

From Immolation to Restoration: The Jesuits, 1773–1814

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Abstract

The period between global suppression (1773) and universal restoration (1814) had a profound impact on the 19th-century Society of Jesus. After an account of the events of the suppression years, the author looks at the impact on both Jesuit self-identity (the relationship between “old” and “new” Society), the Society’s relationship with the papacy, and the Jesuits’ interaction with the broader 19th-century culture. He concludes with some historiographical remarks on the current state and future directions of scholarship concerning this period.

Keywords

Catholic Church, Enlightenment, Enlightenment and Catholicism, Jesuits, Jesuit history, Jesuit restoration, Jesuit suppression, 19th-century Catholicism, religious orders, Society of Jesus, Ultramontanism

Maternal Rome stretched out her withered hands over her child and her champion, grieving, while she herself united in one common sacrifice to peace—and the Jesuits were immolated.”¹ This, at any rate, was how one

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1. Isaac Disraeli, *Despotism: Or, The Fall of the Jesuits; A Political Romance* (London: John Murray, 1811) vii.

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early 19th-century hack writer portrayed the greatest catastrophe in Jesuit history. One might dislike his gleeful tone, but he was correct about the dramatic nature of the event. Long before 1773 the Society of Jesus had grown accustomed to local, usually temporary, expulsions. The events of the 18th century were of a different magnitude, however. Between 1759 and 1767 the Jesuits were expelled from (or dissolved in) the three most powerful nations of Catholic Europe (Portugal, France, and Spain) and their overseas possessions. In 1773 they suffered worldwide suppression at the hands of a reluctant and much-pressured pope, Clement XIV (r. 1769–1774). Even the most basic question—how could this possibly have come pass?—remains a matter of scholarly debate, and it is still appropriate to agree with John Henry Newman’s (1801–1890) description of the suppression as “one of the most mysterious matters in the history of the Church.”²

It has always been tempting to locate an overarching explanation, some metanarrative that ties all the disparate events together. Some of the possible candidates no longer hold great appeal and might, perhaps, be retired. It is not sufficient, for instance, to argue that the Jesuits simply fell victim to the tides of something called “The Enlightenment.” We can concede that the self-fashioned champions of reason and progress had many hurtful things to say and write about the Society of Jesus: it was routinely portrayed as a balefully obscurantist religious order, and the *philosophes* of France were not slow to claim the credit for destroying the Jesuits in their own nation.

Such an explanation falls down at several points, however. First, it is somewhat fanciful to suggest that the denizens of Parisian salons had the wherewithal to bring down the most dynamic religious order in the Catholic world. They could stoke the fires of discontent, but even the French attack on the Society had more to do with the skillful maneuvering of Jansenist adversaries.³ Second, identifying the Jesuits as the inevitable foes or victims of the Enlightenment (assuming it makes sense to refer to a unified Enlightenment “movement”) is a dubious activity. As so much excellent recent work has demonstrated, the Jesuits played a starring role in the Catholic variant of the Enlightenment.⁴ The Jesuit order had more than its share of bred-in-the-bone Aristotelians, but it also provided some of Europe’s most eminent universities with professors of science and ran some of the Continent’s most prestigious observatories. Optics, geometry, climatology, cartography, and many other such disciplines were favored Jesuit pursuits. This was, after all, the order that produced Joseph Stepling

2. Charles Stephen Dessain, ed., *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 12 (New York: T. Nelson, 1961–) 117.

3. Dale Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France, 1757–1765* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1975).

4. Jeffrey Burson, *The Rise and Fall of Theological Enlightenment: Jean-Martin de Prades and Ideological Polarization in Eighteenth-Century France* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2010); Ulrich Lehner and Jeffrey Burson, eds., *Enlightenment and Catholicism in Europe* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2014); Ulrich Lehner and Michael Printy, eds., *A Companion to the Catholic Enlightenment in Europe* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

(1716–1778), Roger Boscovich (1711–1787), and Maximilian Hell (1720–1792). Members of the Society also engaged, albeit cautiously in many cases, with the era's most provocative philosophical developments. Can we really suggest that the order fell because it was, as it were, out of step with the times? Here, we should not trust the adjudications of the likes of Diderot and d'Alembert.

What, then, of the potential to see the suppression as the inevitable culmination of ancient hatreds and rivalries? As a contributory factor, this should not be discounted. The Society had been plagued by an ever-expanding charge sheet of supposed moral and political offenses throughout its history (everything from regicide, to boundless avarice, to sexual perversion). It is clear that the Jesuits' 18th-century enemies made full use of the legacy of earlier anti-Jesuit rhetoric (specific texts were routinely cited) or myth-making, and various old themes emerged. Similarly, the belief that the Society represented Roman intrusion in the affairs of national churches clearly played a role, not least in the regalist Spain of Charles III (r. 1759–1788). Likewise, and as already mentioned, Jansenist hatred of the Society, which had been simmering for more than a century, was a crucial factor in France. Ever since the mid-17th century the Jansenists had been grumbling about a (heavily caricatured) Jesuit species of moral theology, and they held the Society responsible for the attacks Jansenism had suffered from Rome. Old wounds had not come close to healing.

All this provided important context and added momentum but, reductive as it may sound, momentous historical events usually require specific triggers. I therefore repeat an argument I made some years ago: we cannot hope to explain the 18th-century assault on the Jesuits without looking at a series of random political events and crises. I have revised my thinking on some of the specifics. I am now increasingly convinced by, for instance, the idea that regional enemies of the Society made common cause and benefited from the collision of specific anti-Jesuit campaigns. Anti-Jesuit texts produced in Portugal during the 1750s and 1760s spread far and wide across the Continent. In France, they would be translated by men of Jansenist sympathies such as Pierre-Olivier Pinault (d. 1790). Dale Van Kley's argument for an international Jansenist campaign against the Society likewise warrants close attention.⁵ These and other factors provided crucial momentum. I would still maintain, however, that the clinching factor was that the Society of Jesus endured an extraordinary run of bad luck during the 1750s and 1760s that allowed its enemies to pounce. Perhaps the best way to demonstrate this point is to offer a synoptic account of what actually happened.

It all began with an earthquake in Lisbon in 1755, in which as many as 30,000 people perished. In the aftermath, various Jesuit priests described the tragedy as God's way of punishing Portugal for its sins. This infuriated Sebastião José de Carvalho e Mello (1699–1782), often referred to by his later title, the marquis of Pombal and the

5. Dale Van Kley, "Jansenism and the International Expulsion of the Jesuits," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 7, *Enlightenment, Reawakening, and Revolution, 1660–1815*, ed. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (New York: Cambridge University, 2006) 302–28.

most powerful political figure in Portugal. His hatred of the Jesuits knew no bounds, and his ascendancy was the first crucial piece of bad luck suffered by the Society of Jesus.⁶

With scant justification, Pombal was convinced that the Jesuits had been stirring up discontent in the South American colonies and, back at home, he regarded them as one of the main challenges, alongside the aristocracy, to royal authority and a resurgence of local episcopal control. During the 1750s, Pombal chipped away at the Society's influence, banishing confessors from court and spreading anti-Jesuit propaganda. In 1758, a golden opportunity arose. On September 3 of that year, an unsuccessful attempt was made to assassinate the king. Pombal wasted little time in pointing the finger of blame at his Jesuit and noble foes. The arrests began in December 1758 and January 1759. The marquis of Távora, the duke of Aveiro, various other nobles, and ten eminent Jesuits were taken into custody. Accusing Jesuits of attempted regicide was a clever propagandist tactic—indeed, a fine example of how long-standing anti-Jesuit themes could be turned to 18th-century advantage. Similar charges, all of them false, had haunted the Society throughout its history, most recently when someone had attempted to kill the king of France in 1757.

In early 1759, the government announced that Jesuits had played a leading role in the assassination attempt, and over the following months the Portuguese Jesuits were restricted to their houses. Colleges were closed in July, and a royal decree of expulsion arrived in September. There were close to 1500 Jesuits within Portugal and its overseas territories; the vast majority were sent into exile, though more than 200 were imprisoned in harsh conditions from which only 45 would emerge alive. Perhaps the clearest indication of Pombal's venom (very much the crucial factor in the destruction of the Portuguese branch of the Jesuit order) was his treatment of Gabriel Malagrida (d. 1761), who was executed September 21, 1761 for his supposed role in the assassination attempt.⁷

The Jesuits' French enemies most certainly took heed of events in Portugal (though Voltaire admitted that the attack on the aged Malagrida was unusually cruel), but again they required a specific excuse to launch their localized attack. The Paris Parlement was home to a boisterous Jansenist party, fired by resentment about earlier wrangles with the Jesuits, and it eagerly awaited its chance of revenge. The chance came from an unexpected quarter: random happenstance, once again.

6. Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University, 1995).

7. See Christine Vogel, "Les Lumières face à l'Inquisition portugaise: Le procès du jésuite Gabriele Malagrida et l'opinion publique en Europe (1759–1761)," in *Inquisição Portuguesa: Tempo, razão, e circunstância*, ed. Luis Filipe Barreto (Lisbon: Prefácio, 2007) 375–90; Kenneth Maxwell, "The Spark: Pombal, the Amazon, and the Jesuits," *Portuguese Studies* 17 (2001) 168–83; Borja Vivanco Diaz, "La expulsión de los jesuitas de Portugal en la 'era pombalina,'" *Arbor: Ciencia, Pensamiento, y Cultura* 190 (2014) 1–13; Eduardo Brazão, "Pombal e os jesuítas," in *O Marquês de Pombal e o seu Tempo*, ed. Luis Reis Torgal and Isabel Nobre Vargues (Coimbra: University of Coimbra, 1982–1983) 329–65.

The Jesuit Antoine Lavalette (1708–1767) had established a thriving business in Martinique and Dominica; he dealt in sugar, coffee, and indigo and as a sideline helped Martinique residents to transfer money back home to France. He had also amassed hefty debts with a number of French creditors. When some of the ships transporting his goods were captured in 1756, he found himself in dire financial straits, and those creditors (chiefly the firm of Lioncy in Marseille) fell into bankruptcy and sought restitution. Fatefully, the aggrieved parties insisted that the Society of Jesus as a corporate entity should be held responsible for covering Lavalette's debts.⁸

In 1760 a court in Marseilles argued that the entire Society was indeed liable. The Society reasonably decided to appeal the decision but made the colossal mistake of taking their case to the Paris Parlement, a body containing delegates who detested the Jesuits. A random incident of fiscal misadventure soon faded into the background. The Parlement upheld the lower court's decision, but there was now a chance to launch a general attack on the Society of Jesus. Parlement declared that the Jesuits were papal interlopers who undermined the proud Gallican tradition, and that the Society's organization and ethos were utterly despotic.

The die had been cast. In April 1761, Parlement ruled that the Jesuits were to stop receiving novices. In August the Jesuits' Institute was condemned, and the Jesuits were to be expelled from all their institutions and stripped of their properties, though the enforcement of this legislation was delayed for several months. In the coming years, French Jesuits would be obliged to take unsavory oaths—including commitment to Gallican ideas, severing of contact with their superior general in Rome, and denouncement of supposedly evil teachings attributed to the Society—or leave the country. The chaos of banishment, as witnessed in Portugal, was largely avoided; many Jesuits were allowed to remain and were even granted small pensions, but in terms of corporate existence, the blow was no less catastrophic.

At least there was still Spain, but not for long. Charles III had a clear vision of how the Spanish Church should operate. Unsurprisingly, he advocated an ecclesiastical system in which the king's authority was uncontested. The influential Jesuits were an obvious target. It took more than a king's malice to uproot them, of course, and yet again, a confluence of events was required. During the 1760s various reformist politicians—including Pedro Rodriguez de Campomanes and José Moñino—won influence at court. There was also an upsurge of opposition to Jesuit moral teaching (crucially, an analogue of Jansenist sentiment in France) and much talk of potential educational reform. A strong anti-Jesuit mood prevailed, and all that was lacking, just as in France and Portugal, was an excuse to attack the Society.

In March 1766, the unloved finance minister, the marquis of Esquilache, enacted legislation that forbade the wearing of broad-brimmed hats and capes: they provided, so the theory went, useful disguises for criminals. The populace of Madrid, already suffering the consequences of bad harvests, soaring prices, and rising taxes, were not

8. D. G. Thompson, "The Lavalette Affair and the Jesuit Superiors," *French History* 10 (1996) 206–39.

impressed by this development. Why should they tolerate this assault on their traditional costume? Violent riots, the result of pent-up anger over all these issues, broke out, and such was the peril that the king was obliged to flee his capital. A scapegoat was required.

Charles launched an inquiry into the riots, led by a special committee of the Council of Castille, chaired by the count of Aranda. In January 1767 the Council reached the conclusion that the Jesuits were responsible—that, indeed, there had been an attempted *coup d'état*—and recommended deporting the Spanish Jesuits. In February Charles approved this measure. After keeping the decree of banishment a closely guarded secret for several weeks, Jesuit houses and communities were surrounded by troops and emptied out in late March and early April. After being stripped of most of their possessions, the residents were dragooned to the coast to begin their journey into exile. Over the coming months and years they would be joined by hundreds of Jesuits banished from Spain's overseas colonies and exiles from Spain's European satellite states—Naples, Parma, and Sicily.⁹

This all makes for a very interesting, even bewildering, case study in the processes of historical causality. I readily concede that it is not enough to point to a series of random, unfortunate events in order to explain the impact of the attack on the Jesuits: the bad luck would not have mattered had there not been anti-Jesuit sentiment in the cultural groundwater (though I repeat that the sources of this sentiment sometimes varied from country to country). Then again, the anti-Jesuit sentiment would not have been capable of destroying the Jesuits if the aforementioned random events had not occurred. I leave it to philosophers of history to untangle all this. The only safe conclusion, in my opinion, is that a word like “inevitability” should never be part of the historian's lexicon, and that a monocausal explanation for a complex historical event is almost always unsatisfactory.

When it comes to the road from national attacks to worldwide suppression we are, perhaps, on firmer ground. In the years after 1767 leading figures in Spain, France, and Portugal worked inordinately hard to secure the general, worldwide suppression of the Jesuits. There was no better way to justify and legitimize their local actions. The papal conclave of 1769 was crucial, and Bourbon ambassadors lobbied energetically for a new pope who would do their bidding. With the arrival of Clement XIV they seemed to have secured this goal, and not a few Jesuits expressed alarm. As things turned out,

9. On the banishment from Spain and the fate of exiled Spanish Jesuits during the Suppression era, see Inmaculada Fernández Arrillaga, *El destierro de los jesuitas castellanos (1767–1815)* (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, 2004); Teófanos Egido, “La expulsión de los jesuitas de España,” in *Historia de la Iglesia en España de los siglos XVII y XVIII*, ed. Ricardo García Villoslada, vol. 4 of *Historia de la Iglesia en España* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979) 745–92; Enrique Giménez López, ed., *Expulsión y exilio de los jesuitas españoles* (Alicante: University of Alicante, 1997); Niccolò Guasti, *Lotta politica e riforme all'inizio del regno di Carlo III: Campomanes e l'espulsione dei gesuiti dalla monarchia spagnola (1759–1768)* (Florence: Alinea, 2006); José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, *Expulsión y extinción de los Jesuitas (1759–1773)* (Bilbao: Mensajero, 2013).

however, Clement was not quickly bullied into compliance. But finally, under huge pressure from the ministers and ambassadors of the Bourbon powers, he ordered the global suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773.

The consequences were immediate and devastating. With a single stroke, close to 23,000 men were now ex-Jesuits. Hundreds of schools around the globe were closed or handed over to other parties, the contents of hundreds of libraries were scattered, mission fields were abandoned, and Jesuit buildings were turned to other uses—from grain stores, to barracks, to governmental offices.

For many Jesuits this was a time of shock and displacement, and neither the tragedy nor the poignancy of the situation should be underestimated. The memory of these dark days would never fade; indeed, it provided one of the most powerful anchors of continuity between the “old” and “new” Societies. Throughout the 19th-century Jesuits campaigned to prove how unjust the suppression had been and to demonstrate how vital the Society was to the Church’s fortunes. Even 200 years later a historically informed joke could be made when the first Jesuit pope was elected: perhaps, someone suggested, he should call himself Clement XV. What better way to finally respond to the actions of the earlier Clement who had destroyed the order?

When considering the long-term consequences for the Society of Jesus, however, it is important to bear two points in mind. Countless Jesuits suffered during the aftermath of suppression, led by the order’s superior general, Lorenzo Ricci (1703–1775), who would languish to his death in a papal prison. Others, however, went on to successful careers, and they were still, as the contemporary phrase had it, Jesuits-at-heart. Second, and crucially, despite the best efforts of the Bourbon powers, the Society of Jesus never entirely disappeared. Both factors would influence the outlook and fortunes of the postrestoration order. It is to that somewhat happier tale that I now turn.

Survival

When news of Pombal’s devastating measures reached India, Joseph Tiefenthaler (1710–1785) did not fall into panic. He simply decided to embark on epic journeys around northern India. He would not learn of his order’s worldwide suppression until 1778. His best publications were still ahead of him during the suppression era, and he would die peacefully in Agra in 1785. Joseph Eckhel (1737–1798) was obviously not delighted by the destruction of the Society of Jesus, but he moved fairly effortlessly into new, lofty positions: a professorship at the University of Vienna and keeper of Maria Theresa’s Imperial Cabinet of Coins (he was even able to rescue the local numismatic treasures of his former order). Not far away, the ex-Jesuit Franz von Paula Schrank (1747–1835) would earn his doctorate in 1776, produce more than 40 influential works on natural history, become a professor at Ingolstadt and, in 1809, rise to the position of director of the Munich Botanical Gardens. Such trajectories were matched by numerous ex-Jesuits, notably in the educational sphere. Even those who found themselves in exile could manage to make sterling contributions to their new homes—the exploits of the Spanish ex-Jesuits in Italy provide the most impressive

case in point.¹⁰ More was going on than tragedy, though there was certainly more than enough of that.

In places like Spain and Portugal the destruction of the Society was abrupt. Elsewhere, the Jesuits simply faded away, relatively unmolested. This was the case, for example, in China, and also in Canada, where the last remaining ex-Jesuit from the presuppression era, Jean-Joseph Casot (1728–1800), would die in 1800. Far more importantly, the Jesuits' corporate existence was uninterrupted in one corner of the world: the Russian Empire. Catherine the Great (r. 1762–1796) had no intention of allowing the papal brief of suppression to be promulgated or enforced within her dominions. This was not because of any great affection for the Jesuits—it was more an indication of proud independence—but it did the Society of Jesus a huge favor. The year before the suppression, 1772, had witnessed the First Partition of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. This involved the Russian annexation of territories with a modest but vibrant Jesuit presence: 201 Jesuits spread across institutions including residences, mission houses, and colleges, notably the dynamic college at Polotsk.

It was in this region that the Society of Jesus would survive and indeed thrive. Pius VI (r. 1775–1799) gave oral approval to the “Russian Society” in 1783 and 1799, followed by the momentous papal brief *Catholicae fidei* issued by Pius VII (r. 1800–1823) on March 7, 1801. With a single stroke, the local vicar-general became superior general of the order that had continued to exist in the Russian Empire. The consequences were significant. Locally, the period between 1801 and 1815 witnessed a dramatic expansion of Jesuit activity. New colleges were established (notably in St. Petersburg), and missions were launched across the empire: on the Volga, on the Black Sea and Caspian coasts, and in Siberia.¹¹

The worldwide impact was every bit as important. A papally sanctioned outpost of the Society now existed, and ex-Jesuits outside the Russian Empire, in both Europe and the United States, clamored to “aggregate” themselves to it. Indeed, such petitions had been coming in well ahead of the 1801 papal brief. There was good news elsewhere. As early as 1793 Ferdinand of Parma (1751–1802) had allowed the establishment of a Jesuit vice-province, and Jesuits had arrived from Polotsk to help in this work of prerestoration Jesuit activity. On July 30, 1804, Pius VII issued the papal brief *Per alias* restoring the Society in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

The crucial point about all these developments was that they allowed for a sense of continuity. That epochal papal brief of 1801, which granted formal papal recognition to the Society in the Russian Empire, made it very clear that a “new” religious order

10. See Niccolò Guasti, *L'Esilio italiano dei Gesuiti spagnoli: Identità, controllo sociale, e pratiche culturali (1767–1798)* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 2006); Ugo Baldini and Gian Paolo Brizzi, eds., *La presenza in Italia dei Gesuiti iberici espulsi: Aspetti religiosi, politici, e culturali* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2010).

11. See Marek Ingot, *La Compagnia di Gesù nell'impero Russo (1772–1820) e la sua parte nella restaurazione generale della Compagnia* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1997); Sabina Pavone, *Una strana alleanza: La Compagnia di Gesù in Russia dal 1772 al 1820* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2008).

was not being established. This would have surprised no one, least of all the ex-Jesuits around the world who were longing for restoration. Continuity was key, and many figures throughout the suppression years worked extraordinarily hard to keep the Ignatian spirit alive or benefited hugely from the islands of Jesuit survival; many of those who made the journey to Russia and then spread their wings around the globe would, for instance, contribute to the resurgence before 1814, notably in the United States.

In this fascinating period, three names have always stood out. First comes Pierre-Joseph de Clorivière (1735–1820). In the most difficult circumstances, he established groups, the Society of Daughters of the Heart of Mary in 1790 and the Society of the Heart of Jesus in 1791, with the patent intention of keeping Jesuit spiritual concepts alive. José Pignatelli (1737–1811), meanwhile, experienced the trauma of exile from Spain, but over the next decades he did his utmost to bolster morale and sustain links within the banished ex-Jesuit community. He would become master of novices at Colorno, Italy, in 1799 (another of those prerestoration sparks of life), leader of the province in the Kingdom of the two Sicilies in 1804, and provincial of Italy in 1806.

Pignatelli would not live to see the 1814 restoration, but by then the torch had been passed. An obvious example of this process is the career of Jan Philipp Roothaan (1785–1853). Born in Amsterdam in 1785, he received great inspiration (and education) from the ex-Jesuit Adam Beckers (1744–1806), now a parish priest. Roothaan would be one of those to travel to the Russian Empire during the suppression era and from 1829 to 1853 would become one of the Society's most dynamic superior generals. His impact on the United States was particularly noteworthy: as well as establishing new missions he would oversee the founding of some of the Society's most influential colleges—including Fordham in the Bronx, Holy Cross in Worcester, St. Joseph's in Philadelphia, and St. Louis University. The task of forging continuity between “old” and “new” Societies was crucial to his project.

Nor was this task uncommon. In terms of Jesuit self-identity during the 19th century, creating links with the presuppression Society and sustaining long-standing traditions was of the utmost importance. The order's foundational documents, though (as always) open to minor revision, lost none of their influence, and the order's 16th-century educational manifesto, the *Ratio studiorum*, remained in place—though it too underwent modification (again under Roothaan's stewardship). There was also a concerted effort to record the Society's past, both by producing regional histories of the order and by assembling archival documents. This process was fitful at first, though by the generalate of Luis Martín (1846–1906) late in the century, it was on the verge of an astonishingly productive period: the documentary collections on which all historians of the order still depend were the lasting result.¹²

12. For a very useful analysis of Jesuit historiographical efforts see Robert Danieluk, S.J., “Some Remarks on Jesuit Historiography 1773–1814,” in *Jesuit Survival and Restoration*, ed. Robert Maryks and Jonathan Wright (Boston: Brill, forthcoming). See also Danieluk, “La reprise d’une mémoire brisée: L’historiographie de la ‘nouvelle’ Compagnie de Jésus,” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 150 (2006) 269–71.

Throughout the Society's challenging restoration, one constant never lost its potency. During the Jesuits' first century it had been beneficial for someone like J ronimo Nadal (1547–1608), one of the first Jesuits, to be able to announce that “the whole life of the Society is contained in germ and expressed in Ignatius's story,” or for Everard Mercurian (1514–1580), an early superior general, to be able to state, in 1574, that “there is nothing under my responsibility that I want more than to see things going along the original line of our father Ignatius, of holy memory.”¹³

The precise trajectory of that “original line” was sometimes the subject of heated debate within the order, and certainly not every Jesuit was convinced that Mercurian was pursuing it authentically. Still, all agreed on Ignatius's status as model, inspiration, and guiding light. This was assuredly still the case during the immediate post-1814 period that witnessed many attempts to study the great man and also, again courtesy of Roothaan's initiatives, a new edition of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

As the postrestoration Society faced new challenges and had to adapt, the past continued to matter. It is commonplace to talk of the “old” and the “new” Society (I have already done so in this article) and such a division makes considerable sense.¹⁴ It is important to recognize, however, that after 1814 a conscious effort was made to embrace tradition and strive for continuity. More to the point, the legacy of the suppression was rarely perceived as the “death” of one Society of Jesus that made space for the “birth” of a new order. “Restoration” was, on balance, a well-chosen word.

Jesuit self-identity was, of course, only half the story. It also had to cope with how it was perceived by others. This was far beyond the Society's control.

The Same Old Story

There is a standard image of the 19th-century Society of Jesus as a religious order that was none too keen on the era's political, cultural, and philosophical trends and developments. It is certainly not hard to locate contemporary quotations (though “fulminations” might be a better word) that portray the Jesuits as implacable enemies of modernity and something called “progress.” Here, for instance, is Henry Isaac Roper firing his rhetorical cannon:

When you speak of Jesuitism you call up the spirit of the past, the dull dark past. . . . Its mission is not to take the world onward, but to drag the world backward, to get it again amidst that rickety infancy of intellect and those dim shadows that are Rome's best hope.¹⁵

13. Cited in Philip Endean, “‘The Original Line of Our Father Ignatius’: Mercurian and the *Spiritual Exercises*,” in *The Mercurian Project: Forming Jesuit Culture, 1573–1580*, ed. Thomas M. McCoog (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004) 35–48, at 35.

14. Thomas Worcester will offer interesting musings on this topic in his contribution to *Jesuit Survival and Restoration*, ed. Robert Maryks and Jonathan Wright (forthcoming from Brill).

15. Henry Isaac Roper, *The Jesuits*, 2nd ed. (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1848) 39.

A few decades later, William Paterson treated an Edinburgh audience to a supposed exposé of the “great Jesuit plot of the 19th century.” “In the recent work of the order,” he thundered, “the popish world is reconstructed, kings and counsellors disappear before the one infallible man, and over the globe this ultramontane growth is one of the most significant facts of the century.” From the very moment of restoration, Paterson opined, there had been a “new fresh project for the conquest of the globe and for the reconstruction of human society.” The “pope’s black cohorts” were determined to “plant the foot of the pope on the neck of a prostrate mankind.” Worse yet, Paterson warned, they had adopted new sinister methods. In the United States they “saw that the scavenger had as much political power as the millionaire, and the ignorant labourer, who was not fit for better work than the opening of a sewer, counted the same by his vote as the most cultured citizen.” Jesuits, he suggested, had therefore moved from whispering in the ears of princes to dominating political machines in Baltimore, Chicago, and Cincinnati. They had also, so Paterson claimed, found time to start the Civil War and then to assassinate Abraham Lincoln.¹⁶

Such fantasies gained similar traction across the Atlantic Ocean. Jean Claude Pitrat warned Americans against

the Jesuits who fill the Roman Catholic churches, invade your colleges and educate your children, who are scattered everywhere in the richest cities of the United States, who are in Oregon, in California, wherever money is made, whom you meet aboard the steam boats and the railroads, with a studied smile, eyes cast down, very modestly dressed, and with the most reserved posture.

“What monstrous tree,” Pitrat wondered, “will be produced by the Jesuitical seed.”¹⁷

The scale, breadth, and ferocity of this anti-Jesuit caricature (replicated across the world) was quite extraordinary, although in a way it was only the continuation, newly bottled, of an old vintage—one species of continuity that the postrestoration Society would gladly have avoided. We can dismiss much of this Jesuit-bashing as calumny, but it clearly reflects a contemporary perception of the postrestoration Society: a religious order that simply did not “fit” the modern world. This leads to an interesting question. Putting aside the exaggeration and venom, how precisely did the Society of Jesus perceive its role in the postrevolutionary milieu?

At first blush, a very easy analysis (which I will modify below) is available: the Society was, by and large, on the conservative side of the 19th-century cultural aisle. This did not render it guilty of dark conspiracy, and, after all, there was nothing wrong with a Roman Catholic religious order following the lead set by the papacy. The timing and wording of the restoration bull were of great significance. Pius VII had only

16. William Paterson, *The Great Jesuit Plot of the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: R. W. Hunter, 1894) 12.

17. John Claudius Pitrat, *Americans Warned of Jesuitism: Or, The Jesuits Unveiled* (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1851) 13, 190.

recently been released from French captivity and, presumably, was in the mood to make a stand against the currents of postrevolutionary Europe. He saw the Jesuits as a natural ally. "Amidst these dangers of the Christian Republic . . . we should deem ourselves guilty of a great crime towards God if . . . we neglected the aids which the special providence of God has put at our disposal." The bark of Peter was "tossed and assailed by continuous storms," so why not turn to the Jesuits, the "vigorous and experienced powers who volunteer their services"?¹⁸ As mandates go, this one did not lack clarity.

It is also clear that, for the most part, the 19th-century Society fared far better under conservative regimes than in politics governed by self-styled liberal progressives. There is a conspicuous pattern of exile and return that was dictated by the shifting political tides. In Spain and its empire, Ferdinand VII (r. 1808–1833) had invited the Society back in 1815, but as early as 1820, under pressure from Spanish general and liberal politician Rafael Riego y Nuñez (1784–1823), he was obliged to suppress all religious orders. The Jesuits returned in 1823, in the wake of Riego's overthrow and execution, but were suppressed yet again in 1835. The baffling cycle continued: return during the years after 1848, exile in 1868, and restoration in 1875.

In France, events were equally discombobulating. Modest progress was made under Charles X (r. 1824–1830), and then came the July Revolution of 1830, dripping with anticlerical intent. The reign of Louis Philippe (r. 1830–1848) was, in fact, for the most part tolerable, though the era witnessed an outpouring of anti-Jesuit polemic, and was followed by the revolution of 1848 that did French Jesuits few favors. The Second Empire (1852–1870) allowed for major Jesuit expansion, especially in the educational sphere, but then the Paris Commune of 1871 arrived, and several French Jesuits lost their lives. The list goes on. The Jesuits were banished from Switzerland in 1847 and were not granted official permission to return until as late as 1973. In Germany, one result of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* was one more Jesuit expulsion.

Comparable trends were visible far beyond Europe. The Society achieved full restoration in Mexico by 1853, but in 1856 a liberal-dominated congress once more suppressed the order. It returned under Emperor Maximilian (r. 1864–1867) but was then forced to adopt a clandestine existence. During the successive periods of rule of Porfirio Díaz (beginning in 1876) Jesuits were able to minister freely, although anticlerical laws remained on the statute book. The 1910 revolution and subsequent 1917 constitution spelled disaster for the Jesuits of Mexico. This kind of chaos was common in 19th-century Latin America. The Jesuits were forced to leave Argentina in 1848; they were expelled from Uruguay in 1859, from Colombia in 1850 and 1861, from Ecuador in 1852, from Guatemala in 1845 and 1872, and from Peru in 1855. It is not hard to spot a trend.

As for the theological stance of the Jesuits, again a broad brushstroke analysis is available. If one were looking for champions of various 19th-century papal projects, from the declaration of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council to the enshrining

18. Pope Pius VII, *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum* (August 7, 1814), <http://www.reformation.org/jesuits-reestablished-bull.html>. All URLs cited herein were accessed July 11, 2014.

of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, one could turn easily to Jesuits such as Giovanni Perrone (1794–1886) or Johann Baptist Franzelin (1816–1886). Both men were close to the heart of papal power, and, tellingly, both had their reasons to dislike revolutionary excess: events in Rome in 1848 had driven them both into temporary exile. Likewise, there was no greater champion of devotion to the Sacred Heart than the Jesuit Henri Ramière (1821–1884), while Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio (1793–1862) did as much as anyone to inaugurate the concept of Social Catholicism. He died well ahead of *Rerum novarum*, but in many ways it was his legacy. He was also an advocate of the Thomist revival—another consistent 19th-century Jesuit theme.

There were also rebels, of course. Carlo Maria Curci (1810–1891) got himself into all kinds of trouble for his objections to the temporal power of the papacy and his support for separation of church and state in Italy. He would be expelled from the order, although a few months before his death he retracted his musings and was readmitted. The positions of others are not easy to pin down—Carlo Passaglia (1812–1887), for example. No one was more passionate about the Immaculate Conception, but he too criticized the pope’s temporal power and supported Italian unification. And he too would find himself outside the Jesuit order, have his book placed on the Index, and his image erased from a painting commissioned to commemorate the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. But shortly before his death Passaglia would retract some of his earlier pronouncements.

These were, so to speak, the extremes, but it is crucial to recognize that a middle ground also existed. To suggest that there was a monolithic 19th-century Jesuit intellectual culture strikes me as ludicrous. We should resist the very bad historical habit of summing up the Society of Jesus in any given place or time. We are told, for instance, that every early modern Jesuit missionary was an accommodationist like Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in China or Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656) in India. This simply is not true. Most histories of the topic suggest that, during the same period, in the realm of moral theology, Jesuit-promoted probabilism was the only game in town.¹⁹ It was not. There were, of course, dominant trends, but it is very easy to overlook the diversity that has always characterized the Society of Jesus.

This assuredly holds true for the 19th century, and in a host of spheres. Different Jesuits responded differently to the perils and opportunities provided by the separation of church and state in the United States. They adopted varying positions on the spread of Western imperialism and the “liberalizing” threads of South American history. Some were all for a Thomist revival; others were not so sure. Pius IX’s Syllabus of Errors (December 8, 1864) delighted a majority; indeed many leading Jesuit journals had been calling for such a measure for a long time, and Jesuits played a major role in translating the text into European languages. It would be hard to imagine, however, that every last Jesuit rejoiced. Elsewhere, it is worth remembering that, while some Jesuits clung to established missionary paradigms, others explored new strategies.

19. See Jean-Pascal Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars: Theology, Politics, and Government under Tirso Gonzalez (1687–1705)* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

This is not to deny that dominant trends existed within the postrestoration Society of Jesus. Of course they did, and so they should have done: any religious order worth its salt seeks coherence and cogency. It can also be stated with certainty that Rome was hugely reliant on members of the Society during the 19th century. As we continue to explore this fascinating period in Jesuit history, however, one of our crucial tasks will be to identify the issues that were a source of division and befuddlement but also, ultimately, enrichment. By far the most interesting thing about the Society of Jesus is that it has always produced diverse answers to urgent cultural, theological, and intellectual questions. The outspoken rebels and the champions of prevailing orthodoxies have tended to garner the headlines, but those in-between these two camps warrant much closer scrutiny.

There was a moment in the late 18th century when it seemed eminently possible that the Society of Jesus would never return. For someone like Alexandre Lanfant (1726–1792), the 1760s had been tortuous. He had been forced to sell off his few possessions (a cotton mattress, a pine desk, and a copper candlestick among them) in order to make ends meet. His situation then improved, and he could be found preaching at the royal courts of Paris and Vienna. But then, disastrously, the French Revolution arrived, and during the bloody days of September 1792 Lanfant would be killed by a mob—one of many ex-Jesuits who met such a grizzly end. It was not much help to Lanfant, but such revolutionary excess was one very good reason why, by 1814, the very powers that had sought to destroy the Jesuits now turned to them as allies. As historical ironies go, this one soars. It is vital to realize, however, that the response of the Society of Jesus to this invitation was far more complex than is usually realized. It carved out its own, idiosyncratic path through the chaos, and if the 19th century was puzzling, the events of the 20th would be more puzzling still.

Historiographical Horizons

What does the future hold for the study of the postrestoration Society of Jesus? Some of the signs are promising. There has rarely been a more exciting or more challenging time to be a historian of the Jesuits. The field has enjoyed unprecedented growth over the past few decades, both in terms of its multidisciplinary impact and its roster of practitioners. While the Jesuit past was always a source of broad scholarly interest, it is safe to say that until relatively recently the majority of detailed work (and, indeed, most of the best work) was conducted by members of the Society of Jesus itself. Today, many fine Jesuit scholars retain their rightful place at the heart of our investigations, but they have been joined by ever-expanding legions of non-Jesuit colleagues. It is a time of collaboration and collegiality.

The scope of inquiry is also cheering. The history of science, art and architecture, literature, and education are only some of the disciplines that have been greatly enhanced by their interaction with the study of the Jesuits. Meanwhile the analyses of Jesuit aspects of missiology, theology, and philosophy have lost none of their dynamism. Each week the excellent “Jesuitica” project based at Leuven²⁰ provides a digest

20. See <http://www.Jesuitica.be>.

of newly published books and articles, and it routinely provokes two thoughts: first, that we all have our work cut out for us to keep up with the avalanche of publications and, second, that the field of Jesuit history is a magnificently international venture.

These are all wonderful developments, but there is still a problem to confront—or better, an opportunity to be seized. It would be reasonable to suggest that the majority of work on Jesuit history is still dedicated to the presuppression era. There have, of course, been numerous excellent works on the post-1814 period and, if one were to venture a shortlist of the most significant volumes on Jesuit history published during the past few years, it would include, among others, titles concerning Italian Jesuit exiles in United States during the 19th century,²¹ a five-volume history of the restored Society in Germany,²² and an account of Portuguese Jesuits in Italy in the years up to 1831.²³ There have also been mighty volumes that look at specific themes across Jesuit history and include notable contributions on the 19th century.²⁴

Readers of this journal in particular might not immediately recognize the chronological imbalance I am describing. Theology is one arena, at least, where interest in the postrestoration Society matches interest in its presuppression forebear. There is certainly as much (likely more) fine work being done on, for example, Henri de Lubac or Karl Rahner as there is, for example, on Francisco Suárez or Robert Bellarmine. Nonetheless, I believe the broad assessment is correct. When I was reviews editor of the *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, I commissioned far more pieces on the first half of the Jesuit story than the second. This simply reflected the fact that a strong majority of the most important volumes still concern the earlier period.

The obvious question, one that is particularly appropriate in this anniversary year of the Society's restoration, is why this should be the case. It can no longer be put down to mathematics. There are now more years (241) in the post-1773 era than there were in the pre-1773 period (233). Is it, then, the case that the Society of Jesus simply became less important or less interesting during the past two centuries? This is a tempting but ultimately misguided suggestion, though everything, of course, hinges on one's perspective. Recovering from the cataclysm of suppression was for the Jesuits a long-term enterprise. John Carroll was correct when he predicted that "many years will be necessary to reproduce such men as formerly adorned the Society by their virtues and talents."²⁵ In many ways, Jesuits would never regain the level of cultural

21. Gerald McKeivitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848–1919* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2007).

22. Klaus Schatz, *Geschichte der deutschen Jesuiten (1814–1983)* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2013).

23. Maria Grazia Russo and António Júlio Limpo Trigueiros, S.J., *I Gesuiti dell'Assistenza Lusitana esiliati in Italia (1759–1831)* (Padova, CLUEP, 2013).

24. For instance, Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Catherine Maire, eds., *Les antijésuites: Discours, figures, et lieux de l'antijésuitisme à l'époque moderne* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010).

25. Thomas O'Brien Hanley, ed., *The John Carroll Papers*, 3 vols. (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University, 1976) 3:351.

influence they had once enjoyed: their role on the political stage was, perforce, diminished once the link between throne and altar was severed or challenged in so many places; mission fields around the globe would become increasingly congested during the 19th century; and the Society's educational ministry (while brimming with energy and ambition in some places, not least the United States) would, on the whole, never regain its presuppression reach.

For all that, to suggest that Jesuit history, particularly during the 19th century, became less fascinating would be a curious conclusion. The Society of Jesus remained central to the theological, political, and ecclesiological developments of Roman Catholicism. It was, so to speak, in the thick of things when it came to confronting the philosophical and cultural challenges of the modern era: was there any religious order that spent so much time puzzling over Kant, or that looked so closely at the consequences of revolution, industrialization, unfettered rationalism, the modish democratic paradigm, and the forward march of what today we refer to as secularism and liberalism? The Society was also more than a bystander when it came to the developments that defined the Church during the same period: the cause of Ultramontanism, the Americanist and Modernist crises, the Thomist revival, the encounter with Fascism and Communism, the evolution of Social Catholicism, all the way through to the emergence and elucidation of Liberation Theology. The list could easily be extended. If one sought a reliable barometer of the changes and tensions that shaped the modern Roman Catholic Church, one could do much worse than look to the history of the postrestoration Society of Jesus. It was only ever one part of the story, but a vitally important one. This is surely reflected in the fact that the postrestoration Society was every bit as capable of dividing opinion, attracting praise and criticism, as its presuppression ancestor.²⁶

It is also worth pointing out that many of the traditional fields of Jesuit endeavor retained considerable dynamism after 1814. Jesuit science would flourish during the 19th century with a figure such as Angelo Secchi (1818–1878), one of his era's most accomplished astronomers, being representative. In the missionary realm, the Jesuits sometimes took decades to return to former territories; sometimes they never made it back. Despite many setbacks, however, the Society engaged in a host of new evangelical adventures, notably in Africa, Australia, and the United States. The Belgian

26. On the perseverance of anti-Jesuit myth-making see John Wolffe, "The Jesuit as Villain in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction," *Studies in Church History* 48 (2012) 308–20; Philippe Boutry, "Edgar Quinet et le mythe jésuite en 1843: Nova et vetera," in *Les anti-jésuites* 91–135; José Eduardo Franco, "L'antijésuitisme au Portugal: Composition, fonctionnalités, et signification du mythe des Jésuites (De Pombal à la 1re République)," in *Les anti-jésuites* 353–81; Camilla Loureiro Dias and Carlos Alberto de Moura Ribeiro Zeron, "L'Antijésuitisme dans l'Amérique portugaise (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)," in *Les anti-jésuites* 563–83; Geoffrey Cubitt, "Conspiracism, Secrecy, and Security in Restoration France: Denouncing the Jesuit Menace," *Historical Social Research* 38 (2013) 107–28; Timothy Verhoeven, "Neither Male nor Female: The Jesuit as Androgyne," in *Transatlantic Anti-Catholicism: France and the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010) 103–27.

Peter de Smet (1801–1873), who traveled up to 6,500 miles a year around the young republic by horse, canoe, and steamboat, serves as well as anyone to encapsulate this trend. The fact that, for some, he remains a controversial figure only adds to his significance.

That the postrestoration Society has not received the attention it deserves is all the more surprising because the 19th century was surely one of the most dramatic periods in the Jesuits' history. As we have seen, the Society was, at one time or another, banished from a staggering number of countries and, while the frequency of martyrdom is a crude metric of historical significance, the number of Jesuits who met unsavory ends during the century is a useful indication of how close the Society was to many of the era's most turbulent events. Jesuits would perish in, among other places, the 1860 Lebanese massacres, the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, and the chaos of the 1871 Paris Commune. One of these days someone will write a popular history of the 19th-century Society of Jesus: it would have every chance of flying off the shelves.

I am as guilty as anyone when it comes to neglecting the study of the postrestoration Society. In a general history of the order published a decade ago, I gave only 60 out of 300 pages to the post-1814 period. This is not an untypical ratio in survey histories of the Jesuits, though that is hardly an excuse. In this anniversary year a rallying cry is hopefully not out of place. We must all try to do better. Thankfully, there are promising signs. This year has witnessed an explosion of conferences on the restoration and postrestoration periods and, more broadly, there are indications of a number of "growth industries" in the world of Jesuitica. One firm prediction, for instance, is that the study of the Society in 19th- and 20th-century Africa will flourish in the years ahead.²⁷

Author biography

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27. An excellent start has been made in Festo Mkenda, S.J., *A Mission for Everyone: A Story of the Jesuits in Eastern Africa (1555–2012)* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013).