



Identifiers:

ID: 371-25/DTN

December 30, 2025

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AI Tools: Artificial Intelligence tools employed for scientific content development, data analysis, formulation, synthesis and conclusions for accuracy, validity and implications of the work.

Conflict of interest:

Author accepts all potential conflict of interest.

Funding:

The authors received no direct funding.

Ethics approval:

No ethical approval needed for this work.

Consent for publication:

Author is agreed to publish this article

Peer Review: Not peer reviewed.

Blog Article

THE PROTOCOLS OF THE ELDERS OF ZION: A FABRICATED BLUEPRINT FOR GLOBAL CONTROL

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Running title: False Conspiracy, Zion Hoax

Keywords: Antisemitism, Forgery, Conspiracy, Propaganda, Historical Hoax, Zionism, Deception, Disinformation, Historical Fraud, Propaganda

Data Source: Archives, Biographies, Databanks, Encyclopedias, Libraries, Metadata Registries, Reports, Repositories, arXiv, Crossref, OpenAI, Wikipedia, World Health Organization, Zenodo

Introduction:

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a document first serialized in August–September 1903 by the antisemitic newspaper Znamya in St. Petersburg, Russia, stands as one of the most infamous forgeries in modern history. Purporting to be the minutes of secret meetings held by Jewish leaders—allegedly during the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897—it outlines a sinister plan for global domination through economic manipulation, media control, political subversion, and moral decay. Comprising 24 protocols, it has fueled antisemitic conspiracy theories for over a century, influencing everything from Tsarist pogroms to Nazi propaganda. Despite its claims, exhaustive historical and textual evidence reveals it as a plagiarized fabrication, rooted in 19th-century fiction and designed to scapegoat Jews amid the sociopolitical turmoil of the Russian Empire. This analysis synthesizes historical data, primary sources, and scholarly findings to expose the Protocols as a deliberate hoax, while examining its enduring, dangerous legacy through a scientific lens.

Origins and Provenance:

The Protocols emerged in the volatile context of late Imperial

Russia, where economic instability, revolutionary movements, and state-sanctioned antisemitism—exemplified by the April 1903 Kishinev Pogrom in modern Chişinău, Moldova—created fertile ground for scapegoating. Published by Pavel Krushevan, a notorious antisemite and Znamya editor implicated in inciting the Kishinev violence, the document was later amplified in 1905 by Sergei Nilus, a Russian Orthodox mystic from the Optina Monastery near Moscow. Nilus, in his apocalyptic tract *The Great Within the Minuscule and Antichrist*, claimed the Protocols were transcribed from secret Jewish meetings in Paris around 1897–1898, possibly by agents of the Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police. However, historians like Michael Hagemester of Ruhr-Universität Bochum argue the text likely originated as a satirical or antisemitic fabrication circulated in Minsk after the 1902 Zionist congress, with no direct Okhrana involvement.

Textual analysis reveals the Protocols as a patchwork of plagiarism, primarily drawn from Maurice Joly's 1864 *Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu*, a Brussels-published satire critiquing Napoleon III's authoritarian regime in France. Joly, a French lawyer exiled to Geneva for his dissent, used fictional dialogues to expose despotism, but over 160 passages were lifted verbatim and repurposed to vilify Jews. Additional elements stem from Hermann Goedsche's 1868 novel *Biarritz*, serialized in Prussia, which depicted a fictional rabbinical conspiracy in a Prague cemetery—a scene translated into Russian by 1872 and widely circulated in antisemitic pamphlets. Other influences include Jacob Brafman's *The Book of the Kahal* (1869, Vilnius), which alleged a secret Jewish governance structure in Eastern Europe, and Osman Bey's *The Conquest of the World by the Jews* (1873, Switzerland). The Protocols also contains anachronisms, such as references to the 1900 assassination of King Umberto I of Italy and the 1901 murder of U.S. President William McKinley, betraying its post-1901 fabrication. These sources, stitched together with antisemitic intent, demonstrate a calculated effort to exploit societal fears, akin to modern disinformation campaigns.

Content and Themes of the Protocols:

The Protocols comprises 24 sections, each outlining a supposed strategy for global domination. Below is a concise summary of their central themes, grounded in the original text but analyzed critically to highlight their propagandistic nature:

Protocol 1: Power as the Only Right – Asserts that concepts like freedom and equality are hollow slogans, with true authority derived from wealth and force. It advocates using “gold” (financial control) to subvert societies, reflecting antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish greed.

Protocol 2: Economic Domination – Describes orchestrating economic crises and controlling media to manipulate public opinion, rendering nations dependent on a centralized global authority.

Protocol 3: Political Manipulation – Claims politicians will be corrupted through greed and pride, with governments reduced to puppets under a hidden elite.

Protocol 4: Undermining Religion – Proposes weakening all religions except Judaism through materialism, promoting a secular, controllable society.

Protocol 5: Tyranny Disguised as Progress – Suggests using slogans of liberty to mask authoritarian control, convincing the public that oppression serves their benefit.

Protocol 6: Land and Wealth Concentration – Envisions seizing property through speculation, trapping farmers and workers in debt to centralize wealth.

Protocol 7: Perpetual Conflict – Advocates instigating wars to exhaust nations, forcing reliance on the conspirators while maintaining a facade of peace.

Protocol 8: Corrupt Governance – Proposes installing compliant, corrupt interim governments to legislate in the conspirators' favor.

Protocol 9: Propaganda and Freemasonry – Claims law, education, and Freemasonry will propagate lies as truth, shaping a compliant public narrative.

Protocol 10: Subverting Democracy – Suggests weakening constitutions and democracy to pave the way for authoritarian rule under the guise of public demand.

Protocol 11: Global Control via Freemasonry – Envisions a universal system where Freemasonry ensures nations cannot resist the planners' authority.

Protocol 12: Media as a Parallel State – Proposes controlling media through censorship and selective reporting to shape global opinion.

Protocol 13: Public Distraction – Advocates keeping populations occupied with entertainment and trivial conflicts to prevent awareness of systemic control.

Protocol 14: Moral Decay – Promotes pornography and materialism to erode religious ethics, consolidating secular control.

Protocol 15: Suppressing Opposition – Suggests using Freemasonry to eliminate adversaries, pitting powerful opponents against each other.

Protocol 16: Controlled Education – Proposes curricula designed to suppress critical thinking, fostering obedience worldwide.

Protocol 17: Corrupting Institutions – Claims legal systems and religious leaders will be undermined, forcing public reliance on the conspirators’ framework.

Protocol 18: Engineered Chaos – Advocates exploiting freedom of speech to incite disorder, justifying authoritarian interventions.

Protocol 19: Manipulating Public Perception – Suggests using propaganda to portray compliant rulers as saviors, while discrediting dissenters.

Protocol 20: Financial Enslavement – Envisions using debt, taxation, and interest to control governments and populations.

Protocol 21: Market Manipulation – Proposes seizing wealth through stock markets and bonds, burying nations in debt.

Protocol 22: Justifying Oppression – Claims the conspirators’ rule will be presented as salvation, invoking the notion of a “chosen people.”

Protocol 23: Enforcing Obedience – Portrays submission to rulers as a virtue, preventing rebellion through psychological conditioning.

Protocol 24: The Global Ruler – Envisions a single “Jewish king” ruling all nations, the culmination of the alleged plan.

These themes, steeped in antisemitic tropes, mirror earlier conspiracy narratives like those in Goedsche’s novel, repurposing 19th-century anxieties about modernity, Freemasonry, and globalization into a fabricated Jewish plot.

Debunking and Scholarly Consensus:

The Protocols was exposed as a forgery through rigorous investigative journalism and legal scrutiny. In August 1921, The Times of London, led by correspondent Philip Graves in Constantinople (modern Istanbul), published a series titled “The Truth About ‘The Protocols of Zion,’” revealing its plagiarism from Joly’s Dialogue. Graves, tipped off by a Russian émigré, demonstrated how Joly’s satire was twisted into antisemitic propaganda, prompting international outrage. The 1934–1935 Berne Trial in Switzerland, where Jewish plaintiffs challenged Nazi sympathizers distributing the text, saw Judge Walter Meyer rule it a “laughable” forgery, supported by textual comparisons and expert testimony from historians like Vladimir Burtsev, who had exposed its origins in Paris in 1938.

Scholars like Norman Cohn, in his 1967 book *Warrant for Genocide* (published in London), and Richard S. Levy, in his analyses at the University of Illinois, have cemented the Protocols as a literary fraud, comparable to the Donation of Constantine. Russian Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin's 1905 investigation for Tsar Nicholas II in St. Petersburg concluded it was fabricated, though its spread continued amid revolutionary chaos. Modern studies, such as Randall Bytwerk's 2015 article in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, underscore its propagandistic intent, lacking any empirical basis. This consensus, built on comparative linguistics and historiography, exemplifies the scientific method's role in dismantling pseudohistory.

Impact and Legacy:

Despite its exposure, the Protocols has left a toxic legacy, fueling antisemitism and enabling atrocities. In the 1920s, Henry Ford, the American industrialist from Dearborn, Michigan, serialized it in his *Dearborn Independent*, compiling it into *The International Jew* (1920–1922), which reached millions and inspired Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925, Munich). Under Nazi rule from 1933, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels in Berlin promoted it as a school text, despite acknowledging its forgery, contributing to the Holocaust's ideological framework and the genocide of six million Jews from 1941 to 1945.

Globally, it was endorsed by figures like Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1950s, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in the 1970s, and cited in Hamas' 1988 charter (removed in 2017). It was distributed at the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, and persists in modern conspiracy circles, from David Icke's reptilian theories in the UK to far-right groups in Finland (e.g., Pekka Siitoin's 1970s editions) and Greece (read by Golden Dawn's Ilias Kasidiaris in Parliament in 2012). Recent X posts reflect its ongoing circulation, with some users promoting it as evidence of global control, while others denounce it as a hoax, highlighting the need for digital literacy to counter misinformation. Data from the Anti-Defamation League shows correlations between its dissemination and spikes in antisemitic hate crimes, underscoring its real-world harm.

Conclusion:

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion is a thoroughly debunked forgery, its plagiarized origins and anachronistic errors exposing it as a malicious fabrication. From its roots in 19th-century fiction to its exposure by journalists like Philip Graves and scholars like Norman Cohn, it serves as a case study in the dangers of unchecked propaganda. Its enduring influence, from Nazi Germany to modern online platforms, underscores the need for rigorous, evidence-based analysis to combat misinformation. As historian Nora Levin warned in her 1986 study from New York, its persistence highlights the peril of fiction masquerading as fact, urging societies to prioritize critical thinking and peer-reviewed scholarship to safeguard against hatred and division.

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