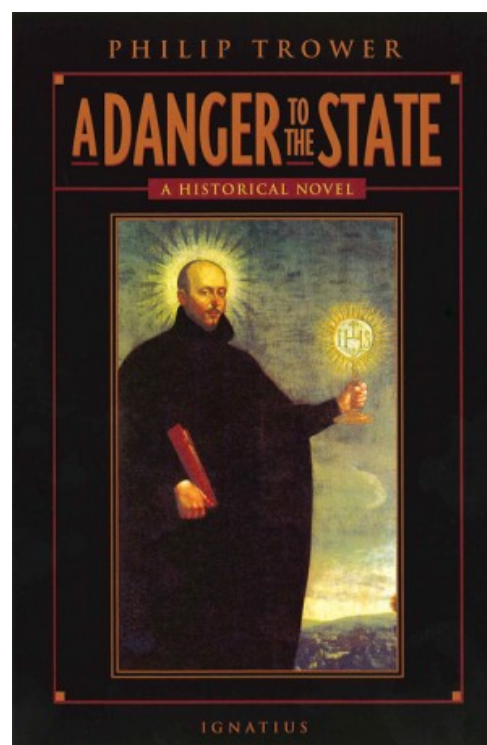


Discussion Questions for *A Danger to the State*

1. Describe the various characters of the de Vallecás family. Was there a particular family member that you liked/disliked and why?
2. Where does Alfonso de Vallecás go? Why did his family think they wouldn't see him again?
3. Who is trying to get rid of the Jesuits in Spain? Why is this difficult?
4. What is the character of Monsieur Charville? How does he influence the fate of the Jesuits?
5. What is the character of the king and his relationship with his mother? Why were the European royalty and the Pope at odds?
6. How does Fr. Padilla influence and help Diego? How is Fr. Padilla a good priest?
7. What is the character of Fr. de la Cueva? How can envy develop, even among religious? How can one guard oneself against this?
8. What is life like for Alfonso in the village of San Miguel? What is Fr. Huber like?
9. One of the ironic things in this story is how Europe was striving to “discover” the perfect government and utopia, but thought it must be without religion. This is contrasted with the harmonious life on the Indian reductions, run by the Jesuits. How did the Jesuits help the Indians? What were the most important principles of their lives, work, etc.? What did you think of the life in San Miguel?
10. What happened politically to the Jesuits and what false accusations did they face? How did they respond and what did you think of that? Should they have left the reductions, even though they know the people would be enslaved?
11. What happens to Rodrigo? Why do you think he was susceptible to the lies about the Jesuits? What changes him?
12. How did the General de Pradanos and his wife, Doña Mercedes, live their faith? Did they inspire you?
13. Did you know how cruelly the Jesuits were treated in their banishment and imprisonment?
14. What happened to Don Maurice and family?
15. Discuss the conversation between Alfonso and the Empress Catherine at the end. Is there such a thing as utopia on earth? Is there justice in this life?
16. One of the last sentences of the book—“Do their followers still believe that human reason alone can lead us into a Promised Land?”—what does that mean? How does this story illustrate that human reason alone cannot lead to a utopia?



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