab-Israeli Conflict, Zionism, and the Jews," in *The Global Impact of The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Esther Webman ed. (Routledge, 2011), pp. 202-203.
[17] James Toth, *Sayyid Qutb: the Life and Legacy of a Radical Islamic Intellectual*, (Oxford University Press, 2013), Kindle Edition, pp. 16, 49.
[18] Toth, p. 75-77.
[19] John Calvert, *Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism*, (London: Hurst & co., 2010), p. 185.

zone.[20] Qutb was detained for three months in early 1954 for publicly protesting this deal. As Nasser's power grew and the more pro-Brotherhood Egyptian president Mohamed Naguib was sidelined, the Egyptian state took stronger and stronger actions against the Brotherhood. After an attempted assassination of Nasser in late 1954 the Brotherhood was suppressed and Qutb was thrown in prison.[21] With the exception of 8 months of freedom, Qutb would spend the rest of his life in prison.

It was during this time that he wrote his most influential works, the foremost of which is his multi-volume Quran commentary *Fi Zilal al-Quran,* "In the Shade of the Quran." He wrote and revised this enormous work between 1952 and his final imprisonment starting in 1965. According to some Qutb experts, after being imprisoned for the first time (1959-1964) he began to take a more radical, activist approach in his writings and he subsequently revised some of his earlier volumes to reflect this.[22] *Our Struggle with The Jews*, a work he published in the early 1950s,[23] probably before he was put in jail, is filled with the idea of a massive multi-generational Jewish conspiracy against Islam, suggesting that his purported prison "radicalization" did not include an embrace of the grand anti-Jewish conspiracy, which he held beforehand. The following quotation from *Our Struggle with the Jews* confirms that Qutb had already embraced the conspiracy theory of a grand Jewish plot against Islam before he went to prison or mentioned the *Protocols* in his commentary:

> The Jews also conspired against Islam by inciting its enemies against it throughout the world.... This has brought the Jews in the latest era to the point of being the chiefs of the struggle with Islam, on every foot of the face of the earth.... The Jews are (also) the ones who utilize Christianity and idolatry in this comprehensive war.... And they are the ones who create the circumstances and make the "heroes" who carry Muslim names. . . . And they attack every foundation of this religion [Islam], in a Crusader-Zionist war!!"[24]

Qutb was imprisoned after the assassination attempt on Nasser in October 1954, and it is unlikely that he published this work after then (though, he did manage to publish *In the Shade of the Quran* while in prison.) Recent Arabic commentary on the work appears to indicate *Our Struggle with the Jews* is a collection of excerpts from Qutb's early 1950s writings in the journal of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.[25]

Qutb's *jahiliyyah*

This section will analyze Qutb's work in light of his repeated references to the Grand Conspiracy Theory and the *Protocols*, specifically with regards to his theory of *jahiliyyah*. This aspect of Qutb's thought that has had the most impact. *Jahiliyyah* was traditionally used in Islam

[20] Toth, pp. 77.
[21] Toth, pp. 77-79.
[22] William E. Shepard "Sayyid Qutb," in *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia*, Oliver Leaman ed., (Routledge, 2006), pp. 568-569.
[23] Nettler, p. 29.
[24] Nettler, p. 83.
[25] Amal al-Khuzami, سيد قطب: في ظلال صاحب الظلال*: In The Shadows of Sayyid Qotob*, (Center of Civilization for the Development of Islamic Thought, 2015), p.110.

as a word describing the ignorance of the world during the pre-Islamic period.[26] Qutb defined *jahiliyyah* not as an era in the past, but as something that can exist in any period of history. He defined it in the fourth volume of his Quran commentaries:

> "…*jāhiliyyah,* rendered here as 'pagan ignorance,' as the term is used in the *Qur'ān. Jāhiliyyah* means that people are ruled by people, because this signifies that they submit to one another. They refuse to submit to God alone and reject His Godhead, acknowledging instead that some human beings have qualities of Godhead and hence they submit to their authority. As such, the term pagan ignorance, or *jāhiliyyah,* does not refer to a particular period of time, but to a certain situation which may come into existence at any time. Whenever it exists, it must be described as *jāhiliyyah* which is in contrast to Islam."[27]

Qutb wrote about two modes of *jahiliyyah*: one - a pre-Islamic ignorance, and another - a contemporary *jahiliyyah* which is active and very aware of Islam's power and seeks to crush it using its vast resources.[28] Qutb believed that this latter form of *jahiliyyah* was not just a way to describe a non-Islamic society but an active force that had succeeded where the first form of *jahiliyyah* had failed, and managed to successfully destroy true Islamic society and stymie the development of a truly Islamic state. It continually intervened in the politics of supposedly Islamic countries and the theology of supposedly Islamic institutions to maintain this state of ignorance. This is Qutb's main innovation, and if a Muslim believes that this active, usurping *jahiliyyah* actually exists, one's primary goal should be to fight against it by any means necessary in order to rescue the world from its clutches.

Qutb's view of modern *jahiliyyah* was partly derived from the work of Qutb's contemporary, the Pakistani Imam and jurist Abul A'la Maududi. Mawdudi referred to modernity as the "new *jahiliyyah*."[29] Qutb adapted this idea of a "new *jahiliyyah*" into his concept of two modes of *jahiliyyah*, and Qutb's contemporary *jahiliyyah* was globally connected and much more sophisticated than the old one. In *Milestones,* his most widely-read work in the West*,* Qutb makes clear that when he speaks of *jahiliyyah* he is not speaking about just an idea or an adjective, but of something that can become an active conscious force, under the right circumstances:

> "This *Jahiliyyahh* is not an abstract theory; in fact, under certain circumstances it has no theory at all. It always takes the form of a living movement in a society which has its own leadership, its own concepts and values, and its own traditions, habits and feelings. It is an organized society and there is a close cooperation and loyalty between its individuals, and it is always ready and alive to defend its existence consciously or unconsciously. It crushes all elements which seem to be dangerous to its personality."[30]

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[26] Vincent J. Cornell, "Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge" in *The Oxford History of Islam*, (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 78.

[27] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 4., M.A. Salahi trans.(?), (Islamic Foundation?), p. 112.

[28] Sayed Khatab, *The Political Thought of Sayyid Qutb: The Theory of Jahiliyyah. (Routledge Studies in Political Islam, Book 2)*, Taylor and Francis, 2006, Kindle Edition, Locations 334-347.

[29] "Jahiliyyah," *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, John L. Esposito ed., (Oxford University Press 2003) p. 154.

[30] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, A. B. al-Mehri ed., (Birmingham: Maktabah, 2006) p. 57.

Qutb believed that we are living through one of these "certain circumstances" in which *jahiliyyah* becomes organized and conscious and ceased to be a "theory" in any sense of the word. He described the difference between the tactics of the old *jahiliyyah* and the modern *jahiliyyah:*

> "The people of old *jāhiliyyah* used to divert the masses away from the Qur'ān, demanding physical miracles. The people of modern *jāhiliyyah* try to divert the masses away from the Qur'ān by putting in its place a false bible which they promote through all mass media and information channels."[31]

The major difference between the old *jahiliyyah* and the new is that the forces opposing Mohammed in the 7th century were local forces fighting a losing battle against God's prophet, and were doomed to failure. Now, on the other hand, the global forces of *jahiliyyah* are much more ambitious. They have had such success in their multi-generational campaign of deception and subterfuge that they believe that they are about to destroy Islam forever. Qutb was clear about who he believed made up the shock troops of the "forces of *jahiliyyah"* - the Zionists and Christian imperialists:

> "Zionism and Christian Imperialism have employed in these modern times various methods of combat, scheming and plotting against this religion which are far superior to what they used over past centuries. In our modern time, they are trying to put an end to the Islamic faith altogether, thinking that they are fighting their final decisive battle. Therefore, they re-employ the methods and schemes they used in the past, in addition to what the present advancements enable them to use."[32]

The *Protocols* is cited several times in Qutb's Quran commentary as an important proof of the existence of this grand conspiracy against Islam. Qutb appears to have taken the *Protocols* quite literally, and saw them as an actual blueprint for a massive deception and manipulation of the whole globe by usurping Jews. Take this example when Qutb discussed the history of atheism in the West in his commentary on Sura 6 of the Quran:

> "Most probably, the whole concept of atheism started as a manoeuvre to confront the Church. Zionism then exploited it for its own ends, because it tries to demolish the basic foundation of human life, so that no human community other than its own can take it as a basis for its code of living. This they state in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The result they aim to achieve is the collapse of humanity so that they can exercise control over it, since they preserve for themselves the source of true power, namely faith."[33]

While Qutb believed in the authenticity of the *Protocols* and the threat of the Jewish projects of communism, liberalism, republicanism, etc., he also believed that the Jewish/Christian forces of *jahiliyyah* went beyond the plans described in the *Protocols*, and that they had been deliberately and self-consciously conspiring against Islam for millennia. Their plots included seeding disinformation over centuries and infiltrating agents into the Muslim world to clandestinely destroy Islam and lead Muslims astray:

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[31] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 6., M.A. Salahi trans (?), (Islamic Foundation?), p. 263.
[32] Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 6., pp. 197-198.
[33] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 5., M.A. Salahi trans (?), (Islamic Foundation?), p. 31.

> [Jews and Christians]... continue to reject the truth of Islam, not because of any lack of evidence and proof, but because of personal prejudices and vested interests… Over the centuries, they have unfortunately been able to plant in Islamic heritage that which has nothing to do with this religion of Islam and which cannot be discovered without Herculean efforts. They have managed to confound truth with falsehood in much of our heritage, with the exception, however, of this Book which God has undertaken to preserve intact for the rest of time. Praise be to God for His limitless grace.
>
> They have distorted much of Islamic history and its events as well as the images of its best men of action. They have also put their alien plants in the field of the *ĥadīth* until God has enabled the great scholars of *ĥadīth* to verify and sift out the true from the false, as much as is humanly possible. Their distortions have also crept into commentaries on the Qur'ān to the extent that it has become very difficult for a student of the Qur'ān to find his clear way to a correct understanding. They have also implanted their own men, hundreds if not thousands, to distort our Islamic heritage. Some of these are with us even today in the shape of Orientalists and their disciples who occupy positions of intellectual leadership in the countries whose peoples claim to be Muslim. They have also implanted in our societies scores of people who are given the status of heroes when they have actually been carefully brought up by Zionism and Christian fanaticism in order to serve the enemies of Islam in a way which cannot be achieved by any open enemy."[34]

The conspiracy that Qutb believed in was incredibly deceptive and powerful, global, and self-consciously usurping, immoral, and against the true religion, i.e. Islam. These Judeo-Christian forces of *jahiliyyah,* he believed, are engaged in a long-term and massively successful deception against Islam and have given Islamic camouflage to their agents and ersatz Islam to their dupes in order to prevent Muslims from realizing what is really being done to their faith:

> "The enemies of this faith who are watching carefully the Islamic revivalist movements of today are fully aware of what may influence human nature, and of the history of Islam as well. Therefore, they are keen to give an outward `Islamic' appearance to the regimes, movements, values, traditions and philosophies they nurture and support in order to crush the Islamic revivalist movements the world over. They do so, because this outward `Islamic' appearance may prevent the true advocates of Islam from confronting the jāhiliyyah reality that lies behind this false appearance….Some Muslims, including many of those who advocate the need for an Islamic revival, are deceived by this `Islamic' appearance which is portrayed by present-day jāhiliyyah. Hence they are reluctant to unmask these hostile regimes and show them as they truly are. All this impedes an open confrontation with jāhiliyyah."[35]

In the above passages and elsewhere Qutb pointed to Zionism and Christian imperialists as joint corrupters of Islam: "They are all working together for a definite objective, that is, the total destruction of the Islamic faith."[36] Qutb wrote in other passages in his Quran commentary that the conspiracy, as per the *Protocols*, is a Jewish endeavor, with duped Christians in tow along with other servants. The schemes of the "crusaders" and "imperialists" form important parts of the forces of *jahiliyyah,* but he believed the core enemy are the Jews. They are ultimately the more malign force, the orchestrators of the anti-Islamic conspiracy: "No one has

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[34] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 2., M.A. Salahi trans(?), (Islamic Foundation?), pp. 100-101.
[35] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 8., M.A. Salahi trans(?), (Islamic Foundation?), p. 118-119.
[36] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 2., p. 102.

ever worked against Islam during any period of its history, including the Crusades and all forms of colonialism, without having had some help and encouragement from the Jews."[37]

Qutb's belief in an all-powerful global conspiracy was similar to Hitler's because they both believed that their ultimate enemies were the Jews, and both were evidently influenced by the "Black Hundred" variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, and specifically the *Protocols*, that identified the Jews with the forces of liberalism, socialism, and communism. (Qutub mentioned in an aside that with regards to the war against Islam "...Marxism is only an offshoot of Zionism...")[38] Repeating themes from Nazi/Tsarist propaganda, Qutb blames the Jews for inventing communism as a tool to corrupt Christian civilization, although with mixed success:

> "Atheism is simply the result of long suffering at the hands of the Church… The Church resorted to oppressive practices… That long history of suffering, endured for centuries by Europe, was responsible for pushing the Europeans into their professed atheism, simply to flee from their tormentors. Besides, Jewish forces have exploited this historical legacy to tempt the Christians away from their faith so that they spread immorality and its attendant misery among them. This facilitates what the Zionist Jews see as the manipulation of the 'asses', to use the expression as contained within the Talmud and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. It would have been impossible for those evil forces to achieve any of this, or to drive people to atheism, without the exploitation which occurred during that grim period of European history. These tireless efforts have been given their most striking picture in the efforts of Communism, itself a Jewish invention."[39]

The first parts of the Quran contain stories of Mohammed fighting with the Jews of 7th century Arabia, and Qutb extrapolated this conflict into the present, modified with the idea of the modern *jahiliyyah* with much greater abilities of deception. As in the Nazi propaganda broadcasts in Arabic, the Quran's story of the scheming Jews of 7th century Arabia who fought and conspired in vain against Islam is transformed in Qutb's work into a story supporting the idea that the Jews of today have secretly succeeded against Islam, or very nearly so. Qutb believed in a continuity of the war between the Jews and Islam: "The war the Jews began to wage against Islam and Muslims in those early days has raged on to the present day."[40] He also believed that the Jews were by nature prone to oppose Islam: "Jews as Jews were by nature determined to fight Allah's Truth and sow corruption and confusion. Judaism was by nature defective and corrupted Truth…"[41] The scholar Ronald L. Nettler, who translated Qutb's *Our Struggle Against the Jews* into English, commented that Qutb merged the "metaphor" of the Jews as a "symbol of all great dangers to Islam… a metaphor for the challenges of Western domination and immorality."[42] with the idea that the Jews were a real, concrete threat. For the Jews, "The line here between metaphor and reality was sometimes even effaced altogether."[43] However, this merger of the "symbolic" and the "real" Jewish threat did not happen for the first time in Qutb's brain, but likely reflected his intake of European anti-Jewish propaganda.

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[37] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 3, p. 146.
[38] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 4, p. 185.
[39] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 3, p. 117-118.
[40] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 1, p. 65.
[41] Nettler, p. 36.
[42] Nettler, p. 29.
[43] Nettler, p. 29.

The use of Jewish bogeymen to explain some of the failures of the Islamic community predates the modern era,[44] but Qutb's belief in the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy and the *Protocols* made the supposed Jewish force opposing Islam more powerful than it ever had been imagined before and identified modernity with this conspiracy. Films, liberalism, communism, democracy, imperialism, really anything perceived as negative and alien could be easily worked into a conspiratorial narrative involving the machinations of the Jews and the Crusaders against Islam.

Qutb's solution to *jahiliyyah*

In his works Qutb regularly uses rhetoric that appears to be liberal, talking of freedom and referencing the idea that governments must earn their legitimacy. His writings include admonitions for "the freedom of man from servitude"[45] and condemnations of slavery[46] and even against unreasonable searches and seizures.[47] Qutb did write that "...the process of liberating mankind is completed by giving every individual the freedom of choice based on conviction."[48] A former scholar at the Brookings institute and current (as of 2019) professor at the University of Delaware Dr. Muqtedar Khan wrote a 2003 essay that called Qutb the "John Locke of the Muslim World, who advocated freedom - and supported rebellion against tyrannical rulers."[49] The problem with this analysis is that Qutb's discussion of religious "freedom" and what constitutes tyranny cannot be disentangled from his deep belief in a version of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory.

Qutb's vision of "freedom" does not just mean freedom from direct coercion, but also freedom from the machinations of the massive international conspiracy:

> "Those who adopt the religion of Islam also have the right not to be intimidated or subjected to oppression, in any way whatsoever, so that they abandon their faith. No impediments may be placed to turn people away from Islam. The Muslim community, if subjected to any such aggressive designs, has the right to defend itself by force, in order to protect the community's freedom and security… The Muslim community must pursue this course of *jihād,* or struggle for God's cause, until all threat of oppression is eliminated and people are free to believe in Islam and practice it. This does not imply any sense of compulsion, but it does mean allowing Islam to prevail in society to the extent that everyone is free to accept it and tell others about it without any fear of persecution or intimidation."[50]

So, Qutb endorses *jihad* against any restriction of a Muslim's religious freedom or aggression against Islam, but he makes clear elsewhere that these "impediments" against Islam can include any activities of the supposed massive Zionist/Crusader propaganda and subversion machine. For example, this campaign against Islam supposedly includes the

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[44] Nettler, p. 40.
[45] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones,* p. 84.
[46] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 1, p. 188.
[47] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 1, p. 230.
[48] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 8, p. 98. (This quotation is more sinister in context, as will be demonstrated later.)
[49] Muqtedar Khan, "Syed Qutb – John Locke of the Islamic World," Brookings, July 28, 2008. Available at https://www.brookings.edu/articles/syed-qutb-john-locke-of-the-islamic-world/. Accessed October 8 2018.
[50] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol 1, pp. 227, 230.

increasing sexual promiscuity in modern society. While Qutb allowed that the fact that Europe and America are populated by unbelievers is a sufficient explanation for the "sexual perversion rapidly increasing"[51] in the West, he also asserted in his Quran commentary that this trend was helped on by the Zionist conspiracy:

> "The media, often controlled by Zionist interests, is directed to undermine human life through the spreading of immorality and promiscuity. Hence it has been trying hard to stress the misconception that women's adoption of a position of conservative propriety is the reason for the spread of such abnormal indecencies… Anyone who still wants to argue in the face of these glaring facts should read first, 'Men's sexual behaviour' and 'Women's sexual behaviour' in the McKenzie Report. [sic.] The controlled media nevertheless continues to repeat this falsehood, attributing perversion to women's religious dress. In this way, they are only fulfilling the aims of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and implementing the recommendations of missionary conventions. "[52]

Qutb believed Arab nationalism was also part of the conspiracy against Islam, despite the appearance that it was a force fighting Western imperialism. Qutb singled out Palestinians as a prime example of a people who failed to resist the unbelievers because "They do not rally under the banner of the Islamic faith, but instead they hoist a nationalist or racist banner." This was a result of a lack of awareness that "the only method weapon and banner which saw them victorious for a thousand years, and which is certain to make them victorious again…" is Islam. But this is not mere ignorance, Qutb wrote, it is the result of deliberate Zionist and Christian deception: "Such lack of awareness comes as a result of the poison injected in the Muslim community by Zionist and Christian imperialist forces, which try to perpetuate such a state of affairs through the regimes they establish in the Muslim world."[53] Qutb wrote that the global conspiracy against Islam was involved in trying to wheedle permission for "usury, promiscuity, and other practices that Islam forbids" via twisted modern interpretations of Islamic law.[54] They even worked hard to deceive the world into believing that Kemal Ataturk was not an atheist in order to legitimize his reforms in Turkey.[55]

Qutb wrote that the Jewish attacks on Islam also took the form of slander against genuine Islamic movements: "They manipulate all the media under their control in order to distort the image of every successful Islamic movement anywhere in the world."[56] Qutb believed the conspiracy was consciously waging a largely successful campaign to distort the image of Islam and misinform people:

> "[Modern people] are also prevented from appreciating the Qur'ān by the die-hard Zionist and imperialist opposition that has continued to scheme and plot against this faith and its revealed message for fourteen centuries. They continue with their unceasing attempts to divert Muslims away from the Qur'ān and its directives. This is because the Zionists and the imperialists have learnt through long experience that they cannot be a match for the Muslims as long as they adhere to the Qur'ān in the same way as the first generation of Muslims did."[57]

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[51] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 6, p. 117.
[52] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 6, p. 117-118.
[53] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 6, p. 193.
[54] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 5, p. 198.
[55] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 5, p. 289.
[56] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 3, p. 153.
[57] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 5, p. 263.

In the face of such a global conspiracy with super powers of deception, real religious freedom in the Western, liberal sense would be impossible. For Qutb, there was nowhere in the world that had religious freedom in the Western sense, though some places may have an ersatz religious freedom, i.e. places where the global conspiracy against Islam has managed to dupe populations into believing that they have freedom of conscience when they are really under the spell of Jewish propaganda.

Qutb believed that the message of Islam is clear and inviting and unstoppable, but that the forces of *jahiliyyah* (and in particular the grand Jewish conspiracy and its servants) had managed to deceive nearly everyone in a massive global conspiracy against Islam. If one unmasks deceptive forces of *jahiliyyah,* more people will turn to true Islam. Indeed, Qutb believed that "This religion of Islam will always be victorious when its advocates, in any generation and any place, achieve a certain degree of awareness of its reality and the reality of the *jahiliyyah* trying to suppress it."[58]

However, as Qutb believed that *jahiliyyah* is a conscious, reactive force, attempts to unmask it purely through propaganda and missionary work would be incredibly difficult. The true Muslims have to fight against an evolving counter-Islamic global strategy created by the forces of *jahiliyyah.* Qutb did not believe that he was fighting against an idea or even "ignorance" in general, but against a "living and active organization"[59] which deliberately supports ignorance, and is dedicated to destroying Islam and capable of adapting and spinning new lies. One is reminded of Metternich suspecting that the Jacobins were shifting from being anti-religious to adopting religious enthusiasm to carry out their revolutionary plans.

A fight against a global, deceptive, multi-generational and super-powerful conspiracy that threatens Islam and therefore "freedom" needs a global counter-offensive, a revolution to remove the deceptive mask of the *jahiliyyah* and allow true Islam to once again establish an Islamic society. However, a conspiracy so powerful, one that has shown itself so competent in history and has successfully re-imposed global *jahiliyyah* would not go down without resistance. The vanguard of the coming Islamic revolution had to work hard to prepare the way for the revolution. This revolution needed a global dimension, because the enemy had global dominion. Even if one laid aside any global vision of Muslim evangelism, for Qutub "Islamism in one country" would be impossible. Any local success of building an authentic Muslim society would be immediately squelched by the vast conspiracy of Zionists and Crusaders, if they have the power and the will. In one of his lesser-known books *Islam and the Problems of Civilization* Qutb lamented that the international anti-Islamic conspiracy would allow all kinds of "Islamic" books to be publish, "Islamic" films to be screened, as long as no actual Islamic state or Islamic society is formed. If such an Islamic state/society ever come into existence, then the conspiracy against Islam would quickly try to crush it, no matter how insignificant it might be:

> "Never, Never, and in no way can the formation of a society based on Islam be tolerated anywhere in the world, even on one of the most remote islands in the ocean, and in this way they [the Zionists and colonialists] will mobilize all the visible and invisible, massive global forces."[60]

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 57.

[60] Sayyid Qutb, ادعانامه ای علیه تمدن غرب و دورنمائی از رسالت اسلام *(An Indictment of Western Civilization and the Prospects of Islam)*, Ali Khamenei trans., (Qom, Iran: Tebyan Cultural Institute, 2008). Available at

The vanguard to fight the conspiracy

Qutb presented a condensed version of his plan for liberating Islam and the world from *jahiliyyah* in his tract *Milestones,* which is a spin-off his Quran commentary.[61] While *Milestones* does not make explicit references to the *Protocols*, the program he lays out is based on the idea of the global conspiracy against Islam that Qutb discusses in *Our Struggle with The Jews* and in his Quran commentary. *Milestones* teaches that an Islamic vanguard had to embark on a long-term program to fight the grand anti-Islamic conspiracy, a program that will fight *jahiliyyahh* across the whole world:

> "How is it possible to start the task of reviving Islam? It is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of Jahiliyyahh which has encompassed the entire world. During its course, it should keep itself somewhat aloof from this all-encompassing Jahiliyyahh and should also keep some ties with it…"[62]

In *Milestones* Qutb again stated his belief that this vanguard will be immediately attacked by the forces of *jahiliyyahh*: "...history tells us that the Jahili society chooses to fight and not to make peace, attacking the vanguard of Islam at its very inception, whether it be a few individuals or whether it be groups, and even after this vanguard has become a well-established community."[63] This belief in this powerful conspiracy aggressively attacking Islam (and "freedom") from every angle lends a whole new aspect to ideas about how to fight back, ideas about *jihad.* Classical Sunni Islamic rules distinguish between "offensive" and "defensive" jihad. Offensive jihad to expand the realms of Islam has to be authorized by legitimate Islamic rulers,[64] and it was to be waged by a select group of believers, it does not require the participation of all Muslims. Defensive jihad, on the other hand, has a requirement for unrestricted Muslim warfare against unbelievers who invaded Muslim lands.[65] For Qutb, the distinction between "defensive" and "offensive" jihad was de-facto worthless in this modern age because of the relentless attacks using propaganda and other secret tactics by the global conspiracy against Islam:

> "If we must describe Islamic *jihād* as defensive, then we need to amend the meaning of the term `defence' so that it means the defending of mankind against all factors that hinder their liberation and restrict their freedom. These may take the form of concepts and beliefs, as well as political regimes that create economic, class and racial distinctions. When Islam first came into existence, this world was full of such hindrances, some forms of which persist in present- day *jāhiliyyah."*[66]

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https://library.tebyan.net/fa/Viewer/Text/92016/274, p. 274. This book is a selection of Qutb's writings that Khamenei translated. This quote is from Qutb's essay "The Way of Salvation."

[61] Calvert, p. 219.

[62] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 27-28.

[63] Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 90.

[64] Dr. David Suurland, *Secular Totalitarian and Islamist Legal-political Philosophy: A Study Into the Applicability of the Totalitarianism Paradigm to Islamist Ideologies and Movements*, Part 1, Phd Dissertation, University of Leiden, 2012, p. 76.

[65] J. M. B. Porter, "Osama Bin Laden, *Jihad,* and the Sources of International Terrorism." *Indiana International & Comparative Law Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 883.

[66] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 7, p. 10.

Qutb made it clear in his commentary that the reach of the supposed global conspiracy means that the jihad against it must aspire to a similar reach:

> *"Jihād* is, indeed, a means of defending the Islamic message and its right to be conveyed freely to everyone, everywhere in the world. It is also the means to ensure that every individual, anywhere in the world is free to accept Islam."[67]

Here is another example from a different volume that emphasizes that the coming Islamic revolution will necessarily be global in scope, and concerned with power:

> "The revolution is not territorial but international, though as a starter the members of the Muslim party, wherever they live, should focus on that place. Their eventual goal should, however, be a world revolution for the simple reason that any revolutionary ideology, which is humanity specific and seeking universal welfare, cannot reduce itself to a particular state or nation. It is innate in its nature to embrace the whole world,... Wherever humans are oppressed, it must come to their rescue… On the one hand, it should seek a global reach for its message inviting everyone to its fold for a better life. On the other hand, depending on its power resource, it should force non-Islamic governments to clean their stables or face the cleansing sweep of Islamic governance."[68]

Qutb did not only write about revolutionary violence against the reigning conspiracy, *Milestones* was not just a theoretical treatise. Qutb practiced what he preached. *Milestones* was written as a kind of strategic instruction manual for a secret society of violent Muslim revolutionaries that Qutb lead. After the suppression of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's in the late 1950s a few members tried to put together a clandestine paramilitary organization to strike back, and perhaps to overthrow Nasser. The organization was eventually known to the security services as *al-Tanzim al-Sirri* (the Secret Organization.)[69] After some small-scale clandestine organizing *Al-Tanzim al-Sirri* (hereafter, just "al-Tanzim") reached out to the second in command of the Brotherhood, Abdel Khaleq, and asked him to lead them. According to his testimony, Abdel Khaleq refused, saying this organization "would provide the Nasser regime with a rationale for brutalizing the sons of the Islamic movement further and for perpetrating more bloodshed."[70]

The conspirators then reached out to the imprisoned Sayyid Qutb, who agreed to lead the organization.[71] According to Dr. Fawaz Gerges, who conducted a number of invaluable interviews with members of al-Tanzim, this secret network along with Qutb's intellectual heft enabled him to virtually control of the Brotherhood and become a second center of power that overshadowed the "official" Brotherhood leadership.[72] According to one member, Qutb "often reminded us that we were the vanguard tasked with replacing the status quo with an Islamic system…" and that "Qutb aimed at violently overthrowing the whole social and political order, not only the Nasser regime… He taught us that all means must be used to change the status

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[67] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 3, p. 224.
[68] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, Vol. 7, pp. 30-31.
[69] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, pp. 236, 263.
[70] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 266.
[71] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 266.
[72] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 152.

quo, including violence,... He trained us to be patient and that, once we go on the offensive, we must deploy overwhelming force to tip the balance in our favor… We were a paramilitary organization, not a peaceful protest movement. Qutb was a revolutionary Islamist who believed in revolutionary change."[73] The organization was dedicated to overthrowing the Nasserist regime that Qutb had once supported, and Qutb's idea that the Egyptian government was in fact a front of a vast anti-Islamic conspiracy justified its violent overthrow. According to Eid, one former member of al-Tanzim "Qutb told us that initially the army officers had collaborated with the Ikhwan, until evil-minded America recruited him to the anti-Islamic camp. Nasser sold his soul on the altar of political expediency."[74]

Al-Tanzim was not the first secret paramilitary/conspiratorial organization from the Muslim Brotherhood. In the late 1930s Hassan al-Banna had established a separate secret group: *al-Nizam al-Khass* (the Secret Apparatus).[75] This group was involved in facilitating the Brotherhood's violent jihad against Jewish settlers in Palestine and later against Israel.[76] In the 1940s members of this group had conducted attacks against British soldiers and some Egyptians. Al-Banna appears to have struggled to control his own creation and eventually denounced at least some of this violence against Egyptians by the end of his life.[77] While al-Banna was obviously not a stranger to violence, certainly not when it came to Jewish migrants or British soldiers, clandestinely-organized violence was not at the center of his program. Al-Banna believed that the first mission of the Brotherhood was to conduct a massive long-term missionary campaign among the Egyptian people and only take power once Egyptians were prepared for the establishment of an Islamic state. While al-Banna's organization was centrally organized, he believed in a bottom-up strategy of persuasion. Qutb, by contrast, put politics, conspiracy, and violence at the center of his program. The existing regimes were obstructions preventing Muslims from returning to true Islam.[78]

Qutb and his followers dismissed mere propaganda and missionary work as ineffectual, and instead emphasized armed struggle.[79] They believed that continuing a focus on propaganda and missionary work would merely play into the hands of the evil conspiracy, which had resources for propaganda that dwarfed anything the true Muslims could muster. A revolution and continued violence to create a space free of the intervention and meddling of the Jewish conspiracy and their Christian servants was the only way forward. An important first step along this path would be retaliation against those who interfered with true Muslims, to strike them hard enough so these "renegade rulers" under the control of the conspiracy would think twice about troubling true Muslims again. The Qutb biographer Sherif Younis claims that Qutb and his followers were driven by a desire to revenge themselves on Nasser and his state.[80] However, these were just the first targets. As the head of al-Tanzims intelligence committee

[73] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 269.
[74] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 258.
[75] Alison Pargeter, *The Muslim Brotherhood, From Opposition to Power*, (Saqi Books, 2013), Kindle Edition, p. 27.
[76] Barbara Zollner, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Hasan Al-Hudaybi and Ideology*, (Routledge, 2009), p. 17.
[77] Pargeter, p. 30.
[78] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, pp. 142-143.
[79] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 243.
[80] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 254.

Ahmad Abdel Majid[81] said: "The military junta proved to be a front and a tool for an unholy global conspiracy against Islam."[82] While Qutb's organization never appears to have planned attacks against America, the Jews, Western institutions, etc. (some of the main targets of their spiritual descendants today) this was probably because of the limited abilities and targets available to Qutb and his disciples. Qutb is clear in his writing: the Egyptian government might be the proximate enemy, but the ultimate one is the global Jewish conspiracy, followed by its Christian servants.

Al-Tanzim was not successful as a subversive organization. There was at least one abortive plot to assassinate Nasser in Alexandria. This was called off because of disagreements within the organization about strategy.[83] Despite this, the network was still preparing for greater things, gathering weapons and funds and training cadres. It was exposed in 1965, before it could conduct any operations, when one of al-Tanzim's members was arrested on unrelated charges and told the government about the network while under interrogation.[84] Qutb had been released from prison in 1964, but he was arrested again along with the entire leadership of al-Tanzim and the "official" leadership of the Brotherhood. Nasser's propaganda machine portrayed al-Tanzim as a terrorist organization supported from abroad that was deliberately planning to create chaos.[85]

For planning violence against Nasser and plotting revolution, Qutb and his disciples have been often accused of one of the cardinal Muslim sins, creating *fitna,* or civil discord. He and his followers insistence that they can rebel against their rulers, even if they are Sunni Muslims, has lead them to be compared to the Kharijites, a splinter group from early Islam who regarded any non-Kharijite as a non-Muslim. A Kharijite was responsible for assassinating the fourth caliph 'Ali.[86] Orthodox Sunni Muslims regard Kharijites as eternally damned for creating *fitna*.[87] If we adopt Qutb's conspiracy-theory vision of history, Nasser was not a "true Muslim" ruler, he was a servant of the secret global conspiracy against Islam, and therefore rebellion against him was part of waging defensive jihad against global *jahiliyyahh*. For Qutb and his followers the Islamic society of Egypt was really an ersatz-Islamic society, where "true Muslims" like Qutb and his followers had to conduct many of their activities in secret. During his trial Qutb was asked if "the establishment of a Muslim military underground may bring about a *fitna* or so serious a calamity that Islam may perish." He responded: "It may well bring about fitna, but the blame should be placed at the door of those who interdict open Muslim Brotherhood activity thus pushing Muslims to underground action."[88]

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[81] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 266.
[82] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 258.
[83] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 256.
[84] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 276.
[85] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 277.
[86] Jeffrey T. Kenney, *Muslim Rebels: Kharijites and the Politics of Extremism in Egypt*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 4.
[87] Kenney, p. 122.
[88] John McHugo, *A Concise History of the Arabs*, (The New Press, 2013), p. 212.

Qutb was sentenced to death. Before his execution he wrote one last testament *Why Did They Execute Me?* In it he laid the ultimate blame for his execution on the Zionist-Crusader conspiracy, reiterating the Grand Conspiracy Theory in his final literary act.[89]

Analysis: conspiracy theory vs. tradition

The examples presented above clearly demonstrate the major role played in his thought by a variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory derived from European anti-Jewish/anti-liberal propaganda. This is especially evident in justifying his rebellion, - what other Muslims decried as *fitna*, though Qutb considered himself an orthodox Sunni. Qutb's belief in a grand conspiracy of Jews and their Christian servants against Islam is the key to his understanding of history and what he considered to be the re-emergence of *jahiliyyahh.* In addition to the undisputable influence of the Pakistani writer Abul A'la Maududi, Qutb's thought is most often associated with Ibn Taymiyyah, the 14th century Sunni theologian and jurist who wrote fatwas justifying resistance against the Ilkhanate (Mongol) king Mahmud Ghazan, despite the fact that Mahmud Ghazan had earlier converted to Sunni Islam.

Ibn Taymiyyah does not appear to be referenced at all in Qutb's Quran commentary or in *Milestones*. Ibn Taymiyyah is probably not omitted out of any special aversion. While his commentary makes repeated reference to the ideas of various Islamic scholars on various points of interpretation, Qutb generally does not have much confidence in the Islamic scholars of the classical tradition.[90] Recall that Qutb believed a powerful conspiracy had, over centuries, "been able to plant in Islamic heritage that which has nothing to do with this religion of Islam and which cannot be discovered without Herculean efforts."[91] The "classical" commentaries and Islamic schools of jurisprudence were themselves suspect in the face of such a grand multi-generational conspiracy to corrupt Islam. The major concern of Qutb is the fight against the new *jahiliyyahh,* and rather than reference potentially suspect "classical" Islamic works in his commentary and other writings, Qutb preferred to reference evidence of the conspiracy's work in history, including evidence found in non-Islamic documents that appear to illustrate this conspiracy (e.g. the *Protocols*).

Qutb's successors: the paths to conspiracist-jihad

The importance of Qutb's work and the conspiracy theory contained in it has grown since his death. Qutb's idea of a new *jahiliyyah* opposing Islam that was directing the apparent and secret enemies of Islam became a key part of radical Islamic ideology in the decades after Qutub's death, not only in Egypt. By the 1990s Qutb's use of *jahiliyyah* was a normal part of the rhetoric and ideology of "Islamic revivalism" even by some who would not be described as

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[89] Sayyid Qutb, لماذا أعدموني *(Why They are Executing Me)*. Available at www.twhed.com/books/sayed-kttp/lmaza-a3dmonny.doc. Accessed October 8, 2018.

[90] Jane Dammen Mcauliffe, "Exegesis" in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, Gerhard Browning ed., (Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 162.

[91] Sayyid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran,* Vol. 2, p. 100.

violent.[92] Qutb's Quran commentaries may be the most influential Quran commentary of the 20th century,[93] which means that the conspiracy theory contained within it has been transmitted to several generations of Muslim students. Dr. Fawaz Gerges reports that he has never met a Qutbian who did not believe in a grand Zionist-Christian conspiracy against Islam.[94]

Qutb's posthumous influence throughout the Islamic world grew, surely partially driven by his surviving disciples in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. His teaching also got a boost through the largess of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia became a refuge for members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood fleeing persecution, and for a time the Saudi monarchy saw the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as a useful tool to bolster its legitimacy and Islamic credentials. Qutb's brother Mohammad Qutb, who had also been imprisoned in Egypt, was released in 1972. He moved to Mecca, and became a professor at King 'Abd al-Aziz University. According to Dr. John Calvert he "accommodated" his brother's work to fit with Saudi Wahhabi theology, specifically by de-emphasizing his brother's idea of universal *jahiliyyahh*. After all, to maintain the idea of universal *jahiliyyahh* Mohammed Qutb would have to also attack his Saudi patrons.[95] This accommodation, however, did not include toning down the other conspiracy-theory aspects of his brother's thought. Mohammad Qutb still claimed, as evidenced in a 1983 book titled *Madhāhib Fikrīya Mu'āṣira*, "Contemporary Schools of Thought" that the Jews had been behind the French Revolution, Darwinism, and had plans to take over the world. The highlighted evidence for this plot was the *Protocols*.[96] This aspect of Sayyid Qutb's work did not have to be modified for the Saudi environment because many of the rulers of Saudi Arabia were themselves aficionados of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia (r. 1964-1975) for example was a believer in the Judeo-Masonic / Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy. He drew a direct line between Communism and Zionism. In 1970 he told an interviewer from *Newsweek* "Zionism is the mother of communism... It helped to spread communism all over the world." When the interviewer pressed him on why Israel and the USSR were then such bitter opponents in the Middle East, the king replied "It is part of the great conspiracy.... Communism, as I have told you, is a creation of Zionism, intended for achieving Zionist goals. They only pretend to oppose each other."[97]

This embrace of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories by the Saudi leadership was probably partially driven by a desire to explain Israel's regular battlefield victories and America's support for the Jewish state, in addition to the sectarian appeal and even just the narrative appeal of the stories. There may also have been a desire to explain the constant creep of elements of modern Western culture into conservative Sunni society as being the result of a vast conspiracy.

Mohammad Qutb and other followers of Sayyid Qutb in Saudi Arabian exile tried to fuse Sayyid Qutb's teachings with Wahhabi currents already present in Saudi Arabia. This fusion

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[92] John Obert Voll, "The Revivalist Heritage," in *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography*, (Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 27-28.

[93] Mcauliffe, p. 162.

[94] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 22.

[95] Calvert, pp. 410-413.

[96] Masami Nishino, "Muhammad Qutb's Islamist Thought: A Missing Link between Sayyid Qutb and al-Qaeda?" *NIDS Journal of Defense and Security* Vol. 16, (2015), pp. 121-122. Available at http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/2015/bulletin_e2015_6.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.

[97] Alexei Vassiliev, *King Faisal: Personality, Faith and Times*, (Saqi Books; Reprint edition, 2013), p. 338.

became known as the Islamic Awakening, or just "Awakening" (*Sahwa*).[98] [99] This movement ceded doctrinal questions to Wahhabi interpretations, but on questions of politics and culture ideas from the Muslim Brotherhood tended to predominate, and this included the ideas of Sayyid Qutb. Sayyid Qutub's ideas eventually dominated the movement, and his brother Mohammed was known as the "sheikh of the *Sahwa*."[100] This movement at one time enjoyed the patronage of the house of Saud, which saw it as a counterbalance to other more anti-Saudi strains of conservative Islam in the kingdom.[101]

As mentioned earlier, Mohammad Qutb tried to accommodate his brother's teachings to the Wahhabi environment, which meant that he downplayed some of his brother's works that dealt with music, art, and socialism, but Qutb's Quran commentaries and *Milestones* were still promoted and spread.[102] Some of Qutb's choicest conspiracy-theory laden writings are in his Quran commentaries, and in them he clearly suggested a solution: violent jihad. While Mohammad may have made Sayyid Qutb's teaching palatable to Wahhabis, Sayyid Qutb's core teaching about conspiracy theories did not just describe a conspiracy to create Israel or a conspiracy to conquer the modern world, but one that was very long-lasting, perhaps stretching all the way back to the early years of Islam. A conspiracy this powerful would be capable of disguising its agents as anything or subverting nearly any entity, even the royal family of a conservative Islamic state.

The second generation of the vanguard In Egypt

In Egypt many members of the Muslim Brotherhood were eventually released from prison and even allowed to organize again during the presidency of Nasser's successor Anwar Sadat. Sadat's regime had close relationships with some less-radical members of the Muslim Brotherhood.[103] However, Sadat's less-than-radical political choices and most notably his agreement to the Camp David Peace Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1978 caused his relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood to deteriorate. The Egyptian state began to repress the Muslim Brotherhood again,[104] and some Qutubian elements of the Brotherhood again responded by organizing a clandestine vanguard. A number of these disparate Qutubist groups coalesced around Cairo under the leadership of an Egyptian engineer Abd al-Salam Faraj, who had been heavily influenced by Sayyid Qutb. In addition to organizing revolutionary violence, Faraj wrote a pamphlet that justified his sedition as resistance against a ruler who did not actually enact Islamic law. The pamphlet *The Neglected Duty* anchored a call to arms in quotations from the Quran and quotations from classic Sunni scholars, drawing from the fatwas of Ibn Taymiyyah.[105] [106] The Grand Conspiracy Theory does not make a strong appearance in

[98] Calvert, pp. 410-413.
[99] Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening*, George Holoch trans, (Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 51.
[100] Lacroix, pp. 52-53**.**
[101] Calvert, p. 276.
[102] Lacroix, p. 54-55**.**
[103] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 344.
[104] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 345.
[105] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God,* (Third Edition, University of California Press, 2003) p. 82.
[106] David Sagiv, *Fundamentalism and Intellectuals in Egypt, 1973-1993*, (Franklin Cass, 1995), p. 56.

this text. Nevertheless, in one crucial section Faraj defends his call to jihad against the charge that missionary work would be more effective than violence in bringing the Islamic state closer to a reality. Faraj counters with the claim that all the means of mass missionary work are under the control of those who would not permit true missionary work, including "those who have engage themselves in war with Allah":

> "Some of them say that the way to establish the (Islamic) state is by da'wah (inviting to Islaam) alone, and forming a wide base (i.e. a large number of practicing Muslims), but this will not do so. Despite that some people have based their abandonment of Jihaad on this point, the truth is that those who will establish the Islamic State are a few believers… how could da'wah alone achieve this large success while all the means of media are under the control of the disbelievers, sinners and those who have engaged themselves in war with Allaah? Thus the useful endeavour is to free these means of information from the hands of those (people). It is known that straight after victory and authority there will be a (great) acceptance of Islaam" [107]

Here we see an echo of Faraj's ideological forebear Sayyid Qutb, declaring that all media outlets are under the control of powerful anti-Muslim forces, and that jihad to "liberate" these media outlets from these enemies is the only path.

Faraj organized his vanguard into three sections, one devoted to spreading their ideology and recruiting new members, another to financing the movement (including through theft from Coptic Christian shops), and another for gathering intelligence and planning. One of the cells was led by the Qutubist physician Ayman al-Zawahiri, who later became the leader of the more famous terrorist organization Al Qaeda. Faraj and his followers were planning to build up a secret organization capable of seizing power. However, when one member of the group had an opportunity to be near President Sadat in a military parade, the leaders of the organization decided to take a risk and assassinate him.[108]

President Sadat's assassination on October 6, 1981 was the first time a Qutubist network achieved global attention - brought by a violent act that the Qutubists believed was one of revenge. The Egyptian state cracked down again on the Muslim Brotherhood and anyone associated with the assassination and the clandestine organization behind it, but the organization survived. It eventually became known as Egyptian Islamic Jihad. The organization continued to attack the Egyptian government and produce Qutubist propaganda. The leader of this organization by the mid-1980s was the physician Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was released from an Egyptian prison in 1985. Earlier he had developed ties to fighters in Afghanistan, and he went there to assist in the *jihad* against the communists. During this second sojourn in Afghanistan he met a young wealthy and well-connected Saudi, who was a former student of Mohammad Qutb: Osama Bin Laden.[109] These two built Al Qaeda together.

Bin Laden had come to South Asia to assist foreign fighters going to fight in Afghanistan, and he took part in some fighting himself. In the late 80s, after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, he and some other Arabs founded Al Qaeda, "the base" as an international jihadist

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[107] Muhammad 'Abdus Salam Faraj, *The Absent Obligation*, (London: Maktabah Al Ansaar, 2000), pp. 41, 43.
[108] Sagiv, pp. 56-59.
[109] *The Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism, An Anthology*, Marvin Perry and Howard E. Negrin eds., (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 40, 47-48.

organization. Bin Laden was imprisoned in Saudi Arabia in 1990 for opposing the Saudi Government's decision to invite foreign forces into the Arabian peninsula to fight the First Gulf War,[110] a common complaint against the Saudi government among the ranks of the *Sawa*.[111] Bin Laden was released, and he again went to Afghanistan and later to Sudan to organize jihad, which included attacks on the Saudi monarchy, the Egyptian government, the United States (specifically, an attack on the World Trade Center in New York), and attempts to establish safe bases from which to organize attacks and subversion. Zawahiri joined Bin Laden in Sudan, and eventually both returned to Afghanistan and built a strong alliance with the Taliban, a radical mainly Pashtun group that was in the process of conquering Afghanistan. Al Qaeda became internationally infamous when it destroyed two US embassies in East Africa in 1998, attacked the US warship the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen in 2000, and most spectacularly, conducted the attacks in New York and Washington DC on September 11th, 2001 which killed nearly 3000 people in one day.[112] The US retaliated by invading Afghanistan and removing the Taliban from power. Bin Laden was eventually hunted down and killed in Pakistan. However, Al Qaeda has persisted, and continues to carry out attacks. As of 2019 the leader is Zawahiri.

Zawahiri and Bin Laden, two conspiracy theorists

The following sections will examine the written works and statements of Bin Laden and Zawahiri to establish their Qutubian belief in a grand Jewish conspiracy against Islam and attempt to discern how this belief motivated their decision to continue to wage jihad and the strategies they chose. Of particular interest is their use of conspiracy theories as justification and perhaps motivation for attacks on Muslim regimes, even the conservative Sunni Saudi Monarchy, and for attacks on targets in the West. This is not the place for an exhaustive history of Al Qaeda, a proper study of which is probably futile without access to still-classified reports from intelligence agencies tracking it. Fortunately both leaders have written and spoken extensively to justify their jihad and the violent acts they have organized and ordered, and journalists, scholars, and intelligence agencies have translated large portions of their work from Arabic. There is a difficulty in analyzing statements of leaders of an organization engaged in subversive war, as sometimes their statements can be deceptive, for example, promising peace to a people if they withdraw from this or that location or by not taking credit for attacks that they organized, as Bin Laden initially did after 9-11.[113] Nevertheless, by comparing statements prepared for the public with essays, and books that were destined for the followers of the organization one can get a sense of consistent themes and beliefs that are truly held, and private libraries and papers can give further clues.

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[110] T*he Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism, An Anthology,* p. 41.
[111] Lacroix, p. 155.
[112] T*he Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism, An Anthology,* p. 41.
[113] "Usama bin Laden Says the Al-Qa'idah Group had Nothing to Do with the 11 September Attacks," Interview published in newspaper Ummat Karachi, 28th September, 2001. Available at https://web.archive.org/web/20080516041810/http://www.robert-fisk.com/usama_interview_ummat.htm. Accessed October 8, 2018.

The enemy: who it is and how they work

A belief in the existence of a secret worldwide Jewish government orchestrating the *jahiliyyahh* is a common idea in the writings and statements of Zawahiri. An essay written by Zawahiri in 1996 in an Egyptian Islamic Jihad publication praised the suicide bombings in Israel "which greatly harmed the Jews, the true rulers of the world."[114] In Zawahiri's book *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* he twice mentions this belief. One statement about the international plot against Islam begins: "The United States, and the global Jewish government that is behind it…"[115] At another spot Zawahiri call for a future *jihad* led by a re-born Islamic state "against the empire of the United States and the world's Jewish government..."[116]

Evidence of Bin Laden's belief in a conspiracy against Islam, carried out by America and orchestrated by the Jews, is clear in his statements as early as 1994. In that year, in the aftermath of the arrest of some radical preachers in Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden declared that this crackdown had been at the behest of the Americans, and that "This has been done in synchronization with the comprehensive Jewish campaign to humiliate the countries in the region and the Muslim people… The Zionists, the Christians, and others are implementing their conspiracy against Islam and the Muslims. By going along with this plan, the Saudi regime is showing its allegiance to the unbelievers, instead of its loyalty to the people of the faith…"[117]

In his essay "Moderate Islam is a Prostration to the West" Osama Bin Laden endorsed the Qutubian idea of a Western crusade against Islam itself. Mocking the call by some Muslim intellectuals for the West to reconsider Islam and open dialogue, Bin Laden, echoing Qutb, insists that the West is well aware of what Islam is, and because of this it has been involved in a massive multi-generational campaign against Islam.

> "Although they are intellectuals, they still remain ignorant—or are willfully ignorant—that the West understands their religion and the foundations of their exclusive creed more than the Muslim laity. So they think that the West's position toward us is due to its lack of understanding Islam, its principles, and its laws. In fact, the West did not treat Islam in this atrocious manner until after it [first] understood the truth about Islam—comprehended its essence and soul. And the West is knowledgeable of all religions, but it would never confront any of them, nor persecute their people. But it is bent on pulverizing the Muslims, since first learning of their enterprise…"[118]

With the phrase "...since first learning of their enterprise…" Bin Laden implied that the campaign against Islam might stretch back some time. If one accepts Bin Laden's belief here,

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[114] "The First Issue of Characteristics of Jihad Magazine," Harmony reference number AFGP-2002-600142. Available at https://ctc.usma.edu/harmony-program/the-first-issue-of-characteristics-of-jihad-magazine-original-language-2/. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[115] Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri, *His Own Words: Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*, Laura Mansfield trans., (TLG Publications, 2006), p. 125.
[116] Zawahiri*, His Own Words,* p. 113.
[117] "Letters From Bin Laden," Harmony reference number AFGP-2002-003345, pp. 23-25. Available at https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2013/10/Letter-from-Bin-Laden-Translation.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[118] *The Al Qaeda Reader: The Essential Texts of Osama Bin Laden's Terrorist Organization*, Raymond Ibrahim ed and trans, (Crown/Archetype, 2007) Kindle Edition, Locations 1220-1225).

then any attempt to make peace with the West on these terms would in fact be succumbing to the West's successful "peaceful conquest" of the Muslim world. This is a similar thought to the one expressed by the authors of the *Protocols* and other earlier generations of European conspiracy theorists. The idea that the enemy is pushing, be it liberalism, religious freedom, republicanism, or in this case "moderate Islam," is really ideological poison that the enemy is trying to spread. The enemy has no friendly or even just non-confrontational motivations in spreading this poison, it is part of his vast conspiracy against all that is good and true.

America and "fake" Muslim regimes, the conspiracy's proxy, and the proxy's proxy, in the war against Islam

Like Qutb, Al Qaeda's leadership does not view the weakness and moral corruption in the Islamic world as a the result of an internal process of decay, but as a result of past aggression and conspiracy, and one that is linked to current-day, ongoing activities of Western entities and their local agents.[119] They believe in "an all-encompassing conspiracy against Islam which is controlled by 'the West' and demonstrative of 'its' animosity toward Islam." [120] Many of the grievances cited as reasons for Al Qaeda attacks are based on "cultural" aggression against Islam, such as publishing cartoons of Mohammed. These acts are not under the control of any government.[121] However, if one adopts the idea of an international conspiracy against Islam, a hidden Jewish world government, the latest stage of a conspiracy that has been orchestrating a campaign against Islam for generations, then even these cultural aggressions are not mere insults but real attacks, part of a secretly orchestrated campaign. These attacks that are perhaps more damaging than physical attacks. As Qutb himself stated:

> "The Free World does not fight us with tanks and guns except for limited periods of time. Instead, it wages a battle against us with tongues and pens. It also fights through philanthropic societies and organizations it establishes, revives, and supports for the sake of controlling the most sensitive centers in our land."[122]

The cultural and political superpower is the United States. The United States has been one of the top targets of Al Qaeda's wrath. This is consistent with reports of Qutb's hatred of America, as a contemporary of Sayyid Qutb stated: "[Qutb] was prophetic about America's imperial designs on the Muslim world,... Long before anyone else, Qutb pointed to America as the chief enemy of Islam and Muslims,"[123]

However, when one reads more of Qutb's works one discovers, as demonstrated earlier, that the "crusader" part of the conspiracy against Islam (that is, the Western, in this case, the American part) is the servant of the Jewish core. Al Qaeda's leaders believe, as Zawahiri stated, that main enemies are the United States, surely, but also its boss: "... the global Jewish

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[119] Donald Holbrook, *The Al-Qaeda Doctrine: The Framing and Evolution of the Leadership's Public Discourse*, (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), Kindle Edition, location 1564.
[120] Holbrook, location 1606.
[121] Holbrook, location 1616.
[122] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 259.
[123] Gerges, *Making the Arab World*, p. 261.

government that is behind it…"[124] Al Qaeda's leaders do not view the United States as the "main" enemy any more than Barruel viewed revolutionary France as the main enemy. To Barruel the French Revolution was a tool of the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy. Likewise, Hitler did not see himself as an antagonist against Bolshevism primarily, but rather as an antagonist against a global Jewish conspiracy that used Bolshevism as one of its main weapons.

Bin Laden has endorsed the idea that the Jews "control world forces with these two sciences, sociology and psychology"[125] and in another message complained of "global Zionist oppression"[126] In multiple message Bin Laden made clear that America was the servant of the Jews, using the idea old idea that the Jews had seized control of the American media through their ill-gotten wealth, and then use both their money and their propaganda to manipulate the United States to do their will:

> "You [the United States] are the nation that permits usury, though it has been forbidden by all the religions. Yet you build your economy and investments on usury. As a result of this, in all its different forms and guises, the Jews have taken control of your economy, thereby taking control of your media, and now control all aspects of your life, making you their servants and achieving their aims at your expense—precisely what Benjamin Franklin warned you against.[127]

Here Bin Laden is referring to the "Franklin Prophecy" a counterfeit speech against the Jews presented as Benjamin Franklin's. It was first published in an American pro-Nazi propaganda newspaper in 1934.[128] This is not to give the impression that Bin Laden imported his ideas directly from 1930s pro-Nazi propaganda. The idea that a conspiracy of Jews controls the US through the media was common in Saudi Arabia. In one statement from 1998 Bin Laden quoted a prominent Saudi cleric in support of the idea that a Jewish conspiracy controls the US:

> "The last homily of the imam of the Prophet's Holy Mosque was nothing but a model for expressing the level of rejection that the nations [sic] feels about the presence of the infidels. In his homily, the Imam of the Mosque displayed the truth about the religious animosity of the Americans towards the Muslims, the level of influence of the Jews in America, the refusal of the Muslims to the presence of the American forces, and the necessity of forcing them out. The Imam said, "servants of Allah, the animosity is religious and America is not in command of anything, because she is totally submissive to the Jews who lead her anywhere they want..."[129]

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[124] Zawahiri*, His Own Words,* p. 125.
[125] Osama Bin Laden, "The Afghan Opportunity." Document captured in the 2011 raid that killed Osama Bin Laden. Available at: https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ubl/english/Afghani%20Opportunity.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[126] Osama Bin Laden, "Message for general Islamic nation." Document captured in the 2011 raid that killed Osama Bin Laden. Available at: https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ubl/english/Message%20for%20general%20Islamic%20nation.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[127] *The Al Qaeda Reader*, locations 3527-2528.
[128] *The Al Qaeda Reader*, locations 4909-4916.
[129] "Letters From Bin Laden," Harmony reference number AFGP-2002-003345, p. 99. Available at https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2013/10/Letter-from-Bin-Laden-Translation.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.

Bin Laden is quoting a sermon by Ali Bin Abdur Rahman Al Huthaify, a prominent Saudi Cleric who enjoyed state support as one of the preachers at the grand mosque.[130] Bin Laden's quotation of a cleric spreading Qutubian conspiracy theories is in no way an endorsement of the Saudi regime that sponsored this cleric. The Saudi regime has been one of the main targets in Bin Laden's rhetoric since the earliest days of Al Qaeda. Bin Laden regularly accused the Saudi regime of being the cat's paw of the global conspiracy. According to Bin Laden, Saudi Arabia "in all truthfulness is a U.S. state, subject to U.S. jurisdiction."[131] Bin Laden was born and raised in Saudi Arabia, received a conservative Sunni Muslim education there, including for a time under the tutelage of Mohammed Qutb, who lived in Saudi Arabia at government expense. Bin Laden was evidently a consumer of sermons preached at mosques, all paid for and supported by the government. Nevertheless, he believed the government of Saudi Arabia was part of a grand conspiracy against Islam, and must be combatted. The hyper-deceptive hyper-manipulative conspiracy has managed to suborn even the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and should this be a surprise? The *Protocols* and Sayyid Qutb describe a super-powerful Jewish conspiracy, able to cloak itself as both capitalist and communist. If one accepts the existence of such a conspiracy, then the idea that it can infiltrate and take over Saudi Arabia is not a large logical leap. This is a repeat of what happened in 1817, when the conservative and formerly pro-Austrian Salis-Soglio brothers prepared a revolution against the Austrian Empire because they believed it was controlled by the Illuminati. The government which spread the conspiracy theory became a target of the true believers. (This was discussed in chapter 4.) Bin Laden believed that the use of Saudi Arabia by the American conspirators was not just about corrupting the people of the Arabian Peninsula. In one broadside he attacked the Saudi government for funding the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which Bin Laden describes as part of a grand plot against all true jihadi movements:

> "...you donated $100 million to Yasser Arafat's secular authority, which was formed to do what the Jewish occupational forces had failed to achieve—the oppression of the Muslim Palestinian people and the war on its jihad movements, chief among which is the Islamic resistance movement, Hamas. You did not refrain from supporting Arafat's authority and greeted him in Riyadh, even after his hostility during the Gulf War and his ostentatious support for Saddam Hussein. You swallowed this insult in order to indulge America's sponsorship of this false peace process."[132]

Hamas is the Islamist terrorist group fighting Israel that gets positive mention in Bin Laden's writing, while the PLO is depicted as an instrument of oppression. Zawahiri uses the example of how mixing with non-Islamist "resistance" groups and countries during the wars against Israel led to the defeat of Islam. This is very likely a reference to Egypt (among other countries) which under Nasser was certainly anti-Israeli but still (according to Zawahiri and Qutb) part of the grand conspiracy against Islam:

> "The Muslim youths began to have doubts about who was the enemy. Was it the foreign enemy that occupied Muslim territory, or was it the domestic enemy that prohibited government by Islamic shari'ah, repressed the Muslims, and disseminated immorality under the slogans of progressiveness, liberty, nationalism, and liberation. This situation led the homeland to the brink of

[130] A transcript of the original sermon is available at http://arabic.islamicweb.com/Shia/khutba.htm. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[131] Brad K. Berner, *Jihad: Bin Laden in His Own Words - Declarations, Interviews and Speeches*, (Amazon, 2009) Kindle Edition, locations 602-603.
[132] Berner, Locations 586-591.

> the abyss of domestic ruin and surrender to the foreign enemy, exactly like the current situation of the majority of our (Arab) countries under the aegis of the new world order."[133]

This new world order, probably referring to President George Bush Sr.'s description of the post-Cold War world "where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind -- peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law"[134] is believed by Zawahiri to be the plans for a global conspiracy against Islam. Zawahiri warned in 2006 that giving in to this peaceful conquest by the Crusader-Zionist conspiracy would condemn Muslims "to live on the margins of the New World Order and international law and under the control of the arrogant enemies of Islam, dishonored, humiliated, plundered and occupied, with them meddling in your beliefs and true religion, sticking their noses in all your foreign and domestic affairs, and you living the life of a vassal, lowly, disgraced and defiled"[135]

Fighting the enemy

Now that we have established the reality of the grand conspiracy against Islam in the minds of the leaders of Al Qaeda, we ought to discuss how this belief affected their strategy against their imagined enemy. This enemy, the Zionist-Crusader alliance led by a Jewish conspiracy, is not susceptible to reason or pure persuasion and propaganda. Reflect upon its tiered structure, though: A Jewish conspiracy has managed to gain control of the United States, which has managed to set up and/or support various regimes in Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia. This perceived tiered structure of how the conspiracy works is important to understanding Al Qaeda's strategy

Al Qaeda's leaders believe that setting up an Islamic state in the Middle East is not feasible at the present time. Any nascent Islamic state would immediately be attacked or subverted, as Qutb wrote. The conspiracy would not countenance the re-birth of true Islam. In the early years of Al Qaeda, Zawahiri was still focused on targeting the Egyptian government, while Bin Laden insisted on primarily attacking the United States. During this period Zawahiri was still in control of the separate terrorist organization Egyptian Islamic Jihad, though he was involved in planning Al Qaeda attacks as well. He faced criticism from within Egyptian Islamic Jihad for supporting an organization that was not focused on Egypt before two organizations were officially merged in 2001.[136] Zawahiri used to be an opponent of attacking the "far enemy" that is, the United States, and through the 1980s and 1990s he urged that the vanguard concentrate their attacks on the Egyptian government. However, after repeated failures to topple the Egyptian government, Zawahiri conceded and adopted Bin Laden's strategy of attacking America first.[137]

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[133] Zawahiri*, His Own Words*, pp. 36-37.
[134] George Bush "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 29, 1991. Available at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[135] Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Realities of the Conflict Between Islam and Unbelief," December 2006, p. 6. Available at https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/67/67BD026383A5C82BEBB2AD11BB31A1E9_Dr_Aiman_Reality_of_the_Conflict_En.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.
[136] T*he Theory and Practice of Islamic Terrorism, An Anthology,* p. 48.
[137] Gerges, *The Far Enemy,* p. 26.

It would be of no use to design an Islamic state or even just an authentic Islamic revival that is no threat to national interests of the United States (so as to prevent it from intervening) or to try to bribe it or even to work as its local enforcer and ally. The United States is not its own. Its shadowy Jewish masters and the Americans at the pinnacle of the conspiracy are dead-set against true Islam, and they will manipulate their dupes to carry out their will.

The solution that Bin Laden and his confederates latched onto was to jam-up the Jewish tool, the United States, and take out the tier of the conspiracy that enables the maintenance of pseudo-Islamic regimes in the Middle East. However, they believe the conspiracy is not in charge of the US the way that a commander is in charge of his troops. Remember, they believe the US is controlled by a conspiracy, a massive deception and manipulation, not by chains and direct orders. Even if America is just a beast being led by its masters, it is still an animate instead of an inanimate tool. This being the case, it would be possible to inflict so much pain on the United States that it would recoil. If the American people are punished for the activities they are manipulated into supporting, they will no longer respond to their manipulators and will avoid such activity out of fear.

The American retreat from Vietnam in the 1970s seems to play an important role in Bin Laden's strategic imagination. Bin Laden would have been 16 years old when the US pulled out of Vietnam in 1973 and 18 when North Vietnam finally crushed South Vietnam two years later. According to Bin Laden, this American defeat was made possible by the American people "rising up" against their government and demanding an end to the war. In a November 2001 appeal to the United States, Bin Laden called on Americans to repeat this:

> "I ask the American people to force their government to give up anti-Muslim policies. The American people had risen against their government's war in Vietnam. They must do the same today. The American people should stop the massacre of Muslims by their government."[138]

This might be interpreted as a call for civil resistance, a peace-mongering appeal to "end the war," but it was issued just a few months after 9-11. A 1993 audio recording of Bin Laden, probably recorded in Saudi Arabia shows that the Vietnam experience is his model for forcing the US to get out of the Middle East:

> "That's the disbelievers' principal: they understand nothing without painful strikes directly against their heads, their economy, and their selves. That's the case with America: she will not understand dialogue. These are a feeble people! For more than fifty or sixty years they were subjugated: first to the colonial British and then to the Jews. What kind of freedom is mentioned by America, in all its hubris, when it went to the peoples of the East, to Vietnam thousands of miles away, to bomb them in airplane sorties, slaughter them, and kill them.
>
> What freedom is this? The Americans left Vietnam only after they suffered terribly, these wretched people. More than 60,000 American soldiers died, their wealth having been spent and their resources exhausted, all of which caused the American people to raise a din in their homeland. Through numerous demonstrations they asked their criminal and despotic government to bring their sons home from Vietnam.
>
> That's the situation today. America won't cease their support of Jews in Palestine who are killing Muslims until we smash them adequately and raise the banner of Struggle. They will not desist until

[138] *The Al Qaeda Reader*, locations 4553-4555.

> we struggle against them. The malefaction of disbelievers will not cease except through Struggle; justice will not be achieved except through Struggle; the tails of apostates will never be severed except through Struggle; falsehood will never be eradicated except through Struggle."[139]

Based on this recording, Bin Laden believed in 1993 that the key to getting the American people to rise up against their "criminal and despotic" (and only supposedly democratic) government was to inflict massive pain on them. In the case of Vietnam it took 60,000 deaths. Al Qaeda's strategy is to similarly inflict punishment on the Americans so great that the people will demand that their state stop supporting Israel, Saudi Arabia, and other regimes in the Middle East. It is a strategy of punishment, meant to train a US populace domesticated by the Jews to ignore their conditioning and cease any involvement in the Middle East. The alternative would be the continued success of the conspiracy against Islam. As Bin Laden urged Muslims: "If you do not punish them for their sins in Jerusalem and Iraq, they shall defeat you because of your failure. They will also rob you of the land of al-Haramain [Mecca and Medina]. Today [they robbed you] of Baghdad, and tomorrow they will rob you of Riyadh and so forth unless God deems otherwise."[140]

This is the motivation for Al Qaeda's continued attempts at conducting mass-casualty attacks in the United States and the West in general: striking out at the main tool of the grand conspiracy against Islam in an attempt to disable it politically. Al Qaeda's leaders believe that if it succeeds, and the United States pulls out of the Middle East in order to stop the pain, then the next stage of the struggle will begin. In his autobiography, Zawahiri talks hopefully about how the "spirit of jihad" would force the United States out of the region, which would lead to the creation of an Egyptian Islamic state that will then carry out jihad against the West:

> It [the Egyptian regime] was also convinced that this spirit of jihad would most likely turn things upside down in the region and force the United States out of it. This would be followed by the earth-shattering event, which the west trembles at the mere thought of it, which is the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Egypt.
>
> If God wills it, such a state in Egypt, with all its weight in the heart of the Islamic world, could lead the Islamic world in a jihad against the West. It could also rally the world Muslims around it. Then history would make a new turn, God willing, in the opposite direction against the empire of the United States and the world's Jewish government."[141]

Perhaps one can see another idea here: the shift from defensive to offensive jihad. In addition to justifying rebellion against Muslim rulers, the conspiracy theory popularized by Sayyid Qutb provides a path around the distinction between offensive and defensive jihad. Like Qutb, Al Qaeda's leaders believe in the distinction between defensive and offensive jihad, and point out that they believe that are currently fighting a defensive one.[142] According to them, the Jewish-led conspiracy against Islam is in the process of invading Muslim lands and occupying and subjugating Muslims, though it is accomplishing this under the cover of a massive

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[139] Flagg Miller, *The Audacious Ascetic: What the Bin Laden Tapes Reveal About Al-Qa'ida*, (Oxford University Press, 2015) Kindle Edition, p. 183.
[140] Berner, Locations 6243-6245.
[141] Zawahiri*, His Own Words*, p. 112-113.
[142] Suurland, part 1, p. 76. Also Porter, p. 883.

deception. This means they believe that the jihad against this conspiracy is defensive, and not subject to the rituals and rules of offensive jihad, so among other things it does not require the sanction of a political authority, nor is it to be waged only by a small elite. Waging unrestricted defensive jihad is incumbent on all Muslims.[143] Bin Laden endorsed this idea in a fatwa from 1998, which he issued along with the leaders of other extremist Sunni groups. The authors of this statement "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders" begin with a litany of grievances against America, including "occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples" and also the sanctions against Iraq. They wrote that these actions are motivated by a desire to "serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there…" The statement then issues an order for defensive jihad:

> "...ulema have throughout Islamic history unanimously agreed that the jihad is an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries. This was revealed by Imam Bin-Qadamah in 'Al-Mughni,' Imam al-Kisa'i in 'Al-Bada'i,' al-Qurtubi in his interpretation, and the shaykh of al-Islam in his books, where he said: 'As for the fighting to repulse [an enemy], it is aimed at defending sanctity and religion, and it is a duty as agreed [by the ulema]. Nothing is more sacred than belief except repulsing an enemy who is attacking religion and life.'
>
> On that basis, and in compliance with Allah's order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims:
>
> The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies -- civilians and military -- is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate the al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim… We -- with Allah's help -- call on every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be rewarded to comply with Allah's order to kill the Americans and plunder their money wherever and whenever they find it. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on Satan's U.S. troops and the devil's supporters allying with them, and to displace those who are behind them so that they may learn a lesson.[144]

As indicated in the Zawahiri quote just previous, after the American forces are repulsed, and a proper Islamic state is founded, then it would be time for a "return" to offensive jihad.

Al Qaeda and Israel

Given Al Qaeda's roots in Qutubian thought, which was heavily anti-Jewish and anti-Israel, and the role that the Jews play in the conspiracy-theory rhetoric and propaganda of Al Qaeda's leadership, Al Qaeda's lack of effort against Israel may seem incongruous. Its consistent attempts at mass-casualty attacks against the West in general and the United States

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[143] Michael G. Knapp, "The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam," *Parameters*, 2003, Vol. 33, p. 9. Available at https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/parameters/articles/03spring/knapp.pdf. Accessed October 8 2018.

[144] "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," Statement from the World Islamic Front, 3 February 1998. Available at https://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/980223-fatwa.htm. Accessed October 8, 2018.

in particular have not been matched by similar efforts against Israel, though there has been plenty of anti-Israel rhetoric, especially following Al Qaeda's repeated failures and defeats in the late 2000s.[145] In March of 2001, in a recorded meeting in Afghanistan, Bin Laden was asked directly about this discrepancy. He replied:

> "...it is no secret that the Crusader-Zionist alliance is like two banknotes of the same currency. We must strike them both. Breaking the back of Zionism will come from breaking the back of the Crusaders, with God's permission, Glorious and Exalted is He. America is foremost among them. Striking Zionism will set limits on the Crusader-American advance. We ask God, Glorious and Exalted is He, to assist us in striking them both."[146]

According to the reasoning expounded by Bin Laden, while striking "Zionism" is good, striking America is paramount, and the path to "breaking the back of Zionism" will be through destroying the Jew's main tool, the Crusaders (the West/America.) In the mind of Bin Laden, if one had asked him why he is attacking the United States and not Israel, it would be the equivalent of asking general Eisenhower in June 1944 why he was attacking Normandy and not Germany.

There is even some indication in the works of Zawahiri of the idea that Israel is a tool of the United States, which is in turn the tool of a deeper Jewish conspiracy. This would stand to reason in Qutbian thinking, because the Jewish plot against Islam extends back hundreds and hundreds of years before Zionism even existed. In his *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* Zawahiri writes that Israel "is in fact a huge US military base…"[147] and in a section on Israel Zawahiri describes it as a tool of Western invaders:

> "The establishment of Israel has been a western objective for over two centuries. The Israeli presence in the region was considered a basic guarantee for serving the western interests. Israel separates between Egypt and Syria, the two regions that for several centuries served as a wall of steadfastness against the Crusades and the Tartar conquests…"[148]

Zawahiri describes the motivation for the Balfour Declaration and early British support for a Jewish state in then-Ottoman Palestine as dictated by British needs for a non-Arab barrier in the heart of the Arab world, combined with Jewish influence in England.[149] We might see here an echo of the Soviet idea of Zionism as a tool of Imperialism in the Middle East. However, one can't get a clear answer on this issue from the available writings and statements of Zawahiri and Bin Laden, and their own beliefs could be admixed with the use of anti-Zionism as a powerful rhetorical tool for propagandizing Arabs. Sufficient information about the precise contours of Zawahiri's beliefs regarding the relationship between the global Jewish conspiracy, the United States, and the state of Israel may never be available, or only available to the public after he dies, is killed, or captured.

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[145] Barak Mendelsohn, "Al-Qaeda's Palestinian Problem," *Survival*, Vol. 51 no. 4, August–September 2009.
[146] Flagg, p. 351.
[147] Zawahiri, *His Own Words*, p 121.
[148] Zawahiri, *His Own Words*, p. 177.
[149] Zawahiri, *His Own Words*, p. 185-190.

Motivating the fight and justifying the fight - between the conspiracy theory and Shari'a, Qutb and Taymiyyah

Ever since the Egyptian engineer Abd al-Salam Faraj wrote *The Neglected Duty*, justifying subversion against Sadat's regime by citing Sunni fatwas, many analysts have taken these violent extremist Sunnis at their word, and explained the wave of violent extremist Sunni activity that started in the 1980s as a re-emergence of a strain of violent Sunni behavior that stretches back at least to Ibn Taymiyyah, and perhaps to the prophet Muhammad himself. This section will argue that the importance of the works of Ibn Taymiyyah and other classical Sunni texts and ideas in the theories and activities of Bin Laden, Zawahiri, and their ilk is much smaller than they claim, and that their ideas and actions far more influenced by Qutb's teachings and 19th and 20th century European conspiracy theories.

The Quran has been with us for over a thousand years, and Sunnis have at times waged violent jihad since then, conquering territory at different times all the way to Vienna, the Pyrenees, India, and the Pamirs. However, the current strain of Sunni violent extremism a-la Al Qaeda is new to Islamic history, as the jihadis are waging war against their own Muslim governments, indeed, against Saudi Arabia in particular, one of the most conservative Sunni states on the globe. Attempts to describe Al Qaeda leaders and fighters, many of whom like Bin Laden are from Saudi Arabia, as radical Wahhabis are flawed. Wahhabism has generally been against non-state violence, declaring it as *fitna,* a capital sin, an invitation for chaos. Even if a ruler was unjust, then criticism of the ruler must be private to avoid *fitna*. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, legitimized and encouraged jihad against Islamic states, even in lands which were not under attack or occupation by non-Muslim armies.[150]

This is not to deny that Wahhabis are capable of violence. There have been revolts by Wahhabis and other Sunnis before, including a Wahabbi revolt against the House of Saud in the 1920s. However, history does not record a previous insurrection in which Sunni rebels fought against a Muslim government because they believed their government was secretly a Jewish pawn.

The examples most often pointed to by radical extremists Sunnis like Al Qaeda justifying their *fitna* are the fatwas of Ibn Taymiyyah. Ibn Taymiyyah has been a staple of Sunni theology for centuries, but his work was not previously used as a justification for revolt against Sunni rulers as being secretly aligned with apostates. Ibn Taymiyyah's 14th-century anti-Mongol fatwas attacked the sincerity of the conversion of the Mongol Ilkhan who was in the process of invading Syria, then ruled by the Mamluk sultans of Egypt. In his fatwas from this period Ibn Taymiyyah argued that whereas the Mongol rulers of Iran, while outwardly Muslim, they still used Mongol common law in addition to Shari'a and therefore they were still unbelievers and had to be treated as unbelievers. Those who were subservient to them were given the status of being subservient to an unbeliever.[151] However, when it came to his own rulers in the Egypt-

[150] Thomas Small, Jonathan Hacker, *Path of Blood: The Story of Al Qaeda's War on the House of Saud*, Overlook Press, 2015, p. 107.

[151] Yahya Michot, *Mamlūks, Qalandars, Rāfidīs, and the "Other" Ibn Taymiyya, University of Indiana, The 13th annual Victor Danner Memorial Lecture*, April 15, 2015, p. 3-4. Available at

based Mamluk Sultanate, Ibn Taymiyyah was in the mainstream of conservative Sunni thought, and always urged that Muslim subjects of a Muslim ruler avoid *fitna* at all costs, and never to rebel.[152] Here is a quote from one of Ibn Taymiyyah's writings where he urges patience even with a tyrannical Muslim ruler:

> "Among the fundamentals of the truth, for which the texts {to which one refers to know the religion} provide proofs, there is that people with a tyrannical (jā'ir) and unjust (zālim) leader are commanded to show patience (sabr) in the face of his tyranny, his injustice, his oppression (baghī), and not to fight him. The Prophet likewise commanded that in more than one hadīth. He did absolutely not authorize the pushing back of oppression by fighting (qitāl) {it}. Quite the contrary: as fighting is the source of dissension (fitna), he prohibited the pushing back of oppression by this means and commanded patience."[153]

If a Muslim had to speak out against a ruler who was going astray, then Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that this must be limited to speaking: "...it is incumbent upon him to be patient. And, if he is harmed for [the sake of] God, then this is the way (sunna) followed by God with the Prophets and their followers."[154] In fact, the Mamluk sultanate even concluded a peace treaty with the Mongol rulers of Iran in 1323,[155] after the Mongol king had become Shi'a, a group that Ibn Taymiyyah described as "the worst of the innovators" in his second anti-Mongol fatwa.[156] Ibn Taymiyyah did not renounce his loyalty to his rulers because of these dealings with Shi'a Mongols, or their refusal to continue waging "defensive" (as they occupied "Muslim lands") jihad against them after 1323. (He died in 1328.)

The use of Ibn Taymiyyah's anti-Mongol fatwas to denounce the Saudi Royal family or other Muslim governments requires one to first establish that they are secretly non-Muslim or that they are somehow servants of anti-Islamic entities. Especially in the case of Saudi Arabia, a state that proudly champions the most conservative versions of Sunni Islam, the idea that they are secretly non-Muslim or secretly in hock to an anti-Islamic powers requires that there exist an anti-Islamic conspiracy with superpowers of deception. This conspiracy has to be able infiltrate and/or support fake-Islamic governments, which to all appearance are actually Islamic, even super-Islamic, like that of Saudi Arabia.

The use of Ibn Taymiyyah's fatwas in this manner is made possible by the conspiracy theory expounded by Sayyid Qutb, which is itself dependent on the early 20th century European Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. In his writings Zawahiri is clear that Sayyid Qutb, not Ibn Taymiyyah or some other medieval Muslim thinker, is the inspiration for his violent jihad. Zwawhiri describes him as " the most prominent theoretician of the fundamentalist

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http://www.indiana.edu/~nelc/events/documents/Danner/danner_lecture_2015.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.

[152] Michot, p. 5.

[153] Michot, p. 5.

[154] Michot, p. 6

[155] "Mamluk," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, C. E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, B. Lewis, and Ch. Pellat eds., Vol VI, (Leiden: Brill, 1987) p. 315.

[156] Denise Aigle, "The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three "Anti-Mongol" Fatwas," in *Mamluk Studies Review*, no. XI (2) 2007, (Middle East Documentation Center, University of Chicago), p. 108. Available at http://mamluk.uchicago.edu/MamlukStudiesReview_XI-2_2007.pdf. Accessed October 8, 2018.

movements,..."[157] and describes in great detail the importance of Qutb's thought: "...[Qutb] greatly helped the Islamic movement to know and define its enemies. It also helped it to realize that the internal enemy was not less dangerous than the external enemy was and that the internal enemy was a tool used by the external enemy and a screen behind which it hid to launch its war on Islam..."[158] Zawahiri was not inspired by Ibn Taymiyyah to begin organizing a vanguard to fight the Egyptian government. As was discussed earlier, the history of Islam is not full of Taymiyyah-inspired Sunni rebellions against Muslim rulers.

While the link between Qutb's thought and Bin Laden's ideas are not as direct as with Zawahiri, the link between his ideas and those of Ibn Taymiyyah are weaker still. When US commandos killed Bin Laden in his Pakistani hideout in May 2011, they captured the small personal library he had accumulated in the 6 years he had lived at that location. The library did not contain compendiums of Islamic law and the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah and histories of the Mamluk fight against the Mongols, but instead the holdings included a Quran, a few volumes of hadiths, various books produced by other Muslim extremist groups (many of them with a conspiratorial bent), one book by Sayyid Qutb,[159] and a selection of conspiracy-theory literature such as *Bloodlines of the Illuminati*, *The Secret teaching of All Ages*, and books like *Black Box Voting, Ballot Tampering in the 21st Century* and *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy* (which allege that American democracy is a sham run by a shadowy group of manipulators.)[160]

This suggests that these violent extremist Sunnis are not reformers, returning to an older, purer form of Islam by going back to the primary texts, or reviving the thought of a great medieval Muslim thinker and then acting as he would have them act. Rather they were inspired to act against an imaginary foe by the ideas of Sayyid Qutb and other Muslim (and perhaps non-Muslim) conspiracy theorists, and then they ransacked Islamic history in order to justify their violent departure from centuries of Sunni tradition. They have found some quotes, stripped of context, that can justify violent rebellion against "fake" Muslim rulers, but that only function the way the extremists desire if one first accepts the premise that there is a massive conspiracy against Islam. Unfortunately, probably partially due to decades of propaganda from Europe and the Middle East and the popularity of the work of Sayyid Qutb and his ilk, today's Muslims have been bombarded with narratives about and "evidence" of the existence of such a conspiracy.

Conclusion

This chapter has described how the idea of a grand conspiracy against Islam, including a belief in the authenticity of the *Protocols,* was adopted by Sayyid Qutb. Through him the idea of a massive Jewish conspiracy against Islam became common among radical Sunnis in the Arab world, mainly through his concept of *jahiliyyah* and his repeated statements about a massive anti-Islam conspiracy in his Quran commentaries. Like the Salis-Soglio brothers, the Union of the Russian People, and the Nazis, Qutb believed that this massive conspiracy was

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[157] *His Own Words*, p. 137.
[158] *His Own Words*, p. 47.
[159] Several audio lectures of Sayyid Qutb were captured at one of Bin Laden's compounds in Afghanistan after the American invasion in 2001. See Miller, p. 59.
[160] "Bin Laden's Bookshelf," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Initially released May 20, 2015. Available at https://www.dni.gov/index.php/features/bin-laden-s-bookshelf. Accessed October 8, 2018.

usurping the legitimate political and moral authorities. He responded by organizing violent subversion against what he viewed as a massive campaign of subversion, a conspiracy against a conspiracy. The effects of Qutb's ideas can be seen not only in his own subversive activities against the Nasserist Egyptian government, but also in the activities of Al Qaeda, which took Qutb's ideas about fighting a *jihad* against the clandestine Jewish enemy and applied it globally in ways that Qutb was not able to do in his day.

Al Qaeda's strategy, as articulated by its previous and current (as of 2019) leaders, is predicated on the belief in a massive Jewish conspiracy against Islam, a massive conspiracy that has also managed to gain control of the United States. The United States is considered by them to be a weapon wielded by the Jewish conspiracy, and using the model of Vietnam Al Qaeda's leaders believe they can knock this proxy out of action through mass-casualty attacks against Americans. Because they believe a massive conspiracy is bearing down on Islam, they view this activity as defensive in nature.

Al Qaeda's activities also include violent rebellion against Sunni authority and pursuit of a revolutionary vision of eventually establishing a new "Islamic state" to wage offensive jihad. Their justification of this vision, like Qutb's, is based on the idea of a massive usurping conspiracy, which must be violently overthrown. This is a repetition of a pattern now familiar from European history, conspiracy theories motivating even erstwhile "conservatives" to embrace radical violent subversion in order to fight an ultimate enemy that does not exist.

Chapter 13: Khomeini and the Grand Conspiracy Theory

"The [Iranian Islamic] revolution is still developing and its ultimate destination is not readily apparent. All that is clear is that the clergy are still on top and will continue to be for some time before gradually returning to their traditional role as spiritual leaders… The view of Khomeini as a moderate blend of radicalism and conservatism does not fit his popular image abroad as the 'mad mullah', but his every action since the fall of the Shah's regime has reinforced that impression. His role as a reluctant revolutionary is central to many of the problems now facing Iran."[1] - Vahe Petrossian, then a senior staff writer for the *Middle East Economic Digest* specializing in Iran, January 1980.

"... the Jews and their foreign backers are opposed to the very foundations of Islam and wish to establish Jewish domination throughout the world. Since they are a cunning and resourceful group of people, I fear that —God forbid— they may one day achieve their goal, and that the apathy shown by some of us may allow a Jew to rule over us one day. May God never let us see such a day!"[2] - Ruhollah Khomeini, 1970.

"The propaganda device television is owned by a hated minority group, and it is supposed to be developed throughout the country. It's owner, in addition to having taken over the economy of our country, is the Pepsi Cola plant spy center… The Baha'i device and the Pepsi Cola factory are a spying apparatus for Palestinian Jews."[3] - Ruhollah Khomeini, 1961.

This chapter is concerned with the thought and some of the deeds of Sayyed Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989) the first Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khomeini was a Shi'a cleric and scholar from central Iran who by the end of his life was the undisputed leader of a Shi'a theocracy, a form of government unprecedented in Iranian history. He was the primary leader of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution which overthrew the Iranian monarchy and set up the Islamic Republic. This chapter will argue that the idea of a massive conspiracy of Jews and

[1] Vahe Petrossian, "Dilemmas of the Iranian Revolution," *The World Today*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Jan., 1980), pp. 19-25.
[2] Imam Khomeini (Ruhollah Khomeini), *Governance of the Jurist (Velayate-e Faqeeh): Islamic Government*, Hamid Algar trans., (The institute for Compilation and Publication of Imam Khomeini's Works, 2002[?]) p. 79
[3] Ruhollah Khomeini, صحیفه امام, (Pages of The Imam), Vol. 1, (Tehran: The Institute for the Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imam Khomeini, Persian year 1383 [2010-2011]), p.123. Available online at http://ar.lib.eshia.ir/11150/1/123. Accessed March 1, 2019.

imperialists against Islam, influenced by the European tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, is a crucial part Khomeini's major political work *Velayat-e faqih* (hereafter *Governance of the Jurist*). After Khomeini took power this idea become hard-baked into the ideology of the regime he founded. This chapter will not concern itself with the path that Khomeini took to power and the conspiracies and the political maneuvering that resulted in the success of Khomeini's faction during the Iranian Revolution. Unlike with Lenin, the importance of a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Khomeini's thought had become a pillar of his ideology well before the start of the revolution that brought him to power. The main texts for this chapter are Khomeini's written work and his public speeches and statements, which have been carefully curated by the regime he founded. Unlike with Hitler, Lenin, and Osama Bin Laden, unfortunately there has never been any access to Khomeini's private files to get a look at what he "really" believed, assuming there was some deception. Nevertheless, there is more than enough evidence from his public statements about his motivations and beliefs to make a reasonable judgement, including in Khomeini's major work which is still a pillar of the ideology of Iran's government, and also evidence from the activities of Khomeini and his government after he achieved power.

The previous chapter on the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the ideology of Sunni violent extremists of the Qutubist bent dealt with the "radical Muslim" threat which has overshadowed all others in the imagination of most Westerners. In the 1980s and for much of the 90s, especially before September 11th 2001, a common image of a "Muslim terrorist" was that of a Shi'a militant affiliated with Lebanese Hizballah. As will be demonstrated, Lebanese Hizballah is an explicitly Khomeinist organization, and this chapter briefly analyze the ideology of Lebanese Hizballah in light of Khomeini's belief in a grand conspiracy against Islam, spearheaded by America. Khomeini and his followers believe in another version of the non-existent enemy posited by the Grand Conspiracy Theory, adapted to Khomeini's context.

In some aspects Khomeini's thought is remarkably close to the conspiracist thought of Sayyed Qutb, especially when it comes to Khomeini's description of ostensibly Muslim rulers as participating in a massive multi-generational Jewish/Western (imperialist) conspiracy against Islam. Both men supported subversive violent jihad against these rulers and their supposed servants. Qutb never seized control of a state and his attempts at subversion failed, but the subversive implications of his ideology are today carried on by his ideological successors, such as the leadership of Al Qaeda. Khomeini, on the other hand, did manage to become the head of a large state and was able to put his vision directly into practice. This vision involves the belief in a massive imperialist (i.e. American) conspiracy against Islam, one that must be countered.

This chapter will not make the argument that there is some inherent Iranian conspiracism or analyze a supposed "paranoid style of Iranian politics"[4] [5] or argue that Iran is

[4] Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*, (University of California Press, 1993), pp. 111-131.

[5] Abrahamian's excellent chapter on this topic in *Khomeinism* is referencing Richard Hofstadter's seminal essay on the study of conspiracy theories "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." The author of this thesis has avoided citing this essay mainly because Hofstadter's work deals almost exclusively with US examples and is dedicated to examining a "style" - a paranoid state of mind or way of describing the world - rather than a set of ideas that can evoke paranoia, like the Grand Conspiracy Theory, the focus of this thesis. However, the importance of this essay in being one of the first serious scholarly works to deal with the topic of conspiracy theories cannot be overlooked, and it certainly had an influence, perhaps indirect

"the world's most conspiracy-minded country"[6] as Daniel Pipes suggested. While it would be difficult to deny the conspiracism of many Iranians during the mid-to-late 20th century, the rest of this thesis has shown that other countries have passed through periods where conspiracy theories were widely accepted by a large portion of the educated population. Instead of examining Khomeini's obviously conspiracist statements as a symptom of some supposed general Iranian preoccupation with conspiracy theories this chapter will place Khomeini's thought in the tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, examining his beliefs critically and charting the crucial role the belief plays in his ideology.

This chapter will begin with a limited discussion of some strains of Iranian conspiracist traditions, with contributions from other non-Iranian strains of conspiracy theories, that probably influenced Khomeini as evidenced by his later writing. These traditions include narratives of courtly intrigue, conspiracy theories about the activities and motives of foreign agents in Iran, and anti-Bahai conspiracy theories. It will then examine the earliest evidence of Khomeini's belief in a massive conspiracy against Islam and how this belief was a crucial aspect of his major doctrine of the "governance of the jurist." Finally, this chapter will examine some of the actions of the Iranian state and other Khomeinists after the Islamic revolution, placing them in the context of a Khomeinist belief in a huge, malign conspiracy that must be combatted.

Conspiracy theories in Iran

Conspiratorial narratives have an impressive pedigree in Iran, long predating the advent of the European Grand Conspiracy Theory. With a few exceptions, Iranians were ruled by monarchies from ancient times up to the modern era, and Iranian literature reflects this with its many narratives of court conspiracy, which in monarchies is one of the main methods of influencing politics. Chapter 2 discussed the Bishtun inscription, one of the more famous narratives involving a conspiracy at court. Chapter 4 discussed how the sectarian conspiracy theory that the Ismaili leaders, some located within the borders of present-day Iran, were secret atheists bent on seizing power influenced the 19th century diplomat and orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's interpretation of revolutionary movements in Europe, and through him, probably also influenced Metternich's political thought.

The traffic in conspiracy theories has not been one-way. In the late 19th and 20th centuries the Persian educated elite was quite well-connected to European civilization, and European diplomats and spies wielded disproportionate power and influence over Iranian affairs during the era of European imperialism. Along with this contact came European conspiracy theories that mingled with indigenous Iranian suspicions of the activities and motives of the European governments that had such great indirect power. The focus of the suspicion during the first half of the 20th century was Britain. Perfidious Albion was sometimes perceived as possessing near-miraculous powers of deception and manipulation.[7] This tradition has been preserved in one of the best-known Iranian novels *My Uncle Napoleon* (1973) in which the

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but definitely present, on this thesis. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 3-40.

[6] Daniel Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 76.

[7] Ahmad Ashraf, "Conspiracy Theories," Encyclopædia Iranica, Vol. VI, Fasc. 2, pp. 138-147. Available Online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/conspiracy-theories. Accessed March 1, 2019.

titular character, an aging upper-middle class Iranian, is obsessed with the idea that the British Secret Service is orchestrating an elaborate plot against him personally.[8] These kinds of narratives may have been imported by Iranians returning from travels in Europe and augmented by anti-British propaganda spread by their rivals the Ottomans, Germans, and Russians. These anti-British conspiracy theories were helped along by the fact that the British actually *did* have disproportionate influence in Iran in the 20th century, including through secret channels.[9] During WWII, when the novel *My Uncle Napoleon* is set, Britain and the USSR bombed and then invaded Iran and forced the abdication of the pro-German king Reza Shah Pahlavi in favor of his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.[10] This invasion happened in the open, but some of the tales of secret all-pervasive British influence were seemingly confirmed in 1953 when the British Secret Service in coordination with the American CIA secretly engineered the ouster of the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and bolstered the autocratic government of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whom the British had installed in 1941.[11]

Alongside anti-British ideas and the actual conspiratorial activities of foreign powers, some Iranians picked up elements of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that had made their way to Iran before the Nazi, Soviet, or Nasserists propaganda campaigns. During the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906 one prominent Iranian cleric denounced the revolutionaries as secret Freemasons and Babis (an Iranian religious minority) demonstrating his attachment to the anti-Masonic conspiracy theory[12] and mixing this European-origin conspiracy theory with a local sectarian hatred. The mixing currents of strands of different conspiracy theories, local grievances, and actual events in Iran in the 20th century is an excellent example of the flexible nature of conspiracy theories.

This thesis is concerned with political-conspiracy theories that first sprouted after the French Revolution, but at times we have noted how sectarian-conspiracy theories influenced or merged with them, i.e. conspiracy theories primarily concerned with matters of religion instead of politics and power. Of course, the mother of all sectarian conspiracy theories is the anti-Jewish one, and stories of ritual murder, poisoning wells, etc. predate the modern era. In the 20th century a similar strain of influential sectarian homegrown conspiracy theories developed in Persia that similarly merged with the European-origin Grand Conspiracy Theory. These were anti-Baha'i conspiracy theories. This case is of special interest to us in this chapter as it appears to have had an impact on Khomeini's thought.

The Baha'i faith began in Iran in the 1840s. A young Iranian named Sayyid Ali Muhammad Shirazi claimed to be the gate "*Bab*" for the teachings of the Hidden Imam and then later to be the Hidden Imam himself.[13] He and his followers proclaimed a new religious

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[8] See Iraj Pezeshkzad, *My Uncle Napoleon: A Novel*, Dick Davis trans., (Modern Library, Reprint edition, 2006).
[9] Ibid.
[10] For an extensive and well-sourced account of this invasion and occupation see Mohammad Gholi Majd, *August 1941: The Anglo-Russian Occupation of Iran and Change of Shahs*, (University Press of America, 2012).
[11] See Ervand Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, The CIA, and The Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations*, (The New Press, 2013).
[12] Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, pp. 92-93.
[13] "Shirazi, Sayyid Ali Muhammad," in The Oxford Dictionary of Islam. Avaliable via Oxford Islamic Studies Online at http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2194. Accessed March 2, 2019.

dispensation and the abrogation of Islamic law. (His followers are known as the aforementioned Babis.) After his execution at the hands of the Iranian government in 1850 many of his followers found a new leader in one of his followers Mirza Ḥusayn-Ali Nuri, who took the name "*Baha'u'llah"* (Glory to God). He claimed to receive divine visions. He broke off from the earlier movement and proclaimed himself to be the promised Messiah of all the world's religions. In 1863 Baha'u'llah was banished and moved to the Ottoman empire. He was eventually imprisoned in the town of 'Akka by the Ottomans, which today is the town of Acre in Israel. He remained there writing and proselytizing until his death in 1892.[14]

Many Shi'a believers took a dim view of the Baha'i. There were periodic persecutions of Baha'i in Iran and slanders cooked up against the adherents of the new faith. They were accused of being sexually immoral, having too much influence in government, and of being spies for some foreign power. Some anti-Bahai conspiracy theories sprang up that were redolent of European anti-Jewish/Freemason/Jesuit conspiracy theories. The most famous anti-Baha'i text was *The Confessions of Dolgoruki.* It emerged as a handwritten good-luck chain letter in Iran in the 1930s and has been published several times since. The document claims be the memoirs of Dimitri Ivanovich Dolgorukov, a Russian ambassador to Iran in the mid-19th century, and it details how he supposedly engineered the Baha'i religion as a Russian spy network built to spread disunity in Iran by weakening Islam. The author of the original text may have been inspired by the *Protocols*.[15]

In the early 20th century the Iranian state participated in the periodic persecution of Baha'is, banning Baha'i literature, refusing to recognize Baha'i marriages, and closing Baha'i schools.[16] In the mid-20th century a champion of persecuting the Baha'i was Ayatollah Borujerdi, a renowned Shi'a cleric and scholar. Khomeini was one of the more junior clerics who asked Borujerdi to move to Qom and become a teacher at the Shi'a seminary there. In 1946 Borujerdi was recognized as a *marja-i taqlid* (source of imitation) the highest rank of Shi'a cleric. Then in the early 1950s the other leading Qom *marja* died, leaving Borujerdi as the sole *marja* in Qom.[17] During the fall of Mossadeq, Borujerdi and his followers remained loyal to the Shah. This made them feel entitled to a reward, and the reward they received was a massive anti-Baha'i campaign in 1955.[18] During this time Khomeini was a close deputy of Borujerdi.[19] One of the Shah's only meetings with Khomeini, his eventual nemesis, occurred in the late 1940s when Khomeini was sent by Ayatollah Borujerdi to ask the Shah to annul the death sentence of a Muslim who had murdered two Baha'is. The Shah did so. Another was when Khomeini was sent again by Ayatollah Borujerdi in 1955 to ask the Shah to repress the Baha'is and keep them

[14] Wendi Momen, Moojan Momen, *Understanding the Baha'i Faith*, (Dunedin Academic Press, 2006), pp. 138-142.
[15] Mina Yazdani, "The Confessions of Dolgoruki Fiction and Masternarrative in Twentieth Century Iran," *Iranian Studie*s, Vol. 44, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 25-26, 37.
[16] Ronen A. Cohen, *The Hojjatiyeh Society in Iran: Ideology and Practice from the 1950s to the Present*, (Palgrave Macmillan; 2013), p. 65.
[17] Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic State, Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, (I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 50.
[18] Ronen A. Cohen, pp. 66-67
[19] Ronen A. Cohen, p. 67.

"tied up in the stable" as the Shah's father had.[20] Again, Borujerdi got his wish. A nationwide campaign of persecution was kicked off with a series of sermons broadcast via the national and army radio stations denouncing the Baha'i and calling for their suppression. Senior government figures personally participated in the demolition of the national headquarters of the Baha'i in Iran, which was followed by a wave of violence, rape, and robbery.[21]

This violence was accompanied by an outpouring of libel in the Iranian press. At least one article from the time claimed there was a link between the Baha'i and Zionism, in addition to making the claim that they had been founded as a British espionage and influence project.[22] During this period and earlier during WWII many Iranians would have heard conspiracy-theory propaganda broadcasts and other media from the Nazis, Soviets, Nasserites, and others denounce the evils of Zionism, and it probably should not surprise one that the idea of a Jewish/Zionist conspiracy made its way into some anti-Baha'i material. There were several factors that would have eased the mixing of anti-Baha'i vitriol with the Grand anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theory. Not only was the center of Baha'i pilgrimage in Israel, where their exiled leader had died while it was still part of the Ottoman empire, but one of the leading Iranian entrepreneurs was a Baha'i of Jewish extraction, Habib Sabet.

A remarkable businessman, Habib Sabet had started selling tobacco and renting bicycles at a young age, and by the 1950s he had built a business empire in Iran of car dealerships, manufacturing, and agricultural machinery, among many other things. In 1955 he had just acquired a prize, the rights to bottle Pepsi in Iran.[23] His marketing of this novelty coincided with the anti-Baha'i campaign, and Pepsi became a major target of attack. In September of 1955 one Iranian politician declared "The income earned from sales of 'Pepsi Cola' is spent on the propaganda activities of the Baha'is. Therefore Muslims are not permitted to drink it."[24] Ayatollah Borujerdi issued a fatwa against consuming Pepsi.[25] The attacks on Pepsi did not stop at just linking it with the Baha'is. It was announced that Pepsi caused cancer,[26] that it was alcoholic and contained cocaine, that the Baha'is were deliberately

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[20] Mina Yazdani, "The Islamic Revolution's Internal Other: The Case of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Baha'is of Iran," *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 36, Issue 4, (December 2012), pp. 595-596.

[21] Douglas Martin, *The Persecution of the Baha'is of Iran, 1844-1984,* Baha'i studies, 12/13, 1984, p. 22.

[22] روزنامه شاهین تهران: بهائیت در برابر کمونیسم ایجاد شد! (The Baha'is were created against Communism!), from the newspaper Shaheen Tehran, May 10, 1955. Available at https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/fa/archive/rwznamh-shahyn-thran-bhayyt-dr-brabr-kmwnysm-ayjad-shd. Accessed March 2, 2019.

[23] Moojan Momen, "SABET, HABIB," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2015. Available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sabet-habib. Accessed March 2, 2019.

[24] "PEPSI supports Baha'is," from the newspaper Vaheme, 9 November 1955, Archives of Bahai Persecution in Iran. Available at https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/vaheme-newspaper-pepsi-supports-bahais. Accessed March 2, 2019.

[25] "Sanction against PEPSI by Ayatollah Boroujerdi," from the newspaper Arezou, 19 April 1955(? exact date unclear), Archives of Bahai Persecution in Iran. Available at https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/arezou-newspaper-sanction-against-pepsi-ayatollah-boroujerdi. Accessed March 2, 2019.

[26] "PEPSI causes cancer," from the newspaper Erade Asia, 20 September 1955, Archives of Bahai Persecution in Iran. Available at https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/erade-asia-newspaper-pepsi-causes-cancer. Accessed March 2, 2019.

attempting to poison Muslims,[27] perhaps a distant echo of the old stories of Jews deliberately poisoning Gentiles. One newspaper article alleged that the Pepsi factory "houses the hideout of the Baha'is that is a nest of spies."[28]

This wave of persecution against the Baha'i faith only ended after an international outcry.[29] It is relevant to us because it is another example of the mixing of different conspiracy theories, this time outside of Europe, and because of Khomeini's involvement in the anti-Bahai campaign and his later apparent reference to that will be discussed in a subsequent section.

Highbrow conspiracism in Iran

Conspiracy theories in Iran were not just for street-rallies against sectarian opponents, they were seriously believed at and spread by the highest echelons of the Iranian clerical establishment. A window into the ideas circulating in Khomeini's clerical circles during the 60s is provided by the journal درسهایی از مکتب اسلام *Darsha'i az Maktab Islam* or in English "Lessons from the School of Islam" (hereafter just *Maktab Islam)* which was founded as a religious journal to reach the increasingly-literate Iranian people and turn them from falling under the sway of secular ideologies. The journal began publishing in 1958 with the tacit approval of Ayatollah Borujerdi. He eventually gave it his full endorsement and even made financial contributions to the journal.[30] The journal brought a major change to intellectual life among literate Shi'a, publishing articles from important figures in easy-to-read Persian on a variety of topics, all from a religious point of view. Earlier most of the writings emerging from the Qom seminary were in Arabic.[31] The first editorial board included prominent Qom clerics and future leaders in the post-revolutionary Islamic Republic.[32] The influential Iranian-Lebanese cleric Musa Sadr began writing for the journal soon after its establishment.[33] The journal reached a mass audience for

[27] پپسی کولا - معجون مرگ (Pepsi Cola, Death Potion), from the newspaper Zelzeleh, 10 October 1955, Archives of Bahai Persecution in Iran. Available at https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Persian/004356P_0.pdf. Accessed March 2, 2019.

[28] پپسی کولا مشروب الکلی است (Pepsi Cola is an alcoholic drink), from the newspaper Zelzeleh, October 10 1955, Archives of Bahai Persecution in Iran. Available at https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/fa/archive/rwznamh-zlzlh-ppsy-kwla-mshrwb-alkly-ast. Accessed March 2, 2019.

[29] Martin, pp. 22-23.

[30] H. E. Chehabi and Majid Tafreshi, "Musa Sadr and Iran," in *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years*, H.E. Chehabi ed., (Center for Lebanese Studies in association with I. B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 144-147

[31] Chehabi and Tafreshi, p. 149.

[32] These included Makarem Shirazi, Ja'far Sobhani, Abdul-Karim Mousavi Ardebili, Hossein Noori Hamedani, and Mohammad-Javad Bahonar. See a historical article about the magazine published in the magazine: مهدی پیشوایی (Mehdi Peshwai), "مجله درسهایی از مکتب اسلام" (The Magazine Lessons from the School of Islam), درسهایی از مکتب اسلام (Lessons from the School of Islam, hereafter *Maktab Islam*), Persian date Tir 1384 (Jule-July 2005), pp. 57, 60.

[33] Chehabi and Tafreshi, p. 148.

the time, with sales of about 50,000 copies a month by the late 1970s, far surpassing the 3,000 per month circulation of Iran's leading literary magazine.[34]

Several of the articles published in *Maktab Islam* in the late 1960s reveal that variants of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was taken seriously in Qum during this time. Seyed Hadi Khosroshahi, a future prominent official in the Islamic Republic, wrote in *Maktab Islam* in 1967 of the "Western imperialist" Conspiracy. He wrote about the plot of British imperialists and Jewish leaders to build a Jewish state in the Middle East in order to build a base for espionage and create permanent chaos in Islamic countries, to protect their route to India, and to put a "dagger" in the heart of Islam. To this end "Palestinian Jews, supported by Zionism, international Imperialism, and American, Russian, and English criminals, created Israel." In support of this theory he cited an unidentified French press report about a plot to establish a greater Hebrew empire by expanding "the breadth of its land to the Euphrates and to the valleys of the Nile and the Levant and Lebanon and Medina, and bring in 5 million Jews from Europe and the United States..."[35]

Earlier in 1966 the same Seyed Hadi Khosroshahi had published a glowing obituary of Sayyed Qutb in the journal, writing that he "...had special insight into perceiving and understanding the Quran…" and praised the work of this Sunni extremist. The obituary even pointed readers to a Persian translation of some of Qutb's Quran commentaries, which as shown in the previous chapter, contains several references to the *Protocols* and a great deal of writing about a grand Jewish conspiracy against Islam, working in cahoots with the European imperialists.

In the September-October issue of 1969 *Maktab Islam* a young radical and scholar named Zeenalabedeen Gorbani published a summary of and commentary on the *Protocols*. He referred to it as the "24 Protocols" writing "In this book, clearly, the thoughts of the Jews are revealed and it is shown how the descendants of Israel, through the formation of secret societies and the corruption of society and assassination, are building their own rule in the world!"[36] He followed with a selection of quotes from the *Protocols* demonstrating the Elders' supposed lust for power and determination to get it by any means, including the clandestine control of the press. Gorbani pointed out that the main weapon of the conspiracy mentioned in the *Protocols* are Freemasons, who "advocate non-religious thoughts and are serving the interests of imperialism and Zionism."[37] Here we have a direct import of the classic text of the Grand anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theory into the main journal of Shi'a clerics, during the period when Khomeini was developing what would eventually become his book *Governance of the Jurist.*

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[34] Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism*, (Syracuse University Press, 1996) p. 89.

[35] سید هادی خسروشاهی (Seyed Hadi Khosroshai),"جهان اسلام: بیت المقدس و فلسطین را آزاد کنید" (Islamic World: Liberate Jerusalem and Palestine), *Maktab Islam,* Persian date Aban 1346 (October-November 1967), p. 54.

[36] زین‌العابدین قربانی (Zeenalabedeen Gorbani), "اسلام و آزادی (11)/ دکترین یهود" (Islam and Freedom (11) / Jewish Doctrine), *Maktab Islam,* Persian date Mehr 1348 (September-October 1969), p. 40.

[37] Gorbani, p. 42.

First signs of Khomeini's conspiracism

According to the testimony of his students, Khomeini was already taking a revolutionary line in the 1940s and 50s, privately discussing the idea that the Shah should be overthrown and the clergy should rule.[38] Borujerdi had ordered all the Shi'a clergy who followed him to stay well away from politics, and that included Khomeini.[39]

After the death of Borujerdi in 1961 Khomeini took an increasingly confrontational stance against the Shah and the policies of his government. Khomeini showed his new outspokenness in his strong protests against voting rights for women in Iran, a policy which the government backed down from, and against the Shah's massive "White Revolution" reform program, and against other initiatives that strengthened the Shah's autocratic power or those that modernized the country along more Western lines.[40] Khomeini was also evidently angered by the increasingly friendly relationship between Iran and Israel, which had been secretly growing closer during the 1950s. In 1960 the relationship moved into the open when the Shah publicly recognized Israel. The Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion visited Tehran the following year.[41] Also, the Baha'i businessman Habib Sabet was prospering, and he had become a key figure in the emerging Iranian television broadcasting industry.[42]

At this time Khomeini was apparently already anti-Baha'i, anti-Israel, and against many of the proposed changes championed by the Shah. In November 1962 he wrapped many of these grievances together, reached back into the conspiratorial rhetoric of 1955, and accused the government of tolerating Baha'i influence and espionage, and insinuated that the Baha'i were working for Israel:

> "The propaganda device television is owned by a hated minority group, and it is supposed to be developed throughout the country. It's owner, in addition to having taken over the economy of our country, is the Pepsi Cola plant spy center… The Baha'i device and the Pepsi Cola factory are a spying apparatus for Palestinian Jews."[43]

This is the first instance in Khomeini's collected works of a theme that will dominate his thought for the rest of his life: that there is an evil conspiracy with some Jewish and/or Israeli connection that was able to disguise itself, sometimes as Baha'is. The protests of Khomeini and his comrades and disciples against the government grew stronger in this period. In response to these increasing protests emanating from Qum in March 1963 the Iranian government raided

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[38] Martin, p. 58.
[39] Martin, p. 53.
[40] Martin, pp. 60-64.
[41] David Menashri, Trita Parsi, "ISRAEL i. RELATIONS WITH IRAN," Encyclopædia Iranica, XIV/2, pp. 213-223, 2007. Available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/israel-i-relations-with-iran. Accessed March 2, 2019.
[42] Moojan Momen, "SABET, HABIB," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2015. Available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sabet-habib. Accessed March 2, 2019.
[43] Ruhollah Khomeini, امام صحیفه, (Pages of The Imam), Vol. 1, (Tehran: The Institute for the Compilation and Publication of the Works of Imam Khomeini, Persian year 1383 [2010-2011]), p.123. Available online at http://ar.lib.eshia.ir/11150/1/123. Accessed March 1, 2019.

the Faiziyya school where Khomeini was teaching, killing one student.[44] A few months after this attack, during the Shi'a commemoration of Ashura, Khomeini accused the government of working in the interests Israel, which he asserted was campaigning against Islam:

> "If the tyrannical regime of Iran simply wished to wage war on the *maraji*, to oppose the *'ulama*, what business did it have tearing the Qur'an to shreds on the day it attacked Fayziya Madrasa? Indeed, what business did it have with the madrasa or with its students, like the eighteen year-old *sayyid* who was killed?... We come to the conclusion that this regime also has a more basic aim: they are fundamentally opposed to Islam itself… Israel does not wish the Qur'an to exist in this country. Israel does not wish the 'ulama to exist in this country. Israel does not wish a single learned man to exist in this country. It was Israel that assaulted Fayziya Madrasa by means of its sinister agents. It is still assaulting us, and assaulting you, the nation; it wishes to seize your economy, to destroy your trade and agriculture, to appropriate your wealth. Israel wishes to remove by means of its agents anything it regards as blocking its path .The Qur'an is blocking its path; it must be removed. The religious scholars are blocking its path; they must be eliminated. Fayziya Madrasa and other centers of knowledge and learning are blocking its path; they must be destroyed. The tullab might later come to block their path; they must be killed, pushed off the roof, have their heads and arms broken. In order for Israel to attain its objectives, the government of Iran has continually affronted us in accordance with the goals and plans conceived in Israel."[45]

Here again, more clearly, we see a conspiracist theme that attacks Israel. The school had been raided by Iranians, but Khomeini alleged that the Israelis were actually the ones who carried out this attack by proxy, as part of their larger campaign against Islam. Present also is the theme of a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the economy.

A more clear-cut early example of Khomeini's evident conspiracism is the speech he gave that finally got him exiled from Iran. In this speech given in October 1964 he railed against the concept of diplomatic immunity and the immunity granted to US advisors in Iran, a common practice wherever US soldiers are deployed in an allied country over the long-term. This speech included an accusation that America was a malign force that was nearly all-powerful (causing "All of our troubles") and that Israel was just an outgrowth of America: "All of our troubles today are caused by America and Israel. Israel itself derives from America; these deputies and ministers that have been imposed upon us derive from America- they are all agents of America, for if they were not, they would rise up in protest."[46] Here we see a common trope from Soviet and later Arab nationalist propaganda, the idea that Israel was an extension of a sinister imperialism, in this case, American.

Governance of the Jurist

It might be possible to argue that these earlier statements from Khomeini accusing Jews, Americans, and Baha'i of conspiring to harm Islam were hyperbolic, just part of his sharp protests against policies and individuals he opposed. An enraged Khomeini in the heat of the moment could have reached back and used conspiracy theory arguments from the 1955 anti-Baha'i campaign, those similar to Nazi broadcasts, or to Soviet tropes in order to whip up a

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[44] Martin, p. 62.
[45] Ruhollah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution, Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini*, Hamid Algar trans., (Mizan press, 1981) p. 263-264.
[46] *Islam and Revolution,* p. 278.

crowd, only to discard them the next day after the narrative was no longer needed. However, based on Khomeini's later statements and writings it is plainly evident that at least by 1970 he was a full-fledged believer in the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Unfortunately the specific sources of his belief are unclear. Khomeini was chary about citing sources or explaining his own intellectual influences.[47] He was formulating the ideas expressed in his best-known work, *Governance of the Jurist* (1970) during his time in exile in Najaf, Iraq (1964-1978.) The first four years of his Iraqi exile were an unusually silent period in Khomeini's life. He made few pronouncements, preached few sermons and gave few interviews during this time.[48] One assumes that, as a prominent cleric and public figure, he was involved in private and even secret correspondence with his colleagues in Iran and elsewhere during this time.

This section will discuss in depth the elements of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Khomeini's main work, *Governance of the Jurist*. It was initially a series of lectures Khomeini gave in Najaf in early 1970 and later published as a book. The concept Khomeini laid out in this book is the ideological foundation of today's Islamic Republic and is mentioned in the Iranian constitution.[49] [50]

Before examining the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in this work, we ought to briefly discuss the main theological arguments of the book. In *Governance of the Jurist* Khomeini went against generations of Shi'a teaching and his own earlier writings and stated that all monarchies are un-Islamic and evil.[51] Khomeini argued that religious judges (*fuqaha*) not kings, have the divine right to rule until the return of the Twelfth Imam at the end of history; that they are the successors of the prophet Mohammed and the Shi'a Imams. Khomeini wrote that religious judges have the same authority as Mohammed and the Imams, and that disobedience to them is the same as disobedience to God. [52] The Persian name for this concept is *vilayat-i faqih,* in English - the governance of the jurist, from which the book gets its title. Khomeini had discussed aspects of the idea of the *vilayat-i faqih* earlier, in sections of his previous works, but they were first fully expressed in *Governance of the Jurist*.[53]

Vilayat-i faqih was an innovation, a proposed new form of Islamic government unprecedented in the history of Islam. In the *Governance of the Jurist* Khomeini cites the work of a single earlier Shi'a cleric and jurisprudent, Mullah Ahmad Naraqi (1771-1829) in support of his ideas. In his work *'Awa'id al-ayyam* Naraqi supported the juridical authority of the Shi'a *mujtahids* as the representatives of the hidden Imam[54] He wrote that the *mujtahids* are "the

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[47] Abrahamian, *Khomeinism,* p. 22.
[48] Abrahamian, *Khomeinism,* p. 22.
[49] Ali Alfoneh, *Iran Unveiled: How the Revolutionary Guards Is Transforming Iran from Theocracy into Military Dictatorship*, (AEI Press, 2013), Kindle Edition, location 4431.
[50] A full translation of the constitution of the Islamic Republic is available on the website of the Foundation for Iranian Studies at https://fis-iran.org/en/resources/legaldoc/constitutionislamic. Accessed March 2, 2019. See Article 5 in particular.
[51] Mosa Zahed, "The Evolution and Ascension of Iran's Terror Apparatus", in *Terrorism Revisited: Islamism, Political Violence and State-Sponsorship*, Paulo Casaca and Siegfried O. Wolf eds., (Springer International, 2017), p. 67
[52] Abrahamian, *Khomeinism,* pp. 24-25.
[53] Martin, p. 119.
[54] Said Amir Arjomand, "The State and Khomeini's Islamic Order," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1/4, 1980, p. 154.

trustees of the Prophet and will not be tied up with the kings."[55] However, Naraqi was no revolutionary, and maintained a relationship with the king of Iran, while exercising influence, at times in opposition to the King's will. Once Naraqi was said to have forced the governor of the Iranian city of Kashan out of office. The King of Iran got angry and called Naraqi to Tehran. When Naraqi arrived he said "O God! This unjust king appointed an unjust governor over the people. I put an end to his oppression; and now this oppressor is angry with me." The king relented and appointed a different governor. On another occasion, in the lead-up to one of the Russo-Persian wars (1826-1828) Naraqi along with some other clergy came to the camp of the Iranian king when the king was hesitant to declare war on Russia. The clergy were dressed in shrouds to show their preparation for martyrdom, and the King again relented and declared war.[56] These examples show that in contrast to Khomeini, Naraqi was not a revolutionary, and had enough respect for the authority of the Qajar king to remonstrate with him instead of attempting to overthrow him or declare him illegitimate. Naraqi's arguments were about juridical authority, not temporal rule.[57]

Khomeini, by contrast, argued that all Muslims are obliged to oppose all monarchies and to rise up against them.[58] This is in stark contrast not only to Naraqi, but generations of Shi'a who either embraced quietism and shunned politics or embraced the monarchy. The embrace of monarchy in Iran was made easier after the establishment of the Shi'a Safavid dynasty in Iran in 1501.[59] Khomeini claimed that his radical anti-monarchical stance was rooted in the true interpretation of Islam. He even asserted that Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of Mohammed, the third Shi'a Imam, and a towering figure in Shi'a theology and sacred history, rose up in rebellion against monarchy and hereditary succession, which resulted in his martyrdom. This assertion is especially religiously charged, as the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali at Karbala is one of the key events in Shi'a history and theology. It is commemorated and re-enacted every year in Shi'a communities during the day of *Ashura*.

> "Islam proclaims monarchy and hereditary succession wrong and invalid…. Monarchy and hereditary succession represent the same sinister, evil system of government that prompted the Doyen of the Martyrs ('a) to rise up in revolt and seek martyrdom in an effort to prevent its establishment. He revolted in repudiation of the hereditary succession of Yazīd, to refuse it his recognition."[60]

How then did Khomeini explain the fact that Shi'a Muslims, including Naraqi and other leading clerics, had obeyed and accepted monarchies for centuries? How did he explain how his vision of a truly Islamic government under the *vilayat-i faqih* was only "re-discovered" in the mid-20th century? - He used the Grand Conspiracy Theory. One can witness this very clearly in the first three paragraphs of the introduction to his *Islamic Government.* All three are reproduced

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[55] Zackery M. Heern, *The Emergence of Modern Shi'ism: Islamic Reform in Iraq and Iran*, (Oneworld Publications, 2015), p. 101.
[56] Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*, (University of California Press, 1980), p. 89.
[57] Arjomand, p. 154.
[58] Abrahamian, *Khomeinism,* p. 24.
[59] Abrahamian, *Khomeinism,* pp. 18-19.
[60] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* pp. 10-11.

here, without any abridgement, in order to demonstrate how explicit Khomeini was about his belief in a massive Judeo-imperialist conspiracy against Islam. In the first paragraph he insists that the *vilayat-i faqih* is an obvious concept that any thoughtful and honest Muslim should automatically accept. Khomeini then recognizes that because of circumstances at the present time this "self-evident" concept requires "demonstration":

> "The subject of the governance of the jurist (vilāyat-i faqīh) provides us with the opportunity to discuss certain related matters and questions. The governance of the faqīh is a subject that in itself elicits immediate assent and has little need of demonstration, for anyone who has some general awareness of the beliefs and ordinances of Islam will unhesitatingly give his assent to the principle of the governance of the faqīh as soon as he encounters it; he will recognize it as necessary and self-evident. If little attention is paid to this principle today, so that it has come to require demonstration, it is because of the social circumstances prevailing among the Muslims in general, and the teaching institution in particular. These circumstances, in turn, have certain historical roots to which I will now briefly refer."[61]

Khomeini immediately follows this first paragraph with another that describes the "social circumstances" he referred to in the above paragraph. He states that a vast Jewish conspiracy spreading "anti-Islamic propaganda" and other strategies ruined the purity of Islam and sidelined the "self-evident" idea of *vilayat-i faqih*. He also states that there is another "imperialist" conspiracy (of Europeans) that seeks to destroy Islam in order to weaken Muslims, who would be easier to despoil without a *faqiih* in charge:

> "From the very beginning, the historical movement of Islam has had to contend with the Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda and engaged in various stratagems, and as you can see, this activity continues down to the present. Later they were joined by other groups, who were in certain respects, more satanic than they. These new groups began their imperialist penetration of the Muslim countries about three hundred years ago, and they regarded it as necessary to work for the extirpation of Islam in order to attain their ultimate goals. It was not their aim to alienate the people from Islam in order to promote Christianity among them, for the imperialists really have no religious belief, Christian or Islamic. Rather, throughout this long historical period, and going back to the Crusades, they felt that the major obstacle in the path of their materialistic ambitions and the chief threat to their political power was nothing but Islam and its ordinances, and the belief of the people in Islam. They therefore plotted and campaigned against Islam by various means.
>
> The preachers they planted in the religious teaching institution, the agents they employed in the universities, government educational institutions, and publishing houses, and the orientalists who work in the service of the imperialistic states—all these people have pooled their energies in an effort to distort the principles of Islam. As a result, many persons, particularly the educated, have formed misguided and incorrect notions of Islam."[62]

Conspiracies: Jewish and imperialist

Of the two conspiracies mentioned in *Governance of the Jurist*, the most long-lasting one is the Jewish conspiracy, which Khomeini accuses of having spread "anti-Islamic propaganda and engaged in various stratagems" in order to weaken Islam. Khomeini writes that

[61] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 7.
[62] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 7.

this activity dates from the beginning of Islam and "continues down to the present."[63] This is a clear re-iteration of the version Grand Conspiracy Theory that was spread in Nazi and Nasserist propaganda and also embraced by Sayyed Qutb, described in chapters 11 and 12. Nazi propaganda during the war targeted at Muslims depicted Jews as the perennial enemy of Islam, that had been secretly working to introduce innovations into Islam.[64] Khomeini used this same narrative, only he alleges that the specific thing the Jewish conspiracy had destroyed was the *vilayat-i faqih*.

While there is no endorsement or direct citation of the *Protocols* in Khomeini's *Islamic Government,* at one point in the text Khomeini is explicit in his belief in the idea of a global Jewish conspiracy not just to distort Islam and deny the guardianship of the Jurist, but also to take over the world:

> "... the Jews and their foreign backers are opposed to the very foundations of Islam and wish to establish Jewish domination throughout the world. Since they are a cunning and resourceful group of people, I fear that —God forbid— they may one day achieve their goal, and that the apathy shown by some of us may allow a Jew to rule over us one day. May God never let us see such a day!"[65]

If this is not a reference to the *Protocols*, it is certainly a reference to an anti-Jewish strain of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, of which the *Protocols* is the classic text.

Khomeini also wrote of a conspiracy of "imperialists" who had "plans drawn up several centuries ago that are now being implemented and bearing fruit."[66] In the passage from the introduction Khomeini dated the beginning of this conspiracy to 300 years ago, the late 17th century. This plot mainly involved anti-Islamic propaganda. The "propaganda institutions of imperialism"[67] made people believe that Islam is separate from politics and the plotters installed puppet-rulers in Islamic lands to assist in this propagandizing. Khomeini summed up the message that the imperialist conspirators spread as:

> "...that Islam does not have a specific form of government or governmental institutions. They say further that even if Islam does have certain laws, it has no method for enforcing them, so that its function is purely legislative. This kind of propaganda forms part of the overall plan of the imperialists to prevent the Muslims from becoming involved in political activity and establishing an Islamic government."[68]

As with some of those conspiracy theories discussed earlier in this chapter, Khomeini's description of a vast imperialist conspiracy derives partly from the actual experience of European imperialism in Iran and much of the rest of the world in the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, Khomeini credits the forces of imperialism with vastly more power and coordination than they ever possessed. There were certainly attempts by imperial rulers to

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[63] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 7.
[64] Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World,* p. 53.
[65] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 79.
[66] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 13.
[67] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 88.
[68] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 15.

influence Muslim leaders in their favor. To take an example from Russian history: in the late 19th century the Russian government tried to organize the Muslim clergy of the Caucasus into religious hierarchies and paid them salaries. According to a letter sent by the Imperial Viceroy Mikhail Nikolaevich this was done in order to increase state surveillance, get the clergy's material interests in line with the Russian state, keep Muslims divided, and limit Persian and Turkish influence.[69] This activity was only attempted in part of the Russian Empire, and while other imperial powers might have tried something similar from time to time, it was not uniform or coordinated. The conspiracy Khomeini depicts is coordinated, massive, and multi-generational. The imperialists of Khomeini's imagination have more in common with Lenin's view of an all-pervasive and hyper-deceptive conspiracy of finance capital than with the actual European empires. In Lenin's version several conspiracies emerged in the 19th century to dominate the world outside of Europe and prevent revolution inside through bribery and intrigue. Khomeini's version had a clique of Europeans preventing revolution in the Muslim world by deliberately distorting Islam as part of their resource extraction scheme.

While it appears Khomeini usually referred to Western countries like the US, France, and Britain when he discusses imperialism, in at least one passage he complained of imperialism "both Western and communist."[70] According to Khomeini the original ringleader of this imperialist scheme was Britain. This power was joined later by the United States and other powers:

> "The British imperialists penetrated the countries of the East more than three hundred years ago. Being knowledgeable about all aspects of these countries, they drew up elaborate plans for assuming control of them. Then came the new imperialists, the Americans and others. They allied themselves with the British and took part in the execution of their plans."[71]

According to Khomeini writing in *Islamic Government*, the primary operatives in this conspiracy to spread anti-Islamic propaganda are the "agents of imperialism" and the "educational and political apparatuses of the anti-national puppet governments they have installed."[72] Khomeini emphasizes that while Zionists, Christians, Baha'is and others might be participating in spreading this propaganda the purpose of this propaganda is not to convert people to Christianity or Judaism or the Baha'i faith, but to enable the imperialist conspiracy:

> "...The agents of imperialism are busy in every corner of the Islamic world drawing our youth from us with their evil propaganda. They are not converting them into Jews and Christians; they are corrupting them, making them irreligious and indifferent, which is sufficient for their purposes. In our own city of Tehran now there are centers of evil propaganda run by the churches, the Zionists, and the Bahā'is in order to lead our people astray and make them abandon the ordinances and teachings of Islam"[73]

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[69] Firouzeh Mostashari, *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus*, (I.B. Tauris, 2006), p, 89.
[70] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 71.
[71] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 87.
[72] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* 85.
[73] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 79.

Note here the inclusion of the Baha'is as one of the trio of forces operating "centers of evil propaganda." Khomeini held that the introduction of this propaganda and other western tricks to weaken Islam were done deliberately. He believed that the powers that be in the Islamic world were puppets, installed "for the sake of exploitation…"[74] i.e. as preparation for the plunder of the natural resources of the region. True Islam, under the leadership of a jurist, the deputy of the Imam, would never allow the imperialists to slander Islam, deceive and weaken the Muslims, and thereby economically exploit them. Khomeini asserted that Islam "is the school of those who struggle against imperialism"[75] and therefore it is logical that a far-sighted imperialism would seek to corrupt Islam:

> "Foreign experts have studied our country, and have discovered all our mineral reserves—gold, copper, petroleum, and so on. They have also made an assessment of our people's intelligence and came to the conclusion that the only barriers blocking their way are Islam and the religious leadership.
>
> They have known the power of Islam themselves for it once ruled part of Europe, and they know that true Islam is opposed to their activities. They have also realized they cannot make the true religious scholars submit to their influence, nor can they affect their thinking. From the very outset, therefore, they have sought to remove this obstacle from their path by disparaging Islam and besmirching the religious leaders. They have resorted to malicious propaganda so that today, we imagine that Islam simply consists of a handful of legal topics. They have also tried to destroy the reputation of fuqahā and the 'ulamā, who stand at the head of Islam society, by slanderous accusations and other means."[76]

In one passage Khomeini mocks those who still engage in religious practices such as praying, but who neglect the struggle against imperialism, emphasizing that by their quietism they are playing into the hands of the imperialist conspiracy:

> ""If you pay no attention to the policies of the imperialists, and consider Islam to be simply the few topics you are always studying and never go beyond them, then the imperialists will leave you alone. Pray as much as you like; it is your oil they are after—why should they worry about your prayers? They are after our minerals, and want to turn our country into a market for their goods. That is the reason the puppet governments they have installed prevent us from industrializing, and instead, establish only assembly plants and industry that is dependent on the outside world."[77]

Zionism and imperialism

Like the leaders of Al Qaeda, in *Islamic Government* Khomeini seemed to differentiate between the imperialist conspiracy to dominate the Middle East through distorting Islam and establishing Israel and another Jewish plot from earlier in history that distorted Islam. Unlike the leaders of Al Qaeda, Khomeini did not clearly reference the existence of a secret global Jewish government, though the activities of the Jews in distorting Islam "continues down to the

[74] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 15.
[75] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 8.
[76] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* pp. 87-88.
[77] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 17.

present."[78] He described the creation of Israel as being the work of a "...handful of wretched Jews (the agents of America, Britain and other foreign powers)..."[79] a common trope in Soviet propaganda. Khomeini declared that if Muslims had made a unified front against the imperialists and their Israeli servants then Israel would never have existed:

> "If the Muslims had acted in accordance with this command, and after forming a government, made the necessary extensive preparations to be in a state of full readiness for war, a handful of Jews would never have dared to occupy our lands and to burn and destroy the Masjid al-Aqsā."[80]

Khomeini's reference to plans for a global Jewish government, a possible reference to the *Protocols*, mentions that the "the Jews and their foreign backers" are the ones who wish a global Jewish government.[81] After the revolution, in an August 1979 speech Khomeini first attacked the "imperialist" powers and then threatened Israel by saying "Israel should try to understand its masters don't have any power any longer."[82]

This is a vision of Israel likely indirectly imported from the Soviets, as it smacks of Lenin's theory of imperialism. According to this vision, Israel is not a sovereign state but really a tool in the hands of an imperialist conspiracy. The general shape of Khomeini's version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory is a combination of older sectarian conspiracy theories about imperial powers meddling in religion to harm Iran, like the anti-Baha'i conspiracy theory discussed earlier in this chapter, combined with the larger structure of Lenin's theory of imperialism (especially with regards to the role of Israel) and infused with ideas of a global Jewish conspiracy closer to what is described in the *Protocols*. On balance, Khomeini's ideas about the "Zionist" conspiracy, at least as described in *Governance of the Jurist*, seem to have more in common with Lenin's idea of Imperialism than Qutb's view of an age-old global Jewish conspiracy. However, there are many parallels between Qutb's ideas and Khomeini's: both Qutb and Khomeini believe there was once an original, much purer, form of Islam that was corrupted by the machinations of a super-influential Jewish plot. This created a malformed, enervated Islam that was easy for European imperialists to control and humiliate, including the humiliation of the establishment of the state of Israel – a state that is ostensibly a tool of imperialist control. Khomeini and Qutb both perceived a sinister imperialist-Jewish alliance, or at least common purpose, behind the continual degradation of Islam, and that the propaganda of this alliance was the main weapon they used against Islam along with pseudo-Islamic puppet governments. Both Khomeini and Qutb believed that Islam's decay is not the result of an internal process but of an external plot, and that a powerful plot continues to undermine Islam and prevent its rise.

Responding to the conspiracy

Like Qutb and his successors, and like other true believers in an ultra-powerful global conspiracy we have examined in this thesis, Khomeini believed that a response was necessary

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[78] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 7.
[79] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 22.
[80] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 22.
[81] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 79.
[82] Khomeini, "Message of Imam Khomeini on the Occasion of the Day of Quds," in *The Dawn of the Islamic Revolution*, Special Edition of the Echo of Islam, (Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1982) p. 204.

to fight this conspiracy. In Islamic Government Khomeini's main call to action was for propaganda: "The first activity we must undertake in this respect is the propagation of our case; that is how we must begin."[83] According to what he published in 1970 he wished to create a wave of protest in Iran "against the state of the government; let the people gather, and the preachers and rawzakhwāns firmly fix the issue of government in their minds."[84]

This protest was to be directed against the usurpers secretly in the employ of the imperialist conspiracy (that is, primarily the British and Americans) who Khomeini refers to as *taghut* - unjust usurpers.[85] In *Governance of the Jurist* Khomeini exhorted Muslims to overthrow their illegitimate governments - and according to him all governments in the Muslim world were illegitimate.[86] This was a revolutionary prescription for the entire Islamic world:

> "In the Qur'an, God Almighty has forbidden men to obey the tāghūt—illegitimate regimes—and encouraged them to rise up against kings, just as He commanded Moses to rebel. There are a number of traditions encouraging people to fight against oppressors and those who wish to pervert religion."[87]

Khomeini wrote that he had earlier urged other Iranian clerics to overthrow the Iranian government.[88] While he was in exile, Khomeini's network engaged in propaganda against the Shah and against the Saudi monarchy.[89]

This description of what was needed, "unmasking" the evil propaganda of the Grand Conspiracy against Islam and overthrowing the Muslim governments that were actually subservient to the conspiracy, was very similar to what Qutb urged, though Qutb seemed more enamored of armed struggle at the earliest stage. This similarity between Qutb's program and Khomeini's was recognized by the Egyptian intellectual Hassan Hanafi in his introduction to the 1979 Arabic edition of *Governance of the Jurist,* probably published after Khomeini's sudden rise to power in Iran.[90]

Qutb had also prepared for an armed struggle against what he believed to be an illegitimate regime in cahoots with an anti-Islam conspiracy. Khomeini did not, at least not at first, engage in violent subversion. During the 1970s while in exile, Khomeini eschewed armed struggle against the Shah, regarding it as counterproductive.[91] This strategy changed as the position of the Shah deteriorated. According to Nader Uskowi, who met with Khomeini in Paris in November 1978, Khomeini's senior advisors were planning to establish a "people's army" in Iran to engage in a long-term violent struggle and topple the Shah when it was clear his grip on

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[83] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 78.
[84] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 82.
[85] Ali Rahnema, "Ayatollah Khomeini's Rule of the Guardian Jurist: From Theory to Practice," in *A Critical introduction to Khomeini*, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam ed., (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 92.
[86] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 92.
[87] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 92.
[88] Khomeini, *Governance of the Jurist,* p. 89.
[89] Martin, p. 72.
[90] Ruhollah Khomeini, الحكومة الإسلامية(Islamic Government), Hasan Hanafi trans., (al-Qahira, 1979), from the introduction by Hasan Hanafi, p. 5.
[91] Martin, p. 70.

the country was weakening. But suddenly the Shah fled the country, saying he had to get treatment for cancer. Khomeini flew to Tehran and began his march to power.[92]

Some of the effects of Khomeini's conspiracism on Iran

This section will examine the activities of Khomeini and his followers after he gained power and illustrate how the idea of powerful conspiracies against Islam contributed to the decisions they made and the policies they pursued. After briefly illustrating how some of the Islamic Republic's religious repression and censorship and much of its propaganda are based on the idea of massive conspiracy against Islam, this section will dwell on the most important consequence of the belief in this idea: Iran's participation in directing and sponsoring violent Islamic extremism.

Upon his return Khomeini was the most powerful man in Iran. He did not grow complacent and continued to preach that hyper-powerful anti-Islamic conspiracies were meddling in Iranian affairs. He took action against them through censorship and repression. An early example is the case of the major Iranian newspaper *Ayandegan*, Iran's first morning daily. It had been nationalist and liberal under the Shah, while operating under the Shah's censorship regime. It was suspected of having connections to the authorities because of its usual anti-communist and pro-establishment stances. However, in the fall of 1978 the paper was taken over by left-leaning revolutionary journalists and during the course of the Iranian revolution *Ayandegan* grew even more in national prominence. It became a place where Iranian writers who were neither communists or left-radicals or Khomeinist radicals could get published.[93] In May 1979 the paper published an interview that Khomeini had given to *Le Monde* in which he had said he wanted to remain just a cleric and stay away from politics.[94] This angered Khomeini.[95] The paper was shut down in August 1979 at the order of the public prosecutor's office. A Voice of the Islamic Republic Radio broadcast alleged that the newspaper still enjoyed the "indirect blessing of the deposed shah."[96] When the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci asked Khomeini about this shut down in an interview published in October 1979 he replied:

> "The newspaper Ayandegan was part of the plot I mentioned. It had relations with the Zionists; it got ideas from them to do harm to the country. The same goes for all the newspapers that the attorney general of the revolution judged subversive, and then closed: newspapers which, through a phony opposition, tried to restore the old regime

[92] Nader Uskowi, *Temperature Rising: Iran's Revolutionary Guards and Wars in the Middle East*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018), Kindle Edition, Location 89-97.
[93] L. P. Elwell-Sutton and P. Mohajer, "ĀYANDAGĀN" Encyclopædia Iranica, Vol. III, Fasc. 2, pp. 132-133, online edition, 2011. Available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ayandagan-newspaper. Accessed March 2, 2019.
[94] Gholam Khiabany, *Iranian Media: The Paradox of Modernity*, (Routledge, 2010), p. 99.
[95] Annabelle Sreberny and Ali Mohammadi, *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 168.
[96] Nicholas Cumming-Bruce, "Iranian Rulers Shut Newspaper" *Washington Post*, August 8, 1979. Available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/08/08/iranian-rulers-shut-newspaper/0d7008fb-9ae9-4e50-a943-daf62bf1365d/. Accessed March 2, 2019.

> and to serve foreign interests. We shut them up because we knew who they were, and what they were after."[97]

This attack on the freedom of the press was not couched in the language of religious fundamentalism, the need to safeguard morals from deterioration etc.. It was defensive, i.e. defensive against the Zionist conspiracy. Khomeini declared that this conspiracy encompassed or co-opted many things, including the concept of human rights itself. After the Revolution Khomeini described "human rights societies and other societies such as these" as fronts that "all have their hands locked together for plundering us Muslims and these who are in Asia, Africa and other places, but regrettably the Muslims are not awakened."[98]

The Iranian constitution that was adopted in December 1979, after Khomeini had largely consolidated power, calls the new Iranian state an "Islamic Republic." The constitution includes a presidency and a parliament. Following Khomeini's principle of *velayat-e faqih*, there is a single Supreme Leader enshrined in the constitution who is above the president and parliament, who ratifies the election of the president, makes decisions of peace and war, controls the internal and external security organs, and appoints members of the Iranian judicial and cultural institutions. The Supreme Leader has the ability to override any other element of the Iranian government. His constitutional power can be potentially checked only by the "Assembly of Experts" a secretive body which can remove him if he is determined to be unfit for office. The Assembly of Experts is an 86 member body of Shi'a clerics who are elected from a list prepared by the "Guardian Council" another body of senior clerics which is in turn appointed by the Supreme Leader.[99] Of course, Khomeini was the first Supreme Leader of Iran. The constitution of Iran has Khomeini's idea of *velayat-i faqih* at its core, saying that his concept opened up for the Muslim world "...the true path of Islamic ideological struggle, and giving greater intensity to the struggle of militant and committed Muslims both within the country and abroad."[100]

Along with the idea of *velayat-i faqih* comes the Grand Conspiracy Theory. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, Khomeini's ideology includes a belief in the existence of massive Jewish and imperialist conspiracies that seek to undermine Islam. This produces an effect in the Iranian government that might seem schizophrenic to an outside observer lacking an understanding of the Khomeinist obsession with conspiracies. While Article 3 of the Iranian constitution includes the goal of "ensuring political and social freedoms within the framework of the law" Article 9 states that no one "has the right to infringe in the slightest way upon the political, cultural, economic, and military independence or the territorial integrity of Iran under the pretext of exercising freedom."[101] Freedom of the press is granted "except when it is detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam or the rights of the public." According to Article 14 of the Iranian constitution all Muslims must treat non-Muslims ethically and respect their

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[97] Oriana Fallaci, "An Interview With KHOMEINI," *The New York Times*, October 7, 1979. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/1979/10/07/archives/an-interview-with-khomeini.html. Accessed March 2, 2019.
[98] Khomeini, "Excerpts from the Imam's Address on the Eve of the First Day of Quds:, from *The Dawn of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 206.
[99] David E. Thaler, Alireza Nader, et. al., Mullahs, *Guards, and Bonyads: An Exploration of Iranian Leadership Dynamics*, (RAND for the National Defense Research Institute, 2010), pp. 24 - 29.
[100] See the translation of the constitution of the Islamic Republic on the website of the Foundation for Iranian Studies at https://fis-iran.org/en/resources/legaldoc/constitutionislamic. Accessed March 2, 2019.
[101] Ibid.

human rights, but notes that "This principle applies to all who refrain from engaging in conspiracy or activity against Islam and the Islamic Republic of Iran."[102]

Among those who are not extended the mantle of human rights for precisely this reason are the Baha'i. The 300,000 Baha'i left in Iran are repressed and treated as part of an evil foreign conspiracy. In 1980 Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards arrested all the members of the Baha'i National Spiritual assembly of Iran, none of whom were ever seen again.[103] At one point an interviewer asked Khomeini point-blank about the religious freedom of Baha'i. Khomeini replied: "they are a political faction; they are harmful. They will not be accepted."[104] Khomeini's hatred of the Baha'i as the tools of a secret alien conspiracy was made into state policy under his rule. One scholar of the persecution of Baha'i in Iran noted that "The connection of Baha'is with Israel and the Jews is so strong in Ayatollah Khomeini's rhetoric that one wonders which of the two was his primary concern…"[105]

This kind of rhetoric was not just used by Khomeini in a tiff with a foreign journalist, it has become a standard part of the Iranian government's repertoire in justifying religious repression of the Baha'is. In an interview on a US news program in 1983, Sayed Rajaie Khorassani, then the Islamic Republic's Ambassador to the UN frankly admitted to the execution of Baha'i leaders as enemy spies. As the interviewer probed him about the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran, he responded with several streams of invective that labeled the Baha'is as a front for various conspiracies, not as a religion:

> "Baha'ism is a political movement and not a religion… It has a religious mask, that is all… There is a relation between Israel and Baha'ism. No doubt. We also know that the Baha'i world center is in Haifa. We have also historical evidence which supports the strong relation between the creation of Baha'ism on the one hand and Zionism on the other hand… Their shrine is not considered holy. We take it as a center of conspiracy, very simple, for this there is no protection… It is not a religion… I consider it as a political, - a treacherous political movement, created primarily by the Russians, then supported strongly by the British, and now has the strong support of the American media and foreign policy and everything… they are a threat to the welfare and happiness of the third world countries."[106]

The persecution of Baha'is in Iran has continued to the present day. The 2017 report of the US Commission on Religious Freedom noted that since the Revolution Iranian "authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs."[107]

As Khomeini had urged in *Governance of the Jurist*, the government he founded has actively spread propaganda to unmask the sinister conspiracies against Islam. An early 1980

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Michael Axworthy, *Revolutionary Iran: A History of the Islamic Republic*, (Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 209.

[104] Yazdani, "The Islamic Revolution's Internal Other," p. 593.

[105] Yazdani, "The Islamic Revolution's Internal Other," p. 603.

[106] Bob Brown, "In the Name of Islam," ABC News 20/20, July 28, 1983. Available at https://youtu.be/MIj0OJvVW9k. Quote starts at 4:18.

[107] *Annual Report of the United States Commission on Religious Freedom, 2017,* (United States Commission on Religious Freedom, 2017). Available at https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2017.USCIRFAnnualReport.pdf. Accessed March 2, 2019.

CIA assessment noted that "Tehran radio broadcasts a steady stream of propaganda every day into Iran's neighbors." This propaganda was revolutionary, urging people in other states to adopt Iranian revolutionary tactics to topple their regimes.[108]

Since the Revolution Iranian propaganda has warned of the danger of a "greater Israel" - the canard that Israel is preparing to conquer much of the Middle East.[109] The Iranian government has also re-published the *Protocols*. While the *Protocols* is not explicitly referenced in Khomeini's work, the document has been embraced by the propagandists of the Islamic Republic. Editions of the *Protocols* have been published by many arms of the Iranian government since the Revolution and Iranian media is full of references to "Zionist domination" and stories of the global machinations of the Jews.[110] Iranian propaganda about the worldwide Jewish conspiracy has also been international, even intercontinental. An English language publication of the Iranian Embassy in London in the 1980s quoted from the *Protocols* extensively.[111] By 1985 the *Protocols* was being published in English by an arm of the Iranian state.[112]

Continuing to fight the imaginary enemy

The Islamic Republic is not unique in its activities to spread conspiracy theories internationally or in its persecution of religious minorities. It is outstanding in its cultivation of Islamic violent extremist organizations. This activity is directly related to the perception of the Islamic Republic's leaders, Khomeini and his successors, that they are beset on all sides by a malignant conspiracy against true Islam and therefore against the Islamic Republic.

In the preamble to the constitution of the Islamic Republic the armed forces of Iran are explicitly given the mission of expanding the writ of Islamic law, in addition to defending the country:

> "the Army of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps… will be responsible not only for guarding and preserving the frontiers of the country, but also for fulfilling the ideological mission of jihad in God's way; that is, extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world this is in accordance with the Koranic verse *'Prepare against them whatever force you are able to muster, and strings of horses, striking fear into the enemy of God and your enemy, and others besides them'"*[113]

However, for Khomeinists who believe in the existence of a massive conspiracy against Islam, "extending the sovereignty of God's law throughout the world" is not a linear conquest of

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[108] *Iran: Exporting the Revolution*, CIA Intelligence Assessment, National Foreign Assessment Center, March 1980. Approved for Release April 27, 2006, p. 1. Available at https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP81B00401R000500100001-8.pdf. March 2, 2019.

[109] Daniel Pipes, *The Hidden Hand*, p. 60.

[110] Orly R. Rahimiyan, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion In Iranian Political and Cultural Discourse," in *The Global Impact of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, *A Century-Old Myth*, Esther Webman ed., (Routledge, 2011), pp. 231, 236.

[111] Lewis, *Semites and anti-Semites,* p. 210.

[112] Rahimiyan, p. 237.

[113] See the translation of the constitution of the Islamic Republic on the website of the Foundation for Iranian Studies at https://fis-iran.org/en/resources/legaldoc/constitutionislamic. Accessed March 2, 2019.

non-Islamic lands, but also necessarily involves overthrowing the faux-Islamic regimes established by the imperialists. Likewise, the defense of the Islamic Republic ought to involve defending against new plots from the Zionists/imperialists/Jews against Islam, which history has shown, Khomeinists believe, to be amazingly effective in subduing and distorting Islam. Opposed by adversaries with such immense power, Iran's Khomeinist leaders behave as an embattled underdog waging a guerilla campaign against the still-reigning conspiracies against Islam.

Khomeini's rhetoric made it clear that the threat of these conspiracies did not dissipate with the establishment of the Islamic Republic. It stands to reason that the powerful Jewish and imperialist conspirators would continue their attempts to interfere with Islam and once again destroy the *velayat-e faqih,* which, according to Khomeini's doctrine, is the most powerful threat to their global domination. Unlike the Salis-Soglio brothers, the Nazis, Sayyed Qutb and Al Qaeda, the primary enemy Khomeini and his followers and successors identify is not totally imaginary. The rhetoric of the Islamic Republic, while anti-Soviet, also made it clear that ringleaders of these conspirators against true Islam were the United States and its Zionist servants. Even in a statement condemning the invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR, the senior cleric and heavyweight in the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Montazeri stated "...we regard America and Zionism as enemy number one of humanity and Islam, and prepare ourselves to wage a struggle against them…"[114] Unlike a cabal of the Elders of Zion or the re-constituted Illuminati, the United States does actually exist, it does have soldiers and spies and has been deeply involved in Iran and the wider Middle East, as has Israel. However, Khomeini's ideas of what the United States and Israel are capable of and what they have done (along with their imperialist predecessors such as Britain, Russia, and France) makes them into enemies that might as well be imaginary, to say nothing of presuming that the US and Israel have deep anti-Islamic motives.

- And when it comes to how to fight back, a statement from early 80s Iranian propaganda hints at a way a regional strategy might be part of a global plan to put a dagger in the heart of "imperialism:"

> "After Jerusalem, Mecca will be liberated and the international flag of Islam will be hoisted over the whole of the Middle East. There will be victory for the Third Force based on the Quran. The exploitation of nations will be brought to an end by the lack of oil supply to the superpowers. The human order will be re-established on social justice, based on the doctrine of Islam."[115]

This is the vision of victory, but the Khomeinist conspiracists believe they are usually on the defensive. According to Khomeini, the plot against true Islam went into overdrive against the Islamic Republic less than a year after Iran adopted its constitution based on *velayat-i faqih*. In September 1980 Iraq invaded Iran. Khomeini made it clear that the real culprit in this was the United States, the ringleader of the imperialists, and the Zionists, some of the same conspirators responsible for having earlier distorted Islam:

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[114] Hussein ali Montazeri, "Ayatollah Montazeri's Message on the Occasion of Coup [sic.] in Afghanistan" December 31, 1979, in *The Dawn of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 408.
[115] "An Examination of the Philosophy of the Iranian Nation's Struggle Against the Baathist Invaders," in *The Dawn of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 314.

> "The U.S. is the number one enemy of the oppressed and the Mustaza'f nations in the world. The U.S. will not cease from committing any crime in order to maintain its global political, economic, cultural and military domination. It exploits the oppressed people of the world through its extensive propaganda which is being organized by international Zionism. [Together] with its mysterious and treacherous aides, the U.S. sucks the blood of the unprotected people to the extent that no one in the world has the right to live except it and its satellites. Iran which has decided to cut ties with this Great Satan in every respect, is now being faced with this imposed war. The U.S. has forced Iraq to shed the blood of our youths. It has forced the countries under its domination to damage us by imposing an economic siege against us… We are fighting with the U.S. and today she is manipulating the Iraqi government."[116]

Ironically, based on a recorded conversation with his inner circle discovered in the Iraqi archives after the US invasion of 2003, Saddam believed that the Iranian revolution was part of an American plot to justify intervention in the Persian Gulf.[117]

Lebanese Hizballah

The Khomeinist group most famous for violent extremism against the imaginary enemy is not the government of Iran, but the Lebanon-based extremist group Lebanese Hizballah (hereafter just "Hizballah"). The group was co-founded by Iran's ambassador to Syria Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, and Iranian diplomats and operatives held key posts in Hizballah's hierarchy in its early stages.[118] The leadership of Lebanese Hizballah followed Khomeini's line from Governance of the Jurist, placing themselves under the leadership of Khomeini, the *faqih.*[119]

The group, often operating under the alias Islamic Jihad, carried out a number of high-casualty suicide attacks in Lebanon against the Israelis. As the journal of an arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps has noted: "Although the number of martyrdom operations [of Hizballah] involving car bombs was only twelve, these operations have been widely recognized as an outstanding method of Islamic resistance."[120]

What were they resisting? The obvious answer was the Israeli army occupying parts of Lebanon (which it invaded in 1982), but Hizballah's Iranian Supreme Leader, to which they professed allegiance, did not believe that the ultimate enemy in Lebanon was Israel, but its imperialist boss, the United States. Khomeini had initially stated that America had gotten Israel to attack Lebanon to distract Iran from their war against Iraq: "it was made by America. That is,

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[116] Khomeini, "Imam Khomeini's Message to Hajj Pilgrims," in *The Dawn of the Islamic Revolution*, pp. 293-294.

[117] Williamson Murray, Kevin Woods, *The Iran–Iraq War A Military and Strategic History*, (Cambridge University Press 2014), p. 89.

[118] Daniel Byman, *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp 210-212.

[119] Jason Wimberly, "Wilayat al-Faqih in Hizballah's Web of Concepts: A Perspective on Ideology," *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 51, Issue 5, 2015, p. 692. Available at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00263206.2015.1012507?casa_token=uHEly5HoYCMAAAAA:zX0bKtmbl8xCwaDccwNklM2R-Y4lDlsziOKjeK67CLHSBI-NtqlL1-hlwpMPz-EeGXzbWKLFgQ. Accessed March 3, 2019.

[120] "معرفی کتاب: حزب الله لبنان، خط مشی، گذشته و آینده آن" (Book Review: Lebanese Hizballah, Its Policies Past and Future), مطالعات راهبردی بسیج (Basij Strategic Studies) Issue 29, Winter 2005, p. 123

it sent its own lackey to attack Lebanon."[121] America, as the evident ringleader of the imperialist powers in Lebanon and a close ally of Israel, was the ultimate target of Khomeini's invective when discussing Lebanon and Palestine:

> "From the beginning of the struggle, the cases of Lebanon and Palestine have been our main goals and have not been isolated from Iranian issues… Since the region is at the forefront of the popular Islamic movement, the United States has launched initiatives to cut the helpless people of the region off from their destiny, and unfortunately some governments help them... Even if America would put forward a 100% Islamic-humanitarian plan, we would not believe that they would step it up for our peace and interests. If the US and Israel say 'There is no God but God' we will not accept it, because they are after our heads. Those who talk about peace want to bring war to the region…"[122]

In the mid-1980s Hizballah began to grow in numbers and influence, transforming from a small group of militants into a structured military force.[123] Hizballah became the poster child of Islamic terrorism in the 1980s and 90s, carrying out hijackings and bomb attacks in the Middle East, Europe, and beyond. This is not the place to discuss the complex history of Hizballah and its various attacks and extensive propaganda apparatus. Suffice it to say that Hizballah's activities are diverse and while it is best known for its suicide attacks and guerilla warfare, it is also a political party and a provider of social services in Lebanon.[124] It is now (as of 2019) a major political party in Lebanon. However, it is still not an independent organization. The lion's share of Hizballah's financial support is said to come from Iran, supplemented by donations from supporters and revenues from illegal enterprises and other sources.[125] There is also still a theological/ideological chain linking Hizballah to the Iranian leadership. Hizballah is an avowedly Khomeinist organization, believing strongly in the truth of Khomeini's theory of the *velayat-e faqih*. The current leader of Hizballah Hassan Nasrallah once said "the subject of the velayat-e faqih and the Imamate is at the heart of our religious doctrine, and any offense to it is an offense to our religion."[126] As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, belief in Khomeini's *velayat-e faqih* requires belief in immensely powerful Jewish/Imperialist conspiracies against Islam which prevented the emergence of the *velayat-e faqih* earlier in Islamic history. Otherwise Khomeini is an upstart innovator inventing new doctrine.

The 1985 Hizballah Manifesto, published when the organization was just emerging from the shadows, demonstrates the organizations loyalty to the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih,* its belief, shared by Khomeini, that Lebanon's travails were the work of an American anti-Islamic conspiracy and that Israel was the cat's paw of the US. It also contemptuously rejects the label

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[121] Ruhollah Khomeini, صحیفه امام, (Pages of The Imam), Vol. 16. p. 351. Available at https://farsi.rouhollah.ir/library/sahife-imam-khomeini/vol/16/title/116. Accessed March 3, 2019.
[122] Ruhollah Khomeini, صحیفه امام, (Pages of The Imam), Vol. 15. p. 339. Available at https://farsi.rouhollah.ir/library/sahife-imam-khomeini/vol/15/title/163. Accessed March 3, 2019.
[123] Lt. Col. Jeffrey O. Goodes, Maj Sharon Tosi Moore, "Hizbollah: The Party of God," *Joint Center for Operational Analysis,* Vol. 10, Issue 1, December 2007, p. 5. Available at https://archive.org/details/DTIC_ADA519817/page/n9. Accessed March 3, 2019.
[124] Byman, p. 230
[125] Levitt, p. 357.

[126] Levitt, p. 357.

of being merely Islamic fundamentalists concerned with morals and theology. The document is quite clear that Hizballah's main purpose is to combat the US and its allies, and it eschews acts of petty terrorism against bars etc.:

> "We obey the orders of one leader, wise and just, that of our tutor and faqih (jurist) who fulfills all the necessary conditions: Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini… when it becomes necessary to carry out the Holy War, each of us takes up his assignment in the fight in accordance with the injunctions of the Law, and that in the framework of the mission carried out under the tutelage of the Commanding Jurist.
>
> The US has tried, through its local agents, to persuade the people that those who crushed their arrogance in Lebanon and frustrated their conspiracy against the oppressed (mustad'afin) were nothing but a bunch of fanatic terrorists whose sole aim is to dynamite bars and destroy slot machines. Such suggestions cannot and will not mislead our umma, for the whole world knows that whoever wishes to oppose the US, that arrogant superpower, cannot indulge in marginal acts which may make it deviate from its major objective. We combat abomination and we shall tear out its very roots, its primary roots, which are the US. All attempts made to drive us into marginal actions will fail, especially as our determination to fight the US is solid.
>
> "We see in Israel the vanguard of the United States in our Islamic world. It is the hated enemy that must be fought until the hated ones get what they deserve. This enemy is the greatest danger to our future generations and to the destiny of our lands, particularly as it glorifies the ideas of settlement and expansion, initiated in Palestine, and yearning outwards to the extension of the Great Israel, from the Euphrates to the Nile."[127]

After Khomeini

Ruhollah Khomeini died in 1989 and was succeeded by his protege Ali Khamenei. Khomeini's doctrine of *velayat-e faqih* is still the ideological foundation of the regime As long as the Iranian government is beholden to Khomeini's teaching it will have to be beholden to an essential part of that teaching, a precursor to everything else: the existence of one or two massive multi-generational conspiracies against Islam, which today mainly manifest themselves in the American and Israeli governments. Anyone who claims Khomeini's mantle as a leader of the Islamic Republic must also accept his belief in massive anti-Islamic conspiracies. Under a monarchy, the monarch might be a conspiracy theorist, as Mohammad Reza Pahlavi certainly was,[128] but this official paranoia could pass with the death of the king. The leader of any state could be a conspiracy theorist, but a conspiracy theory is at the foundation of the Islamic Republic's own claim to legitimacy. This belief has and will continue to complicate its relations with foreign powers that it believes are participating in this self-conscious conspiracy against Islam and therefore against the Islamic Republic. If one insists that the conspiracy does not exist, there is always the tried-and-true reply, used by conspiracy theorists for centuries, that

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[127] According to a translation available via the Council on Foreign Relations, this program was originally published on 16 February 1985 and also read by the organization's spokesman at the al-Ouzai Mosque in west Beirut. This is from a "slightly abridged translation" from the Jerusalem Quarterly from 1988. Full translation available at https://web.archive.org/web/20150924003127/http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/open-letter-hizballah-program/p30967. Accessed March 3, 2019.

[128] Abrahamian, *Khomeinism,* p. 128.

those denying it are working on behalf of the Grand Conspiracy. As the current Supreme Leader Khamenei said in a 2017 speech:

> "Some people deny the existence of the enemy. When we speak about an enemy, such individuals say, 'You are suffering from an illusion, a conspiracy illusion.' In my opinion, bringing up this conspiracy illusion is a conspiracy in itself. In order to decrease sensitivities, they say, 'What is the enemy? Which enmity?'
>
> What we are saying is that America is the enemy of the Revolution. It is in the nature of global imperialism to show enmity towards a system such as the Islamic Republic. Their interests are 180 degrees different from each other. Global imperialism is after showing treachery, waging wars, creating and organizing terrorist groups, suppressing freedom-seeking groups and exerting pressure over the oppressed.
>
> ...Who is the enemy? Now, some people will say, 'It is clear. As soon as he mentions the word "the enemy", it is clear that he means America, the Zionists and the like. He has a conspiracy illusion.' But this is not a conspiracy illusion, rather it is seeing and having full knowledge of conspiracy. When I see conspiracy and when I am witness to it, I cannot hide it from you. So, I should discuss it with you."[129]

Conclusion

Given Khomeini's reticence to discuss his sources and influences, it is difficult to trace the influence of specific previous iterations of the Grand Conspiracy Theory on Khomeini's thought. However, the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory is clear in his main work *Government of the Jurist* and in many of his statements about a massive conspiracy against Islam and specifically against his doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*. Not only is the influence of the Grand Conspiracy Theory clear, but Khomeini's claim to have "re-discovered" the doctrine of *velayat-e faqih* rests on the idea that Jewish and "imperialist" conspirators had worked for centuries to distort Islam and lead Muslims away from this "self-evident" doctrine. If one dispenses with the Grand Conspiracy Theory then the innovative nature of Khomeini's doctrine is undeniable.

Upon achieving power Khomeini and his followers continued to interpret events as being influenced by a massive American-Zionist conspiracy targeting Iran. This belief has continued to the present day, with the Iranian government and its main proxy in the region Lebanese Hizballah militating and fighting against this imaginary conspiracy. The Grand Conspiracy Theory is demonstrably important both in the ideology of the Islamic Republic, but also features in its continuing propaganda.

[129] "Bringing up 'illusion of conspiracy' is a conspiracy in itself: Ayatollah Khamenei" March 27, 2017, Khamenei.ir. Available at http://english.khamenei.ir/news/4710/Bringing-up-illusion-of-conspiracy-is-a-conspiracy-in-itself. Accessed March 3, 2019.

Chapter 14: Conclusion

This thesis began with the question: "What is the importance of conspiracy theories in propaganda and extremist ideologies?" After initial research it emerged that there was a "main" conspiracy theory, a single kind of narrative - a tradition, that has had a disproportionate effect on politics and a disproportionate share of the attention of influential conspiracy theorists since the end of the 18th century. This is the notion that there is a massive hidden conspiracy that manipulates the world, one often associated with the spread of liberalism and republican government, as part of a plan for world domination. This thesis often called this idea the Grand Conspiracy Theory and tracked it from its birth after the French Revolution in the late 18th century all the way to its adoption by radical Islamic extremist groups in the late 20th century. One can conclude based on the research presented in this thesis that successive generations of propagandists found the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory useful, especially for attacking republican government, freedom of speech and religion, etc. One can also conclude that some major extremist groups have this idea, shaped by generations of propagandists, as a core part of their own beliefs. This thesis has not only made this case successfully via multiple historical examples, but even managed to illustrate several instances of overlap between these two phenomena - when some of these extremist groups also used the Grand Conspiracy Theory in their own propaganda campaigns, sometimes cynically (as in the case of Nazi propaganda designed for Muslim audiences.)

This conclusion will deal with both of these aspects beginning with the one concerning propaganda. Then, after reiterating the thesis' argument about the role of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in extremist ideologies this conclusion will break down how various chapters in this thesis contributed to both of these arguments. This chapter will wind up with a brief discussion of some of the implications of the arguments made in this thesis.

In addition to repeatedly demonstrating how propagandists made use of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, this thesis also elucidated the importance of this propaganda from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, especially state-sponsored propaganda, in the development of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. It was not just that propagandists used ideas about Masonic/Jewish/Jesuit conspiracies in their narratives, at times they made major modifications and updates to older versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, or publicized a previously obscure version because it suited their contemporary interests. While this research cannot make any claims about the efficacy of this kind of propaganda when it was used, it is evident that generations of propagandists, from 18th century Austria to 20th century Russia, have believed that the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory was appealing and effective and they repeatedly used it. Based on the examples provided in this thesis, the Grand Conspiracy Theory has played an important role in many propaganda campaigns, especially those combating liberalism and republican government. Anyone attempting to study the history of propaganda in Europe in the modern era must give attention to the use of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in propaganda, not only because of its repeated use, but also because of its apparent lingering effects.

As mentioned before, the targets, goals, and concerns of propagandists were often incorporated into their versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, versions that were also used by subsequent generations of propagandists and believed by subsequent generations of

conspiracy theorists. The hermeneutic approach taken in this thesis has proven fruitful in revealing the original circumstances, purposes, and meanings of the various texts and associated propaganda campaigns that made up many of the main sources of the Grand Conspiracy Theory or inspired or influenced the creation of new versions.

While this thesis dealt with conspiracy-theory texts, many of them associated with propaganda campaigns, this thesis never engaged in new linguistic analysis or revealed some previously-undiscovered draft copy of a conspiracy theory text in some government archive, though it often cited scholars who have accomplished feats like these. Instead, the hermeneutic approach taken in this thesis involved research into the political and cultural context of many of these texts and exposed the commonalities and sometimes the common origins of these many different versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. By pointing out how these very similar narratives had great importance in various propaganda campaigns, interpreting many of these documents as propaganda, and sometimes demonstrating how a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory is dependent on specific earlier iterations, themselves the product of propaganda campaigns, this thesis has demonstrated that they are all part of a single tradition of lies that were deemed useful in various contexts (though, as has been emphasized repeatedly, many of the most powerful advocates of the Grand Conspiracy Theory appear to have been true believers.) The advocates of the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed in this thesis certainly did not discover hidden truths, nor did they conjure new material out of whole cloth, but usually modified older propaganda material to suit their current needs. The conspiracy theories examined herein are almost all fusions of various types of narratives from the tradition of the Grand Conspiracy Theory and sometimes material from other conspiracy-narratives, including from fiction. Research into the context and likely desires of the men who created various important documents in the history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory shed light on why they made particular changes to the narrative. For example the *Protocols* was based on earlier versions of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, Brafman's Kahal conspiracy theory, and conspiracy theories associated with the secular anti-Semitic movement, but modified to attack specific targets. As this thesis has further demonstrated, these two precursor conspiracy theories were themselves derived from previous versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, specifically the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory and the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory, and all of them were used in and influenced by propaganda campaigns. Even these, as the second chapter demonstrates, are themselves versions of usurpation-via-deception narratives from the age of monarchy.

What sets the Grand Conspiracy Theory apart from earlier conspiracy theories from the age of monarchy is the nature of the supposed enemy. In increasingly democratic and complex societies, an enemy capable of swaying politics through deception could no longer just be a faction at court that can fool a king. It had to be large and powerful enough to deceive an entire population. Those propagandists who wished to argue against the ideas of republican government and liberalism described an imaginary enemy who was so powerful and manipulative that it would make real republican government and political freedom extremely dangerous. Things like freedom of the press or parliamentary debate would play right into the plans of the evil conspirators. By building up the image of a hyper-deceptive globe-spanning enemy, supplying "evidence" supporting its existence, spinning narratives about how this imaginary enemy operates, and spreading news of this enemy far and wide, propagandists

using the Grand Conspiracy Theory inadvertently prepared the ground for the emergence of groups dedicated to fighting this phantasm.

This imaginary enemy is the bridge between this propaganda and the extremist ideologies examined in this thesis. This is one of the main topics of the second part of this thesis, which establishes links between these propaganda campaigns, particularly those against liberalism and republican government, and the ideologies of many of the most pernicious extremist groups that emerged in modern times. This research has decisively demonstrated that the Grand Conspiracy Theory is essential to an understanding of the ideologies of Nazi Germany, of radical Sunnis in the mold of Sayyed Qutb, of the Khomeinist regime in Iran, and even to an understanding of Lenin's theory of imperialism. This suggests a lingering unintended effect of propaganda campaigns that spread the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The genealogy of the Grand Conspiracy Theory reveals that, while these ideologies may be diametrically opposed, they share common ideas about the kind of enemy they are facing, the imaginary enemy built up by generations of propagandists. This enemy that secretly controls the world looms large in their ideologies. Each of these ideologies, in their own way, sought or is still seeking a way to destroy this imaginary enemy or limit its powers. In some cases, this takes the form of subversion and violence against states that are perceived to be in the thrall of this massive deceptive power. This suggests a possible new taxonomy of several kinds of extremist groups and even, eventually, common methods of countering radicalization that can be adapted for use against radical-right, radical-left, and radical-Islamist groups. By drawing attention to the important debt that known world-historical figures like Hitler, Lenin, and Khomeini had to earlier, more obscure conspiracy theorists this thesis throws new light on their ideologies. Their common debt to the Grand Conspiracy Theory can provide analysts with a vocabulary to discuss these disparate ideologies as part of a continuity of an extremist tradition that cuts across centuries, borders, religions, and cultures.

By investigating the biographies and ideas of prominent promotors or modifiers of the Grand Conspiracy Theory across three centuries, from Hoffman, to Butmi and Dubrovin, to Hitler, and even to Qutb and Khomeini, this thesis demonstrated that there is really no stark break between the first and second parts of the thesis, between the 18th-19th century European propagandist and the 20th and 21st century European or Middle Eastern extremist. A hoped-for effect of this thesis would be increased attention to relatively obscure but critically important thinkers and propagandists, Butmi most of all.

An important upshot of this findings is that many true believers in the Grand Conspiracy Theory who engage in violent rebellion against their imaginary secret masters are, in a way, the unintended dupes of propaganda campaigns, often from decades earlier. Sometimes the gap between the propaganda campaign and the true believers who decide to take action is quite large, both in time and space and ideological affiliation. Indeed, this research has demonstrated the surprising flexibility of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, and the ease with which conspiracy-theory narratives and "evidence" have been adopted by people in radically different circumstances. The creators of many prominent versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory would be shocked by the beliefs of its latter-day proponents. This flexibility is aided by the idea of a massive deception at the heart of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, a deception that allows believers to ignore contradictory evidence and interpret any element of reality, including efforts to reveal the true origins of their conspiracy-theory beliefs, as further efforts at deception. This

promiscuous flexibility is especially true of the *Protocols*, which this thesis traced from its origins in the western Russian Empire at the dawn of the 20th century, to its influence on leading Nazis and on Sayyed Qutb in mid-20th century Egypt.

Chapter Review

This section will review the chapters of the body of this text with regard to their contribution to both of the main arguments of this thesis. To reiterate: that the tradition identified as the Grand Conspiracy Theory played an important role in multiple propaganda campaigns, that in turn versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory were influenced by these propaganda campaigns, and that groups of extremist subversives have been inspired to fight against the imaginary enemy created by these successive propaganda campaigns and accompanying versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

Chapter 2 explained that the roots of the earliest iterations of the Grand Conspiracy Theory came from narratives of palace plots and usurpation-via-deception. These were often used in propaganda, sometimes to threaten the legitimacy of a monarch or to attack his policies without attacking him by blaming them on manipulation. The subsequent use of these kinds of narratives is the important first round of the recurring pattern witnessed in this thesis: older narratives, often used in propaganda, provide much of the plot for subsequent versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. This chapter also briefly commented on an important idea to keep in mind in the second “part” of this thesis, the part dealing with extremist ideologies, namely the idea that a usurper or potential usurper, even one working mainly through deception rather than violence, should be killed, and his plans violently upset. A latter-day variant of this idea would be used by some of those justifying their violent actions as self-defense against a deceptive, usurping, imaginary enemy described in the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

Chapters 3 and 4 dealt with the earliest version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, adapted by Austrian and German propagandists in the wake of the French Revolution. This is the version that identifies the Freemasons or the Illuminati or some variant of them (such as the Carbonari) as the main enemy attempting to take over the world by pushing revolution, republican government, and Enlightenment values. Using the concept of usurpation-via-deception discussed in chapter 2, the writers of *Weiner Zeitscrift* and *Eudämonia* described the French Revolution as the work of a massive conspiracy of Masons who secretly ruled revolutionary France and who were intent on bringing down other monarchies in a similar fashion. This story was taken up by Barruel and Robison, who popularized this story throughout Europe. These chapters also showed how this conspiracy theory or variants of it continued to affected politics, even long after the propaganda campaigns were over. Metternich is of special interest in chapter 4 because he became a true believer in a variant of this conspiracy theory and appeared to make major decisions based on this errant belief. In order to further propaganda against the Italian patriots who he considered a threat he persuaded senior figures in the Roman Catholic church to make this theory part of their official doctrine, starting with the 1821 papal bull *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo.* The last part of chapter 4 briefly examines the obscure but interesting case of the Salais-Soglio brothers, who appear to have been the first

people to attempt violent subversion based on their belief in the Grand Conspiracy Theory, specifically a belief that the Austrian empire was actually under the control of the *Illuminati*.

Chapter 5 discussed anti-Jesuit versions of the Grand Conspiracy theory, and examined how even those who were pro-French Revolution could make use of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to attack their enemies. This chapter focused on the idea, popular in mid-19th century France, that there was a massive Jesuit conspiracy to overturn the French Revolution, fight liberalism, and roll-back the Enlightenment. While this iteration of the Grand Conspiracy Theory presented the idea of an enemy with intermediate goals totally different from that of the purported Freemasons/Illuminati conspiracy discussed earlier, it included some very similar ideas about how the Jesuits were planning to take power, and even indicated that the core of the Jesuit conspiracy was made up of amoral usurpers, just like the Illuminati supposedly were. This anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory grew to greatly resemble the anti-Freemason/anti-Illuminati conspiracy theory discussed in previous chapters. One of the main texts discussed in this chapter is *The Secret Plan of the Order*, a classic of anti-Jesuit conspiracy theorizing, which this chapter revealed to be a text likely written as propaganda for the 1845 Sonderbund War in Switzerland. The second part of this chapter focused on the use of this anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory in the Russian propaganda campaign against the Polish January Uprising of 1863; again demonstrating the debt this version of the conspiracy theory has to the propagandists who modified and spread it. The text the *Polish Catechism* discussed in this chapter in connection with this propaganda campaign has relevance as a likely neglected precursor of the *Protocols.*

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 mainly dealt with the emergence and spread of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, arguably the most persistent and deadly variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. These chapters showed how successive variants of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories were ultimately dependent on the Freemason/Illuminati conspiracy theory or the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory described in the previous chapters. These older narratives were mixed with anti-Jewish ideas and also the concerns of various later generations of propagandists and/or conspiracy theorists, such as socialist who hated bankers or those who hated the gold standard. These chapters examine a number of important texts in the history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, such as the *Kniga Kagala* or *La France juive,* and various pieces of propaganda from newspapers, but the main text discussed was the *Protocols.* By researching the political context that the *Protocols* appeared in and the backgrounds of its likely authors, it was also revealed to be a propaganda text, and one dependent on ideas developed in earlier iterations of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, themselves often developed from propaganda.

Chapter 8 also discussed the use of the narrative encapsulated in the *Protocols* in political propaganda against the reforms that came after the Revolution of 1905. This chapter also dealt with the turn to organized violence of some true believers in the massive Jewish conspiracy, as they sought to form their own conspiracy and strike back at their imaginary antagonists.

Chapter 9 focused on the emergence of the Nazis and the special role that the anti-Jewish, Russian-origin version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory had in the development of Hitler's ideology and the actions of the early Nazi party. It paid special attention to the

biographies of some leading figures of the early Nazi party who hailed from the Russian Empire and the organization *Aufbau* which was the midwife of the Nazi party and may have itself participated in violent subversion against the perceived servants of the imaginary Jewish enemy. This chapter presented a glaring example of a version of the Grand Conspiracy theory "escaping" its original context and creating havoc by inspiring violent subversives. While the main focus of this chapter was on the effects of "outdated" Russian propaganda, including the *Protocols*, on the emergence of Nazi ideology and the Nazi's turn to violent subversion with the Beer Hall Putsch, there was some comment on how these ideas influenced the Nazi's later genocidal program and their attempted conquest of Europe.

Chapter 10 turned to the inclusion of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in Soviet ideology, specifically through Lenin's theory of imperialism. While one cannot point to the roots of Lenin's theory of imperialism in a specific previous propaganda campaign, by Lenin's own admission his theory is dependent on *Imperialism* by John A. Hobson. Hobson's ideas about imperialism stemmed from an anti-banker/anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The circumstances surrounding the formulation of Lenin's theory of imperialism and its use in early Soviet propaganda show that Lenin and his companions at the very least saw it as useful in creating propaganda against some of the Bolshevik's enemies (including other socialists) and also probably in excusing their own collaboration with Germany during WWI by arguing for a moral equivalence between Germany and the Allies. Lenin's theory of imperialism argued that the Allies, including Russia's nascent republic, were really under the control of cabals of bankers. As this idea was enshrined in one of Lenin's three major works *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* this version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory became a pillar of Soviet ideology, and was further spread via Soviet propaganda.

Chapter 11 focused on the spread of a few different versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in the Middle East in the mid-20th century and especially on the importance of the Grand Conspiracy theory in Soviet and Nazi propaganda destined for Arabic and Persian-speaking audiences. In addition to a few other conspiracy theories from the Middle East, this chapter examined some adaptations of the Grand Conspiracy Theory likely influenced by Nazi or Soviet propaganda, and how the Grand Conspiracy Theory was adapted for the Middle Eastern context. Special attention was paid to the biography of one of the main interpreters and transmitters of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to Islamic audiences: Hajj Amin al-Husseini. He was a major political/spiritual figure in Palestine as well as a contributor to Nazi propaganda during WWII. This chapter also discussed the radio broadcasts of Nasser's regime in Egypt that also spread word of the Zionist/Imperialist conspiracy. These three propaganda campaigns in the Middle East: Nazi, Soviet, and Nasserite, were all demonstrated to include their own versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

Chapter 12 discussed the ideas of Sayyed Qutb, the key figure in the ideology of radical Sunni Islam, and how he and his successors sought and still seek to wage war against the imaginary Zionist-Crusader alliance which they believe threatens Islam. Qutb's core theory of *jahiliyyah* is his most important innovation, and this chapter demonstrated that it was dependent on a belief in a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, this time a Zionist-Crusader conspiracy

to corrupt Islam. Qutb's theory is in debt to the idea of a grand Jewish conspiracy behind many aspects of modern Western civilization, and cites the *Protocols* and makes references to Jewish conspiracies against Islam several times in his Quran commentary. Qutb believed that this conspiracy was a "living and active organization"[1] armed with a powerful ability to deceive, and that it had infiltrated Islamic lands and corrupted Muslim governments in addition to corrupting the West and spreading sexual immorality. In response to this, Qutb and his close followers planned to violently overthrow the supposedly Muslim government of Egypt (which they believed was actually in the thrall of a massive anti-Islamic conspiracy) and establish a truly Islamic state. This vision is today still championed by the leadership of the terrorist group Al Qaeda, which seeks to strike so violently at the main national "tool" of the conspirators (the United States) that a truly Islamic state could be established in the Middle East, free from their interference.

Chapter 13 analyzed the work of Sayyed Ruhollah Khomeini, the Shi'a who became the leader of revolutionary Iran. After a discussion of some of the kinds of conspiracy theories circulating in Iran before Khomeini announced his theory of *velayat-e faqih,* governance of the jurist, this chapter demonstrated that a belief in a massive, multi-generational Jewish/imperialist conspiracy against Islam is an indispensable part of his theory. Though it is perhaps impossible to detail the precise origins of Khomeini's conspiracism, Khomeini's theory shares remarkable similarities with Qutb's, and this suggests that Khomeini may have been familiar with Qutb's ideas or at least that they shared similar influences, including the anti-Jewish variant of the Grand Conspiracy Theory encapsulated in the *Protocols*. The regime established by Khomeini along with the violent extremist group Lebanese Hizballah which shares Khomeini's theory of *velayat-e faqih* continue to spread propaganda containing the idea of a massive Jewish-imperialist conspiracy against Islam.

Concluding thoughts

This thesis set out to demonstrate the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in propaganda and in extremist ideologies, especially the ideologies of violent subversive groups. At first blush, the pattern that appeared in the research was that propagandists created an imaginary enemy that some other people believed was real, and rebelled against. As mentioned in the introduction and demonstrated throughout the body of the thesis, this rubric is somewhat true but reality is not so simple. This basic pattern is complicated by the fact that many of the most effective propagandists who spread variants of the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory were themselves believers in it. A further complication was that the violent subversives who believed in the Grand Conspiracy Theory did not always remain violent subversives. When they succeeded in taking control of a state, the imaginary enemy did not disappear from their calculations. The Grand Conspiracy Theory was not just a propaganda cudgel dropped by the defenders of throne and altar and later taken up by the Nazis, the Bolsheviks, Qutubists, and others. This thesis has shown that the idea had already been infused into their own ideologies. Three of the four main examples presented in the second half of this thesis, the Nazis, the Bolsheviks, and the followers of Khomeini managed to set up totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian

[1] Sayyed Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 57.

states. Two of them, the Nazis and the Bolsheviks, were the most high-profile dictatorships of the 20th century.

There is insufficient evidence presented here to make a general argument regarding the Grand Conspiracy Theory and the nature of totalitarianism, and this was not a goal of this thesis. In order to make such an argument one would need to seriously study a broader set of regimes in the 20th century, including Mao's in China, probably some south-European fascists, and others. However, one can surely note, based on the evidence presented here, that while the Nazis, Bolsheviks, and Khomeinists had or have very different ideologies with entirely separate and even mutually-antagonistic goals, they all share very similar images of an ultimate enemy that has common roots in the Grand Conspiracy Theory. The Qutubists, e.g. al Qaeda, also share this belief that they face a super-deceptive enemy, and one suspects that they too would not abandon their cherished idea of their imaginary enemy should they ever achieve stable state power and establish an "Islamic state." If they tried to abandon this imaginary enemy they would have to jettison one of the things that justifies their rebellion, the sine-qua-non of Qutb's theory of *jahiliyyah*: the belief in a massive Jewish foe that has been attempting to destroy and subvert Islam for centuries.

Here one should note the major exception to this pattern examined in this thesis, that of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. As chapter 10 stated, this thesis does not argue that any roots of Lenin's extremism lie with the Grand Conspiracy Theory. He was already pushing for violent revolution long before he wrote *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. As chapter 10 showed, the adoption of this idea by Lenin and his Bolsheviks probably had a lot to do with the needs of their faction at the time and the usefulness of the idea for attacking Lenin's ideological enemies, especially non-Bolshevik socialists. Lenin's theory of imperialism was a high-profile pillar of his thought, and it made an important impact on Bolshevik and later Soviet propaganda, and as demonstrated in chapter 11, the USSR helped spread the Grand Conspiracy Theory via its huge propaganda machine.

The usefulness of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to propagandists defending authoritarian governments from the ideological threat of democracy combined with its importance in the ideologies behind major forms of despotism and violent subversion should highlight the importance of studying the history of ideas, even those of defunct political ideologies and the indirect, long-term damage that sclerotic and failing despotisms can do through their propaganda. Indirect because, as this thesis has suggested, the most violent and impactful consequences of their propaganda can take place long after the regime has disappeared. The enduring impact of the *Protocols* is the most glaring example of this.

A way of preventing the emergence of new versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory might be to ensure the preservation of liberal democracies, free countries where there is greater government transparency, independent courts of law, and genuine elections and transfers of power. These societies are the best refutation to the idea that there is a secret cabal manipulating world events and spreading liberal and democratic ideas as part of their world-conquering scheme. Of course, any devotee of the Grand Conspiracy Theory who is looking at a liberal democracy will conclude that the manipulators are always cleverly hidden, manipulating the public from just off-stage. The devotees' obsession with the power of deception means that there is no silver-bullet refutation to the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Nevertheless, real examples

of free societies, free peoples going about their lives without fear of punishment from secret overlords and relatively free from mass manipulation is the best cumulative counter-argument.

This is in no way to imply that democratic countries are immune to the Grand Conspiracy Theory. It is not a focus of this thesis, but recall how the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory flourished in liberal circles in mid-19th century France and Switzerland (see the first part of chapter 5). The narrative of this thesis stops before the widespread use of the internet, and deals hardly at all with US popular culture, which is famously fond of conspiracy theories. This topic- the role of the Grand Conspiracy Theory in American politics and culture and the global impact of American versions of it- is a worthy topic for future study.

This thesis has indicated a potential strategy towards combating the spread of new versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, including in democratic societies: pointing out the importance that propaganda campaigns had in creating and sustaining the Grand Conspiracy Theory over two centuries. After a tradition has been identified, people can be educated to pick out its salient features in new material, and to spot updated versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory as they emerge. In doing so they would rob it of much of its potential persuasive power, and would also perhaps be keyed up to search for underlying propagandistic purposes wrapped in the Grand Conspiracy Theory. If properly educated on the origins of the Grand Conspiracy Theory and its most pernicious versions they would also, of course, to be skeptical towards conspiracy theory texts like the *Protocols* or Jacopo Leone's *Secret Plan of the Order* which are both evidently propagandistic documents once one examines their original context.

Attempts to use this insight about the origins of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to persuade hard-core true believers in it to abandon their cherished conspiracist narratives may be a fool's errand, given their mental preparation to see massive deceptions everywhere. Even the evidence in this thesis, with citations from books available in every library and also from disintegrating newspapers sitting on neglected shelves in Eastern Europe, would doubtless be considered part of a massive conspiracy to cover the tracks of the "real" massive deception. However, it may help to persuade those on the fence, those in danger of radicalization, by presenting the Grand Conspiracy Theory for the long-term lie that it is, and in the process to discredit the ideologies that have embraced it. For example, pointing out the importance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to modern Islamist extremists shows them to be dupes of propaganda campaigns from long-defunct European regimes rather than true-believing jihadists acting out the basic commandments of their faith. Ditto for some "white nationalist" and "anti-elite" conspiracists that have embraced 19th century propaganda narratives created to defend elites of the 19th century. Furthermore, by recognizing the importance of the enemy at the center of the Grand Conspiracy Theory analysts may shed light on the motivations of extremists engaged in violent subversion, helping to better understand their target selection, their goals, and the strategy behind what might seem to a normal person to be random acts of horrific violence.

A further conclusion suggested by this thesis, a troubling one, is that much of the ideology and some of the most important goals of some extremist groups may only be marginally connected to real grievances that can be allayed or even deep disagreements which might still provide a basis for eventual compromise or appeasement. To paraphrase and criticize two truisms often bandied about in discussions of extremism: it may not be that they "hate us for who we are," or hate us for "what we have done." While real grievances might contribute to the

acceptance of some version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, once one has embraced the idea of the massive imaginary enemy thoughts of compromise look like thoughts of surrender, and any number of concessions or actions to ameliorate grievances can be interpreted as ploys of the great enemy. Furthermore, true-believing, violent, and motivated opponents of this imaginary enemy will pursue it and its servants to the ends of the earth if they can – and they have in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and even more recently in spectacular attacks in Western Europe and the Americas. One could make this argument, for example, about the Nazis (angry at the Treaty of Versailles, but also obsessed with the Judeo-Bolshevik/Judeo-Masonic conspiracy) Al Qaeda and other similar radical Sunni groups (perhaps angry about something Israel has done but also obsessed with Sayyed Qutb's anti-Jewish conspiracy theory) or the extremist Shi'a rulers of present-day Iran (angry about past European imperialism but also obsessed with a conspiracy theory about an imperialist/Jewish plot to corrupt Islam).

This thesis did not attempt to present a comprehensive explanation for political violence, but one suspects that if one examines the ideas of many modern violent extremist groups not included in this thesis, one will also find that the Grand Conspiracy Theory plays a crucial role in several of them. For further research, the ideas of present-day right-wing extremists groups in the United States and some of the left-wing groups behind the wave of terrorism in the early 70s are low-hanging fruit.[2] For the left-wing extremists, there is Lenin's theory of imperialism to connect them to the Grand Conspiracy Theory. Among right-wing extremists in the United States and Europe there appears to be a continuing fascination with Nazi ideas that goes beyond iconography. It may have escaped the reader's notice, but chapter 7 cited a translation of an essay by Dietrich Eckart, one of Hitler's intellectual mentors.[3] This essay was translated by William Luther Pierce, the American right-wing anti-Jewish radical best known for writing *The Turner Diaries*, a novel popular among right-wing extremists in the United States.

While many of the ideas connected to the Grand Conspiracy Theory are pseudo-intellectual, paranoid, foolish, even stupid, this thesis has nevertheless demonstrated that they are relevant, especially to understanding the history of ideas, the strategies behind certain kinds of propaganda, and the origins of several major political ideologies. Examining the development and spread of conspiracy theories as political acts has led to interesting research findings, especially regarding the origins and purpose of certain malignant political ideas. By paying attention to ideas that were "mainstream" for a time in certain states and societies this study was able to illuminate the contributions that a certain kind of propaganda has had on intellectual history. This research was able to emphasize some important texts and traditions which have been mostly ignored by scholarship due to their present-day obscurity and the fact that they are often outdated propaganda. This is not in any way to diminish the utility of studying the creation and spread of conspiracy theories in the present day, under the conditions of free societies, or of sociological, biological, and even financial and demographic studies of the roots of conspiracy theories, political repression and violence. The author hopes that this research will help inform

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[2] A good starting place for this would be the 5th chapter of Laurent Murawiec's *The Mind of Jihad,* which deals with early Soviet attempts to spark anti-imperialist revolution in the Middle East. See Laurent Murawiec, *The Mind of Jihad,* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[3] See footnote 135, chapter 7: Deitrich Eckart, *Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin: A Dialogue Between Adolf Hitler and Me*, Dr. William Pierce trans. Available at: http://library.flawlesslogic.com/eckart_1.htm. Accessed Feb 13, 2019.

those working in other disciplines as well as historians and political theorists, and highlight for all of them the important effects that successive propaganda campaigns and paranoid writers and leaders have had on modern history. If one is to distill a single epigram from this research, perhaps it should be: ideas have consequences, especially bad ideas.

The tradition identified in this thesis as the Grand Conspiracy Theory, far from being a defunct and marginal idea consigned to the dustbin of history, is living and active. It is still shaping politics and motivating political violence, and is an important idea to understand several strains of extremist ideology, some of which are still threats to peace. An understanding of its origins and core tenants should allow us to recognize and oppose it in its nascent forms, including when it is used in propaganda, and hopefully to help us devise ways to limit its impact.

Summary

Since at least the time of the French Revolution there has been an identifiable tradition of conspiracy theorizing that posits the existence of a powerful secret network that has either taken over the world or is about to take over the world through deception under the guise of championing enlightenment, freedom, self-government, and liberalism. This thesis charts the development of this idea - called the Grand Conspiracy Theory - and examines some of the impact of this idea and demonstrates that it is a cohesive tradition that has had a decisive impact on world affairs. This is especially evident in its role in inspiring violent subversive groups to engage in "counter-conspiracies" against the evil imaginary enemy. This thesis also establishes the crucial importance of propaganda campaigns in shaping and spreading the idea of the Grand Conspiracy Theory.

In order to demonstrate that it is a cohesive tradition this thesis provides a history of the Grand Conspiracy Theory, with a special focus on the crucial contribution of propaganda campaigns to its development. This thesis then proceeds to show that this idea has been incorporated into the core ideologies of several important extremist groups.

The Grand Conspiracy Theory follows some of the basic patterns of "palace conspiracy" narratives, which could also be called conspiracy theories for the age of monarchy. These involve stories of deceptive usurpers who are reigning in the "true" king's stead and the idea that a supposedly sovereign king could become captive of a clique which manipulates him, using deception to usurp power indirectly. The Grand Conspiracy Theory takes these narratives and applies them on a massive scale - not positing a deception to fool one king or fool the people that one man is not who he presents himself to be (events are both within the realm of historical experience) but rather to manipulate entire populations through deception in supposedly "free" societies.

The earliest appearance of the Grand Conspiracy Theory discussed herein is in an Austrian propaganda response to the French Revolution in the early 1790s. Under the patronage of the Austrian Emperor, the writer Leopold Hoffmann organized a journal, the *Wiener Zeitschrift*, that championed the idea that the French Revolution was the work of the Bavarian Illuminati, a then-defunct secret society that had caused a scandal in Germany some years before. Hoffmann argued that the Illuminati had re-constituted itself and had begun its plan to destroy all governments and all religion in Europe by revolutionizing peoples with the false-songs of liberty and equality. The Illuminati penetration of the Freemason societies had supposedly facilitated this plot.

Hoffman's ideological legacy was taken up by later writers, most notably Augustin Barruel and John Robison, who wrote very popular books that spread the idea of an Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy to take over the world under the guise of spreading enlightenment and democracy. Eventually, versions of these ideas were incorporated into an influential idea that there were Italian and Prussian secret societies that were either analogous to, allied with, or subordinate to the larger Illuminati/Freemason Grand Conspiracy against all governments and true religion. A version of this idea was believed by the Emperor Alexander Ist of Russia and the Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich. Metternich used his influence to have the idea of a massive global anti-Christian, anti-legitimate-government conspiracy included in the 1821 papal bull *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo,* further elevating the profile and spread of the

Grand Conspiracy Theory. Interestingly, around the same time a pair of Anglo-Swiss nobles in Switzerland were planning a (stymied) rebellion against the Austrian Empire, believing that it had come under the control of the Illuminati.

By the early 19th century, anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories had been circulating for hundreds of years, but in the mid-19th century anti-Jesuit conspiratorial narratives began to pick up aspects of and even to merge with the Grand Conspiracy Theory. While anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories tended to show up in more liberal circles in Western Europe, the inherent usefulness of this idea to propagandists, especially propagandists of absolutism, is evident in its adoption by Russian propagandists militating against the Polish rebellion of 1863. The centerpiece of this anti-Polish campaign was the *Polish Catechism*, a document which purported to be a captured Jesuit plan to destroy Russia through Polish subversion. This document is an unacknowledged precursor of the more infamous anti-Jewish text, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

This Russian version of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy theory was likely adapted as an anti-Jewish conspiracy by Jacob Brafman, who popularized in Russia the idea of a massive global conspiracy of *Kahal* (traditional Jewish local self-government in Eastern Europe). In Western Europe the Illuminati/Freemason version of the Grand Conspiracy theory had also been adopted to include anti-Jewish elements, either painting a Jewish conspiracy as a powerfull ally of the Illuminati/Freemason conspiracy or as the actual leaders of the conspiracy. Joseph de Maistre, among others, contributed to this tradition, but it also appeared in Portugal in 1821 in more run-of-the-mill anti-republican propaganda. During this era the utility of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to propagandists attacking republican government and liberalism is quite evident, as the existence of such a powerful anti-Christian network would make “safe” liberal reforms impossible, as they would play into the hands of the malign conspiracy.

The increasing prominence of Jewish bankers allowed rumors of their influence to be incorporated into narratives of a massive Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in the latter half of the 19th century. Some partisans of Tsarism and enemies of economic and political reform found the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory persuasive, and began to incorporate it into propaganda against reform in the Russian Empire. The most notorious document from this trend is the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which purported to be the secret plans of the Jews to take over the world by using Freemasons, liberalism, capitalism, socialism, and democratic reform. Placed in its original context the *Protocols* is evidently a thinly-veiled paean to Russian absolutist government. This document and the narrative it supported were widely used by pro-Tsarist propagandists responding to the Revolution of 1905 with the support of the Russian state, increasing the idea’s reach. Their propaganda pushed the idea of a massive imaginary Jewish enemy, one that was manipulating Russia, indeed, manipulating the world.

After tracing the development of the idea of this imaginary enemy, this super-powerful conspiracy that was developed by generations of propagandists, the second part of this thesis is primarily concerned with the way this idea influenced and inspired subversive extremist groups in the 20th and 21st centuries, beginning with Leninism.

In WWI Vladimir Lenin embraced the anti-Jewish conspiracy theory of the English liberal writer John A. Hobson to explain the survival of capitalism through imperialism and the choices of many of Lenin’s fellow socialists. Hobson believed that small cliques of Jewish bankers controlled each of the major powers, including the supposedly democratic ones, and

conspiratorially manipulated their governments and populations into supporting imperialist adventures that would be profitable to these Jewish bankers. Lenin took this idea shorn of its anti-Jewish elements and integrated it into Bolshevik ideology through his theory of imperialism. One of Lenin's best-known works *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* is an exposition on this idea and demonstrates how a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory became an essential part of Bolshevik - and therefore Soviet - ideology. In the run-up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Bolshevik coup of October 1917 Lenin and his followers used Lenin's theory of imperialism to attack the Allied powers as being faux-democratic and the Russian republic as being the servant of a conspiracy of bankers. The Bolsheviks were helped in these propagandistic and subversive efforts by secret German aid. Lenin's theory of imperialism was also a major part of one of Lenin's other major works *The State and Revolution*.

Meanwhile in Germany, some emigres from the Russian Empire were instrumental in the formation of the Nazi party. A group of them coalesced in Munich and founded an organization *Aufbau* as part of an effort to overthrow the Soviet regime, but eventually became involved in subversion against the new German republic. The leader of this organization, Ludwig Maximilian Erwin von Scheubner-Richter (who grew up in the Russian Empire) became one of Hitler's mentors as did another member of the organization Alfred Rosenberg (who was from Tallinn, also in the Russian Empire.) Both of these men were instrumental in transmitting the Tsarist era Judeo-Masonic version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory to Hitler. *Aufbau* was an important contributor to the formation of the early Nazi party and an examination of the organization's journal *Aufbau-Korrespondenz* reveals how they adapted a Russian-origin conspiracy theory to German conditions. Scheubner-Richter and Rosenberg encouraged Hitler to attempt his failed 1923 coup known as the Beer Hall Putsch. Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* while he was in prison following this attempted coup, and in that book one can see how Hitler blended the Judeo-Masonic/Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy theory with more racialist strains of thought. The imaginary enemy of the massive international Jewish conspiracy pushing communism and capitalism remained the primary antagonist in Hitler's mind and in Nazi ideology till the end of WWII. Eventually this belief contributed to his decision to attempt to annihilate the Jews.

Both the Nazi and the Soviet regime broadcast propaganda into the Middle East that spread both of their mirror-image conspiracy theories, both positing that the West was under the control of shadowy forces (either a Jewish conspiracy or a conspiracy of imperialist bankers). Nazi propaganda in Arabic in particular emphasized that there was a massive multi-generational Jewish conspiracy against Islam that had successfully corrupted Islam and was manipulating Western powers to do its bidding in the Middle East. One of the champions for this idea was Hajj Amin al-Husseini, a Palestinian leader who worked for Nazi radio propaganda efforts during the War. Soviet propaganda tended to emphasize that Zionism was a servant of a Western conspiracy of imperialist finance capital, and that the creation of Israel was part of a wider anti-Arab plan in the Middle East. Many of the ideas spread by Nazi and Soviet propaganda can subsequently be found in Nasserist radio propaganda from the 1950s, emerging from a nationalist Egypt.

These ideas can later be seen in prominent radical strains of both Sunni and Shi'a Islam. Sayyed Qutb, a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and a disillusioned former supporter of Nasser's revolution in Egypt, made the anti-Jewish version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory a pillar of his theology via his idea of modern *jahiliyyah* - positing that the

Islamic world was under the influence of a multi-generational Jewish anti-Islamic conspiracy. This idea is especially evident in his multi-volume Quran commentary. Qutb himself organized a violent subversive group to strike against the Egyptian government, which he and his followers believed was under the control of a Jewish/imperialist conspiracy. After his execution for plotting this subversive activity, some of his successors have continued organizing subversive attacks against the imaginary enemy of the Grand Conspiracy Theory that they believe is actively corrupting Islam. The leaders of Al Qaeda - Usama Bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri - were/are carrying on this tradition in the dramatic attacks of Al Qaeda on Western targets. Al Qaeda's strategy, as stated by the founders, is directed against the US and the supposed secret Jewish world government that controls it.

The Iranian cleric Ruhollah Khomeini also integrated a version of the Grand Conspiracy Theory into his ideology. He maintained that his novel idea of the "guardianship of the jurist" (*velayat-e-faqih*) - the idea that Islamic clerics should be the heads of state - was not novel, but was in fact the original plan set out by the prophet Mohammed. Khomeini explained the apparent lack of historical precedent for *velayat-e-faqih* by insisting that a massive Jewish conspiracy against Islam had been operating for centuries, aided in the last three centuries by a more recent imperialist conspiracy against Islam. The evil works of these conspiracies and the need to combat them are laid out in his seminal work *Governance of the Jurist,* which remains a key ideological text of the current Iranian regime.

The crucial role that various versions of the Grand Conspiracy Theory played in these four major extremist ideologies is demonstrated in this thesis, mainly through a close reading of some of the aforementioned foundational ideological texts of these groups and an examination of their propaganda. This reveals the important role that earlier propaganda campaigns from now-defunct regimes still have today and also indicates a relationship between belief in a massive super-powerful conspiracy and a turn towards subversive violence.

Samenvatting (Dutch summary)

Sinds ten minste de Franse Revolutie is er een duidelijk aanwijsbare traditie van complottheorieën ontstaan die het bestaan van een krachtig geheim netwerk suggereert, dat de wereld overneemt of op het punt staat om de wereld over te nemen onder het mom van het verdedigen van verlichting, vrijheid, zelfbestuur en liberalisme. Dit proefschrift beschrijft de ontwikkeling van dit idee – de Grote Complottheorie genoemd – en onderzoekt de impact hiervan. Daarnaast demonstreert het dat er een samenhangende traditie bestaat die een beslissende invloed heeft gehad op wereldzaken. Dit is voornamelijk duidelijk in zijn rol bij het inspireren van gewelddadige en ondermijnende groepen om deel te nemen aan ‘’tegen-complottheorieën’’ tegen de kwaadaardige en denkbeeldige vijand. Dit proefschrift bevestigt ook het cruciale belang van propagandacampagnes bij het vormen en verspreiden van het idee van de Grote Complottheorie.

Om aan te tonen dat dit een samenhangende traditie is, biedt dit proefschrift een geschiedenis van de Grote Complottheorie, met een speciale aandacht voor de cruciale bijdrage van propagandacampagnes aan de ontwikkeling ervan. Dit proefschrift laat vervolgens zien dat dit idee is opgenomen in de kern van ideologieën, die betrekking hebben op verschillende belangrijke extremistische groepen.

De Grote Complottheorie volgt ook enkele basispatronen van verhalen over ‘’paleis-samenzweringen’’, die voor een tijdperk van de monarchie ook complottheorieën kunnen worden genoemd. Deze omvatten verhalen van misleidende usurpatoren, die regeren in plaats van de ‘ware’ koning, en het idee dat een zogenaamde soevereine koning gevangengenomen zou kunnen worden door een bepaalde groep die hem manipuleert, met behulp van misleiding om zich indirect de macht toe te eigenen. De Grote Complottheorie gebruikt deze verhalen en past ze op grote schaal toe – zonder daarbij een misleiding te vormen door één koning of alle mensen voor de gek te houden door te stellen dat één man niet is wie hij is, maar eerder door volledige populaties te manipuleren middels misleiding in zogenaamde ‘vrije’ samenlevingen.

De vroegste verschijning van de Grote Complottheorie die in dit proefschrift wordt besproken, is een Oostenrijkse reactie op propaganda met betrekking tot de Franse Revolutie in de vroege jaren van 1790. Onder het beschermheerschap van de Oostenrijkse keizer organiseerde de schrijver Leopold Hoffman een tijdschrift genaamd *Wiener Zeitschrift*. Dit tijdschrift verdedigde de opvatting dat de Franse Revolutie het werk was van de Beierse Illuminatie, een geheim genootschap dat jaren daarvoor in Duitsland een schandaal had veroorzaakt. Hoffmann betoogde dat de Illuminatie zichzelf opnieuw had gevormd en was begonnen met een plan om alle regeringen en religies in Europa te vernietigen, door een revolutie teweeg te brengen onder de mensen door middel van valse liederen over vrijheid en gelijkheid. Het binnentreden van de Illuminatie bij de vrijmetselaarsverenigingen zou dit complot hebben vergemakkelijkt.

De ideologische erfenis van Hoffman werd overgenomen door latere schrijvers, met name Augustin Barruel en John Robison, die zeer populaire boeken schreven die het idee verspreidden van een Illuminatie/Vrijmetselaar-samenzwering, om de wereld

over te nemen onder het mom van het verspreiden van de Verlichting en de democratie. Deze versies werden uiteindelijk opgenomen in een invloedrijk idee dat er Italiaanse en Pruisische geheime genootschappen bestonden die analoog waren aan, verbonden waren met of ondergeschikt waren aan de grotere Illuminatie/Vrijmetselaar Grote Complottheorie tegen alle regeringen en ware religie. Een versie van deze opvatting was geloofwaardig voor keizer Alexander I van Rusland en de Oostenrijkse staatsman Klemens von Mettternich. Metternich gebruikte zijn invloed voor het idee van een massale wereldwijde antichristelijke, anti-legitieme-overheid samenzwering in de pauselijke bul *Ecclesiam a Jesu Cristo* van 1821, waardoor het inhoudelijke profiel en de verspreiding van de Grote Complottheorie werd verbeterd. Interessant is dat rond dezelfde tijd enkele Anglo-Zwitserse edelen in Zwitserland een opstand tegen het Oostenrijkse rijk planden, in de overtuiging dat het onder controle van de Illuminatie was.

Tegen het begin van de 19e eeuw circuleerden er al honderden jaren anti-jezuïtische samenzweringstheorieën, maar in het midden van de 19e eeuw begonnen deze samenzweerderige verhalen aspecten van de Grote Complottheorie op te pikken en zelfs samen te voegen. Terwijl de anti-jezuïtische samenzweringen de neiging hadden om in meer liberale kringen in West-Europa te verschijnen, is het inherente nut van dit idee voor propagandisten, en dan voornamelijk propagandisten van het absolutisme, evident voor de opname door Russische propagandisten die zich verzetten tegen de Poolse opstand van 1863. Het middelput van deze anti-Poolse campagne was de Poolse Catechismus, een document dat beweerde een vastgelegd plan van de Jezuïeten te zijn om Rusland te vernietigen door middel van Poolse omverwerping. Dit document is een niet-erkende voorloper van de meer beruchte anti-Joodse tekst, de *Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

Deze Russische versie van de anti-jezuïtische samenzweringstheorie werd waarschijnlijk aangepast naar een anti-Joodse samenzwering door Jacob Brafman, die het idee van een massale wereldwijde samenzwering van Kahal (een traditioneel Joods lokaal zelfbestuur in Oost-Europe) populair maakte. In West Europa was de Illuminatie/Vrijmetselaarsversie van de Grote Complottheorie ook overgenomen om anti-Joodse elementen te bevatten, ofwel voor het afschilderen van een Joodse samenzwering als een krachtige bondgenoot van de Illuminatie/Vrijmetselaarsamenzwering of als de feitelijke leider van de samenzwering. Onder andere Joseph de Maistre droeg bij aan deze traditie, maar het verscheen ook in Portugal in 1821 in steeds meer gangbare anti-republikeinse propaganda. In deze periode is het nut van de Grote Complottheorie voor propagandisten die het liberalisme aanvallen heel duidelijk, omdat het bestaan van een dergelijk antichristelijk netwerk ‘’veilige’’ liberale hervormingen onmogelijk zou maken en de kwaadaardige samenzwering ten goede komen.

Door de toenemende bekendheid van Joodse bankiers konden de geruchten over hun invloed worden verwerkt in verhalen over een massale Joods-maçonnieke complottheorie in de tweede helft van de 19e eeuw. Enkele aanhangers van tsarisme en vijanden van economische en politieke hervormingen, vonden het idee van een joods-maçonnieke samenzweringstheorie overtuigend en begonnen het op te nemen in propaganda tegen hervormingen in het Russische rijk. Het meest beruchte document

van deze trend is de *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* dat beweerden de geheime plannen van de Joden te zijn om de wereld over te nemen door vrijmetselaars, liberalisme, kapitalisme, socialisme en democratische hervormingen te gebruiken. Deze protocollen zijn in hun oorspronkelijke context duidelijk een dun verhulde lofzang voor de Russische absolutistische regering. Dit document, en het verhaal dat het ondersteunde, werden op grote schaal gebruikt door pro-tsaristische propagandisten die op de revolutie van 1905 reageerden met de steun van de Russische staat. Het bereik van hun ideeën werd hierdoor vergroot. Deze propaganda zette het idee van een grote denkbeeldige Joodse vijand voort die Rusland manipuleerde en, inderdaad, de wereld manipuleerde.

Na het volgen van de ontwikkeling van het idee van deze denkbeeldige vijand, een superkrachtige samenzwering die werd ontwikkeld door generaties van propagandisten, gaat het tweede deel van dit proefschrift voornamelijk over de manier waarop dit idee ondermijnende extremistische groepen in de 20e en 21 eeuw beïnvloedde en inspireerde, beginnend met het Leninisme.

In de Eerste Wereldoorlog omarmde Lenig de anti-Joodse samenzweringstheorie van de Engelse liberale schrijver John A. Hobson, om het voortbestaan van kapitalisme door het imperialisme, en de keuzes van veel collega-socialisten van Lenin, te verklaren. Hobson geloofde dat kleine groepen Joodse bankiers elk van de grote mogendheden beheersten, inclusief de vermoedelijk democratische, en samenzweerderig hun regeringen en bevolkingen manipuleerden om imperialistische avonturen te ondersteunen die voordelig zouden zijn voor deze bankiers. Lenin volgde dit idee en integreerde het in zijn bolsjewistische ideologie middels zijn theorie van het imperialisme. Een van Lenins best bekende werken *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* is een uiteenzetting van dit idee en laat zien hoe een versie van de Grote Complottheorie een essentieel onderdeel is geworden van de bolsjewistische ideologie. In de aanloop naar de Russische Revolutie van 1917, en de bolsjewistische staatsgreep van oktober 1917, gebruikten Lenin en zijn volgelingen de theorie van het imperialisme van Lenin om de geallieerden machten aan te vallen als niet-democratisch en de Russische republiek als dienaar van een samenzwering van bankiers. De Bolsjewieken werden geholpen in deze ondermijnende en propagerende inspanningen door geheime Duitse hulp. De theorie van Lenin over het imperialisme speelt ook een grote rol in een ander groot werk van Lenin, namelijk in *The State and Revolution.*

Ondertussen waren er in Duitsland enkele emigranten uit het Russische rijk behulpzaam bij de vorming van de nazipartij. Een deel van hen kwam samen in München en richtte de organisatie *Aufbau* op als onderdeel van de poging om het Sovjetregime omver te werpen. De organisatie raakte echter betrokken bij een ondermijning tegen de nieuwe Duitse republiek. De leider van deze organisatie, Ludwig Maximilian Erwin von Scheubner-Richter (die opgroeide in het Russische rijk), werd een van Hitler's mentoren, net als een ander lid van de organisatie Alfred Rosenberh (die ook uit het Russische rijk kwam). Beide mannen droegen bij aan het overbrengen van de Joods-maçonnieke versie van de tsaristische periode van de Grote Complottheorie naar Hitler. *Aufbau* leverde een belangrijke bijdrage aan de vorming van de nazipartij en een onderzoek van het tijdschrift van de organisatie, de *Aufbau Korrespondenz*, onthulde hoe zij een complottheorie van Russische oorsprong hadden aangepast aan de Duitse

omstandigheden. Scheubner-Richter and Rosenberg moedigden Hitler aan om zijn mislukte staatsgreep van 1923 te proberen. Hitler schreef *Mein Kampf* terwijl hij in de gevangenis zat na deze poging tot een staatsgreep en in dat boek is goed te zien hoe Hitler de Joods-maçonnieke/Joods-Bolsjewistische samenzweringstheorie combineerde met meer racistische gedachten. De denkbeeldige vijand van de massale internationale Joodse samenzwering die het kapitalisme en het communisme voedde, bleef tot het einde van de Tweede Wereldoorlog de primaire tegenstander in Hitler's geest en in de nazi-ideologie.

Zowel de nazi's als het Sovjetregime zonden propaganda uit naar het Midden-Oosten, die beide samenzweringstheorieën verspreidden en stelden dat het Westen onder de controle lag van schaduwkrachten (ofwel een Joodse samenzwering of een samenzwering van imperialistische bankiers). Vooral de nazipropaganda in het Arabisch benadrukte dat er een massale Joodse samenzwering tegen de islam was, die met succes de islam had gecorrumpeerd en westerse machten manipuleerde om te doen wat zij wilden in het Midden-Oosten. Een van de grote voorvechters voor dit idee was Hajj Amin al-Husseini, een Palestijnse leider die tijdens de oorlog voor de nazi-radiopropaganda werkte. De Sovjetpropaganda had de neiging te benadrukken dat het zionisme een dienaar was van een westerse samenzwering van imperialistisch financieel kapitaal en dat de oprichting van Israël deel uitmaakte van een breed anti-Arabisch plan in het Midden-Oosten. Veel van de ideeën die door nazi- en Sovjetpropaganda worden verspreid, kunnen hierop volgend worden gevonden in Nasseristische radiopropaganda uit de jaren 1950 die voortkomen uit een nationalistisch Egypte.

Deze ideeën kunnen later worden gezien in prominente radicale stammen van zowel de soennieten als de sjiieten. Sayyed Qutb, een lid van de Egyptische Moslimbroederschap en een gedesillusioneerde voormalig voorstander van de revolutie van Nasser in Egypte, maakte van de anti-Joodse versie van de Grote Complottheorie een pijler voor zijn theologie via zijn idee van moderne *jahiliyyah* – bewerend dat de islamitische wereld onder invloed was van een Joodse anti-islamitische samenzwering van meerdere generaties. Dit idee komt vooral naar voren in zijn Koran commentaar. Qutb organiseerde zelf een gewelddadige en ondermijnende groep om tegen de Egyptische regering te staken, waarvan hij en zijn volgelingen vonden dat deze onder controle stond van een Joodse/imperialistische samenzwering. Na zijn executie voor het in kaart brengen van dit soort ondermijnende activiteiten, zijn er enkele opvolgers van hem doorgegaan met het organiseren van dit soort aanvallen op de denkbeeldige vijanden van de Grote Complottheorie, die volgens hen de islam actief corrumpeert. De leiders van Al Qaida – Usama bin Laden en Ayma al-Zawahiri – zetten deze traditie voort door aanvallen van Al Qaida op westerse doelen. De strategie van Al Qaida, is gericht tegen de VS en de veronderstelde geheime Joodse wereldregering die deze controleert.

De Iraanse geestelijke Ruhollah Khomeini introduceerde ook een versie van de Grote Complottheorie in zijn ideologie. Hij beweerde dat zijn nieuwe idee van *velayat-e-faqih* – het idee dat islamitische geestelijken staatshoofden zouden moeten zijn – niet nieuw was, maar dat dit in feite het oorspronkelijke plan was van de profeet Mohammed.

Khomeini verklaarde het gebrek aan historisch precedent voor *velayat-e-faqih* door de nadruk te leggen op het feit dat de massale Joodse samenzwering tegen de islam al eeuwen bezig was en het zou in de laatste drie eeuwen geholpen zijn door een recentere imperialistische samenzwering tegen de islam. De kwaadaardige werkzaamheden van deze samenzweringen, en de noodzaak om er tegen te strijden, worden uiteengezet in zijn baanbrekende werk *Governance of the jurist* en dit blijft een belangrijke ideologische tekst van het huidige Iraanse regime.

Dit proefschrift toont de cruciale rol die de verschillende versies van de Grote complottheorie spelen aan in vier grote extremistische ideologieën, voornamelijk door een aantal van de bovengenoemde fundamentele ideologische teksten van deze groepen nauwkeurig te lezen en hun propaganda de onderzoeken. Het onthult de belangrijke rol die eerdere propagandacampagnes van de inmiddels ter ziele gegane regimes vandaag de dag nog steeds hebben, en het duidt op een verband tussen geloof in een massale superkrachtige samenzwering en een wending naar ondermijnend geweld.

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Curriculum Vitae

Andrew Fink received his BA from the University of Pennsylvania (2007) and his MA from the School of Oriental and African Studies (2013). He is an American consultant and analyst. In November 2015 Andrew became an external PhD candidate at the Leiden Law School of Leiden University. Before beginning PhD studies he worked as a defense contractor in the US and Afghanistan and also as a political analyst. He holds a patent in a defense technology and has also occasionally published articles concerning political and naval affairs.