"A sinister creature is on the loose": Anti-Jesuit Conspiracy Allegations as Political and Poetological Strategies in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century in Tyrol

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Abstract

The restoration of the Jesuits in Tyrol in 1838/39 shocked the region's liberals and this shock found expression in the medium of poetry as exemplified by the polemical “Jesuitenlieder” (Jesuit songs) that circulated throughout Tyrol and southern Germany. A few years later a debate developed in German newspapers about the influence of the Jesuits in Tyrol. While older, but also more recent studies often only focused on the literary quality and the liberal elements of the debate, the affinity of this discourse for the tropes of the conspiracy theory has been overlooked until now. Ultimately, the appeal of invoking such tropes was the possibility it afforded of branding the so-called "Jesuitism" and, in doing so, covertly criticizing the government.

Keywords


Being on an omnibus towards Hall in Tyrol in the late summer or early autumn of 1844, Adolf Pichler (1819–90), an Austrian man of letters and later scientist,
heard a poem recited by an artisan.\textsuperscript{1} The poem in question was “The Jesuit” by the Austrian writer Hermann von Gilm (1812–64)—a poem that admittedly did not yet have a title and according to Pichler was known by its first line: “A sinister creature is on the loose.” There is evidence that people clandestinely read and exchanged transcripts of “The Jesuit” in inns, which were one of the typical spaces that in the aggregate created the pre-modern public sphere.\textsuperscript{2} Influence is difficult to measure when we deal with an oral tradition, but at the very least the poem resonated with political and social meaning.

At a time when non-religious literature in Tyrol did not seem to attract much public attention, a poem with a political message that was on everyone’s lips represented a genuine sensation.\textsuperscript{3} “The Jesuit” had not been published by the author Hermann von Gilm but instead was pirated several times and spread from Tyrol to Switzerland and southern Germany without the author being named. Gilm knew very well that people read and distributed his poetry, as his letters prove.\textsuperscript{4} The poem was rediscovered late in the nineteenth century and various versions appeared after Gilm’s death in 1864 with or without the author’s name. “The Jesuit” has also been recognized as an essential source for the enduring anti-Jesuit discourse by international research.\textsuperscript{5} Gilm’s “The Jesuit” is only one among several anonymous anti-Jesuit songs, even if it is the best known. These songs form part of the anti-Jesuit liberal discourse that

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\item In the project “Reading in the Alps,” inventories were used for the first time to systematically determine which books were read or owned in Tyrolean regions: Michael Span and Peter Andorfer, “Privater Buchbesitz in Tirol 1750 bis 1850: Eine Projektvorstellung,” \textit{Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Buchforschung in Österreich} 2 (2016): 7–21. The situation in Paris, for example, was quite different; see Robert Darnton, \textit{Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).
\item Gilm to Johannes Schuler, Bruneck, October 12, 1844, in \textit{Gilms Familien- und Freundesbriefe}, 55: To obtain a printed copy of one of his anti-Jesuit songs, Gilm himself approached Joseph Streiter (see below), who referred him to Schuler (also see below). Gilm wrote that the reputation of his name was of no concern to him and that he was simply devoted to anti-Jesuitism.
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found a foothold in nineteenth-century Tyrol and that constitutes the topic of this essay. In a time of rigid censorship, clandestine ways and means had to be found to circulate texts. This essay investigates which media and, more particularly, which media loopholes liberal thinkers and writers used to present their anti-Jesuit sentiments and convictions—sometimes by name, but mostly anonymously—to the public.

The state of research regarding Gilm’s anti-Jesuit songs and the anti-Jesuit agitation in Tyrol is anything but meager. However, there are two significant gaps. First, the historian Florian Huber has recently described this period as a *Kulturkampf* (culture war) *avant la lettre.*6 The European culture wars were marked by conflicts between liberal administrations and networks against resurgent transnational Catholic networks in the second half of the nineteenth century.7 This essay demurs on the grounds that the later *Kulturkampf* in Tyrol was a confrontation between the state and the revitalized Catholic Church over legislation and school administration.8 The actors in this essay had no official political power and had first to establish liberalism as a political attitude through discursive and poetological means that, following the philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–84), are defined by what they make visible and sayable. In order to achieve this, they incorporated basic elements of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy myth, described in its French context by historians Geoffrey Cubitt and Michel Leroy, into their rhetoric.9

Second, the events described in this essay were often dubbed the “Singers’ War in Tyrol” in Tyrolean historiography, without nearly any reference to the broader context of European anti-Jesuitism.10 The anti-Jesuit conspiracy allegations developed and disseminated by liberal actors have been overlooked or only mentioned in passing by later historians. In those texts, the Society of Jesus is depicted as a conspiratorial, subversive movement posing a grave threat to the cause of liberalism. Therefore, this essay attempts to reinterpret

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the anti-Jesuit agitation in Tyrol by zeroing in on its relationship to nineteenth-century, anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories.

Furthermore, it should be acknowledged how counterintuitive it might seem that a staunchly Catholic country was so receptive to the European anti-Jesuit discourse. According to Huber, the border situation brought forth several interpretations of Catholicism in a pluralizing process that then promoted the emergence of specific national attitudes. Tyrol was suspended between Austrian, German, and Italian spheres of influence. This essay focuses primarily on the formation of a specifically German-speaking, independent, Tyrolean liberalism.11

Background and References

“Backward,” “ultramontane,” and “devoutly Catholic” are common descriptions of Tyrol in historical accounts. Much of this characterization originates in the depictions of the failed uprising in 1809, led by the folk hero Andreas Hofer (1767–1810), against the Enlightenment-inspired reforms of the new Bavarian administration. However, despite this distortion regarding the memory of this uprising, it should be noted that in the preceding centuries the Counter-Reformation had indeed exercised a powerful effect upon Tyrolean society and that the Jesuits and other Catholic orders, particularly the Capuchins, had established a powerful presence in the region.12

The closure of the University of Innsbruck between 1810 and 1814 (reopened in 1826) led educated Tyrolese to form a network and build a regional identity abroad.13 Many Tyrolese went to the University of Landshut in Bavaria. Among them were the later mandataries of the German National Assembly during the Revolution of 1848: Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790–1861), Anton Petzer (1794–1887), and Sylvester Jordan (1792–1861). The latter had a remarkable career. Born in poor circumstances in Omis (Axams) in Tyrol, Jordan was able to attend school due to the intercession of patrons and then to study law and other subjects in Landshut. After completing his studies, he proved himself in various professional positions and was appointed professor in Marburg in 1821. He played a significant role in drawing up the liberal constitution of Electoral Hesse in 1831. Due to his public appearances and statements, he soon found

11 Huber, Grenzkatholizismen, 11–19.
himself under police surveillance and accused of revolutionary activities. Sentenced to five years in prison in 1843, he was acquitted in 1845. Jordan was a convinced liberal and contributed the article on the Jesuits and Jesuitism to Karl von Rotteck’s and Carl Theodor Welcker’s *Staatslexikon*, 15 vols. (1834–43). An enlarged version of this lemma appeared in 1839 as a book under the title *Die Jesuiten und der Jesuitismus* (The Jesuits and Jesuitism).

This publication served as a rallying cry for the anti-Jesuit conspiracy allegations in German-speaking territories. From an unambiguously liberal stance, Jordan, dubbed by the nationalist historian Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96) somewhat disrespectfully as a “jolly Catholic Tyrolean,” ostensibly criticized Jesuits per se, but above all, what he called Jesuitism. Jordan argued in this work that the Jesuits were very well known in name, but that their constitution, principles, and doctrines remained hidden from the public. While some might still naively think that no evil is done behind closed doors, Jordan sought to prove the opposite with his book. By Jesuitism, he understood the enforcement of the beliefs and ideologies of the order; he spoke of Jesuitism infecting states and classes without Jesuits being involved and confirmed that, even when Jesuits had been banned, Jesuitism could remain in the Jesuit-free regions. He furthermore declared that all those who apply Jesuitism may also be called Jesuits, even if they were not members of the order. When the Jesuits were reinstated, their “visible” society joined, according to Jordan, with the “secret” society of the adepts of Jesuitism. Together, the concentration of actual Jesuits and the more diffuse presence of Jesuitism now endangered the causes of Enlightenment, liberalism, and freedom, and threatened to bring the state, the church, and school education back under the yoke of darkness and bondage. Jordan also divulges what he calls the ultimate goal of this conspiracy: restoring the rule of Rome on the ruins of the destroyed Reformation to re-establish the kingdom of darkness and superstition. The conspiracy is thus directed against Protestantism, the free civil constitution, freedom of conscience, and freedom of research.

Jordan's interpretation did not go unchallenged and a debate about the role of the Jesuits spread across German-speaking regions.\textsuperscript{17} Jordan's relations with his former homeland are negligible to non-existent, but liberal Tyrolese received this writing with enthusiasm and were indignant at his arrest. Daniel Fennner von Fenneberg (1818–63), a military officer, writer, translator, and newspaper editor from Tyrol, resigned from the Austrian army in 1843 and found employment as an editor of the \textit{Mannheimer Abendzeitung}, while also publishing various works and translations.\textsuperscript{18} Among them was his translation of the book \textit{Von der Tyrannei} (On tyranny) (1845) by the Italian poet and sympathizer of the first phase of the French Revolution, Vittorio Alfieri (1749–1803).\textsuperscript{19} Fennner von Fenneberg dedicated his translation to his “compatriot” Sylvester Jordan. Jordan's book about the Jesuits was furthermore one of the essential sources for the anonymously published pamphlet \textit{Die Jesuiten in Tirol} (Jesuits in Tyrol), which is directly related to Gilm's anti-Jesuit songs, as will be shown below. Due to Jordan’s prominence and his origins, it was rumored that he was the author.\textsuperscript{20} However, the author was without doubt Joseph Streiter (1804–73). Streiter was a lawyer, politician, and writer and later became mayor of Bolzano. He fought against clerical ultramontanism throughout his life and attempted to combat the censorship perceived as having a substantial effect on Tyrol.\textsuperscript{21} He was also one of the leaders of the Young Tyrolese, whose name was inspired by Young Germany, a movement of young liberal writers rebelling against the reactionary atmosphere prior to the 1848 revolution. Like the German group, the Tyrolean counterpart was originally a literary project initiated by some of the region's literary leaders.

Censorship, the Protestants, and the Jesuits

Streiter was active in Tyrolean cultural life from a young age and constantly endeavored to make Tyrolean literature known in German-speaking regions. The three-volume paperback book series \textit{Alpenblumen} (Alpine flowers)
(1828–30) was particularly noteworthy. Published by the team of Johann Schuler (1800–59), archivist, promotor of Tyrolean literature, and later a politician, Beda Weber (1798–1858), a Benedictine monk, politician, and poet, and Streiter, the project was short-lived and folded after only three years. Although Streiter maintained contact with influential literary personalities of the time, such as Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872) or Ludwig Steub (1812–88), his literary works were not well received. Streiter developed into a convinced liberal during this period and could no longer stand by and passively register the publications of colleagues. He adopted the pseudonym Berengarius Ivo to criticize other writers whom he knew personally for their publications and to avoid censorship.22

While Weber increasingly tended to ally himself with the political ultramontane side and became more and more a representative of religious enthusiasm in his works, Streiter, Pichler, and Gilm were obviously convinced that Tyrolean literature should turn to liberal and open-minded themes.23 Such literature was always exposed to potential censorship exercised by the Austrian state authorities. The poet and friend of composer Franz Schubert (1797–1828), Johann Chrysostomos Senn (1795–1857), born in Tyrol and later residing in Vienna, was particularly affected. In Vienna, he was a member of a Burschenschaft (student association) that was accused of spreading revolutionary ideas and was dissolved by the police in 1820. As a consequence, Senn was sent penniless back to his homeland a year later. Senn was an inspirational figure for liberal poets and significantly influenced Gilm. Critical of the conservatives and in particular the conservative party’s leader Josef von Giovanelli (1784–1845), he was regarded with suspicion in Innsbruck, and his literature often circulated only in handwritten copies. In fact, Senn was only able to publish one collection of poems during his lifetime and later died utterly impoverished.24

Due to the pressure of censorship, it was hardly possible for many intellectuals in Tyrol to read the literature of the Vormärz (thus the designation for the years preceding the outbreak of revolution in March 1848). Schuler’s network was the main reason liberals in Tyrol had access to books, writings, or other texts that the censors had banned or which could only be used with special

permission. For example, the reception of David Friedrich Strauß’s *The Life of Jesus* (1835–36) merits attention because its author questioned religious dogmas, challenged the historicity of the biblical texts, and, by doing so, cast doubt on Christian revelation. The book, which was read and discussed throughout German-speaking regions, provoked strong criticism but its author was revered by liberals of all currents. Strauß’s book was one of the main reference points in political debates between the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. Schuler could procure Strauß’s book and the Tyrolean liberals read it and debated his ideas. Also, news about the revolution of 1830 from Paris and political developments in Switzerland after 1830 did not leave these Tyrolean intellectuals cold. It was during this period that Senn became a kind of local celebrity in the coffee houses of Innsbruck.

The first turning point and thus the break between conservatives, moderate liberals, and more radical liberals occurred in 1837. The provincial parliament, following an imperial resolution, decided to expel the so-called *Zillertaler Inklinanten*. This group of inhabitants of the Ziller Valley had struggled for years to be allowed to establish a Protestant faith community. However, the authorities rejected their petitions. Giovanelli was the driving force behind this policy, as we learn from the diary of Clemens Count Brandis (1798–1863), provincial governor of Tyrol since 1841 and at that time residing in Bolzano. Giovanelli had already been dealing with the *Inklinanten* for several years, and he warned Viennese officials that Protestantism could spread in Tyrol if nothing were done to combat it.

The expulsion shocked the liberal forces in the country, but it was also the starting point for Senn, Streiter, and Gilm to go on the offensive. The next shock followed shortly thereafter; the Jesuits returned to Tyrol in 1839. Behind closed doors, Giovanelli pulled off a move that took the liberals by surprise. He had already worked from 1825 onwards to ensure that the Redemptorists, a religious congregation primarily dedicated to missionary work, would be welcomed, particularly because their introduction would serve to keep the Tyrolean school system strictly Catholic. However, he also made substantial efforts to reinstate the Jesuits. When Emperor Ferdinand I of Austria

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28 People from the Ziller Valley who were inclined towards Protestantism.
(r.1835–48) and Chancellor Klemens von Metternich (in office 1821–48) visited Innsbruck in 1838, Giovanelli presented a motion to the Tyrolean Parliament on May 7 to bring back the Jesuits. Even the conservative prince-bishop of Brixen, Bernhard Galura (1764–1856), disagreed, but Giovanelli managed to get his way. The Jesuits were appointed to run the Theresian Knights Academy and the public grammar school. The establishment of their *Konvikt* (college) in 1842 was the final straw for the liberals.30

**Anti-Jesuit Songs**

Streiter seized the initiative in 1843 and started a public debate about the influence of the Jesuits and Jesuitism in Tyrol. He published an anonymous text in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, which was published in Augsburg. Through his network, he had thus managed to circumvent the censors and to move the topic to the kingdom of Bavaria. This also made it much easier for other liberals to participate in the discourse. Titled “Poetische Regungen in Tirol” (Poetic stirrings in Tyrol), Streiter’s article surveyed and assessed the literature of his time. Weber, his former comrade, came off very badly, while he, Senn, and above all Gilm and Pichler were celebrated as flagships of new literature. Concerning Gilm, Streiter deliberately addressed the anti-Jesuit songs without enumerating them individually.31

Gilm had studied law in Innsbruck, where he had become acquainted with Senn and Schuler. After his studies, he initially worked in various district offices in Schwaz, Rovereto, and Bruneck. His respective superiors were aware of his poetic ambitions and supported him where they could. The anti-Jesuit songs were undoubtedly written before 1843, and there were several versions. As far as his personal life was concerned, Gilm fell in love twice during this period, starting in 1840. Destitution and the dearth of any prospects of escaping from this condition caused the women to end the relationship both times. Literary historians have assumed that the failed relationship with Theodolinde von Gasteiger (1821–58) triggered his hatred against the Jesuits.32

30 Dörrer, “Gilms autobiographisches Drama *Der Verbannte*”; Huber, Grenzkatholisismen, 95–126.
In various hints given by his literary work, among others in a fragment of a drama, Gilm suspected the Jesuits of having influenced the pious family of Gasteiger.\textsuperscript{33} He wrote twenty-four sonnets during this period, four of which are considered anti-Jesuit songs. Gilm hinted at the sinister influence wielded by the Jesuits by symbolically depicting them as black-robed, pale-skinned creatures several times in other texts as well.\textsuperscript{34} The best-known song was “The Jesuit,” followed by “Die Liedertafel und die Jesuiten” (The choir and the Jesuits), “Die Grundsteinlegung des Jesuitenkollegs” (Laying the foundation stone of the Jesuit college), and “Der Tiroler Landtag” (The Tyrolean parliament).\textsuperscript{35}

In “The Jesuit,” the “sinister creature” reproduces the imagined archetype of the Jesuit. This Jesuit is described as “silent and mute,” as a dark being “sneaking around” who wears “a black mourning robe” and is a symbol of darkness in a country “where dawn was already breaking.” In addition, the poem raises the question of why the Jesuits were named after Jesus, given that they did not act with any of the compassion of the savior.\textsuperscript{36}

In the “Die Liedertafel und die Jesuiten” the lyrical subject describes how the Jesuits suppress free thought and expression in Tyrol: “The word is dead, the free song in chains.” In addition, the “pale cheeks” of the Jesuits and their secret machinations are emphasized: “The song is light! – Where light has risen, / There they whisper their secret anathema.” Furthermore, the claim is made that the Jesuits have by no means stood up for Tyrol, but instead have always acted against the region. Finally, there is an appeal, which has a conspiratorial underpinning: “Be wise like them; you still have to wear masks, / The night is suitable for such masquerades; it’s too early / For open combat.”\textsuperscript{37}

In “Die Grundsteinlegung des Jesuitenkollegiums zu Innsbruck,” the lyrical subject reiterates the same metaphors as in the other songs but declares the secret of the Jesuits to have now been revealed:

You have long since killed the shame in your hearts!
From a million eyes the morning

\textsuperscript{33} Dör rer, “Gilms autobiographisches Drama”; Rudolf Heinrich Greinz, ed., \textit{Gedichte von Hermann von Gilm: Gesamtausgabe} (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1894), 73. Due to the anonymous publication and the repeated alteration of the poems by Gilm himself, problems arise in identifying the original versions. The edition of the poems (1894) by Rudolf Heinrich von Greinz is used here.

\textsuperscript{34} For actual visual representations of the figure of the Jesuit from the previous century, see the article by Christine Vogel in this special issue.

\textsuperscript{35} Greinz, \textit{Gedichte}, 70–76.


that reddens the rocky peaks looks upon you,
But you stand unchanged, black and pale.
Do what you will in your dark cell –
What we do not know, we do not blame – But today with hammer and
with trowel
In great pomp you go to the light of day.

Furthermore:

A masterpiece! Do you know what you bury?
Of the land’s youth and the land’s welfare,
The bliss of many hundred boys,
The hope and spring of Tyrol!38

In addition to other shorter poems and several allusions to the Jesuits in other
writings, it was “Der Tiroler Landtag” that was received enthusiastically in the
Tyrolean public sphere. Gilm mockingly addressed the sessions of the parlia-
ment concerning the reintroduction of the Jesuits.39 Probably due to an inter-
vention by his father, Gilm was only marginally involved in the debate from 1844 on and was protected from more severe persecution by the police.40 Of
course, this did not mean that he was no longer under observation. At this
time, Gilm wrote panegyric poems about Galura and other church dignitaries.
Conservatives always saw this as Gilm’s redemption, while liberals interpreted
it either as only occasional poetry or as a betrayal of their cause.41 In contrast,
Streiter was hell-bent on driving forward the debate about Tyrolean literature,
Jesuits, and their influence. He protected himself through anonymity and by
shifting the debate to foreign media.

Public Debate and Media Discourse

Various people took part in the public debate started by Streiter. More than
eighty texts were written between 1843 and 1847, and these texts were printed in
(at least) thirteen newspapers. Because in some cases the texts appeared anon-
ymously, the identity of all those who participated remains uncertain. Although

38 Greinz, Gedichte, 72–73 (my translations).
41 Greinz, Gedichte, 352, 376–77.
the role of Weber was mysterious for a long time, Huber has convincingly
demonstrated that Weber did not join due to a directive from the government.
Contemporary actors, however, were fully convinced of Weber’s involvement.42

Two important actors were the Bavarian writers Ludwig Steub (1812–88) and Friedrich Lentner (1814–52). Steub, who was friends with some of the actors and in particular supported Gilm, was able to exercise a significant influence on the debate; he later wrote the book Sängerkrieg (Singers's war) in which he revealed many sources. The conflict about “Poetische Regungen” and the influence of the Jesuits in the German territories could proceed without the restrictions imposed by censorship in the Habsburg monarchy. For example, Fennerberg claimed curiously that he was the poet of one of Gilm’s anti-Jesuit songs at the height of the debate. This, incidentally, did not bother Gilm.43

The majority of the most important texts by the liberals appeared in the Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung. According to Huber, the government itself reacted and published increasingly aggressive rejoinders in the Augsburger Postzeitung, a Catholic, conservative paper. It should be noted that the Allgemeine Zeitung was readily available in the Austrian territories, while the Postzeitung did not have an extensive reach.44 Of great importance for the public debate was a lecture given by Albert Jäger (1801–91), a Benedictine monk and historian, at the Ferdinandeum, the Tyrolean State Museum in Innsbruck, on March 8, 1844, a day that became a symbolic date for Tyrolean anti-Jesuitism. The lecture took place as part of a series on approaches to the study of Tyrolean history at the invitation of Count Brandis. Jäger, obviously under the impression of the negative mood among the Tyrolean intellectuals towards the Jesuits, described the influence of the Jesuits in Tyrol until their suppression and painted a very negative picture. Jäger did not begin as a liberal in Streiter’s sense but the debate transformed him into one. He was no opponent of Brandis and was by no means hostile to the church. His lecture was not printed and the manuscript disappeared under possibly dubious circumstances. Streiter, in particular, built his anonymously published pamphlet Jesuits in Tyrol directly on memories of Jäger’s lecture.45 Gilm did not let the opportunity slip of using the occasion as inspiration for a poem, penning An P. Albert Jäger: Am 8. März

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42 Huber, Grenzkatholizismen, 291ff.
43 Necker, Familien- und Freundesbriefe, 55.
44 Huber, Grenzkatholizismen, 291–92.
45 Huber, Grenzkatholizismen, 287ff.
Jesuits in Tyrol

Jesuits in Tyrol connects to the pan-European anti-Jesuit discourse unfolding since the restoration of the order. At the beginning of the pamphlet, he mentions the pan-European problem and clarifies that people were left in the dark about the “real” reasons for the Jesuits’ return. Streiter strove to present the “true” history of the Jesuits’ aims and motives. He made clear that the aim of his writing was to protect the youth against the malign influences of the Jesuits. Streiter was also invested in exposing the specious nature of the reputation for learning and scholarship that many associated with the order and some of its most prominent members. Streiter sifted through recent contemporary history in his text and jubilantly applauded Jäger’s lecture. He gave three influential anti-Jesuit sources as authoritative references for his pamphlet: first, he referred to Jordan, second to French historians Jules Michelet (1798–1874) and Edgar Quinet (1803–75), and third to the journalist and professor in a lycée in Laon and Strasbourg François Génin (1803–56).

Of course, Streiter’s text is interspersed with accusations already formulated in earlier centuries, but citing these particular sources established a direct link to the contemporary French debate in which Michelet and Quinet advanced to the intellectual pacesetters for a radical variant of anti-Jesuitism through their lectures (1843–45) at the Collège de France. Michelet and Quinet interpreted the activities of the Jesuits as the antithesis of revolutionary France. With a sense of chiaroscuro contrast, they emphasized the ultimate difference: the revolution stood for a universal idea and religion, and above all, for freedom; the Jesuits stood for intolerance and ultramontane enslavement; the French stood for truth, liveliness, and authenticity, the Jesuits for artificiality and falseness. According to the historian Cubitt, anti-Jesuitism thus mutated into an ideology, thereby regaining “the sort of backbone” that it had lost in the earlier eighteenth-century French context with the decline of Jansenism and Gallicanism. The reference to Génin is only logical, as Quinet and Michelet’s lectures had strongly influenced his book Les Jésuits et l’Université (1844). Génin based his arguments against the Jesuits on a conspiracy theory that imputed to

46 [Joseph Streiter], Jesuiten in Tirol: Von einem Tiroler (Heidelberg: Wilhelm Hoffmeister, 1845), 40–42.
47 Cubitt, Jesuit Myth, 133–40, here 139.
the Jesuits a secret plan to corrupt all social classes. Génin particularly emphasized the danger in terms of education. Streiter, as shown above, adopted this argument.

Besides these sources, research has hardly taken note of the fact that Streiter’s writing took its place among many German books in these years about the Jesuits. Franz Schuselka (1811–86) addressed the Tyrolean situation in his book Jesuitenkrieg (Jesuits’ war), which was published under his name and which reproduced one of Gilm’s anti-Jesuit songs. The enmity towards the Jesuits as suggested by the title leans heavily on conspiratorial arguments. Heinrich Bode’s Das Innere der Gesellschaft Jesu (The interior of the Society of Jesus) also appeared in 1845, a book that was used by opponents of the Jesuits to demonstrate their principles and to show that many Jesuits remained active despite the suppression of the Society in 1773. Of course, there were also more moderate writings such as Ludwig Hahn’s (1820–88) Geschichte der Auflösung der Jesuiten-Congregation in Frankreich (History of the dissolution of the Jesuit congregation in France, 1845). Hahn was critical of Michelet and Quinet and was dismissive of their pro-revolutionary sentiment while agreeing with the opposition to the Jesuits. In 1847, Samuel Sugenheim’s (1811–77) Geschichte der Jesuiten in Deutschland (History of the Jesuits in Germany) was published, which, also like the books already mentioned, used a historical perspective to contextualize the actions of the Jesuits, revealing their hidden “true” plan and exposing their moral depravity.

Apologetic rejoinders were not long in coming; 1845 was also the year in which the controversial theologian Caspar Riffel (1807–56) published his book Die Aufhebung des Jesuiten-Ordens (The abolition of the Jesuit order), in which he defended the Jesuits against the attacks. In the third edition of 1855, he discussed what he considered the most important publications of the anti-Jesuits. Besides Michelet and Quinet, Riffel deemed it necessary to denounce and rebut Streiter’s and Schuselka’s writings.

49 Franz Schuselka, Der Jesuitenkrieg gegen Oesterreich und Deutschland (Leipzig: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1845), 310ff.
52 Samuel Sugenheim, Geschichte der Jesuiten in Deutschland, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Literarische Anstalt, 1847).
Discursive Elements

Across a range of media and genres, encompassing newspaper articles, historical books, and popular poems such as Gilm’s anti-Jesuit songs, one finds various discursive elements that clearly show how a region such as Tyrol connected to the international anti-Jesuit discourse. It should be noted that it is only through emplotment that conspiracy thinking becomes visible. Thus, as much as the anti-Jesuit songs might qualify as anti-Jesuit in themselves, they only become conspiratorial when they are contextualized and, above all, located within an unfolding discourse. In this context, Ralf Klausnitzer, a literary historian, speaks of the formation and spread of conspiracy scenarios “that observe processes and events in socio-political, cultural and scientific areas and attribute visible events and constellations to the work of covertly hidden actors and machinations.”

The following discursive elements draw upon the work of Cubitt and Huber. Both have already teased out the essential elements, all of which played a decisive role in the discourse.

1. Obscurantism: The Jesuits were accused of having secret motives that differed from those that they or the government officially professed.
2. Dualism: Within the poems, newspaper articles, and writings, Jesuits were always portrayed as the power of “darkness.” At the same time, there was an extreme differentiation in the discourse between “good” and “evil,” and “black” and “white.”
3. Intentionality: It is assumed that the harmful effect that the Jesuits had on society was deliberate. Especially in the field of education, one repeatedly finds the accusation that inappropriate and antiquated content was taught while content conducive to producing citizens of a modern nation-state was ignored. A particularly grievous sore point for critics was the neglect of German-language literature.

4. Dehumanization and demonization: Jesuits were described as pallid figures who stalked around in the shadows, exhibiting outward human features that hid an inner demonic nature.

5. The emphasis on the “true” religion: Both the liberals and their adversaries used the debates to try to define “true” religion. The Society of Jesus was stylized and stereotyped as a symbol of “false” religion. This means that many contributions were neither anti-clerical nor anti-religious; rather, they were specifically directed against the Jesuits and “Jesuitism.”

6. The Pope and Rome: The Jesuits were seen to function as the decisive means of the pope’s rule. A solid attachment to the “German-speaking nation” emerged in German-speaking Tyrol during this period. History, literature, and allegations of conspiracy became interwoven fields of discourse (as the case of Jäger demonstrates).

7. Criticism of the government: It should already be clear that this anti-Jesuit discourse also functioned as a covert criticism of the conservative government. Of course, this criticism targeted Tyrolean politicians as well as the Austrian government. It was not so much a question of believing that the Jesuits in Tyrol possessed the power attributed to them but more of deploying accusations as part of a deliberate political strategy. Nevertheless, the opposing side also knew how to respond. The anti-Jesuits were denounced as opponents of religion and traitors to the country. This ultimately led to a break within the liberal movement. Jäger wanted nothing to do with opposition to religion and felt no inclination to become a liberal revolutionary in 1848. Schuler was also frightened by the harsh accusations of conspiracy, especially as formulated in Streiter’s texts.

8. Anonymity and censorship: What remains to be clarified is the role anonymity played in this discourse. It is all too well known that in the Vormärz, anonymity offered a means to circumvent censorship and avoid repression. However, as Andrew McKenzie-McHarg shows, this interpretation is too simple because it fails to take account of the many “shades of grey” characterizing partial or conditional anonymity. Thus, McKenzie-McHarg describes mediated anonymity as follows. It corresponds to partial transparency, achieved through the medium created by the publishers; the reader knows who the publisher is,

56 This is a leitmotive of anti-Jesuit literature of virtually any European region, including France and Poland-Lithuania, as noted in Robert A. Maryks’s article in this special issue.
the publisher knows who the author is, but the reader only becomes privy to the identity of the author when a case can be made that the author has abused the right to anonymous publication by, for example, knowingly spreading untruths.\textsuperscript{57}

In the case under consideration here, liberal Tyrolese felt compelled to go abroad in order to hold a public debate in which they still remained reluctant to disclose any names. As was to be expected, state officials pressured newspaper editors for information about the identity of the authors. In many cases, it was apparent to the readers who the author of an anonymous article had been, though they were sometimes mistaken, as has been described above. Brandis even had to admit in 1847, as Huber shows, that he was quite sure who had written the articles and texts critical of the Austria Empire, but without proof, there was little he could do against them.\textsuperscript{58}

Moreover, Streiter and his comrades-in-arms had achieved the goal of creating at least a partial public sphere. People were discussing the role of the Jesuits, and Tyrolean literature no longer led a furtive existence in inns and without access to printing presses. This observation implies a positive role that anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories played in the emergence of the public sphere. Clearly, they had the power to jump-start a discussion. The attitude of not being allowed to say anything because of censorship but still doing it nevertheless under the cover of anonymity and thus influencing public opinion is evidence of the interest in participating in a debate in which several opinions could be expressed. However, the claim of the liberal publicists to have revealed the actual plan behind reintroducing the Jesuits left no room for the opposing, conservative party to present its version of the story. The liberals wanted to convince their readers that the external perception of the Tyrolese was not accurate and that a far more authentic picture was instead conveyed by their self-presentation in their texts. The aim was to show that censorship, the Jesuits, and the state suppress the “true” Tyrolean—who, of course, was the opposite of the Jesuit.


\textsuperscript{58} Huber, \textit{Grenzkatholizismen}, 294.
Conclusion and Outlook

Research has repeatedly emphasized how anti-Jesuit conspiracy allegations and myths in the nineteenth century built on the tradition of anti-Jesuitism in the early modern period. The present case also makes apparent how the discourse elements described above were drawn from an older tradition. At the same time, a process of adaptation had taken place. The accusations were no longer about heresy or a “state within the state,” but rather about emancipation from political influences in a border region. The Tyrolean example allows us to observe how a specific regional nationalism emerged from and was shaped by three elements: first, Tyrolean literature; second the sense of an independent and autonomous history; and third, anti-Jesuit conspiracy theories with all the discursive elements associated with them. The figure of the Jesuit was thus a crucial ingredient link in this discursive process. As a result of their association with the state, the government was assumed to have acted in a “Jesuit” manner and, following Jordan’s assumptions, were Jesuits because they adhered to Jesuitism.

The anti-Jesuit discourse in Tyrol manifested itself in various media. While people sang Gilm’s anti-Jesuit songs in inns and listened to Senn in coffee houses, Streiter and his comrades-in-arms tried to influence public opinion through texts in foreign daily newspapers. Furthermore, it was Streiter’s distinction to have channeled some of the international anti-Jesuit discourse through his publication *Jesuits in Tyrol*. This discourse was also not primarily about the Society of Jesuits and its actions but rather about the imaginary figure of the Jesuit. The question this figure posed was often answered by reinterpreting history; by insinuating that the Jesuits were secretly and maliciously trying to thwart all progress, they could become a projection of the frustrations and disappointments felt within the liberal movement. By constructing the foil of an evil oppressive regime, liberal forces could develop their own identity, which sharply distinguished between friend and foe, especially in the heated conspiracy discourse. The radical conspiratorial version of the discourse was not attractive to all participants: Schuler, Jäger, probably also Gilm, and later certainly Pichler were at odds with Streiter’s convictions. In

1848, the Jesuits in Austria were again put under a ban that lasted until 1852. As is well known, the revolution led directly to neo-absolutism, but this did not signify the end of a liberal movement in Tyrol, as historian Thomas Götz has lucidly demonstrated.61

In the Kulturkampf, there were various debates about the significance of the anti-Jesuit songs. The anti-Jesuit conspiracy discourse in Tyrol was not an early form of an emerging Kulturkampf but instead laid the foundations for its later occurrence by creating two mutually exclusive reference systems: the emergence of liberal networks and the revitalization of Catholic networks through much closer cooperation. Accordingly, the conspiratorial interpretation had two, if you will, paradoxical effects: First, it served as a political strategy to give liberalism a voice in the first place and to become a factor within the political arena. Second, the overheated discourse, compelled the clericals to close ranks and become a stronger social factor than they had not been before. As the historian Christopher Clark mentions, this ideological differentiation was the condition for the Kulturkampf in the later nineteenth century.62 This means, that the variant of the anti-Jesuit conspiracy myth elaborated in this essay illustrates Karl Popper’s remarks about the fallacy of conspiracy theorizing: While people get bogged down in questions about who is to blame for grievances and who benefits from crises, “nothing ever comes off exactly as intended.”63