

## Local activism against “Illuminati” claims

We’ve already begun work to counteract the “Illuminati” claims that are being spread by Alex Jones fans here in New York City, primarily via the Alex Jones sector of the 9/11 Truth movement and, to a lesser extent, in otherwise progressive political movements such as the anti-war movement.

Our approach involves supporting those aspects of the relevant political movements with which we agree. For example, without endorsing the idea that “9/11 was an inside job,” we support the call for a more truly independent follow-up to the 9/11 Commission. (Even mainstream sources, including some of the commissioners themselves, have acknowledged that there were coverups, and it has been widely acknowledged that Executive Director Philip Zelikow had conflicts of interest. Furthermore, a new and more thorough investigation of 9/11 is likely to shed some light on the history of U.S. foreign policy, including both counter-terrorism policy and the long history of U.S. *support* for extremely intolerant Islamist regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, and for Islamist terrorist movements. The latter is an issue that concerns us as activists against religion-based bigotry.) By *actively* supporting the cause of a new and independent investigation of 9/11, we are able to have constructive dialogue with people in the 9/11 Truth movement.

If you support our aims, we would like very much to hear from you. If you publish a relevant online resource or plan to do so, please let us know by posting a comment on our blog. If you are considering participating in our local activism, please attend one of our meetings, which are usually held at a diner in Manhattan. Please RSVP on the Meetup site if you are considering attending. A link to the relevant Meetup page can be found on the web page below:

**Project: Against Grand Conspiracy Ideology**  
**New Yorkers Against Religion-Based Bigotry**  
**[nyarbb.com/pagci](http://nyarbb.com/pagci)**

## New Yorkers Against Religion-Based Bigotry

### Project: Against Grand Conspiracy Ideology

New Yorkers Against Religion-Based Bigotry is a new group concerned about many different kinds of religion-based bigotry, including both (1) bigotry against people because of their religion (or lack thereof) and (2) bigotry rooted in or excused by religion, e.g. bigotry against GLBT people. NYARBB will focus mainly on projects giving us opportunities to oppose religion-based bigotry on multiple fronts at once.

One of our current main projects is to oppose grand conspiracy ideology. By “grand conspiracy ideology,” we mean the belief that all of history is primarily a series of plots by some alleged elite cabal, usually identified in religious terms. An example is *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which inflamed the Nazi hatred of Jews and is now very popular in the Middle East. Another example is “Illuminati” claims, which (1) were one of the literary precursors of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, (2) were revived in the 1960's by the John Birch Society, and then (3) were further popularized by “Satanism” scaremongers such as Mike Warnke and by major religious right wing leaders such as Pat Robertson, Tim LaHaye, and John Hagee, as well as by right wing populists such as William Cooper and Alex Jones.

Here in the United States today, grand conspiracy ideology itself is mostly confined to the fringes of the political spectrum, primarily the extreme right wing. Nevertheless, grand conspiracy believers can play a big role in more mainstream politics, with very dangerous consequences. For example, during 1980-1995, many police departments, child protection agencies, and psychotherapists took seriously the allegations about “Satanic cults” that were being made by “Illuminati” conspiracy believers, resulting in hundreds of probably-innocent people being sent to prison, plus thousands

more families broken up by “recovered memories.”. And, to this day, “Illuminati” claims are espoused by many of the more fanatical religious right wing activists, including some of the most influential religious right wing leaders. The religious right wing has had its ups and downs over the past few decades, but is far from dead. (Most recently, witness the outpouring of support for Sarah Palin.)

In much the same way that the Nazi hatred of Jews was fueled by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, so too the assorted bigotries of many of the more fanatical religious right wing activists are intensified by their beliefs about “the Illuminati” and “the New World Order.” Today’s “Illuminati” claims closely parallel *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, except that, instead of Jews, the scapegoated categories of people are usually atheists (or “secular humanists”), Freemasons, modern Pagans, occultists, and/or “Satanists” - often all lumped together. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were czarist anti-democratic propaganda, as well as anti-Jewish propaganda, portraying democratic movements as tools of the evil Jews. Similarly, many religious right wing activists believe that modern social reform movements such as feminism and gay rights are just tools of the evil “Illuminati” atheists, occultists, etc. to destroy America.

Right wing populists such as Alex Jones have, to some extent, downplayed the religiously bigoted aspects of “Illuminati” claims, but those aspects can be found on Alex Jones’s websites and on some of his radio shows, too. His guests have included notorious bigots such as Texe Marrs and Henry Makow. And he himself has espoused quite a bit of paranoia about “Satanists,” occultists, and Pagans, claiming that “the Illuminati” have plans to kill off the majority of the world’s population as a mass human sacrifice to ancient gods.

## Online resources

One aspect of NYARBB’s Project Against Grand Conspiracy Ideology is to develop a list of online resources debunking grand

conspiracy claims of both the anti-Jewish and anti-“Illuminati” varieties. We already have an extensive list, but there are some gaps. We’re looking for more detailed, well-documented resources on the following topics, among others:

- \* Anti-Jewish banking conspiracy claims and refutations thereof.
- \* Well-documented refutations of claims that Jews own the mass media or otherwise dominate the U.S. elite.
- \* Well-documented explanations of why most historians reject Robison's and Barruel's claims about the Bavarian Illuminati.

If you know of such resources online or would be interested in developing one yourself, please let us know.

## Local research needed

We would like very much to hear from any people doing research on how widespread grand-conspiracy beliefs are here in New York City, and in what subcultures. We suspect, though we are not sure, that anti-Jewish grand-conspiracy beliefs may be common among NYC Muslims (given how widespread such beliefs apparently are in the Middle East). And we suspect, though we are not sure, that “Illuminati” beliefs may be very common among Pentecostal Christians here. We know that “Illuminati” beliefs have been popularized to some extent via some hip hop lyrics as well.

## Local activism against anti-Jewish claims

NYARBB plans to make a point of countering anti-Jewish conspiracy claims whenever they come up in the context of our other activism. For example, when working together with Muslims to counteract bigotry against Muslims, we plan to respond when any of the people we’re working with voice any of the anti-Jewish conspiracy claims that seem to have been popularized among many Muslims.