

# Adam Weishaupt

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I can practically guarantee you'll never see this article in Reader's Digest. But I love to do these Digest-style biographies of famous people in the paranormal field, so here goes. He's been called many things. The Abbe Barruel called him "a human devil." Thomas Jefferson called him "a harmless philanthropist." Prof. John Robinson called him "the profoundest conspirator that ever existed." But what's the real story behind the man who simply called himself "Brother Spartacus?" Adam Weishaupt was born on February 6, 1748 in Ingolstadt, a city in Bayern (Bavaria), Germany, which was then an independent kingdom. When he was a baby, his parents, who had been Orthodox Jews, converted to the Roman Catholic Church. Instead of attending the yeshiva, Adam attended monastery schools and later a hochschule (high school) run by the Society of Jesus.

As a Bavarian, Adam learned Czech and Italian as a child, and in school, he soon mastered Latin, Greek and, with his father's help, Hebrew. With his avid scholarship and knack for languages, his Jesuit superiors thought he would be a natural for overseas missionary work, perhaps in the Americas or in Asia. But Adam rebelled against Jesuit discipline, resisted their overtures and eventually became the professor of canon law at the University of Ingolstadt. Beginning around 1768, Adam began "the collection of a large library for the purpose of establishing an academy of scholars." He read every ancient manuscript and text he and his associates could lay hands on. Adam grew interested in the occult, becoming obsessed with the Great Pyramid of Giza.

He was convinced that the edifice was a prehistoric temple of initiation. In 1770, he made the acquaintance of Franz Kolmer, a Danish merchant who had lived for many years in Alexandria and had made several trips to Giza.. The following year, 1771, Adam decided to found a secret society aimed at "transforming" the human race. He devoted five years to thinking out the plan, borrowing from many different occult sources. His first name for the proposed order, Perfectibilisen, suggests that he borrowed from the Cathars, a gnostic religion that flourished in Europe for four hundred years. The Cathars, whose name means "perfect ones," were decimated in the Albigensian Crusade of Pope Innocent III during the early Thirteenth Century. Adam fashioned his order in the form of (what else?) a pyramid.

"Its members, pledged to obedience to their superiors, were divided into three main classes; the first including novices, minervals and lesser illuminati the second consisting," like the Freemasons, of "ordinary, Scottish and Scottish Knights, and the third, or mystery class, comprising two grades of priest and regent, and of magus and king," or Illuminatus Rex. This hierarchy, incidentally, is identical to the table of organization of the Sufis of Islam, which has some historians wondering if Adam's friend Kolmer was a closet Sufi. The Illuminati were a closemouthed bunch. "Every candidate had to give a written promise to tell nobody of this society. He learned nothing of his superiors and of the origin of the society, but was confirmed in the belief that the order could be traced back to antiquity and that its members included even popes and cardinals." He further vowed eternal silence and strict obedience.

Every month he had to send a report to his superior, “whom he did not know.” Adam felt that human society had grown hopelessly corrupt and that it could only be saved by a complete overhaul. In effect, he was the first utopian to think on a global scale, and he looked forward to the day his group would bring about the *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, sometimes called the New World Order. The Illuminati had five goals, including “(a) Abolition of monarchies and all ordered governments, (2) Abolition of private property and inheritances, (3) Abolition of patriotism and nationalism, (4) Abolition of family life and the institution of marriage, and the establishment of communal education of children. (5) Abolition of all religion.” By drawing upon Europe’s “best and brightest,” Adam was confident that the order could attain its goals. He wrote, “The pupils are convinced that the Order will rule the world. Every member therefore becomes a ruler. We all think of ourselves as qualified to rule. It is therefore an alluring thought both to good and bad men. Therefore the Order will spread.”

He also urged his followers not to shrink from committing violence or criminal acts in meeting Illuminati objectives, writing, “Sin is only that which is hurtful, and if the profit is greater than the damage, it becomes a virtue.” Recruitment proceeded at a brisk pace. Adam rallied many able lieutenants to his cause. Such as Baron Xavier von Zwack, who lobbied for the order in Germany and in Britain, too, with help from William Petty, the second Earl of Shelburne. And Baron Adolf von Knigge, who brokered a “shotgun marriage” between Illuminism and European Freemasonry at the Congress of Wilhelmsbad in 1782. By 1782, the Illuminati “had spread from Denmark to Portugal,” and even further afield. Illuminized Britons joined with like-minded Americans to found the Columbian Lodge in New York City that year. A young Russian nobleman, Alexander Radischev, joined the order in Leipzig and carried the doctrines home to St. Petersburg.

In Lisboa (Lisbon), a poet named Claudio Manuel da Costa became a member and, upon returning home to Brazil, founded a chapter with two doctors from Ouro Preto, Domingos Vidal Barbosa and Jose Alvares Maciel. In 1788, this trio launched the first Illuminati uprising, the *Inconfidencia Mineira*, but the revolt was nipped in the bud by the viceroy, the Marquis de Barbacena. Meanwhile, back in Germany, Adam was learning that life as the *Illuminatus Rex* was not quite the paradise he’d envisioned. His long-time mistress became pregnant and insisted that he either pay up or marry her. Adam stalled, and the lady threatened to go public with the scandal. Baron von Knigge, who had given the *Illuminatenorden* a big boost by allying with Freemasonry, thought he should be rewarded by becoming Adam’s co-ruler in the order. Adam disagreed, and the resulting feud between the two men resulted in von Knigge quitting the order in 1784. To make matters worse, Illuminati writers Johann Herder and Johann G. Fichte had begun beating the drum for German unification. Their calls for “*Ein volk und ein Reich*” were completely out of sync with Adam’s plan to do away with nationalism. While Adam may have been a brilliant scholar, he lacked the leader’s touch. He was too high-handed and arrogant, disinclined to listen to the advice of subordinates.

These characteristics enraged some of the lesser Illuminati, such as Joseph Utschneider, and they awaited the day they would have their revenge. The day was not long in coming. An Illuminati courier was struck by lightning and killed. When the Bavarian police searched his body, they found coded messages from Weishaupt sewn into the clothes. At this critical juncture, Utschneider and his three companions came forward and told the Bavarian authorities all about the Illuminati. As a result, the King of

Bavaria banned the order in August 1784. Fired from his position at the university, and accused of everything from treason to goat molestation, Adam fled Ingolstadt on horseback and went to Regensburg. When he found the people there equally hostile, he rode on to Gotha, where he was offered refuge by Duke Ernst II. An associate, Dr. Schwartz, loaded the order's collection of Kabbalist, Cathar, Sufi and occult books into an ox-cart and began the long journey eastward to Moscow.

Weishaupt's escape to Gotha resembles the "midnight ride" of Paul Revere and William Dawes in 1775. And Dr. Schwartz's trip to Moscow has its parallel in the wagon trains of the first Oregon pioneers. Maybe he should have put a sign on the cart—Mockba hhave Khytekh, "Moscow or Bust." The "profoundest conspirator that ever existed" lived out the rest of his life in exile in Gotha. He got into more mischief in the French Revolution with his friend and correspondent, Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, the Illuminatus of Lyons. And lived long enough to inspire new generations of Illuminati—Anacharsis Cloots, Francois Babeuf and Filippo Buonarrotti, among others. Adam Weishaupt died on November 18, 1830 in Gotha. Even in death, he remains a figure of controversy. The Roman Catholic Encyclopedia of 1910 said Weishaupt repented on his deathbed and was reconciled with the Church. Author Gary Allen claimed that Adam was working on an essay on hermetic art magick, Two Fragments of a Ritual, when he suddenly dropped dead. Quien sabe?

Proper assessment of Adam's role in history may have to wait a few more centuries, for a generation of more objective historians. His is still a hot-button name. Here in the USA, fundamentalist Christians consider Adam Weishaupt a kind of sinister John the Baptist, proclaiming the global Kingdom of Satan. And those who favor the New World Order... well, they don't say much of anything. Mention the names "Adam Weishaupt" and "Illuminati," and they tend to grit their teeth and scowl. For myself, whenever I think about Adam Weishaupt and his sect, the haunting question of Jesus Christ comes to mind. "Can an evil tree produce good fruit?"

(See *The New World Order* by Pat Robertson, Word Publishing, Dallas, Texas, 1991, pages 180 through 183; *Einige Originalschriften des Illuminatenordens*, Munich, 1786; and *Essai sur la secte des Illuminees*, by J.P.L. de la Roche de Maine, Paris, 1792.)  
<http://ufoinfo.com/roundup/>  
Joseph Trainor, 2000.

Footnote: John Robinson, a professor of natural philosophy at Edinburgh University in Scotland and a member of a Freemason Lodge there, said he had been asked to join the Illuminati. After consideration he concluded that the Illuminati were not for him. In 1798 he published a book called "Proofs of a Conspiracy" in which he wrote: "An association has been formed for the express purposes of rooting out all the religious establishments and overturning all existing governments. . .the leaders would rule the World with uncontrollable power, while all the rest would be employed as tools of the ambition of their unknown superiors". "Proofs of a Conspiracy" was sent to George Washington who replied that he was aware that the Illuminati were in America and that they had "diabolical tenets". Ed.

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