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Venice's War Against Western Civilization

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The British royal family of today typifies the Venetian Party, and continues the outlook and methods of an oligarchical faction which can be traced far back into the ancient world. Oligarchism is a principle of irrational domination associated with hereditary oligarchy/nobility and with certain aristocratic priesthoods. At the center of oligarchy is the idea that certain families are born to rule as an arbitrary elite, while the vast majority of any given population is condemned to oppression, serfdom, or slavery. During most of the past 2,500 years, oligarchs have been identified by their support for the philosophical writings of Aristotle and their rejection of the epistemology of Plato. Aristotle asserted that slavery is a necessary institution, because some are born to rule and others to be ruled. He also reduced the question of human knowledge to the crudest sense certainty and perception of "facts." Aristotle's formalism is a means of killing human creativity, and therefore represents absolute evil. This evil is expressed by the bestialist view of the oligarchs that human beings are the same as animals.

Oligarchs identify wealth purely in money terms, and practice usury, monetarism, and looting at the expense of technological advancement and physical production. Oligarchs have always been associated with the arbitrary rejection of true scientific discovery and scientific method in favor of open anti-science or more subtle obscurantist pseudo-science. The oligarchy has believed for millennia that the Earth is overpopulated; the oligarchical commentary on the Trojan War was that this conflict was necessary in order to prevent greater numbers of mankind from oppressing "Mother Earth." The oligarchy has constantly stressed race and racial characteristics, often as a means for justifying slavery. In international affairs, oligarchs recommend such methods as geopolitics, understood as the method of "divide and conquer," which lets one power prevail by playing its adversaries one against the other. Oligarchical policy strives to maintain a balance of power among such adversaries for its own benefit, but this attempt always fails in the long run and leads to new wars.

The essence of oligarchism is summed up in the idea of the empire, in which an elite identifying itself as a master race rules over a degraded mass of slaves or other oppressed victims. If oligarchical methods are allowed to dominate human affairs, they always create a breakdown crisis of civilization, with economic depression, war, famine, plague, and pestilence. Examples of this are the Fourteenth-century Black Plague and the Thirty Years War (1618-48), both of which were created by Venetian intelligence. The post-industrial society and the derivatives crisis have brought about the potential for a new collapse of civilization in our own time. This crisis can only be reversed by repudiating in practice the axioms of the oligarchical mentality.

The 'Fondo'

A pillar of the oligarchical system is the family fortune, or *fondo,* as it is called in Italian. The continuity of the family fortune which earns money through usury and looting is often more important than the biological continuity across generations of the family that owns the fortune. In Venice, the largest *fondo* was the endowment of the Basilica of St. Mark, which was closely associated with the Venetian state treasury, and which absorbed the family fortunes of nobles who died without heirs. This *fondo* was administered by the procurers of St. Mark, whose position was one of the most powerful under the Venetian system. Around this central *fondo* were grouped the individual family fortunes of the great oligarchical families, such as the Mocenigo, the Cornaro, the Dandolo, the Contarini, the Morosini, the Zorzi, and the Tron. Until the end of the Eighteenth century, the dozen or so wealthiest Venetian families had holdings comparable or superior to the very wealthiest families anywhere in Europe. When the Venetian oligarchy transferred many of its families and assets to northern Europe, the Venetian *fondi* provided the nucleus of the great Bank of Amsterdam, which dominated Europe during the Seventeenth century, and of the Bank of England, which became the leading bank of the Eighteenth century.

In the pre-Christian world around the Mediterranean, oligarchical political forces included Babylon in Mesopotamia. The "whore of Babylon" condemned in the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine, is not a mystical construct, but a very specific power cartel of evil oligarchical families. Other oligarchical centers included Hiram of Tyre and the Phoenicians. The Persian Empire was an oligarchy. In the Greek world, the center of oligarchical banking and intelligence was the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, whose agents included Lycurgus of Sparta and, later, Aristotle. The Delphic Apollo tried and failed to secure the conquest of Greece by the Persian Empire. Then the Delphic Apollo developed the Isocrates plan, which called for King Philip of Macedonia to conquer Athens and the other great city-states so as to set up an oligarchical empire that would operate as a western version of the Persian Empire. This plan failed when Philip died, and the Platonic Academy of Athens decisively influenced Alexander the Great, who finally destroyed the Persian Empire before being assassinated by Aristotle. Later, the Delphic Apollo intervened into the wars between Rome and the Etruscan cities to make Rome the key power of Italy and then of the entire Mediterranean.

Rome dominated the Mediterranean by about 200 B.C.E. There followed a series of civil wars that aimed at deciding where the capital of the new empire would be and who would be the ruling family. These are associated with the Social War, the conflict between Marius and Sulla, the first Triumvirate (Julius Caesar, Pompey the Great, and L. Crassus), and the second Triumvirate (Octavian, Marc Antony, and Lepidus). Marc Antony and Cleopatra wanted the capital of the new empire to be at Alexandria in Egypt. Octavian (Augustus) secured an alliance

with the cult of Sol Invictus Mithra and became emperor, defeating the other contenders. After the series of monsters called the Julian-Claudian emperors (Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, *et al.*) the empire stagnated between A.C.E. 80 and 180, under such figures as Hadrian and Trajan. Then, between A.C.E. 180 and 280, the empire collapsed. It was reorganized by Aurelian, Diocletian, and Constantine with a series of measures that centered on banning any change in the technology of the means of production, and very heavy taxation. The Diocletian program led to the depopulation of the cities, serfdom for farmers, and the collapse of civilization into a prolonged Dark Age.

The Roman Empire in the West finally collapsed in A.C.E. 476. But the Roman Empire in the East, sometimes called the Byzantine Empire, continued for almost a thousand years, until 1453. And if the Ottoman Empire is considered as the Ottoman dynasty of an ongoing Byzantine Empire, then the Byzantine Empire kept going until shortly after World War I. With certain exceptions, the ruling dynasties of Byzantium continued the oligarchical policy of Diocletian and Constantine.

Venice, the city built on islands in the lagoons and marshes of the northern Adriatic Sea, is supposed to have been founded by refugees from the Italian mainland who were fleeing from Attila the Hun in A.C.E. 452. Early on, Venice became the location of a Benedictine monastery on the island of St. George Major. St. George is not a Christian saint, but rather a disguise for Apollo, Perseus, and Marduk, idols of the oligarchy. Around A.C.E. 700, the Venetians claim to have elected their first doge, or duke. This post was not hereditary, but was controlled by an election in which only the nobility could take part. For this reason, Venice erroneously called itself a republic.

Venice Was Never Part of Western Civilization

In the years around A.C.E. 800, Charlemagne King of the Franks, using the ideas of St. Augustine, attempted to revive civilization from the Dark Ages. Venice was the enemy of Charlemagne. Charlemagne's son, King Pepin of Italy, tried unsuccessfully to conquer the Venetian lagoon. Charlemagne was forced to recognize Venice as a part of the eastern or Byzantine Empire, under the protection of the Emperor Nicephorus. Venice was never a part of Western Civilization. *(See Box: Venetian Control Over How People Think)*

Over the next four centuries, Venice developed as a second capital of the Byzantine Empire through marriage alliances with certain Byzantine dynasties and conflicts with the Holy Roman Empire based in Germany. The Venetian economy grew through usury and slavery. By 1082, the Venetians had tax-free trading rights in the entire Byzantine Empire. The Venetians were one of the main factors behind the Crusades against the Muslim power in the eastern Mediterranean. In the Fourth Crusade of A.C.E. 1202, the Venetians used an army of French feudal knights to capture and loot Constantinople, the Orthodox Christian city which was the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The Venetian doge Enrico Dandolo was declared the lord of one-quarter and one-half of one-quarter of the Byzantine Empire, and the Venetians imposed a short-lived puppet state called the Latin Empire. By this point, Venice had replaced Byzantium as the bearer of the oligarchical heritage of the Roman Empire.

During the 1200's, the Venetians, now at the apex of their military and naval power, set out to create a new Roman Empire with its center at Venice. They expanded into the Greek islands, the Black Sea, and the Italian mainland. They helped to defeat the Hohenstaufen rulers of Germany and Italy. Venetian intelligence assisted Genghis Khan as he attacked and wiped out powers that

had resisted Venice. The Venetians caused the death of the poet and political figure Dante Alighieri, who developed the concept of the modern sovereign nation-state in opposition to the Venetian plans for empire. A series of wars with Genoa led later to the *de facto* merger of Venice and Genoa. The Venetian bankers, often called Lombards, began to loot many parts of Europe with usurious loans. Henry III of England in the years after 1255 became insolvent after taking huge Lombard loans to finance foreign wars at 120-180 percent interest. These transactions created the basis for the Venetian Party in England. When the Lombard bankers went bankrupt because the English failed to pay, a breakdown crisis of the European economy ensued. This led to a new collapse of European civilization, including the onset of the Black Plague, which depopulated the continent. In the midst of the chaos, the Venetians encouraged their ally Edward III of England, to wage war against France in the conflict that became the Hundred Years War (1339-1453), which hurled France into chaos before St. Joan of Arc defeated the English. This was then followed by the Wars of the Roses in England. As a result of Venetian domination, the Fourteenth century had become a catastrophe for civilization.

The Basis for the Golden Renaissance

In the midst of the crisis of the 1300's, the friends of Dante and Petrarch laid the basis for the Italian Golden Renaissance, which reached its culmination with Nicolaus of Cusa, Pope Pius II, and the Medici-sponsored Council of Florence of 1439. The Venetians fought the Renaissance with a policy of expansion on the Italian mainland, or *terra firma,* which brought them to the outskirts of Milan. More fundamentally, the Venetians promoted the pagan philosophy of Aristotle against the Christian Platonism of the Florentines. The school of the Rialto was an Aristotelian academy where Venetian patricians lectured and studied their favorite philosopher. Authors like Barbaro and Bembo popularized an Aristotelian "humanism." The University of Padua became the great European center for Aristotelian studies.

Venice also encouraged the Ottoman Turks to advance against Constantinople, which was now controlled by the Paleologue dynasty of emperors. When Cusa and his friends succeeded in reuniting the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox and other eastern churches at the Council of Florence, the Venetians tried to sabotage this result. The ultimate sabotage was the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, which was assisted by Venetian agents and provocateurs. Venice refused to respond to Pope Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini) when he called for the recovery of Constantinople.

The program of Cusa, Pius II, Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and other Italian Renaissance leaders for the creation of powerful national states proved impossible to carry out in Italy. The first nation-state was created in France by King Louis XI during the 1460's and 1470's. The successful nation-building methods of Louis XI compelled attention and imitation in England and Spain. Despite their incessant intrigues, the Venetians were now confronted with large national states whose military power greatly exceeded anything that Venice could mobilize.

The League of Cambrai

The Venetians tried to use the power of the new nation-states, especially France, to crush Milan and allow further Venetian expansion. But ambassadors for the king of France and the Austrian emperor met at Cambrai in December 1508 and agreed to create a European league for the dismemberment of Venice. The League of Cambrai soon included France, Spain, Germany, the

Papacy, Milan, Florence, Savoy, Mantua, Ferrara, and others. At the battle of Agnadello in April 1509, the Venetian mercenaries were defeated by the French, and Venice temporarily lost eight hundred years of land conquests.

Venetian diplomacy played on the greed of the Genoese Pope Julius II Della Rovere, who was bribed to break up the League of Cambrai. By rapid diplomatic maneuvers, Venice managed to survive, although foreign armies threatened to overrun the lagoons on several occasions, and the city was nearly bankrupt. Venice's long-term outlook was very grim, especially because the Portuguese had opened a route to Asia around the Cape of Good Hope. The Venetians considered building a Suez canal, but decided against it.

One result of the Cambrai crisis was the decision of Venetian intelligence to create the Protestant Reformation. The goal was to divide Europe for one to two centuries in religious wars that would prevent any combination like the League of Cambrai from ever again being assembled against Venice. Thus, the leading figure of the Protestant Reformation, the first Protestant in modern Europe, was Venice's Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, who was also the leader of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Contarini was a pupil of the Padua Aristotelian Pietro Pomponazzi, who denied the immortality of the human soul. Contarini pioneered the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith alone, with no regard for good works of charity. Contarini organized a group of Italian Protestants called *gli spirituali,* including oligarchs like Vittoria Colonna and Giulia Gonzaga. Contarini's networks encouraged and protected Martin Luther and later John Calvin of Geneva. Contarini sent his neighbor and relative Francesco Zorzi to England to support King Henry VIII's plan to divorce Catherine of Aragon. Zorzi acted as Henry's sex counselor. As a result, Henry created the Anglican Church on a Venetian-Byzantine model, and opened a phase of hostility to Spain. Henceforth, the Venetians would use England for attacks on Spain and France. Zorzi created a Rosicrucian-Freemasonic party at the English court that later produced writers like Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sydney.

Contarini was also the leader of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. He sponsored St. Ignatius of Loyola and secured papal approval for the creation of the Society of Jesus as an official order of the Church. Contarini also began the process of organizing the Council of Trent with a letter on church reform that praised Aristotle while condemning Erasmus, the leading Platonist of the day. The Venetians dominated the college of cardinals and created the Index of Prohibited Books, which banned works by Dante and Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II).

As the Counter-Reformation advanced, the Contarini networks split into two wings. One was the pro-Protestant *spirituali,* who later evolved into the party of the Venetian oligarchy called the *giovani,* and who serviced growing networks in France, Holland, England, and Scotland. On the other wing were the *zelanti,* oriented toward repression and the Inquisition, and typified by Pope Paul IV Caraffa. The *zelanti* evolved into the oligarchical party called the *vecchi,* who serviced Venetian networks in the Vatican and the Catholic Hapsburg dominions. The apparent conflict of the two groups was orchestrated to serve Venetian projects.

A New Approach To Destroy Science

During the decades after 1570, the salon of the Ridotto Morosini family was the focus of heirs of the pro-Protestant wing of the Contarini *spirituali* networks. These were the *giovani,* whose networks were strongest in the Atlantic powers of France, England, Holland, and Scotland. The central figure here was the Servite monk Paolo Sarpi, **(See Box on Paolo Sarpi)** assisted by his deputy, Fulgenzio Micanzio. Sarpi was the main Venetian propagandist in the struggle against

the papacy during the time of the papal interdict against Venice in 1606. Sarpi and Micanzio were in close touch with the Stuart court in London, and especially with Sir Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes, who got their ideas from Sarpi's *Pensieri* (*Thoughts*) and *Arte di Ben Pensare* (*Art of Thinking Well*). Sarpi's agents in Prague, Heidelberg, and Vienna deliberately organized the Thirty Years War, which killed half the population of Germany and one-third of the population of Europe.

Sarpi also marks a turning point in the methods used by Venetian intelligence to combat science. Under Zorzi and Contarini, the Venetians had been openly hostile to Cusa and other leading scientists. Sarpi realized that the Venetians must now present themselves as the great champions of science, but on the basis of Aristotelian formalism and sense certainty. By seizing control of the scientific community from the inside, the Venetians could corrupt scientific method and strangle the process of discovery. Sarpi sponsored and directed the career of Galileo Galilei, whom the Venetians used for an empiricist counterattack against the Platonic method of Johannes Kepler.

Growth of the Venetian Party

During the 1600's, the Venetian *fondi* were transferred north, often to the Bank of Amsterdam, and later to the newly founded Bank of England. During the reign of "Bloody" Mary, the Stuart period, the civil war in England, the dictatorship of Cromwell, the Stuart Restoration, and the 1688 installation of William of Orange as King of England by the pro-Venetian English oligarchy, the Venetian Party of England grew in power.

During the first half of the 1700's, the most important activities of Venetian intelligence were directed by a salon called the *conversazione filosofica e felice,* which centered around the figure of Antonio Schinella Conti. Conti was a Venetian nobleman, originally a follower of Descartes, who lived for a time in Paris, where he was close to Malebranche. Conti went to London where he became a friend of Sir Isaac Newton. **(See Box on Conti and Newton)** Conti directed the operations that made Newton an international celebrity, including especially the creation of a pro-Newton party of French Anglophiles and Anglomaniacs who came to be known as the French Enlightenment. Conti's agents in this effort included Montesquieu and Voltaire. Conti was also active in intrigues against the German philosopher, scientist, and economist Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, whom Conti portrayed as a plagiarist of Newton. Conti also influenced Georg Ludwig of Hanover, later King George I of England, against Leibniz.

The Conti *conversazione* was also sponsored by the Emo and Memmo oligarchical families. Participants included Giammaria Ortes, the Venetian economist who asserted that the carrying capacity of the planet Earth could never exceed three billion persons. Ortes was a student of the pro-Galileo activist Guido Grandi of Pisa. Ortes applied Newton's method to the so-called social sciences. Ortes denied the possibility of progress or higher standards of living, supported free trade, opposed dirigist economics, and polemicized against the ideas of the American Revolution. The ideas of Conti, Ortes, and their network were brought into Great Britain under the supervision of William Petty, the Earl of Shelburne, who was the *de facto* doge of the British oligarchy around the time of the American Revolution. The Shelburne stable of writers, including Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, Thomas Malthus, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, and other exponents of British philosophical radicalism, all take their main ideas from Conti and especially Ortes.

Francesco Algarotti, author of a treatise on "Newtonian Science for Ladies," was another Venetian in the orbit of the Conti *conversazione.* Algarotti was close to Voltaire, and, along with the French scientist Pierre Louis de Maupertuis, he helped form the homosexual harem around British ally Frederick the Great of Prussia. Frederick the Great was Britain's principal continental ally during the Seven Years War against France, when British victories in India and Canada made them the supreme naval power of the world. The homosexual Frederick made Algarotti his court chamberlain at his palace of Sans Souci. Maupertuis had become famous when he went to Lapland to measure a degree of the local meridian, and came back claiming that he had confirmed one of Newton's postulates. Frederick made him the president of the Berlin Academy of Sciences. Frederick corresponded with Voltaire all his life; Voltaire lived at Sans Souci and Berlin between 1750 and 1753. Voltaire quarreled with Maupertuis and attacked him in his "Diatribe of Doctor Akakia." The mathematicians Leonhard Euler of Switzerland and Joseph Louis Lagrange of Turin were also associated with Fredrick's cabal.

Venice ceased to exist as an independent state after its conquest by Napoleon in 1797 and the Austrian takeover of the lagoon under the Treaty of Campo Formio. But the influence of the Venetian oligarchy over culture and politics has remained immense to the present day, both directly through its own cultural operations like the European Society of Culture (SEC) and the Cini Foundation, but more significantly, through such British-led institutions of the international oligarchy as the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, and Prince Philip's World Wildlife Fund.

Box I

Venice: Control Over How People Think

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Between A.C.E. 1200 and about A.C.E. 1600, the world center of gravity for the cancerous forces of oligarchism was the oligarchy of Venice. Toward the end of that time, the Venetian oligarchy decided for various reasons to transfer its families, fortunes, and characteristic outlook to a new base of operations, which turned out to be the British Isles. The old program of a worldwide new Roman Empire with its capital in Venice was replaced by the new program of a worldwide new Roman Empire with its capital in London—what eventually came to be known as the British Empire.

This was the metastasis of the cancer, the shift of the Venetian Party from the Adriatic to the banks of the Thames, and this has been the main project of the world oligarchy during the past five centuries. The Venetian Party, wherever it is, believes in epistemological warfare. The Venetian Party knows that ideas are more powerful weapons than guns, fleets, and bombs. In order to secure acceptance for their

control the way people think, say the Venetians, you can control the way they respond to events, no matter what those events may be. It is therefore vital to the Venetians to control philosophy and especially science, the area where human powers of hypothesis and creative reason become a force for improvements in the order of nature. The Venetian Party is implacably hostile to scientific discovery. Since the days of Aristotle, they have attempted to suffocate scientific discovery by using formalism and the fetishism of authoritative professional opinion. The Venetian Party has also created over the centuries a series of scientific frauds and hoaxes, which have been elevated to the status of incontrovertible and unchallengeable authorities. These have been used to usurp the rightful honor due to real scientists, whom the Venetians have done everything possible to destroy.

We can identify the Venetian faction which has been responsible for the most important of these scientific and epistemological frauds. We can approach these Venetians in three groups: First there is the group around Pietro Pomponazzi, Gasparo Contarini, and Francesco Zorzi, who were active in the first part of the 1500's. Second, there is the group of Paolo Sarpi and his right-hand man Fulgenzio Micanzio, the case officers for Galileo Galilei. This was the group that opposed Johannes Kepler in the early 1600's. Third, we have the group around Antonio Conti and Giammaria Ortes in the early 1700's. This was the group that created the Newton myth and modern materialism or utilitarianism and combatted Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. These three groups of Venetian game-masters are responsible for a great deal of the obscurantism and garbage that weighs like a nightmare on the brain of humanity today. These Venetian intelligence officials are the original atheists and materialists of the modern world, as reflected in the sympathy of Soviet writers for figures like Galileo, Newton, and Voltaire as ancestors of what was later called Dialectical Materialism.

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Box II

Paolo Sarpi and Galileo

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Galileo Galilei taught mathematics at the University of Padua from 1592 to 1610, and it was during his stay on Venetian territory that he became a celebrity. Galileo was a paid agent of Paolo Sarpi, the chief of Venetian intelligence, and, after Sarpi's death, of Sarpi's right-hand man Micanzio.

Paolo Sarpi

Galileo's fame was procured when he used a small telescope to observe the four largest moons of Jupiter, the rings of Saturn, and the phases of Venus. (The first telescope had been built by Leonardo da Vinci about a hundred years before Galileo.) He reported these sightings in his essay *The Starry Messenger,* which instantly made him the premier scientist in Europe and thus a very important agent of influence for the Venetian Party. This entire telescope operation had been devised by Paolo Sarpi, who wrote about Galileo as "our mathematician." In 1611, a Polish visitor to Venice, Rey, wrote that the "adviser, author, and director" of Galileo's telescope project had been Father Paolo Sarpi.

Kepler and Galileo were in frequent contact for over thirty years. In 1609, Kepler published his *Astronomia Nova,* expounding his first and second laws of planetary motion. Nonetheless, in Galileo's *Dialogues on the Two Great World Systems,* published in 1633, Kepler is hardly mentioned. At the end, one of the characters says that he is surprised at Kepler for being so "puerile" as to attribute the tides to the attraction of the Moon.

Galileo Galilei

Sarpi's achievement for Venetian intelligence was to abstract the *method* of Aristotle from the mass of opinions expressed by Aristotle on this or that particular issue. In this way, sense certainty could be kept as the basis of scientific experiments, and Aristotle's embarrassingly outdated views on certain natural phenomena could be jettisoned. In the *Art of Thinking Well,* Sarpi starts from sense perception and sense certainty. Galileo's epistemology is identical with that of Sarpi.

For Galileo, the trial before the Inquisition was one of the greatest public relations successes of all time. The gesture of repression against Galileo carried out by the Dominicans of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome established the equation "Galileo = *modern experimental science struggling against benighted obscurantism.*" That equation has stood ever since, and this tragic misunderstanding has had terrible consequences for human thought. Lost in the brouhaha about Galileo, is the more relevant fact that Kepler had been condemned by the Inquisition more than a decade before.

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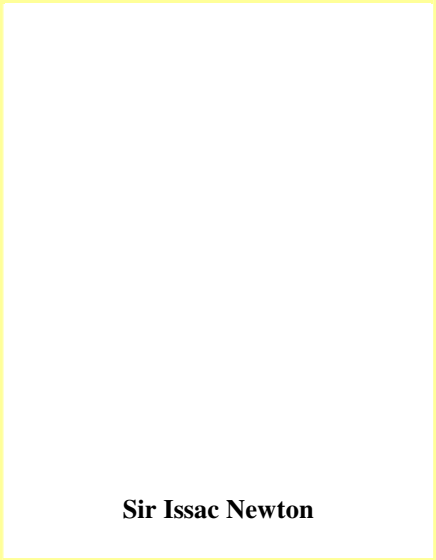
Box III

Abbot Antonio Conti and Newton

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For the oligarchy, Newton and Galileo are the only two contenders for the honor of being the most influential thinker of their faction since Aristotle himself. The British oligarchy praises Newton as the founder of modern science.

But Newton's real interest was not mathematics or astronomy. It was alchemy. His laboratory at Trinity College, Cambridge was fitted out for alchemy. Here, his friends said, the fires never went out during six weeks of the spring and six weeks of the autumn. And what is alchemy? What kind of research was Newton doing? His sources were books like the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* of Elias Ashmole, the Rosicrucian leader of British speculative Freemasonry.



Sir Issac Newton

Newton's love of alchemy and magic surfaces as the basis of his outlook, including in his supposed scientific writings. In his *Opticks,* he asks, "Have not the small particles of bodies certain powers, virtues, or forces, by which they act at a distance. ... How those attractions may be performed, I do not here consider. What I call attraction may be performed by Impulse, or some other means unknown to me." This is Newton's notion of gravity as action at a distance, which Leibniz rightly mocked as black magic. Newton's system was unable to describe anything beyond the interaction of two bodies, and supposed an entropic universe that would have wound down like clockwork if not periodically re-wound.

How then did the current myth of Newton the scientist originate? The apotheosis of Newton was arranged by Antonio Conti of Venice. Conti understood that Newton, kook that he was, represented the ideal cult figure for a new obscurantist concoction of deductive-inductive pseudo-mathematical formalism masquerading as science. Venice needed an English Galileo, and Conti provided the intrigue and the public relations needed to produce one, first through the French networks of Malebranche, and later, Voltaire.

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Box IV

Abbot Antonio Conti and Voltaire

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French literary historians are instinctively not friendly to the idea that the most famous Frenchman was a Venetian agent working for Conti, but the proof is convincing. Voltaire knew both Conti personally and Conti's works.

The book which made Voltaire famous was his *Philosophical Letters,* sometimes called the English letters, because they are devoted to the exaltation of all things British. Most important, the *Philosophical Letters* center on the praise of Newton. After chapters on Francis Bacon and John Locke, there are four chapters on Newton, the guts of the work. Voltaire also translated Newton directly, and published *Elements of Newtonian Philosophy.*

In 1759, Voltaire published his short novel *Candide,* a distillation of Venetian cultural pessimism expressed as a raving attack on Leibniz, through the vicious caricature Dr. Pangloss. When Candide visits Venice, he meets Senator Pococurante, whom he considers a great genius; Senator Pococurante is clearly a figure of Abbot Antonio Conti. Conti later translated one of Voltaire's plays, *Mérope,* into Italian.

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