

## FREEMASONRY AND THE HOLOCAUST. By W. Bro. Gary W. Smith, Pr.D.G.D.C.

The news that Britain was once more at war with Germany was broken by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at 11.15am on Sunday 3 September 1939. The British Expeditionary Force, commanded by General Lord Gort, began arriving in France on 9 September 1939. Following rapid German victories which led to the Fall of France and British forces being withdrawn during the Dunkirk evacuation, Hitler then ordered a directive on 16<sup>th</sup> July that German forces would invade Britain under the codename Operation Sea Lion. The plan for a successful invasion was detailed in the book 'Invasion 1940' otherwise known as 'The Black Book' which listed approximately 2820 British residents identified in advance for immediate arrest and to seize property and documentation in respect of the major enemies of the Reich - Freemasons and Jews. Thankfully Hitler indefinitely postponed the invasion on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1940.

The Black Book was a more detailed version of the briefing handbook which was produced by **SS General Walter Schellenberg**. Schellenberg was born in Saarbrücken, Germany in 1910, but moved with his family to Luxembourg when the French occupation of the Saar Basin after the First World War triggered an economic crisis in the Weimar Republic. Schellenberg returned to Germany to attend university, first at the University of Marburg and then, in 1929, at the University of Bonn. He initially studied medicine, but soon switched to law. After graduating he joined the SS in May 1933. He met Reinhard Heydrich and went to work in the counter-intelligence department of the SS otherwise known as the SD. From 1939 to 1942 he was Heinrich Himmler's personal aide and a deputy chief in the Reich Main Security Office under Heydrich who answered only to Himmler. In addition Himmler bestowed upon Schellenberg a unique position beyond that of a simple aide, making him his special-plenipotentiary. Since Himmler held the position of general plenipotentiary to the whole Reich's administration this gave Schellenberg enormous influence within Nazi Germany. He also arranged many other plots of subterfuge and intelligence gathering, including the bugging of Salon Kitty, a high-class Berlin brothel.

He eventually became the head of the combined intelligence services of the SD and the Wehrmacht. At the Nuremberg trials, he was acquitted on the crime of genocide but found guilty of complicity in the murder of Soviet POWs. Sentenced to six years, he was released in 1951. Within the text of the 20,000 copies of his handbook which were to be the reference 'bible' for the special 'Invasion 1940', the section on Freemasonry starts, 'England is the country of Freemasonry.' It goes on to assert, 'Freemasonry is thus an invisibly effective, political instrument for the internal structure of Great Britain and its Empire and for British imperialism.'

To put these plans for England and actions in occupied countries into context, it is necessary to go back in history. Nick Cohen, writing in 'The Observer' in January 2006, stated that it was Masons, not Jews, who were the target of the original conspiracy theory of the far right. What would end up as fascism began as a reaction against the American and French revolutions. The counter revolutionaries had to explain why people were proclaiming heretical ideas about the rights of man. They couldn't without compromising their stance, admit that the French and Americans were embracing enlightenment values of their own free will. There had to be a conspiracy. Europe's Jews were in ghettos in the 1790s, and it was preposterous to pretend that they were secret rulers of the world. So, the far right decided that the conspirators must be the Freemasons.

Historically, Freemasonry had begun admitting Jews as members in the mid-eighteenth century, first in England and then later in the Netherlands, France, Germany, and other countries. Nevertheless, European Freemasons at the time tended to be very cautious about who they allowed to join their organisation. In some countries and in some locations, Masons allowed Jews to join their lodges. Other countries and other lodges, however, took deliberate steps to reject Jews from becoming members. The antisemitism that some Jews experienced while trying to join fraternal lodges was one reason for the creation of Jewish fraternal organizations, such as B'nai B'rith. German Jews founded the Berlin branch in 1885.

Prior to the First World War many Germans felt that Freemasonry was an organisation not just infiltrated by Jews but dominated by them. Such was the belief of **Theodor Frisch** who founded the Reichshammerbund or Reich Hammer League in 1912 which was a German anti-Semitic movement based on *The Hammer*, a journal founded by Frisch in 1902. A year after the end of the First World War in 1919 a retired army officer, Müller von Hausen together with Frisch attacked International Freemasonry and alleged that it was dominated by Jews. It was a best-seller and maintained that Jews and Freemasons were responsible for Germany's defeat in 1918.

This followed on from the bitterness of **General Erich Ludendorff**, who had been the virtual master of Germany's destinies until 1918 and who took part in the Beer Hall Putsch on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1923 which was a failed coup attempt by the Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler along with other Battle League fighting party leaders to seize power in Munich, Bavaria. About two thousand men marched to the centre of Munich, where they confronted the police, which resulted in the death of 16 Nazis and four policemen. Hitler himself was wounded. The plot having failed, in the trial that followed, Ludendorff was acquitted. In 1924, he was elected to the Reichstag as a representative of the NSFB (a coalition of the German Völkisch Freedom Party and members of the Nazi Party), serving until 1928. The historian Margaret Lavinia Anderson notes that after the war, Ludendorff wanted Germany to go to war against all of Europe, and that he became a pagan worshiper of the Nordic god Odin, he detested not only Judaism, but also Christianity, which he regarded as a weakening force. Right up to his death, Ludendorff devoted himself wholly to propaganda intended to prove that the war, the ensuing German revolution, and most other world ills had been the doing of the Masons.

Two days after the failed plot **Adolf Hitler** was arrested and charged with treason, from Hitler's perspective, there were three positive benefits from this attempt to seize power unlawfully. Firstly, the putsch brought Hitler to the attention of the German nation and generated front page headlines in newspapers around the world. His arrest was followed by a 24-day trial, which was widely publicised and gave Hitler a platform to preach his nationalist sentiment to the nation. Hitler was found guilty of treason and sentenced to five years in Landsberg Prison. Secondly, Hitler used his time in prison to produce *Mein Kampf*, which was dictated to his fellow prisoner, Rudolf Hess. In Chapter 11 of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler asserts that Jews use the principles of freedom expounded by Masonry to strengthen their political position. The third and final benefit to Hitler was the realisation that Revolution and anarchy was not the right path to power this instead must be through legitimate means. Accordingly, the most significant outcome of the putsch was a decision by Hitler to change National Socialist German Workers Party or NSDAP tactics, which would demand an increasing reliance on the development of Nazi propaganda. On 20 December 1924, having served only nine months, Hitler was released.

But what of the rest of Europe, as well as Hitler, both **Benito Mussolini** and Francisco Franco also inaugurated their reigns with outrages against Freemasonry and it seems they never relaxed their respective persecutions of the Craft. In 1924, Mussolini decreed that every member of his Fascist Party who was a Freemason must abandon one or the other organisation. In the summer of 1925 Mussolini officially dissolved Italian Freemasonry.

During 1925 to 1927, Blackshirt hooligans looted the homes of well-known Freemasons in Milan, Florence and other cities, and murdered at least 100 of them. **General Luigi Capello** who was one of the most prominent Fascists at that time and had previously held the post of Deputy Grand Master of the Grande Oriente, gave up membership in Fascism rather than betray his masonic ideals. He paid dearly for his loyalty, less than a year later, he was charged with complicity in an attempt on Mussolini's life and he was sentenced to thirty years in prison.

In 1925, Spain's first dictator, **General Primo de Rivera**, ordered the abolition of Freemasonry in his country. Then the rebellion of 1936 caused a civil war and in the territories held by General Franco, Freemasons and trade unionists were being arrested and executed. Some researchers claim that a large percentage of the 75,000-death toll of this conflict were Freemasons. In 1937 **General Francisco Franco** claimed that "Freemasonry with all its international influence is the organisation responsible for the political ruin of Spain". When Franco consolidated power in 1939, all Freemasonry was banned. In 1979, four years after Franco's death, bans on Freemasonry were declared unconstitutional, and several Grand Lodges and Orients now flourish in Spain.

In Germany during the period just after the First World War most Masonic lodges and their members were affiliated with three Grand Lodges located in Prussia and known collectively as the "Old Prussian Grand Lodges." These Grand Lodges deliberately excluded non-Christians from membership. By 1922, they accounted for 70 percent of all Masons in Germany and numbered about 47,000 men. Six other Grand Lodges in Germany, were known as "Humanitarian" Lodges, because they accepted Jewish and Muslim males as well as Christians. Thus, a German Jew had to apply to a Humanitarian Lodge if he wanted to have any chance of joining a German Masonic lodge. In 1928, the Humanitarian Lodges had 24,000 members, and less than 3,000 of these were Jews.

When Hitler gained power in 1933, all Lodges, except the three Prussian Grand Lodges which barred Jews, were forced into self-dissolution. The Enabling Act was passed by the Reichstag in March 1933. Using the "Act", on January 8, 1934, the German Ministry of the Interior ordered the disbandment of Freemasonry, and confiscation of the property of all other Lodges. Consistently considered an ideological foe of Nazism in their world perception, special sections of the Security Service (SD) and later the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) were established to deal with Freemasonry.

In a speech delivered at Essen on 5th August, **Doctor Wilhelm Frick**, the Reich Minister of the Interior, declared: "It is inappropriate that a secret society with obscure aims should continue to exist in the Third Reich. It is high time that the Freemasons' Lodges should disappear in Germany just as they have disappeared in Italy. If this is not realised in Masonic circles, I will soon help them in this direction". It was not until May 1935 that the Reich and Prussian Ministry of the Interior ordered the immediate dissolution of the three remaining lodges. It declared that all Masonic lodges had engaged in subversive acts against the state and confiscated all lodge properties.

Many prominent dignitaries and members of the Order who did not give up their membership were sent to concentration camps. The Gestapo seized membership lists of the Grand Lodges and looted libraries and collections of Masonic objects. Much of this Masonic "loot" went on to form the basis of Goebbels' "Anti-Masonic Exposition" held in Munich in 1937 - it even included completely furnished Masonic temples. The Nazi Party ordered the words "Freemason" and "Lodge" to be discontinued and international Masonic relations to cease. Many former lodge members holding positions in the civil service were forced or harassed into retirement. They were also barred from holding positions within the military and the Nazi party.

By 1934, **Adolph Eichmann** who had been a member of the youth section of Austrian Herman Hiltls Right ring movement and after being expelled from Austria following the banning of the Nazi Party in Austria in 1933 made the decision to return to Germany. Eichmann who by this time was a member of the SS, was shortly promoted to *SS-Scharführer* or squad leader which is the equivalent to corporal. His battalion of the Deutschland Regiment was quartered at barracks next door to Dachau concentration camp. To escape the monotony of military training and service at Dachau, Eichmann requested transfer to the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) this transfer was accepted and he was assigned to the sub-office on Freemasons, organising seized ritual objects for a proposed museum and creating a card index of German Freemasons and Masonic organisations. He prepared an anti-Masonic exhibition, which proved to be extremely popular. Visitors included Hermann Goering, Heinrich Himmler, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, and Baron Leopold von Mildenstein. Mildenstein invited Eichmann to join his Jewish Department of the SD, at its Berlin headquarters. Eichmann's transfer was granted in November 1934.

Throughout the war Eichmann's ferocity saw him rise through the ranks eventually becoming a Lieutenant Colonel in the Gestapo. He was present at the Wannsee Conference and became one of the major organisers of the Final Solution, following the war he fled like so many of the Nazi war criminals to South America. In 1960 he was kidnapped by the Mossad and brought to Israel to face trial for his war crimes, he was convicted on 15 counts and sentenced to death and was hanged on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1962 at Ramla Prison and remains to this date Israel's only Judicial execution.

During the 1930s, as a result of observing the actions of the Nazis, British Freemasonry ceased to be open. It had previously advertised its meetings and public parades in full regalia were common. As we are all too aware, the veil drawn down at that time still remains to be fully lifted.

Meanwhile, the Axis powers were making in-roads into English society in the form of **Oswald Mosely's** British Union of Fascists and Spencer Leese's Imperial Fascist League. Both of these organisations produced anti-masonic and anti-Jewish propaganda as well as supplying intelligence to the Nazis in Germany.

Mosely who after the death of his first wife Cynthia in 1933 had secretly married his mistress Diana Guinness in Germany on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1936 at the Berlin home of Germany's Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda Joseph Goebbels. Adolf Hitler was their guest of honour. Mosley spent large amounts of his private fortune on the British Union of Fascists (BUF) and tried to establish it on a firm financial footing by various means including an attempt to negotiate, through Diana, with Hitler for permission to broadcast commercial radio to Britain from Germany. Mosley died on 3 December 1980 at Orsay outside Paris. His body was cremated in a ceremony held at la Père Lachaise Cemetery, Orsay.

Throughout the 1930's **Ulrich Fleishhuar** who was leading publisher of antisemitic and news articles reporting on a perceived Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory for World domination further expanded his propaganda efforts by organizing the Pan-Aryan Anti-Jewish Union and a series of international antisemitic congresses to actively push for the suppression of Freemasonry and combat the alleged "Jewish conspiracy for world domination," he went on to encourage the deportation of Jews from within Europe through mandatory resettlement in southern Africa as was envisioned by the Nazi-promoted Madagascar Plan. This plan was to deport all of Europe's Jews to the island of Madagascar which lies to the east of Africa.

The military government of pre-WWII Japan also attacked Freemasonry and these views were expressed by a Japanese representative who attended the Welt-Dienst congress hosted in 1938 by Fleischhauer. On behalf of Imperial Japan, he stated that "Judeo-Masonry is forcing the Chinese to turn China into a spearhead for an attack on Japan, and thereby forcing Japan to defend herself against this threat. Japan is at war not with China but with Freemasonry, represented by **General Chiang Kai-shek**, Chairman of the National Government of the Republic of China, the successor of his master, the Freemason Sun Yat-sen."

In all Japanese controlled territories Freemasons' lodges were closed, buildings destroyed and, if it was possible, the Freemasons were even more brutally treated than other POWs. Deprivation, hunger, disease, torture and executions were common. Despite this in 1942 forty-seven masons met in the infamous Changi Jail in Singapore with a multitude of 'assistant tylers' to warn of any approaching Japanese soldiers.

As Nazi Germany prepared for war in 1938, the regime relaxed pressure on the former members of the dissolved lodges. Hitler realising that the success of his political and military aims in some way rested on the shoulders of the most influential members of German society who had been former members of Freemasonry allowed members of the rank and file who renounced their former loyalties to once again find employment within the military and civil service and in April 1938 efforts were made in the public sector to decide on continued employment of former lodge members on a case to case basis. Many civil servants who had been forced to retire due to their Masonic connections were recalled into service after the war began and the ban on former Masons serving in the Wehrmacht (German armed forces), even at the officer rank, was relaxed. The Nazi Party continued to ban former Masons from membership, though exceptions were made after 1938 in both the Nazi Party and even the SS. Later, following this relaxed view on Germany's former Freemasons Hitler himself appointed a Freemason, Hjalmar Schacht, who had been a member of the Fraternity for thirty years, into a position which aided the regime first as president of the Reichsbank and then as Minister of Economics.

When Austria succumbed in March 1938 to the power of the Third Reich, the persecution against Freemasons continued. The Masters of the various Vienna lodges were immediately arrested and deported to some of the most notorious concentration camps, including Dachau. In Czechoslovakia, the same procedure was repeated when Nazis troops simply occupied Bohemia and Moravia making them a "protectorate" of the Reich.

When, in September 1939, Nazi forces overran most of western and central Poland, Soviet troops invaded Poland from the east. During their occupation of the country, Nazi forces pursued a policy of systematic extermination of the Polish people, particularly Jews and Freemasons, many of whom perished at concentration camps scattered throughout the country.

The next **TWO** slides depict various triangles worn by prisoners in the concentration camps. **SLIDE 1** is the poster which would have been displayed and **SLIDE 2** is the English translation. (Freemasons were classed as Political Prisoners and would wear a Red Triangle.)

The United Grand Lodge of England suspended all masonic meetings in September of 1939 in response to the National Emergency. However, this was relaxed the following month, and meetings were resumed under "special directions". In December of that year the Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge allowed meetings to resume but requested that all members of "ENEMY" nationality or birth should temporarily withdraw in the interests of harmony.

The Netherlands were attacked in May 1940, and immediately Nazi forces started to liquidate the Order of Freemasons. Buildings, archives and funds were confiscated, and private Masonic belongings of brethren were requisitioned. Temples were literally destroyed with archives and libraries being sent to Germany, with buildings and furniture sold by public auction. The Grand Master was taken to Germany and died only three months later in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

For Belgium, the Nazis had compiled over 2,000 dossiers on Belgian Freemasons in preparation for their invasion. On completion they immediately ordered the dissolution of Masonic lodges. A total of 179 crates of books, works of art and Masonic furniture were seized and shipped to Germany.

Shortly after the defeat of the Norwegian army in June 1940, the dissolution of Masonic lodges was the first action on the agenda of **Major Vidkun Jonsson Quisling**. Quisling was a Norwegian military officer, politician, and Nazi collaborator who's right wing National Rally Party nominally headed the government of Norway during the occupation of the country by Nazi Germany during WWII.

Also, in June 1940, France signed an armistice with the Nazis and the puppet Vichy government under the regime of Marshal Philippe Pétain caused the two Masonic bodies of France, the Grand Orient and the Grande Loge to be dissolved whilst, at the same time seizing their property and later selling it at auction.

German-occupied Paris hosted an anti-Masonic exhibition in October 1940, as did German occupied Brussels in February 1941. Displaying Masonic ritual and cultural artifacts stolen from lodges, such exhibitions aimed to ridicule and direct hatred towards Freemasons and to heighten fears of a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. German wartime propaganda, particularly in the army, charged that the Jews and Masons had provoked World War II and were responsible for the policies of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, who was identified as a Freemason.

Freemasonry Today published an article by Dr Keith Doney in April 2002 concerning the very active role of Freemasons in the French Resistance. The first active member of the Resistance to be shot by the German Authorities was a Freemason.

In the mid-1930s, **Professor Bernard Fay**, of the College de France and director of the National Library, who was educated at Harvard, authored books which saw him regarded as a masonic critic. He progressed during the occupation of France to an anti-Masonic activist. Credited with the death and suffering of many Freemasons during World War II, he was a very active "collaborator". After the war, he was tried and convicted by a court of justice in Paris.

Despite a plea from the prosecution that he receive the death penalty, the court was lenient and sentenced him to imprisonment at hard labour for life, the confiscation of all his property and "national degradation". When he was interrogated by the court, he told them "I was glad to have in my hands the instrument capable of renovating the country. My mission was to organize a service for the detection of the Freemasons and masonic archives. To be successful in that work, I was obligated to have relations with the Germans". In May 1947, The Philalethes (pronounced "fill-a-LAY-thayss") Magazine (journal of the oldest independent Masonic research society in North America) reported that "The bureau of which Fay was the head prepared a card index containing 60,000 names. Lists of names of Masons were released to the official gazette of the Vichy government for publication, and many catholic papers copied these lists in order to boycott and publicly shame the Brethren so listed. Hunted down and persecuted for the sole reason that they belonged to the Masonic Fraternity, 989 Masons were sent to Germany and 549 were executed by firing squads or perished in concentration camps."

In Greece where both its King George II and Prime Minister Ionnis Metaxas were Freemasons. Twenty-one days after their invasion in April 1941 the Nazis reached Athens and one of their first actions was to go to the Masonic Hall, confiscate whatever records were left there and inflict serious damage to the property. They then arrested the Grand Master, who was taken to prison where he was kept under very harsh conditions, which caused irrevocable damage to his health. Although he was released some seven months later, he never recovered and died in 1947.

The island of Jersey in the Channel Islands, after a night of heavy bombing on 29th June 1940, was invaded by Nazi forces. Despite promises from the German commanders that Freemasons and Masonic property were not at risk, the Masonic Temple was quickly ransacked and Masonic property was either vandalised or shipped off to Germany for an Anti-Masonic exhibition to be carried out in Berlin the following year.

These actions did not go unnoticed. In February 1941, Sven G. Lunden wrote an article in the American Mercury Newspaper under the heading "Nazis and Fascists are engaged in a ruthless campaign aiming at The Annihilation of Freemasonry". The opening words were 'There is only one group of men whom the Nazis and the Fascists hate more than the Jews. They are the Freemasons'.

On 3 October 1942 the Allied forces launched a small scale raid on Sark, comprising 12 officers and men. Five Germans were captured and bound. They attempted to escape but a German officer and a private were killed and another soldier captured. On hearing of this raid Hitler ordered that all captured commandoes were to be shot. As another reprisal, Berlin ordered a further deportation of Channel Islanders comprising specific categories of persons.

On 27 December 1942 the German Military Commander of western occupied Europe sent a telex to the High Command of the Wehrmacht. This document, headed 'secret', ordered that these deportees were to be drawn from specific categories of Channel Islanders including, Jews, high ranking Freemasons and various other categories. Significantly, as far as the deportation of the Jews was concerned, the telex stated that were the person to be deported was the head of a family then the whole family were also to be deported.

From the foregoing actual events, you can see that it is no surprise that many prominent Freemasons were included in the Schellenberg handbook Special Search List of the 2820 persons to be detained following the invasion of Britain. Also included was a directory of establishments and institutions (embassies, universities, newspaper offices and Freemasons' Lodges) in which the Nazis were interested. It included all known British Lodges, including Grand & Provincial Lodges.

The pattern here, following a successful invasion, would have, undoubtedly, followed that of the rest of Europe. However, in the UK, there was potentially an even greater problem for Freemasons. In 1799 English Freemasonry almost came to a halt. In the wake of the French Revolution the Unlawful Societies Act, 1799 banned any meetings of groups that required their members to take an oath or obligation. The Grand Masters of the Premier Grand Lodge and the Antients Grand Lodge (**Prince Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex and Edward, Duke of Kent**, both sons of George III) called on the Prime Minister William Pitt (who was not a Freemason) and explained to him how Freemasonry was a supporter of the law and lawfully constituted authority and was much involved in charitable work. As a result, Freemasonry was specifically exempted from the terms of the Act, provided that each Private Lodge's Secretary placed with the local "Clerk of the Peace" a list of the members of his Lodge - once a year. This continued until 1967 when the obligation of the provision was rescinded by Parliament.

As part of their propaganda campaign against Freemasonry, the Nazis and other local right-wing organisations mounted anti-Masonic exhibitions throughout occupied Europe.

**The next EIGHT slides depict various propaganda images and video used by the Nazis both in Germany and in Nazi occupied countries aimed at raising public support against Freemasonry and linking it with Judaism.**

**SLIDE 1** Propaganda slide entitled "Jewry, Freemasonry and Bolshevism," featuring a poisonous snake with bared fangs. This served as the title slide for Part I of a lecture series produced by the Leader of the SS, the Chief of the Race and Settlement Main Office), ca. 1936.

**SLIDE 2** An Antisemitic and anti Masonic display at the exhibition 'The Eternal Jew'. The exhibition sought to establish a link between Judasim and Freemasonry at Munich, Germany, November 10<sup>th</sup> 1937.

**SLIDE 3** A display entitled 'British Freemasonry' at an antisemitic and Anti Masonic exhibition in Berlin which shows a Torah scroll and the picture of King Edward VII, Prince Albert Duke of Clarence and Prince Arthur Duke of Connaught wearing Masonic regalia, March 7<sup>th</sup> 1941.

**SLIDE 4** Poster entitled 'The Relationship between Jews and Freemasons' The text at the top reads 'World Politics World Revolution' The text at the bottom reads 'Freemasonry as an International organisation beholden to Jewry with the political aim of establishing Jewish domination through World wide Revolution' The poster shows where revolutions took place in Europe from the French revolution to the German revolution and was poster number 64 published in Stuttgart, Germany, 1935.

**SLIDE 5** Anti-Jewish poster issued in German occupied Serbia in the fall of 1941 for the Grand Anti-Masonic Exhibition in Belgrade from October 22, 1941, to January 19, 1942. It has a caricature of a evil looking Jewish elderly man with a long beard that turns into snakes with symbols for Capitalism, Communism and Freemasonry.

**SLIDE 6** Four stamps which were issued by Serbian collaborationist authorities and were on display at the 'Grand Anti Masonic Exhibition' in Serbia, depicting Judaism as being the source of all evil in the world and portraying a "strong and victorious Serbia triumphing over the plot of world domination." An estimated 80,000 people, including collaborationist leader Milan Nedić and some of his ministers, visited the exhibition prior to its closure on January 19, 1942.

**SLIDE 7** White postcard available to purchase entitled 'Exhibition in Logen Museum' This postal card was issued to commemorate the two day September 17-18, 1938, anti-Masonic exhibition at Chemnitz and depicts a skull with a Square and Compasses laid upon an open Bible.

**SLIDE 8** The French film entitled *Forces Occultes* or *Occult Forces* recounts the life of a young member of parliament who joins the Freemasons in order to relaunch his career. He thus learns of how the Freemasons are conspiring with the Jews and the Anglo-American nations to encourage France into a war against Germany.

The film was commissioned in 1942 by the *Propaganda Abteilung*, a delegation of Nazi Germany's propaganda ministry within occupied France by the ex-Mason Jean Mamy which sought to prove a Jewish-Masonic plot. On France's liberation, its writer Jean Marquès-Rivière, its producer Robert Muzard, and its director Jean Mamy were purged for collaboration with the enemy. On 25 November 1945, Muzard was condemned to 3 years in prison and Marquès-Rivière was condemned in his absence (he had gone into self-imposed exile) to death and degradation. Mamy had also been a journalist on the collaborationist journal *Au pilori*, and was thus condemned to death and executed at the fortress of Montrouge on 29 March 1949.

However, one of the most unexpected Masonic happenings during the war was that at least 3 Lodges were actually formed in concentration or detention camps. According to the April 2005 edition of MQ, other 'Masonic' meetings (usually Lodges of Instruction) were held in prisoner-of-war camps in Europe and the Far East.

On the 15 November 1943, seven Belgian Freemasons and resistance fighters founded the Masonic Lodge *Loge Liberté chérie* (Which is French for "Beloved Liberty") inside Hut 6 of Emslandlager VII, Lower Saxony, Germany. The name of the lodge was derived from *La Marseillaise* and they later Initiated, Passed and Raised another Belgian. Only one Founder, Luc Somerhausen and the Initiate Fernand Erauw survived detention, and the Lodge stopped "working" at the beginning of 1944.

Survivors Erauw and Somerhausen met again in 1944 in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and remained inseparable from then on. In the spring 1945 they were involved in the "Death Marches", and although Erauw was just over 6 feet tall on 21 May 1945 in the Saint Pierre Hospital in Brussels he weighed just over 5 stone. In August 1945 Somerhausen sent a detailed report to the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Belgium, in which he delineated the history of the Lodge. He died in 1982 at the age of 79. The last witness Erauw died at the age of 83, in 1997.

L'Obstinée was a the second Masonic Lodge and was founded in the Oflag XD camp by members of the Grand Orient of Belgium. Jean Rey, the Orator of the Lodge, became, in 1967, the second President of the Grand Orient of Belgium which recognized the Lodge on 14 July 1946.

The third Lodge was "Les Frères captifs d'Allah" and who's register is now located at the Grand Orient of France museum.

In 1938 Hitler's own publishing house issued a volume on "Freemasonry, Its World View, Organization and Policies". The preface was written by **Reinhard Heydrich**, who at that time was the second in command of the Gestapo. Heydrich who was a particular favorite of Hitler's closest circle and one of the main architects of the Holocaust later chaired the January 1942 Wannsee Conference, which formalised plans for the Final Solution to the Jewish Question, which ultimately prepared plans for the deportation and genocide of all Jews in German-occupied Europe. Prior to the conference the Jews were just to be deported from Germany to its satellite nations but with direct orders from Hitler himself, Heydrich was given carte blanche over the deadly and horrific outcome of Europe's Jewish population. He subsequently became head of the Reich Security Main Office. The organisation's stated duty was to fight all "enemies of the Reich" inside and outside the borders of Germany, which included Jews, Bolsheviks, Gypsies and Freemasons.

Freemasonry became a particular obsession of Reinhard Heydrich, who counted the Masons, along with the Jews and the political clergy, as the "most implacable enemies of the German race." Heydrich argued for the need to eliminate not only the visible manifestations of these "enemies," but to root out from every German the "indirect influence of the Jewish spirit, a Jewish, liberal, and Masonic infectious residue that remains in the unconscious of many, above all in the academic and intellectual world."

Heydrich was assassinated in 1942 by Czech Army-in-Exile soldiers flown in by the Special Operation Executive, whose job it was to wage a guerrilla type warfare, as well as assisting resistance groups and partaking in espionage. The SOE were also known as the Baker Street Irregulars, Churchills Secret Army and the Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare.

The book itself, written by one **Dieter Schwarz**, discloses that every new Nazi member must "confirm by his word of honour that he does not belong to a Masonic lodge." In outlining the official Nazi view on the subject, it says: "Nordic is the Nazi conception of the world, Jewish-Oriental that of the Freemasons; in contrast to the anti-racial attitude of the lodges, the Nazi attitude is race conscious." More importantly, it goes on "Masonic lodges are . . . associations of men who, closely bound together in a union employing symbolical usages, represent a supra-national spiritual movement, the idea of Humanity and a general association of mankind, without distinction of races, peoples, religions, social and political convictions." It is amazing that Freemasonry's basic ideals are expressed so clearly by its mortal enemies.

It is quite clear from what happened in countries invaded by German forces that large numbers of European Freemasons perished during the Nazi occupations, over and above the thousands killed by Mussolini and Franco. The exact numbers are difficult to assess. However, it is estimated the number of Freemasons who died in the Holocaust to be between 70,000 and 200,000. After World War II, members of the Soviet forces found much of the Masonic material that had been taken by the Nazis. They transported it to archives in Russia and Poland where the material remained unseen for more than 40 years.

The Soviets, like the Nazis before them, wanted to learn about the Fraternity because they too, found Freemasonry threatening to their totalitarian government.

With a thaw in American-Soviet relations, the end of the Cold War, and the eventual break-up of the Soviet Union, the US Holocaust Memorial has been in a unique position to collect materials from archives of the former Soviet Union, Poland, and Romania that were formerly closed to the West. The Museum Archives began to receive a wealth of information relating to the Holocaust which number in excess of one million microfilmed pages many of which relating to the Nazi persecution of Freemasonry including thousands of pages of reports by the German secret police, the Gestapo, relating to their monitoring of Freemason activities in Germany and in other countries. Investigations into and lists of the contents of Masonic Lodges, archives, and libraries that had been confiscated by the Nazis, Papers and publications compiled by various Nazi organizations that relate the threat they saw in Masonry; and lists of members of Masonic Lodges from various Nazi-occupied countries.

**The final slide depicts a Memorial that was created to commemorate the seven founder members of Lodge Liberte Cherie which translates to Cherished Liberty.**

Anyone who visits the Holocaust Memorial Museum will see that it contains a number of segments that relate to the Nazi persecution of Freemasonry. In the segment entitled Technology and Persecution, visitors learn how the Nazis compiled and used information on their "enemies." This segment's text states: "All governments gather information about their citizens. The Nazi regime, however, used such information to track political opponents, enforce racial policies, and, ultimately, implement mass murder. As early as 1934, various government bureaus began to compile card catalogues identifying political and racial enemies of the regime, such as Freemasons, Jews, Gypsies, and 'genetically diseased' persons."

There is very little public acknowledgement of the suffering of Freemasons during the holocaust period, in the UK. If, for example, you look at the BBC website, you will find the following, "Holocaust Memorial Day is an annual event commemorating all of the communities who suffered as a result of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. Activities and events take place throughout the week leading up to the national event throughout the UK. The Queen is patron of the charity that organises the £500,000 event funded by the Home Office. Six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust and HMD was established in 1999 to create a memorial to those who lost their lives. Other Holocaust victims included Slavs, Gypsies, homosexuals, disabled people, anyone of African descent, Christian pastors and Catholic priests, Jehovah's Witnesses, Russian prisoners of war, trade unionists and any other individuals who for whatever reason, were considered racially inferior or seen as degenerates. It is believed that a total of 15 million people died".

You will note that there is not a mention of our Brothers who either faced persecution or death. It is worth remembering that every Fuhrer Order in respect of the Holocaust started with the words, 'An Order in respect of Freemasons and Jews'. It is difficult to find any references to the death of masons in the Holocaust, in the media or other publications.

But the attacks and the hatred continue - David Sands writing in the Washington Times in July 2004 said that in some countries anti-Masonry is often related to anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. This view is strongly felt in the Middle East.

For example, in 1980, the Iraqi legal and penal code was changed by Saddam Hussein's ruling Ba'ath Party, making it a felony to "promote or acclaim Zionist principles, including Freemasonry. . .". The charter of Hamas, the Islamist party governing Gaza in Article 22 says of the Jews: "They were behind the French Revolution, the communist revolution and most of the revolutions we've heard and hear about. With their money, they formed secret societies, such as Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, the Lions and others in different parts of the world for the purpose of sabotaging societies." As recently as 2016 the FBI foiled a plot by an Islamic extremist to attack a Masonic building in Milwaukee, USA.

Closer to home the threat of Fascism is still a reality with several European countries having extreme Right-wing parties either gaining much more of the vote as seen in France, Holland Austria, Italy, Sweden, Spain and Germany and/or being in government which is the case in Hungary. The threat of many of these parties being asked to form coalitions in the near future is a real threat that is very relevant today.

In conclusion Brethren, we must be thankful that Hitler postponed the Invasion plans for 1940, partly due to the Battle of Britain still being fought and therefore air supremacy still in the balance and a strong Royal Naval presence aligned with the fact that as an island we would have been much more difficult to successfully invade, otherwise we may well have succumbed to the same fate as many of those landlocked countries of Europe of which the Nazi war machine unceremoniously and viciously swept through and our own British Masonic predecessors could have faced the same persecution of their European Brethren and I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that had the Allies lost the Second World War, Freemasonry in Europe as we know it, and perhaps even the World, would have ceased to exist.

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