Book Reviews

Mark Inglot, S.J.

How the Jesuits Survived Their Suppression: The Society of Jesus in the Russian Empire (1773–1814). Edited and translated by Daniel L. Schlafly. Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2015. Pp. xviii + 305. Hb, \$55.

The era of the Jesuit suppression spanned from 1773, the year Pope Clement XIV (r.1769–74) issued his suppression brief, until 1814, when Pius VII (r.1800–23) undid his predecessor's act by issuing his own brief of restoration. For the most part, the activity of former Jesuits during the suppression has received relatively little scholarly attention. Perhaps understandably, few historians anticipated discovering much of interest by exploring the remnants of a religious order that had been so thoroughly eviscerated by its enemies. In the wake of Clement's "murdering brief," as some distraught Jesuits termed it, almost the whole of the Society's institutional infrastructure—its global network of missions and schools—came crashing to the ground. Yet despite the destruction the suppression wrought, a substantial number of former Jesuits and lay supporters of the Jesuit order refused to accept that papal act as the last word on the Society St. Ignatius had founded. During the suppression era, a number of these "Jesuit loyalists" (to borrow a phrase from Philip Gleason's "The Main Sheet Anchor: John Carroll and Higher Education," *Review of Politics* 38, no. 4 [1976]: 576–613, here 603) helped plant the seeds that would eventually bring forth the restored Society. The history of these loyalists and their rebuilding efforts should be of great interest to historians as it reveals much about the political, social and cultural forces that reshaped the Catholic world in the age of revolutions.

No group of Jesuit loyalists did more to realize the restoration than the "Russian" Jesuits that are at the center of Mark Inglot's important study *La Compagnia di Gesù nell'Impero Russo (1772–1820) et la sua parte nella restaurazione generale della Compagnia* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1997). Thanks to the efforts of translator Daniel L. Schlafly, this work is now available in English under the title *How the Jesuits Survived Their Suppression*. Due largely to caprice and happenstance, roughly two hundred

Jesuits residing in Belarus, most of whom were Polish or Lithuanian, found themselves sheltered from the full effects of Clement's brief. In 1772, following the first partition of Poland, these Jesuits became subjects of Imperial Russia. The Russian empress, Catherine the Great (r.1762–96), valued the Society as an instrument for educating as well as pacifying her newly acquired Catholic subjects. Because she believed the Jesuits useful, she saw no reason to accept Clement's brief and refused to promulgate it in her realm. What is more, she forbade the Jesuits in Belarus from abandoning the rules of the Jesuit Institute.

Inglot's book chronicles the gradual transformation of these Jesuits in Russia from a hastily organized Polish-Lithuanian province into the nucleus of a restored Society with global reach. The author divides his study into two parts of roughly equal length. The first focuses on Jesuit survival in Belarus. Inglot investigates why Catherine and her ministers chose to protect the Society, how the Russian Jesuits managed to reorganize their order's governance, and the nature of the schools and missions they built under that patronage of Catherine and her two immediate successors, Czars Paul I (r.1796–1801) and Alexander I (r.1801–25). The second part of the study explores how the Russian Jesuits helped effect the Society's restoration. The author examines Pius VII's 1801 decision to recognize formally the Jesuits in Russia, the Russian Society's active efforts to restore their order in such places as Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, and the United States, and finally the Russian body's role in bringing about the pope's restoration brief.

Drawing on his extensive research in Jesuit and Vatican archives, Inglot has produced a work that wonderfully illuminates the complex and often tortured diplomacy that established the boundaries within which the Jesuits in Russia had to function. Because of the anti-Jesuit sentiment of the Bourbon courts and later the French revolutionary state, Pope Pius VI (1775–99) never spoke openly in favor of the Russian Jesuits, whom he always treated in public statements as “the union of the refractory” (132). Lacking canonical standing, the Russian Jesuits put themselves in an awkward position by beginning their order's institutional reconstruction—the opening of a novitiate (1779) and the election of a general (1782)—with no more authorization than the approval of a non-Catholic court and a report of the pope's verbal approval. By providing extensive extracts from the correspondence of various diplomats and leading Russian Jesuits, Inglot allows his readers to appreciate the intense scruples of conscience experienced by members of the Russian group as they sought reassurance that the Holy Father indeed approved and confirmed all they had done.

While Inglot has written an excellent history of the diplomacy surrounding the Russian Jesuits' survival and the institution building they undertook, there are several important aspects of the Russian group's story that he touches upon only lightly or not at all. One such aspect is the issue of authority. As Inglot

mentions repeatedly in his narrative, the Russian Jesuits were often plagued with doubt over the authenticity of the pope's secret approval. In addition, they had to manage dramatic shifts in their own composition. Shortly after the opening of the novitiate, the Jesuits of Russia began once more to pronounce final vows, and large numbers of former Jesuits from throughout Europe requested permission to be readmitted into the Society. In a very short time, the initial Polish-Lithuanian group was joined by former Jesuits from places such as the Italian Peninsula, Austria, and Hungary. By the 1790s, not only was there an influx of former Jesuits but also a steady stream of young men with no ties to the old Society who wished to become Jesuits. It is not hard to imagine that the irregularity of the Jesuits' canonical situation together with the growing diversity of their membership could have created difficulties for governance. Indeed, Inglot's treatment of the career of Gaetano Angolini (1748–1816), a former Italian Jesuit who rose to prominence in the Russian group, suggests that such difficulties did occur. Angolini eventually denied the authority of the Jesuit general in Russia once he found the general's decisions unpalatable. Inglot's study would have been enriched by more attention to internal challenges such as Angolini's.

Another aspect of the Russian Jesuits' survival that Inglot chose not to explore greatly was its connection to an informal and worldwide network of Jesuit supporters that Dale Van Kley has described as an "ex-Jesuit International" ("Catholic Conciliar Reform in an Age of Anti-Catholic Revolution," in James E. Bradley and Van Kley, eds., *Religion and Politics in Enlightenment Europe* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001], 46–118, esp. 73–74). The participants in this network included former Jesuits as well as others, both clerical and lay, who were devoted to the old Society and committed to its restoration. The letters and writings that circulated within this network, many of which survive in Jesuit archives, reveal that the success of the Russian Jesuits owed much to the sea-change in Catholic sensibilities brought about by the ecclesiastical and political upheavals of the late eighteenth century. In the minds of many, the return of the Society seemed the only reliable defense against the apparent machinations of the *philosophes*, freemasons, and other enemies of the Catholic Church.

A comprehensive history of the Jesuit restoration has yet to be written. Inglot's valuable work on the Russian Jesuits together with other recent and innovative studies into the suppression era, such as those appearing in *Jesuit Survival and Restoration: A Global History, 1773–1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), help ensure that one eventually will.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00403007-01