

Founding Editorial

This inaugural issue accompanies the forthcoming *Handbook of Albanian Conspiracy Theories* and sets the tone for future volumes.

Editorial Note: An Invitation to Our Authors (and the Curious)

At *JACT*, we assume—without apology—that conspiracy thinking can be more than a vice or a political pathology. It can be a method. A heuristic. A way of seeing what official narratives cannot or will not reveal.

We know that the majority of our future contributors are the sort who will recognize themselves in this immediately, because they already work at the point where speculation, method, and narrative overlap. To you, this is less an argument than an affirmation: you are already doing it. We are simply giving it a home.

The starting point is simple. When archives are cleansed and muted, when facts have been made to behave and history is written in a single voice, the air grows thin—there is no smoke to follow, no breath to take. In such rarefied landscapes, well-placed speculation—or even a deliberate fictional turn—becomes not indulgence but necessity, a way to trace the contours of what has been erased. In authoritarian histories, in sanitized political biographies, in telegraphic diplomatic communiqués stripped to their bone, conspiracy remains the last tool sharp enough to cut through the thin air and let truth breathe.

We are not asking you to prove a conspiracy in court. You are responsible only to your thoughts and family. We are asking you to model what *might* have happened. We are asking you to use abduction, intuition, and narrative design as serious instruments of inquiry. Think of it as reverse-engineering the mechanisms of power when the blueprint has been deliberately shredded.

We invite you to conspire with us and treat conspiratorial thinking at the meta-narrative level:

- as a way of interrogating official accounts without succumbing to them,
- as a tool for reconstructing the unarchived and the unspeakable,
- as an intellectual theatre where history, politics, and psychology share the stage.

Our readership will not be broad, but our contributors are few—and deliberate. The reader may skim for intrigue, but the writer will recognize the deeper challenge here: to produce conspiratorial analysis that is disciplined, layered, and conscious of its own devices.

We also state openly: within *JACT*, conspiracy analysis follows the binding editorial framework outlined in Section ???. Alternative models are welcome only if the author believes they are indispensable to the case at hand—and, in such situations, the journal’s fee policy applies. This means that if your vision is so necessary that it must be printed despite the editors’ doubts, publication is possible at the standard exceptional rate of 10 000 EUR.

To those who will write for us: this is your invitation, your provocation, and perhaps your certification. You will be in the company of certified conspiracy

analysts who treat the speculative as a tool of precision and the improbable as a map to the concealed.

To the rest: read on, knowing that much of what follows comes from certified conspiracy analysts—writers who suspect far more than they can prove, and who, for that very reason, often come nearer to the truth than the blind-minded, those who mistake the limits of their mind for the limits of their sight.

JACT Conspiracy Analyst Ranking

The *Journal of Albanian Conspiracy Theories* maintains an official ranking system for its contributors, designed to recognize achievement, methodological rigor, and narrative innovation in the field of conspiratorial studies. These ranks are conferred by the Editorial Board and, once awarded, are to be displayed after the author's name in all JACT publications.

To encourage both scholarly excellence and long-term loyalty to the journal, JACT employs a gamified points system. Each original research article accepted for publication earns its author **2 points** toward their next rank. Review articles, while valuable for consolidating knowledge, earn **0.5 points**. Advancement occurs in increments of **10 points per rank**, and points are cumulative across multiple volumes.

This system is not merely a formality: it is designed to keep conspiracy analysts motivated, engaged, and—above all—loyal to the JACT community. In the spirit of conspiratorial camaraderie, higher-ranked authors are granted priority consideration for special issues, editorial invitations, and classified briefings on emerging theoretical frameworks sanctioned by the Editorial Board.

| <i>Rank (Postnominal)</i> | <i>Points to Attain</i> | <i>Privileges and Notes</i> |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| Certified Conspiracy Theorist (CCT) | 0–9.5 | Entry credential; name appears with postnominal in all JACT publications; eligible for standard peer review. |
| Senior Certified Conspiracy Theorist (SCCT) | 10–19.5 | Priority consideration for themed issues; eligible for invited responses and roundtables. |
| Master Conspiracy Theorist (MCT) | 20–29.5 | Pre-review consultation with an editor; eligible to serve as guest editor for special dossiers. |
| Doctor of Conspiratorial Thought (DCT) | 30–39.5 | May propose methodological extensions to the JACT framework; priority for classified briefings; fee policy may apply in exceptional cases. |
| Grand Conspiracy Theorist (GCT) | 40+ | Lifetime distinction; unanimous board vote required; keynote rights at Mali Tomorri Summer Symposium. |

Point accrual. Original research article accepted: *+2 points*. Review article

accepted: *+0.5 points*. Points are cumulative across volumes. Advancement occurs in 10-point increments.

Invite bonus. Established authors may earn *+1 point* for each invited contributor whose manuscript is accepted. The Editorial Board may cap bonuses per volume to preserve balance.

Record-keeping and enforcement. Authors maintain their own point ledgers. Declaring a false rank triggers an immediate reset to *0 points*. A second offense triggers a *second reset to 0*, and so on, without appeal.

Display convention. Use postnominals after the author name, e.g., Robert Weiler, DCT or Ishmael Kardryni, GCT. For multiple authors, list ranks in the order of contribution.

Authors are encouraged to display their title after their name, e.g., Robert Weiler, CCT.