

CHAPTER IV

CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL RHETORIC: THE JUDEO-MASONIC CONSPIRACY THEORY

In the following two chapters we will examine the development and diffusion of conspiracy theories within Colombia's two traditional parties. The rhetoric of conspiracy, when believed, contributes to inspiring eliminationist violence as witnessed in Colombia during *La Violencia*, when party militants were convinced that those within their midst from the other party were plotting against them and against Colombia. The nationalistic fervor—the *mística*—of the two parties provided a pre-existing discursive framework for the discussion of international plots against Colombia's past traditions and future progress. Coming from the mouths and pens of Colombia's professionalized politicians, these conspiracy theories were even more readily accepted by rank and file Liberals and Conservatives.

Still, the conspiracy theories were not wholly created by party leaders and activists themselves—the promulgators of these fears were taking their cues from ideas and events in Europe. It has been seen how Colombia's professionalized class of politicians often lived and studied abroad. They wished to raise Colombia's politics above its provinciality to prove to themselves that their political concerns were modern and European and not simply the result of the patron-client relationships of the vertically-organized parties. In this chapter we will examine the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory promulgated by Conservatives and clerics; in the following chapter we will analyze Liberal anticlericalism and the claim of a Nazi-Falangist plot at work in Colombia.

The Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory filtered into Latin America from Europe, mainly through Catholic channels. According to this theory, masonic liberalism and moral relativism softened a nation's resolve, paving the way toward political and social chaos, anarchism, communism, and, eventually, complete control of society by an international Jewish cabal. Since freemasons were an active presence throughout Latin America, conspiracy theories involving the fraternal organization were promulgated throughout the region, contributing to the creation of a fear of a secretive "enemy within" that was determined to thwart national traditions and the existing social order inside nations.

In the 1930s and 1940s, militant Conservative politicians and clerics seized upon the rhetoric of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory to depict the leaders of the ruling Liberal Party as insidiously linked to an international anti-Christian plot, since many prominent Liberal politicians were also freemasons. Efforts by the Liberal governments to legally separate Church and state, which were bound tightly together by the Constitution of 1886 and the Concordat of 1887, were cited as further evidence by Conservative conspiracy-mongers that the party in power was scheming to destroy the ageless Catholic traditions of the Colombian *patria*, following the orders of an international cabal. The initial promoters of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy myth were Catholic clerics and laypersons, but when repeated by party leaders, particularly Laureano Gómez, the conspiracy was taken on faith by many in the Conservative rank and file. Once *La Violencia* began, bands of Conservatives were often motivated by a desire to eliminate *rojos masones*—"red masons"—and their Liberal followers.

Origins of the Judeo-Masonic Theory

In the nineteenth century many Catholic clerics, from the Pope on down, were convinced that some dark conspiracy was steering the faithful away from timeless universal Christian truth in order to force the collapse of the Church. Fear of an international anti-Catholic plot came in reaction to the French Revolution and the introduction of liberalism, capitalism, socialism, and nationalism on the European continent. The imagined conspiracy described by the clergy was at first supposedly organized by the freemasons, the Jews were added later.¹ Popes Pius IX (1846-1878) and Leo XIII (1878-1903) issued especially virulent encyclicals against freemasonry—mainly as a reaction to the loss of the Papal States during Italian unification.² The claim of an international masonic cabal resonated in all Catholic countries, including Spain and its former colonies in Latin America, since masons were a presence in the nineteenth-century politics of these nations.

Masonic lodges had first presented themselves openly in London in 1717;³ their advocacy of freethinking and of religious tolerance made them attractive to Enlightenment thinkers.⁴ Among the first Latin Americans to join the lodges were several of the major leaders in the struggle for independence, including Francisco de

¹ David I. Kertzer, The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001) 126.

² Jean-Pierre Viallet, "Freemasonry," The Papacy: An Encyclopedia Vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2002) 604-605.

³ There are many theories about the origins of freemasonry: that they descend from the builders of the Egyptian pyramids, or of Salomon's temple in Jerusalem (many of the rituals of the first three degrees are based on a legend surrounding the architect of the temple); that they originated in the medieval guilds of stonemasons; or in the Knights Templar, a religious order suppressed in the fourteenth century (masonic rituals and attire are similar to those of the order). John J. Robinson, Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1989) 68-98, 127-143, and 159-170. However, all agree that the masons first became publicly known in 1717 in London.

⁴ For instance, Voltaire, Diderot, and Montesquieu were freemasons. Eugen Lennhoff, Los masones ante la historia, trans. Federico Climent Terrer (Barcelona: Biblioteca Orientalista, 1931) 87-99; and Ramón Martínez Zaldúa, Historia de la masonería en Hispanoamérica (México: B. Costa Amic Editor, 1978) 22.

Miranda, Bernardo O'Higgins, Antonio Nariño, José de San Martín and Simón Bolívar; all were initiated into freemasonry while in Europe in the decades preceding liberation.⁵ Bolívar was also among the first anti-masons as well; after being nearly assassinated in Bogotá in 1828, the *Libertador* assumed dictatorial powers and outlawed all secret societies in Gran Colombia, including the masonic lodges.⁶ However, his vice president and political rival, Francisco de Paula Santander, continued to be an active freemason. Influenced by Enlightenment ideas and freemasonry, Santander attempted to separate Church and state in education while president from 1832 to 1837. The anti-mason/pro-mason divide between the two principal leaders of Colombian independence contributed to the Liberal claim of Santander as their spiritual founder, while Conservatives considered Bolívar as theirs—the Church issue had much to do with the nationalistic myth-making on both sides.

As in Europe, freemasons in Latin America went on to play important roles in the liberal and anticlerical movements of the 1850s and 1860s. Mexico offers the most well-known case of masonic activity in politics—Benito Juárez was a freemason⁷—but the lodges were also active in nearly every other country where the Church had lost land and influence to liberal governments.⁸ This was also the case in Colombia, where a string of Liberal presidents who implemented anticlerical policies at mid-century were freemasons.⁹ Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera, one of nineteenth-century Colombia's most active anticlerical presidents, was also very involved in freemasonry. Mosquera went so

⁵ Martínez, 24.

⁶ Ismael Perdomo, *Exposición sobre la masonería* (Bogotá: Librería Nueva-Casa Editorial, 1933) 87.

⁷ Francisco Caudet, *Benito Juárez* (Madrid: Dastin, 2003).

⁸ Américo Carnicelli, *La historia de la masonería colombiana* (Bogotá: Artes Gráficas, 1975) Tomo I, pp. 397-398, 503-506, Tomo II, pp. 90-96.

⁹ Julio Hoenigsberg, *Síntesis histórica de los masones que han sido presidentes de Colombia* (Barranquilla: 1946).

far as to add a special thirty-fourth degree, reserved only for Colombians, to the established thirty-three degrees of Scottish Rite freemasonry—he was roundly criticized by international masonic bodies for this action.¹⁰ The activities of Latin American liberals were specifically condemned in papal encyclicals; Pius IX issued a condemnation of the anticlerical actions of the liberal government in Colombia in 1863 (although in this case he did not single out the influence of secret societies).¹¹

The anticlericalism of the masons stemmed from their sincere dedication to religious tolerance and to the separation of Church and state, as well as from their reaction to papal condemnations of freemasonry for holding these views. Indeed, only a few years after the lodges began operating openly, they were declared dangerously anti-Christian by the papacy. This began a series of anti-masonic papal bulls that would end only in the early twentieth century.¹² The attitude of the popes contributed to making the lodges more attractive to anticlericals wishing to lessen the power of the Church in their countries, which of course led to more condemnations from the Vatican. The proclamations of the Holy See also encouraged the actions of conservatives when they returned to power in different Latin American countries, including Colombia. The “Regeneration” government that “Independent” Liberal Rafael Núñez organized with Conservatives in 1886 immediately suppressed the lodges; they did not reappear in Colombia for nearly twenty-five years.¹³

¹⁰ Carnicelli, Tomo I, 30, 294-297, 345-357. As part of Masonic rituals, particularly within the more widespread Scottish Rite, members are initiated into secret, mind-opening knowledge by degrees. The first three are the most important, and many active freemasons do not go beyond this initial formation. Other degrees are received in batches, with the exception of the last three. Robinson 210-223.

¹¹ Pius IX, “Incredibili Afflictamur,” Colección completa de Encíclicas 152-154.

¹² Viallet 601-608.

¹³ Carnicelli, Tomo II, 303-305.

In the mid-nineteenth century, official papal pronouncements against the freemasons depicted them less as members of an international cabal bent on controlling the world than as misguided heretics who promoted liberalism and secularization, albeit in secrecy.¹⁴ However, the Vatican allowed and sometimes encouraged other clerics to promulgate masonic conspiracy theories. This policy was similar to the Vatican's actions concerning the Jews, who were officially seen by the popes as "souls to be saved" while other members of the clergy were permitted to promulgate the Jewish ritual murder myth.¹⁵ By the late nineteenth century, certain priests and monks, unhindered by the Holy See, were proclaiming the existence of an anti-Christian international plot involving Jews and freemasons—long before the widespread distribution of the infamous anti-Semitic (and anti-masonic) forgery, Protocols of the Elders of Zion, after the First World War, which contributed more than probably any other document to promulgating the conspiracy theory for a wider secular audience.

Among the first works to claim a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was The Jew: Judaism and the Judaization of Christian Peoples first published in 1869 by the lay French Catholic Henri Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux;¹⁶ however, the freemasons had long been blamed by monarchists for fomenting the French Revolution (even though the revolutionary government suppressed the lodges).¹⁷ Fear of a secret international plot increased after the establishment of the Third Republic in 1871, when the French

¹⁴ See *Etsi Multa* by Pius IX in Claudia Carlen, ed., The Papal Encyclicals 1740-1878 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Press: 1990) 427-434; and *Humanus Genus* by Leo XIII, in Carlen, ed., The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903 91-102.

¹⁵ Kertzer 86-105, 158-163, 197-201, 214-218.

¹⁶ Kertzer 128, 174; and Norman Cohn, Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (1967; London: Serif, 2001), 46-49.

¹⁷ The first to propose this theory was Abbé Barruel in 1797. Barruel's works were forgotten by most scholars until they were resurrected during the new conspiracy craze in the late nineteenth century. Cohn 30-36.

government inclined more towards the separation of Church and State while the Catholic clergy felt their traditional position in society increasingly threatened. The clerical reaction was similar to that of the popes during and after Italian unification—priests were unable to accept that the citizenry of an overwhelmingly Catholic country would question Church privileges, and blamed nefarious outside forces for perverting the traditionally faithful populace. By the 1880s, the Assumptionist fathers were publishing anti-masonic and anti-Semitic articles in their daily La Croix; by the end of the century, the newspaper was read by hundreds of thousands throughout France.¹⁸ Another lay Catholic, Edouard Drumont, became France’s leading anti-Semite; his book La France juive (1886) and his newspaper La Libre Parole enjoyed wide circulation among the clergy.¹⁹

Still, the French did not have a monopoly on anti-Masonry and anti-Semitism. With the quiet acquiescence of the papacy, both the Rome-based Jesuit magazine La Civiltà Cattolica and the official Vatican daily L’Osservatore romano began advocating extremist (although not necessarily racially-based) anti-Semitism in the 1880s,²⁰ giving further encouragement to anti-Semitic clergy throughout Europe. Direct papal influence in the promulgation of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory came in a phrase in the anti-liberal and anti-masonic papal encyclical *Etsi Multa* (1873), in which Pius IX claimed that the “synagogue of Satan” is drawn from certain “sects, whether called masonic or some other name.”²¹ Pius IX’s choice of words had an enormous influence on Catholic

¹⁸ Cohn 171-182.

¹⁹ Cohn 56; and Kertzer 177-182.

²⁰ Kertzer 134-146, 158-163; and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002) 79-80. As Kertzer points out, although the Catholic press generally advocated the conversion of the Jews and discouraged anti-Semitic violence, at the same time it promoted nearly all of the other central ideas of modern anti-Semitism, including that of an international Jewish conspiracy. Kertzer 205-206.

²¹ The full citation indicates the extent to which Pius IX had come to believe in a masonic conspiracy by 1873: “Some of you may perchance wonder that the war against the Catholic Church extends so widely.

anti-Semites; for instance, the French archbishop of Port-Louis, Mauritius, employed the phrase from *Etsi Multa* in the title of his book La Franc-Maçonnerie, Synagogue de Satan (1893).²²

Members of religious orders served as the initial conduit for the propagation of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in Latin America in general, and in Colombia in particular. Nearly all religious orders in Latin America sent seminarians to Europe for further study in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Jesuits, for instance, sent seminarians to their houses all over Europe. A case in point is that of Félix Restrepo, one of the most influential Jesuits in Colombia in the twentieth century. Before his ordination, Restrepo studied in Jesuit institutions in Spain and Holland from 1906 to 1912. After spending a few years back in Colombia, Restrepo returned to Europe in 1916, where he completed his studies in Spain and was ordained there in 1920. After two years in Munich, he again went back to Spain, where he was named a “Royal Counselor of Public Instruction” by the Primo de Rivera government. Even after his permanent return to Colombia in 1926, he made frequent trips to Europe and the United States in the following decades.²³ Certain diocesan priests also went to Europe for further study. Ismael Perdomo, who served as the Archbishop of Bogotá from 1928 to 1950, spent four

Indeed each of you knows well the nature, zeal, and intention of sects, whether called masonic or some other name. When he compares them with the nature, purpose, and amplitude of the conflict waged nearly everywhere against the Church, he cannot doubt but that the present calamity must be attributed to their deceits and machinations for the most part. For from these the synagogue of Satan is formed which draws up its forces, advances its standards, and joins battle against the Church of Christ.” This is the closest that Pius IX came to officially involving Jews in the “war against the Catholic Church”; one can speculate how nineteenth-century European anti-Semitism may have been different if the pope had chosen to say “church”, “temple”, or “coven” instead of “synagogue”. Still, the choice of words indicates that Pius IX most probably had the Jews in mind. Carlen 433; and Kertzer 126-127.

²² Cohn 54-56.

²³ Antonio Cagua Prada, Félix Restrepo, S.J. (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1997) 37, 69, 98-99.

years in Europe: one in Rome, where he was ordained in 1895, and three more in France from 1896 to 1899.²⁴

In nineteenth-century Latin America and Spain, the Catholic clergy hardly considered the “Jewish threat,” especially when compared to the “masonic threat.” Since Jews were cast out of Spain in 1492, and were not allowed into Spanish territory during the colonial era, the Jewish population in the region was minimal. For instance, in 1885, at the same time that French Assumptionists and Italian Jesuits were linking Jews and freemasons in their publications, the Spanish priest Félix Sardá y Salvany produced a book, Masonismo y catolicismo: paralelos. Sardá condemned the freemasons without even mentioning the “synagogue of Satan”, let alone the Jews.²⁵ Pedro Adán Brioschi, Italian-born archbishop of Cartagena, on Colombia’s Caribbean coast, was famous throughout the region for his anti-masonic diatribes. However, he never made an explicit link between freemasonry and Judaism in his frequent pronouncements during his long residence in Cartagena from 1882 to 1943.²⁶

Shortly following the First World War, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (first disseminated by the Russian imperial secret police—the Okhrana—in the late 1890s) were translated into other European languages, becoming a best seller first in Germany,

²⁴ An additional trip to Rome in 1903 included a visit to Bergamo in northern Italy, where he became familiar with the possibilities of applying Catholic social teachings. Upon his return to Colombia, he applied what he had learned in the Diocese of Ibagüé, in the central department of Tolima, where he served as bishop. Julio César Orduz, Monseñor Ismael Perdomo y su tiempo (Bogotá: Canal Ramírez-Antares, 1984) 37-48; and Father Eduardo Cárdenas, S.J., personal interview, Bogotá, 1 Aug 2004.

²⁵ Félix Sardá y Salvany, Masonismo y catolicismo, paralelos (Barcelona: Librería y Tipografía Católica, 1885).

²⁶ Brioschi was archbishop from 1898 until his death in 1943. For his anti-masonic writings see, for instance, Pedro Adán Brioschi, Una página de historia ó la Revolución francesa en sus causas, desarrollo y consecuencias (Milán, Italy: Tipografía Pontificia de San José, 1894) 41-44; and La masonería ante la Constitución y leyes de Colombia. Memorial del Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor Pedro Adán Brioschi Arzobispo de Cartagena al Excelentísimo señor general Rafael Reyes Presidente de la República (Cartagena: Imprenta de “San Pedro Claver”, 1907).

then later in England and France.²⁷ The Protocols, supposedly the minutes of a secret international meeting of Jewish leaders, detailed how bourgeois leaders were made the unwitting dupes of the Jews through freemasonry, which indoctrinated its members in liberalism and religious tolerance while at the same time providing a space for corruption and secret deals in the chambers of its lodges. Specifically, the Fourth, Eleventh, and Fifteenth Protocols discuss the role of secret societies and freemasonry in a Jewish plot to take over the world.²⁸ With the catastrophe of war and the challenge of the Russian Revolution, the widespread appearance of the Protocols came at a time when many Europeans were turning to conspiracy theories to explain the new realities.²⁹ The claims about Jews and freemasons essentially followed the familiar lines laid out by lay and religious Catholic writers since the late 1860s—particularly in Italy, France, and Austria—so that the forgery was cited as further evidence by Catholic reactionaries of an international anti-Christian cabal.

The Protocols were also instrumental in spreading the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy myth in Spanish-speaking countries. An anti-Semitic press in Leipzig printed the first Spanish version of the Protocols in 1927, which found its way from Spain to Latin America in the late twenties and early thirties.³⁰ However, the Spanish translation, by the “Duque de la Victoria,” of the French version of the Protocols published (and with

²⁷ Cohn 302-306. Henry Ford’s anti-Semitic newspaper, The Dearborn Independent, began publishing excerpts from the Protocols in 1920. The link to freemasonry was downplayed by Ford, since freemasonry in the U.S. was perceived to be simply a fraternal association of upstanding citizens, rather than linked to a particular political plan; Ford himself was a Scottish Rite freemason of the highest degree. Henry Ford, The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem, Vol. 1 (Dearborn, Mich.: The Dearborn Publishing Co., Nov. 1920) 120, and Logia Manuel Ancizar de Bogotá, “Algunos masones famosos de Colombia y el mundo”, July 2001, <<http://www.msnr.org/Espanol/index32-2.htm>>.

²⁸ John S. Curtiss, An Appraisal of the Protocols of Zion (New York: Columbia UP, 1942) 6, 8, 9.

²⁹ Stephen Eric Bronner, A Rumor about the Jews (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 100-103, 108-109.

³⁰ Cohn 138, 304, 305. I purchased a copy of this edition at a flea market in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1998. Los protocolos de los sabios de Sión o el gobierno mundial invisible (Leipzig: Hammer-Verlag, 1927). This version contains commentary by the French anti-Semite Roger Lambelin, who had produced his own version of the Protocols.

commentary) by Ernest Jouin, has become the most widely disseminated version in the Spanish-speaking world.³¹

Jouin, a French Augustinian friar, was among the most important Catholic promulgators of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in these years. In 1909, a decade before the Protocols were widely available in Europe, Jouin had established the Revue internationale des sociétés secrètes,³² which purported to examine secret societies and their actions, with a special focus especially on the freemasons. It was no surprise that Jouin was the leading French Catholic advocate of the veracity of the Protocols. By the end of the 1920s, Jouin claimed that he had originally coined the phrase “Judeo-Masonic”.³³

Latin American priests and seminarians who studied in Europe brought back the Protocols and other anti-Semitic and anti-masonic publications when they returned to their home countries. In Colombia, certain Jesuits were particularly responsible for introducing the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy based on the Protocols, although they largely abandoned the theory by the early 1940s. Colombian Dominicans, along with many secular priests and bishops, were even more vehement than the Jesuits in expressing their fear of freemasons. These clerical writers influenced the political rhetoric in Colombia—Conservatives cited Jesuits and Dominicans as authorities on conspiracy theories while Liberals later cited them as proof of the existence of a Nazi-Falangist plot in Colombia.

³¹ This translation is grammatically and syntactically different from the one originally published in Leipzig. It has been reproduced all over Latin America, for instance in Mexico by Editorial Latino América (1952, 1980), and by Editorial Época (1967); and in Chile by Editorial “Nueva Época” (1935). It is still published in Bogotá by Editorial Solar.

³² Cohn 182.

³³ Kertzer 267.

The Judeo-Masonic Conspiracy Theory Arrives in Colombia

Throughout the 1920s, anti-masonry and anti-Semitism were occasionally discussed in Colombian Catholic publications. Although this may have planted the idea of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in the minds of certain clerics, few expressed much fear of an anti-Christian international cabal at work in their country. The economic situation was generally positive, led by growing coffee exports, new public works projects, and increased foreign investment in petroleum and bananas;³⁴ and the political situation was stable, with the Conservative Party firmly in power and very few Liberals threatening civil war. In this atmosphere, most priests had the impression that future events in Colombia would unfold in a relatively orderly fashion. Still it is important to examine how the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory was mentioned in Catholic—specifically Jesuit—publications during this decade, since it shows how information and events from abroad influenced the worldview of Colombian clerics. The introduction of the theory by clerics was then followed by its expression by major Conservative politicians, particularly Jesuit-educated Laureano Gómez.

One of the first commentaries in Colombia about the Protocols of the Elders of Zion—and thus the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory—appeared in the Jesuit monthly Mensajero del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús (literally the “Messenger of the Sacred Heart of Jesus”—usually titled the “Sacred Heart Messenger” in English-speaking countries) in July 1922. Various national “Sacred Heart Messengers” are still found in most countries where the Jesuits are active, published for members of the international Apostleship of

³⁴ A \$25 million indemnity paid in 1923 by the U.S. for Colombia’s loss of the province of Panamá, as well as U.S.-backed loans, also benefited the Colombian economy. Bruce R. Dalgaard, “Monetary Reform, 1923-30: A Prelude to Colombia’s Economic Development,” The Journal of Economic History, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Mar. 1980): 98-104.

Prayer, established in 1844 among Jesuits in France, and extended to laypeople and parishes in 1861.³⁵ The international moderator of the Apostleship is the General of the world's Jesuits in Rome, who determines monthly intentions that need the prayers of the faithful; these intentions are then submitted to the Pope for final approval. There is always a monthly "General Intention" and, since 1928, a monthly "Missionary Intention". The General Intention for July 1922 was "the conversion of the Jews," which was an occasion for the Jesuits in Colombia—and around the world—to consider the "Jewish Question."

The twelve-month cycle of intentions are usually submitted for papal approval in March of the previous year,³⁶ which makes the July 1922 intention particularly interesting given that the Protocols were just starting to be published throughout Europe when the Jesuit General in Rome, the Pole Wladimir Ledóchowski, was designing the prayer cycle.³⁷ Ledóchowski was elected General in 1915, and remained the head of the Jesuit order until his death in 1942.³⁸ Just before his election, Ledóchowski had published and disseminated a speech that supported the idea of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy by the Austrian Jesuit Victor Kolb. Later, Ledóchowski was instrumental in first watering-down and then suppressing the proposed papal encyclical on racism and

³⁵ "The Apostleship of Prayer," The Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: The Encyclopedia P, 1917), 7 Sep. 2004, <www.newadvent.org/cathen/01633a.htm>.

³⁶ "Carta del eminentísimo señor cardinal secretario de estado de su santidad al reverendmo. Padre Director General del Apostolado de la Oración," Mensajero del Sacrado Corazón de Jesús [Bogotá] (Mensajero) Jun. 1939: 169; and "Intenciones de Apostolado Para 1943," Mensajero Oct. 1942: 415 (the Mensajero had continuous pagination for a year's run).

³⁷ A more complete study of the monthly intentions would reveal many of the social, political, and spiritual concerns of Jesuit leaders and the Papacy in any given period. Most intentions were less polemic, for instance "That men receive communion once a month" (April 1926), "That women exhibit Christian modesty in their manners and dress" (May 1926), and "That nations that have consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart of Jesus receive many blessings" (June 1926).

³⁸ Ledóchowski's uncle, Miecislav Halka Ledóchowski, was Apostolic Delegate to Colombia in the 1850s. "Miecislav Halka Ledóchowski," New Advent 30 Mar. 2005 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09111b.htm>>.

anti-Semitism in 1938-39. Doubtless, he chose “the conversion of the Jews” as the General Intention for July 1922 with the controversy about the Protocols in mind.³⁹

In Colombia, the Mensajero claimed the highest circulation among all Catholic publications from the 1920s through at least the 1950s.⁴⁰ Copies of the magazine were received by parish priests and directors of Apostleship prayer groups, who would share the ideas encountered in the magazine—such as those expressed on the “Conversion of the Jews” in 1922—with a much wider audience, including entire Sunday congregations. Prayer groups were active throughout Colombia, especially in the mountainous central region where most of the population is found.⁴¹ In the 1920s and 1930s, circulation hovered around 5,000 to 6,000, reaching a high of 12,000 in the late 1940s.⁴²

The Jesuit who wrote about the General Intention for July 1922 in the Mensajero was Jesús María Ruano, a Spaniard from Salamanca who had arrived in Colombia in 1912.⁴³ While calling for prayers for the conversion of the Jews, Ruano also explained how, since the French Revolution, the Jews had influenced the activities of “national stock exchanges, had injected themselves into the most powerful commercial, industrial,

³⁹ Cohn 164-188; and Kertzer 273-274, 280-282. Another reason for considering the conversion of the Jews as a prayer intention may have stemmed from a reaction to the short-lived “Soviet” established by Bela Kun in Hungary in 1919—Kun was of Jewish origin. In May 1920, the Colombian Mensajero reported in its “Noticias Generales” section (devoted to international news and events) that many Hungarian Jews were converting to Catholicism “because the Jewish Bolsheviks had been covered with so much ignominy by their atrocities, the name “Jew” had become odious and honorable Israelites had now become embarrassed by their race”. “Hungría.—Renacimiento católico,” Mensajero May 1920: 206.

⁴⁰ Advertisement, FAS—Fe Acción Sociología [Bogotá] (FAS) 1 and 15 Mar. 1937: 34 (supplemental).

⁴¹ By 1936, 390 groups existed in Colombia with nearly 400,000 associates; the population of Colombia was calculated to be approximately 8.7 million in 1938 (Bushnell, Colombia 286). “Nuestra Portada,” Mensajero, Dec. 1936: 524. The first groups were established 1867 (without the presence of Jesuits, who had been expelled in 1861), along with the first issue of the Mensajero, which was the first Sacred Heart Messenger in the Western Hemisphere. Cecilia Henríquez, Imperio y ocaso del Sagrado Corazón en Colombia (Bogotá: Altamir Ediciones, 1996) 64, 83-84.

⁴² Advertisement, Mensajero, June 1929, i. The economic crisis of the 1930s reduced circulation to 3,000 in the mid-1930s, “Estadísticas para Roma, 1935,” Archivo Provincial de la Sociedad de Jesús en Colombia [Bogotá] (henceforth “SJ Archives”); and “Vamos llegando a las 14.000 suscripciones,” Mensajero Dec. 1949: 679.

⁴³ Ruano died in Bogotá in 1928. “Necrología: El R. P. Jesús María Ruano, S.J.,” Mensajero Nov. 1928: 515-518.

and banking enterprises, and had sustained the most prestigious and widely circulated press.” He added, “Years later, when the abominable Protocols of the Wise Men of Israel were known around the world, on the occasion of the Zionist Congress of 1897, reflective historians, moralists and patriots have not ceased in giving shouts of outrage. They say that the plan of hegemony and universal conquest dreamt by the Jews is already manifest”.⁴⁴ Strong words—however, this would be the last mention of the Protocols—and the Jews—in the Mensajero for more than a decade.⁴⁵ Such rhetoric still did not find much of an audience in a country with so few Jews.⁴⁶ If the “General Intention” had been different in 1922, there may have been no mention of the Protocols at all in Colombia. Indeed, another opportunity to mention the Protocols came in February 1926, when the General Intention was for “the struggle against masonry”. The same Jesuit who wrote about the Jews for the General Intention in 1922, Jesús María Ruano, did not mention the Jews at all on this occasion, even though the Protocols explicitly link the Jews with the freemasons. Ruano instead condemned the masons as heretics, as described in Leo XIII’s encyclical “Humanum Genus”—but did not depict them as part of a worldwide conspiracy.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Jesús María Ruano, “Intención General: Conversión de los Judíos,” Mensajero July 1922: 288. There is no mention of the Protocols in the Spanish Mensajero [Bilbao] for the same General Intention in July 1922. The author (the Jesuit Remigio Vilariño) does describe at length how Jews supposedly profited from the recently terminated World War. “La conversión de Israel”, Mensajero del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús [Bilbao] July 1922: 481-495.

⁴⁵ There was no further call for the conversion of the Jews in the General Intentions for the Apostleship of Prayer until January 1934.

⁴⁶ The first Jews in Colombia were Sephardic, from the Ottoman Empire, who established tiny communities in cities along Colombia’s Caribbean coast in the early nineteenth century. Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe began arriving in small numbers at the beginning of the twentieth century, and settled in all of Colombia’s major cities. Between 1933 and 1942, 3,595 Jews legally arrived in Colombia; by 1943, there were only 6,625 in a country of nearly nine million. Azriel Bibliowicz, “Intermitencia, Ambivalencia y Discrepancia en Emigración y Éxodo,” Le Cahiers ALHIM-Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire (Paris: Université de Paris, 2001).

⁴⁷ “Intención General: La lucha contra la masonería según las enseñanzas de León XIII,” Mensajero February 1926, 57-69. By comparison, in the Spanish Mensajero, Remigio Vilariño wrote about the same

By the early 1930s, times had changed—the combination of new social and labor movements, the worldwide economic crisis, and the victory of the Liberals in the 1930 presidential election, came as a shock and a challenge to the Jesuit writers at the Mensajero. Certain Colombian Jesuits, influenced by the ideas and rhetoric they were receiving from abroad began to reconsider the possibility of a worldwide conspiracy against the Church, a conspiracy so vast that it even touched Colombia. For the most part, this conspiracy was presented as more “masonic” than “Judeo.” Between 1930 and 1942, the Mensajero, condemned the freemasons more than 20 times, most frequently in its favorable coverage of sanctions in other countries against the lodges in its *Noticias Generales* (“General News”) section,⁴⁸ but also in response to inquiries about freemasonry from readers in the *Consultas* (“Advice”) section.⁴⁹ Other articles, including interpretations of certain “General Intentions,” described the masonic control of the press, education, and democratic politics, both in Colombia and abroad, as part of their relentless campaign against Christianity and its precepts.⁵⁰

theme and stated that the Jews were possibly behind international freemasonry (he also offered the possibility that the Protestants and/or the British were the “universal directors” of the lodges); Vilariño again failed to mention the Protocols (97-112).

⁴⁸ “Noticias Generales: Argentina—Arrestos dignos de loa,” Mensajero Mar. 1930: 132-133; “Noticias Generales: Francia—La masonería,” Mensajero Jun. 1931: 301; “Noticias Generales: Turquía cerró las logias masónicas de manera total,” Mensajero Nov. 1935: 518; and “Noticias Generales: Ciudad del Vaticano—Panorama actual del catolicismo,” Mensajero Oct. 1939: 359-363.

⁴⁹ “Consultas—Leo Taxil,” Mensajero Jul. 1931: 243; “Consultas: 1. Masonería,” Mensajero Feb. 1933: 49-57; and “Consultas: 1. Masonería,” Mensajero Apr. 1936: 167-169.

⁵⁰ Luis R. David, “Intención General: Que los católicos den ejemplo de vida cristiana,” Mensajero Apr. 1933: 145-151; Daniel Restrepo, “Los perseguidos por Cristo,” Mensajero Mar. 1937: 97-103; Francisco José González, “Intención General: Los perseguidores de la Santa Iglesia,” Mensajero Nov. 1939: 370-385; “Triste Novedad,” Mensajero Nov. 1931: 434-435; “Los preladados colombianos bendicen la Cruzada Eucarística,” Mensajero Apr. 1933: 163-165; “Circular del Sr. Arzobispo de Bogotá sobre las logias masónicas,” Mensajero Jan. 1936: 19; Pierre L’Ermitte, “Sección Amena: “La veleidosa muchedumbre,” Mensajero Feb. 1932: 78-80; Antonio Granados Forero, “Los gobiernos y la Iglesia,” Mensajero Dec. 1935: 546-547; and Daniel Restrepo, “Sección Instructiva Religiosa: I—Más confesiones masónicas,” Mensajero May 1937: 206-208.

Anti-masonry was further encouraged when the Archbishop Primate of Colombia, Ismael Perdomo in Bogotá, issued a condemnation of the masons in early 1933, which was to be read in parts by the priests of his archdiocese in the first weeks of the year. Perdomo was reacting to a resurgence of the lodges, which came in the wake of the election of Liberal Enrique Olaya Herrera to the presidency in 1930. Perdomo's condemnation pointedly did not stress any international conspiracy theory, but instead presented freemasonry as a wayward sect—he repeated earlier papal condemnations while quoting from the new Revista Masónica, published by Bogotá's freemasons, in order to point out the errors in masonic thinking. Perdomo's Exposición sobre la masonería (1933) was reprinted in parts in nearly all of the editions of the Mensajero from March 1933 through January 1935.

It would be only a short step for many of Colombia's Jesuits to move from a condemnation of the errors of freemasonry to seeing the lodges in their country as linked to an international Judeo-Masonic conspiracy. It was in this atmosphere that the Protocols reappeared in the Mensajero in October 1932, when a review of the first edition of the forgery printed in Spain was published in the *Bibliografía* ("Bibliography") section of the magazine.⁵¹ The comments made by the anonymous Jesuit reviewer are typical for the time period, echoing Hitler's own comments about the Protocols:⁵²

An idea occurs to us that we cannot hide from the reader: separating the question of *authenticity*, in other words, determining whether or not these are the true minutes of the 1897 Zionist Congress of Basel, no one can deny the frightening *veracity* that the Protocols entail due to the portentous exactitude, almost prophetic, that saturates all of its pages.⁵³

⁵¹ "Bibliografía: Los protocolos de los Sabios de Sión," Mensajero Oct. 1932: 479-480.

⁵² Cohn 200-202.

⁵³ "Una idea nos ocurre que no nos resignamos a ocultar al lector: separando la *autenticidad*, o sea, si se trata o no de las verdaderas actas del Congreso Sionista de Basilea en 1897, no puede nadie sustraerse al asombro de *veracidad* que los *Protocolos* encierran; y decimos esto por la portentosa exactitud, casi

The book review also indicates that beginning in 1932 the Protocols were widely available in Spanish in Colombia. The Jesuits had already been promoting the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in the previous months in the same *Bibliografía* section of the Mensajero, where a review of Las fuerzas secretas de la revolución (published in English as The Secret Powers Behind Revolution)—the Spanish translation of a book by French conspiracy theorist Leon de Poncins—appeared in August 1932.⁵⁴ This book had as much influence among Colombian conspiracy theorists as the Protocols. In it, de Poncins published a list compiled by Ernest Jouin that supposedly shows that the majority of the leaders of the Russian Revolution were Jews.⁵⁵ For de Poncins, “the social organism” was infected by the “Judeo-Masonic microbe”,⁵⁶ and the masons needed to be suppressed (as in Italy and Hungary, at that point). Chillingly, he predicted that in the end there would necessarily be either “the extermination of the Jews or of the non-Jews”.⁵⁷ De Poncins’ books seem to have been popular among certain Colombian Jesuits: several are still available in the theological library of the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá.⁵⁸

profética, que satura todas sus páginas” “Bibliografía: Los protocolos de los Sabios de Sión,” Mensajero Oct. 1932: 480.

⁵⁴ “Bibliografía: Las fuerzas secretas de la revolución,” Mensajero Aug. 1932: 383-384.

⁵⁵ Léon de Poncins, Las fuerzas secretas de la revolución: F. M. -judaísmo (Madrid: Ediciones “Fax,” 1931) 141-143.

⁵⁶ de Poncins 248.

⁵⁷ de Poncins 250.

⁵⁸ There are two copies of the Spanish version of de Poncins’ Las fuerzas secretas de la revolución in the Biblioteca Mario Valenzuela, S.J., the theological library of the Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, where the Jesuits have been centralizing the books in their possession in recent years. The books still carry the stamps of the libraries where they were previously located. According to the stamps inside de Poncins’ books, one was in the library of the director of the Mensajero, while the other, purchased at the Librería Voluntad, was in the Jesuit seminary in Chapinero and used in a “Social Studies and Apologetics Study Circle” (*Círculo de estudios sociales y apologeticos*) of the Acción Católica. Another de Poncins book is also in the theological library: an original French version of The Secret Jewish International (La mystérieuse internationale juive, [Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne et ses fils, 1936]), which has the stamp of the library of another important Jesuit publication, the Revista Javeriana, which was founded as an academic university journal in 1933.

The ideas expressed in the Protocols and by de Poncins were synthesized in an article in the Mensajero in November of the same year, “Plan and Means of Action of the Jews and Masons.” The author of this article sustained his thesis by quoting the works of various prominent European anti-Semites and conspiracy theorists, including de Poncins, Josef Eberle (Austria), Henri Rochefort (France), and Nesta Webster (England).⁵⁹

References to the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy appeared intermittently in the Mensajero and in other Jesuit publications throughout the 1930s.⁶⁰ Mention of the supposed international plot was encouraged by the Mission Intention for January 1934: “That the Holy Year of Redemption Serve in an Extraordinary Way for the Conversion of the Jews” (the “Holy Year of Redemption” marked 1900 years since Jesus’ crucifixion). Since the Jesuit General Ledóchowski was submitting intentions for 1934 in March 1933, it is easy to imagine that he had on his mind the recent elevation of Adolf Hitler to the chancellorship of Germany. Writing about the Mission Intention in the Mensajero, the Jesuit Luis R. David detailed extensively how

the Jews and the masons work in collaboration to obtain the triumph of the universal revolution, whose end is the absolute de-Christianization of society, the radical suppression of the revealed Religion. The study of modern revolutionary movements leads the critic to freemasonry, and the study of freemasonry points to Judaism as the prime mover of almost all of these movements. You can assure yourself that masonry is the most important of the many instruments that the Jews use to bring forward the demolition of Christian civilization.⁶¹

⁵⁹ “Plan y medios de acción de los judíos y masones,” Mensajero Nov. 1932: 491-496. The article is unsigned, but seems to be the work of the director of the magazine at the time, Luis R. David.

⁶⁰ Manuel Maldonado, S.J., “La Iglesia Católica a través de la historia,” Mensajero Sep. 1933: 422; Francisco José González, S.J., “El desarrollo de la prensa católica,” Mensajero Nov. 1935: 389; “Por la buena prensa,” Mensajero Sep. 1936: 414; Luis R. David, S.J., “Por los gobernantes,” Mensajero Oct. 1936: 440; “Noticias Generales—Irlanda—Su constitución es la más moderna de Europa y la más católica de todas,” Mensajero Jan.-Feb. 1939: 46; Daniel Restrepo, “El Ateísmo,” FAS Nov. 15, 1936: 10-12; “Qué piensa usted de España?,” FAS Sep. 15, 1937: 409-411; and “La consigna roja, un signo de los tiempos,” FAS Dec. 15, 1937: 557-558.

⁶¹ “... judíos y masones trabajan en colaboración para obtener el triunfo de la revolución universal, cuyo desenlace debe ser la des cristianización absoluta de la sociedad, la supresión radical de la Religión revelada. El estudio de los movimientos revolucionarios modernos conduce al crítico a la francmasonería, y el estudio de la francmasonería le señala el judaísmo como primera causa motriz de casi todos esos

David continued by describing the preponderance of Jews in the Hungarian soviet republic, in the German revolutions after the First World War, and, of course, in the Russian Revolution, backing his assertions by quoting Ernest Jouin, Nesta Webster, and the Russians S.P. Melgunov and Nicolai Sokoloff.⁶²

David also cited extensively from the Tenth Session of the Protocols, which details the usefulness of introducing “in the organism of the State the poison of liberalism;” this quote also served as an indirect way of condemning the Colombian Liberal Party, in power since 1930 after nearly fifty years of Conservative Party hegemony.⁶³ In the other articles previously mentioned, as well as in future articles, the Jesuit writers at the Mensajero rarely made explicit references to the Colombian Liberals, making any general reference to “liberalism” that much more important. The Jesuits tried to publicly stay above the political fray in Colombia, difficult as that may have been for many of them. Indeed, the Mensajero expressed a somewhat positive attitude towards Liberal President Enrique Olaya Herrera,⁶⁴ who included Conservatives in his Cabinet and made an effort to avoid conflict with the Church, admonishing the more radical anticlericals in his own party.⁶⁵ The incidents in the near-civil war which broke out in the

movimientos. Puede asegurarse que la masonería es uno de tantos instrumentos, el principal, de que disponen los judíos para llevar adelante la demolición de la civilización cristiana.” Luis R. David, “Intención Misional para enero: Que el año Santo de la Redención sirva de modo extraordinario a la conversión de los judíos,” Mensajero Jan. 1934: 16.

⁶² David, “Que el año santo” 17-21.

⁶³ After recommending books on the Russian Revolution, including Las fuerzas de la revolución by Poncins, David briefly touched on the spirit of the month’s Mission Intention: “We beg with fervor for the conversion of the 30,000,000 Jews, and for their salvation and the salvation of the world in this year of grace, that upon them will fall the precious blood of the Redeemer who they crucified.” (David, “Que el año santo” 22). Like many Catholic anti-Semites, David calls for the compassionate conversion of the Jews only after describing in detail the bloody crimes and revolutions that they had supposedly perpetrated.

⁶⁴ The Mensajero supported some of Olaya’s economic policies. See “Vida Nacional: Decreto de pobreza,” Mensajero Nov. 1931: 538.

⁶⁵ Olaya pointedly refused in a public declaration to renegotiate a new concordat with the Holy See, despite pressure from other Liberals. See “La Reforma del Concordato,” Mensajero May 1932: 230-233.

departments of Boyacá and Santander were also occasionally mentioned in the Mensajero.⁶⁶ As we shall see, the regional clergy, especially the Dominicans in Boyacá, reacted far more forcefully than the Jesuits to the political violence of these years.

David's article advocating the conversion of the Jews in January 1934 contrasts with that of Julio Martínez, writing about the same Mission Intention in the Spanish Mensajero in Bilbao, Spain. Martínez mentions briefly Jewish involvement in the Russian Revolution and the supposed Jewish "thirst for gold"⁶⁷ but most of his article describes the activities of Jewish converts who became clerics, and of Catholic organizations and religious communities devoted to the conversion of Jews.⁶⁸ The difference between the Colombian and Spanish treatment of the General Intention is striking and indicates ways in which anti-Semitic books and articles were received by the Jesuits in the two countries. It is especially surprising given the much more intense political situation in Spain as compared to Colombia. The Spanish Republic was declared in April 1931, followed by severe anticlerical legislation, which, in January 1932, had stripped the Jesuit order of its legal existence.⁶⁹ That the Spanish Jesuits were less likely than their Colombian counterparts to openly fall into the conspiratorial mindset indicates the differences among the various national provinces of Jesuits and among individual Jesuits in each of these provinces—we shall see how Jesuits in the U.S. had a positive influence on their brethren in Colombia.

⁶⁶ "Molagavita," Mensajero Aug. 1931: 385; "De la Pastoral de Excmo. Sr. Obispo de Nueva Pamplona," Mensajero Mar. 1932: 109-111; and Luis R. David, "Intención General: La paz de Cristo en el reino de Cristo," Mensajero Jan. 1933: 3-13.

⁶⁷ Julio Martínez, "Intención Misional para enero: Que el año Santo de la Redención sirva de modo extraordinario a la conversión de los judíos," Mensajero [Bilbao] Jan. 1934: 20.

⁶⁸ Julio Martínez 19-23.

⁶⁹ Jackson 58-62.

The Jesuits at the Mensajero also defended other Latin American anti-Semites. In June 1936, the Mensajero published a letter that Hugo Wast, the German-sounding pseudonym for the prolific Argentine writer Gustavo Martínez Zubiría (1883-1962), had sent to a newspaper in Asunción, Paraguay, in which he explained how Jews and freemasons in Argentina were conspiring against publicizing his two anti-Semitic novels, El Kahal and Oro. In his letter, Wast quoted the Protocols to show how the actions of these Jews fit in with a pre-conceived plan to pressure and control the press.⁷⁰ Wast published the two books in 1935, basing his story on the existence of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory. In the first part of El Kahal Wast details his own ideas about a vast international Jewish plot, quoting from the Protocols, Poncins, and two other French anti-Semites, Bernard Lazare and Michel Weill.⁷¹ Before he began focusing his energies on defending Argentina from the Jews and freemasons, Wast had written numerous novels extolling the virtues of rural life in his country; many of these works were translated into other languages.⁷² In 1931, he was described as “one of the most eminent Catholic novelists of our times” by the Mensajero.⁷³

⁷⁰ “Noticias Generales—Argentina—Actuaciones de los ‘hijos de la viuda’,” Mensajero Jun. 1936: 279-281. After his anti-Semitic novels, Wast began writing fictionalized accounts of the Apocalypse (666 and Juana Tabor) which were also well received in Colombia. By 1941 Wast was announcing on the title pages of his books that he was a member of three national literary academies: the Argentine Academy of Letters, the Spanish Royal Academy, and, significantly, the Colombian Academy. Hugo Wast, El Sexto Sello (Buenos Aires: Editores de Hugo Wast, 1941) 3. In the preface to the second edition of Juana Tabor, Wast published reviews of the first edition by the Colombian Jesuit Nicolás Bayona Posada and the Colombian Salesian Father José J. Ortega from 1942. Although this edition of Juana Tabor was published in Argentina, it seems that Wast could only find positive reviews from clerics in Colombia rather than from those in his own country. Hugo Wast, Juana Tabor (Buenos Aires: Thau Editores, 1944) 7-12. For more on Wast, see Sandra McGee Deutsch, Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939 (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999) 228-229, 241, 333-334.

⁷¹ The 1935 edition of El Kahal (the original, which included Oro), is still in the General Library of the Universidad Javeriana, where it has been since that time. Hugo Wast, El Kahal (Buenos Aires: Wast, 1935).

⁷² By 1945, El Kahal and Oro had been translated into German, Italian, and English—the English versión was published in Washington, D.C., by Rollins. Oro, 14th ed. (Buenos Aires: Thau, Editores, 1945) 4.

⁷³ “Consultas—Hugo Wast,” Mensajero Sep. 1931: 433.

The Mensajero was not the only Jesuit publication in Colombia to publish the anti-Semitic and anti-masonic ravings of non-Colombians. From 1934 to 1939, the Jesuits published the biweekly FAS—Fe-Acción-Sociología as an intellectual support for Acción Católica (“Catholic Action”). Acción Católica was promoted worldwide by the papacy as a non-partisan and non-political way to promote and apply Catholic social teachings through the organization of Church-based welfare associations, labor unions, and cooperatives.⁷⁴ FAS in its first phase (1934-1937) devoted entire issues to publishing a single conference or radio talk given by national or international Catholic intellectuals on various social and spiritual themes. The issue of July 1, 1936, was devoted to a long essay by the Irish priest George Clune on the “The Masonic Sect”, in which the author quoted from de Poncins, Jouin, and the Protocols.⁷⁵

By the mid-1930s, the Jesuits had various anti-Semitic and anti-masonic publications in their libraries throughout Colombia. The Jesuits possessed two copies of Poncins’ Las fuerzas secretas de la revolución; the academic journal Revista Javeriana also possessed copies of the author’s La mystérieuse internationale juive (1936) and the Spanish edition of Henry Ford’s The International Jew (1930).⁷⁶ Revista Javeriana had several other anti-masonic French titles on hand in their library, all edited in the mid-1930s by the Editorial Baudinière, Paris. Three of these volumes, written jointly by Albert Vigneau and Vivienne Orland, are signed by the authors with a personal message to Félix Restrepo, S.J., director of Revista Javeriana.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Cifuentes and Navas 323-332.

⁷⁵ George Clune, “La secta masónica,” FAS 1 Jul. 1936: 1-24. The essay seems to be taken from George Clune, Free Masonry: Its Origins, Aims, & Methods (Dublin: Catholic Truth Society, 1931).

⁷⁶ Henry Ford, El judío internacional; un problema del mundo (Barcelona: Hammer-Verlag, 1930).

⁷⁷ Albert Vigneau and Vivienne Orland, Sous le Triangle (Paris: Editorial Baudinière, 1936); Albert Vigneau and Vivienne Orland, La F. M.: Danger Social (Paris: Editorial Baudinière, 1937); and Albert Vigneau and Vivienne Orland, Franc-Maçonnerie Rouge (Paris: Editorial Baudinière, 1937).

Félix Restrepo was perhaps the most influential and active Jesuit in Colombia in the twentieth century. He is best known for reestablishing the Universidad Javeriana in 1930, which had been closed in the late eighteenth century when the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish colonies. He was also a prolific writer, an outstanding grammarian of Latin and classical Greek, and one of the most forceful Colombian advocates of ideological corporatism.⁷⁸ In the 1910s and 1920s he had been instrumental in founding several publications throughout Colombia; with the new university, he helped to found the monthly Revista Javeriana in 1933.⁷⁹ Despite the contents of its library, Revista Javeriana and Félix Restrepo avoided promulgating the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, while other Jesuit publications—the Mensajero, FAS, and Destellos—fostered the fear of an international anti-Christian plot. Still, Revista Javeriana went completely in favor of Franco and the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War.

Although Jesuit publications, particularly the Mensajero, had a larger national reach than other Catholic periodicals in Colombia, other religious orders published numerous regional weeklies which went farther than the Jesuits in advocating anti-

⁷⁸ Félix Restrepo, Corporativismo (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana, 1939). A corporate form of government is one in which regulated “corporate” groups (such as labor unions, business associations, the military, the Church) represent the interests of their members within the government. The corporate state coordinates the various represented interests in order to maintain order and balance in the economy and in society. The word “corporate” comes from the Latin word “corpus”—“body”—which further indicates what the system implies: groups are united to work together as an organically-organized body. Although there are aspects of corporatism in many forms of government, “ideological corporatism” builds a specific governmental structure that has corporatism as its fundamental premise. Under ideological corporatism, representatives of corporate bodies are included in the legislative branch (sometimes in a separate chamber) and in the executive branch (in the cabinet or council of ministers). Relationships between corporate groups are regulated, particularly between capital and labor, in both the agricultural and industrial spheres. Howard J. Wiarda, Corporatism and Comparative Politics: The Other Great “ism” (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997) 16-22. Ideological corporatism had its heyday in the 20’s and 30’s, influencing the constitutions of various governments in central and southern Europe as well as in Latin America, including Italy, Portugal, Spain, Poland, and Brazil. Later, when the administration of Laureano Gómez sought to rewrite the Colombian constitution, Restrepo gave a series of radio conferences describing how corporatism would work in Colombia. Félix Restrepo, Colombia en la encrucijada: Conferencias transmitidas por la Radiodifusora Nacional de Colombia en los meses de junio y julio, 1951 (Bogotá: Prensas del Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1951).

⁷⁹ Cacia, Restrepo 104-106.

masonry and anti-Semitism and in treating national and international news from a partisan Conservative point of view. The Dominicans were especially active in this regard. The order had enormous influence because of their sponsorship and control since colonial times of the patroness of Colombia, the miraculous image of the Virgin of Chiquinquirá in the Department of Boyacá.⁸⁰ The Dominicans maintained a strong presence in this department through schools, churches and their own monasteries. Their publications, the weeklies Veritas in Chiquinquirá and El Cruzado in Tunja, both contained almost weekly condemnations of freemasonry, especially after the Liberals came to power in 1930.⁸¹ For instance, as the lodges began to open up and proselytize more, El Cruzado joined with Perdomo and the Jesuits in condemning them anew.⁸²

As already mentioned, northern Boyacá was especially affected by the successful Liberal effort to guarantee an electoral majority for themselves through electoral fraud and political violence. The Dominicans expressed their shock and condemnation about the massacres, displacement, and selective assassinations in no uncertain terms⁸³ and

⁸⁰ The faded image of the Virgin miraculously brightened due to the prayers and devotions of María Ramos, sister-in-law of the *encomendero* of the region. Since then, many have attributed various miracles to the Virgin, and the image has become a national symbol. On the four hundredth anniversary of the miracle in 1986, Pope John Paul II visited Chiquinquirá to give his devotion. Alberto E. Ariza, Los Dominicos en Colombia Tomo I (Bogotá: Ediciones Antropos, 1992) 675-679, 688, 793-796.

⁸¹ The Dominicans also maintained a weekly in Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast, La Hoja Parroquial, which was somewhat less anti-masonic than its inland counterparts.

⁸² “Frac-masonería,” El Cruzado [Tunja] 2 Dec. 1932: 2; “La Masonería,” El Cruzado 30 Dec. 1932: 2; and Francisco Mora Díaz, “Bajo el dominio de Satanás,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos y polémicos (Bogotá: Tipografía Tony, 1934) 261-264.

⁸³ Mora Díaz, “La época del terror,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 37-40; “Hacia la barbarie,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 44-49; “El Tiempo pidió la expulsión de los dominicos,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 64-68; “La libertad ha muerto,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 101-104; “El Liberalismo respeta la religión,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 121-126; “La gran mascarada,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 158-161; “La autoridad episcopal en la gobernación,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 162-166; and “Energía con violencia,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 223-228; and “Boyacá se desangra!,” El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 316-318.

even alluded to masonic involvement in the violence, claiming that the national chief of police was a freemason.⁸⁴

As previously noted, because of political violence and electoral fraud (among other reasons) the Conservative Party abstained from the presidential election of 1934 and the congressional elections of 1935, creating a one-party Liberal national government under President Alfonso López Pumarejo. The López administration began to implement policies that directly affected the clergy and, in particular, Church control and influence over public instruction.⁸⁵ Among the Dominicans, Friar Francisco Mora Díaz, director of El Cruzado in Tunja, was especially vehement in his description of an international masonic conspiracy at work in Colombia at this time.⁸⁶ Mora Díaz' polemics were given a wider national audience by the publication of three collections of his editorials in 1935, 1939, and 1942.⁸⁷

The Franciscans in Colombia also had their own periodicals, publishing the weekly La Buena Prensa in Medellín, which, for instance, extolled the virtues of the

⁸⁴ Mora Díaz, "La patria agonizante," El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 285.

⁸⁵ Tirado Mejía, Aspectos 60-68.

⁸⁶ "Redes de la Masonería," El Cruzado 13 Jan. 1933: 4; "Respeto a los sacerdotes," El Cruzado 31 Mar. 1933: 3; Mora Díaz, "Se trata de amordazar al clero," El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 109-112; "Horrible profanación," El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 249-252; "Los verdugos de la razón," El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 257-260; "Las burdas manos sobre las blancas tocas," El cruzado: artículos apologeticos 288-291; "Los hijos de las tinieblas huyen de la luz," Chispas del yunque: artículos polémicos y discursos académicos (Tunja: Editorial "El Cruzado," 1939) 20-22; "El plebiscito contra los ediles Bogotános," Chispas del yunque 29-31; "Los hijos de la viuda en la selva," Chispas del yunque 49-51; "La ley del candado," Chispas del yunque 52-54; "La protocolización del crimen," Chispas del yunque 55-57; "Las avanzadas de la civilización," Chispas del yunque 58-60; "Satanás rezando el rosario," Chispas del yunque 81-83; "Mandiles y mitras," Chispas del yunque 87-89; "El INRI de Colombia," Chispas del yunque 90-91; "Ante la república masona," Chispas del yunque 131-133; "Satanás con sotana," Chispas del yunque 179-180; "1886-1936, cruz vs. triángulo," Chispas del yunque 204-205; "Bajo el imperio del mandil," El clarín de la victoria (Tunja, Boyacá: 1942) 56-58; "Desintegración de la patria," El clarín 66-69; "El regimen masónico," El clarín 95-98; "La antesala de la masonería," El clarín 102-107; "Confesión de parte," El clarín 139-142; "Degollaron a Francia," El clarín 195-197; and "La iniquidad triunfante," El clarín 202-208.

⁸⁷ Mora Díaz, El cruzado: artículos apologeticos (1934); Chispas del yunque (1939); and El clarín (1942). The editorials published in these collections are undated.

Conservative Party,⁸⁸ and the spiritual impossibility of being both a Liberal and a Catholic.⁸⁹ Not surprisingly, the newspaper was also anti-masonic (although not to the same degree as the Dominican weeklies in Boyacá). For example, in the editorial of January 14, 1933, readers learned “How to Defeat Freemasonry,” through membership in the Franciscan lay Third Order.⁹⁰

The masonic plot was not only promulgated by the regular clergy such as the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans, but also by the secular diocesan clergy. The best example of this is seen in the career of Miguel Angel Builes, the indefatigable bishop of Santa Rosa de Osos, in the populous western Department of Antioquia. In addition to micromanaging the spiritual needs of his flock—which included frequent pastoral letters and organizing Apostleship of Prayer groups throughout his diocese—Builes also founded a seminary for Colombian missionaries in Yarumal. The importance of the seminary cannot be underestimated, since it offered the possibility of training national clergy to serve in the far-flung missions that up to then—as we have seen—had been run by foreign priests throughout Colombia,⁹¹ while at the same time robbing the Liberals of one of their anticlerical tropes—that the government was handing over large parts of national territory to religious orders from abroad. In every other respect, Builes was a controversial figure who could be relied upon to put just about any national political event in the context of the international Jewish-Masonic-Communist plot in his pastoral

⁸⁸ See, for example, “Partidos,” La Buena Prensa [Medellín] Sep. 24, 1932: 1; “Vencido,” La Buena Prensa Nov. 19, 1932: 1; “Con las garantías,” La Buena Prensa Jan. 21, 1933: 1; “Poder Histórico,” La Buena Prensa Jan. 28, 1933: 1; and the pro-Conservative series of first page editorials from Feb. 11, 1933 to Apr. 1, 1933.

⁸⁹ The newspaper ran a long series titled “You cannot serve two masters” (“No se puede servir dos señores”) on the subject from April 1, 1932 to July 15, 1932.

⁹⁰ “Cómo venceremos a la francmasonería,” La Buena Prensa Jan. 14, 1933: 1-2.

⁹¹ María Dolly Olano García, Monseñor Builes: El hombre, el apóstol, el místico (Cali: “Cuadernos de Vida Cristiana,” 1979) 91-92, 191, 270.

letters, which parish priests were obligated to read to their congregations throughout the diocese. His polemics guaranteed that he would never move up in the ranks of the Colombian hierarchy, but his successful seminary—and notable patronage of sacred music—also meant that he would never be demoted.

Builes was consistently against the Liberals in his pastoral letters, at least since the late 1920s.⁹² Builes condemned freemasonry for the first time in a letter on “The Campaigns Against God and the Church” from January 6, 1933, at the time that Bogotá’s Archbishop Perdomo was issuing his own opinion on the subject.⁹³ But only in the beginning of 1936, did Builes really begin to speak out forcefully about a vast masonic conspiracy in Colombia. It would remain a constant theme in his pastoral letters even into his last writings in the mid-1960s—far beyond the point when most Colombian clerics had abandoned the idea.⁹⁴ His exaggerated belief in an international plot at work in *la patria* is especially seen in his letter of February 11, 1937, in which he declared that after Russia, Mexico and Spain,

...the fourth nation of the world chosen by the Judeo-Masonic sect to sink its teeth into and destroy the reign of Christ in souls and in Christian civilization is Colombia. As a consequence, the old liberalism has changed into a frank communism that hates God and Religion, and its leaders rush with diabolic furor toward the ruin of the most Christian nation of South America...⁹⁵

⁹² See, for instance, his letters on laicism and liberalism in 1927 and 1931 respectively. Miguel Angel Builes, Cartas pastorales, 1924-1939 (Medellín: Editorial Bedout, 1958) 85-94, 148-178.

⁹³ “Las campañas contra Dios y la Iglesia,” Builes, Cartas pastorales, 1924-1939 184-208.

⁹⁴ Miguel Angel Builes, Colombia en el caos por la masonería y el comunismo (Medellín: Editorial Granamerica, 1965).

⁹⁵ “...la cuarta nación del mundo escogida por la secta judío masónica para hincarle el diente y destruir el reinado de Cristo en las almas y en la civilización cristiana es Colombia. Como consecuencia, el antiguo liberalismo se trocó en comunismo franco que odia a Dios y a la Religión, y sus gobernantes apresuran con furor diabólico la ruina de la nación más cristiana de Sur América.” “El Evangelio y la Masonería,” Builes, Cartas pastorales, 1924-1939 260-261.

The bishop's rantings would have remained in his own diocese if they had not been seen as politically useful by national Conservative politicians, who published his letters in their newspapers throughout Colombia.

In the 1930s, the Church in Colombia was increasingly divided between moderates, who were willing to work with the Liberal administrations to a certain point, and militants, who wanted to fight the Liberals at every turn. After Olaya's election in 1930, many Conservatives, along with most priests, several bishops, and a number of religious orders, did not march in lockstep with the dictates and attitude of the moderate Archbishop Perdomo of Bogotá (dubbed *Arzobispo Perdimos*—"Archbishop We Lost"—by political wags), nor did they emulate the shrewd actions of the Jesuits. The hopes of right-wing Catholic militants were pinned on Bogotá's adjunct archbishop (with right of succession), Juan Manuel González Arbeláez, appointed in July 1934. The youthful González Arbeláez contrasted with the older Perdomo both physically and in his militancy. He was appointed to be the head of *Acción Católica*.⁹⁶ Many parish priests supported the new Catholic militancy, which would also favor their beloved Conservative Party as well as insure their own influence and prestige in the face of the real or imagined "secularization" of Colombian society by the Liberal regimes.⁹⁷ The Jesuit biweekly, *FAS* was meant to serve as an intellectual support for *Acción Católica* organizers.⁹⁸

González Arbeláez was also the driving force behind a national Eucharistic Congress held in Medellín in 1935, in which hundreds of thousands of the Catholic faithful along with their bishops met for four days of worship, marches, and

⁹⁶ Juan Botero Restrepo, *Monseñor Juan Manuel González Arbeláez: Gran signo de contradicción* (Medellín: Centro de Historia de Sonsón, 1978) 51; and Bidegaín 54-70.

⁹⁷ A similar situation had arisen in Spain during the same years, where rightist parties were aided by the social organizing of the nominally apolitical Spanish *Acción Católica*. Jackson 116.

⁹⁸ See especially Jesús M. Fernández, "Actividades de la Acción Católica," *FAS* 1 Dec. 1935.

sermonizing.⁹⁹ In preparation, González and a group of Colombian clergy (including Luis R. David, the Jesuit coordinator of the Apostleship of Prayer in Colombia) and laypeople attended the international Eucharistic Congress held in Buenos Aires the year before.¹⁰⁰ The Holy See sent Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli—the future Pope Pius XII—to the Congress; according to his own account, González Arbeláez made an impression on the Vatican’s chief diplomat.¹⁰¹ By this time, Eucharistic Congresses followed the same schedule: the first day was for the gathering of the faithful, the second was for the children and youth (including a first communion ceremony), and the third was for women. On the evening of the third day, the men would march in a torchlight parade to a special midnight mass—in Argentina, an estimated one million attended this particular event, which galvanized the Catholic right in that country. The fourth day witnessed the gathering of the faithful once more. The last day’s meeting included a special Eucharistic celebration which was accompanied simultaneously by similar masses throughout Argentina and the world so that priests would be raising the chalice and the host at the same moment. This same day Argentine’s president Agustín Justo joined in consecrating his country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.¹⁰²

The Eucharistic Congress in Medellín followed a similar schedule; the last day included some 400,000 faithful.¹⁰³ To show respect for religion and to demonstrate moderation on Church-state issues, most Liberal departmental, and municipal

⁹⁹ “Congreso Eucarístico en Medellín,” *Mensajero* Apr. 1935: 169-170; and “II Congreso Eucarístico Nacional que se reunirá en Medellín del 14 al 18 de agosto de 1935,” *Mensajero* Jun. 1935: 269-274.

¹⁰⁰ “Reinado del Corazón de Jesús: Peregrinación Colombiana a l XXXII Congreso Eucarístico Internacional en Buenos Aires, que sale el 17 de setiembre en el vapor ‘Reina del Pacífico,’” *Mensajero* Oct. 1934: 464-465.

¹⁰¹ Cárdenas, personal interview, Bogotá, 8 Nov. 2004.

¹⁰² Luis R. David, “Intención General: la lucha contra el ateísmo,” *Mensajero* Jan. 1935: 3-12; and Graciela Ben-Dror, *Católicos, nazis y judíos: la Iglesia argentina en los tiempos del Tercer Reich* (Buenos Aires: Lumiere, 2003) 54-55.

¹⁰³ Cárdenas, personal interview, 8 Nov. 2004.

governments, as well as Liberal president Alfonso López, sent their best wishes to the congress. However, the anticlerical Liberal Bogotá city council sent a message stating that it reserved its good tidings for when the Church hierarchy would support the separation of Church and state and recognize the legitimacy of civil matrimony and divorce. The Eucharistic Congress was outraged by the impertinence of the Bogotá anticlericals; González Arbeláez proclaimed in the last sermon of the meeting that We, Colombian Catholics, are ready for the struggle, to spill blood and to give our lives. That it be well understood, to defeat [the enemies of the Church].¹⁰⁴

In the ensuing years, his words were repeated by Liberals who believed that the Church was conspiring with Conservatives to overthrow the legitimately constituted Liberal governments.

Laureano Gómez and Anti-Masonry

As indicated, in Colombia, as in other parts of Latin America, the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory promulgated by certain Catholic clerics soon found its way into the political rhetoric of right-wing politicians and publicists. This is especially seen in the career of Laureano Gómez, who directed the Colombian Conservative Party from 1932 to 1953. As already mentioned, Spanish priests assigned to elite Latin American schools introduced the conspiratorial aspect of anti-masonry that was expounded by the papacy in the late nineteenth century; Spanish and Colombian Jesuits taught these ideas to Gómez at the Colegio de San Bartolomé in Bogotá. After later graduating from the Universidad Nacional, he was called upon by a Spanish Jesuit mentor, Luis Jáuregui, to direct a pro-clerical newspaper in Bogotá, La Unidad, in order to counter the resurgent Liberal

¹⁰⁴ “Nosotros, católicos colombianos, estamos listos para la lucha, para derramar sangre y dar nuestras vidas. Que se entienda bien, para vencer.” Abel, Política 186.

Party.¹⁰⁵ This was in late 1909—doubtless the priest was thinking of the anticlerical violence during the *Semana Trágica* (“Tragic Week”) that occurred in Barcelona only a few months before. As a young seminarian, Jáuregui had witnessed the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain in 1868 during the “Glorious Revolution.”¹⁰⁶

The reentry of the Liberal Party into civilian politics came after more than twenty years of being shut out of political positions by successive Conservative governments. A few months before the publication of the first issue of La Unidad, Conservative President Rafael Reyes had resigned in June 1909. For intransigent Conservatives like Gómez, it was acceptable to unite with Liberals to get rid of Reyes, but to continue ruling with them through the Republican Union went against all historical Conservative principles. The bloody War of Thousand Days between the two parties had only ended a few years before in 1902; the Conservatives were the victors of that three-year conflict, and many of them were still unwilling to share power with the ex-rebels. For Gómez, collaborating with the Liberals would water down the ideological (and partisan) purity to which he felt the Conservatives needed to aspire.

As the name of the newspaper implies, Gómez and La Unidad sought to form an exclusive “Conservative Union” to oppose the Republican Union, which was led by Colombia’s president, Carlos E. Restrepo, the moderate Antioquian Conservative.¹⁰⁷ Gómez first tried to unite his party around the issue of anti-masonry. Conservatives had closed the masonic lodges in the 1880s; with the Liberals once again active in civilian

¹⁰⁵ Henderson, Conservative Thought 29-35.

¹⁰⁶ Daniel Restrepo, La Compañía de Jesús en Colombia (Bogotá: Corazón de Jesús, 1940) 421; Carr 483-485.

¹⁰⁷ Abel Carbonell, prologue, Comentarios a un régimen, by Laureano Gómez, (Bogotá: Editorial Minerva, 1934) vi-vii; and Hugo Velasco, Ecce Homo: Biografía de una tempestad (Bogotá: Editorial ARGRA, 1950) 43.

politics after 1909, the masons felt secure enough to reestablish their meeting places. In La Unidad and from the floor of Colombia's Chamber of Representatives, Gómez called for outlawing secret societies.¹⁰⁸ However, although he held firm religious and ideological beliefs, Gómez was also a political opportunist who took up one tactic against the opposition if another had proved less-than-successful. Anti-masonry did not seem to stir rank-and-file Conservatives in the first decades of the twentieth century, and Gómez thus abandoned the tactic in 1911 and did not return to it for nearly 25 years.¹⁰⁹

After Gómez had ousted pro-Olaya Conservatives from the party leadership in 1932, he dominated the party for the next two decades. Upset over the lack of electoral guarantees from the Liberal governments, Gómez declared Conservative abstention from all national elections from 1934 to 1939; lacking a position in congress to fight the Liberals, Gómez established the daily El Siglo on February 1, 1936.¹¹⁰ Following the rhetorical example of the Jesuits and other Colombian clerics, Gómez began to beat the drum of anti-masonry once again in the mid-1930s.

The political thought of Gómez and other Conservative party leaders was not solely attributable to clerical influence—the clergy had more of an effect on the thinking of peasant and working-class members of the party rather than on the national and departmental politicians and directorates. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Frenchman Charles Maurras and his political movement *Action Française* inspired conservative Latin American intellectuals and politicians, including those in Colombia.

¹⁰⁸ Carnicelli, Tomo II, 303-305, 323-325, 375-379, 386-391; and Henderson, Conservative Thought 118.

¹⁰⁹ José Vicente Concha, with the support of Liberal Rafael Uribe Uribe, led the Conservative Union to victory in the 1914 presidential elections. Laureano Gómez, from his position as editor of La Unidad, played an important role in reuniting the Conservatives, and defeating the “Republicans.” The masons themselves would add another reason for Gómez' reticence on the subject of the secret society—the Conservative leader was saved from drowning by a freemason in 1914. Carnicelli, Tomo II, 394-395.

¹¹⁰ Henderson, Modernization 226-227, 233-234.

Maurras held that the privileged elite had a special task in preserving high culture and human civilization within a tightly organized hierarchical society. The masses were too prone to materialism—both in its capitalist and communist forms—to be trusted with preserving social order on their own. Maurras’ ideas were easily assimilated by Latin American conservatives, who were already excited by the thesis of José Enrique Rodó in Ariel (1900), which claimed a special place for Latin America in preserving traditional Western culture against (“Anglo-Saxon”) capitalistic materialism.¹¹¹ The *Action Française* was organized in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair, and so Maurras also had his enemies list, which included liberals, republicans, Jews, and freemasons. Despite the papal condemnation of *Action Française* in 1926—accused of the same materialism that Maurras supposedly abhorred—many of its fundamental ideas were carried into other conservative parties and movements in France and throughout Europe.¹¹² In Colombia, as noted, the *leopardos* Eliseo Arango, Silvio Villegas, and Gilberto Alzate Avendaño were especially interested in Charles Maurras.¹¹³ In many ways this group was to the right of Laureano Gómez, and frequently clashed with the Conservative leader over control of their party.

French right-wing newspapers were also strong enough to support their own international news agency, Havas, which by the 1930s was serving conservative newspapers throughout Latin America.¹¹⁴ Havas further propagated the elitist ideas of Maurras and other French reactionaries. Among the newspapers receiving the Havas

¹¹¹ Frederick B. Pike, Hispanismo 1898-1936: Spanish Conservatives and Liberals and Their Relations with Spanish America (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1971) 67-69.

¹¹² Wright 274-275, and 350-351.

¹¹³ Lozano 73-74; and Ruiz Vásquez 132-136.

¹¹⁴ David Thomson, Democracy in France since 1870, (London, Oxford University Press, 1964), footnotes on 71-72.

wire was Laureano Gómez' El Siglo. The right-wing bias of the international news was especially seen in the paper's coverage of events in Spain, even before the civil war broke out in July 1936.¹¹⁵ Freemasons were often blamed for the anticlerical excesses of the Popular Front government of Manuel Azaña, elected on February 16, 1936, shortly after El Siglo's first edition.¹¹⁶ Gómez' newspaper published photomontages received through Havas that presented Azaña as being under the influence of the lodges.¹¹⁷

Gómez returned once again to the political tactic of anti-masonry from the pages of El Siglo when the López administration attempted to lessen Church influence in public instruction. When Gómez discovered that Minister of Education Darío Echandía was the former Grand Master of a dissident Grand Lodge in Bogotá, his paper had a field day. For the first time in almost twenty-five years, the Conservative leader railed against the diabolical influence of the freemasons in the Liberal Party, as well as around the world. This is surprising, given the opportunities he had since 1932 to blame freemasonry for various ills; the lodges were being condemned by Colombian priests and prelates during the same years. As a practicing Catholic, Gómez doubtless heard the exposition against freemasonry by Bogotá's Archbishop Perdomo, who ordered it to read from the pulpits of his archdiocese in early 1933. In his book Comentarios a un régimen (1934), Gómez denounced Liberal-instigated political violence, but never once mentioned the masons, as Mora Díaz and other clerics did during the same years.¹¹⁸ In his study of Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and Ghandi in El Cuadrilátero (1935), Gómez also failed to mention the

¹¹⁵ Colombian Jesuit Hipólito Jérez, in his pro-Franco novel La monja miliciana (Bogotá, Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús, 1937), wrote "the Havas agency has issued splendid articles that could educate the public more than the cables sent by the Marxist camp" (5).

¹¹⁶ In 1935, the Soviet Union urged communist parties throughout the world to cooperate with social democratic and liberal parties in a "Popular Front" against fascism. The election of the Azaña government was the first success of this new strategy. Jackson 184-195.

¹¹⁷ "Baja el régimen del frente popular," El Siglo 18 Jul. 1936: 6.

¹¹⁸ Gómez, Comentarios.

lodges. In this book, Gómez included a long assessment of the process of Italian unification in the nineteenth century; he did not once recall the various papal condemnations of secret societies during those decades.¹¹⁹ However, in early 1936, Gómez seems to have calculated that such rhetoric would resonate among Colombia's Conservatives, given that Church publications and pastoral letters had created a fertile ground for the reception of the conspiracy theory from the leader of the Conservative Party.

Significantly, the "crimes of freemasons" that Gómez listed in his editorials in 1936 invariably occurred in France, belying the fact that he was receiving his information from Havas and other French sources.¹²⁰ Gómez also turned to other lay Colombians to back up his assertions. In May 1936, Simón Pérez y Soto promoted the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory in a radio conference on the "Voz de Colombia," a new broadcast network established by the Conservatives a few weeks after El Siglo first appeared in February 1936. Gómez played an important role in establishing the "Voz de Colombia;" he sent letters to the religious communities throughout Colombia, soliciting funds.¹²¹ Pérez y Soto's conference, "Origin and Causes of the Leftist Revolution in Colombia," was published in El Siglo over three days from May 16 to 18, 1936. The speaker blamed everything on "the impalpable Jacobin shadow of the masonic lodge," as well as on the Jews. He quoted de Poncins and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to support his thesis, claiming that the plot described in these works was "sadly adaptable to the actions of the

¹¹⁹ Laureano Gómez, El Cuadrilátero (Bogotá: Editorial Centro, 1935) 7-25.

¹²⁰ "La acción masónica en la instrucción pública," El Siglo 11 Feb. 1936: 3; and "Un documento masónico del Ministro Señor Darío Echandía," El Siglo 14 Apr. 1936: 1.

¹²¹ Letter, Laureano Gómez to Samuel Mejía, O.P., 11 Dec. 1935, Archivo Dominicano, Bogotá, Fondo San Antonino, Sección Conventos, (henceforth "DA-SA") Subsección Chiquinquirá, Caja 2, Carpeta 1, Folio 54. Gómez expressed the need for ten thousand pesos; the Dominicans donated fifty.

Liberal Republic: to kill patriotism and race pride and establish internationalism as a fundamental principle.” Pérez y Soto expressed support for Mussolini’s suppression of the lodges in the 1920s, and for Hitler’s actions “not only against the lodges, but directly against Judaism.¹²²

However, the anti-masonic campaign did not seem to catch on with rank-and-file Conservatives, and Gómez once again abandoned the theme; it briefly arose again in 1937 when Darío Echandía, the former Minister of Education, was appointed Colombia’s ambassador to the Vatican, with the mission to renegotiate a concordat. Echandía claimed to have broken all ties with freemasonry, and Gómez seemed to accept this at the time.¹²³ Gómez returned to espousing virulent anti-masonry only when Echandía returned to Colombia five years later with a concordat that the Vatican itself praised as a model for Latin America.¹²⁴

Conveniently, the Spanish Civil War began shortly after Gómez ended his 1936 anti-masonic campaign, taking up space on the front page of El Siglo for the next three years. Gómez, receiving the Havas news wire, was unreservedly in favor of Franco and the Nationalists; the Liberal Bogotá daily El Tiempo, on the other hand, maintained a pro-Republican stance—one of its news wire was the liberal-left Agence France Presse. Both Liberals and Conservatives in Colombia tended to espouse an “it-can-happen-here” attitude in the coverage of events in Spain, which contributed to the atmosphere of mutual suspicion between the parties on the eve of *La Violencia*. For instance, on July

¹²² Simón Pérez y Soto, De poetas a conspiradores (novela nacionalista) Y un estudio anexo sobre masonería y judaísmo (Manizales: Editorial Zapata, 1938) 203-223.

¹²³ “La designación de Echandía es un agravio inferido a la catolicidad,” El Siglo 1 Mar. 1937: 1; “Darío Echandía se retira del la Gran Logia de Colombia,” El Siglo 3 Mar. 1937: 1; and “Editorial,” El Siglo 4 Mar. 1937: 4.

¹²⁴ “Firmada en el Vaticano la reforma de Concordato con Colombia, ayer,” El Siglo 23 Apr. 1942: 8; “SE REFORMA EL CONCORDATO,” El Liberal 23 Apr. 1942: 1; and “En cinco puntos fundamentales se reformó el Concordato,” El Liberal 24 Apr. 1942: 1.

20, two days after the uprising, López appointed left-Liberal Plinio Mendoza Neira as War Minister. Inspired by the Spanish government elected in February, Mendoza openly announced that he was the “Popular Front” minister of war—his appointment was seen as a means of “sending a message” to would-be conspirators that a Spanish-like rebellion would not be tolerated in Colombia.¹²⁵ For their part, the clerical press supported the Conservatives in advancing the thesis that a similar civil war could occur in Colombia.

The Colombian Right and the Spanish Civil War

After the Spanish Civil War began with Franco’s uprising on July 18, 1936, the international Judeo-Masonic plot received even more attention in the Spanish-speaking world. Catholics everywhere were shocked by the wave of anticlerical violence in the Republican zones in southern Spain in the first months of the war. Anarchist and radical socialists burned dozens of churches and convents, destroyed religious images and objects, and murdered nearly 7,000 priests, monks, and nuns.¹²⁶ Pro-Franco Nationalist propaganda circulated throughout the religious communities in Colombia and was republished in Church periodicals. For instance, the Jesuits had dozens of pro-Nationalist books in the libraries of the Jesuit seminary in Chapinero in northern Bogotá (known as the “Colegio Máximo”). Most of these volumes blamed at least an international masonic conspiracy, if not a worldwide Judeo-Masonic plot, for the establishment of the Republic

¹²⁵ “Mendoza Neira se posesionó ayer del ministerio de guerra” *El Tiempo* July 20 1936: 1; and “Versión taquigráfica del discurso del Dr. Pedro Juan Navarro en la sesión del viernes sobre política general” *El Tiempo* July 26 1936: 10.

¹²⁶ José M. Sánchez, *The Spanish Civil War as a Religious Tragedy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: U of Notre Dame P, 1987) 1-12; and Julio De la Cueva, “Religious Persecution, Anticlerical Tradition and Revolution: On Atrocities against the Clergy during the Spanish Civil War,” *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 33, No. 3 (1998): 355-369. Francoist sources put the number at 15,000 religious. After the atrocities became widely known, many countries that would have been more inclined to support the Republic, including the United States, hesitated in offending their Catholic populations.

and the election of a Popular Front government in February 1936.¹²⁷ In the Jesuit seminary, as in most seminaries in Colombia at the time, books were read aloud at meal times while the students and faculty quietly ate,¹²⁸ making it likely that several of these books were heard by the seminarians. The ideas expressed in such indoctrination were then repeated by priests from pulpits and Sunday bulletins throughout Colombia.

The Spanish Civil War was reported extensively in the Jesuit publications Revista Javeriana, FAS, and Mensajero.¹²⁹ Félix Restrepo, director of the Revista Javeriana since February 1936, began a special section, “Letters from Spain”, in October 1936, detailing the atrocities taking place in the war-torn country. In recognition of the first anniversary of the Franco uprising, the entire July 1937 issue of the journal was dedicated to *España Mártir* (“Martyred Spain”). News was organized in sections titled “Hatred of Religion—Profanations—Martyred Priests—Burned Churches” and “Cruelties against Women, Children, and Peaceful Citizens.” In his introduction to the special issue, Restrepo wrote that the fight in Spain was a fight against international communism, and not in favor of

¹²⁷ The theological library of the Universidad Javeriana has thirty-five books supporting the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War, issued before 1941. Half of these were published in Spain, five were published in Colombia. Twenty percent of these books treated the civil war as part of an international Judeo-Masonic conspiracy.

¹²⁸ Father Eduardo Rico, S.J., personal interview, Bogotá, 9 Sep. 2004, and Jorge Suárez, personal interview, Bogotá, 5 May 2004 and 2 Jan 2005. Suárez was a diocesan seminarian in Tunja in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and remembers specifically listening to a book about the experiences of a Colombian officer who fought alongside Franco during his campaigns in Morocco in the 1920s, and later died fighting during the civil war. Based on his description, this book would seem to be Camilo Guzmán Cabal, El Legionario (Bogotá: Escuela Tipográfica Salesiana, 1938).

¹²⁹ By 1938, these three publications, along with the weekly Sunday bulletin Destellos [Bogotá] were the bulwark of Jesuit periodical activities. According to an advertisement published in the June 1938 Mensajero, Revista Javeriana was essentially academic, the Mensajero was for the home, FAS was for militants of Acción Católica, and Destellos, which included caricatures, was for “workers and peasants, in order to liberate them from the virus of communism.” Destellos, which had reached a circulation of at least 31,200 (Advertisement, Mensajero Aug. 1941: supplemental 3), does not seem to have been preserved in any Jesuit library or archive in Bogotá.

fascism. He cited the hypocrisy of other news outlets in not condemning the communists with the same passion with which they condemned the fascists.¹³⁰

Also in July 1937, another Colombian Jesuit, Hipólito Jérez, completed a novel about a nun who was forced to aid the Republicans, La monja miliciana, published in Bogotá by the Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús. The pro-Franco line was also taken up in other forms in the Mensajero and in FAS, which, unlike the Revista Javeriana, freely sprinkled the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy into their outrage against Republican atrocities.¹³¹ For instance, the General Intention for November 1936 reinforced the anti-masonic rhetoric in the Mensajero: prayer groups were asked to consider the “Ongoing Struggle against the Masonic Sect.” The Jesuit writing on the topic, Luis R. David, detailed the international crimes of freemasonry, claiming that French freemasons had planned the assassination of Spanish monarchist José Calvo Sotelo, which had sparked the civil war in July 1936.¹³²

In this atmosphere, the Librería Voluntad decided to publish in Bogotá in 1937 the first Colombian edition of the now classic book on the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Félix Restrepo established the Librería Voluntad in 1928; although it was not a strictly Jesuit institution, Restrepo remained on the board of directors until 1961.¹³³ The Protocols were soon taken up by nationalists and Conservative Party politicians. Simón Pérez y Soto, perhaps inspired by Hugo Wast,

¹³⁰ Félix Restrepo, “España mártir en el primer aniversario de la revolución,” Revista Javeriana [Bogotá] Aug. 1937: 89-92.

¹³¹ Augurio Salgado, “Noticias Generales: Comunismo, masonería y seudocatolicismo al servicio de la anti-España,” Mensajero Jun. 1938: 243-256; Augurio Salgado, “Noticias Generales: Comunismo, masonería y seudocatolicismo al servicio de la anti-España,” Mensajero Oct. 1938: 438-447; and “Noticias Generales: España—Legislación en la Nueva España,” Mensajero Jun. 1940: 193-195.

¹³² Luis R. David, “Intención General: Lucha denodada contra la secta masónica,” Mensajero Nov. 1936: 481-492.

¹³³ Cacia, Restrepo 93-95.

wrote his own anti-Semitic and anti-masonic novel, De poetas a conspiradores (From Poets to Conspirators), published in 1938 in Manizales. In an appendix, he republished his radio address from early 1936. In this book, Pérez y Soto's characters discuss de Poncins and the Protocols as they organize a quixotic attempt to take over the corrupt Colombian government from the Liberals.

It is significant that Pérez y Soto published his book in Manizales, where the Augustinian Recollect priests had also published pro-Nationalist books. The first, in 1937, was a reprint of a book published in Europe that described the Nationalist uprising.¹³⁴ The second was by an Augustinian friar in Colombia, Eugenio Ayape de San Agustín, with the title Blood of Spain: Spirit and Redemptive Virtue of the Spanish Crusade (1939).¹³⁵ In it, Ayape specifically cites a catalog of anti-Semitic and anti-masonic books:

Does not the reader know the writings of León de Poncins? Has not the reader extracted the juice from the pages of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, The Secret Powers Behind Revolutions, The International Jew, The Universal Masonry, The Jewish Danger...?¹³⁶

Ayape continued by recounting the role of the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in the Spanish Civil War:

Oh! It's the cabalistic star, the proscribed and damned Salomonic star of the Secret Alliances of Israel, that illuminates the purpled skies of the homeland of Phillip II with its pallid and sinister reflections.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Florentino Salvatierra, Viva Cristo Rey! O la Revolución Española, (Manizales: Tipografía San Agustín, 1937).

¹³⁵ Eugenio Ayape de San Agustín, Sangre de España: Espíritu y virtud redentora de la Cruzada española, (Manizales: Tipografía San Agustín, 1939).

¹³⁶ "No conoce el lector los escritos de León de Poncins? No ha extractado el jugo de las páginas de Los protocolos de los Sabios de Sión, Las fuerzas secretas de la Revolución, El Judío Internacional, La Masonería Universal, El peligro Judío...?" Ayape, Sangre 42.

¹³⁷ "Oh! Es la estrella cabalística, la estrella salomónica de las Alianzas Secretas de Israel el proscrito y maldecido, la que alumbrá con sus pálidos y siniestros reflejos el firmamento empurpurado de la Patria de Felipe Segundo." Ayape, Sangre 43.

These books give an indication of the activities of Colombian rightists in Manizales during these years. Between 1937 and 1939, an extreme right-wing nationalist movement, the *Acción Nacionalista Popular* (“Nationalist Popular Action”—ANP), formed in the coffee capital under the direction of the *leopardos*. As has been noted, the group was against the leadership of Laureano Gómez and his policy of Conservative electoral abstention, as much as it was against the Liberals. Other nationalist groups began organizing themselves inside and outside the Conservative Party as early as 1935, representing a new generation of Conservatives.¹³⁸ Colombian nationalists attempted to maintain links around the country—*leopardo* Augusto Ramírez Moreno was called upon to write the prologues for the novel by Pérez y Soto and for Mora Díaz’ second collection of editorials (*Chispas del Yunque*, 1939). *Leopardos* Silvio Villegas and Gilberto Alzate Avendaño converted the Manizales daily *La Patria* into the most important mouthpiece of the Colombian pro-fascist right, and Villegas was elected to congress in 1939 as a member of the ANP. It was the highpoint of organized fascism in Colombia, but Villegas and the other *leopardos* soon returned to the official Conservative fold, demonstrating varying degrees of cooperation with Gómez in the ensuing years. Nevertheless, through the press and other political activities, the far right-wing ideology of the nationalists—including the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy—was broadcast in various media during these years, adding to the discourse of fear that was increasingly present in the country.¹³⁹

At the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, many governments in Latin America were military or civilian dictatorships, or under the rule of conservatives. These governments were sympathetic to the Spanish Nationalist cause, but were in no position

¹³⁸ Medina, “Terceros partidos” 288-290; Abel 119.

¹³⁹ Ruiz 143-173.

to send aid in the midst of the worldwide economic depression. However, Falangist and fascist parties were established throughout Spanish America; the most notable of these were in Chile and Argentina.¹⁴⁰ Falangist groups also appeared throughout Colombia, frequently inspired and encouraged by Catholic clergy. The Augustinians Recollect helped organize a Falangist cell in Cali, the major city in southwestern Colombia.¹⁴¹ In a pamphlet published by this group in 1938 appears a photo in which Augustinian friars are giving the Falangist salute alongside uniformed members of the cell (including boys as young as five years old).¹⁴² As with the Jesuits, there were many Spanish priests among the Augustinians in Colombia. Jesús Fernández, a Spaniard who was worldwide head of the order in the late 1920s, was previously active in Colombia for several decades.¹⁴³ In 1938, Bogotá's adjunct archbishop González Arbeláez had personally installed the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the headquarters of the *Círculo Nacionalista Español* ("Spanish Nationalist Circle"), established by Spanish Falangists in Bogotá. Laureano Gómez was in attendance, among other Conservative politicians and clerics.¹⁴⁴ By 1939, the students at the Dominican minor seminary in Chiquinquirá wore a uniform similar to that of the Spanish Falange; photographs of the students haughtily giving the Falangist

¹⁴⁰ Chile's falangist grouping became the basis for the Christian Democratic Party. Paul W. Drake, "Chile" The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939 ed. Mark Falcoff and Fredrick B. Pike, (Lincoln, Neb.: U of Nebraska P, 1982) 257-258; and Sandra McGee Deutsch, Las Derechas: The Extreme Right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939 (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999) 143-247.

¹⁴¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.), The Spanish Falange in the Western Hemisphere Today (Washington: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Dec. 1943) 162. 2 Mar. 2005 "History of the Colombian Conflict, 1928-1973," colombiawar.org <<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/falangeF.B.I.htm>> (Wolf). Paul Wolf, an independent journalist interested in Colombian history from the 1930s and 1940s—especially the events surrounding Gaitán's assassination on April 9, 1948—has scanned various F.B.I. and State Department documents and pamphlets and downloaded them to his webpage; the above cite is taken from one of these scanned documents.

¹⁴² La fiesta de la raza en Cali: Homenaje de Falange Española y de las J.O.N.S. (Cali: 1938) [Helguera Collection] 21.

¹⁴³ "Ilustre Visitante," Veritas 21 Aug. 1937: 1; and Ayape, Fundaciones xvi.

¹⁴⁴ "LA FALANGE Y EL CONSERVATISMO: Como Actúa e Interviene la 'España Imperial' en Nuestra Patria por Intermedio de Laureano Gómez," El Liberal 4 Feb. 1942: 9.

salute were published in the Dominican Chinququirá weekly Veritas.¹⁴⁵ A militant Falangist spirit had taken hold among Conservatives in many parts of Colombia.

Pro-Franco Spanish nationalists and the Falange were active in spreading propaganda in Colombia almost from the start of the civil war; by 1937, in addition to distributing books and pamphlets, the nationalists were broadcasting a special *Hora de España* (Spanish Hour) on the Conservative-owned Voz de Colombia radio network.¹⁴⁶ However, between 1938 and 1940, the individuals involved in organizing Spanish nationalists in Bogotá and other cities appear to have been corrupt; several returned to Spain with stolen funds.¹⁴⁷ Falangist organizational activity among Spanish nationals in Colombia increased in 1941. This may have been because the Western Hemisphere headquarters of the Falange Abroad (*Falange Exterior*) in Havana was closed by the Batista government in mid-1941, and their records were confiscated.¹⁴⁸ In its confidential reports, the U.S. State Department expressed the possibility that Falangists were trying to establish a regional headquarters in Colombia in 1940 and 1941. The Spanish

¹⁴⁵ “Colegio Apostólico Dominicano,” Veritas 21 Feb. 1940: 1.

¹⁴⁶ F.B.I. 157.

¹⁴⁷ F.B.I. 157-158, 163.

¹⁴⁸ Fulgencio Batista rose to power in Cuba in 1934, but was not formally elected president until 1940. He enjoyed the support of Cuba’s traditional parties as well as of the Communist Party—he included two communists in his cabinet in 1940. Robert Whitney, State and Revolution in Cuba: Mass Mobilization and Political Change, 1920-1940 (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2001). After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the communists pressured Batista to take action against the Falange. Additionally, the United States government was increasingly applying pressure on Cuba and throughout Latin America to restrict the activities of the pro-Nazi-fascist-Falangist right—in Cuba, as in Colombia, the easiest method was to threaten to deny access to newsprint, which was imported from the U.S. Franco’s choice of Havana as the Americas center for the Falange Abroad made some sense, since nearly 25% of Cuba’s population consisted of the Spanish-born, their children and their dependents. J. M. Alvarez Acevedo, La colonia española en la economía cubana (Habana: Editorial de Ucar, García y Cía, 1936) front cover. The island was also the most geographically accessible point in the region from Spain, (Advertisement, “El Rápido Español,” Diario de la Marina [Havana], 1 Feb. 1942: 15), and the Falange was established there among Spanish nationals even before the uprising in July 1936. Juan Chongo Leiva, El fracaso de Hitler en Cuba (Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1989) 59-63. However, at least half of the Spaniards in Cuba, if not more, were in favor of the Republic; Cubans were well-represented in the pro-Republican International Brigades during the civil war. Alistair Hennessy, “Cuba,” The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939: American Hemispheric Perspectives 101-158.

government opened new consulates in Medellín and Buenaventura (Colombia's largest Pacific port). Along with the previously established consulates in Cali, Barranquilla, and Cucutá, these consulates became important centers of Falangist and pro-Axis propaganda, extending over all of Colombia's most populated territory.¹⁴⁹ An important functionary from the central office of the Falange in Madrid was named second-in-charge of the Spanish Embassy in Bogotá in late 1940, fueling speculation that at least a regional center of Falangism would be established in the Colombian capital. In early 1942, the *Consejo de Hispanidad* (Council of Spanish Solidarity) in Spain invited several young Conservatives, including Álvaro Gómez Hurtado, son of Laureano Gómez—the Colombians did not go because after the U.S. entered the war in December 1941, the ongoing Battle of the Atlantic interrupted most trans-Atlantic shipping. However, the activities of the Spanish Falange, along with the organization of German residents in Colombia in Nazi cells, led the government of Eduardo Santos to outlaw the organization of foreigners in political groups in 1941; when internment camps were set up by the government for German and Japanese citizens in late 1942, both official and unofficial Spanish Falangist activities were curtailed.¹⁵⁰ The Spanish legation was still very active, and contacts with Conservatives, especially Laureano Gómez, were maintained.¹⁵¹

Doubtless the pressure from the right figured into Gómez' decision to end Conservative electoral abstention in February 1939, but he had also accepted the guarantees offered by the moderate Liberal president Eduardo Santos, the owner of El Tiempo, who was elected unopposed in 1938. In the electoral campaign for congress in

¹⁴⁹ Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Division of Reports, U.S. State Department, "The Falange in the Other American Republics," 21 Feb. 1942: 1-2, 2 Mar. 2005 Wolf < <http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/falangeaciaa.htm>>.

¹⁵⁰ F.B.I. 159, 162.

¹⁵¹ F.B.I. 159.

early 1939, Gómez did not turn to anti-masonry as a political tactic to defame the Liberals and animate the rank and file of his party; a massacre on January 9 of nine Conservatives by Liberals in the plaza of the town of Gachetá (about thirty miles from Bogotá) during a public rally gave Gómez plenty of ammunition to use against the Santos administration and the Liberal Party leadership.¹⁵² As will be examined in the next chapter, the government “robberies” of the Dominican school in Chinquinquirá and the Jesuit school in Bogotá during the Santos administration provided Gómez with Church-state issues to use against the Liberals—although significantly, the Conservative leader did not use the tactic of anti-masonry during these years.

The Conservative Anti-Masonic Campaign of 1942

In the second half of 1942, Conservative politicians led by Laureano Gómez maintained the longest sustained anti-masonic campaign of the period. Conservative rank and file heard their leaders lambaste the Liberals for being freemasons or their flunkies—it was even claimed that Colombian masons had hoodwinked the Pope himself into signing an anti-Christian concordat. The rhetoric and accusations of the campaign linked all Liberals to an anti-Catholic international cabal; after 1946, the physical elimination of Liberals was seen by many Conservatives as a justifiable act in defense of Christianity. The anti-masonic campaign of 1942 also illustrates how political tactics guided the nature of Conservative rhetoric—many of the politicians did not believe what they were saying, but found it useful in the context of the moment.

¹⁵² The Gachetá massacre will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

Challenges for Laureano Gómez and the Colombian Church

By mid-1942, Laureano Gómez was in a difficult political position. After unsuccessfully supporting the Liberal Carlos Arango Vélez against the reelection of Alfonso López Pumarejo, the official Liberal candidate, the Conservative leader was attacked by moderates in his party. Certain politicians from both parties had united around the dissident candidacy of Arango Vélez; some of these *anti-lopistas* feared a deepening leftist “revolution” while others were anxious that a “permanent government” of *lopistas* would control the patronage in new state bureaucracies in education, labor, public works, and industrial regulation—much like the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico, the supporters of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, and the Democrats in the United States, where Franklin Roosevelt had just won a third term. However, most Liberals and even a few Conservatives did not share these fears about a second López administration. The reluctant but decisive support of President Eduardo Santos, and his newspaper El Tiempo, was an important factor in López’ victory.¹⁵³

During the campaign, the *lopista* daily El Liberal employed the tactic of depicting Laureano Gómez as a dangerous anti-government conspirator, claiming that he was plotting a coup with Falangists.¹⁵⁴ The campaign ended with the *lopistas* “proving” that Gómez was mentally unstable, publishing a series of articles on the subject in the days leading up to and following the election on May 3.¹⁵⁵ After López’ victory, a group of

¹⁵³ Villar 397-399; and El Liberal 27 Feb. 1942: 1.

¹⁵⁴“Urdaneta acusa la política de Gómez y lo recusa como censor—Laureano Gómez no rendirá las cuentas de la conspiración, dice,” El Liberal 3 Jan. 1942: 1; “La falange y el conservatismo: como actúa e interviene la ‘España Imperial’ en nuestra patria por intermedio de Laureano Gómez,” El Liberal 5 Feb. 1942: 9.

¹⁵⁵“Laureano Gómez: un caso de teratología psicológica,” El Liberal 29 Apr. to 15 May, 1942.

Conservatives rebelled against Gómez' leadership of the party,¹⁵⁶ going so far as to publish their own manifesto in the Liberal newspapers¹⁵⁷ and to establish their own radio program.¹⁵⁸

Gómez received further bad news when it was made public in late June that the militant adjunct archbishop of Bogotá, Juan Manuel González Arbeláez, was demoted to archbishop of the provincial city of Popayán, thus losing the right to succeed Ismael Perdomo and become Prelate of Colombia.¹⁵⁹ This news came as a serious blow to all Conservatives who hoped that a more activist Church would help them electorally against the Liberals—party militants and many churchmen considered Archbishop of Bogotá Ismael Perdomo and the Papal Nuncio Carlos Serena too conciliatory with the Liberal administrations in office since 1930.¹⁶⁰

At the end of June 1942, Gómez was at a loss for a political tactic to use to reunite his party under his leadership. Then, at a public ceremony in Bogotá celebrating the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29, shouts of “Long live the martyred archbishop!” and “Down with disguised freemasonry!” greeted the speech of the Liberal Education

¹⁵⁶ “Luis Caro Escallón contra el Doctor Laureano Gómez,” El Liberal 9 May 1942:1; “Una enérgica protesta del Doctor Luis Caro Escallón,” El Liberal 30 May 1942: 1; “La oposición constructiva,” El Tiempo 1 Jun. 1942: 4; and “Cumplir la ley es un título de Buen Ciudadano,” El Tiempo 10 Jun. 1942: 1.

¹⁵⁷ “Listo para publicarse el manifiesto conservador,” El Liberal 5 Jun. 1942: 1; “Importante manifiesto lanza a la nación la Plana Mayor del Conservatismo Independiente,” El Tiempo 15 Jun. 1942: 1, 7; “Movimiento Conservador,” El Liberal 15 Jun. 1942; and “Manifiesto Independiente,” La Razón [Bogotá] 15 Jun. 1942.

¹⁵⁸ “La Voz Conservadora’ inició sus emisiones con elevado editorial,” El Tiempo 29 Jun. 1942: 1.

¹⁵⁹ “El Excelentísimo Sr. Arzobispo Juan Manuel González ha sido promovido a la sede de Popayán,” El Siglo 22 Jun. 1942: 1. González Arbeláez permanently abandoned Colombia for Spain in late 1943, thus leaving Catholic militants without a charismatic leader. Cárdenas, personal interview, Bogotá, 18 Nov. 2004.

¹⁶⁰ In all likelihood Perdomo and Serena had moved to have the Vatican demote González Arbeláez. Added to the adjunct archbishop’s maverick attitude was his establishment of an order of nuns, the *Deificadoras* (Deifiers). All kinds of scandalous rumors swirled around González Arbeláez and his relationship with the *Deificadoras*. Miguel Zapata Restrepo, La mitra azul: Miguel Angel Builes, el hombre, el obispo y el caudillo (Medellín: Beta, 1973) 307-308. It is certain that he maintained a close relationship with the superior of the order; many clergy felt that she was behind many of the adjunct archbishop’s more polemical actions. The *Deificadoras* were dissolved by the Vatican. Cárdenas, personal interview, Bogotá, 18 Nov. 2004.

Minister, Germán Arciniegas.¹⁶¹ The ceremony was sponsored by Papal Nuncio Carlos Serena—the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul is an opportunity for the Church to recognize the supreme authority of the papacy, since Saint Peter is considered the first Pope.¹⁶² Perdomo, embarrassed by the “lack of culture” demonstrated by a few in the audience, sent a public letter of apology to Serena. The letter was only published in the Liberal press,¹⁶³ while Laureano Gómez and El Siglo immediately began trumpeting the “reality” expressed in the shouts during Arciniegas’ speech. The Conservative leader launched his longest and most vehement campaign against the freemasons, proclaiming the existence of an international Judeo-Masonic conspiracy at work in Colombia, bent on destroying religion and patriotism in its quest to control the world.

By 1942, not all clerics were necessarily in favor of such a campaign. Since the late 1930s, the Jesuits were backing off of the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy, and even toned down their anti-masonic rhetoric, despite the publication of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in 1937 by a Jesuit-affiliated publisher. The reasons for this are multiple. First, members of their order outside of Colombia were already questioning the validity of the Protocols and the idea of an international Judeo-Masonic plot. In 1938, the Belgian Jesuit Charles Pierre wrote an article showing how the Protocols was a forgery and that the Jews were not plotting against the Church.¹⁶⁴ In the last months of the papacy of Pius XI, the pope turned to the U.S. Jesuit John LaFarge to draft an encyclical against anti-Semitism and racism. As noted earlier, the Jesuit General

¹⁶¹ Although he never publicly admitted it, Germán Arciniegas was indeed a freemason (Funeral announcement, El Tiempo 1 Dec. 1999: 14B). The organization, activities and influence of freemasonry in Colombia will be examined in the next chapter.

¹⁶² “Especial solemnidad revistió la fiesta del Papa en Bogotá,” El Tiempo 30 Jun. 1942: 3; and “Aclamado Mons. González durante el solemne acto de ayer en el Teatro Colón,” El Siglo 30 Jun. 1942: 1, 8.

¹⁶³ “Perdomo felicitó Ministro de Educación, condena gritos durante su discurso cumpleaños del Papa,” El Tiempo 2 Jul. 1942: 1.

¹⁶⁴ Cohn 301.

Wladimir Ledóchowski slowed the process of writing the encyclical and the Pope died before issuing this last pronouncement; it was not released by his successor, the germanophile Pius XII.¹⁶⁵ Still, that Pius XI would turn to a Jesuit to write on the subject indicates the level of disagreement within the order concerning the existence of an international anti-Christian cabal. This dissent was always present within the Colombian province—as already mentioned, the prolific Félix Restrepo never referred to the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy in his writings; other Colombian Jesuits who wrote widely on a variety of social, political and economic topics also avoided the theme.¹⁶⁶

Colombian Jesuits were also influenced both against anti-Semitism and in favor of democracy by the Jesuits and the Church in the United States in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Mensajero, in its Noticias Generales section, reflected the moderate U.S. Catholic line on many issues. At first, this came in repeating articles and news from the Jesuit Revista Católica, published in Spanish in El Paso, Texas. Reports from the Revista Católica on the persecution of the Church in Mexico in the late 1920s and early 1930s were frequently repeated in the Mensajero, but so were the numerous positive comments on the administration of Franklin Roosevelt. These comments highlighted the religious devotion of the president,¹⁶⁷ his encouraging words to Catholic prelates, conferences, and organizations,¹⁶⁸ his government's relations with the Vatican,¹⁶⁹ his

¹⁶⁵ Kertzer 273-274, 280-282.

¹⁶⁶ Among these Jesuits were the community organizer Jesús María Campoamor, the pedagogue Jesús María Fernández, and the anti-Protestant propagandist Eduardo Ospina. Daniel Restrepo, La Compañía; and Francisco Miranda Ribadeneira, Eduardo Ospina S.J.: Humanista colombiano, 1891-1965, (Bogotá: Editorial Kelly, 1980).

¹⁶⁷ “Estados Unidos—1) Lección presidencial,” Mensajero Feb. 1937: 92; and “Estados Unidos—2) Proclama de Roosevelt el día de la acción de gracias a Dios,” Mensajero Jan.-Feb. 1939: 44-46.

¹⁶⁸ See letters to the Catholic Veterans of America, “Estados Unidos—Cartas del Presidente Roosevelt a los católicos,” Mensajero Mar. 1936: 138-139; to an anti-atheist conference of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, “Estados Unidos—Mensaje de Presidente Roosevelt por la acción concorde de los creyentes en

promotion of world peace,¹⁷⁰ and even his successful campaigns against the Republicans.¹⁷¹ By contrast, the Mensajero said very little about the most prominent anti-Semitic Catholic priest in the U.S. at the time, Father Charles Coughlin. Beginning in the late 1920s, Coughlin broadcast weekly across the country from the Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan. Although he supported Roosevelt in the 1932 election, by the mid-1930s Coughlin was denouncing Roosevelt's policies as the "Jew Deal." This was barely treated as news by the Mensajero.¹⁷²

By 1942, the Mensajero was receiving a direct news wire from the National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington D.C., which further influenced its editorial stance.¹⁷³ Many times this news was uncommonly positive towards the Jews, mentioning how rabbis supported campaigns against atheism and for decency in books and films,¹⁷⁴ and how Jews reacted to the death of the anti-Nazi Pope Pius XI in early 1939.¹⁷⁵ When prayer intentions in December 1938 and October 1941 were again for the conversion of the Jews, the writers at the Mensajero did not descend into conspiracy-mongering, but

contra del ateísmo," Mensajero Jun. 1936: 281-283; and to Cleveland Jesuits, "Estados Unidos—1) El presidente Roosevelt y la Compañía de Jesús," Mensajero Oct. 1936: 472.

¹⁶⁹ See "Ciudad del Vaticano—2) Texto íntegro de la carta de Su Santidad Pío XII al presidente Roosevelt," Mensajero Apr. 1940: 116-119; and "Estados Unidos—¿Relaciones con el Vaticano?," Mensajero May 1940: 154-157.

¹⁷⁰ See "España," Mensajero Jan. 1937: 48; and "Efemérides de la Guerra," Mensajero Mar. 1940: 73-80.

¹⁷¹ "Estados Unidos—Discurso de Roosevelt," Mensajero Aug. 1936: 375-376. Reading this news in the Mensajero also shows how strong the Catholic vote was for Roosevelt and the Democrats in the 1930s.

¹⁷² Donald I. Warren, Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio (New York: Free Press, 1996); and "Charles Coughlin," Spartacus Educational, 4 Oct. 2004 <<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAcoughlin E.htm>>. The Mensajero reported evenly on the controversy surrounding Coughlin in its "Noticias Generales" section in October 1936 (474); in the same issue was reprinted a letter from Roosevelt to Jesuits in Cleveland, congratulating them on the fiftieth anniversary of their presence there (473).

¹⁷³ See "Alocución de Navidad," Mensajero Apr. 1942:121-127; and "Noticias Católicas Extranjeras," Mensajero Jun. 1942: 248.

¹⁷⁴ "Ecos de la Encíclica sobre la Educación," Mensajero Jul. 1930: 300-306; "Estados Unidos—Una buena campaña de los católicos," Mensajero Dec. 1930: 564; and "Estados Unidos—Mensaje de Presidente Roosevelt por la acción concorde de los creyentes en contra del ateísmo," Mensajero Jun. 1936: 281-283.

¹⁷⁵ "Los gobiernos, en nombre de los pueblos, manifiestan su pesar por el fallecimiento de Su Santidad," Mensajero Mar. 1939: 61-63.

instead emphasized the Church's positive steps towards bringing "Israelites" to the one true faith. Still, on these occasions, they also avoided mentioning the persecution of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe at the time.¹⁷⁶

The influence of the United States is also seen in the actions taken by U.S. Ambassador Spruille Braden. Braden served as chief diplomat to Colombia from 1939 to 1942. He spoke Spanish perfectly, having grown up in Chile, where his father was a mining engineer. He was especially attuned to eradicating Nazi and Falangist influence in Colombia, successfully helping to excise German control of the Colombian airline SCADTA (Sociedad Colombo-Alemán de Transporte Aérea).¹⁷⁷ To deal with reactionary anti-U.S. clerics, with the help of New York's Francis Cardinal Spellman, Braden arranged a trip to Colombia by Bishop John F. O'Hara. O'Hara had grown up in Uruguay and spoke Spanish. The 1941 visit, the first by a U.S. bishop, was well-received by the Colombian clergy and by politicians of both parties; it had the effect of tempering the somewhat anti-democratic rhetoric among Conservatives and churchmen.¹⁷⁸

However, while the Jesuits seemed to be backing away from the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory, certain Colombian Dominicans took up the issue with even greater vehemence. The Spanish Civil War had deeply affected Friar Mora Díaz, and he, even more than the Jesuits, proclaimed his devotion to Franco and the Nationalist cause.¹⁷⁹ In 1944, when asked about his political party affiliation by a newspaper reporter, he did not

¹⁷⁶ "Intención General: Porque Dios suscite apóstoles aptos para convertir al pueblo de Israel," Mensajero Dec. 1938: 497-505; and "Intención Misional: La conversión de los Israelitas," Mensajero Oct. 1941: 323-324. These prayer intentions also reflect the concerns of the Jesuit General Wladimir Ledóchowski in early 1937 (when Pius XI was releasing his encyclical against Nazism) and in early 1940 (soon after the conquest of his native Poland by the Germans).

¹⁷⁷ Spruille Braden, Diplomats and Demagogues, (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1971) 212-242; and Silvia Galvis and Alberto Donadio, Colombia Nazi, 1939-1945 (Bogotá: Planeta, 1986) 165-175.

¹⁷⁸ Braden 209-211.

¹⁷⁹ "España Imperial," El clarín 108-110; "Contra Franco," El clarín 167-169; and "La Legión Azul," El clarín 272-274.

respond “Conservative”, as expected, but rather “Falangist”.¹⁸⁰ After the war began in September 1939, Mora Díaz frequently wrote in favor of Colombian neutrality, and against supporting the U.S. and the allies.¹⁸¹ Shortly after Pearl Harbor, he even showed support for Japan over the United States, who he qualified as the “Bad Neighbor” rather than as the “Good Neighbor” expressed in Roosevelt’s Latin America policy.¹⁸²

Mora Díaz was not the only Dominican repeating Nazi-Falangist propaganda. In Chiquinquirá, the Dominican publication Veritas, under the direction of Friar Fideligno García was also singing the praises of Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini. Such a position became less tenable as the U.S. became increasingly pro-ally in 1940 and 1941—as stated, the U.S. supplied newsprint and advertising to Colombian publications, and the threat of withholding either often had an immediate effect on editorial policy in right-wing newspapers. The most well-known case of the application of this kind of pressure was with Laureano Gómez’ El Siglo in 1941.¹⁸³ Still, certain publications risked the ire of the U.S., especially in 1942 and 1943 when it still seemed that the U.S. was badly injured by both Pearl Harbor and the German submarine war in the Atlantic, and that Hitler’s armies were about to conquer the Soviet Union. Friar García’s superior, the Dominican Provincial Alberto E. Ariza, had to admonish the monk at least three times for publishing “propaganda in favor of the Axis.” Ariza feared that it was “very possible that

¹⁸⁰ Roberto Prada Rueda, “Libro de Crónicas. Convento Santo Domingo Bogotá, 1924-1946,” (unpublished chronicle), Dominican Archive, Bogotá, Fondo San Antonino, Sección Conventos, Subsección Libros-Crónicas, Caja 3, Carpeta 1, 99.

¹⁸¹ “Neutrales Integrales,” El clarín 47-50; “Coyunda Teutona o Sajona,” El clarín 51-55; “Neutrales,” El clarín 59-62; “El crimen contra natura,” El clarín 81-83; “Los yanquis ad portas,” El clarín 91-94; “Desintegración de la patria,” El clarín 66-69; “Desafío a la conciencia nacional,” El clarín 135-138; “Grito de alarma continental,” El clarín 158-162; “Los negros y la democracia,” El clarín 170-172; “Pacifismo integral,” El clarín 191-194; “Degollaron a Francia,” El clarín 195-197; “Neutralidad absoluta,” El clarín 238-240; “La agonía moscovita,” El clarín 262-265; “Las listas negras,” El clarín 275-277; and “Los católicos y la guerra,” El clarín 289-292.

¹⁸² “El Mal Vecino,” El clarín 247-250; and “La conflagración mundial,” El clarín 285-288.

¹⁸³ Braden, memo to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Bogotá, 26 Mar. 1941, State 821.000/1319.

one day the Dominican Community could turn up on the blacklist” of the allies. Ariza did not condemn García for his views, but rather reasoned “what is the Axis going to gain from our policy? Absolutely nothing. And what are the allies going to lose? Nothing. But on the other hand we could gravely endanger ourselves.”¹⁸⁴ The Dominicans demonstrated such “neutrality” even at the end of the war in Europe: they attended a thanksgiving mass in Bogotá’s cathedral in May 1945 without shaving, “because the greatest people in History [the Germans] have fallen.”¹⁸⁵

Despite the general agreement of opinion among Dominicans about the war, Ariza’s letter to García gives an inkling of the dissent within the community on involvement in politics in general. At least privately, other monks expressed in no uncertain terms that Gómez and the Conservatives were hypocritical politicians who needed to be avoided as much as the Liberals.¹⁸⁶ In September 1946, this opinion became official, when the Dominicans declared that they were pulling out of politics in Colombia after receiving no support from Laureano Gómez and the Conservatives when they decided to sell their colonial era church in the center of Bogotá to a group of private investors.¹⁸⁷

The Return to Anti-Masonry

Laureano Gómez turned once again to the topic of an international conspiracy against Colombia in July 1942. The war news at this point still favored the Axis. The German army was successfully continuing its invasion of the southern Soviet Union, the

¹⁸⁴ Letter, Ariza to García, Bogotá, 17 Aug. 1943, Dominican Archive, Bogotá, Fondo San Antonino, Sección Convento, Subsección Chiquinquirá, Caja 2, Carpeta 6, Folio 150.

¹⁸⁵ Prada Rueda, 8 May 1945, 153.

¹⁸⁶ Prada Rueda, 2 May 1943: 47; 12 Jun. 1943: 52; 7 Dec. 1943: 93; 22 Oct. 1944: 129; 3 Nov. 1944: 131.

¹⁸⁷ Prada Rueda, 12 Sep. 1946: 219.

Japanese navy seemed to have knocked out the U.S. Pacific fleet, and German submarines were sinking the U.S. merchant marine in the Atlantic almost at will. Gómez' El Siglo certainly tried to put a pro-Axis spin to war news, without upsetting the U.S. embassy so much as to lose access to newsprint. Others on the right were less restricted—seminarians at the diocesan seminary in Tunja rang a bell every time the Germans sunk an allied ship.¹⁸⁸ In late August 1942, Conservative *laureanista* senator Joaquín Estrada Monsalve expressed the opinion that with “the French Third Republic routed by Hitler’s motorized columns and Great Britain incapable of facing all of its defeats, the conflict has been defined. The European war has ended. The rest of the military actions are consolidation of the victory.”¹⁸⁹

In this atmosphere, Gómez’ anti-masonic campaign repeated the arguments held by the far right in Europe for decades: the masons, along with the communists, were the vehicles by which the Jews would control the world.¹⁹⁰ By 1942, the Germans had already defeated France—Havas had become part of the Nazi Transocean news service, which was received by El Siglo and continued to influence the rhetoric of Gómez. The French collaborationist government in Vichy, which received positive coverage from Havas and Transocean, had gone after the freemasons even before it started rounding up the Jews—Vichy leader (1940-1944) Marshal Phillippe Pétain felt that the masons were in some ways more culpable than Jews, claiming that “A Jew cannot help his origins, but a

¹⁸⁸ Suárez, personal interview, Bogotá, 2 Jan. 2005.

¹⁸⁹ “derrotada Francia por la tercera república bajo las columnas motorizadas de Hitler e incapaz la Gran Bretaña de hacer frente a todos sus fracasos, el conflicto quedó definido. La guerra europea en ese continente ya pasó. Los demás hechos militares son consolidación de la victoria.” “Formidable discurso pronunció en la cámara Joaquín Estrada Monsalve, ayer,” El Siglo 26 Aug. 1942: 1, 3.

¹⁹⁰ “Los grandes y verdaderos enemigos de la patria están adentro, dice el Dr. Gómez; El origen judaico de la masonería y su historia”, El Siglo 12 Aug. 1942: 1; and Henderson, Conservative 120-124.

freemason has chosen to become one.”¹⁹¹ After closing the lodges, an anti-masonic exhibition was mounted in Paris in October 1940, receiving more than three times as many visitors as the anti-Semitic exhibition that was organized a year later.¹⁹² The anti-masonic trope became an important part of Axis propaganda in Latin America—for instance, El Siglo published wire service articles in mid-1941 on how the Versailles Treaty was a “Judeo-Masonic triumph” and on how Franklin Roosevelt was a freemason.¹⁹³ It is therefore unsurprising that Gómez again frequently turned to French sources in his July 1942 anti-masonic campaign.

As already mentioned, this campaign began shortly after an incident during a ceremony in honor of the Pope on June 29, in which “Down with disguised freemasonry!” was shouted during the address by Education Minister Arciniegas. By July 3, an editorial in El Siglo had announced that “the actual government is not Catholic but masonic,” claiming as proof the “robbery” of a Jesuit-run school in Bogotá by the Santos administration.¹⁹⁴ The following day, an advertisement appeared in Gómez’ paper for the sensationalist pamphlet Masonería by “J.B.M. Ex-Caballero Kadosch” (a pseudonym referring to the 30th degree of Scottish Rite freemasonry); it was soon available throughout the country from the newspaper agents of El Siglo.¹⁹⁵ The pamphlet, published in Bogotá, was a sensationalist account of masonic rituals and secrets, and included a long description of the various presumed crimes of freemasonry,

¹⁹¹ Ian Ousby, Occupation: The Ordeal of France 1940-1944 (London: John Murray, 1997) 98.

¹⁹² Julian Jackson, France: The Dark Years 1940-1944 (London: Oxford UP, 2001) 198.

¹⁹³ Braden, Memo to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Bogotá, 29 Jul. 1941, State 821.000/1345.

¹⁹⁴ The property was owned by the government, which had simply not renewed a contract with the Jesuits, who in the meantime had built their own school on their own property in the north of Bogotá. “Robo de San Bartolomé,” El Siglo 3 Jul. 1942: 3.

¹⁹⁵ El Siglo 26 Oct. 1942: 4; and El Siglo 23 Nov. 1942: 4.

based on cases from Spain, France, and Italy.¹⁹⁶ It also claimed that Colombian Liberals were part of the international Judeo-Masonic conspiracy, especially in their attempts to control public instruction—a series of government and political documents were quoted at length to make this point.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, when describing a supposed masonic secret code, the text gave an example: “Let’s suppose that one would like to write the word ‘Eduardo Santos,’”¹⁹⁸ who was still president at the time. Some of the texts quoted obviously did not exist, like the following from a publication called the Revista Judío Masónico (“Masonic Jew Magazine”), which describes “Diabolic Instructions to Pervert Women” in schools:

In the primary and secondary schools, with the pretext of physical development and elegant and good presentation, it is necessary to bring schoolgirls from the smallest indecencies to the most outlandish imprudences. Brought to this point they will no longer believe in heaven, in hell, in angels, in God, in the spirit. With them, we would have perfect female animals. And with these female animals we will rapidly animalize the entire world.

Oblige the schoolgirls to practice gymnastic exercises more appropriate for men, or even soldiers. Keep them dressed, if possible, in men’s clothes, first in short pants, the shorter the better, and the lightest possible blouse, without sleeves. Dressed like this we will make them perform provocative exercises. At the same time we will stimulate them with applause from all of the satyrs present and from the unaware, men and women, great and small.

With this there will not be one woman with humility and shame and in this way we will have gained magnificent militia for the communist cause. And when the fathers and mothers become aware of our labor, it will be too late, because the same girls will have had true pleasure in these presentations and dances and even in the most perverted coed games. The best would be to succeed in establishing coed baths at swimming pools.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ J.B.M. Ex-Caballero Kadosch, Masonería, (Bogotá: Tipografía Verdad, 1942) 43-49.

¹⁹⁷ J.B.M. 62-79.

¹⁹⁸ J.B.M. 19.

¹⁹⁹ “En las escuelas y colegios con pretexto de desarrollo físico, de elegante y buena presentación, es necesario llevar a las alumnas desde las pequeñas indecencias hasta las más descaradas impudencias. Llevadas a este punto ya no creen en nada de cielo, ni infierno, ni ángeles, ni Dios, ni espíritu. Tendremos en ellas unos perfectos animales hembras. Y con estos animales hembras animalizaremos rápidamente a todo el mundo.

“Obligüemos a las alumnas a ejercicios gimnásticos propios de hombres y aún de soldados. Que vistan, sí es posible, trajes de hombres; primero calzones bombachos y cortos; cuanto más cortos mejor, y blusa, lo más ligera posible, sin mangas. En esta traza hagámoslas ejecutar evoluciones o maniobras en las que se

Rather prurient reading for a pamphlet which also expressed that it should “be like a second Catechism in the home.”²⁰⁰ Still, the same quote can be found in other Catholic publications in Colombia after the pamphlet was published: it appeared in the November 1942 issue of the Mensajero, when the General Intention was “That Catholic youth give increased reverence to the Church as Mother and Teacher;”²⁰¹ and Bishop Miguel Angel Builes in Santa Rosa de Osos used it in a pastoral letter on “Masonry in Action” from February 1943.²⁰² Laureano Gómez, militant Conservatives and clergymen converged in the second semester of 1942 on the issue of a masonic conspiracy in Colombia.

Gómez continued proclaiming vociferously that the conspiracy was active in Colombia from the pages of El Siglo during all of July 1942. The newspaper’s campaign was soon receiving telegrams of support from all over Colombia.²⁰³ By July 16, the daily described “Catholic Sentiment in Bogotá and the Campaign of Dr. Laureano Gómez,” declaring that “All social classes of the capital are unanimously mobilizing against masonry and Judaism,” with hundreds signing a petition of support.²⁰⁴ During the coronation of the Virgin of Mount Carmel in Ibagüé on July 17, with the newly-appointed Archbishop of Popayán Juan Manuel González Arbeláez in attendance, shouts

procurará haya algunas provocativas. Al mismo tiempo estimúlense con aplausos de todos los sátiros presentes y de los inconscientes, hombres y mujeres, grandes y pequeños.

“Con esto no quedará una sola mujer con pudor y vergüenza y así las habremos ganado para magníficas milicianas de la causa comunista. Y cuando los padres y madres se den cuenta de nuestra labor, será tarde, porque las mismas muchachas tendrán verdadero gusto en estas presentaciones y bailes y hasta en juegos mixtos los más escabrosos. Lo perfecto sería lograr los baños mixtos en las piscinas de natación.” J.B.M. 41-42. This kind of prurient fantasy about freemasonry has a longer history, dating at least from the late nineteenth century with the works of Frenchman Leo Taxil. Lennhoff 350-353.

²⁰⁰ J.B.M. 3.

²⁰¹ Tomás Galvis, “Que la juventud católica reverencie cada día mas a la Iglesia como Madre y Maestra,” Mensajero Nov. 1942: 349-352.

²⁰² Builes, “La masonería en acción,” Cartas Pastorales, 1940-1948 (Bogotá: Empresa Nacional de Publicaciones, 1957) 89.

²⁰³ El Siglo 9 Jul. 1942: 1; “Todo el país se moviliza contra la masonería atea,” El Siglo 13 Jul. 1942: 1; “El plebiscito nacional a la campaña en contra de la masonería disfrazada,” El Siglo 18 Jul. 1942: 1;

²⁰⁴ “El sentimiento católico de Bogotá y la campaña de Dr. Laureano Gómez,” El Siglo 16 Jul. 1942: 1, 5.

of “Down with masonry” were heard from the multitude.²⁰⁵ The real test for Gómez came with the opening of the new legislative session on July 20. The “independent” Conservatives had failed to gain much headway among the congressional representatives of their party: the nationalist *leopardo* Silvio Villegas spoke in favor of Gómez in the chambers on July 22,²⁰⁶ while the next day, another up and coming reactionary, Rafael Azula Barrera, declared that “spiritually, the country is in a state of civil war.”²⁰⁷

However, during these weeks, the moderate Archbishop Ismael Perdomo and the Papal Nuncio Carlos Serena were carrying on their own battle against Gómez. First, this was because they had both condemned the shouts during the ceremony on June 29, while Gómez obviously defended the ideas expressed by ruffians in the audience. Then it became known that on July 1, Gómez had sent his own circular to all of the bishops and parish priests in the country, instructing them that doctrinally, they only had to follow their local bishops—implying that they could ignore the Archbishop Primate of Bogotá on issues such as the demotion of González Arbeláez to Popayán, the condemnation of freemasons, and the new concordat. On July 17, Perdomo sent a pastoral letter to all of the priests in his archdiocese, to be read at all masses, in which he specifically condemned the disrespectful attitude of Gómez and El Siglo. The Conservative daily had assiduously avoided naming Perdomo or Papal Nuncio Serena in any of their articles in the previous weeks—Perdomo and Serena had to publish their letters, including the pastoral letter of July 17, in the Liberal newspapers. In this atmosphere, the Liberals had a field day, proclaiming Laureano Gómez a heretic for his problems with Bogotá’s

²⁰⁵ “‘Abajo la masonería’ fue el grito de la multitud,” El Siglo 17 Jul. 1942: 1.

²⁰⁶ “Discurso de Silvio Villegas,” El Siglo 23 Jul. 1942: 1.

²⁰⁷ “Discurso de Rafael Azula Barrera,” El Siglo 24 Jul. 1942: 1.

archbishop.²⁰⁸ But more importantly for Gómez, the Conservative Party was uniting once again under his leadership, and thus he continued with his campaign against the supposed Judeo-Masonic conspiracy.

During these days Gómez' El Siglo also avoided publishing the name of the newly elected president, Alfonso López Pumarejo, even though he was to be inaugurated on August 7. August 6, however, is the day Bogotá celebrates its founding in 1538. So while the *lopista* paper El Liberal published a special fifty-six page edition to celebrate López' inauguration on August 7, El Siglo ignored the event and instead dedicated its front page to reporting on a Catholic mass commemorating the foundation of Bogotá one day before. The mass was an opportunity for nationalists and other reactionaries to celebrate the Spanish roots of Colombian culture and the centuries of positive influence that the “mother country” had had on its former colony—the Spanish minister, a Falangist, was in attendance. The most important part of the event was a speech by the Dominican Friar Mora Díaz. El Siglo reported that

Father Mora Díaz insisted on the necessity of defending this sacred patrimony, threatened today more than ever by attacks from the enemies of God—Masonry and Judaism—whose dark machinations are intent on undermining the sacred treasure of our Catholic traditions.

Finally, Father Mora Díaz made reference to the tremendous struggle unleashed by the Spanish people against the masons and the Jewish Bolsheviks of the Republic of [Manuel] Azaña.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ “No prospera el cisma católico que quiso provocar El Siglo,” El Tiempo 8 Jul. 1942: 1; “Ante el Congreso,” El Liberal 15 Jul. 1942: 4; “Una rotunda condenación a la rebeldía de El Siglo,” El Tiempo 19 Jul. 1942: 1; and “En enérgica carta pastoral, el Ilustre Prelado conmina con pena de excomuniación al jefe del cisma conservador,” El Liberal 19 Jul. 1942: 1.

²⁰⁹ “Insistió el Padre Mora Díaz en la necesidad de defender ese patrimonio sagrado, hoy amenazado más que nunca por los embates de los enemigos de Dios, de la masonería y del judaísmo, cuyas oscuras tramas procuran minar el sagrado tesoro de nuestras tradiciones católicas.”

“Por último, el Padre Mora Díaz hizo referencia a la tremenda lucha librada por el pueblo español contra los masones y judiosbolcheviques de la república azañista...” “Misa solemne en conmemoración de la fundación de Santa Fe de Bogotá,” El Siglo 7 Aug. 1942: 1, 8.

Mora Díaz, who did not normally get much attention in El Siglo, was now enlisted in the campaign against Jews and freemasons; as seen in this speech, he too had added the Jewish element to the masonic conspiracy that he had preached since the early 1930s. However, on page three of the same edition of El Siglo appeared another news item from abroad (received from United Press): “Pius XII orders Pétain and Laval to cease the persecution of the Jews.”

18,000 Hebrews were arrested in Paris during the first stage of the German campaign of detaining Jewish refugees for deportation to Upper Silesia. There are many children among the detainees, who are to be sterilized by the Germans.²¹⁰

Although the editors had no way of knowing at this point, the newspaper was reporting on the Holocaust—various extermination camps were located in “Upper Silesia.”²¹¹

Although some readers of El Siglo on August 7 may have noticed the contradiction in reporting Mora Díaz’ viciously anti-Semitic remarks on page eight and describing how Nazis were expelling Jews from France and sterilizing Jewish children on page three, such an incongruence did not seem to affect the newspaper’s editor, Laureano Gómez.

In the new legislative session of the Colombian congress, Gómez, who was a senator, immediately proposed a bill which would deny masonic lodges their existence as legal entities (a right that they had received in 1936 from an all-Liberal congress). The debate over this bill began on August 11, when Gómez would give the most anti-Semitic speech of his career. Essentially, his speech detailed how the Jews manipulated the middle class through freemasonry, and the working class through communism. The

²¹⁰ “Se informó que 18.000 hebreos fueron arrestados en París durante la primera etapa de la campaña alemana de detención de los refugiados judíos para su deportación a la Silesia Superior. Entre los detenidos figuran muchos niños, los cuales son esterilizados por los alemanes.” “Pío XII pide a Pétain y a Laval cese la persecución a los judíos,” El Siglo 7 Aug. 1942: 3.

²¹¹ As the paper reported, the condemnation of the actions of the Vichy government came from the Papal Nuncio in Paris, Valerio Valeri, and not directly from Pius XII, who tended to stay out of the way of the unfolding genocide in Europe despite the reports he was receiving from various sources. Michael Phayer, The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965 (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000) 52.

Conservative leader claimed to have witnessed a masonic “knowing glance” between President Eduardo Santos and his aide Carlos Lozano y Lozano when Gómez brought up the topic of freemasonry at a private meeting on the subject of public instruction in 1938. It was the first time that Gómez had discussed this aspect of the meeting—revealing his use of anti-masonry as a political tactic rather than a consistent part of his ideology. He also mentioned how he had witnessed the corrupting influence of the Jews on German society and politics when he was serving as Colombian ambassador in Berlin from 1930 to 1932; another “fact” that seemed to have been left out of his discourse in the ensuing years—in 1934, in his extensive description of Germany and Hitler in El Cuadrilátero, he had actually claimed that the Jews lacked “political organization.”²¹² His list of supposed Judeo-Masonic crimes were mostly from the French Third Republic; he claimed that “the lesson of history is that when the (Jewish) phenomenon presents itself, there are only two solutions: giving the nation over to the Jews or expelling the Jews,” like Isabella of Spain did in 1492. Gómez ended his speech proclaiming that the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy was busily at work in Colombia, present in the lodges, the Liberal Party, and, of course, the government: “the true, the fearsome, the decisive enemies are here within.”²¹³

This speech represents the kind of inflammatory rhetoric and conspiracy-mongering that would become even more common in Colombia during the next decade—Gómez unequivocally links the ruling Liberals with a nefarious international cabal bent

²¹² Gómez dedicated less than two pages to a discussion of Jews in Germany. Gómez, Cuadrilátero 115-116. He blamed the Nazi rise to power on German president (1925-1934) Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934), who he claimed did not give sufficient support to the Catholic Center Party to solve the social and political crisis. Gómez, Cuadrilátero 122, 124, 130-131.

²¹³ Gómez’ speech appeared in its entirety on the front page of El Siglo on August 12, 1942 (“Los grandes y verdaderos enemigos de la patria están adentro, dice el Dr. Gómez; El origen judaico de la masonería y su historia”). Interestingly, the speech does not appear in any of the extensive collections of his writings and pronouncements, such as the four-volume Obras completas, Laureano Gómez (Ricardo Ruiz Santos, ed., Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1984-1989).

on destroying Christian civilization. This, coming from the mouth of the most respected and revered leader of the Conservative Party made it believable for the Conservative rank and file—in their own homes, many Conservatives had a photograph of Laureano Gómez alongside the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In claiming that Liberals were in league with those who were conspiring against the Church, Laureano Gómez was also referring to the Liberal neighbors of Conservative peasants and workers throughout Colombia. Forming such a discursive framework made the massacres and assassinations of Liberals that much easier to commit after 1946.

For Gómez, the anti-masonry expressed in his speech on August 11 and throughout the second half of 1942 was an opportunistic political tactic. Gómez' August 11 speech was preceded by a defense of the freemasons by Liberal Senator Alfonso Romero Aguirre, who was the most open mason in Congress (he had proposed the initial bill supporting the legalization of the lodges in 1936).²¹⁴ Romero, despite his association with freemasonry, was a political ally of Gómez in the anti-López coalition during the presidential campaign which had ended only a few months before. On the eve of the election, Gómez supported Romero's appointment to the national election commission.²¹⁵ Romero declared before the May 5 election that "this time the electoral functionaries will not give their million votes to Mr. López," his words were a headline in El Siglo²¹⁶—they echoed those of Gómez, who repeated the claim of "one million false identification cards" in the possession of venal Liberal *gamonales* throughout the 1940s. Even after his debate with Gómez on August 11, Romero continued to receive positive press in El

²¹⁴ Alfonso Romero Aguirre, Un Radical en el Senado (Bogotá: Editorial Santafé, 1944) 134-146.

²¹⁵ José Mar, "Masones y Judíos," El Liberal 12 Aug. 1942: 4.

²¹⁶ "Esta vez los funcionarios electorales no le darán su millón de votos al señor López," El Siglo 23 Apr. 1942:1.

Siglo²¹⁷—as a prominent *antilopista*, Romero did not get as much attention from the Liberal press. The political relationship between Gómez and Romero strengthens the thesis that Gómez was using anti-masonry as a political tactic and was not expressing a deeply-held belief—by comparison, Hitler would never have allied himself with German Jews under similar circumstances.

In August 1942, the Liberal majority in the congress quickly voted down Gómez' bill, but another issue kept the theme of a Judeo-Masonic plot alive through the end of the year. As has been seen above, in the previous April on the eve of the presidential election, Darío Echandía had concluded a concordat with the Vatican after five years of negotiations—the debate over the approval of the new treaty in the Colombian senate was another opportunity to claim that a conspiracy was at work in Colombia. When it was initially signed, the concordat was effusively supported by the Vatican, which saw it as a model for other treaties with Catholic countries around the world—El Siglo had grudgingly reported as much at the time, reprinting an article from the Havas news wire.²¹⁸ The new concordat treated relatively mundane issues: all matrimonies would have to be registered with the government and cemeteries were to be under the jurisdiction of municipalities rather than parishes. Early on in the negotiations, Echandía had decided to abandon what most anticlerical Liberals had wanted most: the excision of Church tutelage from public instruction.²¹⁹ Church influence would remain in establishing official curricula for all schools in the country.

²¹⁷ “Al margen de la sesión,” El Siglo 25 Aug. 1942: 4; “Romero Aguirre explica los cargos hechos contra la contraloría general,” El Siglo 5 Sep. 1942: 3.

²¹⁸ “Firmada en el Vaticano la reforma de concordato con Colombia, ayer,” El Siglo 23 Apr. 1942: 8.

²¹⁹ Darío Echandía, memo to Secretary of State Luis López de Mesa, Rome, 21 Oct. 1939, Diplomacia y Consular Caja 612, Embajada de Colombia ante la Santa Sede, (DCC 612), F129 p. 163, Archivo Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

Additionally, under the new treaty, the Vatican would name Colombian-born bishops, with the government reserving the right to reject a bishop for political reasons. Previously, the 1887 concordat had Colombian presidents send a list of possible candidates for open bishoprics to the Vatican, thus the new agreement actually gave more power to the Holy See in this matter. As even El Siglo pointed out in April 1942, the new procedure for naming bishops was the same as in the concordats that the Holy See had signed with Franco's Spain, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany.

Despite his acceptance of the agreement in April 1942 and his subsequent silence on the issue, by August of that year Gómez was attacking the concordat in order to animate the Conservative rank and file. The campaign against the concordat also strengthened Gómez' ties with the more militant clergy, for while Archbishop Perdomo and the Papal Nuncio in Bogotá wholeheartedly supported the new treaty, various bishops opposed it—they assumed that any agreement with the Holy See reached by a Liberal government had to have been made in bad faith. These bishops included Builes in Santa Rosa, González Arbeláez in Popayán, Luis Adriano Díaz in Cali, Crisanto Luque in Tunja, Pedro María Rodríguez in Ibagüé and the Jesuit Angel María Ocampo in San Gil. This group saw the hidden hand of international freemasonry in the negotiations. It had been known since 1936 that treaty negotiator Darío Echandía had served as the Grand Master of a Grand Lodge in Bogotá—in the last half of 1942, this was resurrected as proof of the machinations of the masons. Gómez and the bishops went so far as to claim that the “robbery” of the Jesuit school in Bogotá and the demotion of González

Arbeláez to Popayán were among the various pressures that the government applied on the Holy See during the negotiations.²²⁰

As the concordat made its way through the legislative process in the senate, El Siglo continued to insist on the existence of an evil conspiracy at work in Colombia. A newspaper war began with Eduardo Santos' El Tiempo, which had repeatedly claimed during these months that masonry in Colombia was harmless, that the Jews were innocent, and that Gómez ravings were unfounded and politically motivated. Indeed editorialists in El Tiempo cited the actions of the Conservative leader as proof that he was part of another conspiracy threatening Colombia, that of a Nazi-Falangist "fifth column."²²¹ Gómez soon qualified El Tiempo as "A Typical Masonic Daily" that was knee-jerk in its defense of the masons and the Jews,²²² and went on to quote extensively from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to prove his thesis.²²³ As both sides were claiming the existence of some sort of conspiracy in Colombia, they succeeded in further poisoning the political atmosphere and encouraging distrust between militants of the two traditional parties. Gómez' words and actions not only animated Conservative militants, but also Liberal activists, who were increasingly convinced that Nazis and Falangists were arming Conservatives and priests for a right-wing coup that would reverse

²²⁰ "El Concordato," El Siglo 12 Sep. 1942: 4. Monsignor Bernardo Sáinz de Santamaría related to Vanderbilt Professor Dr. J. León Helguera in Bogotá in August 1973 that Sáinz, together with Frs. José Restrepo Posada and Mario Germán Romero, collected the intemperate González Arbeláez' public declarations, political as well as religious; among other things, the adjunct archbishop was a promoter of apparitions and "miracles." With these proofs, the three diocesan priests were able to convince the Papal Nuncio, Carlos Serena, to recommend to the Roman Curia the removal of González Arbeláez to Popayán. Dr. J. León Helguera, personal interview, Nashville, Tenn. 27 May 2005.

²²¹ Enrique Santos ("Calibán"), "La Danza de las Horas," El Tiempo 13 Aug. 1942: 4; Calibán, El Tiempo 19 Aug. 1942: 4; and Calibán, El Tiempo 3 Sep. 1942: 4.

²²² "Un diario masónico tipo," El Siglo 18 Aug. 1942: 3.

²²³ "El peligro judío," El Siglo 31 Aug. 1942: 4; and "La cuestión judía," El Siglo 7 Sep. 1942.

Colombia's progress towards modernization. This trope will be examined further in the next chapter.

Anti-concordat bishops proclaimed their support for El Siglo's campaign on September 25, openly breaking with the Archbishop Primate of Colombia and the Papal Nuncio in Bogotá.²²⁴ El Tiempo immediately declared that the bishops and González Arbeláez in particular, were "imprudent" in encouraging a schism in the Colombian Church.²²⁵ González Arbeláez responded by prohibiting the reading, possession, or sale of El Tiempo in his diocese, under pain of excommunication.²²⁶ His actions were soon repeated by several other reactionary bishops throughout Colombia.²²⁷ Bishop Perdomo, of course, did not join in the condemnation. Indeed, since his letters and proclamations were not being printed by El Siglo and other Conservative dailies around the country, he reestablished the weekly El Catolicismo in his diocese on August 29, from which more moderate Catholic clerics excoriated Gómez and other anti-concordat Conservatives.²²⁸

The formal senate debate over ratification of the concordat began at the end of October and lasted through mid-December. Gómez was again on the attack, this time with Darío Echandía present in the chamber, now representing the new López government as its chief minister. Gómez repeated all of the claims he had made since July about the freemasons. The Conservative leader's attacks were so vehement that Echandía felt he had to prevaricate, claiming he had not been active in the lodges "for at least fifteen years."²²⁹ During the debates, many other prominent Conservative

²²⁴ "La campaña defensora de la moral cristiana merece la bendición de eminentes preladados," El Siglo 25 Sep. 1942: 1.

²²⁵ Calibán, El Tiempo 26 Sep. 1942: 4.

²²⁶ "Censura eclesiástica contra El Tiempo," El Siglo 30 Sep. 1942: 1.

²²⁷ "Se comete pecado mortal al leer El Tiempo," El Siglo 2 Oct. 1942: 1.

²²⁸ See issues of El Catolicismo, Sep., Oct., Nov. 1942.

²²⁹ Gómez, Obras completas 299, 308, 309-310, 363.

politicians joined Gómez in denouncing the treaty, including future president Guillermo León Valencia (1962-1966).²³⁰ Gómez by now had retained his leadership and united his party, while dividing the Church and forcing the opposition to respond to his charges rather than to defend the concordat on its merits. Although the Liberal-controlled Senate ultimately approved the concordat, Gómez won the debate: the government never enacted the necessary legal mechanisms to make the concordat functional.²³¹

There were other consequences to the poisoning of the ongoing political competition between Colombia's two parties with an unfounded conspiracy theory. Gómez' words and actions in the second semester of 1942 made the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory that much more legitimate in the eyes of Colombian Conservatives and Catholics. It was one thing for a few priests and nationalists, inspired from abroad, to claim that a vast international anti-Christian conspiracy was at work in Colombia; it was quite another for the leader of one of Colombia's vertically-organized traditional parties—one of the most powerful opinion-makers in the country—to announce the existence of the plot. Provincial politicians and newspapers were quick to echo Gómez' discourse, especially those that were most outside the traditional oligarchic power structure within the Conservative Party. It was these small-town shopkeepers, coffee buyers, parish priests and professionals who were the most fanatical *laureanistas*—they had suffered the most under Liberal governments on the local level, seeing their political, social, and economic influence disappear in schools, municipal offices and courts throughout the country. When *La Violencia* began in earnest in 1946, it was members of

²³⁰ “Guillermo León Valencia deshizo todas las argumentaciones de ex-embajador,” *El Siglo* 5 Nov. 1942: 1; “La masonería controla el congreso,” *El Siglo* 6 Nov. 1942: 1; and “El gobierno liberal sólo pretende su predominio sobre la Iglesia,” *El Siglo* 7 Nov. 1942: 1.

²³¹ Olano 439-440.

this group who, believing that Liberals were part of a worldwide anti-Christian plot, would encourage or even take part in the massacres of Liberal civilians throughout the countryside.²³²

²³² Roldán 48-52, 88-92, 75-98, 104-106, 131-132, 175, 235-237; and Ortiz 135-208.