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## **The importance of conspiracy theory in extremist ideology and propaganda**

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## 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.”<sup>1</sup>*

- 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.”<sup>2</sup>*

- 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...”<sup>3</sup>*

- 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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](http://dugward.ru/library/katkov/katkov_sovpadeniye.html).

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> Also, as discussed in chapter 2, the Jesuits had been tied to the crime of regicide,<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.”<sup>10</sup> 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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<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> Burke, Location 5226.

<sup>7</sup> “Introduction,” in *Jesuit Education and The Classics*, Edmund Cueva, Shannon Bryne, and Frederick Benda eds., (Cambridge Scholars, 2009), p. ix.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> Juan de Mariana, p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 186.

equally believed by their enemies, both Catholics and Protestants.”<sup>11</sup> Bayle listed examples of slander, such as tales of the Jesuits refusing to accept the bishops the Pope himself sent to China,<sup>12</sup> Jesuits rampantly impregnating nuns,<sup>13</sup> Jesuits trying to poison the Holy Roman emperor at communion,<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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.<sup>16</sup> 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,<sup>17</sup> but it has continued to be republished and referenced right up to the present day.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup> 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.”<sup>20</sup>

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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<sup>11</sup> Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 177.

<sup>12</sup> Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 183.

<sup>13</sup> Bayle, Vol. 2, pp. 177-178.

<sup>14</sup> Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 180.

<sup>15</sup> Bayle, Vol. 2, p. 179.

<sup>16</sup> For an example English translation see W. C. Brownlee, *Secret Instructions of The Jesuits*, (New York: American and Foreign Christian Union, 1857.)

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> Robert W. Shaffern, “Jansenist Controversy,” in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism: A-L*, (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), pp. 683-684.

<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> 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 passé à 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.<sup>22</sup> 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”<sup>23</sup> 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.”<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> Later in the book the author even published the allegation that there was a clandestine “...union between Jansenists and the Calvinists...”<sup>26</sup> 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 Sacrement de l'Autel dans leurs Liures* (Port-Royal and Geneva in league against the most Blessed

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

<sup>22</sup> 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.

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

<sup>24</sup> Filleau, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> Filleau, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Filleau, p. 46.

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

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.<sup>31</sup>

## 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).<sup>32</sup>

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.<sup>33</sup> 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,<sup>34</sup> which had organized public demonstrations in favor of Louis XVII before the Restoration.<sup>35</sup> 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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<sup>27</sup> Bernard Meynier, *Le Port-Royal et Geneve D'intelligence, Contre le Tres-Saint Sacrament de l'Autel dans leurs Liures*, (Paris: Chez Antonie Padelov, 1656), pp. 14 - 16.

<sup>28</sup> Betts, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> Translation of the title from *The Cambridge Companion to Pascal*, Nicholas Hammond Ed., (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 194.

<sup>30</sup> Pascal, Location 3645-3654.

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan Wright and Jeffrey D. Burson, “Introduction: Towards a New History of the Eighteenth-Century Jesuit Suppression in Global Context,” in *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context: Causes, Events, and Consequences*, Jonathan Wright and Jeffrey D. Burson eds., (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> Geoffrey Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France*, (Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> Cibitt, pp. 19-20.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Tombs, *France 1814 - 1914*, (Routledge, 2014), p. 92.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas D. Beck, *French Legislators, 1800-1834: A Study in Quantitative History*, (University of California Press, 1974), p. 53.



Illuminati,<sup>36</sup> and was actually afraid that Metternich would be angered by his implicit criticisms of the Jesuits.<sup>37</sup> 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 Balzac, and turned the deservedly great historian Michelet into a vulgar anti-Jesuit propagandist."<sup>38</sup>

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.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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.<sup>41</sup> 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'."<sup>42</sup>

One of the primary organs spreading anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories in Restoration-era France was the newspaper *Le Constitutionnel*.<sup>43</sup> *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.<sup>44</sup> 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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<sup>36</sup> Hammer-Purgstall, *The History of the Assassins*, p. 60.

<sup>37</sup> Hammer-Purgstall, *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Erinnerungen und Briefe*, p. 123.

<sup>38</sup> 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 .

<sup>39</sup> Cibitt, p. 67.

<sup>40</sup> Tombs, p. 92.

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> From Geoffrey Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 23, quoting J. Michelet and E. Quinet, *Des Jesuites*, 7th edition, (Paris, 1845), p. 22.

<sup>43</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 67.

<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup>

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.<sup>46</sup> (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 ...”<sup>47</sup> 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....”<sup>48</sup>

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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<sup>45</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, *Cults and Conspiracies, a Literary History*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), Kindle Edition, Locations 2546-2594.

<sup>46</sup> A. De Lamartine, *Historie de la Restauration*, (Brussels: 1853), Vol. 8, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror*, Location 5986. Quoting A. De Lamartine, *Historie de la Restauration*, (Brussels: 1853), Vol 8, p. 44.

<sup>48</sup> F. Genin, *Les Jesuites et L'Universite*, (Paris: Paulin, 1844), pp. 42-44.

from 1824-1828.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> 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.”<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup> 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<sup>54</sup> Barruel claimed that the destruction of the Jesuits was an essential part of the Philosophe conspirators “plan of overwhelming the Christian religion...”<sup>55</sup> 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

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<sup>49</sup> Tombs, p. 136.

<sup>50</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 107.

<sup>51</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>52</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 147.

<sup>53</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, George Schwab trans., (The University of Chicago Press, 2007), Kindle Edition, Location 894.

<sup>54</sup> This was during the time when the Jesuits were suppressed.

<sup>55</sup> 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.”<sup>56</sup> 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.”<sup>57</sup>

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.<sup>58</sup> “...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...”<sup>59</sup>

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.<sup>60</sup> 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 Eudamionist 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.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup>

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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<sup>56</sup> Joseph De Maistre, *Lettres et Opuscules Inédits Du Comte Joseph De Maistre*, (Paris: A. Vatou, 1851), Vol. 2, p. 341

<sup>57</sup> “Interieur,” in *Le Constitutionnel*, (Paris) 11 December 1824, p. 2, column 2.

<sup>58</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 35.

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

<sup>60</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 62.

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

<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup> 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.”<sup>64</sup>

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.<sup>65</sup> 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.”<sup>66</sup>

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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<sup>63</sup> 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.

<sup>64</sup> Jules Michelet, Edgar Quinet, *The Jesuits*, C. Cocks Trans., (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1848), p. 119.

<sup>65</sup> John Andrew Frey, “Ad majorem dei gloriam,” in *A Victor Hugo Encyclopedia*, (Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 4-5.

<sup>66</sup> 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.”<sup>67</sup> (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...”<sup>68</sup> 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.”<sup>69</sup> 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)<sup>70</sup> 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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<sup>67</sup> Abbate Leone, *The Jesuit Conspiracy, The Secret Plan of the Order*, (London: Vizetelly Brothers and Co., 1848), p. 74.

<sup>68</sup> Leone, p. 74.

<sup>69</sup> Leone, p. 72.

<sup>70</sup> 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*.”<sup>71</sup> 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.<sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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.<sup>75</sup>

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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<sup>71</sup> Henrion, Vol. 10., p. 253.

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

<sup>73</sup> Clive Church and Randolph Head, *A Concise History of Switzerland*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 157.

<sup>74</sup> Church and Head, p. 157.

<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup> 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.<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup>

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.<sup>79</sup> <sup>80</sup> 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.<sup>81</sup>

This was the last war in Switzerland, and it resulted in only 93 deaths,<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> 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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<sup>76</sup> Church and Head, p. 157.

<sup>77</sup> Church and Head, pp. 157-159.

<sup>78</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>79</sup> Church and Head, p. 159.

<sup>80</sup> He seems to be a relative of the Salais-Soglio brothers who had attempted violent revolution against the Austrian empire decades earlier.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Seignobos, *A Political History of Europe Since 1814*, S. M. Macvane trans., (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1900), pp. 268-269.

<sup>82</sup> Black, p. 45.

<sup>83</sup> 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.<sup>84</sup> 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.)<sup>85</sup> 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,<sup>86</sup> who was one of the revolutionaries that overthrew the Genevan government and who later served as a volunteer surgeon during the Sonderbund War.<sup>87</sup> 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.<sup>88</sup>

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.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup> The Jesuits were revealed to be a scheming

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<sup>84</sup> Leone, p. ii.

<sup>85</sup> Leone, p. xxxviii.

<sup>86</sup> Leone, p. xl.

<sup>87</sup> Euene Borel and Louis Gulliaume, *Frédéric Roessinger: Esquisse Biographique*, (Neuchatel: Imprimerie Montandon Freres, 1863), pp. 82-83.

<sup>88</sup> Cibitt, *The Jesuit Myth*, p. 147-148.

<sup>89</sup> Leone, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> Leone, p. 19.

<sup>91</sup> 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.”<sup>92</sup>

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!”<sup>93</sup> 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.”<sup>94</sup> 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.<sup>95</sup> 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...”<sup>96</sup> 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.”<sup>97</sup>

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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<sup>92</sup> Leone p. 24-25.

<sup>93</sup> Leone, p. 132

<sup>94</sup> Leone, p. 113

<sup>95</sup> Leone, p. 91

<sup>96</sup> Leone, p. 92

<sup>97</sup> Leone, p. 99

false sense of complacency.<sup>98</sup> Nobles were to be encouraged to believe that the Jesuits are useful propagandists who will make the people submissive,<sup>99</sup> 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.<sup>100</sup> 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;...”<sup>101</sup> 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.”<sup>102</sup>

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 “Voltaireism” 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.<sup>103</sup> 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

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<sup>98</sup> Leone, p. 93

<sup>99</sup> Leone, p. 120

<sup>100</sup> Leone, p. 178

<sup>101</sup> Leone, p. 178

<sup>102</sup> Leone p. 94

<sup>103</sup> 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"<sup>104</sup> 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."<sup>105</sup>

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.<sup>106</sup> 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.<sup>107</sup>

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

<sup>105</sup> 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.

<sup>106</sup> Massa, p. 137.

<sup>107</sup> 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<sup>108</sup>:

“...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...”<sup>109</sup>

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.<sup>110</sup> 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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<sup>108</sup> 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.

<sup>109</sup> Kalamajska-Saeed.

<sup>110</sup> 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.”<sup>111</sup>

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.<sup>112</sup>

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

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<sup>111</sup> Kalamajska-Saeed.

<sup>112</sup> 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.”<sup>113</sup>

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.<sup>114</sup> 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*.<sup>115</sup> 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*.<sup>116</sup> 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 propagandist 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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<sup>113</sup> 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.

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

<sup>115</sup> “Проектъ объ уничтоженіи православнаго и уніятскаго вѣроисповѣданій, а также и русской народности въ русскихъ областяхъ, 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.

<sup>116</sup> “Тайныя Наставленія Общества иезуитовъ” (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,<sup>117</sup> 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;..."<sup>118</sup> 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.<sup>119</sup> 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.<sup>120</sup> 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."<sup>121</sup>

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.<sup>122</sup> During the early months of the January Uprising the English press was strongly pro-Polish.<sup>123</sup> 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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<sup>117</sup> Adam Zamoyski, *Poland*, (HarperPress, 2009), Kindle Edition, location 2475.

<sup>118</sup> 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.

<sup>119</sup> Głębocki, location 2948.

<sup>120</sup> Adam B. Ulam, *Prophets and Conspirators in Pre-Revolutionary Russia*, (Transaction Publishers, 1998), pp. 118 - 121.

<sup>121</sup> Ulam, p. 124.

<sup>122</sup> 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.

<sup>123</sup> 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.<sup>124</sup> Napoleon III’s government hinted to the Poles that they would send weapons and troops, and this encouraged the Poles to keep fighting.<sup>125</sup> 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”<sup>126</sup> who wanted to “destroy the Orthodox Faith,”<sup>127</sup> 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.<sup>128</sup> 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”<sup>129</sup> 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<sup>130</sup> from an obscure author named J. H. Elliot titled

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<sup>124</sup> Kutowski, pp. 253-257.

<sup>125</sup> Zamorsky, *Poland*, location 2484.

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

<sup>127</sup> Мельников, p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> Głębocki, location 4065.

<sup>129</sup> Русский инвалид, (Ruskii Invalid), 8 August 1863, no. 173, p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> 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...”<sup>131</sup> 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.”<sup>132</sup>

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.”<sup>133</sup> 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...”<sup>134</sup> The pamphlet also accused the Jesuits of having provoked the Sonderbund War<sup>135</sup> and of forcibly converting Jews in Poland.<sup>136 137</sup>

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.<sup>138</sup>

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.<sup>139</sup> 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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<sup>131</sup> 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.

<sup>132</sup> Elliot, p. 17.

<sup>133</sup> Elliot, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> Elliot, p. 9.

<sup>135</sup> Elliot, p. 23.

<sup>136</sup> Elliot, p. 22.

<sup>137</sup> 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.

<sup>138</sup> “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.”

<sup>139</sup> Głębocki, location 2291.

They distributed this fake manifesto in the Kazan, Nizhegorodsky, Tambov and Vyatsk districts, deep inside Russia.<sup>140</sup> 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<sup>141</sup> 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."<sup>142</sup> 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*.<sup>143 144</sup> 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."<sup>145</sup> These accusations helped to explain how the Jesuits were still at the heart of

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<sup>140</sup> Alexander Herzen, *A Herzen Reader*, (Northwestern University Press, 2012), pp. 204-206.

<sup>141</sup> John Paxton, *Imperial Russia: A Reference Handbook*, (Palgrave, 2001), p. 115.

<sup>142</sup> 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.

<sup>143</sup> "Краткая Исторія лезуитовъ 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.

<sup>144</sup> 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).

<sup>145</sup> This is a translation from the Russian. Note some slight differences with the French version. "Краткая Исторія лезуитовъ 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.”<sup>146</sup> 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).<sup>147</sup> 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.)<sup>148</sup> 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”<sup>149</sup> to make Russia agree to

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<sup>146</sup> W. A. Day, *The Russian Government in Poland with a Narrative of the Polish Insurrection of 1863*, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1867), p. 9.

<sup>147</sup> 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.

<sup>148</sup> “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.

<sup>149</sup> 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.”<sup>150</sup>

This massive act of deception was to be accomplished by the Polish network both infiltrating the Russian civil service to manipulate Russian policy directly<sup>151</sup> and by them becoming the “the moral arbiters of that dull nation”<sup>152</sup> 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”<sup>153</sup> 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,…”<sup>154</sup>

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 *Rusky 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”<sup>155</sup> (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

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<sup>150</sup> Day, p. 10.

<sup>151</sup> Day, p. 11.

<sup>152</sup> Day, p. 11.

<sup>153</sup> Day, p. 12.

<sup>154</sup> Day, p. 11.

<sup>155</sup> “Польській Катихизисъ” (*Polish Catechism*), *Ruskii Invalid*, 28 May 1863, no. 115, p. 490.

genealogy of this codex of various deceptions and subterfuge.”<sup>156</sup> 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.’”<sup>157</sup>

The *Polish Catechism* has every hallmark of being a propaganda forgery.<sup>158</sup> 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.<sup>159</sup> 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.<sup>160</sup> (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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<sup>156</sup> “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

<sup>157</sup> “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

<sup>158</sup> 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

<sup>159</sup> О. А. Пржецславскому (O. A. Przhetslavskomy), “Нѣскольکو Словъ по поводѣ ‘отвѣта’ Г. Берга на мои Замѣчанія” (Some words on the occasion of ‘the answer’ of G. Berg to my Notes) *Русскій Архивъ* (Russian Archive,) Vol. 156, 1872, Issues 5-8, (Moscow: V. Grachev and Co., 1872), p. 1570.

<sup>160</sup> 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.”<sup>161</sup>

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.<sup>162</sup> 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.<sup>163</sup> 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.<sup>164</sup> During

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<sup>161</sup> 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](http://dugward.ru/library/katkov/katkov_sovpadeniye.html).

<sup>162</sup> 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.

<sup>163</sup> Saunders, p. 370.

<sup>164</sup> 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.<sup>165</sup>

### **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.<sup>166</sup> None of these pamphlets mentioned the Jesuits, though they repeat the other tropes of the Russian anti-Polish propaganda campaign.<sup>167 168 169</sup> 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,<sup>170</sup> 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.”<sup>171</sup> 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*.<sup>172</sup> 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.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Thaden, pp. 48-49.

<sup>166</sup> 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>.

<sup>167</sup> *The Polish Question or an Appeal to the Good Sense of Englishmen by a Russian*, (St. Petersburg, June 1863), p. 13.

<sup>168</sup> *The Polish Question or an Appeal to the Good Sense of Englishmen by a Russian*, (St. Petersburg, June 1863), p. 11.

<sup>169</sup> *The Polish Question: From an English Point of View*, (London: Saunders, Otley & Co., 1863), p. 10.

<sup>170</sup> С. Рождественский, “Толстой, граф Дмитрий Андреевич” (Tolstoy, Graf Dmitrii Andreevich), *Русский биографический словарь* (Russian Biographical Dictionary), edited by V. V. Майков (Майков) Aspent Press, Moscow, 1999, p. 49.

<sup>171</sup> 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, ll. 2-2 ob.

<sup>172</sup> Dmitry Tolstoy, *Catholicisme Romain En Russie*, Vol. 1, (Paris: Dentu, 1863).

<sup>173</sup> 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;..."<sup>174</sup> The Jesuits only "pretended to be the most devoted servants"<sup>175</sup> of the Pope. In fact the Jesuits were "...the enemy to all true civilization, and to other Christian confessions, and even to Catholicism..."<sup>176</sup> 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.<sup>177</sup>

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.<sup>178</sup> 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..."<sup>179</sup> 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.<sup>180</sup> (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"<sup>181</sup> and they opened a "propagand" in Moscow and St. Petersburg specifically to target the aristocracy.<sup>182</sup> 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."<sup>183</sup> 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..."<sup>184</sup> 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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<sup>174</sup> Count Dmitry Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia, An Historical Study*, Mrs. M'Kibbin trans., Vol. 2, (London: J. T. Hayes, 1874), p. 130-131.

<sup>175</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 103.

<sup>176</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 131.

<sup>177</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 42.

<sup>178</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 106.

<sup>179</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 108.

<sup>180</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 130-131.

<sup>181</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 106.

<sup>182</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 109-110.

<sup>183</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 35.

<sup>184</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 122.

*Zapadnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii*.<sup>185</sup> <sup>186</sup> 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.”<sup>187</sup>

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.<sup>188</sup> 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.”<sup>189</sup> Dmitri Tolstoy became the Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia shortly thereafter,<sup>190</sup> 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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<sup>185</sup> “Краткая Исторія 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.

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

<sup>187</sup> Tolstoy, *Romanism in Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 232.

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

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

<sup>190</sup> 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.”<sup>191</sup> An article about the debate records that there was laughter in the chamber.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> (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.<sup>194</sup> (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.<sup>195</sup> 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.”<sup>196</sup> 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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<sup>191</sup> *Staffordshire Advertiser*, Saturday 25 July 1863, page 7, column 6.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Dominic Lieven ed., Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 38.

<sup>194</sup> *The Cambridge History of Russia*, Vol. 2, p. 38.

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

<sup>196</sup> See the earlier items in “Четыре политическия Записки Графа Михаила Николаевича Муравьева виленскаго” (Four Political notes of Graf Michail Nickolaevich Murav’ev of Vilnius), *Руский 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*.<sup>197</sup>

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 Tutchiev 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.<sup>198</sup> In Western

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<sup>197</sup> Saveli Yurevich Dudakov, *История одного мифа* (History of one Myth), (Moscow: Nauka, 1993) p. 96.

<sup>198</sup> 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.

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November 2, 2010. Available at [http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2010/02/11/russkaya\\_pravoslavnaya\\_mysl\\_ob\\_iezuitah\\_i\\_ih\\_otnoshenii\\_k\\_rossii/](http://ruskline.ru/analitika/2010/02/11/russkaya_pravoslavnaya_mysl_ob_iezuitah_i_ih_otnoshenii_k_rossii/). Accessed June 12, 2019.