

Nana Tsikhistavi,

*Associate Professor of the New Higher Education
Institute-NEWUNI*

Tamar Kopaleishvili,

*assistant of the New Higher Education Institute-NEWUNI,
PhD student of the Technical University*

THE JESUIT ORDER AND THE ECONOMY

Key words: Catholics, Jesuits, order, reduction, Latin America, Paraguay, indians

Summary

As one of the strangest experiments in the history of the spread of Christianity, the settlements created by the Jesuit order to «protect» the Indians during colonialism, the so-called Reductions can be named. It is often referred to as the state of the Jesuits, which united 30 large settlements in present-day Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina territories. During the development of the region, about 140,000 people lived here. Later settlements appeared in Peru and Bolivia. In 1767, there were 70 such settlements and 200,000 people lived in them, the same year the Jesuits were expelled and the reduction ceased to exist.

To this day, this experiment of the Jesuit order is still a matter of discussion and controversy. It was admired by some French philosophers because they saw in this idea of the Jesuits, a victory of humanity compared to the politics of the Spanish colonizers. Montesquieu wrote that this was the first attempt on the continent to develop a connection between religion and humanity. Voltaire appreciated the Jesuit state as an attempt to atone for the horrors of the conquered lands. However, sociologist Paul Lefebvre characterized this event negatively in history. Lefebvre spoke of a Jesuit state structure where talent-driven and profit-oriented obedience replaced slavery. The English Jesuit Philip Caraman, in his work «Paradise Lost», concluded that the social and political features of this event could be a kind of foreshadowing of democracy. If it had been completed for the betterment of the local inhabitants South America would have been one hundred years earlier in the history of the world.

The main idea of the settlements was the planned Christianization of the local inhabitants under the guidance of the missionaries and the introduction of civilization into them. The Indians, who lived as nomads or semi-nomads, had to be gathered (reduce-gathering, hence the name reduction) and brought up according to church dogmas and «civil» norms. At the same time, it also meant giving up the past rules and forms of life for the Indians. Due to their late arrival on the continent, the Jesuits were the least assimilated to the colonial system and the colonial church, which removed the reductions from the influence of the royal family and gained more political and administrative freedom. In today's Paraguay (formerly the Guarani region), the settlements created by the Jesuits have been preserved to this day. It is a well-planned city, the centre of which was a square decorated with the most important buildings: a church, a priest's house, workshops, a shop, a cemetery, a hospital and a widow's home. And around it, the dwellings of the Indians were symmetrically arranged. As for the order, the governance was fully shared by a small group of European missionaries, both clergy and laity. Economic activities included local indigenous traditions and the requirement of cooperative work, common property, and generous hospitality. The received income was distributed by the leaders for social care. Meat, cotton, textiles, etc., were produced in reductions. Two working days per week were allocated for this purpose, and four days were allocated for earning personal finances and supporting the family. With the help of the missionaries, the local population technologically improved the primitive cultivation of the fields and also studied handicrafts and construction techniques.

As for the religious life in the reductions, the service was accompanied by a musical orchestra and a choir of singers, as well as a religious dance, which included a religious procession, and the church was dressed in forms characteristic of the local culture. They took care of the local language, developed the Guaranitic alphabet, and also created a dictionary and grammar, the books of which were partially printed in reductions. Despite the criticism, it was a kind of combination of the church and the local inhabitants, an attempt at a Guaraní-Christian synthesis and separation from the colonial world.

The Society of Jesus, or the Order of the Jesuits, has long been attracting the attention of mankind with its activities and activities in the international arena. Many secrets hidden stories and facts are connected with the name of this organization. One thing is clear, the interest in the Jesuits continues to this day, and many interesting stories are still unsolved in political, economic or religious terms. Therefore, we aimed to find information on the relationship between this order and the economy. We think it would be interesting to gather some information and facts in this regard.

The new era or «modern age» in human history is the beginning of the era of capitalism. The majority of historians consider the discovery of America and the price revolution in Europe as its starting point. The New Age was a period of great changes in all spheres of life. This era is of great importance in history. Many historians call it a «time of great breakthrough». It was at this stage that the foundation of the capitalist mode of production was laid. During that period, the level of development of production forces increased significantly, and the forms of production organization changed; Thanks to the introduction of technical innovations, labor productivity increased and the pace of economic development accelerated. Great geographical discoveries broadened the horizons of Europeans. The development of trade relations deepened the process of formation of national, pan-European and world markets. XVI-XVII centuries. Europe became the birthplace of the first early revolutions. This is a brief description of the political and economic overview of the new period.

During the new era, significant qualitative changes took place in the lives of the people of the eastern hemisphere of the planet, and then of the whole world. This was due to the transition from traditional to industrial farming, which is called modernization. The new times in many countries led to a change in the political system. The rapid development of trade, the emergence of banking activities, and the beginning of manufacturing production formed a new class – the bourgeoisie, which began to play an important role. All this led to democratic revolutions in many places (England, France), which in turn led to the establishment of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class in the political organization of European society.

The creation of the first colonial empires began in the new era. For the first time, the mighty Spanish colonial empire was created. Spain claimed all the lands it discovered in the New World as its property. The first Spanish colony was established in Hispaniola (modern Haiti); Then Cuba, Jamaica and other islands of the «West Indies» joined. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Spaniards began to enter the new continent. For many centuries, highly developed civilizations existed there: Inca (in Peru), Maya and Aztecs (in present-day Mexico). The colonies of New Spain and Peru were created on the ruins of the conquered states.

The Portuguese used somewhat different methods to build their empire. First establishing themselves in the forts built on the coast of the «West Indies», they quickly began to spread their dominance in South Asia. The Portuguese followed the established trade routes in this part of the world, trying to establish control over their key points. To begin with, they captured the western ports of India, through which trade was carried out with the Arab states and Persia, and in 1511 they captured Malacca, the largest port in Southeast Asia, located at the crossroads of the most important roads. Trade routes off the coast of Asia – the «Spice Islands» became the most valuable acquisition. In 1517, the Portuguese established trade relations with China, and in 1542 with Japan. In 1557, they founded Macao, the first European colony in China. Such valuable goods as tea, silk, and porcelain were brought to Europe from the countries of the Far East.

The Portuguese were creating a colonial empire that was different from the Spanish. Spain sought

to directly conquer vast undeveloped territories, where it organized the mining of precious metals and created plantations – large agricultural farms that grew tea, sugar cane, cotton and other crops. Instead of large colonies, the Portuguese created a network of forts, trying to bring under their control the richest trade of the East Indies. Unlike Spain's territorial empire, Portugal created the world's first global trade empire. In 1580, when Portugal was conquered by Spain, a gigantic colonial empire was formed that lasted until 1640.¹

All this was added to the schism of the Catholic Church, the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The appearance of the Jesuits, i.e. the Society of Jesus, on the religious and political front is connected with the latter, which brought great changes and changes to Protestantism and many states of the world at that time. The Jesuit order (officially the Society of Jesus) was founded in Paris in 1536 by the Spanish fanatic Ignatius Loyola, who, according to the educator Denis Diderot, devoted his youth to military craft and the pleasures of love. In 1540, the order was legalized by Pope Paul III. The order was created on a military model. Its members considered themselves soldiers, the army of Christ, and their organization was called the army. Iron discipline and absolute obedience to superiors were considered the highest virtues of the Jesuits. Unlike other monastic orders, the Jesuits were not bound by strict monastic rules.

The largest Jesuit possession in Spanish America was the Reduction-Reduction of Paraguay. Jesuits came to Paraguay at the beginning of the 17th century. There were no precious stones in this area, there were no developed communities of Indians. Here the Spaniards found a favourable climate, and fertile land that allowed two harvests a year at the expense of the work of the large masses of the Indian population – the peace-loving Guarani tribes. Thanks to them, this area became very promising for the development of agriculture, especially cattle breeding. The Jesuits were also attracted by the fact that there were few Spanish settlers and the area was far from large colonial centers. In addition to Paraguay, the Jesuits also had provinces of Mexico and Peru in colonial America, centred in Asuncion, whose influence extended over present-day Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the adjacent border areas of highland Peru (Bolivia) and southern Brazil.

The Jesuits created the first reduction-reduction settlements in the area of the city of Guaira. In the 18th century, the Jesuit Paraguayan missions had 30 reductions in the upper and middle reaches of the Parana and Paraguay rivers, between the 25th and 32nd South meridians. At the junction of the current republics of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina, 8 reductions were recorded (in present-day Paraguay), 15 – in Argentina, and 7 – in Brazil (on the territory of the current state of Rio Grande do Sul). The largest settlement – Yapeu – had about 8,000 inhabitants, the smallest – 250, and, on average, about 3,000 people lived in the settlement. Currently, these areas are called Misiones District in Paraguay, Misiones National Territory in Argentina, and Mission District in Brazil.

In October 1611, the Jesuits received from the Spanish crown the monopoly right to establish missions in Paraguay, and the Indians they converted to Christianity were exempted from paying taxes to the Spanish crown for 10 years. The Spanish authorities took this step for various reasons: first, the area was difficult to access and poor in minerals; secondly, it was inhabited by freedom-loving tribes, whose conquest would require great funds and efforts on the part of the colonial authorities; Third, the area where the Jesuits settled bordered Brazil, which at that time (thanks to the union of Portugal with Spain in 1580) was in the orbit of Spanish influence. Therefore, the Portuguese did not resist the advance of the Jesuits.

The Jesuits in Paraguay form a unique theocratic-patriarchal kingdom (Jesuits reduction-reduction – Jesuit Indian reservations). Its basis was the primitive communal tribal association of local Indians, the institutions of the Inca Empire (Tauantinsui) and Christian ideas. The Jesuits and the Indians created the first socialist state (with local specifics). It was the first large-scale attempt to build a just society based on the rejection of private property, the priority of the public good, and the priority of the collective over the individual. The Jesuit fathers studied very well the experience of governance in the Inca Empire and developed it creatively.²

The Jesuits had enormous power, this province was like a republic, and this caused the discontent of the colonists. They say that the structure and way of life of this country resembled communism, i.e. the utopia of Campanella and Thomas More. According to them, the Jesuits were building the kingdom of God on earth. A socialist type of economy worked, it was a powerful experiment that lasted for more than 100 years. Their own culture and economy emerged. Indians grew corn, rice, cocoa beans, hunted and fished. The monks taught them how to raise cattle. All products of labour were collected in common barns and then distributed according to needs. Surplus goods were sold or exchanged. In addition to common-use land, there was also private-use land, which belonged not to the community, but to a particular Indian. The Jesuits were not despots, so their rule was popular among the population.

The reduction of Paraguay included the territories of modern Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil. The Jesuits were able to convert to Christianity and develop Christian culture among the Indians. The natives learned to cultivate the land, settled and mastered crafts. The monks taught them to make tools, built workshops, and on the three Baroque reservations, they baptized the Indians as Christians and tried to transform them into sedentary people who engaged in productive farming – agriculture and cattle breeding, as well as crafts and manufacturing. More than 170,000 Indians were members of the cathedrals. Civilized monks developed a fairly high level of agricultural technology, taught crafts, transmitted certain elements of spiritual culture, created choirs and orchestras, and made musical instruments. Each settlement, along with the Indian leaders, had a Jesuit priest and vicar who performed not only spiritual duties but were also the heads of the local administration. The Indians worked together, collecting all the fruits of their labour in special stores, from which food was distributed to everyone who needed it. The monks were not tyrants; they did not impose the Spanish language and European customs by force, so the Indians treated them well. Settlements flourished and «Christian Socialism» was a fairly effective form of organization that brought economic success. The Jesuits had a high degree of autonomy and were practically not subject to the civil authorities of the colony. If necessary, Indian settlements formed militias to fight against attacks by slave traders and their Indian mercenaries. In addition, the reduction of the Jesuits was opposed by the neighbouring Portuguese colonies.

The reduction was controlled by the Corregidor and his deputy (they were Indians). In addition, there were individual military leaders – caciques. The administration included alcaldes (judges) – councillors and agencies (police). The positions of secretary (clerk) and royal media were also highly respected. Each town had a curate and a priest. They were true «rulers of thoughts and souls.» The Jesuits created a fairly stable system. In 1639, when the practice of forced enslavement of the Reducian population became widespread, two Jesuit monks and the cacique Ignacio (Senior) armed the Indians and defeated a large group of Portuguese slave traders from São Paulo. The raids stopped, but the secular authorities of Spain and Portugal were concerned about the strengthening of the autonomous territories. The situation in Spain was complicated by the political and economic crisis. In 1750, the Spanish handed over 7 colonies to Portugal, the Jesuits did not submit, after which the Guarani War began, which lasted for 4 years. The «team» of Spain and Portugal won. The Jesuits were expelled from South America, the decline fell, and the Indians returned to forest life. Some settlements became ordinary cities. Thus ended the history of the Jesuits in South America. They introduced civilization to more than 200 thousand people and taught literacy, agriculture and medicine. Of course, history and powerful forces destroyed their work, but in terms of social experimentation, it was a very interesting and eventful era. The Order was able to implement a large social project. In the 18th century, the Jesuits remained benign. Secular authorities were concerned about the strengthening of the order. The Jesuits controlled 700 universities and 200 seminaries and had more than 500 representative offices. In 1773 the Pope abolished the Order, but its representation continued to exist where the Vatican could not reach. After the ban, the Europeans faced another problem – who taught? About 250,000 students and seminarians could not continue their studies because the Jesuits were no longer there. Order had to be restored, which led to a new growth of Jesuit educational institutions.

In South America, where the Spanish and Portuguese not only traded but ruled, the Jesuit missionaries acted differently. The Order created Jesuit reductions – mini-states (reductions), in which the missionaries were the rulers and the Indians were the subjects. On the one hand, the natives were used as cheap labour on the plantations; on the other hand, they got good food, a safe life without constant intertribal wars and any kind of medical care. The Jesuits did not cause special resentment among the Indians, because the living conditions were relatively good in the conditions of reduction, and besides, the power of the missionaries was usually based on the power of the local leaders. The most famous Jesuit reduction originated in Paraguay in 1608. The Order conducted a real socialist experiment: a planned economy, jobs for all, and redistribution of goods in favour of the poor. Even then, the positive and negative sides of socialism were revealed: stability, unemployment, and no one dying of hunger, but at the same time local people work without personal interest, and without showing any initiative.³

Many people know that Christianity and socialism are very close from a spiritual and ideological point of view. However, few people know that it was the Jesuit monks who created the world's first state formation in the territory of modern Paraguay (Latin America) with signs of socialism long before the arrival of Marx's teachings. The assassination of the socialist Paraguay is one of the darkest and bloodiest pages in Latin American history. It is clear that the independence of the monks irritated the Portuguese and Spanish authorities. They had their own plans regarding the Indians and the possession of the territories occupied by the Jesuits. In 1750, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Madrid. This agreement settled the boundaries of the two states' possessions in South America, namely in the territory of present-day Brazil. As a result of the four-year war (1754-1758), the united Spanish-Portuguese troops defeated the theocrats. The Jesuits were expelled from all Spanish possessions in South America, and the Indians began to return to their former way of life.

In the 1760s, the Jesuits were expelled from all their properties. Their numerous and prosperous settlements were destroyed. Many Indians returned to their old way of life, separated from the Europeans and took refuge in the forests. However, the socialist ideas of the Jesuits were not forgotten. Fifty years later, the Spanish colonial empire collapsed. In 1811, Paraguay declared its independence. The country was led by the lawyer José Francia, who ruled until 1840. The country announced a policy of autarky (focusing on its own resources to minimize dependence on external economic factors), confiscation of monastic lands and public property, and crime was almost completely eradicated. France partly revived the ideas of the Jesuits but without overt religious overtones. The economy was based on social labour and small business. Public benefits were introduced that were completely unimaginable in the early 19th century: free education, free medicine, low taxes and social welfare funds. The result was the creation of a powerful state-owned industry. Paraguay has become the most dynamically developing and richest country in South America. Poverty was eradicated and a considerable number of wealthy people were integrated into society without conflict. After Francia's death in 1840, his nephew Carlos Lopez came to power. He carried out a number of liberal reforms, opened access to foreigners, strengthened the country's defences, created a river fleet and reorganized the army. López died in 1862 and left the country to his son, Francisco López. During his time, Paraguay reached the peak of prosperity. The population grew to 1.3 million people and the first railroad was built. Steel, textile and paper industries began to develop in the country, printing houses were built, and gunpowder production and shipbuilding were organized. Gunpowder and artillery factories were built. Neighboring Uruguay, which had access to the sea, began to learn more about Paraguay's experience. There was a real possibility of the union of the two states, and then other South American countries could be involved in this process.

According to Marx's theory of class struggle, which emerged a little later, the bourgeoisie united to destroy the material embodiment of socialist ideas. Brazil occupied the Uruguayan port of Montevideo and installed its proxy at the head of Uruguay. A little later, a triple alliance was made between Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil and the war began. At the initial stage, the mobile and patriotic army of Paraguay won a number of victories, taking, in particular, several cities and fortresses in Brazil. However, the resource

potential of the warring parties was unmatched, and the Triple Alliance received interest-free loans from the London banking houses N «Rothschild and Barings». After a series of bloody battles in which the Paraguayan soldiers displayed fearlessness and heroism, the army was defeated. Even children took part in the battles to commemorate their heroism, modern day Paraguay celebrates Children's Day on August 16. In battles, skirmishes and acts of genocide, 90 per cent of Paraguay's male population died. By 1871, about 220,000 of the population of more than 1.3 million remained. Paraguay was completely destroyed. Thus ended the history of the first socialist state in world history based on the ideas of the Jesuits.

The Jesuits were the only Europeans in the area. They obtained a law from the Spanish government, according to which no European could enter the reduction territory without their permission, and in any case could not stay there more than three days. The Jesuits did not teach the Indians Spanish, but they developed the Guarani script and taught them to read and write. The Jesuit region had its army and conducted independent foreign trade. The population of the Jesuit state during its heyday was 150,200 thousand people. The main part of them were Indians, besides about 12 thousand black slaves and 150-300 Jesuits. The history of this state was interrupted in 1767-1768 when the Jesuits were expelled from Paraguay due to the adoption of an anti-Jesuit policy by the Spanish cabinet.

The Jesuits in Paraguay, as elsewhere in the world, destroyed themselves with their success – they became very dangerous. In particular, a well-armed army of up to 12,000 people was created in the reduction, which, it seems, was a decisive military force in the area. They intervened in internal wars, repeatedly stormed the capital of Asuncion, defeated the Portuguese troops and freed Buenos Aires from the British siege. During the riots, they defeated the governor of Paraguay, Don José Antequera. Several thousand Guarani armed with firearms participated in the battles. This army began to inspire more and more fear in the Spanish government. The downfall of the Jesuits was greatly facilitated by rumours of the colossal wealth they had amassed. After the Jesuits were expelled, the authorities rushed to find their hidden treasure and found it was not there. Most of the Indians escaped the reduction and returned to their former religion and nomadic life. It is interesting to note that the work of the Jesuits in Paraguay was received from the philosophers of the Enlightenment. For them, the Jesuits were the number one enemy, but some of them could not find high enough epithets to characterize the Paraguayan state: «The spread of Christianity in Paraguay only by the Jesuits' forces is in a sense a triumph of humanity.»⁴

Conclusions

Therefore, the main goal is to try to prove that in the 17th and 18th centuries, the last point of activity of the Jesuit order was established in Latin America. This happened not from their desire to get rich, but because of the creation of their state – for the emergence of an empire based on Christian values throughout Latin America, as part of the implementation of the global project of a united Catholic world. We believe that the Jesuits partially achieved the realization of their project on the American continent and that its realization was possible thanks to the use of the experience of the economic organization of the Incas, which consisted, first of all, of the organization of the division of labour; not through competition, but through the introduction of the principles of mutual connection and mutual assistance, both in terms of the development of individual farms and entire regions.

Used literature:

1. <https://ik-ptz.ru/ka/dictations-on-the-russian-language--grade-4/ranee-novoe-vremya-opredelenie-kultura-novogo-vremeni-harakternye.html>
2. <https://my-kross.ru/ka/cats/glavnoi-celyu-ordena-iezuitov-stala-borba-s-tehnologii-myagkoi-sily/>
3. [topwar.ru / Иезуиты-«социалисты» и уничтожение первого в мире социалистического государства](http://topwar.ru/)
4. <https://goaravetisyan.ru/ka/simvol-iezuitov-rasshifrovka-iezuity/>

We also used the following:

1. <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gwdict/index.php?a=term&d=16&t=3031>
2. <https://www.tsu.ge/ge/scripta-manent/single/1068>
3. <https://doi.org/10.61671/hos.6.2023.6779>
4. <https://history1111.wordpress.com/2015/07/30/%E1%83%98%E1%83%94%E1%83%96%E1%83%A3%E1%83%98%E1%83%A2%E1%83%A3%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98-%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A0%E1%83%93%E1%83%94%E1%83%9C%E1%83%98-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90-%E1%83%98%E1%83%92%E1%83%9C%E1%83%90/>
5. «Religions in Georgia», Tbilisi: Office of the Public Defender, 2008. — p. 223-227, ISBN 978-9941-0-0902-0.
6. Encyclopedia «Tbilisi», volume, 2002. — p. 511, ISBN 99928-20-32-2.
7. Tamarashvili M., «History of the Church of Georgia», Rome, 1910.
8. Tamarashvili M., «History of Catholicism among Georgians», Tbilisi, 1902.
9. «For the issue of the relationship between the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) and Georgia» was published in the magazine «Saba: Catholic Monthly Bulletin of Georgia» #7, 2007.
10. https://socialjustice.org.ge/uploads/products/pdf/Christianity and Colonialism/_1689575568.pdf
11. Prien Hans-Jürgen: Die Geschichte des Christentums in Lateinamerika, 213. 38 ობ. Hartmann Claus: Des Jesuitenstaat in Südamerika 1609-1768, 18. 39 ობ. Gründer Horst: Welt Eroberung und Christentum, ein Handbuch zur Geschichte der Neuzeit, 126-127.
12. Hartmann Claus: Des Jesuitenstaat in Südamerika 1609-1768, 15-35. 41 the same, 47-48.