A Short History of Freemasonry

Its Role in the Revolutions and Shaping of the Modern World

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# Table of Contents

Introduction… 3

1. Medieval Europe… 8

2. Theories of Origin… 17

3. The Rise of Science and Humanism… 26

4. Masonic Founding and Formation… 34

5. Freemasonry and the Concepts of Reformation… 44

6. The Age of Enlightenment… 55

7. The American Revolution… 67

8. The French Revolution… 78

9. Le Grand Orient de France… 91

10. Freemasonry in Germany and the Bavarian Illuminati… 97

11. Freemasonry in Russia and the Decembrists… 107

12. The Russian Revolution(s) and Political Freemasonry… 125

13. Freemasonry in Ukraine from the XVIII to the Early XX century… 139

Conclusion… 155

Bibliography… 162
This work is dedicated to one of the most famous closed societies that are still in existence. Its significance in history was seriously peculiar and the major task of this study is to analyze how powerful was its influence. Did it stand behind the whole variety of events from the American to the Russian Revolutions? What was the role of Freemasonry in the French Revolution and how it could influence politics? These questions are answered in this work by providing a sequential and thorough analysis of Masonic history. This organization’s connection to the Enlightenment and Protestantism, differences between Freemasons and their ritualistic systems are forming the main part of the given monograph.
Introduction

The question of Freemasonry is usually a part of some larger discussion, which cannot be resolved in one or two words. Its history is long and complicated, full of myths and gossip that makes the work of any historian overly complicated and often not possible. The most challenging part of any research on Freemasonry and its history is finding trustworthy materials that can shed light upon this secret society or as many Freemasons themselves say, the society with secrets. Yellow press materials, conspiracy theories, and journalism that has nothing to do with true academic research lead to misunderstandings. The real picture of this organization may not be very obvious to the world, but it can be traced and shown without any shattering and eventually provide objective information to any reader. It must exist in archives and books written by academic historians that did not follow any particular gossip, but wanted to find the real and basic meaning of how and why the society of Freemasons came into being, who were the early leaders of this organization, and how did they influence it. Certainly, how did the organization influence the world, and who were the early Freemasons, how did this fraternity had changed society so much that we now may call it modern? Or it did not change anything and was merely the side project of some liberal rationalists? That is important to look at the roots of Freemasonry, its history, and how did it evolve from being a small fraternity of aristocrats and scientists, into the most famous society with secrets? Why were so many famous philosophers, political thinkers, and politicians of the eighteenth-century Freemasons, and what was their role in forming new visions of life? Did this organization gain its foremost base during the Enlightenment and become the club of intellectuals that have learned how to gain the potential to unite people from different races, gather knowledge and create progress as was done by Voltaire and Montesquieu? All these questions are being raised in this study, and try to open it up with academic precision avoiding the yellow press, casual newspaper articles, or biased information that cannot be proven without any additional citations and scientific evidence. Books and papers that collect conspiracy theories and other materials are not used at all and can be related merely as examples of how not to lead an investigation into history. Often it becomes way more difficult to understand how Freemasonry had changed and where it was forming its myths, which were the matter of discussions and disagreements among the Freemasons themselves. Some of them believe that the Knights Templar stands at the beginning of their fraternity, some say it goes back to King Solomon himself, but others insist that their origin may be traced back to the medieval guilds and building fraternities. All these accounts may seriously differ from one another and as the Masonic historian J.W.S Mitchell stated in The History of Freemasonry and Digest, -

Since the publication of Anderson’s Constitutions, containing a very faithful account of English Masonry, and a fancy sketch of its origin, many sketches have been written, claiming to be historical, no two of which, it is believed, agree as to the time when the Order instituted.  


2 J.W.S. Mitchell, The History of Freemasonry and Masonic Digest [...] to which are Added the Old Charges and Ancient Regulations as Collated by Order of the Grand Lodge of England, in 1722, Volume 1, (Marietta, Geo., Published by the author, 1859) at pp. 7-8.
In other words, there is a lot of credible Masonic literature made on the academic level, written by academicians that provide different points of view. Many historians who wrote about this fraternity were not Freemasons, however, it does not mean that they were not or cannot be trustworthy or less knowledgeable. Many experts on the matters of Freemasonry and its history could be aware of so many open sources that were enough to draw the general picture because practically everything that Freemasonry does or did is known and cannot be a part of any top-secret information not available to an independent researcher. Archives, rituals, personalities that used to be Freemasons, their views, and the use of symbolism are technically known today. This particular notion must be the guiding light of any historian that wishes to write an analysis of the society of Freemasons, its origins, and its true meaning of it.

Freemasonry and the modern world coincide because the Age of Enlightenment goes along with the emergence of Freemasonry in Europe. The whole discourse is technically part of the general Western Civilization, and when discussing the term ‘modern world’ it should be additionally mentioned that it is directly connected to the history of Europe and North America. Nowadays, the fraternity of Freemasons is an intricate part of the whole world, from Japan to South Africa and from Argentina to Ukraine, however, if talking about the medieval European guilds or the Reformation, it all can be traced back to Europe. The first belongs to the formation of Freemasonry if going back to its origins, the latter had historically coincided with it and both were always trying to peacefully coexist, even though often it does not work out - in many countries this organization is still forbidden. The guilds may be put at the organizational origins of Freemasonry, its structure, many technical or operative terms, symbols, etc, belong to them and cannot be separated. Some historians trace the origins of Freemasonry to the Knights Templar or even King Solomon, however, along with one of the most prominent historians of Freemasonry, Robert Freke Gould, this discussion will try to disapprove such theories.

No attempt will be made to follow the beaten road of those voluminous plodders of Masonic history, who make Masons of every man of note, from Adam to Nimrod, and from Nimrod to Solomon, down to the present day… In the history of Freemasonry there are no speculations which are worthy of more critical investigation than its conjectual origin…

Basically, many theories are offered to the reader, and they all will certainly be taken seriously from the position of historical analysis and ought to be studied in vitro without taking them as serious evidence. In other words, the investigatory approach is the real scientific tool of history because history itself is not science but is capable of using the tools of science as a detective applies chemistry in forensic studies. This particular work is using credible citations and relates to authors who have used the same approach and made their publications at accredited universities or publishing houses. Surely this work is incorporating materials kept by Freemasons in their archives, repositories, and lodges open and that are available to any interested independent researcher. A lot of materials were taken from the nineteenth-century Masonic journals and records.

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3 George Franklin Fort, *The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry: As Connected with Ancient Norse Guilds, and the Oriental and Mediæval Building Fraternities*, (Bradley, 1881) at pp. 133-134.
Modernity and the Age of Enlightenment are closely related; the early wake-up of science and liberal arts are reflected in the Masonic Second Degree—Fellow Craft, in which the understanding of human reasoning is represented by the Seven Noble Arts and Sciences. Astronomy, Logic, Arithmetic, Grammar, Rhetoric, Geometry, and Music. All of them stand in the center of the Age of Enlightenment. Therefore, this direct connection to modernity and Freemasonry will be thoroughly discussed. Most certainly all these connections do not mean that Freemasonry was somewhat creating or inventing the modern world, however, its participation in the process is quite obvious and technically stands in the middle of the discussion when the modern world is ever mentioned. Shaping of the rough stone or the Ashlar [as known in the Masonic tradition] is especially important in Masonic symbolism and the allegorical reference includes scientific changes that have shaped the social fabric since the 1600s and 1700s. Generally, it is important to pay a lot of attention to the symbols in Freemasonry because they principally explain most of it. The Second Degree is especially important in understanding the connection between science and Freemasonry, and the latter’s attempt to unite social classes [to be on the level], races and political views, etc. Science and wisdom are capable of uniting different types of people; the light bulb works the same everywhere when theological understandings may differ and split. For example, the concept and symbolism of the level are not merely alluding to architecture and tools of builders, but create almost political and religious meaning out of it because all the Brethren in a lodge are equal regardless of their position in the world, it also refers to the nature and death that unites all human beings.\(^5\) In other words, Masonic symbols and Charges should be looked upon as something that can explain and further add to the discussion of progressive ideas of the age and better present the connection between Freemasonry and science.

Nevertheless, did this organization, which has its roots in Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, really shape these and later developments, and revolutionary changes in the Western civilization, or was it merely an integral part of it? The study insists that it was not the cause, but a part of the larger process of changes and developments that took place during the 1500s shaping the world known today. Freemasonry was participating in the process becoming somewhat closely related to all these changes. Many Freemasons were movers and shakers of the American and French Revolutions, and without them, it is often difficult to imagine these historical events. George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, Lafayette, and Danton all were Freemasons with different personal views on how the world is supposed to be. They belonged to the pluralist fraternity where all their ideas could be tolerated, making it a laboratory of all these new concepts that they cherished. Tolerance is an important part of the modern world. How did the fraternity of Freemasons assist to shape it and build a better society? This question is answered in two ways, first, the level of involvement of Freemasons in the changes is analyzed alongside the origins of Freemasonry. Second, it describes the history of circumstances that took place before and during the formation of Freemasonry, for example, the Reformation and the Age of Enlightenment are compared with this organization. Even the European historical setting during the Middle Ages is looked upon as the breeding ground for

it, particularly for the guilds that have played an important role in the establishment of Masonic traditions.

Polymaths have followed the principle of Seven Noble Arts and Sciences even when they were not Freemasons and have never heard of the Second Degree in it. Such people of the Renaissance as Leonardo da Vinci, who practiced different kinds of self-progress, possessed many talents, and did not focus only on liberal arts or sciences, but united them in their personalities and interests. The idea of enlightenment was the fabric of Renaissance and humanism, thus, could not just participate in one or two organizations or fraternities, so logically the whole notion of time was producing such thinking groups that believed in progress. Natural philosophy began to challenge theology, though they were not always parting ways but could peacefully coexist as in the case of Erasmus. According to Karl Rudolph Hagenbach, Erasmus was able to unite the Seven Noble Arts and Sciences of the classical age [later Masonic Second Degree], and natural philosophy with the concept of theology, or the methods to better understand it.6

Another interesting factor that is discussed in the work is the difference between the Middle Ages [and their values] and the upcoming Renaissance. Particularly, it is important to understand the origins of Freemasonry that did not begin in 1717 for sure and had longer, but most likely non-mythical ancestry. The question of the medieval guilds and building fraternities is addressed directly in the work, they are good examples of the collection of knowledge of the day and social organization that later shaped Freemasonry. As it was argued on the first page, there are different views on the origins of this fraternity, some are more mythical and allude to the very ancient origin, and some believe that it grew out of the medieval guilds and later united with the humanist and polymathic ideas during the Age of Enlightenment in England. The famous historian of Freemasonry George Franklin Fort argued that English guilds during the Middle Ages were specifically important and practically stood at the base of Freemasonry as an organization.7 Also, it was noted that merely the academic sources are included in the work, and such academics as Fort may be one of the best examples of such authorship. Though some others, also profoundly serious historians such as Emmanuel Rebold believed that the beginnings of Freemasonry should be traced back to Egypt [or at least the culture of building fraternities there], later transferred to Greeks and the Roman King Numa Pompilius, who had instituted the Colleges of Builders in his lands.8 Both points of view share the bits and pieces of truth that should be evaluated and included in any worth-reading study. It cannot be said that the Knights Templar have absolutely nothing to do with Freemasonry and especially the notion of innovations that surround them in Europe. The Knights Templar introduced innovations not merely by their ability to link monks and warriors, but through the introduction of the banking system in which they were early masters.9 Nevertheless, there is no direct proven connection between Freemasons and the Templars and even though this work analyzed any possibility, it

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6 Karl Rudolph Hagenbach, _Theological encyclopedia and methodology: On the basis of Hagenbach_, (Phillips & Hunt, 1884) at p. 120.
7 Fort, _The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry_. pp. 125-131.
8 Emmanuel Rebold, _A General History of Freemasonry: Based Upon the Ancient Documents Relating To, and the Monuments Erected by this Fraternity, from Its Foundation, in the Year 715 B.C., to the Present Time_, (American Masonic Publishing Association, 1872) at p. 34.
looks more or less skeptical of these theories of the fraternity’s origin. Moreover, Freemasons do not belong to the religious organization, when Templars were belonging to the Catholic Church, until their shady banishment. Plus, Freemasons were never related to the banking system, developed by the later Templars.

A lot of attention is paid to the rise of revolutions in Europe and how they could or were connected to the fraternity of Freemasons. It is true that many movers and shakers of the American and French Revolutions were indeed Freemasons and acted a big role in the foundation of the United States and the establishment of the French Republic, in the case of the latter, more than once. However, the brethren were often standing on two sides of the conflict, in other words, not all of those, who were Freemasons fought against King George III, and not all of those, who were French royalists, were not Freemasons. Many accusations against them or praising of this fraternity originate during the period between the 1770s and 1790s. The Russian Revolution was able to change world history, the world known today was in many ways strongly influenced by that event. Political Freemasonry in Russia from 1906 to 1917 had been widely presented in its political circles, thus its role in the Revolution is thoroughly examined. Everything that is connected to Freemasonry and Russia is closely related to the progressive or revolutionary events in Ukraine. This country was connected to the developments in Russian Freemasonry and had influenced it. Many political Freemasons in Ukraine between 1906 and 1917 were important in the establishment of the first Ukrainian Republic and the state in 1917-1918.

At the same time, a lot of attention is given to the factor of splits and differences that were also an integral part of the history of Freemasonry. One of the factors that contributed to it was politics. The reason why the discussion of politics is forbidden during the Ritual Labors in the Lodge is that the latter issue always divides people and Freemasons believed in the concept of level and unity. Often this Masonic stance can lead to the accusation of moral indifference. Nevertheless, despite the ban on political discussions, it always existed among Freemasons and split them, if not in the Lodge but the real life. Some fought on the side of Napoleon [Napoleonic Masonry], some on the side of the anti-Napoleonic coalition and it all could not be escaped. These issues are placed at the center of discussion and are answered with the help of many prominent historians that have studied Freemasonry such as George Franklin Fort, Robert Freke Gould, Robert Macoy, J.G. Findel, Georg Kloss, Robert Gallatin Mackey, Emmanuel Rebold, Claude-Antoine Thory, Oksana Kryzhanivska, and many others.

The whole complexity of the main question, which is pointing to the issue of whether Freemasonry was an integral part in the shaping of the modern world, whether it was the leader of the process, or it did not participate at all is thoroughly discussed in the given study. At times when many prominent representatives of the European and its colonial elites belonged to this fraternity, and vigorously participated in almost all historical developments of their time, it appears that the influence of the fraternity was somewhat strong, however, it might have been an exaggeration, and any objective analysis must keep an eye on any subjectivity that often appears in this or similar cases. Practically, when dealing with an organization that has been operating on a high cultural and political level for three centuries and was often disliked or just the opposite when it was welcomed and seen as something patriotic and positive, that is often

10 The Freemason's Repository, Volume 20, (E. L. Freeman & Son, 1891) at p. 269.
easy to fall into personal opinions which cannot be objective. Therefore, any opinion based on non-academic sources, not supported by the archival materials, and non-Masonic accounts that were not confirmed by other academics shall not be presented. Eventually, the major question [as in any research] of this work is to show whether Freemasonry had influenced the formation of modernity or not. Did it form conceptual meaning used by the people today or they were merely a part of the overall process that had begun long before its founding in 1717? These questions are answered by the following study and hopefully with maximum objectivity.

Medieval Europe

I

Religion

To understand the context in which the whole topic of the discussion came about, it is important to look at the age. Before Freemasonry was formally and ritualistically organized [1717], what kind of surroundings were presented in Europe for centuries and how did they influence its construction? The first thing which usually appears in the minds of so many is the issue of religion in Medieval Europe. It was surely dominating all the aspects of life there, personal, and public, and nothing could be moved or changed without its direct or indirect influence. Particularly it became obvious after the Church began to remove influences of the laymen on its internal affairs, that it corresponded with the rise of monasteries and religious orders such as the Cistercian or Cluniac.11 Political and ideological domination of the Catholic Church was at the centerpiece of all life, it dealt with the everyday proceedings and what was maybe way more important, it was taking care of the main questions of life and death. The order of that day was controlled and shaped by the Church ideologically and very often politically. If any teaching [theological or secular] wanted to speak of itself and manifest, it had to undergo the process of confirmation or rejection by the local or central ecclesiastical authorities. No monarch or the mighty feudal could escape that order of the day in France, Flanders, or England. As Robert Bartlett had put it out, -

Medieval Christianity was certainly based on a set of doctrines, and those who dissented from those doctrines were persecuted and sometimes executed, but the heart of the religion was not creed but a range of ritual and devotional customs. The Christian life was framed by the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, marriage and anointing of the dead, and found regular expression in the sacraments of mass and penance.12

The general picture that is often pointed out and given to many contemporary readers is that the age was very dark. There were moments of true darkness without any chances of light

to get through, but it all should not be seen merely through the lens of negativity. As given in
the quote above, the perception of that time was the sheer domination of religion with
sometimes applied persecutions of those who did not confirm, however, it was not something
that took place all the time. With the dominance of rituals, and everyday customs, some
believed more and some less. Often drawn pictures of total tragedy and destruction cannot be
seen as true and the quote above is showing it. The perception of Christ in those days was also
not identical and varied depending on the given image, often he was seen as the nemesis of all
sinners [especially under the influence of St. Francis and his sermon], ruler of eternity, and
sometimes as a good teacher and a savior. A similar understanding of the day can be drawn
from practically all the aspects of life in those days. It was not all illustrious or dark, nor full
of sheer and constant violence. There will be enough violence in the future of Europe when it
splits religiously, though that age is not associated with medievalism. What should be
addressed is the fact that the Catholic Church was dominating Europe ideologically and any
single idea that could go in contrast with its official teachings was not welcomed or understood
by the authorities. Often it was associated with the affairs of the inner life of the Church, and
many later prominent ecclesiastical institutions were not accepted when they first appeared
before its judgment. Franciscans were not accepted immediately and, for example, in England
early Dominicans and Franciscans were not welcoming the rich material possessions owned by
the Church in that country, they even called to avoid its control and order. However, to
succeed they needed to look for acceptance from the Church and eventually the latter absorbed
them, and both became one. The point of it is that even those institutions or opinions that were
part of the Church still needed to get acceptance from it.

Many may say that in this kind of environment it was nearly impossible to get any
progressive ideas, that everything had to be confirmed, free thoughts did not last, and all
intellectual life stood still. The Nautical Magazine in London had argued in 1874, but in the
long period known as the Middle Ages, from various causes, a complete intellectual stagnation set in; ... Such
opinions are compared to the contemporary days of those when they have lived when the
modern approach to science was already explored. Certainly, people during the Middle Ages
did not know many things that were already well understood by the second half of the
nineteenth century. However, the Church itself was often the source of gathering knowledge
that was long forgotten after the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and the only centers of
literacy were in the monasteries. As George Ferzoco argues in his article The Changing Face
of Tradition: Monastic Education in the Middle Ages, the cathedral schools and early
universities established by the Church were paying a lot of attention to education and
underlined the factor and importance of monastic learning. In his work, he quoted Stephen
Jaeger whose full quote is seemingly very accurate and fits the discussion.

13 Ibid., at p. 75.
14 Sir Edward Shepherd Creasy, History of England from the Earliest to the Present Time: The History During
the Early and Middle Ages, (J Walton, 1870) at p. 247.
15 The Nautical Magazine: A Journal of Papers on Subjects Connected with Maritime Affairs, Volume 43,
(Brown, Son and Ferguson, 1874) at p. 929.
16 George Ferzoco, Carolyn Muessig, Medieval Monastic Education, an article by George Ferzoco, The
Monasticism gave Europe new ways of studying; humanism gave it new ways of behaving; scholasticism gave it new ways of thinking.\(^{17}\)

This opinion seems to be quite objective due to its lack of sharp criticism, but all points of view should be given while judging the Medieval period in Europe and particularly the factor of religion during that time. It was truly dominating the day and any position that could or was critical of the official teaching of the Church was not accepted at all. Nevertheless, there were early centers of knowledge that remained under the protection of the Catholic Church, and such groups as Dominicans or Franciscans are good examples of it. What is also important is that the process of learning, keeping the knowledge, gathering information, and even influencing events was best done when standing as one group, which was united by the internal organization and the code of conduct.

II

Feudalism

The Middle Ages were closely related to the social structure with almost fixed roles and positions, better known as feudalism. Nation states did not exist, but ethnic groups did as always, they have incorporated various ethnic characteristics, within their dialects, cultures, and customs. Nevertheless, belonging to one or the other feudal lord whose allegiance was vowed to the King or Duke, usually the supreme lord in the country. What may be particularly interesting about that time is that there was almost no chance for most of the population that was belonging to servants to get out, change their strains and become someone else. Completely fixed social lifts and levers were the quality of birth and not something that could be achieved with personal talents or hard work. If one was born a peasant, then there was one narrow road left to exist in bondage with the local gentry that owned the very land upon which a peasant was born. Could this issue be changed with legal measures? Definitely, no. The only way to make such changes was the way of the road, running away from the landlord, getting away from those who kept a peasant and his family in feudal captivity could by no means be the peaceful one. For example, the biggest social rebellion in England that was led by a single peasant and joined by many of them took place under the young king Richard II in 1381; it was one of the most famous challenges to the known social system in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages. One of the factors behind it was the preceding plague that wiped out many landlord families and simply hastened the race for a better position on the social ladder, making certain areas of life vacant.\(^{18}\) Any kind of representation in the Parliament was impossible, the Statute of Labourers [if speaking solely about England] fixed the position of peasants even further, and the post-plague demand from the landowners to villeins to return to their old service [apart from the latter’s payments] had eventually summed in the well-known Peasant


Revolt.\textsuperscript{19} The infamous critic of the gentry, John Ball, who was eventually thrown into prison had reportedly said, \textquote{When Adam delved and Eve span. Who was then a gentleman?}\textsuperscript{20}

Another example of the fixed social structure was the Church, which was often the subject of attacks from those who wanted more changes, asking it to resign the riches and demanded its internal reform. John Wycliffe became one of those precursors of the Reformation and eventually caused criticism, making it possible and even if speaking about the Peasant Revolt of 1381 in England, he was one of the ideological contributors. The movement was not new, Cistercians before him were asking the Church to go back to the apostolic poverty, openly criticizing the established order, Franciscans were not far behind them, if not ahead of the process. These two monastic orders were eventually absorbed by the Church; however, the idea did not disappear and Wycliffe’s followers, also known as Lollards, had been continuing the undertaking before the revolt and made many peasants question the authority. Wycliffe and his followers were under scrutiny mainly due to their supposedly influential ideological role in the rebellion, and his questioning of the existing order from a theological pulpit.\textsuperscript{21} There was no chance to move on and merely the inborn position in society was seen as normal and any shattering such as the plague or someone like the lonely preacher, or yet another rise of taxation could make the lower classes think about raising. Later on, the whole position of the fraternity of Freemasons will be standing on the principle of no social classes inside the organization, even though it was in many ways created by the gentry or at least people such as John Desaguliers, an academician and scientist. The order of the day demanded taxes and villains had to provide them to the landlord, and kings or grand dukes had to pay homage to the emperor [Holy Roman Empire], higher the position was more payment had been made by the longer chain of peoples of title. The intellectual base could not grow in a society where there was no actual base for a reform other than the rebellion or some sort of radical change in the structure because feudalism was too profitable to one side of the society and completely usurping the other. At this point, it may be also added that starting with the energetic Church orders such as Franciscans or Dominicans, later the movement of Lollards and their leader John Wycliffe, the future Reformation would be the driving force behind many changes in the feudal structure in Europe. Once the authority is questioned by one man, then others may look up to him and do the same thing. For that matter, Medieval Europe and its feudal structure were growing the seeds of upcoming changes, and that is the reason why the first chapter of this study is dedicated to this particular period. The main topic of discussion, the fraternity of Freemasons, was rooted in that era, it was structurally created in the guilds and fraternities of builders that were more or less free from the typical social structure of the day. Guilds had more rights, they were mostly located in towns [free from the landlord-servant model], and above all, the group of builders or stonecutters could travel. Hence is the term traveler, so often used in Freemasonry today.\textsuperscript{22} As Joseph Gwilt mentioned in his Encyclopaedia of Architecture, the term \textit{fremason} was first seen on the fabric rolls of the Exeter

\textsuperscript{19} Samuel Rawson Gardiner, \textit{A Student’s History of England: From the Earliest Times to 1885}, (Longman’s Green and Company, 1892) at p. 268.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 268.
\textsuperscript{22} Oscar Patterson III, \textit{Rough Mason, Mason, Freemason, Accepted Mason}, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017) at p. 4.
Cathedral around 1396. At least these were the first historical accounts of this term to be used in Europe. In one way or another, the social structure of the medieval and feudal society was challenging progress, including those in the Catholic Church that longed for more changes but bounced off the fixed structure of the given system that did not want to move on. Gentry was coming from the Latin word, genus; the ruling class believed that they were coming from the better stock of people, far advancing the peasantry or the town’s free people. The rough and cruel measures applied against those who were challenging it were uncompromising and stationary in their position. One of the biggest rebellions that could question the order of things in England and possibly other parts of Europe was squashed. Surprisingly, the young king Richard II had managed to speak to the crowd of peasants in London while Walworth, the Mayor of London slew the peasant leader Wat Tyler right in front of his followers. The king’s sudden speech made the crowd obey him, and get into dispersion, thus ending the challenge with only one true winner - the gentry.

III

The Knighthood

What was holding the fabric of that society together is the question of when and how it was formed, or who was in the center. Surely all such social structures where the majority belongs to the peasant’s class and where even the free tenants do not have any strong voice are controlled by the relatively small group. For example, according to Christopher Dyer and his source of this information, historian E.A. Kosminsky, In one sample of 22,000 peasants from the East Midlands in 1279, 29 percent of villein holdings contained less than 7 acres, while 47 percent of free tenants came into this smallholding category. Villains were practically at the bottom, but often their holdings could be even larger than those of the free tenants and both categories were bound to their lords. Generally, up to 80 percent of the population of thirteenth century England consisted of a peasantry that depended on the resources available to them such as timber or anything available in the lands they have been cultivating. These numbers are remarkably similar throughout the Middle Ages and not merely in that country including most of Europe. The whole structure of bondage was not held only by the group of aristocratic families, Hapsburgs, Anjou, or Plantagenets, but needed more men at arms that knew how to use their weapons better than any rebellious peasant. These were the knights, a force that was holding the whole principle of gentry together, with its chivalric codes and generally the right to carry arms, the whole system was cemented together by their means of power grip over the land. Such a class of men was powerful enough to hold the medieval societies together. Only if they were killing each other, died during the plague, or on a Crusade, the lower class of tenants and villains could get out of their huts and somewhat manage to exercise the social lifts because such events could not just

23 Joseph Gwilt, An Encyclopaedia of Architecture, Historical, Theoretical, and Practical, (Longmans, Green, 1876) at p. 127.
25 Ibid., pp. 133-134.
remove the local knight or lord but change the family bounds to local customs.  

Depopulation that was caused by the plague [Black Death] in the 1300s was tremendous and often led to the loss of half of the population, and Sardinia can be the best example of it. Though the medieval plague is not the topic of this chapter, it is important to understand that during the Middle Ages merely these kinds of shattering could influence the social pattern faster than anything else including the growth of economic individualism [that formed later], evolving aristocracy, etc. The knighthood was formed out of those who at some point in history were brave or strong enough to pick up the arms, went and served other powerful men with weapons, and often without any chivalry becoming their friends and servants. At some point, their children also began to have the right to bear arms and conquer lands or get them for granted by the above-standing lord. The knighthood was also not as chivalric [though chivalry did exist, and the class of knights and other medieval aristocrats did gradually change] as many may suggest today. The fleur of nearly angelic qualities that were given to the medieval aristocrats that were supposedly cherishing their ladies, kept their words to the last but were able to kill their opponent without any hesitation over some simple issues such as the loss in the game of chess or dice as in the case of Fulk fitz Warin. Their jousts and violent quarrels over simple things eventually grew into more complicated and serious European conflicts, undertakings in the Middle East during the Crusades, castle building in Wales to subdue the local Welsh population, and many more.

Monarchs were the biggest knights in the land whose ancestors managed to take the biggest grip over the land. Plantagenets, Angevins, or Habsburgs were born out of bloody conflicts with other families and over the power struggle inside their own families. Angevins-Plantagenets, for example, were known as the devil’s brood due to the legend of their origin and the later appliance of cruelty upon their relatives and subjects. Violence and intimidation was the rule that kept one knight over the other, particularly in the whole system of lordship led by the knights. Otherwise, it would be completely impossible to rule the vast majority of villains and tenants, especially if they were from foreign lands such as attempts to submit to Scotland during the first War of Scottish Independence or the Norman Conquest of England. In both cases, one group of knights led by barons was supposed to remove or break the local aristocracy and make them pay homage. Surely none of it was possible with the chivalric codes alone. At the same time, chivalry did exist, the rights and customs cannot be denied, too. Knights were gathering into organizations known as the orders and the Church was playing the leading role in this process. To a certain degree, it may be theorized that these orders showed an example of how to organize or manage a semi-or completely closed organization. It can be related to Freemasonry which often calls itself the order with chivalric traditions. One of the most famous was the Order of the Knights Templar and it is no coincidence why this order is


27 Ibid., p. 150.


presented in this study. Later, Freemasons [the mid-1700s] began to openly incorporate their symbolism into the Higher Degrees. *The Masonic Voice Review* composed by C. Moore openly stated, -

The Ancient and Accepted Rite [Scottish Rite., the system of higher degrees in Freemasonry., O.K] in its turn repudiates the Templars; and, although the high grades confer a Templar degree, yet they profess to have no dealings with that body, while, to make the matter more confused, almost every high-grade Mason is a Masonic Knight Templar...\(^{30}\)

Nevertheless, it will be more important when the future discussion will touch on the question of Masonic origin. At this point what matters is the presence of violence and powerful procurement of control over the subject exercised by the knighthood. However, the acts of chivalry and gradual shaping of the warrior class also was taking place. Often these chivalric acts were dictated by religious customs and regulations. For example, St. Bernard did not allow the Templars to hunt out deer or net partridges, and only lions were permitted to be hunted by the statute.\(^{31}\) Templars were the only religious knight’s order that was probably the riches, it brought the system of banking [early checks] to Europe, but was not humble enough and it attracted too much jealousy from those who owned them more than they could pay back. This was the only order of knights that was destroyed and technically eliminated when other similar groups of knights continued to exist. They were the most noticeable among the others in Europe of the day, their order portrays the complexity of the medieval knighthood that was feudal and violent, but at the same time chivalric, elitist, and sometimes mysterious. Once again, there is no clear evidence that they were directly connected to Freemasonry, however, their name and some symbols are used by the latter, so it was also interesting to particularly mention the Templars.

IV

Monasteries

When discussing the Middle Ages or just briefly mentioning them, in any case, it is impossible to avoid writing about the monasteries. What was their role during that time and how that role could have later influenced the formation of societies with their agenda, concepts, and sharing of knowledge? Technically, they were in the center of the Catholic Church foundations, the model of a pious and a true Christian who had resigned this world before it could catch him/her. However, the life in them was not purely a life of isolation and negligence towards the world because humans remain of flesh and blood regardless of the circumstances, and they also could not merely stay without any activity [as any human being]. The word monk or a nun should not and cannot be associated with the concept of complete erasure of human qualities. What particularly may be in the sphere of interest is the preservation of knowledge that became especially important in the monasteries during the Middle Ages. Possibly it was the most interesting and peculiar activity that was carried on with the monastic life during that


era. The collection of works written in Latin, the very preservation of this language, and translations from Arabic of the old Greek and other Latin texts became the main task given to scribes. Scriptorium is probably as important to the formation of Western civilization as the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg. It was crucially quintessential to the organization of each monastery and took care of their libraries, and the better it was organized, the higher role any given monastic institution was playing in the cultural or political life of the region. Historian Robert Morrissey in his book Charlemagne and France: A Thousand Years of Mythology, relates to another researcher Du Boulay who had connected medieval monasteries to the centers of knowledge and erudition, comparing them to such places of education as universities. It is important to mention the role of such monastic orders as Franciscans and Dominicans in the spread of this knowledge sharing inside the medieval monasteries. The famous Scotists’ school was named after John Duns Scotus who belonged to the Franciscan order and may be seen as one of its most prominent figures of that age. His influence on thinkers such as Roger Bacon is surely imminent.

The single name of Roger Bacon, the marvel of medieval letters, the divine, the philosopher, the linguist, the experimentalist, the practical mechanician, would in itself have sufficed to make the reputation of his order, had his contemporaries not failed to appreciate his merit. We may add that in the revival of art the Franciscan order bore an active, liberal, and enlightened part.

What may matter is that all their activities were not necessarily connected to theology or the studies of the Bible. The collection of knowledge is surely connected to all kinds of it, including mathematics, mechanics, languages, and many more. At this point, it may be interesting to say that here it is possible to find one more parallel with the Masonic Second Degree, which pretty much includes the direct allusions to polymathic activities of the medieval universities or monastic scribes. Here it may also be argued that the future fraternity of Freemasons is not necessarily the author of these concepts, but the follower. The Dominican order had produced such famous personalities as Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, and Raymund de Pennafort, but at the same time, they became also famous for their involvement in the Inquisition and rivalry with Franciscans [Thomists vs. Scotists]. Notably, such disputes that have arisen from the mentioned rivalries were also contributing to the dialogue and helped to produce a better quality of grammar, rhetoric, and logic among the friars of both orders. Simultaneously it must be said that these rivalries were shaping knowledge and made a colossal contribution to the rise of European academia. Additionally, there is no doubt that any future fraternity or society would try to model itself based on these medieval brotherhoods that were not merely considering prayers and theology but were also involved in secular studies that they were often mixing with the studies of God. It may be said that the collection of knowledge that was taking place in these medieval scriptoriums and monastic cells is probably the most peculiar period of the medieval era when looking at the roots of modernity. This surely would

not take place without the presence of the Catholic Church, a protectorate from the Pope and the aristocrats that were strongly influenced by the Church. There is no doubt they were influenced by the cultural activities of the friars who mainly taught the illiterate and warlike knights to read and write. Latin and Greek could be learned only from them and together with them, the roots of the classic era could grow through the almost illiterate feudal soil of the minds of the people. Could it be done without the presence of the Church? Probably not at all because monasteries belonged to the large network, monastic fraternities and orders were making that network function, and the functioning required financial resources that were equally connected to the legal rights of the Church and to the lands that belonged to it. The infamous quarrel between King John and Pope Innocent III over Stephen Langton and his appointment to the archbishop’s seat of Canterbury showed the power of the Bishop of Rome and his capability to argue even with the king. Feudal landlords could not touch their lands without serious consequences, and particularly during the medieval era when the Church had the most power, it could overlook this network and preserve its functioning abilities. The Pope and the Church during that time played the role of a unifying system that may be compared to the UN today but is much stronger. Having these capabilities, it could protect itself and the organizations that were controlled by it, and those certainly included monasteries and universities that were notably influenced by the Church and were formed by different monastic brotherhoods. Education was important and these brotherhoods played a crucial role in doing so, and at the same time being part of the greater Church system.

For the Church is a living community, lay and ecclesiastical, dedicated to the moral and spiritual education of Catholics and indeed of modern Western society in general. The Roman Catholic Church has a specific place in the education of the West.

Writing about these issues is important to understand the functioning of medieval social structures. The time setting was not for Freemasons yet, but their roots were planted during that time, many concepts, and examples for them were set up during the medieval era in Europe. Again, the fraternity of Freemasons is not a religion [or at least claimed to be as such by the Freemasons themselves], however, the structure of the monastic orders, the polymathic principles that were developed by them, which included rhetoric, logic, and grammar are somewhat connecting them. The latter principles became particularly important during the Age of Reason and Enlightenment when Freemasons became organized into a separate fraternity. At this point, it was crucial to mention the concept of the Medieval monastery in the place where it brought education and knowledge and not merely theological discussions and prayer that were most important, too. It may be said as follows, physically weak and not a warlike person, but clever could find a safe place in the monastery, and learn something that could have been completely hidden in other areas of life at that time.

Theories of Origin

I

Ancient and Biblical

There are many debates on how Freemasonry began and what was the most influential source of inspiration that gave it a push, or what was the rock upon which it was built. Some historians such as Emanuel Rebold in his book *A General History of Freemasonry: Based Upon the Ancient Documents Relating To, and the Monuments Erected by this Fraternity, from Its Foundation, in the Year 715 B.C., to the Present Time* had certainly asserted to the reader that this fraternity did not merely begin in 1717, but had a long history, and, therefore, could not be narrated only following the beginnings that originated in the Goose and Gridiron tavern in London.\(^{37}\) The title of the book clearly stated that this organization goes back to the Biblical era and even surpasses Greek and Rome. Surely many documents will show that Freemasonry as an organization uses numerous symbols, allegories, and charges [symbolic texts in the Ritual] that may look like a fairy-tale or an illustration to it, however, it has a deeper meaning that explains the history of this fraternity saying that the builders had always existed, even before 1717. E. Rebold particularly used this approach to explain it in his work. For example, he went even further by comparing the concepts from all civilizations known in the Bible and traced them to the origins of Freemasonry. He had clearly stated that mysteries of Ancient Egypt were brought to Greece and became adopted into their mythology, later borrowed and narrated by Homer himself.\(^ {38}\) His position is somewhat interesting because he had most likely believed that the mysteries of initiation, burial, marriage, and other commemorations could be traced to the fraternities of priests in those discussed areas, later these rites went into Rome and the rest of Europe to one day re-emerge as the system of rituals used by Freemasons. It is only an assumption, but it may have some base underneath it, otherwise, why was he tracing it back to these old days? Surely, nearly anyone who looks closer to the Masonic tracing boards [pictures used in all three symbolic Degrees during the Rituals of closing, opening, and raising onto the next Degree, and prone to inspections by the Masonic committees to be correct] will notice the symbols that resemble Biblical stories, partially Classic Greece with its columns and the Church with the chess floor.\(^ {39}\) The ancient origin of Freemasonry is becoming almost obvious, however, was not it added later during the actual establishment of the regular and speculative Freemasonry in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century? One of the prominent founders of the historically documented Freemasonry, James Anderson was not someone who did not understand the Bible. He was a Calvinist minister from Scotland who had also specialized in the ancient genealogies and could easily adopt many of the ancient


\(^ {39}\) *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, (Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, Paternoster-Row, 1845) at p. 467.
concepts into his fraternity at the roots of which he was standing. Therefore, the ancient and Biblical origin is often seen with skepticism and will be more thoroughly discussed in the following chapter. Here it is interesting to take a closer look at the ancient theory of the Masonic origin. The concept of classic columns is of particular interest because they are not merely connected to the Bible, but they allude to the classical age in architecture and may not be directly alluded to in the Bible. Any Masonic Lodge includes the concept and images [or often the actual pieces] of mainly three classical columns, and those are Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian [in many cases they also include the Tuscan and Composite]. Each of them possesses a special and allegorical meaning. Doric stands for strength, Ionic for wisdom, and Corinthian for beauty; the last two were added in Italy later. These Five Orders of the Architecture are used in the Masonic allegorical language and tell a story about Freemasonry or perhaps to a historian it may be seen as the source of information about the fraternity’s origin. Each column goes back to Greece and Rome, however, there is no information about the origin of this fraternity in those ancient times, except for the allegories and allusions explained in the Lodges, [especially the Quatuor Coronati Lodge of instructions established in London in 1884 where Brethren learned the meanings of the Masonic symbols and Rituals; the Latin expression means Four Crowned Ones]. Certainly, Freemasonry became somewhat an integral part of these ancient stories of origin, symbols, and charges that took it to the Biblical past or Ancient Greece, however, some attention may be paid to Egypt, too. Emanuel Rebold has begun writing his history of Freemasonry discussing the history of Egypt, strongly mixing it with the mythology of an unknown origin. He connected the Essenian priests with Therapeutes who supposedly linked Egyptians with Hebrews, and later the Essenians continued their spiritual connection to Jesus Christ. This and other stories may be a part of the greater discussion on religious studies, origins of Christianity, etc, however, it still did not provide any specific links to Freemasonry as the modern organization. He thoroughly discussed the origin of the word Jehovah and showed an incredible knowledge of ancient history, but still, there was no clear connection to the actual establishment of the Masonic organization in 1717 and for example, Essenians. It all may be of great interest when the idea of the original stone masonry arrives. Builders and stonecutters are directly connected to the rules of geometry and arithmetic, both latter disciplines could be presented anytime if there were builders and stonecutters. Operative masonry had indeed existed since the days of Ancient Egypt and was presented in practically any era since then, but it does not mean that speculative masonry or Freemasonry traces its direct origins to Ancient Egypt or Greece. The whole history of builders and people who were interested in the construction of holy sites or temples were knowledgeable in geometry and possessed the necessary skills to shape and cut out stones. Hence, the famous Masonic allegory to the Ashlar or the rough stone represents the candidate or a common man, who did not earn the knowledge of a master, yet. There is a great source for the whole variety of allegories and

40 Albert Gallatin Mackey, A Lexicon of Freemasonry: Containing a Definition of All Its Communicable Terms, Notices of Its History, Traditions, and Antiquities, and an Account of All the Rites and Mysteries of the Ancient World, (Moss, Brother, 1860) at p. 33.
41 Albert Gallatin Mackey, An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences: Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature as Connected with the Institution, (Moss and Company, 1894) at p. 86.
43 Emanuel Rebold, A General History of Freemasonry, p. 400.
stories that may be found in Egypt or Greece [later Rome] which were so famous for building different structures for cult or secular activities. In contrast to E. Rebold, another historian Robert Gould traced the origin of modern Freemasonry to the Roman *collegia* [a form of guilds or fraternities] that were later introduced to the British Isles.\(^{44}\) To understand the allegorical language of Freemasonry and its historians, who often applied some legends to real historical texts, it is necessary to understand the principle of an allegory and the indirect language of a fairytale. However, any tale may have the true meaning behind it, even if it was wrongly and inappropriately made.

II

The Knights Templar

As it was already mentioned before, the Knights Templar were in one way, or another connected to Freemasonry. Their links may be seen in the Masonic symbolism and terminology, however, there is no clear evidence of their direct ascendency from them, which is often claimed and defended. Robert Freke Gould mentioned in his works on the history of this fraternity that there are *apocryphal manuscripts*, which date Freemasonry before the Knights Templar and go back to Palestine and Greece, particularly some of their views were discussed in the previous chapter.\(^{45}\) Generally, these theories are not supported by the documents, neither paper on these ancient origins can provide enough evidence and they are often seen from a skeptical point of view. After all, Freemasonry itself could be the source of mythology and inventions on its incredibly old roots because it is full of symbolism and charges that describe and interpret primarily Biblical texts. What makes it peculiar is that the Lodge itself is seen as the Solomon’s Temple, its prototype in the profane world, and is meant to allude to each of its members to promote self-development and personal reconstruction [the concept of the *inner temple*].\(^{46}\) What is interesting is that practically all three symbolic Degrees of initiation [the *Craft*] turn around the concept of the Temple of Solomon, which is representing this construction process of one's inner self, personal growth, and progress. Shaping of the rough stone - the *Ashlar* - is specifically symbolic to any Freemason, hence it alludes to self-development, meaning that the candidate who enters the Lodge from the West and later [symbolically] proceeds to the East is going from the darkness into the Light by making this personal progress [candidate is the rough stone].\(^{47}\) In one way or another, it appears to be almost the religion, however, it is usually denied by the Lodge members themselves, there are clear signs and characteristics of the religion, or at least something that copies it. It is somewhat the continuation or yet another form of the Hebrew religion, but without making its followers reject their religious affiliations. At least it appears to be so, but on the other hand, there is no actual evidence of a cult, but again the Grand Architect of the Universe [like Hebrew

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\(^{46}\) *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York*, (Freemasons, Grand Lodge of the State of New York, 1885) at p. 14.

\(^{47}\) The Freemason’s Repository, Volume 22, (E. L. Freeman & Son, 1894) at p. 479.
Yahweh] is the Almighty supreme Being in the Universe and the creator of the world is represented by the All-Seeing Eye, which is typically presented in every Masonic Lodge in the East [sometimes it may be the letter G behind the Worshipful Master’s chair].

The name Templars is probably the most connecting and peculiar in this link because it directly makes this medieval order, the Solomon’s Temple, and the symbolic temple which is the Masonic Lodge all get-together. It seems very logical, especially knowing that the Templars themselves had acquired their name because they were guarding the sight that used to be the original Temple and possessed stables nearby. Also, the Templars were well famous for their religious zeal and warlike approach, thus making them the first among equals during the era of Crusades, and until they were proclaimed beyond the law in France and elsewhere. Many theories arrive from that point on including everything that came to the mind of historians, journalists, and adventurists, who if they could not provide evidence, still produced a lot of material that was supposed to link the Knights Templar to Freemasonry. One of the most plausible theories is that this order did not fully disappear after its banishment and continued to exist in remote parts of Europe such as Switzerland or Scotland. Later, it is believed, that they formed or entered the builder’s fraternities and guilds to better hide and promote their hidden concepts in common architecture or the construction of cathedrals and churches. The official Freemasons’ Magazine and Masonic Mirror from 1869 [issued in the United Kingdom] is directly discussing this issue [seems to be the inner Masonic discussion].

I do not understand what Bro. Buchan means by a “liberty to trade,” as sought by the Templars, but I quite understand the guilds seeking to limit their privileges to Templars actually admitted members of the guild.

This quote shows that there were ideas about the fact that the blending between the guilds and the Knights Templar could exist before the latter was forbidden by the ecclesiastic and secular authorities. It is well known that the Templars were leading many constructions and were not merely bound to the concept of the Solomon’s Temple, but were literally linked to the building of fraternities. The discussion mentioned above had continued and was furthermore raising the question of how the Knights Templar were somewhat blending with the operative stonemasons.

In process of time, no doubt, the Templars dispensed with guild membership, having developed a secret organization and form of recognition of their own. I have assumed as far that “the guild” alluded to is really the guild of operative Masons, and I shall await Bro. Buchan’s reply to my question before continuing my remarks on this interesting subject. - A MASONIC STUDENT.

These quotes are representing the discussion that was always going on inside the Freemasonry and it also means that Freemasons themselves were not always sure of the original connection between their organization and the medieval Templars. Surely, it may be said that

49 The Freemasons’ Magazine and Masonic Mirror, Volume 21, (Bro. Henry George Warren, 2, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, 1869) at p. 330.
50 Ibid., p. 330.
it was somewhat prestigious to belong to the inheritance of the original Templars due to their
grandeur and fame, chivalry, symbolism, and power. The Freemasonry is often known as the
“order” with chivalric principles and traditions, therefore, the mysterious Templars were cut
down by the arrogance of the French king Philip IV and at that time his subordinate Pope
Clement V. In addition to the inner Masonic conversation cited above, it was impossible to find
the answer, Bro. Buchan could provide, and generally contribute to the conversation, however,
it provides a glimpse into the most peculiar theory that may connect the Knights Templar and
Freemasons.

It must be said that many organizations have claimed to be the direct descendants of the
Knights Templar, some of them bear their name and this tradition is far from being the post-
1960s New Age revival issue. For example, there is a whole book written called the History of the
Knights Templar of the State of Pennsylvania written by Alfred Creigh in 1867. He dated
the origins of his particular organization carrying the name the Knights Templar back to 1794,
and later mixes the history of the Freemasons and the Templars in the most whirling way
possible claiming that the knights were introduced to the Freemasons, and the latter had already
existed during the reign of Edward the Confessor.\footnote{Alfred Creigh, History of the Knights Templar of the State of Pennsylvania from February 14th, A.D. 1794 ... to November 13th, 1866, (J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1867) at p. 12.} This particular paper did not include any
evidence based on facts or the actual documents that Freemasons had existed during the reign
of the Anglo-Saxon kings in England. At the same time, there was a possibility of cooperation
with some active Freemasons of Pennsylvania [York Rite; the system of Higher Degrees; in
this rite the Knights Templar is the highest order or the Degree] that could simply get involved
in the creation of such theories presented by A. Creigh.\footnote{Proceedings of the Grand Commandery, Knights Templar, State of New York, (Edward O. Jenkins’ Sons, 1885) at p. 87.} His book is one of the earliest
examples of such writing that links Freemasons to the Knights Templar and believes in its
ancient origin [discussed in the previous chapter]. In other words, the first-hand Masonic
literature as in the case of historian Emmanuel Rebold [past deputy of the Grand Orient of
France] should be first analyzed and later used as a historical source. Any researcher must be
incredibly careful with them whether they are coming directly from the publishing houses
working under the precepts of the official Grand Lodges or not. Specifically, it is tempting to
open an old book and incorporate anything that is written in there as firsthand evidence,
however, it must be contrasted with other works [as was made here] and thoroughly analyzed.
Many of them lack the disputation principle and do not cite other sources.

In his article The Knights Templar published on the pages of the same Freemasons’
Magazine cited above, Anthony O’Neal Haye discussed the history of accusations given to the
arrested Templars and went deeper into describing the demolition of that medieval order. He
was defending the Templars, throwing away the numerous macabre accusations, and accusing
Pope Clement V of intrigues, usurpation of power, and other misgivings, saying that his
activities were merely aiding the future Reformation.\footnote{The Freemasons’ Magazine and Masonic Mirror, Volume 19, an article by Anthony Oneal Haye, The Knights Templar, (Bro. Henry George Warren, 2, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, 1868) at p. 221.} It should be underlined that the general
sympathies of the modern speculative Freemasonry had always been on the side of Templars,
and never on the side of its opponents. Moreover, it was mentioned that the York Rite in
Freemasonry incorporates the Degree or the order of the Knights Templar [the highest Degree in the Rite] and shows respect given by the fraternity to the history and traditions of the original Templars.

III

Guilds

The question of guilds will be thoroughly discussed in the chapter about the origins of Freemasonry; however, it may be interesting to mention it while discussing the historical circumstances in which the roots of this fraternity had been planted while quickly describing Medieval Europe. Guilds had existed before Medieval Europe had even emerged after the fall of the Roman Empire; people simply needed to get together and live their lives more securely. The whole concept of the professional club is especially important to survive and carry on with everyday duties, thus, even if there is no aim or statute, still the club in which certain important questions can be solved or propositions made is needed. The guilds were presented in the Byzantine period in Constantinople well until the 12th century. Later periods did not leave real historical records of their presence there. Particularly they were important in establishing prices on the market and played an active role in the economy as a whole.54 The Roman Empire was famous for its funeral guilds and the whole undertaking was clearly connected to the religious practices and earned a lot of respect, partially due to a necessity, someone had to do the job, and on the other, it was the issue of state matters. Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum contains more than one thousand messages about different kinds of guilds and one of the most respectable roles that are mentioned about them is their charitable activity, something that was typical of them.55 It may also be important if compare it to the famous Masonic principle of faith, hope, and charity that still exists and often can be seen in the various Lodge documents and slogans. Technically, the guilds system was one of the best markers of the European medieval era that has made a lot of traces into the future. It’s not just directly connected to the emergence of Freemasonry, in this chapter it may be discussed not always alluding to Freemasonry alone, but can be mentioned in general. The medieval guilds were shaping the future of Europe by uniting different people based on professionalism or protective matters. If one gets sick there is nothing worse when no one or nothing can assist, life halts still, and just imagine how it could be for the stonecutters or carpenters in the 1300s. To an extent, it was a matter of survival if someone could watch over the family in case of death or help in finding another place of work. Guilds and fraternities that were able to take care of their members have developed something that may be called the social lift, too, because once you know more than one person united in one group, then there is a chance of moving forward no matter how difficult it could be inside the fixed social structure. It enhanced the freedom of movement, and what was extensively important, the freedom of sharing information and knowledge, something that was particularly needed in almost completely illiterate world of that day. Practically every

profession was included and marked the relations between the state and common people, who were gathering in the guilds to survive, assist and share. In 1162 king Louis VII of France established the guild for bakers, it was done not merely to help them but also to organize and control the prices [something that was done by the Byzantines]. Armors, stoncutters, and potters all had their guilds and were able to operate under the supervision of the state, but like any autonomous group, they could also manage their own business and affairs - simply not everything was an oversight by the local lord or a king. In the age of feudalism, it was important to establish a connection between the people, commoners, and the state, which belonged to the knights, aristocrats, and monarchs that were vigorously watching over the social structure that was the solid pyramid. Nevertheless, as soon as the feudal pyramid became less authoritarian the group of commoners without any titles or lands was able to manage prices for such important products as bread, so at some point, the very knights became somewhat dependent on the commoners that could make shields and swords for them. This was the role of guilds and fraternities bound by one profession or skill. As was already mentioned before, it enabled the possibility of personal economic growth in the society without any significant social lifts that could change the destiny of a peasant or simply a commoner from the town, free but without any personal connections to the entitled privileges. Guilds were creating a new economy, set apart from the domination of the rural, agricultural set that was solid for both, the landlord and the peasant. Fixing and changing prices was not what the commoner could have done in the Middle Ages, but as soon as they were united into the guild, these processes empowered them with this ability, and especially important personalities such as king Louis VII of France, had to establish some guilds of their own to control prices. Gary Richardson right on the first page of his book, Did Manufacturing Guilds Monopolize Markets in Medieval England, said that the popular texts assert it and according to them they were able to do so, but he is very skeptical of it himself and argued that it was impossible, the guilds had no power to do so. Nevertheless, this point of view can be argued because traces of this ability set up by the guilds in that age may be seen in the relatively modern world, and as was mentioned in the book Trade Association Activity produced by the US Department of Commerce in 1923 it was, indeed, possible. The book brought up the following argument.

The old guilds were essentially-price fixing organizations and their influence proceeded into the earlier American pools… The pool was the next step in the development of this movement from the medieval guild merchant… And so the historical background has five rather overlapping steps, the ancient cooperative societies, the medieval guild, the pool, the trust, and then the early trade association.

The Middle Ages are often seen as a time of total darkness and illiteracy, to the great extent the time was most likely quite dark and certainly illiterate, however, there were seeds

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57 The School Community Journal, (Center for the School Community, 2001) at pp. 1, 3.
planted for a brighter future. This period explains a lot about the future Masonic tradition. The existence of guilds is very crucial in this discussion, particularly if talking about the background and origins of the operative stonemasons that will have been transformed into the speculative Masonic fraternity by the end of the Middle Ages. This basic connection is proposed to the reader as one of the main theories of the origin of the fraternity of Freemasons, in terms of organization and structure. Many traditions have also originated in the guilds. For example, each Lodge is well known for such terms as steward, deacon [junior and senior], wardens, master, entered apprentice, fellowcraft, and of course the master. All these titles came from the era of the guilds and were certainly used in the fraternities of builders. In the article Masonic Archeology presumably written by one of the London’s Freemasons [the name was kept secret] published in The Freemason’s Monthly Michigan Freemason, it is argued that on one hand these terms were not borrowed by the speculative Freemasons from the guilds, however, the author had stated that many operative guilds in the early eighteenth century were opening their doors to speculative members in England, and thus this terminology was acquired. Here the hint is given very directly saying that both kinds of masons were dealing with each other and began to borrow many things that have dealt with terminology and of course symbolism. Surely these symbols did not go to the early English guilds of the Anglo-Saxon period but dealt merely with the guilds that were still continually active in the early 1700s and were involved in the organizational work in that country. As it was argued above, Rome was famous for its system of guilds [funeral ones were specifically peculiar], and as John Thrupp noted, they were most likely behind the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon guilds, and what is even more interesting the “office bearers in the guilds” have received their titles from the Anglo-Saxon and not from the Latin linguistic roots. At this point, it may be said that the whole concept of terms such as warden, or steward have an Anglo-Saxon origin. The main question is evident, and it asks when did this blend between the speculative and operative masons take place in England and additionally what kind of other influences it could possess? The factor of the German builder’s fraternities is also particularly important. The Stein-Metzen of Germany were also forming the same types of guilds [glycepetes] as in other parts of Europe and some of them were directly visiting England because their presence was recorded during the building of the King’s College chapel; it was constructed by the master from Germany. It adds to the original concept of the Free-masons, which were free to move around regardless of the countries’ borders or servant’s obligations. Closer to the 1600s and later onto the 1700s the system of guilds began to change and was becoming not so important, it became specifically evident during the rise of early capitalism and mercantilism, that mercers and drapers were losing profits, but artisanal guilds somewhat managed to survive during and after 1720s, but with the declining numbers. However, they still existed and as was noted before, there was some exchange process going on during the early eighteenth century between the operatives and speculative members in

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62 George Franklin Fort, The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry: As Connected with Ancient Norse Guilds, and the Oriental and Mediaeval Building Fraternities, (Bradley, 1881) at p. 123.
England, after the latter was allowed to enter the guilds. What requires a lot of attention is the problem that many scholars and readers make; they believe that if a word mason meets the eye on a medieval manuscript or a 1600s document, they immediately think that Freemasonry was already established during that time. It may be not so true because operative masons and later Freemasons used remarkably similar symbols [the latter borrowed them from the operatives]. The term lodge itself is going back to the building fraternities meaning the place where they could take their lodging and take a rest from work or gather for any purpose. Already mentioned ideas about the same terminology and symbolism make it even more clear that Freemasonry was strongly rooted in the organizational concept of the guilds that had existed in Europe and particularly in England before 1717 when this fraternity was officially established in London [Goose and Gridiron tavern]. The official British Masonic weekly journal titled The Freemason mentioned some of these early 1600s Masonic establishments that could be the precursors of speculative Masonry. These include the establishment of the group in which Sir Robert Padgett was a member of the fraternity of Freemasons in 1665, some possible Lodges could exist in Ashmole [England] in 1645 and variably 1682, also there is a record of the protocols from the Alnwick Lodge made in 1702.64 These records may witness that particular moment or a period when many operative guilds or fraternities were blending with the philosophical concepts that were later included in Freemasonry with the introduction of Ritual, the Constitution, and Charges.

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64 The Freemason and Masonic Illustrated. A Weekly Record of Progress in Freemasonry, Volume 8, (London, Bro. George Kenning, 1875) at p. 223.
The Rise of Science and Humanism

I

Humanism

It is often strongly believed that humanism is the base for what the world is calling human rights, knowledge, education, and something that may be called human dignity. Something that differentiates animal behavior from human one and makes human beings truly civilized. In many ways it is true and the whole era when science and humanism began to enter the world is specifically peculiar when discussing the given topic in this study. Humanism incorporates the term human not without a reason, it centers itself around humanity, its purposes, and meanings. This term entered the English language during the early nineteenth century [if paying attention to the Oxford English Dictionary] with the assistance of Matthew Arnold and according to Peter Burke was originally defined by Germans and was corresponding with the meaning given above. It was centered upon the human being and underlined something humanitarian and civilized. Generally, the movement of humanists was part of the revival of the Western civilization better known as the Renaissance, where humanism was its seriously powerful driving force. Humanism itself was strongly influenced by the Italian cultural revival and was later spreading throughout Europe among the educated classes of nobility. For example, Filippo Buonaccorsi [also known as Callimaco] went to live in Poland over the patronage of its king’s court during the late 1400s, Poggio Bracciolini became friends with Polish intellectual Mikolaj Lasocki, Vergerio, and Enea Silvio became closely related to the court of emperor Frederick III with the second becoming monarch’s brother Ladislaus’ children’s mentor. Also, Silvio was the emperor’s secretary for quite some time. These educated Italians were bringing the light of humanism that was inseparably related to education, libraries, and books that contained not merely theological scholastics but were additionally involved with secular knowledge. Bartholomew Stäber, an educator and humanist who worked in Vienna once wrote to his colleague Celtis that the university was finally getting rid of “its rough and thorny spines” and that studia humanitatis will soon become very important among the arts in their university. It meant that the ideas of humanism did not merely spread through the networks of monastery libraries [such as one in St. Gallen] or roughly medieval universities, but with the assistance from monarchs. Knowledge began to enter the lives and minds of the people of power that could seriously influence various important issues. Frederick III himself was trying to write and in one of his letters was backing the purposes of humanism, therefore, leveling himself with the scholars such as Celtis, Stäber, and Amaltheus. There is no question that monarchs and aristocrats by the late fifteenth century were not the same as during the time of the first Crusade, they were changing, Austrian,

65 A. Goodman, Angus Mackay, The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe During the Renaissance, an article by Peter Burke, The Spread of Italian Humanism, (Routledge, 11.06.2014) p. 1.
66 Ibid., p. 4.
67 James H. Overfield, Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany, (Princeton University Press, 2019) at p. 133.
68 Ibid., p. 134.
French, Burgundian, or English barons, landgraves, and dukes were already well educated in Latin with the help of the monastic libraries and scholars. Early medieval universities had accumulated enough knowledge to transfer it to the ruling classes. Thus, by the late 1400s, it was already very visible throughout Europe from Poland to Wales. The Jagiellonian University in Krakow was assisting not merely the people of the gentry but helped to educate those from the lower classes, those who later became very prominent scholars and humanists and the list included Jakub of Szadek, Erazm Ciołek [also known as Vitellius], and Mikolaj Czepiel.\textsuperscript{69} It was notable that the people from towns, who were less dependent on the nobility, had better access to education and literacy in general, a factor that can be attributed to humanists and those individuals in power who were tolerating and promoting it. It was certainly bringing education to the wider public and even though it was still an illiterate society in Europe during the Renaissance era, it began to reach certain groups in the cities, the townsfolk, and surely those who were involved in the guilds where education was becoming more important to get things done.

Humanism was not necessarily the issue of secular thoughts and ideas, many scholars and theologians were sorts of interchanging different fields of knowledge-creating something that would be later called, the \textit{polymathic} approach. Erasmus of Rotterdam is well known for his humanistic involvement with theology, attempts to interpret the Biblical texts, and wishes to get the best out of them, questioning many happenings of his day in society and politics. He believed that the way of God and barbarism cannot be put together, in his view civilization is based on piety and the Almighty’s work on this earth. The spiritual grounding is necessary to construct righteousness in humanity and pure scholasticism was not always necessary. Cornelis Augustijn had argued in his \textit{Erasmus: Der Humanist Als Theologe Und Kirchenreformer}, - The first goal will be one's own spiritual education ... Exactly for this reason he leads the argument against scholasticism. Scholasticism wants a combination of belief and knowledge that corrupts both. Erasmus wants a connection between pietas and eruditio, whereby the eruditio must form the person who comes to piety.\textsuperscript{70} Piety was very important or even crucial to creating a civilized human being. At the very same time, Erasmus understood that certainly not everything can be attained within the walls of a monastery and required secular methodology. Additionally, he believed that spiritual or mental development cannot be completed there.\textsuperscript{71} This philosopher, scholar, and humanist were one of the first ones, who began to formulate an idea of the blend between religion or spirituality and a scientific approach. This basic idea is one of the most important in humanism, they were trying to attach different ideas and create this new pious formation, the general idea that could create an integrated polymathic understanding of the world – \textit{congruit universa}. Such an idea eventually found its way during the Age of Enlightenment, directly ascending from the Renaissance humanists and later becoming specifically important in Freemasonry. The philosophical fraternity would try to unite scientific, artistic, and spiritual ideas and concepts [Five Noble Arts and Sciences] spreading them through the system of \textit{symbolic degrees}. In each degree a Freemason learns something from these above-mentioned concepts and allegorically becomes the shaped stone, opening the path for self-perfection. There is no direct

\textsuperscript{69} Krzysztof Stopka, Andrzej Kazimierz Banach, Julian Dybiec, \textit{The History of the Jagiellonian University}, (Jagiellonian University Press, 2000) at p. 75.

\textsuperscript{70} Cornelis Augustijn, \textit{Erasmus: Der Humanist Als Theologe Und Kirchenreformer}, (BRILL, 1996) at p. 12.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., p. 12.
religious approach, but somewhat deistic and certainly spiritual, the belief in Supreme Being is necessary for all regular Masonic Lodges and jurisdictions. It is all closely related, and the way of humanists cannot be separated from the future position and beliefs of this peculiar fraternity. Humanism cannot be separated from the new ways of thinking, questioning everything, and applying new methods, including the new approach to scholasticism and learning. For example, the University of Vienna in the 1490s was not always welcoming changes that could be proposed by the humanist progressives, often they included autonomous governance of the universities, and because of that, a humanist Bernhard Perger had to leave, giving the way to more loyal scholar and humanist Johannus Cuspianus. New ideas required time and often a long wait before they could truly hang on to the old scholasticism, re-work the university system and convince the ruling elites to accept change.

Also, it should be noted that many contemporary authors see the word ‘humanist’ as a synonym for the word ‘liberal’, not meaning someone like Erasmus or Thomas More. For example, Stephen Law in his book, Humanism: A Very Short Introduction argues that humanists today are often associated with relativists, who believe that the truth about moral values is relative from one community or an individual to another, noting that it’s not true about humanists of today and the past. Humanists from the past were very strong believers in moral values, as Erasmus was, and did not reject religion as one of the most important pillars of moralism. It was noted previously, that their position was not very liberal in the contemporary sense, but was standing on the concept of searching for the moral truth to enhance human ethical behavior. Additionally, the rise of humanism during the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance did not formulate the term ‘liberal’ yet, they were as Cuspinianus or More, the moral educators, who believed in progressive ideas that had to be based on piety brought by religion [in their case it was Christianity].

Different universities were sharing knowledge and people who could be the carriers of it - people of learning that were not afraid of the polymathic approach in academia. On one hand, the biggest challenge was to bring a secular element to it, and on the other, not to make it too obvious to the superiors, changes had to take place slowly. The exchange process was the key, establishing something that today may be compared to the Internet and joint university seminars. Lecturers could be brought from elsewhere, and as the building fraternities, universities could have this over-the-border reach that was also acting as the unifier of knowledge in Europe and was even capable to work against the class privileges. Humanities were getting more important, and the exchange process could include invitations of those lecturers who were more specialized in it than anyone in the existing university who was inviting them. Stäber had written in his letter that the “studia humanitatis” would have a special place among the arts.” He referred to Perger’s intention of bringing to Vienna a special, salaried lecturer on the humanities, as had been done at Freiburg, Ingolstadt, and Tübingen. Eventually, the choice fell on the Italian scholar C. Paulus Amaltheus who was closely related to the emperor’s court and probably had some

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73 James H. Overfield, Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany, pp. 140-141.
75 Ibid., p. 134.
significant influence on him; at least he was surely favored. It was also particularly important if such people, who could share the light of humanism, had enough influence on those in power. Through them, it was possible to move on with the reforms in scholasticism, changes in academia, more freedoms to print and publish, and many more. Their influence was often involving open conflicts and politics as in the case of Coluccio Salutati. He belonged to the beginning of the humanist movement [particularly in Florence], when the Renaissance was already growing in Italy, but still did not reach other corners of Europe. He was chancellor and brilliant in rhetoric, he was able to change minds, and influence the political spectrum and if such a figure as Gian Galeazzo Visconti considered him to be stronger and more important than the Milanese militia, it meant something.76 Rhetoric became one of the Noble Arts in the symbolic second Degree in Freemasonry. All the humanistic ideas were later reflected in the ideas of this fraternity, and specifically in the second Degree of Fellowcraft that as was noted before, includes the teaching of all Seven Noble Arts and Sciences. Another example may go to the near Coluccio’s contemporary, Bocaccio who was born in Paris to a Florentine banker and member of the banker’s guild in France, later to be raised in Florence in the light of humanism, studying grammatica and arismetica.77 The first was more important to poets and writers, someone who Bocaccio later became, and the second could be more useful to bankers, the path which he did not choose. Both were also included in the second degree and were always meant to make the Fellowcraft Freemason pay more attention to these two virtues of the mind. Generally, it may be concluded that the era of humanism, when it began to develop, had included those who seek education and progress, their ideas were gaining popularity, and various groups of educated people were interested in including them in their curriculum or codex operandi. By the early eighteenth century, it became the Constitution of Freemasons, written by a Calvinist minister, James Anderson, one of the founders of Freemasonry in Britain.78 Humanist approach sort of turned out to be the way of thinking in this fraternity, and became part of the Ritual and its meanings, symbols, and tracing boards that are widely used in Freemasonry. The humanist ideas brought into the world by Erasmus, More, Amaltheus, Caspianus, and their contemporaries are an intricate part of this fraternity and surely cannot be separated from it.

77 Ibid., p. 171.
The rise in secular fields of study in European universities began to give birth to the scientific approach to knowledge. Theology was still especially important and continued as one of the most important subjects alongside philosophy, however, changes began to take place when geometry, arithmetic, and medicine climbed up the ladder in academia. Was humanism connected to the development of science is the subject of debate, and often these two concepts are seen as separate. Lynn Thorndike argued that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they were not standing on the equal path and did not influence each other, math and natural sciences stood aside from many humanists. He had also discussed the causes that could influence the emergence of science in medieval Europe [and early Renaissance] and proposed a theory that it could be the Black Death, the great pestilence which ravaged Europe and cut its population at least by half, not just providing more demand for scientific knowledge, particularly medicine, but had generally changed the medieval society. It was discussed in the previous chapters on medieval Europe [particularly feudalism] that the plague could change the social strata by removing feudal lords and many aristocrats, providing more possibilities for shifts in traditions. It was also proposed that the Crusades were capable of doing the same to aristocratic families. Eventually, starting with the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries science and particularly medicine began to act a larger role in the academic curriculum. It would be unforgiving not to mention that during that age of rising science and humanism, many women began to participate in the discussed developments. Caritas Pirckheimer [sister of a humanist Willibald Pirckheimer], Beatriz Galindo from Spain, and a daughter of Thomas More, Margaret Roper, who wrote ‘liberal studies’ to her daughter. Eventually, it appears that science and humanities were not exactly connected even though the polymathic approach had existed before Descartes and after him, showing that learning mathematics and philosophy could get along with the latter philosopher portraying one of the biggest examples of it, pointing out that humanism and science could get together. Parallely it may be noted that on the most ‘scientific’ second Degree in Freemasonry, the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences are all included in one polymathic concept, but are still named ‘liberal arts’ and ‘sciences’ showing the original differences between them. Humanities are not sciences and therefore L. Thorndike’s concept is accurate, though it does not mean that both could not co-exist in one person. Notably, according to him, early science was the continuation of medieval research that became particularly significant in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

80 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
by the sympathetic attitude toward the mathematical sciences that was characteristic of most of the leading humanists of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.\footnote{Antonia McLean, \textit{Humanism and the Rise of Science in Tudor England}, (Heinemann Educational, 1972) at p. 119.} She had united science and humanism into one concept with both going together. However, another view more similar to L. Thorndike was given by Lloyd Fallers in the \textit{Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists}, where he openly argued that science and humanists stand separated, even calling the latter “natural Luddites”, who are attached to traditional values.\footnote{\textit{Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists}, Volume XVII, Number 8, an article by Lloyd Fallers, \textit{C.P. Snow and the Third Culture}, (University of Chicago Press, 1961) at p. 206.} His view may be seen as too radical, and it can be possible to find the middle way by saying that science and humanities are attached to different concepts, but both are capable of being progressive. There is no doubt that mathematicians often do not understand philosophy or liberal arts, however, particularly when science was forming its way in Europe, and humanists attempted to change the human way of thinking, reforming universities [Perger and his presence in Vienna] and asking difficult questions, the cap of polymathic approach was uniting them. Both were ground-breaking in one way or another and did try to move the world in the direction of progress, which in their mind included more education and further questioning.

Science during the Renaissance and later in the age of Descartes did not contradict humanists, with the latter often uniting both concepts. More modern meanings of the humanists which are either pointed out as moral relativists or anti-science do not apply to the meaning of ‘humanists’ of the Renaissance era. The demand for science was based on curiosity, and as was argued before, the demand to improve everyday life. The plague was taking too many lives and caused tremendous suffering upon the people, and what made it all worse, nothing was known about the cause of this suffering. Surely, such demand gave rise to medicine and doctors as Paracelsus began to challenge their teachers. Owsei Temkin argued that Paracelsus was directly attacking the establishment of his time, believing that he was working to help the sick and in the name of God kept doing his work, and around the 1520s had contacted Protestants and humanists.\footnote{Owsei Temkin, \textit{Galenism; Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy, Volume 10}, (Cornell University Press, 1973) at pp. 129, 132.} Suddenly, during the Late Middle Ages and later into the Renaissance the curiosity to find out new paths with the help of discoveries and more studies in light when there was so much illiteracy and darkness became very important. Some people were simply ahead of their own time and society and knew that the given answers were not enough.

Up to the sixteenth century almost the sole object of chemical research had been to find the philosopher’s stone. But now chemistry began to develop itself in two new and different paths, opened by two distinguished men - Agricola, the father of Metallurgy, and Paracelsus, the founder of Iatrochemistry or medical chemistry.\footnote{Carl Schorlemmer, \textit{The Rise and Development of Organic Chemistry}, (MacMillan and Company, 1894) at p. 9.}

These developments were not directly connected to Freemasonry, as the guilds were, however, their indirect influence on them was important, hence Freemasons had included
science into their concept or vision of self-development [“the same as that of the different empirical sciences”].

III

Alchemists

This sphere of activity was and still is seen as something quite peculiar, sinister, and at the same time somewhat romantic. Alchemy was not science, it was not based on pure empiricism, and did not produce the philosopher’s stone, however, it may be early science. Curiosity to discover did not appear early in the Renaissance, but went deeper into human history, some attempts ended up in discovering the earth’s diameter, and some others sank into mysticism and sort of mixed science in its early forms with the belief. This is alchemy, the early science mixed with mysticism and beliefs, depending on the time, era, and personalities that invented it. Volumes of literature were written about the subject, and what may be interesting in this context is how it was connected to the medieval and Renaissance era guilds, and later Freemasonry. Arthur Edward Waite in his work The Secret Tradition in Alchemy: Its Development and Records refers to the old and descriptive text. The Book of Three Worlds defines Alchemy as the Art of Arts Science of Sciences, and is that by which imperfect metals are led into the perfect state, from corruption into incorruption, the design of Nature being always to make Sol et Luna, otherwise gold and silver. This concept is really one simple definition of the form of Art as it’s known to the followers of alchemy, or the form of belief or even illusion to those who are more skeptical. In the symbolic meaning, it refers to changes, and perfectionism of the given imperfect world, where changing of metals, and their mystical transformation should be studied to change the world or a man. The idea is remarkable to the concepts of Freemasonry, self-development, changes of the imperfect being, or if referring to Ashlar - shaping of the rough stone. Therefore, Freemasons have adopted many symbols of these early medieval scientists, who have preserved this mix of mystical traditions based on primitive science and chemistry. The symbol of Ouroboros, the snake which bites its tail is common to Freemasons and means the renewable Universum, the principles of cosmological eternity, and immortality. The above-cited text mentioned ‘Sol et Luna’, the everlasting symbols of the constant opposites without which the world and life would cease to exist, are also represented in many Lodges, often on the East right behind the chair of the Worshipful Master or on the Masters’ tracing boards. The sun rises on the East and goes to the West, meaning that the East itself, or the Orient is symbolically very important to the concept of Freemasons for the Orient is the place where life begins. The same may be attributed to the six-pointed star in its different variations, with the circle around or the point in the center; it all can be alluded to the symbols used in alchemy, meaning the

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90 Edward Gallatin Mackey, An Encyclopædia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences, (Moss & Company, 1879) at p. 766.
God, microcosm and macrocosm, sacred number 7, etc. It was already argued that Freemasonry itself is based on the *operative* masonic guilds of the Middle Ages, however, the latter did not possess these symbols or allegories mixed with esotericism. This symbolism had to enter Freemasonry during the period of its formation, the process that will be discussed in the following chapter. Here it may be argued that alchemists did not unite into the guilds, [in comparison to builders, butchers, tailors, etc], but rather stayed on their own, probably due to the very nature of their work that was seen as useful neither by the authorities nor by the university faculties. At some point, the alchemical symbolism became accepted by Freemasons, particularly the concepts of eternity and transformation, and that specific contact most likely happened after the formal establishment of the Masonic Lodges in England or not too far before it happened in 1717. Bernard Jones argued that it happened during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, at the time when original Masonic *Degrees* were formed, basically supporting the above-made statement, without tracing the origins of Freemasonry to the ancient times of the actual Solomon’s Temple.

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Masonic Founding and Formation

I

From the late 1500s to the Early 1700s

Particularly the seventeenth century is seen as the beginning of the actual Freemasonry known today because its direct traces could be found in that time. Previous versions hardly hold any serious criticism because they are based on theories that may be found in texts written by Freemasons themselves [primarily Charges] or the names of Degrees as in the York Rite Degree of the Knights Templar. However, any serious documents or records can surely support the direct connection between them; symbolically there is a visible bond even with the Biblical times, but historically they are less likely to hold any direct contact. The first real traces go back to the 1600s, the time when professional guilds were still held for being important in England, and at the same time could be the places where both stonecutters with their organizational traditions and gentlemen with their humanist ideas could meet or blend. For example, in the 1500s there is a lot of evidence of the activities of operative masons, or as some records show they could already call themselves freemasons, but they were not in any way akin to the future organization. In the year 1506, John Hylmer and William Vertue, freemasons, were engaged to “vaulte or doo to bee vawlted with free-stone the roof of the quere of the College Roiall of our Lady and Saint George, within the castell Wyndsore, according to the roof of the body of the said College…” It shows the actual setting, the speculative Freemasons did not exist, yet, but there was this organizational and in many aspects theoretical ground for its creation, however, without the allusions to Solomon’s Temple and the Lodge as being its smaller copy. The same author was tracing the actual beginnings of Freemasons of today to the close of the fifteenth century and strongly insisted that there is no actual evidence of them being established in the earlier time, even though many “creationist Freemasons of the present day” [as he called them] argue with this position. Halliwell wrote his work in the 1830s and as he pointed out, there were a lot of other opinions that emphasized other theories that Freemasonry had existed before the late 1500s. Other sources may take it to the next level and trace its actual origins to the earlier 1600s because Halliwell’s example provided above shows merely the operative freemasons with which he supported his theory, stating that in 1506 only they could exist in England. Operative masons have left numerous traces throughout medieval Europe, they have even used the same terminology when it came to the Degrees to identify the professional level such as the entered apprentice, fellowcraft, or master mason, surely these were not of spiritual or any other origin, but were designed to identify whether the learning stonemason became or did not become the master in his craft. Robert Gould mentioned different names of master masons who worked in England and Scotland during the late 1500s and into the 1600s but could be of different origins, including the French, possessing their ceremonies and symbols. He also believed that the only evidence of the existence of the Freemasons before the initiation of Elias Ashmole in 1646

95 James Orchard-Halliwell, The Early History of Freemasonry in England, (Thomas Rodd, 1840) at p. 43.
96 Ibid., p. 45.
could be found in the old Charges or Statutes, but even they referred to the *Freemasons* that dealt with the actual stone and were not the same as the later speculative Freemasons were in England and elsewhere.  

David Stevenson also mentioned the factor of *statutes* in the early roots of Freemasonry and gave an example of the First Shaw Statutes of 1598, also connecting English and Scottish *free-masons* - “Thus eight years after evidence is found of the office of the regional warden, a general warden of all Scottish masons appears”.  

It seems that the old statutes and charges of the operative free-masons or just stone-masons that were closely related to guilds [alongside shoemakers, carpenters, and others] were later transplanted into the new organization. Also, Stevenson’s discussion of statutes points out that Scottish Freemasonry was developing independently and simultaneously with the English one, - But the material taken from the Old Charges was altered and expanded in the statutes so as to apply it specifically to Scottish conditions.  

Robert Gould had also traced the origins of the Scottish Freemasonry to this prominent statute and believed that Freemasonry in Scotland was originating during that period [even slightly disagreeing with J. Anderson’s or Oliver’s position on that account], and not merely in 1717.  

The discussed period was that particular time when some stonemasons’ guilds and their professional fraternities began transforming into *speculative* Freemasonry.  

These early developments in transitions from the operative to speculative Freemasonry coincided with the changes that took place in Europe during that given time. It was slowly entering the Age of Enlightenment through humanism and science. Also, it should be quickly noticed that it was not merely the influence of humanists and early scientists that were drawing a lot of criticism against the Catholic Church. They began to bring changes, but the role of the Catholic Church, which became strongly connected to the art, and humanists during the 1500s that were supportive of the Church at least formally, were not going against each other. Architecture and education with the classic Greek and Latin that was spreading around the Catholic universities and monasteries were marking the Catholic enlightenment. Religious intolerance or fanaticism that was presented during that and earlier times should not be dropped or forgotten, too, before noting the future complementary quote. Ulrich L. Lehner made the definition which seems to be very appropriate:

Drawing on reform ideas that grew out of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Catholic Enlighteners constructed a worldview that defended the traditional faith while giving the utmost consideration to science, “the improvement of civilization, the increasing attractiveness and livability of this nether world,” and individual moral progress.

The formation of Freemasonry itself was based on the concept of guilds and the knighthood, which were originating particularly in Catholic Europe [surely including the aforementioned Templars]. Additionally, there is no direct evidence of them being part of the

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98 Ibid., p. 336.  
100 Ibid., p. 35.  
Masonic fraternity, but their symbolism was included in the York Rite, which is the system of *Higher Degrees* [the Degree of the Knights Templar is the highest in this system].

Nevertheless, the Age Enlightenment was an integral part of the formation of the *speculative* Masonry, or that side of it that dealt with gentlemen, aristocrats, philosophers, and generally people from the educated groups. Stonecutters became gentlemen in the newly established group, which is known as Freemasonry today. One remarkably interesting quote was found in *The Freemason’s Repository* magazine edited by Henry W. Rugg. The quoted line includes some findings made by historian Albert G. Mackey from the old Masonic lectures on how to distinguish the *speculative* and *operative* *free-masons*, and how it went into the Masonic tradition. Thus, in answer to the question, “What do you learn by being a Gentleman Mason?” The response is made, “Secrecy, Morality and Good Fellowship”. To the question, “What do you learn by being an Operative Mason?” answer is made, “To hew, square and mould stone, lay a level, and raise a perpendicular.”

It seems that this old Masonic questionnaire [as what it seems to be] includes a long-standing memory of this transition when the people of intellectual labor such as Dr. Desaguliers or aristocrats as Duke of Wharton began to get interested in forming the organization based on the tradition of guilds and particularly building fraternities, and had accepted it, adding the signs of distinction between them and the *operatives*. It all took place during the 1600s and early 1700s without any clear documents that could exactly state that on this date, these people decided to accept these stonemasons’ traditions, except for the 1717 infamous meetings in London when the first Masonic protocols [of the speculative Freemasons] were written down.

There is one especially important issue that cannot be avoided when talking about Freemasonry, its origins and the seventeenth century, the period when it officially did not exist, but its roots were already laid. The St. Paul’s Cathedral [the first stone was laid down in 1675] in London was surely supervised by the stonecutters, carvers, and builders. Thus, there is a good theory that the first real blend between the gentlemen’s society and the actual already educated builders such as Sir Christopher Wren, who might have known architecture and mathematics better than anyone else in the city, except for Newton, was, indeed, formed around the construction of this magnificent Cathedral. The information was mentioned in the Masonic records.

They discuss the figure of Sir Christopher Wren who was in charge of the Lodge of Freemasons at this Cathedral for not less, but eighteen years and this Lodge had already held meetings at the Goose and Gridiron tavern. The only exclusion from the future meetings was that it did not write down any protocols as it began to do in 1717.

During the Age of Enlightenment when science began to play a larger role among the educated groups of people, it was certainly one of the factors that influenced Freemasonry. It is specifically evident when looking at the number of geometrical figures, allegories, and instruments that are used in craftsmanship or cartography. All these instruments are not

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103 *The Masonic Review, Volume 77*, (C. Moore, 1892) at p. 125.
105 *The Masonic Mirror: Devoted to Masonic Literature, History, Jurisprudence and General Intelligence*, Volume 1, (F.R. Carrick, 1870) at p. 68.
instruments of faith or theology but belong to the process of reasoning, mathematics, and geometry. The presence of Seven Noble Arts and Sciences and the concept of Five Senses in the meanings of the Second Degree-Fellowcraft, merely adds to this notion. Certainly, the Age of Enlightenment with its growing deism, as in the writings of John Toland or Matthew Tindal, had some profound influence on the formation of the concept of the Grand Architect of the Universe, which possesses many allusions to deism.108

II

The Early 1700s, Goose and Gridiron and the Apple Tree Taverns

The actual and well-documented beginning of Freemasonry took place during the second decade of the eighteenth century. This organization had fully formed and managed to be the way it is right now, even though it underwent some additions and internal structural changes. It was the time when a guild of stonemasons had turned into a society of gentlemen, who wanted to change themselves, share information, and subsequently shape the world. The main topic of this study is to show and analyze how this organization emerged, and to what extent it had influenced the world, or it was merely a part of the greater process of changes that are often called progress. Thus, in 1717 the organization of Freemasons came about officially in England while gathering at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern by forming the Grand Lodge of England out of four pre-existing Lodges, and what is very important, it began to carry out protocols of its meetings [minutes], that now historically prove its emergence and continuation.109 Notably, these were not the only meeting locations around that time, and those also included the Queen’s Head, Turnstile at the Drury Lane, and the Queen’s Head in Knave’s Acre, also formerly known as the Apple Tree Tavern in Covent Garden, Charles Street.110 These places are seen as legendary in the history of Freemasonry and are of course viewed as the birthplaces of Freemasonry, though it was previously discussed that there was more to it, and the fraternity did not just appear from nowhere. Goose and Gridiron Tavern is probably the most famous one and can be cited as the mere place of emergence of the first truly official Masonic meeting place, however, others cannot be dropped off the record and the Apple Tree venue is often mentioned as the earlier one that was taking place in 1716.111 One of the Masonic records shows that the first official meeting took place at the Apple Tree Tavern in 1717 on June 24, [St. John the Baptist Day], and not in 1716 during which the Grand Lodge of England was instituted.112 Here John Lane can be doubted for his mentioning of the other year.

110 Ibid., p. 46. Also see The Masonic magazine, suppl. to The Freemason. [Continued as] The Masonic monthly, (London, George Kenning, 1882) at pp. 110-111.
111 The Freemason’s Chronicle, Volume 35, an article in Voice of Masonry [unknown author], Masonry in the Seventeenth Century, (W.W. Morgan, 1892) at p. 53.
112 John Lane, Masonic records, 1717-1894: being lists of all the lodges at home and abroad warranted by the four grand lodges and the “United Grand Lodge” of England, with their dates of constitution, places of meeting,
These meetings laid the pavement for all the future Masonic meetings and gatherings, which soon were taking place everywhere in Europe from London to Berlin. What was the most significant part about their gatherings, is that these early Freemasons were not hiding and were openly taking minutes on what they were doing, therefore it became known to history. Also, it portrays the club culture of England [Britain] where people could have met for such an important occasion in the tavern or an ale house and discussed various important issues. Humorously or not, the social drinking culture eventually had an impact on the formation of this fraternity and was later reflected in the tradition of the Agape or Masonic dinner before or after the Ritual Labors in the Lodge. Certainly, if dinner had included alcohol, then it had to be carried out after the Labors, otherwise, the consequences were surely predictable. The social nature of Freemasonry was obvious from the beginning, these were not lonely philosophers who merely wanted to be left alone, no, they wished to socialize, talk, share their daily experiences which took place along the week or a month, and just simply wanted to stay in the company of friends. This tradition was most likely taken from both, the culture of coffee houses and taverns in Britain and the guilds of stonemasons, who were sitting in their lodges during the rainy evenings, discussing various matters and planning the future. This human factor of Freemasonry is still one of the most attractive parts of this fraternity, men look for communication and a company of friends, who would understand them and to whom they can talk after a nice pint of beer. Also, it did not include religious or political barriers, an individual could have crossed those lines that have always divided humanity and caused violent conflicts. Here is the reality of human contact that was searched in the guilds and turned out to be so important in a world full of problems based on different religions, opinions, and rivalries between big power brokers. Talks on politics were always forbidden in the Lodges, well at least surely during the Ritual Labors, when the Books of Sacred Law are opened, thus eliminating the possibilities of quarrels when a Freemason should think about eternity, spiritual matters, reckon on the Masonic symbols, or participate in the process of discussing technical issues such as acceptance of a new candidate. Each Degree has a moral lesson to learn from, hidden in the allegory of a Biblical language and different Books of the Old Testament. They explain how a Freemason should act, change his life, look upon others and generally live his life following the Masonic principles of self-improvement. These postulates were formed during that early period of establishment of the organization and are observed until this day, except for those branches of the fraternity, which have broken with the principles of not taking women or atheists into the Lodges [Grand Orient of France and its position since 1877].

Since its official and historical founding in 1717, British Freemasonry did not remain lonely and began quickly spreading around different corners of Europe, and thus the world. It did not remain the same all the time in terms of the Ritual because new symbolic Degree systems were in the process of being developed from decade to decade, providing more allegorical lessons,
symbols, and structures. However, it all goes back to the original organization that had incorporated those four lodges into the Grand Lodge of England which is believed to be in charge of London only, not incorporating some older York Lodges [not the city, but the Ritual tradition] until 1738.\textsuperscript{115} Later on, the biggest schism in Freemasonry took place in 1877 after the Grand Orient of France had decided to allow the acceptance of atheists and agnostics into its ranks, something that could not and would not be accepted by the mainstream Freemasonry in the world, however, in all other issues even these two split up groups still share everything else in common.\textsuperscript{116} Though these two major groups do not officially communicate or certainly do not hold Ritual meetings of any kind together, they appear to be very similar to the eye of a commoner. They may remind the schism between the Catholics and Orthodox that took place in 1054.

Soon after the first official meetings began to take place, and the minutes were recorded, the need to establish officers came into reality, and the Masonic jurisdictional hierarchy came about. It is not very clear whether it had already existed before 1717 or began to get introduced later, though the records show that the Charters did not exist by that time and the first Deputy Grand Master was appointed in 1721.\textsuperscript{117} The same thing happened with other officers who are supposed to be in charge of the Lodge at work, Steward’s office was introduced in 1722 and the Sword-bearer came into existence in 1732, pretty far away from the original introduction of the organization.\textsuperscript{118} All these offices are necessary to carry out the ritual and bureaucratic tasks of the Lodge. Worshipful Master rules it, Senior and Junior Wardens directly assist him, Senior and Junior Deacons work on the ceremonial part and carry out the messages during the work, Secretary records the minutes and is often seen as the “foreign minister” of the Lodge, and a Steward takes care of the dinner or Agape [means Love] as it’s known in Freemasonry.\textsuperscript{119} Each position requires knowledge of the Ritual, takes a lot of memorization, and often needs years to learn, sometimes additionally requiring a lot of skill and effort. None of these positions can be sold or purchased, hence such a practice is completely unknown and forbidden in any regular and accepted Masonic Lodge, anywhere in the world. Mutual respect during the Ritual Labors or at the time of festivities is a prerequisite for the harmony and good communication between each member of any given Lodge.

\textsuperscript{115} Leon Heyneman, \textit{Freemasonry in England from 1567 to 1813: Including an Analysis of Anderson’s Constitutions of 1723 and 1738}, (Worthington, 1877) at p. 145.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Proceedings...Scottish Rite (Masonic Order). Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction}, (Printed at the Office of the Freemason's Magazine, 1877) at p. 29.
\textsuperscript{117} \textit{The Masonic Eclectic, Volume 3}, edited by John W. Simons and Robert Macoy, (Masonic Publishing & Manufacturing Co, 1867) at p. 176.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 176.
\textsuperscript{119} Row, \textit{Masonic Biography and Dictionary}, p. 20.
James Anderson and His Constitutions

His personality is one of the most prominent in this fraternal organization, and his role is significant, particularly when forming the system of conduct, which also explained the history and grounding origins of Freemasonry, eventually known as the Constitution of James Anderson. This man was not merely a writer of this especially important document for the fraternity, but his biography and profession make him very peculiar. Originally from Aberdeen [1680] where he acquired his education, he was interested in Biblical studies, something that led him to receive the Doctor of Divinity degree and most likely transfer his knowledge and experience as a Presbyterian minister in London since 1710 into Freemasonry. If looking carefully it appears quite clearly that Freemasonry incorporates a lot of allegories, symbols, and ideas taken from the Old Testament, literally making it appear as if it was the continuation of a Biblical society that aims at learning the significance of the genealogy of King Solomon. Certainly, these characteristics did not appear in the old stonemasons’ fraternities or guilds, they have never put the Bible at the center of their activities, but this new organization did it, where each Degree of initiation inquires some knowledge of the episode from the Scriptures. According to Richard Carlile, the researcher of Freemasonry, the Bible acts as the guiding moral instruction, which is meant to be in the mind of any person, in any Church and any Masonic Lodge, not only as the spiritual teacher but also as the historical record. This position was seriously presumptive of the fact that without an understanding of the texts from the Scriptures, it would be impossible to understand what is the aim and character of Freemasonry, therefore someone had to explain it, introduce it into the organization and be very knowledgeable in theology. The only well-documented person is James Anderson, who was well educated in the subject and could influence such an introduction of the Bible as the Volume of Sacred Law [as it’s known in Freemasonry] into each Lodge as a requirement to open and close the Ritual Labors. The very term, “books are closed” or “books are opened” comes from Freemasonry, meaning that the Lodge is in the midst of the Ritual work when they are opened, and closed when the work is over, and ‘brothers’ proceed to the dinner or take a break. It was popular during the time of the early Freemasons to interpret the Biblical texts in an allegorical way, something that is seen in the Masonic ritual manuals. Albert Gallatin Mackay discussed this matter in the Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry with his traditionally accurate and exact explanations. All the legends of Freemasonry are more or less allegorical, and whatever truth there may be in some of them in a historical point of view, it is only as allegories or legendary symbols, that they are of importance. The English lectures have therefore very properly defined Freemasonry to be “a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”.

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122 Albert Gallatin Mackey, *An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences ...*, (L.H. Everts, 1889) at p. 56.
James Anderson was also well known during his time, and not that well known today for the completion of a book called *Royal Genealogies: Or, the Genealogical Tables of Emperors, Kings and Princes, from Adam to These Times*, which was published in 1732 in England.\(^{123}\) This particular book makes him not merely a theologian, but a historian who was interested in the biographies of such Biblical figures as King Solomon and his predecessors. One of the names seen in Freemasonry is “Boaz” which is the name of the left-hand column or Pillar in the Masonic Temple if facing the East.\(^{124}\) This particular figure was the great-grandfather of King David, and by some rabbis this Boaz is identified with the judge Ibzan of Bethlehem who is mentioned in the eighth verse of the twelfth chapter of judges.\(^{125}\) The knowledge had to come from someone who was reading the Bible and knew exactly what it was in terms of genealogies. The whole variety of Biblical allegories and later Masonic Charges. A moral story based on one of the episodes from the Old Testament also may tell something about the origins of Freemasonry in general. Anderson was surely in the middle of establishing the legacy of this fraternity and almost no doubt had a lot to do with the creation of its early written texts that became the basis for organizational self-governance.

One of the most important documents that were composed by him, and later took his name was the Constitution of Freemasons, also well known as Anderson’s Constitution. This book is the basic law of the fraternity, it tells Freemasons how to act, live, obey, understand themselves and conduct the Lodge. Technically, it is as being the real state Constitution, which rules the land, and it may be presumed that it was the first such document made to run the organization [not the country], later modeled by the republican governments, especially the American Constitution and its system of government.\(^{126}\) It was not the only organizational text composed by Freemasons, which was used as the basic document of their self-conduct. The Ancient York Masons [*the Ancients*] were established in England in the 1750s, as the alternative or to some a schismatic branch of the Grand Lodge of England, thus it created its document of the basic Masonic law, composed by Laurence Dermott, which was also called “Ahiman Rezon” or just known by its common name, the Book of Constitutions.\(^{127}\) Nevertheless, the document that was originally published by James Anderson in 1723 is the only Constitution that is used today in and by every Masonic Lodge in the world as the basis for its internal jurisprudence. When the Grand Lodge of England was established in 1717 it did not have any serious document to govern it, except for the *Old Gothic Constitutions* concerning work and activities of the preceding organizations, [“the usages of ancient times”] and those were the guilds, building fraternities or Masonic lodges that were already there right before the

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\(^{123}\) Note: James Anderson, *Royal Genealogies: Or, the Genealogical Tables of Emperors, Kings and Princes, from Adam to These Times; in Two Parts*, (published for the author by James Bettenham, 1732).


\(^{126}\) *The American Freemason’s New Monthly Magazine*, (J.F. Brennan, 1860) at p. 282.

establishment of the Grand Lodge of England.\textsuperscript{128} James Anderson was first mentioned in the Masonic history on September 29, 1721, when John, the Second Duke of Montagu, who was the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England at that time, asked him to re-work and digest those Old Gothic Constitutions and compose the new one for the good and righteous conduct of the Freemasons.\textsuperscript{129} The nobleman and aristocrat, who was prone to making jokes, he reportedly had enjoyed pouring cold water over his guests during the games, did not take the task of writing the Constitutions himself, but gave it to the man who was mostly adjusted for it.\textsuperscript{130} It is hard to tell whether James Anderson was assigned to this task for his religious background or just because he was well known for his piety and good knowledge of letters, but he had certainly managed to fulfill it. Ancient Charges found in the Constitution explain and provide the history of Freemasonry the way he or his closest associates saw it at that time, they cannot be taken as the historical verifications for the history of the Masonic fraternity, but they may be the history itself, tracing a historian to the way Anderson could see the organization with his eyes, and provide some hints into the real story behind fraternity’s establishment. Charges include numerous hints not merely into the actual order by which Freemasons get organized, but it shows how it incorporates various philosophical ideas that certainly include deism, tolerance, inclusiveness of the humanistic ideals, etc. For example, according to Anderson, the Biblical Adam was already teaching geometry to his sons and Seth was the “cultivator of astronomy”, something that may be in the realm of the mythical theories of origin discussed before, however, worth mentioning when discussing the Constitution itself.\textsuperscript{131} In the regular, traditional system of Freemasonry based on this Constitution, a Freemason cannot be an atheist, or something that is mentioned there, – “an irreligious libertine” and should follow the religion of the country in which they live, according to the proclaimed customs and traditions of the older operative free-masons in different corners of the world.\textsuperscript{132} Though the text itself does not mention the term operative and stands only on the principle of one continuous history of Freemasonry, which has its roots in the Old Testament. Additionally, to clarify some historical issues, it should be noted that at the time when the Constitution was ordered it seems that according to the sources mentioned above [Ars Quatuor Coronatorum magazine, issued by the Quatuor Coronati Lodge in London] the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, who had ordered the issue, was John, the Second Duke of Montagu. The book was presented to him as was noticed in Dedication written by another famous early Freemason, Dr. John Desaguliers [Deputy Grand Master in 1723] at the beginning of the Constitution, and the words “by order of his Grace the Duke of Wharton” could also mean that the undertaking was made following his orders, too.\textsuperscript{133} This little confusion may be resolved if looking at the clarification provided in the Masonic Monthly published in Boston in 1864; it stated that in 1722-23 the Duke of Montagu had resigned his Grand Master’s position in favor

\textsuperscript{128} The American Freemason’s New Monthly Magazine, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{130} Francis Hardy, Memoirs of the political and private life of J. Caulfield, Earl of Charlemont, Volume 1, (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand; by G. Sidney, 1812) at p. 65.
\textsuperscript{131} James Anderson, The Constitutions Of The Free-Masons: Containing The History, Charges, Regulations Etc. of that Most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity : For the Use of the Lodges, (Hunter, 1723) at p. 2.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. ix, Dedication, composed by Dr. J.T. Desaguliers, Deputy Grand Master.
of Philip, the First Duke of Wharton following some quarrel in the fraternity, hence not everyone had welcomed the given choice.134 All of these individuals were important figures in the English society of the day and were co-founders of the society of Freemasons. Their influence on the Constitution may be different and the co-authorship cannot be insisted upon it because there is not enough evidence to say that the Dukes of Montagu or Wharton were assisting James Anderson, but the *preface* [Dedication] written by John Desaguliers, also a Calvinist from the family of French Huguenot refugees [and a chaplain to Frederick, Prince of Wales], mathematician and philosopher, hints that he was at least participating in the process of actually composing it.135 The Prince was initiated into the Degree of *Entered Apprentice* and immediately a *Fellow-Craft* on November 8, 1737, in presence of Rev. Dr. Desaguliers.136

The second edition of the Masonic Constitution took place in 1738 and was also completed by James Anderson. This new edition was not quite different from the original one but did not contain much of the history of the Grand Lodge of England from 1717 until the year of this second publication. At the same time, he was criticized by Albert Gallatin Mackey for not providing any history from that period, and for giving a lot of unreliable information on the very ancient origins of Freemasonry. He had specifically said that - *No Masonic writer would now venture to quote Anderson as authority for the history of the Order anterior to the eighteenth century.*137 Additionally, in 1730 he wrote the text called *A Defense of Masonry* in reaction to some attacks against the Fraternity, thus it was added to the 1738 edition of the Constitution.138 All of his efforts to regulate the internal jurisprudence of the organization were seriously influential on it, and without his participation in the process it could have never been the same, or at most, it seems that way. He was the man of letters and could fulfill the tasks given to him by the aristocrats who were also running the Grand Lodge of England along with him, Anderson was also the Grand Master, but could not compose the same text on the same qualified literary level. Notably, both Rev. Dr. John Desaguliers and James Anderson belonged to the Protestant and particularly Calvinist denomination were involved in the composition of the Constitution for Freemasons and were standing at the beginning of this Fraternity.

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137 Albert Gallatin Mackey, *An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences: Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences and Literature as Connected with the Institution*, (Moss & Company, 1874) at p. 68.
138 Ibid., 68.
Freemasonry and the Concepts of Reformation

I

Tolerance, Freemasonry, and Protestantism

Freemasonry and tolerance are two terms that are as similar as war and peace, and it is difficult not to imagine controversies and heated discussions when getting to the issues of Freemasonry. In one way or another, this group is presented in some negative light, especially if organized religions are getting involved in the discussion. It may not be a coincidence why this peculiar fraternity came about in England and Scotland, the countries that by the end of the seventeenth century were clearly on the side of Protestantism. No understanding or concept can explain it all in one or two words, but even though the building fraternities and guilds of stonemasons had existed before in practically all European countries, still it did not originate in Austria or the Netherlands. Here it should be said that the culture of English and Scottish stonemasons’ guilds had intricately coincided with the emergence of British deism and a certain number of religious freedoms. First, James II who was trying to protect Catholics procured and lobbied for the Declaration of Indulgences in 1687 that gave religious freedom to Dissenters and Catholics, while imprisoning seven Anglican bishops who were not welcoming the act. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 played a role in the future Toleration Act of 1689, which was providing almost the same freedoms, but did not really treat Catholics on the same level as the Anglicans and Dissenters, and for example, the acceptance of the doctrinal articles of the Church of England was still required from the Irish Nonconformists. Catholics were seen as a threat to the United Kingdom and were not treated with all given tolerance because the latter was still limited, and was not very close to what may be seen today. At the same time, it may be argued that the new Protestant monarchy under William and Mary was contemplating how to put all its subjects together because any return to the civil conflicts that have shattered England just a few decades before, was not acceptable. Somehow different ideas including Unitarianism [or the new versions of Arianism], Lock and Hobbes which were also getting more popular had to be somewhat considered under the notion of new tolerance. Unitarianism was surely more radical and was recalling those days when anti-Trinitarians were forced to hide in the underground and could be easily executed by both Catholics and Protestants alike – recall the case of Michael Servetus in Geneva. Deism was also getting ground around that time and originally was not warmly welcomed by Unitarians while being criticized by the notable proponents of it among the Dissenters such as Nathaniel Lardner, Foster or Hallet. In other words, those who were criticized were beginning to criticize those

139 Christopher Lazarski, Power Tends to Corrupt: Lord Acton’s Study of Liberty, (Cornell University Press, 2012) at p. 118.
142 Ibid., pp. 250-251.
who were under some form of criticism themselves, and the way out of it was merely tolerance because the other way could suggest only war. It was well understood by James II and the new Protestant monarchs after the Glorious Revolution; it had to be either tolerant or totalitarian in its religious and philosophical views, where the totalitarian could not catch up with the real fear of any civil unrest that had already taken place in England. Therefore, the English government had to learn how to tolerate all these different views, and make them all stay together, and surely it was the Anglican Church that could not physically replace the Catholic with its all-controlling position. If one point of view could get through then others had the right to get voiced as well. Simply, once there was no theological or ideological monopoly in the United Kingdom with the emergence of different Protestant denominations and growing *parliamentarism* which people could talk about their issues through, then it was nearly impossible to set such a monopoly up again. This particular notion gave rise to ideological pluralism, and if any religious or philosophical group is loyal to the government, or ruling dynasty and is not rebelling against the Anglican Church, thus it could be justified and live-in peace. It all was not developed immediately, but the idea was established, especially after the English Civil War period.

Tolerance was not a must under the Protestant doctrine of any kind that came out of the Reformation, Calvin did not tolerate Anabaptists, *anti-Trinitarians*, or deists, and surely his position was at war with the Catholics, that may be out of the question.\(^{143}\) Luther also did not tolerate these groups and spoke against Anabaptists.\(^{144}\) The Toleration Act of 1689 was far from perfect, it did not give all the freedom, for example, merely Anglicans could be part of the state’s establishment in England, and Scotland was already Presbyterian by that time. The idea of pluralism was developing in England or generally in Britain without one particular statesman or monarch. By the will of time or history itself, it was eventually benefiting the emergence of such groups as Freemasons or Odd Fellows. Without the idea of tolerance, it could be like in Spain where Freemasonry was originally prosecuted and where the Papal Bull of 1738 was taken very seriously and without any sentiments. In contrast to England, in 1740 the King of Spain Philip V had enacted it, and soon the Inquisition had found the Lodge, allowed the arrest of its eight members, and all of them were sent to the galleys.\(^ {145}\) Often Freemasonry could be seen as the agent of Britain, but it may be another issue of politics between the two countries and not a matter of theology. An article in *The Freemason’s Quarterly Review* tells about one arrest and interrogation made in 1757 by the Inquisition of a Frenchman M. Tournon who had worked in Spain.\(^ {146}\) However, the government in the United Kingdom did not just produce a possibility of coexistence between the different religious Christian groups, but also has not hunted out deists such as John Toland and liberal thinkers, for example, John Locke, nor neither it carried out plans to prohibit early Masonic Lodges under the authority of James Anderson or the Duke of Wharton. To understand the tolerant

\(^{143}\) Jean Calvin, edited by Benjamin Wirt Farley, *Treatises Against the Anabaptists and Against the Libertines*, (Baker Book House, 1982) at p. 28.

\(^{144}\) Martin Luther, *A Commentary of M. Doctor Martin Luther Upon the Epistle of S. Paule to the Galathians*, (London, printed by George Miller, 1635) at p. 3.


\(^{146}\) *The Freemason’s Quarterly Review, and General Assurance Advocate*, (Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, Paternoster-Row, 1849) at p. 272.
position of many and not all Protestants toward Freemasonry, it must be realized that it was necessary of cooperating between all the Protestant groups outside and within their communities because another option meant war, and it could not be permitted by the English monarchy. Later, that tolerance spread to non-religious or philosophical societies, too. This mutual behavior was eventually transferred to the British colonies and became part of the unwritten rule among Protestants, saying that religion was important, but one could not go into the neighboring community to murder representatives from that community over their beliefs. There were some exceptions as with Quakers in New England. Even though Freemasonry is not a religion, still it was claiming certain beliefs such as the belief in the Supreme Being, and always included rituals that could remind of some deistic worshipping [not called so in the fraternity]. Generally, speaking about religion and Freemasonry may be more complicated than it seems at the first glance. This fraternity may include many different religions among its members, allowing its peaceful coexistence, but without letting it all be professed inside the society, sort of uniting all by the belief in the Grand Architect of the Universe or simply the Supreme Being. Masonic historian Albert Gallatin Mackey was leaning toward the idea that Freemasonry was a kind of religious system or at least had all its traits of it.

Now, it is plain that, in either of the first three senses in which we may take the word religion (and they do not very materially differ from each other), Masonry may rightfully claim to be called a religious institution.¹⁴⁸ He had based this idea on the fact that any religion includes some *modus operandi*. He drew this conclusion from the following notions. The belief in God, duties that are owed to God, and fulfilling His plan following the “revelations given by God to men”, which are built into all three Abrahamic religions, make them perfect from the religious point of view but claiming that other religions are not perfect enough.¹⁴⁹ In other words, if they were perfect then why did the need for other institutions such as Freemasonry came about? Freemasonry also has its alternative to any religion semi-like cult of the Grand Architect, which begins to rival other religions as “perfect and the only view of the world”. Freemasonry has its *modus operandi* and its way of perfecting men. The matter is questionable; however, Mackey’s understanding is noticeably clear, in fact, provable in practice and through observations.

If Protestant denominations and churches managed to tolerate and not prosecute each other, they learned how to treat fraternities such as Freemasonry or Odd Fellows without much hesitation. The relationship was and is not perfect, but at least manageable in comparison to other faiths, political regimes, and spiritual practices. All the founders of Freemasonry belonged to Protestantism and two of them were pastors, Dr. John Desaguliers and James Anderson. The first came from the family of French Huguenots, and a pastor, the second was a Calvinist minister in London and certainly played a huge role in the formation of this

¹⁴⁷ *The Freemasons Repository Published Monthly for Masons and Their Families*, Editor Henry W. Rugg, Volume 20, (E.L. Freeman & Son, 1891) at p. 197.
¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 640-641.
fraternity by writing its Constitution. Both were Calvinists and certainly, their faiths did not contradict anything that was associated with their Masonic activities, and even more, they were continuously practicing their beliefs after joining, or better to say forming the Grand Lodge of England.

The level of tolerance among Protestants when it comes to the issues of Freemasonry is extremely high, especially if linked to the nobles and royals that join it. In England and Scandinavia, many representatives of the royal blood were belonging to this fraternity, and even as of 2021 the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England is Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent. It was already noted before that such figures as Philip, the First Duke of Wharton, and John, the Second Duke of Montagu were standing at the roots of the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 and became its prominent Grand Masters during the first decade of its existence. They were not always the most intelligent people though, and as the Duke of Wharton, who was known for his eccentric behavior, the noble youths like him, were probably becoming Freemasons out of sheer fun. For the same reason, he was probably participating in the Hellfire Clubs that became immensely popular during the 1720s in Britain. Nevertheless, their acceptance and presence added the notion of legitimacy and provided some serious coverage in case any religious group would attempt to attack it. Today, the church which is mostly tolerant of Freemasonry is the Anglican Church [an Episcopal Church in the United States], and its liberal position on many issues is well known. Also due to the particular presence of the royals in the fraternity, and thousands of Anglican Freemasons, its former Archbishop Rowan Williams even apologized for his previous accusations against the fraternity. Additionally, he had appointed Rev. Jonathan Baker as the Bishop of Ebbsfleet in 2011, well known for his membership in Freemasonry, and the whole agenda did not go without some controversy, but Dr. R. Williams insisted on his decision, and all his preceding views were forgotten.

Royals and the people of influence could shift the situation in favor of the fraternity but mostly it was taking place in Protestant countries such as England, Sweden, or Denmark. The Scandinavian Freemasonry was also closely connected to the nobility of Germany and England, making its aristocratic representatives join the lodges around the 1740s. Lord James Cranstoun was behind the establishment of the first warranted and legitimate Lodge in Denmark, from whom the Lodge “Zorobabel” had received the actual warrant in October 1745. Another Lodge, St. Martin was granted the Constitution in 1749 from the following Grand Master of

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the Grand Lodge of England, Lord Byron, who had given it to Count Danneskiold Laurvig, the Worshipful Master of the actual Lodge.\textsuperscript{156} Certainly, there were no representatives of any other official religion, but from the Church of England and the Lutheran Church of Denmark. It may surely be said that many of them were not that religious, or that they were searching for alternatives to their faith, however, the fact remains quite solid, none of the Churches stood openly against Freemasonry. No laws or regulations against the nobility or commoners to join the lodges came about, neither from the Archbishop of Canterbury nor from the Lutheran Bishops of Denmark. A similar attitude and history of relations between Freemasons of Sweden and its royal family were taking place and gave rise to the special \textit{Masonic system}, which is well known for its dignity and discipline. Gustavus IV was initiated as a teenager in 1792; the Duke of Sudermanie, also known as Charles XIII was eventually appointed the Grand Master of all Swedish Freemasons [1780], later giving this office to Prince Charles Jean Bernadotte.\textsuperscript{157} Particularly the Swedish system of \textit{Masonic Degrees} is known as the Zinnendorf Rite, which has its origin in Germany is honoring the king of Sweden with his protectorate over Freemasonry, and was made to include those Freemasons that were and are particularly distinguished in their advantages and benefits.\textsuperscript{158} Possibly Sweden is the biggest and most valuable example of cooperation between Freemasonry and royalty, nobility and Masonic lodges that are working in harmony, without any serious conflicts or persecutions.

Generally, many of the founding fathers of the United States were Anglicans and often deists, who believed in the new order of republicanism over the old royal order. Hence, most likely came the sign in Latin on the US dollar bill. It was already argued before that English deists such as John Toland became influential in the country’s philosophical circles, and no doubt, these ideas kept on spreading to the North American continent, later shaping the mindset of figures such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Both were known for their deistic overview of the world, Benjamin Franklin was one of the most famous American Freemasons even during his lifetime, joining the Nine Sisters Lodge in Paris alongside Voltaire.\textsuperscript{159} Protestant America was not always very friendly towards this society, and it shall be discussed in the following sub-chapter, however, it allowed them to exist from the colonial period until today as the organization in which the Founding Fathers have manifested themselves. There is no coincidence on why the originally Protestant country has the Scottish Rite Temple [includes \textit{Higher Degrees}] right in the center of its capital on Pennsylvania Avenue, house number 1733. Now the temple is famous for its roof in the form of an unfinished pyramid, which most likely means that the experiment is not over, and the construction of American democracy is still in the process. The finished pyramid or an ideal can be only in the hands of the Supreme Being. Before that, in Britain many Freemasons were not satisfied with the level of religious tolerance in the UK, and spoke for more freedoms for some Protestant groups, particularly when it came to voting rights; it can be seen from the example of Raphael Courteville and Dr. Thomas Pyle

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., pp. 319-320.

\textsuperscript{157} Emanuel Rebold, \textit{A General History of Free-masonry in Europe: Based Upon the Ancient Documents Relating To, and the Monuments Erected by this Fraternity from Its Foundation in the Year 715 B.C. to the Present Time}, (American Masonic Publishing Association, 1869) at p. 112.

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., pp. 112-113.

who had spoken for such rights.\(^{160}\) It all does not mean that merely the Anglo-Protestant countries such as Denmark or Prussia, including France during the Age of Enlightenment where Freemasonry was tolerated. There are many other examples such as Turkey, Poland, and Austria under the Duke of Lorraine, Emperor Francis I, where Freemasonry became seriously prominent, too. It may be separately discussed when touching on the issue of Catholicism and Freemasonry in Europe, and elsewhere, or the introduction of Freemasonry into the Ottoman Empire with its later growth there. Technically, the level of tolerance that was shown to Freemasonry under the “Protestant governments” was always very high and could guarantee the growth of republicanism together with Freemasonry. This fraternity is certainly well linked to the growth and expansion of democracy, free speech, and the freedom of travel, the principles which are found in the original Masonic Constitutions. The latter had played a huge role in forming the more modern world, justice, the new transparent social order which did not possess noble privileges, and racial or gender inequalities.

II

Anti-Masonic Position in Protestantism

Surely, the relations between Freemasonry and Protestant Churches or groups were not always without clouds, and have included mistrust, suspicion, or accusations. Freemasonry even though it was established in the Anglican and Presbyterian United Kingdom by Anglicans and Calvinists [Desaguliers, Anderson], still it was not an integral part of any church or religious organization. It was purely independent of any religion, often resembling the religion itself, and as A. Mackey had argued, it possessed all the qualities of a religion, except for the philosophical part.\(^{161}\) It could not and did not attract those representatives of the Protestant denomination, who were truly pure in their faith, and had not seen any other alternative way to God, but through the revelation given in the Scriptures. Freemasons swear an oath, which at least symbolically makes them keep the secret they are supposedly possessing, and even if there is no actual secret or it has merely the traditional meaning, it is enough for many to build numerous suspicions against the fraternity.\(^{162}\) Was it true about the Catholic Church that had banned it in 1738, and the answer is absolute yes, Freemasons were not trusted, though the Protestant groups had similar attitudes here and there, often turning into serious misunderstandings. It was not always seen as part of the community, its rituals could be understood wrongly, and generally, the idea of a lodge not regulated by the highest moral authority in the area, the church or local parish, was seen as macabre or sinister. Rev. Moses Thacher wrote his critique of Freemasonry *Addresses and Letters* published in Boston in 1829-1832, which were voiced on behalf of the Christian, Protestant theology, thus making his beliefs heard by many Evangelicals in the mostly Protestant America during that time.\(^{163}\) The


\(^{161}\) Mackey, *An Encyclopædia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences*, p. 640.


\(^{163}\) Samuel Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature, and British and American Authors, Living and Deceased, from the Earliest Accounts to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century: Containing Thirty
use of so many symbols that may or may not be of Christian origin, a certain amount of Hebrew words and terms, the hoodwink pulled over the eyes of a candidate during the initiation ceremony, all of these characteristics of Freemasonry were in one way or another put under suspicion almost right from the beginning. There is a story told by Robert F. Gould about James Anderson telling an anecdote that even the predecessors to speculative Freemasons, who lived in England during the reign of Elizabeth I, made her jealous with their secrets, so she decided to send a force to break their assembly in York on St. John’s Day, 26 December 1561. It seems like a myth, but it may reflect some attitudes and the atmosphere that was surrounding Freemasonry during J. Anderson’s time. In 1730 an individual known as Samuel Prichard published a pamphlet *Masonry Dissected*, which brought a lot of criticism upon Freemasons and in one way or another compared it to the sinister secret organization that professes anti-Christian principles, and what was the strangest is that it included a lot of technicalities of the Masonic terminology. There is a possibility that Prichard was a former Freemason or at least had personally known them. His thirty-two pages long publication was not unnoticed, especially by the city population, giving rise to many speculations of how macabre the organization of Freemasons can be, that it may have built plots, etc. In 1762 another publication came out called *Jachin and Boaz* composed by William Morgan [not the one which is going to be discussed later, and who lived in the 1820s New York state]. There he had been discussing many similar views and ideas about the possibility of the anti-Christian nature of Freemasonry, its existence in all layers of society, of how damaging it can be to moral values, including many more common gossips that were surrounding this fraternity. It seems that this publication spread even more rumors against Freemasonry in England and many of those who could have attained it began to suspect that membership in the Christian community and Freemasonry are not compatible.

Nevertheless, the Presbyterian and Anglican United Kingdom did not catch up with the anti-Masonic position. Views and ideas published in these pamphlets could not cause a serious uproar or a wave of true hate against the society, partially because it was not supported by the religious institutions in Britain, notably those of the Protestant faith, and to a larger degree, it did not gain much attention among the elites. It should also not be given to the notion that many of those in the elite were actual Freemasons, so the lack of notice on the side of the British government was most likely caused by sheer indifference. There were more important things in life and politics that attracted its attention. Conflicts with France, the Seven Years’ War, Spain, and many more. Also, England went through many serious religious conflicts where not merely one club or organization went into a conflict, but the whole country fought over what is going to be more dominant, the Anglican Church, the English monarchy, the republic with the Parliament, or the Dissenting and puritanical Christian groups will dominate the future;

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165 R.L. Tafel, *Documents Concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg*, (Swedenborg Society, British and Foreign, 1890) at p. 737.
these issues were more important. Whigs and Tories did not pay much attention to Freemasonry. Such relatively small social matters associated with Freemasonry did not bother England during the 1700s. First, the level of religious tolerance was already high, and everything that had to do with gatherings of men, whether it was the Hellfire Club, the tavern meeting, or the Masonic lodge, was permitted in British society. In the 1700s it was almost as in the modern twenty-first century Britain, and at this point, Freemasonry was reflecting the shape of modernity itself with the freedom of conscience and meetings. However, there were suspicions and misunderstandings primarily on the common level without breaching the legal tolerance in Britain. Protestants were not always acting without suspicion against Freemasons in such countries as the Netherlands or Sweden, where the fraternity was first put under surveillance and investigations before being accepted. Such examples of suspicion against Freemasonry may put this fraternity on the side of progressive forces, which demanded tolerance, the coexistence of different opinions, and pluralism. However, this point of view was certainly not observed by its opponents. In Sweden King Frederik I did not welcome this organization in his country, which was brought there from Britain in the 1730s, and decided to ban it under the punishment of execution, not more and not less. Also, similar references may be traced to the historian of Freemasonry R. L. Tafel, who was mentioning it with his citations from the Allgemeine Enzyklopädie composed by Ersch and Gruber. There he was discussing the position of Freemasonry in Sweden under Frederik, seven years later a change of this attitude, and the eventual legalization of Freemasonry. Gustavus III who in return became the Grand Master of the order [Freemasonry is also known as the order] in 1773 made it popular among the nobility in Sweden, however, back in the 1730s, the whole situation was different. In the Netherlands, Freemasonry was almost always tolerated and oversaw the edge of the progressive side, but even there it did not avoid some investigations due to the certain level of anti-Masonic sentiments. According to George Smith, the earliest Masonic lodges in the Netherlands may be traced back to 1725, and nothing was standing in the way of their development until the States-General prohibited it in 1735. Later, the town secretary of the city of Amsterdam went on with the investigation, however, he did not find anything threatening in the local lodges, which were meeting anyway regardless of the prohibition, and had eventually joined one of them. These prohibitions did not reflect the nature of the Netherlands and its quite progressive levels of tolerance under the tradition of religievrede. Due to the fact that during the 1700s the country was mostly Calvinist, it became obvious that not all of its adepts were welcoming this closed and seemingly deistic organization [fraternity, order]. In any way, all these prosecutions or slight prohibitions as in the Netherlands did not reflect this general position of Freemasonry within the Protestant denomination(s) making it

168 R.L. Tafel, Documents Concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg, p. 737.
169 Freemason’s Chronicle, A Weekly Record, Masonic Intelligence, Volume 40, (W.W. Morgan, 1894) at p. 95.
171 Ibid., p. 93.
certainly very tolerant, however, it all went quite different in the United States during the 1820s and 30s.

The infamous Morgan Affair had changed attitudes against Freemasonry in the United States to the most unprecedented forms. They were not seen in the Protestant countries before because for the first time it set up the formation of the anti-Masonic party, the only political force in the country which was bonded by one goal, the elimination of Freemasonry. It’s still being argued whether the town of Batavia in the New York state had witnessed a murder of a former Freemason by other Freemasons, or it was a coincidence, but what is certain is that it was able to unleash a powerful anti-Masonic movement, which had shattered its respectful authority in then mostly Protestant and progressive country. Political anti-Masonry was not known in Britain or practically anywhere else before that, and the only real form of anti-Masonic sentiments was usually based on gossip, rumors, or theological discussions that accused it of standing against Christianity. This time it became based on one political goal, and it took some effort on the side of Freemasons to sort of get away with the situation. In September 1826 William Morgan, a Freemason and a member of the Royal Arch Degree [part of the system which follows up the first symbolic 3 Degrees] was incarcerated on the debt charges he had owed to some people in the Batavia area, NY. Eventually, his debt was paid by the jailer’s wife, not without the involvement of his friends from one of the lodges, and upon his release on September 16, he was kidnapped and had never been seen again. What did eventually happen? There is no exact answer. What was adding fuel to the fire belongs to the fact that he had planned to release a book on Freemasonry, in which he wanted to describe its rituals and maybe more, however, his Brethren were trying to change his mind, so he would not publish it, even going as far as possibly burning the print on September 10. His conflict with local Freemasons was quite evident, the whole situation was scandalous before his kidnapping, and there is enough information that local lodges did not want him to publish the book [to be titled Illustrations of Masonry], however, there was never enough evidence to prove that his former Brethren were directly involved in his kidnapping or especially murder. Nevertheless, the picture of all happening events points to that, and it was exceedingly difficult to restore the fraternity’s reputation. Soon, it took more fire, and a lot of members of the local lodges underwent thorough investigations. Dr. J.W.S. Mitchell had believed that Morgan was murdered, and had no doubts that it most likely involved some Masons, but did not accuse the whole organization, and on the other hand, Dr. Rob Morris thought that Morgan somehow slipped into Canada and there got killed by the lawless mob due to his drunkenness. All these opinions are based on the lack of direct evidence, and cannot be pushed against any individual who was standing near W. Morgan, but the resentment of his fellow ‘brothers’ against the latter’s publication was obvious, his scandalous behavior could also take place due to his abuse of alcohol, and many more proved or unproved events could also exist. All those investigations that took place afterward were not trying to cover up Freemasons, and the highest Masonic authority of the state of New York was protecting the following undertakings.

173 Ibid., p. 4.
174 A.P. Bentley, History of the Abduction of William Morgan: And the Anti-masonic Excitement of 1826-30, with Many Details and Incidents Never Before Published, (Van Cice & Throop, 1874) at pp. 26-27.
In September and October 1826, New York governor DeWitt Clinton, one of the highest ranking Masons in the United States, issued two proclamations. One urged apprehension of the offenders involved in Morgan’s abduction and requested the cooperation of citizens with all civil authorities.\textsuperscript{175}

There were no attempts to bribe or change judges, or manipulate the case in favor of Freemasonry using illegal methods, but there were ways to divert the danger, and it would be strange if the New York lodges decided then to suddenly plead guilty without knowing anything for sure themselves. It seems that Freemasons were not happy at all, and all the following measures merely prove that, as much as they prove their suspicion against some of their fellow ‘brothers’ in participating in the kidnapping. Lodges were reluctant to expel its members, who were suspected due to some evidence produced after investigations, but some left on their own after criticizing Freemasonry in 1827, and 1829 [Branch Lodge in Bethany, NY].\textsuperscript{176} In 1827 the trials did convict four men, including an individual named Nicholas G. Chesebro and John Whitney in the conspiracy to kidnap, giving them relatively light sentences of two years, three months, and one month to three men, however, nobody was convicted in committing a murder, which was not fully proved but still seriously suspected.\textsuperscript{177} This particular verdict could not and did not change the minds of many people, who were now more and more believing that Freemasonry was the brood of conspiracies and an organization that was strong enough to establish a structure that is capable of punishments and its trials if someone was capable of giving up its secrets. What was adding the fuel to all this scandal that had been linked to Morgan’s publication, which did not include anything special, but the gossip like the \textit{Masonry Dissected} published a century earlier in England? Nevertheless, the fact that people who were proved to be involved in the kidnapping began to stay their sentence for the kidnapping, but not for the murder, was the most serious cause of the following anti-Masonic movement. It was hard to believe that local lodges were not involved in the kidnapping. Most likely he was killed, and the public had technically known that it was done by some members of the local Masonic lodge(s), though it could not be fully proved, still it was full enough to create an uproar. One of the biggest Protestant groups that came out of this scandal was the American Christian Organization, which was later on supported by many followers, well-financed, and capable of setting up public lectures, and its hostility towards Freemasonry became sincerely large in the United States during the 1800s.\textsuperscript{178} All the typical anti-Masonic ideas were generated and thrown at them with yet the political twist, surely being supported by many clergymen who saw Freemasonry as a rival to their activities. The fraternity was taking in different ideas, working without any political agenda before, and surely could tolerate the whole variety of denominations. Each church was not ready to accept it, and additionally, the Morgan Affair gave more room for rumors and gossip that began to undermine trust.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., p. 6.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., p. 7. Also see, Edward Thomas Schultz, \textit{History of Freemasonry in Maryland}, (J.H. Medairy, 1887) at p. 31.
Until today the mistrust exists and persists among many Protestant churches, one of them being the Southern Baptist Convention, the biggest American group of Baptists, which had published two reports in 1993 and 2000 pointing out many incompatibilities with Freemasonry. The same conclusion was drawn by the American Lutheran Synod in 2014 in the *Handbook of Freemasonry*.

By and large, Protestantism is often seen as part of the European and generally Western progressive force, which had shaped modernity. There is an interesting point made by Paul Frame that is worth quoting in full. Furthermore, there had been a widespread realization in a society formed in the shadow of the Reformation that what had once seemed unquestionable religious dogma was actually nothing of the sort. Freemasonry is also seen as an intricate part of progress and something that challenges various dogmas. If binding the concept to the main question of this work, it may be concluded in this chapter that neither this fraternity nor Protestantism alone could be the factors that shaped the modern world, but all of them together could have done it. Each group did not exist alone and was prone to mistakes and misdemeanors as in the Morgan Affair with his kidnapping and the unsolved mystery of murder, and the anti-Masonic Party which came out of it blaming one group of people for so many evils that it has not done.

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180 Ibid., pp. 180-182.
The Age of Enlightenment

I

Thinkers, Scientists, Publicists, and Modernity

This period in history is certainly outstanding due to its continuing development of something that was begun by humanists during the Renaissance in Europe. At the same time, the growth of mercantilism [trade methods to increase profit to the maximum], the bourgeoisie class, which did not want to continue with the same feudal structures as in France, and the new scientific discoveries, all of it stand at the center of this prominent age. There is practically no doubt that without it, the world would not see the so-called modern world, it would simply not have the base that was founded by such people as Rene Descartes, John Lock, John Desaguliers, Baruch Spinoza, Voltaire, Julien de La Mettrie and many others. A lot of these people happened to be Freemasons, and had a profound effect on the culture, philosophy, science, political systems, and history in general, so their activities are particularly important for this study. Karen L. Rich has noticed that the process had started earlier under the intellectual guidance of the Catholic Church, as was also discussed before in this work, and that it had reached certain proportions after the declining authority of religion.

The period of modern philosophy began when the Catholic Church, the major intellectual force during the Middle Ages, began to have a diminishing influence within society while the influence of science began to increase. In many ways, the intellectual revolution that had certainly begun with those who knew how to read Latin and ancient Greek, early scholars of theology and philosophy such as Thomas Aquinas were the base. Later Renaissance humanists took it further to another step, and then the time came to take it to a new stage with more skepticism and evaluation of reality by science and deism. People such as Descartes were questioning the day with the system of coordinates that did not belong to the heart of the humanists, who began to reject medieval scholasticism and appealed to feelings. For example, Calvin found it in the Scriptures and did not appeal to traditional scholasticism. In contrast, the enlightenment was more scientific if compared it with humanism, and certainly way less religious. Descartes did not approach God with the sheer heart but wanted to prove its existence of it, so no doubts in this uncertain world would have bothered him anymore, he wanted scientific certainty in his approach to God. It did bother Calvin, however, the latter as many Protestants, later on, found the way out of these doubts in more discipline. Spinoza may be seen as the most radical atheist in the Jewish community until today, and his radical approach to religion did not save it to Christians only but rather

underlined that the process of any further questioning is universal and prone to any religion. It had merely shown more universalism and attacks of skeptics against the dogma with more scientific radicalism and doubt, leading Voltaire to seriously condemn Calvin in his *Philosophical Dictionary*, judging him way more harshly than he judged Cardinal de Lorraine for his inquisitorial activities. To many philosophers and publicists of the Enlightenment, both Catholics and Protestants were equally wrong in their beliefs because according to them, they did not possess enough doubt in their actions, were too fanatical, and therefore, not very humane or even educated. In other words, Copernicus found his way into the future with the continuing scientific doubts of the following age, while being ‘picked up by the scientists of the Age of Enlightenment and Reason.’ Thinkers like Voltaire or Diderot cannot be seen as mere philosophers and their actions to judge reality may be compared to science, but the best way to describe them is to view them as brilliant publicists, who were able to use the scientific discoveries of their time to change the political or social environment around them. It seems that they began to get away from any kinds of dogma and as a result of it, were not welcomed by the people, who continued to think traditionally, those who could not unlearn the stereotypes. Preceding them, humanists were relying on religion and religious appeal and did not open position such issues as deism or materialism at the center of their messages. Those were certainly taken further away from the humanistic approaches, which could still appeal to the heart. The enlightenment era was walking through the ideas of reason and a lot of cynicism, and Voltaire is the best example of a cynical public that did not know that many limits, especially if it came to religion in its unenlightened variations. Erasmus, the humanist, had visibly a different approach, even though his view on some things, particularly religious fanaticism may be paralleled to the enlightenment thinking, and he was attacked for his views as Voltaire would be, two centuries later. What is particularly interesting is that Voltaire was a Freemason and is now known as one of the most famous representatives of this fraternity, he was a member of the *Nine Sisters* Lodge in Paris during its best days. An entry of Voltaire into the Masonic society happened in 1778 under the influence of another member of this Lodge, mathematician, and astronomer Jérôme Lalande, who was the Worshipful Master that was certainly interested in the intellectual growth of the Nine Sisters, which later became one of the most influential lodges in the history of Freemasonry.

What may matter in this discussion of the philosophers, scientists, and publicists during the enlightenment are that all of them were challenging their time and brought something that may be still used today on an everyday basis. These certainly include almost unquestionable use of science and democratic constitutions, the Masonic Constitution may be seen as the example for other such documents, and the first non-political, but organizational document of

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185 Félix Bungener, *Voltaire and His Times*, (T. Constable and Company, 1854) at p. 151.
188 Jean Henri Merle d'Aubigné, *History of the Great Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in Germany, Switzerland, Etc.*, (James M. Campbell, 1847) at p. 417.
this kind. Now it is practically impossible to imagine any school program without the system
of coordinates formulated by Rene Descartes or see the world without some especially
important countries that were established during that time, one of the most notable is certainly
the United States. The latter’s Constitution and the Bill of Rights were highly influenced by
such people as Benjamin Franklin, who was one of those polyathic people of the
enlightenment, who built bridges between the colonies and Europe during the eighteenth
century. It is also well known that he was a member of the Nine Sisters in Paris and had
personally known Voltaire while staying in France. Above mentioned Jérôme Lalande was
an important person, who managed to unite so many people of science, political thinking,
publicists, and philosophers under the same cap of the Lodge. He is the perfect example of such
a scientist that had represented the most prominent days of his challenging age, which was
taking the Renaissance yet to another level, establishing more bridges into the future. It is
practically impossible to imagine modern science and the scientific worldview without Julian
de La Mettrie whose position, similar to another preceding representative of the time at its early
stages, Malebranche, began to formulate the concept of a ‘man the machine’. Their influence
is possibly a little bit intoxicating to some, and revolutionary and positive to others, it seriously
depends on the opinion. The bitterness of their writing, cynicism of all questioning pen
Voltaire, and the mechanistic approach of La Mettrie have shaped the following centuries and
specifically found itself not in the nineteenth but the twentieth century. Its natural philosophy,
deism, and science shaped publicists who brought into the light a completely new and relentless
worldview with all its positive and negative sides. Aram Vartanian had underlined Voltaire’s
naturalist position which was not uncommon to him.

Voltaire, on several occasions that were not typical of his deistic outlook, had viewed human
destiny through the disabused optic of naturalism.

All of them were interconnected, Voltaire, La Mettrie, Franklin, Descartes, and Pascal in
this scientific, deistic, and naturalistic view of the world that they wanted to grasp and
understand without any old religious approach, which they did not see as satisfying. Debating
in salons, coffee houses, taverns, and Masonic lodges became normal for the foundations of
this way of thinking. This age was a continuation of the Renaissance taken to another level.
The salon’s culture in France and the pub-coffee house culture in Britain, which were able to
unite many peculiar people in one place, giving them the ability to talk, and talk freely, became
very typical of that age. It provided the base for the establishment of the first Masonic lodges,
where later many of the representatives of the enlightenment could meet together during the
eighteenth century, trying to think about universal principles, leaving religion and politics
aside. Religion was always capable of uniting people merely if it was unquestioned or
unchallenged by another one, otherwise, it was disuniting, however, this new approach based
on science gave yet another opportunity to unite at least those who were able to agree with

193 Ibid., p. 66.
Library, Book IV, (Masonic Publishing Company, 1874) at pp. 105-106.
science. There might have been many theological interpretations, but science is one, found and not invented in the old stories, there is only one law of gravity, practically undeniable; that could unite all the people regardless of their views and positions. Nevertheless, Freemasonry which tries to base its core concepts on science and geometry, also became prone to splits and divisions because the human factor is there to exist anywhere.

During that time, the fraternity was slowly incorporating more people of influence, who were also joining these meetings, and became involved in the establishment of the Masonic lodges in Britain and later elsewhere. As it was noted before, thought was able to meet power during the establishment of the first historical Masonic Grand Lodge of England, which united Dr. John Desaguliers, the mathematician, and Dukes of Montagu and Wharton in one place. The influence of their activities may be seen today, and the procurement of the ideas generated during the Age of Enlightenment cannot be unnoticed with its legacy of modern science and constitutional democracies. However, Freemasonry was not inventing them as many believe and was merely an integrated part of the process.

II

Britain and Freemasonry During the Enlightenment

It was already said in the previous chapters that Freemasonry was established and formed during the discussed age, playing the role of uniting different progressive people in its lodges, but it may be interesting to focus more closely on how it was acting at that time. As it was originally formed in Britain, it may be important to focus on the relations between the enlightenment, Britain, and Freemasonry. It was noticed that the original united Lodge of England [Grand Lodge of England], consisting of four previously created lodges was established in 1717, and according to the Masonic Records published by the UGLE two of those four were installed in 1691, and 1712 in London. It was almost immediately doing the work mentioned above, and it meant bridging between different people that would most likely not communicate in real life. The question immediately arises, why would the Duke or Count meet with people, whom he never met before, who belong to completely different classes or religions, and probably another political camp? John Desaguliers belonged to the Huguenot refugees in England, and aristocrats in the first lodges were mostly Anglicans, they had belonged to the establishment of English society at that time. Nevertheless, the Lodge itself had managed to get them together, mutually develop Rituals, compose one of the most peculiar documents of the day, the Masonic Constitution(s), and generally drink, talk, and share ideas. For example, what could someone like Desaguliers teach high tempered, popular in the high society Duke of Wharton, who was famous for his intriguing, partying, and other entertaining activities? Surely, they were different, but the whole idea of shaping the stone in Freemasonry is to do exactly that, meet different people, teach them, listen, and learn from them. Philip, the

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196 John Lane, Masonic Records 1717-1894, published under the authority of the United Grand Lodge of England by Edward Letchwoth, the second edition (London: Freemasons' Hall, 1895) at p. 34.
First Duke of Wharton could at least try to be better tempered, less erratic, and more abstinent while being in the Lodge, something he had later tried to do in the monastery in Paris, learn from the academics after the Ritual works or find some new ideas in science that were getting more popular. This type of sharing of knowledge in Freemasonry is guarded by the Constitution and General Regulations of the Lodge, where respect and good conduct are of great importance, and cannot be violated. This particular transfer of information changes other people, therefore, the educated class of the enlightened thinkers was able to directly influence those in power, those children who did not know that much of a restriction when growing up, thinking that the world is turning around them. Freemasonry in London was shifting the principle of class society of the day, and Reverend Dr. John Desaguliers or the Doctor of Divinity such as James Anderson could run the Lodge(s) as its Worshipful or Grand Masters, actually commanding their ‘Brethren’ who were nobles and aristocrats, but in real life that would be the opposite. Interestingly, this exchange process was taking place in Britain during the enlightenment and was specifically reflecting the urge of many people from the educated classes, including the aristocracy to willingly commit themselves to participate in such societies where it was possible. Entertainment and extravaganza were not unknown to these clubs, and if some believe that the Masonic Ritual is also part of this tradition and style, then it was certainly attractive to many aristocrats like the Duke of Wharton. Lords, artists, and actresses were able to participate in the so-called Hell Fire or Florists’ Clubs established in London or Dublin during that time with the purpose to entertain. Surely if so many prominent people of the day gathered together, it could mean more than just entertainment, it was capable of at least creating a cultural phenomenon. Such clubs became popular in Britain after the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The whole culture of clubs, pubs, and tea houses became very typical of Britain, enhancing the idea that Freemasonry was also part of this general notion of the Enlightenment Age. It probably shall not be ambiguous to say that this culture enhanced the whole style of democracy based on everyday life, without being afraid to get prosecuted for belonging to another denomination. A group with a different political view or even an organization that does not follow any of the religious or political mainstreams could feel comfortable in such an environment. The enlightenment in Britain was well connected to deism, many British thinkers such as Matthew Tindal, John Toland, and Philip Skelton were looking at it and thought of true possibilities that any acceptable Christian theological concept may not be correct. Thomas Woolston went far by questioning the Miracles described in the Old and New Testaments, including the Resurrection itself, thus he was experiencing prosecutions for his book *Discourses on the Miracle*, and much more moderate deists as Peter Annet had argued with him. In other words, the discussion kept on going, challenging all the

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198 The Free Mason’s Pocket Companion: Containing, the Origin, Progress, and Present State of that Ancient Fraternity; the Institution of the Grand Lodge of Scotland; Lists of the Grand Masters and Other Officers of the Grand Lodge of Scotland; Their Customs, Charges, Constitutions, Orders and Regulations, (Printed by John & Peter Wilson, 1792) at p. 79.
201 Ibid., pp. 195-196.
possible borders of correctness that was a must during the days of Erasmus or More. Freemasonry had absorbed many philosophical ideas spoken out during the Age of Enlightenment, and many of its symbols reveal it. One of them is the All-Seeing Eye often shown in a triangle, the real symbol of the deistic nature of this fraternity because any particular religion cannot be official inside the Masonic Lodge. Surely, it may be found in many churches, representing God the Father, and it is true, however, in Freemasonry, it represents the deistic concepts of the Grand Architect of the Universe, the force which may be applied to any existing, primarily Abrahamic religion. They. This notion is very important in Freemasonry, the idea that one cannot be an atheist, but at the same time any organized, theologically based religion is not the system upon which the fraternity was founded. Its principles are reflected in the enlightenment, possibly because many Freemasons were philosophers and politicians during that age. On the other hand, it may be seen that the age itself was influencing the fraternity, the process of exchange was taking place more actively than often thought. The philosophical school of British deism, natural law, and rationalism influenced many prominent people and Freemasons during the colonial period and the early United States such as Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Adams, James Madison, and Benjamin Franklin. They were standing upon the British enlightenment and took it to another level by establishing the republic in the British colonies, and who knows if it would take place if none of them were belonging to the fraternity of Freemasons. It seems that these principles were becoming an integral part of the fraternity and had to be shared by its members. One of the British Masonic newspapers wrote on one of the major principles shared by all Freemasons.

I am not the Church laying down dogmata of faith, or articles of peace or catechisms of doctrinal truth, but I am a religious and benevolent sodality based on the broad principles of humanitarian sympathy and toleration, but requiring that all who join my association, avoiding all other questions, shall be believers in God Most High, no atheists, and no libertines.

These ideas reflect the concept of something that may be called, deistic toleration. The whole idea is remarkably close to deism and the concept of natural philosophy that dominates Freemasonry. It incorporates the enlightenment and was certainly professed by many Freemasons, especially during that age. The above-cited text is one of the clearest explanations of Freemasonry and its overall principles.

Enlightenment, France, and Freemasonry

These three words are practically inseparable when discussing this particular time. It was already mentioned above that such people as Voltaire, Montesquieu and La Mettrie played a crucial role in the enlightenment, their influence was immense on the establishment of a new time, and yet in France, it turned to be even more radical than anywhere else. Britain was already quite famous for its deists, which included Matthew Tindal, John Toland, Peter Annet, and many others, so this was not very well organized, but a new school of thought was spreading around the Western world quickly, providing challenges to the order of things based on organized religion. Freemasonry was not the last organization or fraternity that played a huge role in amassing these ideas, catching up with hundreds of intellectuals around Europe, and giving them the way to participate in a group without religious dogma. Deism had certainly become the central philosophical concept of the speculative Masonry most likely responsible for its quick establishment and popularity. The other reason was religious and political borders could be more or less lifted in the lodges, it was the driving force behind a simple human curiosity, an attempt to get around the problem which was always blocking the way to contact between humans. This fraternity brought a level of internal tolerance that was not very well known in the various political circles or religious denominations. There is no wonder why so many Freemasons such as Voltaire were deists in France, too.

Nevertheless, France took it to another level during the era of enlightenment, it began to concentrate on materialism, something that was not typical of the British philosophical school at that time, or Freemasonry which excludes atheists. La Mettrie, Helvétius, Diderot, and Condorcet were all influenced by deism; however, they took it to another level and began to concentrate on materialism, which inevitably led to atheism. All these thinkers, scientists, and publicists were influencing each other, for example, von Holbach was believed to be a connection between later and earlier groups of materialists in France, where the earlier had included D’Alembert, Diderot, La Mettrie, Helvétius, and the later Condorcet, Lalande or Marechal. It was already said that Lalande was a Freemason, the Worshipful Master who brought Voltaire into the Nine Sisters Lodge in 1778. Moreover, the Masonic records show that Helvétius, too, as belonging to that Lodge just before the initiation of Voltaire, and the latter wore his apron. The Worshipful Master then clothed him with the apron formerly belonging to Helvétius, (the famous author,) which the widow of that illustrious philosopher had deposited in the Lodge of Nine Sisters. On receiving this apron Brother Voltaire kissed it. It clearly shows the link between all these figures of the French philosophical thought during the enlightenment, their mutual disagreements that could get united not merely by similar ideas, but also by fraternal activity.

207 Weisberger, Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment, p. 81.
208 Ceremonies on the Occasion of Constituting the Grand Royal Arch Chapter and the Installation of the Grand Officers, Together with the Inaugural Address of the Grand High Priest J.E. Holmead, (Gibson Brothers, 1867 at p. 101.
Freemasonry in France became the place of gathering of such personalities and the Nine Sisters Lodge turned out to be one of the most influential and famous for its diversity of minds and the spectacular list of its members. French Freemasonry was introduced to that country by the English Masonic representatives in 1725 and its first members included Lord Derwentwater, Chevalier Maskelyne, Heguerty, and some others who have also arrived from England.\textsuperscript{209} Generally, the first lodges in France were established under the supervision of the Grand Lodge of England and were aimed at the same type of people as during its original founding in the home country. They were mostly educated, many had belonged to the aristocracy before joining the lodges, and did not share very strong religious beliefs. Otherwise, the concepts of deism that they have shared could go in contrast with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Any oath taken outside of the Church could easily contradict the sacrament of confession. At the same time, it was not oriented toward making the French Masons the same as in England or Scotland, with the latter possessing its special qualities. Back in the 1850s, William Alexander Laurie insisted that the first organization of Masons in France called Maçonnerie was established there in 1645, but his claim is not very clear and is not backed by documents or any other serious evidence that it was, indeed, an organization of Freemasons.\textsuperscript{210} He gave it some connections to Scotland by saying, - This institution has such a striking resemblance to the Warden Courts which existed in Scotland in the sixteenth century, that it must have derived its origin from these.\textsuperscript{211} Scotland and France were traditionally connected while having a common enemy in the face of England, so there could be particular mutual links, at least on the level of any human contact based on economy, information sharing, art, etc. The special role in the history of Freemasonry in France, apart from England or the Grand Lodge of England, may be given to Chevalier Baron Ramsay, who was a Catholic convert [the conversion was made by Fenelon] coming to France in 1728 as the representative of Stuarts; he had established a few lodges by 1736 under the auspices of Edinburgh Masonic authorities.\textsuperscript{212} This was claimed by Emanuel Rebold, a Masonic historian. Also, he had underlined that Lord Derwenter and his successor Lord Harnwester, the first’s successor to the position of the Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of France, have been connected to Stuarts, but without any revolutionary aims as was done by Chevalier Ramsay.\textsuperscript{213} It may be quite obvious that separately established lodges and the system of Higher Degrees in France by the Scottish representatives were connected to the cause of Scottish Jacobites, the Pretender [James Francis Edward Stuart], and his son Charles Edward Stuart. Additionally, E. Rebold noted that in 1747 the chapter of Higher Degrees was founded in Arras and was known afterward as the Scottish Jacobite Masonry.\textsuperscript{214} The whole concept of the term “Écosee” in French Freemasonry is the descendant of all these connections and links to Scotland and its separate Masonic structures that were not dependent on the Grand Lodge of England.

\textsuperscript{209} \textit{The Freemason’s Monthly Magazine, Band 14}, (Tuttle & Bennett, 1855) at p. 22.

\textsuperscript{210} William Alexander Laurie, \textit{The History of Free Masonry and the Grand Lodge of Scotland: With Chapters on the Knight Templars, Knights of St. John, Mark Masonry, and R.A. Degree}, (Seton & MacKenzie, 1859) at p. 57.

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., p. 57.

\textsuperscript{212} Emanuel Rebold, \textit{A General History of Freemasonry: Based Upon the Ancient Documents Relating To, and the Monuments Erected by this Fraternity, from Its Foundation, in the Year 715 B.C., to the Present Time}, (American Masonic Publishing Association, 1872) at p. 213.

\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., p. 213.

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., p. 214.
established in 1717. The future ladder of the Scottish Rite system with its thirty-three degrees should be traced to Chevalier Ramsay, Stuarts, and their activities in France during the first half of the eighteenth century. The same was claimed by Hyde Clarke who had connected the Jacobites, Stuarts, and Freemasonry to France. Notably, all of them were portraying the concept of the British or French Freemasonry of the Age of Enlightenment, all were well-established nobles, and familiar with the high intrigue, the distinguishing mark of their lives and time. What is the most important fact that should not be avoided is that French Freemasonry had developed a more materialistic philosophy that would later (1877) cause the Grand Orient of France to split from the rest of the so-called regular Freemasonry and become separate. This issue was happening due to the GOdF’s decision to accept atheists and agnostics into its lodges, something that would be completely nonpermissible in other Masonic organizations. It was most likely caused by the influence of natural philosophy and particularly the ideas of Helvétius, Diderot, La Mettrie, or Marquis de Condorcet. It is clear that Helvétius, Diderot, and Condorcet were Freemasons, however, it may not be so definite about Julien de La Mettrie, hence the last was a well-known atheist at that time, and it was less likely that he became a member of any lodge in France back then. Nevertheless, their ideas were similar and their influence on the enlightenment era was surely immense.

Freemasonry in France was not prosecuted during that period in history due to the country’s enlightened monarchy and powerful independence of its nobles from the Church, which in return was also going through a period of development and changes. The Gallican Church [the Catholic Church in France] was led by such people as Cardinal de Fleury and Fenelon. Above mentioned Chevalier de Ramsay had presented the meeting “address” of the Grand Provincial Lodge of France to Fleury in 1737, but the cardinal did not issue any serious bans or prohibitions against the fraternity. In 1738 Pope Clement XII issued the Bull prohibiting Freemasonry in the name of the Catholic Church, however, the Parliament of Paris did not enact it, thus protecting Freemasons in France and leading to its expansion. Eventually, all these developments based on the enlightened position of the French monarchy, the influence of aristocracy which was getting more interested in ideas of the age that included deism, natural philosophy, and materialism gave rise to Freemasonry in France. Even the fact that it was arriving from the often-hostile England, did not diverge Masonic growth in France. Moreover, at that time the United Kingdom was already fully incorporating Scotland. Surely it may be specifically underlined that Freemasonry was not spreading due to some special secret knowledge, or other issues that are often rumored by the conspiracy theorists, but due to contemporary philosophical ideas and principles. They have included deism, natural philosophy, reliance on new scientific discoveries, and generally the alternative to religious dogma. Many people had a chance to talk without being divided by the English Channel and

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216 Transactions of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Michigan, (Kalamazoo Publishing, 1877) at p. 104.
share a lot of ideas that were previously seen as unfriendly to the religious or public authorities. The veil of secrecy was adding some spicy intrigue, that necessary fleur, and taste of the unknown. Many aristocrats, and not merely in France, were interested in spending their time in the company of different people, who could have given them something alternative, and it was attractive to philosophers, scientists, publicists, and political thinkers in France. From Voltaire to Lalande, this fraternity became the place where they could meet and evaluate themselves and their new ideas.

III

Germany, Freemasonry, and Frederick the Great

It has been well known that Germany became the country in which Freemasonry had extended during the Age of Enlightenment. Many of its philosophers, composers, and politicians entered this fraternity; notably, their influence on the German culture was extensive. The ideas of reason and deism, those principles that changed so many minds in the 1700s, entered the lands of Germany almost simultaneously with France and other continental European countries. It came from England, but as it was argued in the chapter on the theory of origin, this fraternity had also many roots in the older German system of guilds of stonemasons, which could have their profound influence on England itself - the Stein-Metzen from Germany, and those of them that worked in England before 1717.\(^{220}\) The process of cultural exchange became more possible after the establishment of the Hannoverian dynasty in the United Kingdom, many people went to Britain and came back not as ordinary people, but as Freemasons.\(^{221}\) Generally, 1730 was the time when Freemasonry was introduced into the areas of Northern Germany, under the leadership of the Grand Lodge of England. In 1733 the Grand Master Lord Strathmore had permitted eleven men that were considered to be a gentleman from Hamburg to form a lodge, [in fact it was activated in 1737] which in 1741 became known as the “Absalom” Lodge merely after Brother Lüttmann had acquired the warrant from the Provincial Grand Lodge that was established the same year.\(^{222}\) In other words, Hamburg and Northern Germany became the place where Freemasonry took roots in that country and began to establish itself quite fast. On August 11, 1738, this particular Lodge was summoned in Brunswick for one very important purpose, to initiate Crown Prince Frederick, who was, indeed, initiated on that day and soon became the greatest protector of this fraternity not just in his Kingdom of Prussia, but everywhere in Europe.\(^{223}\) The system of the previous German stonemasons’ guilds that were having very common principles with the actual speculative Freemasonry did not directly influence its establishment. To some, it may be the re-establishment in Germany during the Age of Enlightenment but was most likely known to an

\(^{220}\) Fort, The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry: As Connected with Ancient Norse Guilds, and the Oriental and Medieval Building Fraternities. p. 123.
\(^{221}\) J.G. Findel, History of Freemasonry ... Translated from the second German edition under the author's personal superintendence. With a preface by Murrey Lyon, (Asher & Co, 1869) at p. 238.
\(^{222}\) Ibid., 239.
\(^{223}\) George Oliver, A Cyclopedia of Freemasonry; embracing the whole of G. Oliver's Dictionary of Symbolical Masonry. ... Together with a comprehensive supplement; containing definitions of the technical terms used by the Fraternity, (Masonic Publishing & Manufacturing Company, 1867) at p. 359.
educated Masonic ‘Brethren’ before. Principles of equality among the members, the idea of three levels of initiation [Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master] was notable in the older German fraternities that had also observed equality and required the presence of officers to regulate procedures. Frederick II was trying not just to introduce this fraternity from England as the growing enlightened society of deists and intellectual aristocrats under the veil of exotic secrecy but sought to re-introduce those old and peculiar German traditions of the guilds. Eventually, these traditions will assist the meeting among such people as Goethe and Lessing and shall inspire Heine and Mozart to write their best masterpieces. It is not uncommon to understand that Frederick was looking for an alternative to his father’s domination and purely military values. He needed a place of gathering for the intellectual talk and it could be provided by the Masonic Lodges.

In 1740 the Lodge Aux Trois Globes, [Zu den drei Weltkugeln or Three Globes] was installed and soon became known as the King’s Lodge in Prussia. Its records published in 1875 by the very Lodge show many noble names among which the reader may see those originating in France, and this fact reflects the character and favoritism of Frederick towards that country’s culture. It became the noble’s association which was gathering those who were interested in ideas based on many peculiar contemporary principles reflected in the works of Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Diderot. To some, it may appear strange that such a person as Frederick could, indeed, cherish these enlightened ideas and at the same time command the armies. But this question may also apply to Louis XIV or Catherine the Great, who was not very democratic in their ruling appearances. However, this was the major distinguishing quality of the Age of Enlightenment - the enlightened absolutism and despotism could live in one monarch. Under this Prussian Freemason king, the Code of Frederick the Great was originally drafted, and it was meant to organize the aristocratic society along educated and humane lines, however, it was also aimed at keeping the serfs under control. This age and many of its rulers may be compared to the educated but strict parents who wish good upon their children, though punish them for the given purpose of keeping them in line. It may be also said that they were providing the whole myriad of smaller freedoms or tolerant attitudes in comparison to their more despotic predecessors. In this case, Frederick II was quite tolerant and believed in religious tolerance, in particular, thus welcoming Huguenot refugees into his kingdom. The policy started earlier under his Hohenzollern predecessors, and specifically the Calvinist Elector of Brandenburg John Sigismund, who had rejected the principle of cuius regio, eius religio and allowed his Lutheran subjects to keep their faith. Robert M. Bigler argued that Frederick II, - was indifferent to religious dogma and hence inclined, even more than his pious predecessors, to emphasize the role of clergymen in public administration. Did Freemasonry, his ‘brothers’ from the lodges, and the

224 Ibid., p. 359.
227 Ibid., 305.
229 Ibid., p. 8.
ideas of Voltaire had influenced his worldview? It may be said that he was well read in them and believed in education and human attitudes toward those in need, however, at the same time he was also strongly prone to fight the wars and did not believe in pacifism. Freemasonry is not directly involved in politics and issues of war and peace, it merely promotes equality, fraternity, and brotherhood of men without particularly stating when one should fight or sign peace treaties. Under Frederick II this fraternity was a place for alternatives to religious dogma and was capable to lodge those who believed in either deism or anything contrary to any organized religion of the day. At the same time, it was capable of erasing borders between those living in Prussia, France, Russia, or England, thus providing the union of those who thought differently. Goethe and Herder, Mozart, Lessing, and Beethoven [even though the latter may be extended to the period of Romanticism] all were the intellectual and talented forces behind Freemasonry in the German-speaking lands during that time.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing is truly famous for his work *Ernst und Falk*, which is exploring the nature of Freemasonry in an attempt to unite it and explain its origin and purpose in five philosophical dialogues. Technically during the 1770s when the work was written, German Freemasonry was experiencing some issues with unity and internal understanding, so this profound and innovative artistic approach was in many ways an attempt to unite different lodges, for example, by making the argument on the Kabballistic origins of Freemasonry to justify the acceptance of Jews into it.²³⁰ He was particularly emphasizing the development of this uniting concept to make Jews participate in Freemasonry on the spiritual level, without being converted to Christianity and the idea was quite popular among many Freemasons. Nevertheless, his way was not accepted by everyone and his idea of the gradual development of the truth [or the true revelation] first from the pagans to Judaism, then from Judaism to Christianity, and later being perfected by the Freemasons was criticized. Mathilde Ludendorff went as far as saying that if he publishes the last part of the last dialogue from the work, he will follow the faith of Socrates and that he was poisoned by the Jews and Freemasons along with Schiller, Luther, and Mozart.²³¹ *Ernst und Falk* gave the philosophical concept to Freemasonry that was emphasizing the importance of religious tolerance and unity, not merely among Freemasons that by the 1770s have developed different systems of Observances and Rituals, but all of humanity, insisting that not a single religious school of thought is perfect. All of them taken together can make a positive difference and teach humanity something positive. In this sense, Lessing’s work was truly reflecting the nature of Enlightenment and Freemasonry during its most prominent days. As Paweł Maciejko had argued, citing his position to Katz and Scholem that during the eighteenth century Masonic lodges were the only places where Jews and Christians could meet and communicate, sharing ideas and experiences.²³² Due to this reason, Lessing’s work, which was pointing to the Jewish origins of Freemasonry, or at least its close relationship to the Judaic traditions, made him the defender of tolerance. Hugh Barr Nisbet underlined that the eighteenth century was the century of Enlightenment and the golden age for secret societies such as Freemasonry, which were often mystical, not rationalistic.

Nevertheless, they were also believing in rationalist and scientific ideas, and Ernst und Falk: *Dialogues for Freemasons* turned out to be the defensive work for the ideas of Enlightenment and the Masonic role in it.\(^{233}\) The concept that was written into the original Constitution composed by James Anderson, indeed, was revolving around the First Temple, King Solomon, and was alluding to the Old Testament. The ideas were explored and continued by Lessing and became especially important to Freemasonry and the ideas of the enlightenment.

The American Revolution and Freemasonry

I

The Founding Fathers and Deism

This period in the history of Freemasonry is often considered to be the most peculiar because many influential figures that founded the United States were Freemasons. Additionally, those who were Freemasons could often be well known for their deistic views that were capable of contradicting denominations in which they have participated as members. As was discussed in the previous chapters, deism as philosophy has a lot in common with Freemasonry and is entrenched in the latter’s symbols and some noticeable concepts. If linking it all to the role of Freemasonry in the progress and its build-up of modernity, it may be specifically interesting to see all these parallels between the founding fathers, Masonic concepts, and deism as philosophy, which was so popular during the Age of Enlightenment.\(^ {234}\) This suggestion may be supported by such writers as Joseph A. Leo Lemay and Alfred Own Aldridge. There are also critics of it, who say that Voltaire and many other deists did not have a progressive impact on the modern world, and one of them is S. J. Barnett.\(^ {235}\) First, all these ideas were new and any politician and activist in Europe or its overseas colonies were in one way or another trying to implement them and see how they could work. A growing interest in uniting different people and their views under some kind of cap of ideas that did not require wars and battles was an insight behind Freemasonry as an organization of free-thinkers, people who did not agree with the environment in which they have grown up. Religion, politics, dogmas, and values were not necessarily in contradiction with what they have lived through or believed in, but still, Freemasonry was that possible cap that was uniting them with other people who might have had completely different ways, and in regular life would possibly fight them. The lodge was a place of at least some unity, thus deism as a concept was the best philosophy to cement it. One architect of the universe, everlasting metaphors alluding to science and geometry that cannot be differentiated from one person to another, however, the theological


concepts can, and so can any political constitution. Each lodge is ruled by a constitution that is similar to any document of such kind in the world and is making Freemasonry look like a democratically self-governed society. It certainly influenced the founding fathers, and the concepts of democracy were often learned in the lodges together with deistic principles common to Freemasonry and the enlightenment era.

Deism was closely related to many first American presidents and according to Leo Pfeffer mentioned by another researcher of that time J. David Holcomb, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights were based on the spirit of “deistic humanism”. It was seriously influencing their worldview, and the new world that they have often envisioned was not divided along the ecclesiastical lines but was rather formed on the concepts of deism in which God exists. Their God was akin to the Grand Architect of the Universe, the God in which they trust as it was later written on the dollar bills, but without clearly showing which God, or what kind of religion is going to be reflecting upon it. It was influencing the freedom of religion and was well formulated by Thomas Jefferson in his Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom proposed to the Virginia legislature in 1779. Jefferson was often accused of being one of the most non-religious founding fathers, however, it must also be said that he was not a Freemason. Deism or the concept of religious freedom was not necessarily directly connected to Freemasonry. The role of this society should never be exaggerated and overextended because it may shatter the objective picture of its true role. There is no single organization or a factor that forms the modern world, thus some of the ideas should be separated from others, certainly without uplifting one over the other, too. Nevertheless, the researcher Barry Schwartz clearly stated that George Washington was not even a true Christian and was the deist along with the enlightened beliefs so popular during his time. It may be noticebly clear and certain that any deistic belief at some point cannot be fully compatible with religion which demands the solid concept of one God that has clear characteristics of salvation for humanity. Deists generally do not accept divine intervention or any sort of God's involvement in this world, the deity creates the world, exists, and does nothing more to change the destiny. J. David Holcombe wrote that deists did not believe in God’s involvement in this violent world.

Reacting in part to the religious wars and persecution that had been a regular part of the fabric of Western history, deists opted for a God of transcendence whose interaction with the world was minimal and consistent with human reason and experience.

Descartes’ definition of God is logical, almost natural, but requires nothing but the actual proof of God. Everything else merely constitutes an idea or a possibility and speaks of limitations that the human mind has in comparison to the higher existence. Deists in return often cannot fit these positions into any religious belief, it may not be very well correlating with any theology, which is way less uncertain and promotes salvation. It can be found in

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237 Ibid., p. 42.
239 J. David Holcombe, Guardian of the Wall: Leo Pfeffer and the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment, p. 40.
almost any religious practice. Eventually, what may be said about such figures and politicians as George Washington or activists and writers as Thomas Paine, they were involved with ideas that promoted unity, regardless of beliefs, they saw deism and possibly Freemasonry as the way into such unity that would cut the corners of human intolerance and fanaticism. Humanity had to be shaped and changed by human hands, possibly without any revelation or support from the above, and it was truly fitting the deists’ minds. Moreover, Freemasonry itself was always speaking of self-improvement, shaping of the rough stone [Ashlar], accepting that the world is not perfect and must be re-constructed by humans, and what is most important, all these efforts could be performed by the people who did not discuss religion [theology] during their meetings. It was directly contradicting any church, but was attractive to the people of enlightenment and was part of the agenda in the life of Washington, Franklin, and Paine. They were searching for an alternative, and this alternative led them to what they have produced and designed - the new country. The new order of the ages would not be like the old one, based on monarchy, despotism, and religious warfare. David L. Holmes argued that deists were often denying the Judeo-Christian tradition for inspiring intolerance and prosecutions that were limiting the freedom of human thinking and creative capabilities. This was one of the reasons why Freemasons were suspected of trying to mix all religions under the concept of the Grand Architect of the Universe, supporting the deist approach. On one hand, the founding fathers among whom many were Freemasons or could be their acquaintances were correlated with the idea of deism and often were also closely related to politics. For example, Thomas Paine was possibly a Freemason [the fact is not very well proven yet] and was related to other founding fathers of the United States who were approved members of the Masonic lodges, and were sharing deistic views. Paine was known for his criticisms of religion and saw it as one of the sources of human deceit based on myths that cannot be trusted. On the other hand, Benjamin Franklin, the founding father, was also closely related to that camp, and his ideas were closely related to deism as well as Paine’s, so Franklin often found their arguments to be way more convincing than those given by the Christian theologians when arguing with deists. Here are the direct words written by Franklin himself, provided by Paul Frame in his book Liberty’s Apostle - Richard Price, His Life and Times. The effect of the anti-deist writings was, - ‘quite contrary to what was intended by them; for the arguments of the Deists, which were quoted to be refuted, appeared to be much stronger than the refutations; in short, I soon became a thorough Deist’. It was the honest and straightforward position of one of the most influential founding fathers. The idea was not uncommon in the age when Newton and Boyle were discovering new laws of science, which could function without the direct intervention of God, and the whole notion of suffering in the world and indifferent God that logically must exist but refuses to get involved, was very appealing. Masonic lodges were not openly proposing deism as an ideology, hence the organization does not have any, however, it was reflected in the fraternity’s concept of the Grand Architect of the Universe and its appeal to science, especially on the Second Degree.

243 Ibid., p. 88.
The founding fathers were looking at polymathic knowledge and had searched for different discoveries that could assist them in opening the new world not merely in science or philosophy but politics. Deism did not become their religion because the latter is not requiring any practice or function of a cult, but it had seriously shattered and twisted their notion of religion, so its appeal became less and less influential upon them. George Washington was also known for his deistic approach to philosophy and religious practices. Stephen J. Vecchio in his work George Washington’s Religion: The Faith of the First President quoted Michael and Jana Novak’s book Washington’s God in which they gave the list of terms by which the first American President was called God. It includes such definitions of God as ‘the Architect of the World’, ‘the Invisi{}ble Hand’, ‘the Great Creator’, ‘the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, ‘the Great Governor of the Universe, and many more. All this terminology is seriously close to the Masonic terms which define God, and the influence of the Craft on Washington was extraordinarily strong. It seems that he was nearly alluding to the Grand Architect of the Universe or the Supreme Being, technically getting as close to the concept of Freemasonry as possible. Perhaps this was and still is the major reason why so many religions distrust it and view Freemasonry as hostile to their theological teachings. It broadens the general perception of life and provides more options to someone who opens the Craft of a Mason and begins to build up himself using many alternatives that were closed to him before. The founding fathers were sympathetic to deism, many of them were Freemasons and many were not, but their deism was reflected in Masonic ideas because Freemasonry includes a lot of deism in its core values. In other words, Freemasonry, deism, and the founding fathers of the United States were closely interconnected, shared common values, and believed in changing the world, shaping it in accordance with the ideas found in Freemasonry and deistic concepts. Deists have denied the religious despotism and some absolute dogma that could slow down human development. The idea was moving and changing the way such people as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington could think and plan their political projects.

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First of all, the role of Freemasonry should not be exaggerated when any researcher is trying to study the involvement of founding fathers in this fraternity. Yes, it did act an important role in the shaping of the United States in terms of ideals that were guiding the lives of many people who found that country, however, it also must be noted and always remembered that merely nine out of fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were Freemasons, and only ten out of thirty governors of the original colonies were members of the fraternity. It should bring some additional doubts to those who may think that all the idea behind the United States and its foundations was brought up, particularly by Freemasons, and certainly, it’s not true. The ideas of enlightenment and republicanism were afloat for a long time during that era, and Freemasonry’s role was based on these ideas, they did not simply invent it themselves, but surely this fraternity was an integral part of these modern principles. The same issue may be related to numerous beliefs that somehow Freemasonry was centering upon the conspiracy of establishing the new state that would be coordinated and ruled by it, however, these notions do not find any valuable and truthful evidence. Most of the Freemasons of the day were not really hiding what they did and where they met, additionally, their principles were not hidden as much as today, all information was open and available to those who truly wanted to find it out. It is also known that Freemasonry was not somehow guiding or controlling those signers of the Declaration, and those who were not belonging to this organization. Thus, there is no general evidence that Freemasonry alone was standing behind the establishment of the new country. Nevertheless, many Freemasons turned out to be very influential in the founding of it, and certainly famous; Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and John Hancock are probably the best known, but they were not the only individuals that stood in the rear and front of colonial and later American politics. An exaggeration of the Freemasons’ role in the founding of the United States often led to numerous conspiracy theories, something that is haunting any researcher and historian of Freemasonry. There is no doubt that the ideas of Freemasonry, its philosophy, constitutional system of self-governing, and internal tolerance towards different religions became the base of thinking for many founding fathers who were Freemasons. They were looking at their lodges as something to model in real life, many trusting their ‘brothers’ more than other individuals, and it may be true about George Washington during the War of Independence. Many of Washington’s brothers in the Fredericksburg Lodge later served within in the Continental Army or Virginia Militia, including Hugh Mercer, George Weedon, and Thomas Posey. The


fraternity itself was good in establishing links between different people, but it should not be seen as some mysterious network without which the United States would not get established. However, it was assisting in making friendships, too, especially if one or another brother was looking for it.

Benjamin Franklin was standing at the beginning of American Freemasonry and had a profound influence on it. Without him, it is hardly imaginable to see the Masonic structure in Pennsylvania, specifically when it comes to unity among Freemasons in different colonies during the colonial and later War of Independence periods. According to his accounts published, commented on, and edited by Clifford P. Mac Calla, he was interested in Freemasonry without any diminishing activity in it throughout his life, probably discovering something new, socializing, and influencing its growth. Eventually, his name was soon to be known outside of the colonial world, and particularly his newspaper, Pennsylvania Gazette became the register in which not merely the events of colonial Freemasonry were noted, but also those that took place in Britain and Ireland. The latter fact may be seen in one of the issues of his newspaper in which different Masonic appointments and events that were happening in Dublin became reported to the wider public. He was a notable person in other places that were far from Pennsylvania, and later it would give him more capabilities in making friends in London and Paris. Amazingly this Masonic activity was published and exposed in his newspaper, and it was not made a secret from those who did not belong to this fraternity. Franklin was taking it seriously, looked over the fraternal life, and was often bothered if it was shattered by splits, something that would haunt the organization all the time in one way or another. One of his letters in 1734 particularly shows this little fear of the internal Masonic schisms, where he speaks against some unauthorized lodge in Boston. His language is clear and unabridged, - that some false and rebel Brethren, who are foreigners, being about to set up a distinct Lodge, in opposition to the old and true Brethren here, pretending to make Masons for a bowl of punch. His involvement in the organization was true and showed constant wishes to improve it, cutting down on those attempts that were either not sanctioned by the Grand Lodges or were moved by the general policy of internal Masonic subordination. This position inside the fraternity paid off when Franklin was living in Paris during the War of Independence. It made him a member of one of the most prominent lodges of all times, the Nine Sisters. In that Lodge [as it was noted in the previous chapter] he met Voltaire himself, marking the possible pinnacle of Masonic cooperation. Two of the best minds of the day, two intellectuals and publicists managed to shake hands in the Lodge which was located in Paris during the Age of Enlightenment. Certainly, Franklin’s presence in Freemasonry, his involvement in the whole variety of events where he could shape the future of the world by assisting in the establishment of the new Republic, was noticed by history. At this point, the fraternity was not standing aside from the building of the world that exists today, and notably, it did not happen directly, but rather through those who were participating in the organization. Regular Freemasonry cannot directly influence politics, but it surely can form and raise those who do.

249 Ibid., p. 34. Also see, Pennsylvania Gazette, # 357, Oct. 2 to Oct. 9, 1735.
250 Ibid., p. 53. B. Franklin’s letter of November 28, 1734 to Brother Henry Price of Boston.
If there are no doubts about the membership of Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, or Paul Revere, there are still some questions being raised about Thomas Paine, who was seriously influential when it came to the theory of how the future world, its political system, and the organization should appear. Some doubt his membership in the lodges and believe he was not belonging to any lodge; others insist that he was a member of the fraternity. Dr. David Harrison in his article *Thomas Paine Freemason?* noted that such Masonic historians as Robert Freke Gould and A.F.A Woodford were denying his participation in the society, but on the other hand, others such as Margaret Jacob were insisting that he well could be a Freemason. What makes him look like the founding father, who was part of the fraternity is his proximity to those who were confirmed to be in one or the other lodge [in Europe or America] and the list is very impressive, it may include many notable founders of the United States that were mentioned above. Also, he had written the work on the history of Freemasonry, titled *Origin of Freemasonry* in which he discussed so many details, theories of its creation, and other issues related to it. This made him appear as if he was participating in the craft. For example, in one of the paragraphs, he denied the beginnings of Freemasonry during the times of the tower of Babel, calling it “absurdity”. He was certainly not buying into all those ancient theories and seeing Freemasonry as a rational society that should cherish logic and geometry, and which includes some ancient, non-Christian allusions such as the Pythagorean theorem. His position did not reflect upon the Biblical origin of Freemasonry, but rather linked it to those who have worshipped the sun.

The Masons, in order to protect themselves from the persecution of the Christian church, have always spoken in a mystical manner of the figure of the sun in their lodges, or like the astronomer Lalande, who is a mason, been silent upon the subject. It is their secret, especially in Catholic countries, because the figure of the sun is the expressive criterion that denotes, they are descended from the Druids, and that wise, elegant, philosophical religion, was the faith opposite to the faith of the gloomy Christian church.

These were his direct words, quoted from the *Origin of Freemasonry* and they certainly show a lot about Thomas Paine. First, he was not believing or respect Christianity, or any other religion, second, he was, indeed, allowing himself to think that Freemasonry had some mystical background, though not the Biblical one. Additionally, these two sentences show that he was speaking about Freemasonry using definitions such as “their” or “they”, meaning that he, at least, did not want to be connected to this fraternity. His position was to discuss it without getting too close to them himself, and particularly this notion in his sentences makes it believable that Paine did not belong to any lodge in Britain, Europe, or America. From the other perspective, how did he know so many of them, and who gave him so much knowledge about their rituals, which he had thoroughly discussed throughout the whole essay? He was clearly describing and interpreting the *initiation* questionnaire almost as if he was witnessing it himself either during his rite of passage into the lodge or when he was looking at someone

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253 Ibid., p. 229.
else’s while being an observer, something that could not happen unless he was a Freemason.\textsuperscript{254} In any case, there is no solid evidence, though his knowledge of the craft [with his own opinion on it] is obvious, possibly because he had eventually entered it or was simply drawn from the open sources and personal closeness to La Fayette, Washington, and Franklin. At the same time, Moncure Daniel Conway refers to Dr. Robinet, who had noted that Paine was the “soul of the people” and came into many contacts with Freemasons not merely in America, but also in France, and the list includes such figures as Danton.\textsuperscript{255} At least it may be concluded that Thomas Paine was involved in the Masonic ideas, and in one way or another they were able to change him, and consequently, he changed many things around him.

The founding fathers, as was noticed before, were not all Freemasons, and they were not working merely to justify their respectable society. It seems that first they were continuing the British tradition, and second, their philosophical and ideological trends were following the enlightenment. It proves that Freemasonry was standing, not officially though, on the principles of the republic, and there are numerous examples of it. The Masonic constitution often resembles the constitution of the United States or the Bill of Rights, shows democratic principles of self-governing and organization, defends the personal rights of each member of the lodge, etc. These principles were progressive and shaped the democratic governmental structures. Surely, they would move on with or without Freemasonry, and again the fraternity’s role should not be exaggerated and seen behind every corner of political history, however, it assisted in making connections, did organize those who were belonging to the lodges, and surely added to the principles of the enlightenment trend. If someone who was a member of the Masonic lodge could begin to search for those who had common views with them, even though Freemasonry is not a political organization, and start to build “bridges”. At this point, this fraternity was playing some role behind the Boston Tea Party, even though this presumption is often doubted by such historians as James M. Volo, who did not see Freemasonry behind every event and process in American history.\textsuperscript{256} The sheer presence of so many influential figures in the American Revolution who were Freemasons makes this society also powerful enough at least indirectly and puts it on the level of a philosophical school of thought that helped to shape and organize many famous individuals. In contrast, some historians were often giving more credit to Freemasonry, and saw it behind many developments including the French Revolution, too, and certainly including Bernard Fay.\textsuperscript{257} Both points of view have a right to exist, and the answer, especially about the given work’s main question, seems to be quite solid, the founding father’s role in Freemasonry was well rooted, and at the same time Freemasonry itself was influencing them, and therefore the fraternity was involved in the foundations of the United States and did shape modernity. However, its role must not be overwhelmingly overestimated.

\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., pp. 229-231.
\textsuperscript{255} Moncure Daniel Conway, \textit{The Life of Thomas Paine}, Volume I, (G.P. Putnam’s Sons) at p. 229.
\textsuperscript{257} Bernard Fay, \textit{Revolution and Freemasonry, 1680-1800}, (Little, Brown, 1935) at p. 331.
This visible connection between the American Revolution and Freemasonry is often prone to various speculations and even conspiracy theories. At the same time, it is important to study the matter from the academic point of view, weighing all the details and parallels that are worth discussing. Truth is in the details, and it is specifically peculiar to focus on whether all the symbols that are considered to be American, are actually of Masonic origin.

The most famous and intriguing discussion was always surrounding everything that was put on the dollar bill, particularly the Great Seal. Scholars and the wider public were often linking the pyramid to the Masonic concepts, the All-Seeing Eye on top of it was mistakenly associated with the Illuminati and many more. In reality, these symbols are in one way, or another can certainly be found in the Masonic lodges, they are sort of shared, and probably not a single scholar will be able to one hundred percent disprove the connection between the basic American political symbolism and Freemasonry. The symbol of the All-Seeing Eye, triangle, and letter G belong to the concept of deism [The Grand Architect of the Universe] in Freemasonry and reflect the notion of unity between different religions represented by various members of any given lodge. At the same time, these symbols are expressed on the dollar bill, so to speak, and are probably one of the most noticeable picture carriers in the world. The question arises consequently, and it certainly means that there is something important there, otherwise, why it was installed on the American money? If speaking of the Great Seal, then it was not created by Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, or Benjamin Franklin, who was a Freemason because during its approval in 1782 the latter was in France. At the same time, he was one of the most influential and respected figures in the new country and Freemasonry.

All kinds of theories that demote Freemasonry often speak of the “phoenix” that is represented by the bald eagle, however, this symbol is not represented in Regular Freemasonry, especially in its craft or the first three degrees [blue lodge]. George Oliver, the researcher of Freemasonry connected this “phoenix” symbolism and theories linking it to Freemasonry with the false Freemasonry represented by the Illuminati group [Adam Weishaupt, Bavaria]. Generally saying, this issue must always be kept under attention because many groups can model Freemasonry, copy its symbols, add their own, and thus provide sources for the false information, which later on spreads around and shatters the objective picture of Freemasonry and its representation in the world history. It may be argued that there is the double-headed eagle in the Scottish Rite Freemasonry [the system of Higher Degrees; from 4 to 33], but it’s not corresponding to the American Great Seal and the bald eagle. Thirteen arrows represent thirteen original colonies and have nothing to do with the number thirteen in its mystical

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258 The American Quarterly Review of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences, Volume 1, (R. Macoy, New York, 1858) at p. 236.
259 Jessica Gunderson, The Real Benjamin Franklin: The Truth Behind the Legend, (Capstone, 2019) at p. 28.
260 George Oliver, The Historical Landmarks and Other Evidences of Freemasonry, Explained, a Series of Practical Lectures, with Notes, Volume 1, (London, Richard Spencer, 314, High Holborn, 1846) at pp. 350-351.
261 Note: Arturo de Hoyos, Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry: 2nd Annotated Edition, (Supreme Council, The/Thirty Three Degrees, 2013).
explanations, or October 13, 1307, when major arrests took place in France in the campaign to eliminate the Knights Templar. All these events cannot support any theory that alludes to the Great Seal of Freemasonry. Moreover, eagles were typical attributes of the state in many countries since the Roman empire, and have nothing to do with the stone masons or Freemasons. Richard S. Patterson and Richardson Dougall wrote in their book *The Eagle and the Shield* that many theories about the Great Seal came about closer to the midst of the twentieth century, and may talk about certain aspects of the design which was not included in the original blazon of the Great Seal made in 1782.²⁶²

What attracts the attention of so many scholars and researchers is the unfinished pyramid and the All-Seeing Eye. Both symbols may be found in Freemasonry and can support some claims that the founding fathers and designers of the dollar bill were connected to this fraternity. The symbol of a pyramid [in different interpretations] may stand for growth and development based on the original concepts of geometry. The unfinished pyramid on the dollar bill represents the United States and its original thirteen colonies and stands for the everlasting perfection or the democracy’s build-up in the hostile world, but the perfection itself represented by the All-Seeing Eye is in the hands of God alone.²⁶³ Perfection, can be merely in the hands of the Creator, and human beings that construct the pyramid of their lives can never achieve such perfection, but still, they keep doing it and are symbolically guided by the Creator’s watch from above. This concept is like any political build-up, the pyramid means the state, and the All-Seeing Eye may also be represented in the Church, meaning the same concept of the Creator or God the Father if interpreted from the Christian point of view. Masonic meaning is indirect, and cannot be given as the reason for talks and discussions that only Freemasons were responsible for this design. What is obvious is that the All-Seeing Eye on the dollar bill is closely related to the above-explained concept of the democratic state construction and the deistic principles. There are no clear Christian signs and meanings in the discussed design, it does not include other religious symbols that may be explained by the language of theology. Followers of Egyptian mythology may say that it is connected to them, but it seems that the original drawers of the given picture were not sharing such views and did not follow any cult. Particularly they were not openly visiting any organization based on the cult structure, nor were they renowned Egyptologists. On the other hand, Freemasonry possesses a lot of allegories to Ancient Egypt, but the actual designers of this symbol on the dollar bill, William Barton and Charles Thomson were not Freemasons, and the only person who was a Freemason and had some influence on the creation of the national American symbols was Benjamin Franklin.²⁶⁴ It must be realized that the same symbol can be used by different people and ideas represented in them may also have a whole variety of explanations. The pyramid for one person can represent Ancient Egypt without any religious or philosophical under meaning, but for the other, it may explain the world from some esoteric position that can include numerous ideas that cannot be


supported empirically. In other words, the All-Seeing Eye, the pyramid, and the triangle are found in Freemasonry and were the first and the last stand for deistic and Christian meanings alike. Freemasons were not drawing and creating this symbolism on the dollar bill, they were not taking any final decisions on establishing the All-Seeing Eye and the pyramid symbols which are now viewed by billions on American money.

All these ideas cannot and should not be exaggerated. Also, Freemasonry in the United States and mostly elsewhere should not be associated with the Bavarian Illuminati group, and therefore, their ideas and symbolism are not directly connected to the American national symbols. George Washington himself was often disproving any connection of his fraternity to the Illuminati radicalism.

I have heard much of the nefarious and dangerous plan and doctrines of the Illuminati, but never saw the book until you were pleased to send it to me… I believe notwithstanding, that none of the lodges in this country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the Society of the Illuminati.265

What makes it specifically peculiar is that Freemasonry was prominent during the Age of Enlightenment, which is connected to the deistic principles and all the political philosophies that assisted in forming the new parliamntarism in America, and eventually not merely in the United States. Its ways are intricately interwoven with the politics of that day because many politicians and political thinkers were Freemasons, however, they did not stand behind all the progressive or destructive processes that took place during that time, and later on as well. The American symbols are closely related to something that may be called “the universal geometry” that may be viewed on the numerous pictures, state seals, and emblems. The universality of geometry, architectural forms, or as it is seen on the US Great Seal, bald eagle, and pyramid on the American dollar, represent these universal principles. They simply cannot be tied down to Freemasonry alone, as much as all the political developments cannot be associated with it, too. Richard S. Patterson and Richardson Dougall have written in their book, mentioned above that those who were designing the major American national symbols were using the same inspirational sources with Freemasonry, and it does not mean that they were copying them from the fraternity.266 This conclusion is probably the best, to sum up, the involvement of Freemasons in the design and implementation of the most recognizable American symbols. They were living in the same world and as was noted before, they were using these universal principles that may be seen in different places, but do not necessarily correspond to each other. If adding to the overall concept of the work, then it may be also concluded that nothing can be taken out from the historical context, various ideas of progressive thinking during the age of reason were involving many aspects, and Freemasonry most certainly can be seen as part of them, however, not the only progressive and changing force behind all the progressive developments that shaped the modern future.

The French Revolution and Freemasonry

I

The Enlightened Absolutism

Freemasonry and France are closely related and the first has a lot of traditions that are connected to the establishment of so many lodges in the country. Even the beginning of a separate Masonic Ritual called the *French Rite*, which possesses its own Administrative Commission evolved from France. It was not a coincidence that Freemasonry in France was not persecuted as much as in other traditionally Catholic countries such as Spain and Portugal. France became the center of enlightened absolutism, the country that became the role model for those rulers that saw themselves well educated, protectorates of liberal arts and sciences, but did not share their power with any other institution or individual. This system surely varied from one country to country, and for example, in Russia, it turned out to be less enlightened if including all the cruelties of its serfdom, and a more totalitarian system of administration. However, Catherine II was also seeing herself as an enlightened monarch as much as her predecessor, Elizabeth I, the daughter of Peter the Great. Absolutism meant that the power of a monarch is absolute but is prone to humanism, construction of academies, and schools, and a ruler is capable of being merciful. Personalities such as Voltaire were treated with honor and respect, Freemasonry was one of the most interesting societies among the nobles, and theaters were staging plays written by either a monarch or their best ‘literary feathers’ such as Molier. It may be peculiar that Voltaire did not see himself as the enemy of these monarchs, and was working for them by writing *The History of the Russian Empire under Peter the Great*, basically idealizing the despot, known for that as the “Russian mirage in France”. Additionally, it was well seen that while completing this order from Elizabeth I of Russia [Elizaveta Petrovna] he was technically working for the despot and these literary activities did not go unnoticed. David Kopf wrote while mentioning Voltaire and James Mill that, - the rationalist heritage of the Enlightenment betrayed itself as the double-edged sword. The same Mill who attacked Voltaire and other *philosophes* for their “silly, sentimental” infatuation with Oriental despotism also felt ill at ease with Macauley’s extreme chauvinism in India. In other words, *philosophes* were not afraid of taking resources from the despotic figures, however, they saw them as something that brought light from above, or a donor that cannot be judged merely from the perspective of any form of the traditional moral values because the subjects of these judgments were monarchs, not more not less. The enlightened absolutism had almost nothing against Freemasonry, unless it was Spain, but some were even protecting the fraternity. Frederick the Great is an example

269 Robert Zaretsky, *Catherine & Diderot: The Empress, the Philosopher, and the Fate of the Enlightenment*, (Harvard University Press, 2019) at pp. 75-76.
of such an enlightened absolutist monarch, who himself was head of the Prussian Freemasonry and served as an example of the possibility to co-exist in the world of Masonic rituals and secrets that were often seen as funny, and in the role of a king. Freemasonry was not extremely far away from the absolutist monarchs even in Russia where Catherine II was trying to control it but did not forbid the organization that was closely related to the enlightenment which she saw as peculiar until 1789 when it began to be associated with the French Revolution. Emmanuel Robold wrote that under her reign hardly any noble was not a Freemason in St. Petersburg.\textsuperscript{271} The only thing that they [absolute monarchs] could have been afraid of was the concept of Freemasonry as something that they could not control. The latter’s international concept, some kind of force that was not embedded in true loyalty to the personality of an absolute monarch, was often put under suspicion. In France, things were not always too perfect for the Freemasons under absolutism, too. Louis XV had issued several decrees against Freemasonry in 1737, 1744, and 1745 that were prescribing fines of 3000 francs and even the punishment by imprisonment to members of the Masonic lodges, however, these measures were not enforced.\textsuperscript{272}

Freemasonry and absolutism were friends and co-operators well until the monarchy saw itself being threatened by its secret meetings, half-understandable symbols, oaths, and the constitution. This document was something that any absolute monarch would not welcome in his or her country for its rule of law over any personality and the lodge was the model of a state. The whole system of Freemasonry was often a toy in the hands of nobles, such as the Duke of Wharton, or even possibly Frederick II with his nearly childish romance with the French culture, however, they also saw the possibility to improve their states. This fraternity was the way to bypass politics, strange unions and agreements, and surely borders, the Masonic constitution was giving such permits and if following the example of Frederick II, he was using this bypass to welcome the enlightenment into his court and his soul. Childishness often became serious. Catherine II was welcoming Freemasonry until the French Revolution, after that the romance was almost over and it was well marked by the arrest and imprisonment of Nikolai Novikov, the educator, and Freemason.\textsuperscript{273} As much as Catherine, Louis XV was issuing his decrees three times not because he was less educated or enlightened; he was distrusting the semi-secretive organization. Notably, the first decree issued by him was made before the Papal Bull of 1738. The masonic historian G. J. Findel had described that Freemasons who were nobles could not be allowed to appear in court, their secrets were seen as dreadful, and his subjects were not supposed to have any contact with them.\textsuperscript{274} Nevertheless, the absolutism and enlightened monarchy of Louis XV was not able to make such powerful moves against its subjects, especially if they were of noble stock and the interest in the fraternity merely increased. Perhaps, this is the major difference between an obscurant despotism and the

\textsuperscript{271} Emmanuel Robold, A General History of Freemasonry: Based Upon the Ancient Documents Relating To, and the Monuments Erected by this Fraternity, from Its Foundation, in the Year 715 B.C., to the Present Time, (American Masonic Publishing Association, 1872) at p. 113.

\textsuperscript{272} The Freemason's Monthly Magazine, Volume 5, (Tuttle & Bennett, 1846) at p. 206.

\textsuperscript{273} Paul Robinson, Russian Conservatism, (Cornell University Press, 2019) at p. 27.

\textsuperscript{274} Gottfried Joseph Findel, History of Freemasonry: From its Origin Down to the Present Day. Translated from the 2nd German edition, (Asher & Co, 1869) at p. 201.
enlightened monarchy, which was not capable of using certain measures because the monarch himself was already quite shaped by humanist values and tolerance.

II

Freemasonry, Education, and Enlightenment in France Before 1789

It was already noted in the other chapter about the Age of Enlightenment that Freemasonry was an integral part of many famous people during that time in France. Their roles were prominent despite suspicion from the Catholic Church, which was never able to fully destroy or control Freemasonry in that country, or the fraternity was able to dodge the decrees produced by Louis XV. It produced just the opposite effect, an interest in society had merely increased\textsuperscript{275}. There were no serious persecutions against Freemasons and unlike in Spain, it was possible to open new lodges, engage influential individuals as members and surely influence the whole variety of events. It should not be said that by becoming Freemasons, many people were suddenly turning into someone else, or after joining the Masonic lodges they were able to change the course of events. It is part of the old conspiracy belief. What was significant is that the area of social enlightenment, education, arts, and science could have progressed if Freemasons were somehow involved in them during that time. At the same time, these virtues could also progress Freemasons, and make them grow. The process was mutual. So, such personalities as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, Condorcet, Lalande, and Lafayette, of them were seriously influential when writing their masterpieces about life or when they began to gather knowledge about nature in the encyclopedia, or maybe when discovering new mathematical formulas. The influence of Diderot was innumerable on the higher social layers, which could read and make conclusions about life, politics, nature, and the state. Science and education became part of Freemasonry through its members. Ian Cumming wrote in his book \textit{Helvetius: His Life and Place in the History of Educational Thought} that Helvetius, another prominent educator, philosopher, and figure of enlightenment who was a Freemason, was zealously taking care of the fraternity and often influenced by Frederick II, had established the Grand Orient of Paris [the Grand Lodge of Paris] in 1766.\textsuperscript{276} He saw Freemasonry as the tool by which he would be able to change the people in some better way, possibly shape the events and primarily bring the light of philosophy. Certainly, the word ‘light’ was not said to complement Freemasonry alone but meant to underline Helvetius’ position on what he thought of his activities. The mere view that he could reflect upon these activities was described as the ‘light’. Most likely people like Helvetius saw Freemasonry as the light bringer, and his philosophical and literary works were adding to the organization, brought more positive views on its activities, and most likely shaped a lot of minds that began to question the world around them. No matter how positive or negative the absolutism in France could be, it was still slowing down the development of an individual due to its solid class structure that was according to

\textsuperscript{275} Ibid., pp. 201-202.
\textsuperscript{276} Ian Cumming, \textit{Helvetius: His Life and Place in the History of Educational Thought}, (Routledge, 2013) at p. 115.
Perry Anderson, highly effective in controlling the peasant masses.\textsuperscript{277} Nobility, clergy, and commoners, all three major layers of society were not and could not get re-structured unless the absolute monarchy was changed or limited by the rule of law. The only superior rule that was known during the Ancien Regime was the Divine Right [Louis by the grace of God] of the king, his inborn qualities to rule the country could not be questioned, and his authority was standing above any other mortal human being.\textsuperscript{278} The absolute monarchy was still intact despite all the efforts made by educators, political salons, and Masonic lodges to bring in more ideas. All of them were already influential enough to begin the process of questioning that would eventually lead to the revolution. In his book \textit{The Historical Landmarks and other Evidences of Freemasonry}, George Oliver even cited William Finch who was saying that the French monarchy, including Louis XVI, made a mistake by trying to prohibit Freemasonry, instead of joining it as did the monarchs in Britain, thus averting the faith of the Bourbons in France.\textsuperscript{279} Education and enlightenment were closely related to education and encyclopaedists as Diderot, but W. Finch was alluding to later horrors of the revolution and thought that Freemasonry was playing a role in it. Here it may be said that Freemasonry itself did not call for the revolution [at that time Masonic lodges as organizations in France were not directly involved in any partisan political activities], and particularly did not organize violence that took place after 1789. Separate Freemasons could be involved in anything though. However, before 1789 this fraternity’s members were more involved in education.

In its establishment Helvetius was assisted by the celebrated astronomer de Lalande [in the establishment of the Grand Orient of Paris, O.K]. There was no one more qualified to become ‘Vénérable’ of a ‘Loge de Science’ and de Lalande was elected to that office in 1773.\textsuperscript{280}

Freemasonry did already exist in France and Helvetius was not the first one to bring it to Paris, but, indeed, he was trying to establish new lodges under the authority of the Grand Orient de Paris that would later evolve into the Grand Orient of France because he sought to reform this organization in France. Helvetius and Lalande, later Voltaire as members of the Grand Orient de France, would become somewhat symbols of the enlightenment in Freemasonry. Their activities cannot be unnoticed and surely under the influence propagated by them, it was strongly contributing to the educational process in France among the ruling noble class. It may be imagined what if some young, barely educated, but seeking the education noble had joined the Masonic lodge and met with someone like Condorcet or d’Alembert, or members of the Catholic Church who could also be Freemasons?\textsuperscript{281} That person’s internal world would undergo some changes unless he remained in the lodge and had tried to evolve and grow through the Degrees. Education was spread through connections and possibilities to communicate with those members of the lodge, who could tell more about science, arts, and

\textsuperscript{277} David Parker, \textit{Class and State in Ancien Regime France: The Road to Modernity?}, (Routledge, 2002) at p. 19.
\textsuperscript{279} George Oliver, \textit{The Historical Landmarks and Other Evidences of Freemasonry, Explained, a Series of Practical Lectures, with Notes}, Volume 1, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{280} Ian Cumming, \textit{Helvetius: His Life and Place in the History of Educational Thought}, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{281} Joseph Le Gras, \textit{Casanova, Adventurer and Lover}, (John Lane, 1923) at p. 218.
just sheer life experiences. This was the enlightenment when people from different social classes that were so solid and immovable in France during the Ancien Regime could share a whole variety of information and knowledge. Rituals themselves could be misunderstood or not fully explored, that was the reality back then and remains true today, not every Freemason knows its meanings and often performs them merely because it is the way they should act in a lodge. However, the communication with other members of the lodge is always supported by some kind of conversation, it may take place during the ritual dinner or Agape, breaks, and intermissions between the ritual labor hours. Ritual is often seen as the role that must be acted and memorized, some try to understand its metaphorical language, others can repeat it without getting any deeper, or just perform them with only slight understanding. It was already mentioned before that all Masonic symbols and ritualistic actions have allegorical and metaphorical meanings, they all talk about the progress of the mind and unity between different people regardless of their social class, status, or wealth. What may be particularly interesting is that all of the ritualistic moves and phrases are strictly regulated and often remind of religious acts, but no one is required to believe in them as if it was a religion. A member is asked to be loyal to the religion he professes outside the lodge [“sincere and earnest”].

According to Chalmers Izett Paton that is more or less asked of any member of the lodge. At the same time, there are different opinions, and some researchers believe it is a religion, or at least the speculative Masonry possesses some clear elements of it. They include the Deity who is well known as the Grand Architect of the Universe, the source of light and knowledge that can be discovered with the help of symbolic tools reflected in geometry. Albert Gallatin Mackey was centering this principle of the Deity around the reason to call Freemasonry to be a form of religion. Freemasonry is, then, also a religious institution, but it usually negates such a notion.

The very science which it inculcates is in itself the science of religion. Not a religion of forms and creeds, but a universal religion, whose theology embraces the important dogmas of a Supreme Creator.

Eventually, it may be seen that even in the formulations given by Mackey, Freemasonry is not just an institution that shares some religious concepts, but is the “science of religion”. This peculiar formula to describe the art of Masonry is not uncommon because even the stonemasons were known to use geometry and instruments that were connected to science. Freemasonry [or the speculative Masonry] began to adopt all these tools based on science, arithmetic, and geometry as its own, creating something that may be called the religion of education. The concept is closely related to natural philosophy, the notion of discoveries, and the education of its members. The Second Degree in Freemasonry incorporates these educational matters while centering its symbolism and principles around Seven Noble Arts and Sciences, and Five Senses. It explores this educational position of Freemasonry. It was

283 Albert Gallatin Mackey, The Mystic Tie: Or, Facts and Opinions, Illustrative of the Character and Tendency of Freemasonry, (Masonic Publishing and Manufacturing Company, 1867) at p. 3.
already discussed that the presence of scientists and mathematicians was not uncommon in the early days of Freemasonry, and the personality of Dr. John Desaguliers particularly proves it. Later, exactly these concepts were attracting Lalande, Condorcet, and d’Alembert, they were seeking it and saw Freemasonry as a further educational instrument. They were understanding this allegorical and symbolic language of Freemasonry by trying to implement their views of the world into the society that they had seen as the meeting place for those who shared their views, too. Also, it could have been attractive to them to see that there was something else there, that the craft Degrees were not solely commenced to the notion of logic and geometry, but were truly trying to blend them with the principles of spirituality. Above mentioned historian A. Mackey also argued about it in his work *The Symbolism of Freemasonry*.

This portion of the labor finds its symbolism in the second degree of the speculative science, and in applying this symbolism we still continue to refer to the idea of erecting a spiritual temple in the heart.\(^{285}\)

The educational tendency in Freemasonry in France represented by those lodge members listed above is certainly obvious. Those who do not cherish progress and education do not usually enter societies that procure it. The encyclopedists such as Denis Diderot and Jean-Baptiste d’Alembert who were particularly seen as famous educators of France and Europe during the eighteenth century also sought Freemasonry as the source of knowledge, allegorical secrets, and communication. Otherwise, they would not join it, or at least leave almost right after being initiated. In the view of Charles Porset, the enlightenment had entered Freemasonry and if following his idea, it was specifically reflected in the speeches made by Freemasons and the lodge titles.\(^{286}\) The latter note is important when it comes to speeches made in the lodges or possibly during the dinners, or other gatherings where Freemasons were presented. Making toasts during those dinners is an important part of the ritual, in which each member of the lodge is encouraged to say something following the Masonic subordination, first Master Masons speak, then Fellowcrafts, and Entered Apprentices can have a word only on the day of their initiation. Later on, they merely learn without any right to say anything during the ritualistic parts of the labors in a lodge. These particular speeches could include many new things during the time of the enlightenment era, and if they were said by Helvetius or Diderot, there is no doubt that they possessed something capable of bringing knowledge to other ‘brothers’. Later on, each member of the lodge was able to learn from these speeches and other communications, practically learning something each time while being in a lodge. At this point a lodge becomes an institution of educators, where each member becomes a teacher or a student, sharing and reflecting upon technically anything that may be worth discussing. The lodge titles such as “Amis de la Liberté” [later “Point Parfait”] or “Le Centres des Amis” underline this notion of the enlightenment, charity, and brotherhood which was so common in the fraternity.\(^{287}\)


This political movement in France during the 1789 and later revolution is always seen as the most controversial, dangerous, and predictable in its radical acts against its opponents. Was it seriously trying to change the world for the better? Perhaps yes, but Jacobins' systematic intolerance toward practically all their political rivals was making their position particularly strong, and vulnerable at the same time. This study is specifically interested in the process of understanding how Freemasonry could be involved in some major revolutions in general, and how it was connected to Jacobins during the French Revolution. It is well known that many of their representatives had belonged to various Masonic lodges in France, but Freemasonry itself was not involved in any political activity on its own. However, there were numerous accusations from the religious right against Freemasons, and particularly against their connection to Jacobins, the reign of terror under Robespierre and Danton. For instance, Jeff Horn had written about the issue, and noted that Danton and Desmoulins were members of the same Lodge already mentioned above, the Nine Sisters. Any suspicious mind would immediately make various connections, and, indeed, there were many of them. The above-mentioned Lodge was very influential during the period before 1789 due to its members, among which it is possible to find Benjamin Franklin, Voltaire, and Lalande. The influence was not based on any political or other controversial position of the Lodge itself because there was no such position. It was based on the members themselves because Regular Freemasonry [recognized by the traditional Landmarks] is never involved in politics on the official level, though its members may do practically anything unless their actions do not contradict the constitution, general regulations, and statutes of a lodge. Numerous criticisms came from such authors as John Robison and Abbé Augustin de Barruel, who were supposedly observing the development of the Illuminati in Bavaria and many Masonic lodges in France before the revolution. Particularly these two political writers were accusing the whole intellectual movement that preceded the ‘storming of Bastille’, taking their criticisms against many Encyclopaedists and philosophes, technically believing that they were trying to go against the Church, society, and state in France, or elsewhere in Europe. These accusations were quite influential in making public opinion not just about the revolution or Jacobins, but against Freemasons who were supposed, according to these authors, to plot against all the ‘Godly matters’, in order to replace them with materialism, natural philosophy, deism, and republicanism. These particular talks were supported by yet another writer, James Burton Robertson, who was citing and admired the above-mentioned critics, making him produce his

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Lectures about Freemasonry, where he was repeating the old notion of conspiracy against the Freemasons. In the opinion given by Jonathan Ashe, the fraternity was so badly accused of the whole variety of bad deeds during the French Revolution, and primarily Jacobins that it was on the brink of destruction in many places, and merely due to works of the several Masonic authors, it was avoided.

Jacobins were truly radical and not all their actions were seen as positive even by their fellow revolutionaries from other groups [ex. les Girondines], and this very radicalism would eventually overturn their faith in 1794. Such a collision course and the movement’s demise are now seen as almost natural. Such radicals could not last for too long. All the crimes that were responsibly performed by the Jacobins, Robespierre, and the Revolutionary Tribunal were immediately taken against something that could be running their activities from behind as was thought by the anti-Masonic conspiracies, even though the lodges were not involved in mass murders and did not order them at the Place de Greve, or any other area in France. At least, there is no evidence found showing it. Eventually what was written by Robison was seen as something taken too far even by his contemporaries, however, he was convinced that, indeed, there was a force behind the Reign of Terror. An unknown Freemason from London [it was popular among many Freemasons to write articles without showing their identity] had written an article in the Michigan Freemason, Freemasons Monthly Magazine, published in 1877 in the United States, Michigan. He was making a polemic with Father Foy, from Hastings, England by arguing that the French Revolution, Jacobins, and Girondins were not ordered or guided by the lodges of any Masonic obedience, including the Grand Orient of France.

If here and there a French Lodge was favorable to the dread principles of the Illuminati or the turbid violence of Jacobins and Girondins, the effect of the French Revolution was to shut up the French Lodges altogether, and to suspend the sittings of the Grand Orient of France.

This basic fact shows that Freemasonry was not an integral part of any political movement during the French Revolution, and was not favored by the Jacobin Clubs. Robespierre was not a Freemason, and there is also no evidence of him belonging to any lodge in France. Nevertheless, there is an argument that such a figure as Jacques Hébert was a Freemason, and particularly this possibility is connected to his radicalism [Hébertistes] during the reign of Robespierre, and the execution of both during the Thermidorian reaction. Certainly, Hébert was involved in some radical actions, and they cannot play in favor of any Mason, but the lodges did not preach mass executions against the aristocrats or anyone who was accused of

292 James Burton Robertson, *Freemasonry ... A lecture delivered ... on the 26th May, 1862 ... With appendix containing a synopsis of the Papal bulls respecting secret societies, by the Rev. Dr. Murray*, (John F. Fowler, 1862) at p. 3.


being ‘the foreign agent’. Aristocrats themselves were an intricate part of the Freemasonry in France before 1789 and later. It seems that Hébert’s membership in the fraternity was not guiding his radical actions, at least it was not ordered by any lodge, and there is no historical document to support it. Another fact always seems to be slightly strange and often goes unnoticed by researchers or the general public, is that Dr. Joseph Ignace Guillotin was not merely a Freemason, but also one of the founding members of the Grand Orient of France, and a member of the above-mentioned Lodge of the Nine Sisters.\footnote{Steven L. Harrison, *Freemasons: Tales From the Craft*, (Lulu, 2014) at p. 72. Also see, Robert Freke Gould, *A Library of Freemasonry: Comprising Its History, Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, Customs, Etc., and Concordant Orders of Royal Arch, Knights Templar, A.A.S. Rite, Mystic Shrine, with Other Important Masonic Information of Value to the Fraternity Derived from Official and Standard Sources Throughout the World from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, Volume 3, (John C. Yorston, 1911) at p. 424.} It’s hardly possible to say, too, that fraternity was in some way responsible for his invention, or later on, somehow was prone to any glorification of the guillotine, and this new, and seriously revolutionary method of execution. However, it may be said that when the blade falls, it’s driven not by a human hand, but by the laws of nature, therefore, the king who was executed by the guillotine in 1792 was not of the divine right because the laws of nature did not stop the blade. This almost cynical explanation of the royal execution, and this new “humane” method, so favored by the Jacobins [and not only them] was not a collective invention of the Masonic principles, of course, though it was referring to the ideals of the new republic based not on religion.

The ideas of changes were taken too far by the extremists, or better to say the whole idea of progress, modernity, and changes were carved with the guillotine’s blade during the French Revolutionary reign of terror, thus staining the whole idea of the revolution. Indeed, many Jacobins were Freemasons, and this fact is often seen as something seriously negative due to the violent nature of Robespierre’s methods in implementing the new order in France. It all became truly clear that the French Revolution was sinking in violence and self-destruction, later post-Jacobin period [1794] would prove exactly this, those who were making the change began to destroy their ranks and they did not look upon the fact that their co-revolutionaries or aristocrats and clergy could also be Freemasons, as they were. ‘Brothers’ could send other brothers to the guillotine without a shadow of a doubt, and this exact issue will be discussed in a separate chapter about internal schisms in Freemasonry. All those ideas of the enlightenment cherished and cultivated by Diderot, Voltaire, Helvetius, Lalande, and Lessing were not reflected in the Jacobin Clubs that were ready to destroy everything to make the religion disappear, erase feudalism and monarchy. What may be seen as akin to Freemasonry, even though it could be merely referred to deism, was the Feast of the Supreme Being, in which Robespierre acted one of the leading roles, calling himself a “pontiff of the ceremony”, something that was called a “sham” by St. George Mivart, a royalist.\footnote{St. George Jackson Mivart, *Jacobinism. Sorel’s Europe and the French revolution. Memoirs of a royalist*, (J.R. Osgood, McIlvaine & Company, 1892) at p. 16.} Definitely, for a devout Catholic, it was all looking terrible and blasphemous. Jacobins were trying to replace religion with something else, the other kind of cult. The cult of Lenin in his grotesque mausoleum after the Russian Revolution may reflect similar tendencies. It was based on the ego of Robespierre, and his wish to turn deism into religion, or the counter-religion. Freemasonry is not a religion at all, according to many researchers and most Freemasons, however, it was already argued
before and referenced to Albert Gallatin Mackey that it possesses all the notions and signs of religion.\textsuperscript{299} There are a lot of allusions and mentions of the Supreme Being in Freemasonry, the All-Seeing Eye is truly meaning it, various Masonic texts speak of it, and Freemasons often call God, the Grand Architect of the Universe, which is just another name for the Supreme Being. As mentioned before, researcher of Freemasonry, Emmanuel Rebold was adding the element of \textit{Manicheism} to it, calling various prophets and gods to be the \textit{incarnation} of the Supreme Being.\textsuperscript{300} Notably, Freemasons are deists in many ways, at least their fraternity reflects this notion, but Jacobin’s Feast of the Supreme Being is most likely referring to deism bypassing Freemasonry as the organization. After all, as Marxists are not necessarily Communists, then deists are not always Freemasons. Jacobins were connected to the principles of enlightenment and progress, many were members of the lodges, but they understood it in their way, fanatically, and the latter attitude is not Masonic. As Mivart said, - It is almost needless to say that the Jacobin view of these principles was widely different, and implied the sacrifice of the freedom and welfare of the real men and women of a nation to an abstract ideal.\textsuperscript{301}

### III

**Thermidor**

Any revolution ends with a reaction, it corresponds to the principles of causality, and it cannot be avoided. What was the role of Freemasonry in it? The new world was forming during those certainly turbulent and violent years, many revolutionaries were, indeed, Freemasons and were acting their political roles. However, it was the time when many ‘brothers’ from the same lodges could get divided by the myriads of partisan politics, views, and personal interests. The Thermidorian reaction which began with the overthrow of Robespierre is often seen as the end of the Revolution itself, and the beginning of another period in French history that eventually led to Napoleonic rule, and later the Restoration of Bourbons in 1814. What is important here is to see what the role of Freemasons was in 1794, how did they form themselves and what was their position. It was already mentioned that during the rule of Jacobins, Freemasons were not in the best position, many lodges were closed and those members who were belonging to the aristocracy or clergy found themselves in grave danger. According to the \textit{Masonic Quarterly Review} published in London in 1845, the Grand Orient was re-established in Paris in 1799, thus underlining the idea that this fraternity cannot peacefully exist during times of disturbances.\textsuperscript{302} Generally, Thermidor and the following years saw the revitalization of Freemasonry in France, with the Grand Orient commanding and leading it. Gottfried Joseph Findel wrote in his \textit{History of Freemasonry} that by 1800 the Grand Orient was already

\textsuperscript{299} Albert Gallatin Mackey, \textit{An Encyclopædia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences}, (Moss & Company, 1879) at p. 640.

\textsuperscript{300} Emmanuel Rebold, \textit{A General History of Freemasonry}, pp. 381-383.

\textsuperscript{301} Mivart, \textit{Jacobinism}, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{302} \textit{The Freemasons’ Quarterly Review}, Second Series, Volume 12, (London, Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 1845) at p. 304.
incorporating 74 lodges, and by 1802 this number rose to 114.³⁰³ It means that many active Freemasons were involved and had participated in the changes that took place in France after 1794, so neither shift in the changing government could damage their existence. The Directoire and Consulate were equally friendly to Masonic activity, and it was something that could not be so visible under the Reign of Terror. This revival in the activity of the Grand Orient of France is notable because of the processes that were surely friendly towards it, and neither Carnot nor Barras and later Napoleon had intentions to destroy it. It additionally approves the idea that Freemasonry welcomes peaceful existence and truly disagrees with the radical methods of any kind, the National Convent under Robespierre was not the best time for its principles, even though some Jacobins were Freemasons. Separate individuals maybe could have done their political activity, without really being good Freemasons, they have just done it while not consulting the lodges on whether what they did was moral or not, and the lodges themselves could not agree on that activity because it was often seriously immoral. One of the most famous mystics in Freemasonry, Marquis de Saint Martin was not welcomed by the Reign of Terror for being noble, and had to run and hide, eventually being spared by the “revolution of Thermidor”.³⁰⁴ Hence, many nobles were Freemasons in France before 1789, the “reaction” was welcomed by many of them, and therefore, many lodges were seeing their revitalization. It was noted that after the revolution, and especially during the Reign of Terror, many Freemasons were divided along partisan lines, some were supporting Danton, some Robespierre, and some could generally stand on the side of Jacobins, and others on the side of Girondists. Hébertists were leaning in the direction of atheism, Robespierre went for the deistic celebration, and both did not survive Thermidor. It may also be notable that Hébert was a Freemason, and due to his atheistic views, was most likely not welcomed by Freemasonry anymore. After the ninth of Thermidor, and the fall of Robespierre, French Freemasons were undergoing a revival, and its adept Louis-Marie de La Révellière-Lépeaux was involved in the creation of the system known as théophilantrpie, something that could be closely related to deism, and the natural philosophy forming the concept of the religion of reason.³⁰⁵ It was echoing many allusions to the Grand Architect of the Universe and recalled the Masonic terminology, which in return was certainly influencing Révellière-Lépeaux. Nevertheless, it was like the previous Robespierre’s attempt to establish the cult of the Supreme Being, and this system of natural religion was not using any methods of radicalism that were prone to Jacobins. It was more or less in shades, similar to the concepts of Voltaire before the revolution. In other words, it was less revolutionary and in the light of Masonic revival, steadier. Freemasons could be indirectly involved in the political movements during the French Revolution, they could be followers of deism or even atheism as Hébert was, but they did not, as an organization, welcome violence, thus everything that was happening in the politics of France after the overthrow of Jacobins was more closely related to them in terms of ideas and Masonic concepts.

³⁰⁴ Robert Macoy, Illustrated History and Cyclopedia of Freemasonry: Containing an Elaborate Account of the Rise and Progress of Freemasonry, and Its Kindred Associations, Ancient and Modern. Also, Definitions of the Technical Terms Used by the Fraternity, (Macoy Publishing, 1908) at p. 236.
³⁰⁵ Louis d’Estampes, Claudio Jannet, La Franc-Maçonnerie et la Révolution, (Seguin, 1884) at p. 219.
IV

Royalists

It was already mentioned that many aristocrats belonged to Freemasonry. This fraternity was in many ways established by them, spread around Europe from Britain, and was later supported by the nobles. Francis I in Vienna, Frederick II in Berlin, and many Dukes and Lords in London, were involved in Freemasonry, so the radicalism of some political movements during the French Revolution was not just merely damaging, but rather disastrous to them and those lodges in which they had a privilege to be members. Therefore, royalists in France were involved in Freemasonry for a long time before the revolution struck, and remained in the organization after emigrating from the revolutionary motherland. James Burton Robertson even saw Chevalier Ramsay from Scotland [originally a Calvinist, like many early Freemasons], who was in many ways responsible for the establishment of the Scottish branch of this organization in France, later converting to Catholicism, and this seemingly contradictory position was possible back then, particularly in France, and most likely before 1738. Many aristocrats in France were not standing in the position of going against the Catholic Church, and in return, their country was not corresponding to persecutions, as was true about Spain or Portugal. All these aristocrats did not welcome the revolution, even if they were standing on the positions of enlightenment, and truly they could not be on the side of the Jacobins. Sangeet Duchane had underlined that the revolutionaries often saw Freemasonry as a hierarchical organization, and thus opposed it. Aristocrats were sort of sharing Freemasonry from country to country, some seeing it as a place to get away from boredom, some for the sake of new ideas that they could find in its metaphors and symbols, or merely by attaining them from other lodge members. John Hamilton Graham in his book *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec* had referred to Gould, writing that already by 1742 twenty-one lodges were already established in Paris, and they were including the élite of the day. However, at the same time, in the course of the revolution, royalists were sort of led away from the notion of enlightenment that could be brought up by Masonic connection to the enlightened philosophes and began to accuse it of many crimes of the revolution. Conspiracies against the Masonry were getting more aggressive and sharper. The Chouans were going against Robespierre, Billaud, Varennes, and even the Duke of Orleans, who was not fully against the revolution, and who previously spoke for the constitutional monarchy, and certainly the Freemasons. Definite connections between the deism, natural philosophy, revolutionaries who could be Freemasons and, indeed, were participating in the anti-aristocratic actions, and many lodges in France, all summed up in the royalist position which went straight against the fraternity. Moreover, they needed some sort of explanation, not rooted in problems of the

306 James Burton Robertson, *Freemasonry ... A lecture delivered ... on the 26th May, 1862 ... With appendix containing a synopsis of the Papal bulls respecting secret societies*, (John F. Fowler, 1862) at pp. 16-17.
Ancien Regime, but in some external force that was everywhere and at the same time could be somewhat linked to the French Revolution itself. Royalists were not fond of Freemasonry, especially after Augustin de Barruel began to publish his thoughts on the society, which according to him was at the center of all revolutionary atrocities, anti-Church fallouts, and many more. Additionally, he was criticizing the enlightenment as the basic cause of all troubles that followed in France and Europe. Before the revolution, Freemasons were involved in attempts to liberalize and reform certain aspects of life in Europe and France. Historian and researcher of the Age of Enlightenment Richard William Weisberger noted in his work *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment* that many issues could be influenced in a progressive and liberal way, particularly in the direction of religious tolerance. This could not be welcomed by such people as Barruel that were getting more conservative when it came to any change due to their loss of property, status, and sadly, the country, too. Royalists were not reaching the moment of understanding that Freemasonry as the organization did not and could not organize the revolution, and specifically did not stand behind Jacobinism. Freemasons themselves were not in the best position during the Reign of Terror, but it was not enough to convince many of the royalists, and particularly Chouans, in getting to bottom of the truth and showing them that Voltaire or Diderot were not standing behind Robespierre. Nevertheless, those details seemed to be less significant, hence the whole concept of the French enlightenment, its *philosophes*, and pamphleteers, who spoke for more tolerance towards Huguenots, more education [*encyclopaedists*] as Diderot did, an alternative view on the world as La Mettrie had proposed, all of it was covered by criticism and got immediately connected to Freemasonry. Truly, the fraternity was involved in the enlightenment, so it underwent yet even more speculations and accusations. In *War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy mentioned some French emigres who were Freemasons, and even though the masterpiece is not a historical work, it was based on real documents and prototypes. They could belong to different quite conservative groups and could belong to the fraternity at the same time, but generally, royalists began to see Freemasonry as something that had undermined their previous lives under the Ancien Regime. A similar process would take place among surviving Russian nobility, which had managed to run away from the October Revolution of 1917, and at some point began to blame Freemasonry for it. They were also listening to the Russian Orthodox conservatives that were to blame Alexander Kerensky [a Freemason] for leading their state into submission. Generally, it may be concluded that royalists, even if many aristocrats before the revolution were sympathizing with the enlightenment and Freemasonry, after the revolution and particularly the Jacobin dictatorship, began to blame it for causing their lives to be destroyed. After 1794 the fraternity was appearing to be sympathetic to those who were accepting the results of the revolution and sort of blended with the newly forming bourgeois class in France.

312 Andrei Saburov, *War and Peace of L.N. Tolstoy*, [Война и Мир Л.Н. Толстого: проблематика и поэтика], (Moscow University Press, 1959) at p. 121.
Le Grand Orient de France

I

Foundations

This Grand Lodge in France is the most well-known since the times of Voltaire and is certainly responsible for the fame of Freemasonry in the country. It remains to be the largest in France today and is now representing the fraternity’s separate or “irregular” tradition from the British, “mainstream” Freemasonry. The Grand Orient stands for the Grand Lodge and smaller local lodges are called ateliers or loge. What specifically makes this Grand Lodge significant is the duration, and according to Achille Godefroy Jouaust was founded in 1773 with the assistance of such people and Freemasons as Lalande, Labady, Gaillard, Baron Toussaint, and Lucas de Boulainvilliers [out of two Masonic organizations, the Souverain Conseil and the Grand Loge].

It was continuing the French tradition of Freemasonry, which had originated in England and Scotland but was resulting from the variety of splits and reorganizations that took place in the 1740s and 60s in France. This Masonic organization is unique due to its incorporation of many prominent people in the history of France, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the era of the Napoleonic Wars. Later, this exact Masonic body would separate from the rest of Freemasonry over the issue of accepting atheists and removing the concept of the Supreme Being in 1877, forming its concept that will be discussed a little later. As of the 1770s, this organization became the cluster of ideas, personalities, and those who had simply formed the future of France and Europe. It was not so evident during that time, but if looking at it a few centuries later, it becomes obvious how significant the GOdF turned out to be, having united the whole myriad of interesting people of that age [and later periods after the French Revolution and Napoleon] in France under its roof. It included such people as Voltaire, Lalande, John Paul Jones, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Stroganov, Victor Schoelcher, and Frédéric Desmons [Calvinist pastor and theologian].

If keeping with the original and accurate aim of this work, it cannot be avoided to mention the Grand Orient of France in a short, but inclusive chapter that is capable of illuminating this Masonic structure that gave so much to the formation of modernity in Europe and the West in general. As with all of Freemasonry right from its beginning, the Grand Orient of France was established not merely by the educated class to which such personalities as Lalande or Desaguliers had belonged, but with the assistance of the nobility. Duc Anne Charles Montmorency-Luxembourg was the actual founder and establisher of the Grand Orient, and his signature put on May 1, 1772, projected the actual union between the Grand Loge and Souverain Conseil, the two already

313 Achille Godefroy Jouaust, Histoire du Grand-Orient de France, (Brisard, 1865) at pp. 126, 128.
314 The Masonic Review, Masonic Journal, Volume 73, Correspondence, an article by Jacob Norton, The Grand Orient of France (C. Moore, 1890) at p. 53.
mentioned Masonic organizations that existed in France before 1772/73. The role of Louis-Phillipe d’Orleans and Baron de Toussaint is also significant, hence they were additionally seeking to create an organization that would unite all Freemasons in France under the same structure. After the establishment, principles or concepts did not change, they were simply carrying on the tradition that was brought from Britain, but Freemasonry was becoming more assimilated in France, picking up its cultural traits by originating the Rite Français that unites certain previous forms of the Masonic ritual by integrating them [or emulating]. Eventually, this organization became one of the most famous organizations in Freemasonry, and cannot be separated from the history of France and its culture.

II

The Nine Sisters Lodge

This Parisian Lodge was mentioned before and may be talked about further on because when discussing progress, Masonic influence on modernity, and its role in it, that may be nearly impossible not to expand this discussion. Modernity and enlightenment are intricately interwoven, and France was the country in which the process is seriously visible with Freemasonry being at the center of these developments. The Grand Orient of France turned out to be quintessentially French in spirit and international in its ideas, welcoming numerous foreigners into its ateliers, and the list includes Benjamin Franklin and even John Paul Jones, the founder of the American military fleet. These two figures were members of the Neuf Sœurs. What does it say about the Lodge and its character? First, this organization was not political, neither the Grand Orient nor the Nine Sisters, however, they became closely related to the culture of salons that were capable of changing not merely the ideas of some people, but the whole direction of thinking. If different prominent people work together, at some point they will either develop new principles or at least attempt the establishment of their ideas in the real world. Something that Freemasons may call, the world of profanes. Without this Lodge, it is impossible to imagine Franklin’s connections in France during the American Revolutionary War, or where else he could have met with Voltaire. In one way or another this Grand Orient Lodge, the meeting place for so many talents and active characters became the most influential lodge in the history of Freemasonry. The only parallels may be seen with the original Masonic lodges in England that became the roots for all of them around the world, or some lodges before the Russian Revolution [The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia; irregular] that had an immense influence on many developments that took place during 1917 in that country. The Nine Sisters was extremely significant in terms of culture and politics, even though Freemasonry is not supposed to operate as a political organization. R. William Weisberger had noted that Abbé Robin was an important brother of this Lodge, his works in defense of the

317 Ibid., pp. 117, 119.
318 François Favre, Documents Maçonniques, Recueillis et Annotés, (Paris, Librairie Maçonnique, de A. Teissier, 1866) at p. 232.
American Revolution made many other members get involved in the support of the cause of Washington and Franklin, basically making the Lodge itself become part of the given process.\textsuperscript{320} It may be found interesting that Robin was involved with the Catholic Church, and at the same time did not refuse to enter Freemasonry, something that by his time was illegal [post-1738 Papal Bull]. He was assisting in bringing the Loge closer to politics, and not merely to the political activity, but the politics of supporting the rise of republicanism outside of France, which was still a monarchy. It was not based on the sheer wishes of Louis XVI's government that was interested in assisting the rebellious colonies while working against Britain, it was based on ideals that were bred in the Nine Sisters by its members, who were interested in democratization, and new forms of government.

This Lodge was particularly influential in the sphere of arts and sciences, truly reflecting the meaning and purposes of the second symbolic Degree, which includes the concept of the Seven Noble Arts and Sciences. Its direct founder Jerome Joseph Lalande, looked to establish an organization that would truly reflect the concept of a temple of knowledge, something that would be inspiring to participate in, and would bring changes. The concept of the polished stone [Ashlar] was well known to Lalande and his purpose was in his idea to establish such a Lodge that would influence the individual and public development of culture and science. First, his idea was met with some resentment due to the conservative position of the Grand Officers of the Grand Orient, but later the plan moved forward.\textsuperscript{321} Eventually, each work of the Lodge was met with very interesting conversations, presentations, and Masonic reports on philosophy, arts, and science, producing an influential environment for the future development of its members, and those who would later contact them.\textsuperscript{322} The Lodge’s spirit and its symbolism were reflected in the title referring to nine Muses, daughters of Mnemosyne, those symbolic inspirational forces that protect creativity.\textsuperscript{323} This may be the strongest and most important of the practical activities behind Freemasonry, often misunderstood or not seen at all. Basically, not the rituals and ancient Charges presented in the book of Masonic constitutions define the true meaning behind this society, but its social and cultural activities matter the most, and this particular Lodge is merely the most famous example of it. Masonic rituals hide nothing but metaphors. Their language of allegories and symbols alludes to science and moral principles of stoicism rooted in Ancient Greece. What may be specifically peculiar is that the Lodge established by Lalande was also inspired by the Société des Neuf Sœurs which existed before [created around 1769] under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Sciences.\textsuperscript{324} This basic connection is adding to the general notion of how arts and sciences were intricately linked from the inside to the Masonic activities in France during the Age of Enlightenment. It is important to understand that such personalities as Lalande were

\textsuperscript{320} Weisberger, Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment, (McFarland, 2017) at p. 81.

\textsuperscript{321} Richard William Weisberger, Wallace McLeod, S. Brent Morris, Freemasonry on Both Sides of the Atlantic: Essays Concerning the Craft in the British Isles, Europe, the United States, and Mexico, (East European Monographs, 2002) at p. 312.


\textsuperscript{323} Note: Marcus Tullius Cicero, Cicero's Tusculan Disputations: Also Treatises On the Nature of the Gods, and On the Commonwealth, (Harper, 1890) or any other previous and later edition.

\textsuperscript{324} Le Nouvelliste français ou recueil choisi de mémoires, itinéraires, réflexions morales et critiques, biographies modernes, caractères célèbres (etc.), Volume 10, (Hartleben, 1816) at p. 23.
looking to make education a part of the progress in France with the help of their membership in Freemasonry. The fraternity itself was reflecting the idea of sciences and arts in its symbolic *craft* degrees paying a lot of attention to geometry and architecture that alluded to science and arts. For those who were members of the Nine Sisters Lodge, their gatherings could be compared to Plato’s Academy in Athens, they were inspired by the classical age and saw their *speculative* Masonry as the key to opening the door into that enlightened past to bring it back and contribute their cultural efforts.

### III

Frédéric Desmons and the Great Schism in Freemasonry

What particularly distinguishes the Grand Orient of France from the rest of Freemasonry is the unique position in this whole tradition, which is seen as progressive and modern by its members. The whole organization is not viewing other Grand Lodges [regular] as hostile to them, but the latter believes that the Grand Orient has shifted from the original traditions and most likely cannot be judged as the real carrier of the Masonic knowledge and light. After 1877 under the leadership of Frédéric Desmons, the Grand Master of the *GOdF*, this Masonic organization decided to begin accepting candidates who did not necessarily believe in God [of any religion or religious practice, a cult]. This was always totally necessary to follow some form of the Supreme Being in real life, and atheists or even agnostics were never accepted into the fraternity because such a belief was the requirement.\(^3\) In one way or another, it was the most important thing for any candidate to profess and the change proved to be too challenging for those Freemasons in France, who could not accept atheists into their ranks. The world’s reaction was sure to follow and in other countries, the Grand Lodges began to break communications with the Grand Orient of France due to its new, and if not philosophical, then at least administrative position. J. D. Drummond, a correspondent, and Freemason was writing for the *Freemason’s Repository* in 1890 that many Grand Lodges and Orient were not keeping relations with GOdF anymore, but some did, however, according to his opinion, it should be decided against such relations because they go against the Masonic traditions.\(^4\) What could stand behind such a move on the side of the Grand Orient’s leadership, why did they suddenly or gradually conclude that belief in the Supreme Being is not necessary anymore, and all of its Lodge members do not have to perceive the All-Seeing Eye as the symbol of the Grand Architect of the Universe? It may be argued for the tendency and not any sudden decision was taken by the GOdF. It seems that this organization was to follow some principles and concepts of the age and began to value the idea of freedom of conscience for and to any member or candidate. In other words, they have decided to make a step in the direction of an additional extension of the principle that speaks for the freedom of belief and non-belief, too, allowing themselves to step over the Masonic constitutional requirement. Dr.

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William Hillier, a British author was seriously concerned with the position of the Grand Orient and was saying that the British culture and its constitution [meaning the political principles that rule Britain, not the Masonic constitution] are based on the belief in God, therefore, British Freemasons will not accept atheism.\(^{327}\) On the same page where he discussed the importance of a belief, Hillier mentioned Robespierre, who was stating that even “if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him”, adding that the latter was “impious” but still thought it was necessary to profess the Supreme Being to control the infidelity and corrupt human nature.\(^{328}\) According to this writer, atheism will certainly end in the reign of terror in his country, probably alluding to the Jacobins, and honestly, his words turned out to be right but about the other country, where after 1917 atheism and the state terror became synonyms [Bolshevism and its consequences]. British Freemasons saw this step to be an infidelity, or as it was seen by the GOdF, a step toward progress, something that broke all the rules and ripped off all the keys that were guarding the piety in the form of Masonic traditions.

Frédéric Desmons saw it differently and what is most interesting, he was a Calvinist pastor and theologian, someone who had been standing against any form of atheism in his professional life. Calvinism was not a stranger to many Freemasons, Dr. John Desaguliers and James Anderson were both Calvinist ministers themselves, and did not think that their religion may contradict Freemasonry and vice versa. Chevalier Ramsay, who came from Scotland, and brought some of its Masonic traditions to France and established the early pre-Scottish Rite concepts there, was also a Calvinist [but did not like it] before he had converted to Roman Catholicism.\(^{329}\) Desmons did not become a Roman Catholic but went in another direction while deciding that any good person, including atheists, who also could be good people, has a right to become Freemasons. It did not take the belief out of those members that continued to believe in the Supreme Being, thus, establishing a wider plurality among members of the Grand Orient of France. At the same time, it may be added that Desmons did not do it on his own, of course, and was aided by other Masons of the GOdF that could be possibly connected to the socialist movements in France during the III Republic [even including some radicals].\(^{330}\) This tendency was quite visible in France and was not unnoticed by Desmons and the Grand Orient as the organization, which began to harness these ideas by accepting members with socialist views. During that time, it became possible that many French Freemasons saw their fraternity as the base for their political or social activity, something that was possible before, especially during the time of the Nine Sisters Lodge. Though the latter infamous Lodge did not become openly political, it could influence the developments in France and elsewhere. Closer to the end of the nineteenth century, the whole Grand Orient of France, and not its distinct lodges, began to proliferate the possibility of influencing the political environment with the current trends that were brought by the brothers who were following them. At first, it contradicts the basic Masonic principle of non-involvement in politics with its organizational or structural capabilities, however, something that may be called the ‘political diffusion’ was always

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\(^{327}\) William Hillier, *The British Constitution* [a lecture], (Exeter, Daily Gazette office, 229, High Street) at p. 23.

\(^{328}\) Ibid., p. 23.

\(^{329}\) *The Scottish Historical Review*, Volumes 32-34, (Edinburgh University Press for the Scottish Historical Review Trust, 1953) at p. 77.

\(^{330}\) Svetlana Gurvich, *Radical-Socialists, and the Workers Movement in France at the Beginning of the XX Century*, [Радикал-социалисты и рабочее движение во Франции в начале XX века], (Наука, 1976) at p. 39.
undeniable in Freemasonry. This diffusion always made many lodges closer to what was going on in the real world, and attempt to change it, plus those sheer Masonic concepts of self-perfection supporting the given notion. A lodge may not be officially participating in politics, but its members can do it freely and without any internal Masonic censorship unless it contradicts the country’s laws.\textsuperscript{331} While picking up Marxist and socialist ideas, socialists could certainly contribute to the whole idea of accepting atheists into the Degrees of the Grand Orient of France because many of them were atheists, and thought that certain changes were necessary by denying some aspects of Anderson’s Masonic constitution that was published in 1723. The diverse group of Freemasons during that time in France was the major factor behind these changes, and socialist ideas gave enough grounding to establish them. David Robin Watson in his book \textit{George Clemenceau: A Political Biography}, pointed out that the French left wing was openly meeting inside the GOdF headquarters.

On June 19, Clemenceau invited the deputies of the Left to a meeting at the rooms of the Grand Orient de France, the masonic headquarters, where they drew up an electoral platform, known during the campaign as the programme of the rue Cadet.\textsuperscript{332}

Certain principles were not seen as contradictory with Freemasonry at all, the left-leaning political forces in France and to a higher level, anti-clericalism, particularly in the Grand Orient were normal. To a good extent at some point, the traditionally anti-clerical left-wing groups, and the GOdF were associated with each other. They were working in the same buildings, shared memberships, and were part of the same political agenda by establishing the ‘diffusion’ between Freemasonry, now viewed as irregular by the Masonic theist tradition, and the left. Henry Walter Ehrmann and Martin Schain in their study \textit{Politics in France} were particularly pointing out this similarity between the two groups.

Yet a broad congruence of liberal and undogmatic views had long encouraged overlapping membership between the Socialist party and the Grand Orient, today the most representative of the Masonic lodges.\textsuperscript{333}

Today, the Grand Orient of France is the largest Masonic organization in France, and as of 2019/2020, the total number of members reaches 52,413 people in 1,372 lodges.\textsuperscript{334} This exact tradition of Freemasonry became the most popular in France, possibly due to its strong left political wing since the days of the III Republic and later Clemenceau. The spirit of secularism that exists in France today is especially important to many Frenchmen, and the Grand Orient of France truly reflects these needs and values. More traditional, quite ritualistic, and conservative Freemasons of the UGLE and the North American Grand Lodges are seen as less modern by the members of the Grand Orient of France; they tend to cling to the winds of the liberal French political school of thought. Way back in 1884, the Grand Orient of France

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\textsuperscript{331} \textit{The Masonic Monthly}, Volume II, edited by Samuel Evans, (Edward L. Michell, 1864) at p. 155.
\textsuperscript{332} David Robin Watson, \textit{George Clemenceau: A Political Biography}, (David McKay, 1976) at p. 97.
\end{small}
was separately excommunicated by Pope Leo XIII in an Encyclical issued on April 20 the same year for the organization’s 1877 reforms, but it did not mention the British or American Masons. Their influence on the politics of France was always extraordinarily strong before the schism and after it, too. The Nine Sisters Lodge, later reforms of Frédéric Desmons, and its loyalty to France, all made the Grand Orient of France seriously involved in what may be called modern France, and the West in its broader sense. It may, of course, be argued that standing on the more left than the centrist side of politics is not objective for a single organization, which originally was supposed to be apolitical, but the GOdF was truly contributing to the shaping of the modern world, and it cannot be denied. Whether this world is seen as good or bad, depends on the opinion.

Freemasonry in Germany and the Bavarian Illuminati

I

German Masonic Tradition

German Masonic tradition turned out to be significantly influential in the formation of history in Europe, creating different social and political currents, and distinguishing it from France, Britain, and Italy. It was already discussed before that during the Age of Enlightenment, the Prussian lodges under the supervision and protection of Frederick II became particularly outstanding, making Berlin one of the centers of Freemasonry on the level of London or Paris. Even Mirebeau in his *Histoire de la Monarchie Prussienne* was discussing Frederick and thought that it was bad that he did not become the Grand Master of all German or at least all Prussian lodges during his reign, thus proving the importance of Freemasonry in Germany, so it was worth talking about in France. French monarchy during the eighteenth century was not involved in Freemasonry on the personal level, not a single monarch and especially Louis XV, who was going against Freemasonry with his decrees, was a Freemason. An article called *The Origin and Early History of the Fraternity of Masons* published in the *Freemasons’ Monthly Magazine* particularly points out this old and distinctively German tradition of not merely the Stein-Metzen, but of fraternities that were related to the Middle Ages. Germany had contributed its particular traditions that were not directly connected to that of England and France, or any other country, but that was going even deeper with the distinct history of guilds. Surely, speculative Masonry as it is known today was established in England, however, the stonemasons of Germany were making some contributions to the British Isles even before the

336 Albert Gallatin Mackey, *An Encyclopædia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences*, (L.H. Everts, 1889) at p. 293.
first speculative lodges were established. This tradition was creating the German guilds and building fraternities on the level of those in England, and what is specifically interesting is that they were not worse, but better. George Franklin Fort in his *The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry* mentioned that there are certain legends spread around Freemasons, directly pointing at those in Germany that the concept of ‘berg’ or the elevated place [could also be the deep valley] was the original gathering place for their *operative* predecessors, linking this tradition to the old Germanic polytheism, Celts and Druids. Freemasons, in general, do not possess any cults, and its origins go to England, the latter’s traditions of guilds, humanism, and the deist philosophy, however, many tales about the Masonic origins that go back to Templars and even some other roots, also exist. German guilds, even though they were always quite like the English ones, still could include various local customs, and later they were transferred to everything that is known to be German Freemasonry [*operative, and later speculative*]. Moreover, the stonemasons [die Steinmetzen] could have traveled all over Europe, and as it was noted before, their presence in England during the construction of various sites was also recorded. Freemasons’ predecessors were capable of sharing knowledge, skills, and passwords, it could also include the tales of their origins, depending on where that exact guild was previously located. Certainly, those that were founded in Saxony could be different from those in Oberbayern, and both were not the same as those in Northumbria. Dr. Georg Kloss should be mentioned in this context due to his thorough studies of the history of Freemasonry, and particularly its origination in the guilds, including the detailed description of the roles and hierarchical subordination that existed in them [apprentice, master]. His contribution to the history of this fraternity is simply crucial, he was able to get rid of many myths that surround Freemasons, especially when they relate to its nearly Ancient Egyptian origin. He was focusing on the tradition of guilds, and surely not forgetting that in his native Germany, they were acting the very role as in England, so they have also seriously contributed to the traditions of not merely German Freemasonry, but the one that came from Britain. He was not a fan of that theory which leads the history of Freemasonry to the Knights Templar, Kloss was seriously skeptical of it, as much as he did not support any ancient origin, too [as seen in the *Annalen der Loge zur Einigkeit*]. What is specifically interesting is to see the connection between Freemasonry and Germany, and how these two countries were related, as it is the central point of attention in this chapter. Such links are truly visible, and Kloss, Winzer, and surely Fr. Alb Fallon supported them, providing the key role of German guilds and *Bruderschaften* in the establishment of Masonic tradition beginning with the stonemasons and ending with the creation of *speculative* Masonry in England. In other words, Germany can be seen as another country of origin for this fraternity, maybe not when it was fully formed, with its contemporary terminology better known in English, but in its forthcoming traditions. The same Masonic correspondent that was mentioned above had specifically underlined this notion and concept.

339 J. Winzer, *Die deutschen Bruderschaften des Mittelalters*, (Gießen, 1859) at pp. 90-91.
340 George Franklin Fort, *The Early History and Antiquities of Freemasonry: As Connected with Ancient Norse Guilds, and the Oriental and Mediæval Building Fraternities*, (Bradley, 1881) at p. 265.
341 Georg Kloss, *Die Freimaurerei in ihrer wahren Bedeutung aus den alten und dichten Urkunden der Steinmetzen, Masonen und Freimaurer nachgewiesen*, (Klenn, 1840) at pp. 293-295.
These two works [those written by Winzer and Alb Fallon., O.K.] also furnish the proof that modern Freemasons neither invented their liturgy and symbolism, nor received it from any other secret association, but that they inherited it from their former parent society; that the English Masons received their customs and mysteries from Germany; and finally, that this system was not an invention of the German Stonemasons, but was, in part borrowed from other German Guilds… 343

This exact quote is crucial and sums up the concept of the special role that was played by Germany and its stonemasons in England, and later worldwide. These studies paralleling Germany to England in its contribution to the establishment of Freemasonry. Many German and other researchers of Freemasonry were having different points of view, and here are some to name a few, Laurie, Rössler, Schanberg, and Lenoir. 344 Their position was not focused on the facts that may be found in the Middle Ages in Europe, but strongly believed that Freemasonry itself was as old as Masonry, therefore, making an erroneous conclusion about its long, and ancient history that was not supported by the historical facts. After all, it was already stated before that many Freemasons themselves were making a lot of such conclusions and Emanuel Rebold is certainly one of them when he led its origins back to Ancient Egypt, even claiming that Moses was educated in Heliopolis. 345 The same Freemasons’ Monthly Magazine in its two volumes suggested that some other famous writers had similar theories, George Oliver compared Moses to the Grand Master and Joshua to his Deputy, J.W.S. Mitchell traced it back to the Temple of Solomon [including rituals], Thomas Payne saw the Druids for being early Freemasons, and D’Anse de Villoison led the roots to the Knights Templar and Crusades. 346 It was all seriously interesting and peculiar, but not supported by the facts, thus, giving in to such researchers as J.G. Findel, Gould, Thory, Alb Fallon, Winzer, and Kloss. Also, Friedrich Voigts may be important while studying the German Masonic tradition. Moreover, they all were contributing to the German “factor” in Freemasonry, and it is crucially important while making the study. The whole tradition of building societies in Germany, its capabilities, and guilds [of different specializations and professions] was so well established in that country, thus leaving no doubt that its Steinmetzen had to be a part of anything that would title itself Masonry, anywhere in Europe. It can be very well seen in the chapter Die Bruderschaft der Steinmetzen written by Findel in his book Geschichte der Freimaurerei, where he provided numerous examples of their activity based on actual historical facts. 347 German builders, guilds, and professional groups were reflected upon what they were able to produce, and it may be noted anywhere from Cologne’s Cathedral to the famous miner’s wish words “Glück auf!”, that many associates exclusively with Germany. This interesting Masonic tradition that had contributed to the emergence of Freemasonry in England is certainly

344 Ibid., p. 334.
especially important in terms of progress and Germany did participate in it. Carpentry, mining, *Steinmetz*, breweries, and armories, all became incredibly famous around Europe and other parts of the world due to the guild system that was developed in the territories from Koenigsberg to Basel. Thus, when Masonry came back in the form of speculative Freemasonry to Hamburg in 1737, it made somewhat a circle.\textsuperscript{348}

II

Culture, Philosophy, and German Romanticism

This period in European and German history is always considered to be significantly important. First, it created the whole myriad of thinkers that were involved in progressive ideas, second, it influenced literature in such a way that it’s still being read and cherished. Lessing, Goethe, Heine, Schroeder, and Fichte, of them, were movers and shakers of German culture, pointing out that not merely nobles and politicians were involved in the fraternity. Frederick II may have been specifically prominent in his activities as a politician and monarch of Prussia, protecting and establishing new lodges, but without the people mentioned above, he would not be able to reach that level in his Masonic activity. It may all be argued that Germany was in many ways reborn during the time of Romanticism in literature and philosophy, and Freemasonry was not standing aside. It has been asked for a long time if Ludwig van Beethoven was a Freemason, someone who had greatly influenced German romanticism and gave it yet another meaning. Theodor von Frimmel was trying to answer that question and gave some important historical hints that point out Beethoven’s membership.\textsuperscript{349} Generally, he is considered to be a Freemason by most of the fraternity, and many lodges are named after him. For example, there is the Lodge in his hometown of Bonn called *Freimaurer Loge Zur Ewigen Harmonie*, which has been active since 1928. Vividly the title itself shows that Masons are searching for harmony, and they try to find it in the works and heritage of Beethoven. Searchers of something new in life and the world were becoming interested in Masonic symbolism and allegories because they were taking them to the perspectives of another possibility of truth, apart from the religion in which they were raised. They were attracted by the romanticism of Freemasonry, its secretive meetings, strange rituals that are often not well understood even by Masons themselves, the beauty of regalia, and many more attributes of this fraternity. It was truly giving Goethe an idea of expanding his thoughts about life, death, purity of love, and universal meaning. Freemasonry is capable of doing it due to its deistic approach, and universal symbolism that can expand the mind and thoughts of those who try to get into the deeper meaning of life. Once again, the romantics were looking for an alternative, which could not be found in their regular life. Moreover, it brought that previously discussed connection between the whole variety of people, who were linked by their progressive and unstandardized thinking about how to change the world and themselves. Friedrich Rückert was also belonging to this

\textsuperscript{348} Friedrich Voigt, *Die Freimaurer-Logen im Königreiche Hannover: geschichtlichen Abriss*, (Hofbuchdr. der Gebr. Jänecke, 1855) at p. 9.

brotherhood and as a Freemason and a poet, he was searching for unity between people, and their abilities to be more friendly despite all the differences in their cultures, customs, and religions. His *Lied und die Freude* is most likely one of those examples of his talents that were exploring exactly that universal approach and wishes to make more harmony with the world. Freemasonry took deep root in the life and minds of many prominent people in Germany of that day, and what is most important, they were influential in the revival of *der Zeitgeist* [the spirit of time, era, or epoch], which managed to influence later unity of Germans. The romantic period and Freemasonry coincided with the *Befreiungskrieg* of 1813-1815 in Germany, when the newly revived feeling of self and national identity began to grasp many Germans from its various Länder, giving a new purpose to their future. Surely, Freemasonry and its members were not the cause of all these developments, but many of them became important during that time, specifically in the field of liberal arts. Johann Gottlieb Fichte and his heritage are considerable even today, the time which produced such personalities was once again marked with many progressive ideas, and they were certainly connected to Freemasonry in Germany during the era of Romanticism. Paul Müller had argued in his book *Untersuchungen zum Problem der Freimaurerei bei Lessing, Herder und Fichte* that it is often difficult to prove whether one or the other figure was a Freemason, and particularly he was concentrating on German Freemasonry. He had pointed out Fichte’s connection to the *Royal York zur Freundschaft Lodge* in Berlin and later his letter from Zurich sometime in 1792, and one year later in another letter on November 20, 1793, where he had mentioned Freemasonry. His membership in the lodges was seriously proved by Freemasons themselves, and as the Austrian Masonic journal pointed out [in 1876], he was participating in this society alongside Herder, Goethe, and Wieland. What matters is that their participation in Freemasonry was making this fraternity grow intellectually and fulfill its mission of bringing culture and education to the world. Shaping of the rough stone [Ashlar] is not done merely by the lodge, but the whole process is mutual, its members are also improving the lodge. This principle is especially important to understand because otherwise Freemasonry would not become what it is today, or was during the ages of Enlightenment and Romanticism in Germany. Another seriously interesting fact about this time in German Freemasonry is that it was not akin to what was going on in this organization in other places. First, the Enlightenment and Romanticism differ, and both cultural epochs were reflecting various sides of Freemasonry. Second, each country and its cultural traits can bring something new to Freemasonry, so it shapes and changes along with its members. On one side Freemasonry is based on the principles of rationalism, architectural allegories, and geometrical symbolism, but at the same time it is possible to find a lot of romanticism in it. Particularly it may be clear about esotericism and mysticism that can be found in this fraternity. Cynicism and laughter of Voltaire, the mathematical clarity of Lalande, and the encyclopedic facts of Diderot were ascribed to the French Freemasons of the Enlightenment age, but poetic Goethe, musical Beethoven, and more idealistic Fichte [German
philosophical school of idealism] point out German Freemasons of the Romantic age. It was something else, yet another side of progress or dreaming about the progress from another, less ‘geometric’ corner of the human mind. Masonic traditions are not identical to one another, and the sense of spirituality is as important as geometry. For this matter, Fichte was to some extent uniting these principles in his philosophy, and even though he was accused of atheism while teaching at Jena University, he most likely did not belong to this idea due to his Masonic membership. Freemasons before 1877 [Grand Orient of France] were required to have some belief in the Supreme Being. Fichte’s thesis-antithesis-synthesis concept was not merely peculiar, but also very Masonic in its meaning, somewhat reflecting the idea of two columns [Jachin and Boaz, ‘the house of happiness, balance’], the ‘checkerboard’ floor in a lodge, dualism, and harmony. Different opinions that may be held by the ‘brethren’ in a lodge are subdued by the inner unity, which is the actual synthesis of their collective activity. Tolerance that is inside the lodge must put them together, sort of produce synthesis out of thesis and antithesis of each member. Myriads of opinions are curved into harmony, or at least they ought to be so. Fichte was most likely attracted by the idea of this common Masonic concept of dualism, which may be seen practically everywhere in any lodge. The ‘checkerboard’ is one of the most famous concepts that reflect human existence and life itself, good versus evil, negative, and positive, light and dark, men and women, all of it may be found in three Masonic Degrees. Practically every symbol in the lodge belongs to philosophy and various inspirations come out of them, so this effect of the Masonic symbolism and their architectural beauty had to be attractive to artists, thinkers, composers, and poets. Edgar Istel thought that Beethoven’s “Fidelio” and “Missa Solemnis” were directly inspired by Masonic concepts of brotherly respect and love and that they are not less impressive in terms of reflecting these Masonic ideas than Mozart’s “Magic Flute”. Masonic romanticism does surely exist, it belongs to all sorts of symbols and the Ritual, which is colorful and theatrical with its aprons, regalia, medals, and tracing boards. There is a lot of art in Freemasonry. Romantic minds were drawn by the secret nature of this organization, covered with all sorts of paraphernalia and intrigue that always existed there. An intrigue without any bad undertone to it, even though Freemasonry was never perfect, and the real intrigue was also part of it, too. Johann Gottfried Herder was a Freemason and belonged to the so-called, strict observance Lodge “Zum Schwert” in Riga, which he had joined in 1766. He was thoroughly involved in Freemasonry for a few decades after his initiation, but in 1796 had accused this and any secret society [or the society with secrets] of “ambition, fraud, and intrigues”, also adding that he “utterly hates all of them”. His position was not typical but possible in Freemasonry and should be

356 Edgar Istel, Die Freimaurei in Mozarts Zauberflöte, (Moravská zemská knihovna, 1928) at p. 32.
357 Freimaurer-Zeitung, Volume 49, (M. Zille, 1895) at p. 226.
358 Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, [Таємні Організації: Масонський Рух в Україні], (Nash Chas, 2012) at p. 19. Also see, S.E. Semenov, Esoteric Elements in the Latin American and Soviet Heraldry [Эзотерические элементы в латиноамериканской и советской геральдике] #3, (Ochestvennie Nauki i Sovremennost’, [Общественные науки и современность], 1996) at p. 159.
mentioned here, first because he was an important person who thought so, and second, his position must counterbalance the romantic and somewhat perfect view of Freemasonry. Various opinions deserve to exist in any study to draw an objective picture, especially if talking about the Masonic tradition. Herder was probably also drawn by curiosity, philosophical searching, and friendships, however, became seriously dissatisfied with many of his colleagues and decided to switch his standing in the fraternity. Good and romantic aspirations, positive thinking, and brotherhood were not always about Freemasonry, but perhaps that is what made this organization particularly interesting and progressive. Democracy and pluralism require differences.

III

The Illuminati

It should be said right in the beginning that this organization is not part of Freemasonry, but is directly related to it because of the mixed memberships. The Illuminati was formed by Freemasons; however, their original intent was not to continue their original organization and what is way more important, it was supposed to become political. This idea was practically impossible in the regular lodges at that time [the 1770s], and the founders of Illuminati society in Bavaria looked for something new, an organization that would appear similar in structure, but quite different in conceptual nature. The term itself stands for die Erleuchtete formed from the word Erleuchtung or illuminatio (lat.), which means the enlightenment = “the enlightened ones, who were organized by the lawyer from Ingolstadt, Adam Weishaupt on May 1, 1776.359 Those who were forming it were referring to education, progressive social reforms, science, and what was the most suspicious, radical political changes that were supposed to be aimed in the direction of overthrowing monarchies, and the establishment of more democratic states. To some extent, their political beliefs were somewhat akin to the Jacobins. What made them so close to radicalism was the sheer belief that religion was not important and had to be eliminated in one way or another, due to its regressive and divisive position.360 It could not and was not welcomed by Freemasons that were consistently requiring some form of belief in God at least on the deistic level. The famous writer Umberto Eco in his Foucault’s Pendulum fostered an idea that the Illuminati were connected to those Freemasons who were about the Jacobin clubs in France during the Revolution.361 Fiction cannot be used as an argument in any scientific or historical work, however, it is peculiar to mention this author, whose knowledge of history was incredible. The Age of Enlightenment brought in various ideas, some have included radicalism, otherwise, there would not be anything such as Jacobinism in France, or Illuminatism in Bavaria. These movements were taking their roots in Voltaire and Rousseau, various new scientific discoveries that were showing yet another way, apart from the Catholic Church or Protestantism. Rousseau was trying to put the truth behind his Emile, and explained the latter’s

360 Robert Bateman Paul, A History of Germany, from the Invasion of Germany by Marius Down to the Completion of Cologne Cathedral in the Year 1880, new and revised edition, (John Murray, 1882) at p. 363.
anti-Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant offenses, thus inspiring many, who wanted to establish a new society that would incorporate no religion with its divine right the monarch.\textsuperscript{362} This and other principles that were going in contrast with the feudal, Church, or royal order were further questioned and even found some sympathizers amongst the ruling classes. In 1785 when Weishaupt and his organization were outlawed in Bavaria, he found refuge under the protection of the Duke of Gotha, and his court was friendly to him.\textsuperscript{363} Freemasonry was immediately accused of being directly connected to the Illuminati-\textit{Orden}, and even such people as George Washington were supposed to make some clarifications denying any involvement of his fraternity with the Illuminati. It can be seen from at least two letters written by him to Rev. G.W. Snyder, where he specifically noticed that “Illuminati does not preside over any Masonic lodge”.\textsuperscript{364} Generally, Freemasons were always trying to take a few steps away from the legacy of the Illuminati that was sharing some heritage, particularly joint memberships, and the symbol of the All-Seeing Eye.

Once again it may be said that this almost universal symbol should not be associated merely with Freemasonry or the Illuminati that was not following the most important Masonic principles. Technically, these two organizations must not be mixed up in any case, though certain similarities did exist. In contrast to Freemasons, they were more secretive due to their radical ideas that had to be kept hidden from authorities. Additionally, the Illuminati organization included \textit{Graden} or degrees, like Freemasonry did, even though their system was not akin to the latter. It did not possess the same metaphorical stories that related to the Bible, which Freemasonry strongly relates to, and cherishes. The Illuminati was not religious and looked to remove all such allegories to distance themselves from religion, so exactly right from this point they cannot be fully compared to Freemasonry. What can be said about their \textit{degrees}? They were most likely modeled after those used in the speculative Masonry, but were sort of added with more allusions to the symbolic hierarchy of “illuminated princes” and “Scottish knights”. The Illuminati were interested in establishing their system of \textit{grades} that was supposed to educate its members upon reaching each grade, something that exists in Freemasonry, however, unlike the Scottish Rite, this new system did not become integrated into Freemasonry, but remained separate. It means that the Illuminati, right from the beginning, was not interested in having or sharing the same organization with Freemasonry, and wished to have their own. In 1780 Baron Adolf Franz von Knigge joined the order of the Illuminati and began to develop the system of Higher Degrees in it, which included the so-called “Higher and Lesser Mysteries” with more grades [also attached to one of three \textit{classes}].\textsuperscript{365} Vernon Stauffer and Benedict J. Williamson in their book \textit{New England and the Bavarian Illuminati} underlined the anti-clerical [and non-religious] position of that organization, further explaining the development of Weishaupt’s beliefs [widely expanded by Knigge]. For example, when describing the grade of Priest, they have mentioned the following:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{362} R.J. Howells, \textit{Voltaire and His World: Studies Presented to W.H. Barber}, (Voltaire Foundation, Taylor Institution, 1985) at p. 319.
\item \textsuperscript{363} Paul, \textit{A History of Germany}, p. 363.
\item \textsuperscript{365} Vernon Stauffer, Benedict J. Williamson, \textit{New England and the Bavarian Illuminati}, (The Invisible College Press, LLC, 2005) at pp. 142, 144.
\end{itemize}
Relieved entirely of administrative responsibilities, the members of this grade devoted themselves exclusively to the instruction of their subordinates in the following branches of science: physics, medicine, mathematics, natural history, political science, the arts and crafts, and the occult sciences.366

This description is peculiar for a few reasons. First, it has some allusions to the second degree in Freemasonry, where sciences and arts are included. Second, it did not remove superstitions or occult concepts completely, despite the organization’s materialistic approach and anti-clericalism. Sciences were something of a non-religious position to them, they were no different from La Mettrie while looking at the world, denying any involvement of religious influence, but on the other hand, did not refuse the existence of unknown forces or mysticism. At this point, they may be quite like Freemasonry. Both seem to attempt to establish some unity between materialism and the occult without involving any organized and accepted religion. Each member had his concept of God; however, the Illuminati position was not requiring any belief in the Supreme Being due to its anti-clericalism. Yes, it’s surely possible to presume that this organization was preceding the Jacobins in France, and there are not merely ideological parallels, but real connections. Many nobles were involved in it, and one of them was Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick367, who could transfer his secretive hobby to other places in Europe. Robert B. Paul believed that through another noble, the elector of Baden Frederick Charles, Dalberg, and Bahrdt it came to France, where the first Jacobin club was formed with the assistance of these people.368 There is still not enough information to show everything that linked Illuminati to Jacobins, but there is enough to surely insist on this, and take it for a plausible theory. The Anti-Jacobin Review Magazine published in England was saying that there were two schools of the Illuminati, French, and German, but it was also accusing it of moral problems, and generally cannot be judged as objective.369 At that time in Britain [1805] there was a strong anti-French Revolutionary sentiment, and the war against France kept on going, thus the Review may be seen as biased in its judgments, but it may be surely true that there were two organizations. Eventually, radical ideas shared by the Illuminati and Jacobins led to a lot of violence in France, the reign of terror threw a shadow over them, and Freemasons had to keep separating themselves from it as much as possible. At the same time, the Illuminati cannot be directly accused of what Robespierre or Danton were doing, revolutionary courts [tribunal] were not somehow guided by that organization. Some Illuminati members had, indeed, become fanatical in their approach, and did participate in the Jacobin terror.370 What was specifically throwing a shadow against Freemasons is their rectified degree system, which was like the one used in Freemasonry, and often shared memberships. According to Hermann Schüttler, such prominent and positive people as Goethe and Herder were interested in the

366 Ibid., p. 147.
Illuminati concepts, though their direct memberships are doubted. They were clearly not participating in any anti-social or hateful activities, so it may be stated that as in any organization, there are good and bad members, and an overall judgment simply cannot be objective at all. The Illuminati factions were not the same, different countries and various personalities were influencing it in one way or another, and the same developments were taking place in Freemasonry, too. Danton was Jacobin and a Freemason, but to what extent did the organization influence his revolutionary and radical decisions? Jacobinism was not favoring Freemasonry, and it was discussed in the previous chapters, stating that during the reign of terror many lodges were closed. The Illuminati had some level of influence on the development of radicalism; however, the truth may be in the middle. Many nobles that were once members of the Illuminati were not fond of mass executions of the French aristocrats on a guillotine, making them stand on a far less radical side of this organization. The French Revolution was in one way, or another directly influenced by social injustices, economic issues, weak royal power, and of course the Enlightenment. Any organization or a club [or even an individual] who was involved in the Enlightenment could be linked up with the Revolution, particularly Jacobinism which turned out to be quite grave. The Illuminati may be indirectly connected to all these developments, however, neither the Duke of Gotha nor Adam Weishaupt were calling for the reign of terror. Their beliefs may belong to a category of utopias or at least something that seemed this way back in the 1770s and 80s. Today, as of 2021 their ideas are not so radical at all, there is no class of European nobles and landowners, who could practice nearly complete control over their subjects, particularly like in pre-1789 France with its pyramid-like social structure. The political idealism of the Enlightenment era was fascinating to Weishaupt and his circle of friends, as the lawyer was studying the legal way of things and was not flying somewhere else in the idealistic world all the time. Among people like him and Robespierre, also a lawyer, there was a practical way or method to change things, to Weishaupt it was the Illuminati, the semi-educational, and partially occult club with its degrees and systems. The Illuminati was officially taken down in 1785, Weishaupt fled from Bavaria to Gotha and this organization as a whole did not participate in the French Revolution or later Napoleonic Wars. Emperor Joseph of Austria, who was possibly a Freemason himself had decided to put Freemasonry under his protection but had reduced the number of lodges in his country from eight to three [1785/86], fearing that they were connected to the anti-royal sentiments of the Illuminati. German historian Wolfgang Menzel eloquently and clearly explained the position of Freemasonry in Germany during those years. In the ensuing year the great Lodge of the Three Globes at Berlin discovered far greater energy by declaring every person, who attempted to degrade freemasonry to a society inimical to Christianity, incapable of becoming or remaining a member.

Weishaupt surely did not turn into another Robespierre, and cannot be seen as a political figure anyway, but his secret club will always be somewhat associated with Freemasonry, due

374 Wolfgang Menzel, *The History of Germany: From the Earliest Period to the Present Time, Volume 3*, (Bell & Deldy, 1872) at p. 102.
to its proximity with shared memberships and organizational structures, and the French Revolution with its calls for radical reforms.

Freemasonry in Russia and the Decembrists

I

Early Freemasonry in Russia, The Reichel-Yelagin Systems, and Catherine II

These pages in the history of Freemasonry may be specifically peculiar because they influence what was going on in the world; its developments, downfalls, and many other issues. As with the French Revolution, there are multiple accusations against Freemasonry which point directly to its role in many events surrounding them and the revolutionary processes that took place in the Russian Empire. Generally, the term “Russian Revolution” is easy to grasp and notice, but it really includes a plural meaning in it because there were more than one, and all of them may go back to the growth of ideas or movements that came from either Europe [nobility, middle class], conquered territories [Caucasus, Poland, Ukraine, Baltic, etc] or peasantry [Cossack and peasant revolts]. What will be discussed are the first two sources of changes and influence because Freemasonry in Russia was indirectly connected to them through the fraternity’s representatives. As of the 1730s and 40s this then all European tradition was entering the Russian Empire through those territories that were about to become integrated into it [after the partition of Poland] from the West, or via the people who were on permanent or temporary service, often military contractors. For example, General James Keith, who was also a brother to the last Earl of Marischal, was accepted into the Russian service in 1728, and as of 1732, he was already the Worshipful Master in one of the local lodges [St. Petersburg or Moscow]. It was the first documented Masonic presence in Russia, and it seems that all other theories that rumour its existence there to the earlier times, do not hold any criticism. There is no real evidence to support that it was somehow introduced during Peter I’s reign or earlier, or that it was already well formed before 1717 in England. Peter I [the Great] had died in early 1725 when this fraternity was merely growing, and even if some Freemasons came to Russia before the 1730s, then they were not connected to any locally accepted lodge. In 1740 Keith received a patent from England to become the Grand Provincial Master; it allowed him to continue the process of Masonic installations related to individuals or single-standing lodges.

In contrast, according to a historian of Freemasonry, Oksana Kryzhanivska, the original Grand Master of all lodges in Russia was Captain John Philips, who had designated that position in 1731, and only in 1782, did it become the 8th Masonic Province at the Wilhelmsbad

376 Ibid., p. 308.
Convention [with Ivan Yelagin’s influence].  

Most likely Philips had preceded Keith, and both were placed in Russia as the Grand Masters by the Grand Lodge of England [London].

First, it appears that it was yet another typical procedure that had already taken place in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and elsewhere, when Freemasonry was originally established by the representatives from England, later to be picked up by local nobility. Russia with its subdued territories was not quite different, but surely there was something else right from the beginning, there was one little detail that made Freemasonry in Russia very different from any other place. It was the western, particularly German and French influence that was arriving together with Freemasonry into the country, making serious changes, perhaps more serious than in other areas where Freemasons could attempt to make any difference in social, cultural, or political issues. As with James Keith, who was participating in the military activities, this organization began to hold root in the Russian Army, so in 1761 there was already a Field Lodge, with its headquarters in Marienburg, and according to Robert F. Gould the second military lodge came about in 1764 under the title, “Of the Three Towers”. The Russian nobility was originally interested in something new, peculiar, and intriguing, basically, the same reason over which most of the people had entered Freemasonry then and now, but later that sheer curiosity began to provide certain ‘free-thinking’. This phenomenon was not new or unique to Russia, it was the influence of Enlightenment. Along with seemingly bizarre rituals, came the spirit of new ideas, connections to those who had those ideas, and a whole variety of questions, whether the system that ruled Russia was justified enough to exist. Once again, Freemasonry itself was not the revolutionary group, however, it was able to carry many of the ideas that could have been pointing at certain traditions that were simply not very democratic. At least all those concepts that were developing in France or England, sentiments for equality and fraternity, leadership instead of monarchy, all synthesized in the newly established lodges. The process of free-thinking was simply inevitable.

Eventually, the Russian Freemasonry, which was consisting primarily of nobles and aristocrats, army officers and partially merchants, musicians, and scholars, was given the patent of the independent Grand Lodge from its English supervisors with the aristocratic, noble, and intellectual courtier Ivan Yelagin becoming the Grand Master there in 1772. What is specifically interesting is Yelagin himself, and not merely the Reichel-Yelagin conflict that would take place later on. There was an internal rivalry over the question of which system of Masonic rituals was more correct; Georg von Reichel was representing the Zinnendorf, “Prussian” or “Swedish” system of strict observance, Yelagin, was more on the traditional English side. Eventually, the rivalry ended in 1776 under the authority and mediation of the Minerva zu den drei Palmen Lodge located in Prussia, which managed to unite the two branches of Russian Freemasonry. It may be specifically peculiar to see that in Russia, German traditions of Freemasonry were not left alone, and continued to carry on its influence, partially

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381 Named after its founder, Johann Wilhelm Kellner von Zinnendorf, who was the Grand Master [as of 1770] of the Große Landesloge der Freimaurer von Deutschland, GLL FvD. Note.
382 Magnus Olausson, Catherine the Great & Gustav III, (Boktryck AB, 1999) at p. 170.
due to the presence of many Germans in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but also because of its well-organized discipline. Many nobles wanted to have fun, and learn new ideas from friends in the lodges, others sought to discipline, self-organization, and control over their own lives. The Reichel-Yelagin quarrel over which system is better was reflecting one of the epic divisions in Freemasonry. One tradition had always looked for self-organization, education through understanding oneself, it was the concept of a rough stone that had to be polished, or the internal Solomon’s Temple that had to be constructed, thus favorite Masonic saying, - *Connais-toi toi-même* or know thyself. The other tradition was always more liberal and may be linked to Voltaire and Diderot, the social clubs, and the English tavern culture where gentlemen could discuss various ideas. There was always another tradition, mystical, and it began to enter Russia together with Martinism, Egyptian symbolism, Kabbalah, and often strange ideas of Count Cagliostro with Ivan Yelagin being interested in them, too.\(^{383}\) It is the continental European Masonic tradition that was not much like the British-American one, more Protestant, Calvinist, Biblical, metaphorical, and moralist. The Russian nobility was not united under the same tradition and continued to be divided despite the unifying attempts that were introduced by the Zinnendorf-Swedish, more strict system of observance. Generally, it must be underlined that in Freemasonry it was always practically impossible to unite all the lodges under one system or code. They were consistently independent, thus fulfilling the meaning of the Masonic title with *free* being more important than anything else. On one hand, it was constantly causing issues of disunity, fractioning and surely intriguing, however, on the other it was providing that original meaning of freedom that made Freemasonry so different from other religious, political, or philosophical clubs and orders.

Ivan Yelagin was not a revolutionary figure, nor was he involved in any anti-governmental or anti-monarchist agenda; however, he did bring culture, through his character and activities. He was not necessarily bringing it from the lodge, but rather brought it to the lodge. In 1756 he was involved in the activities related to the Lodge of Modesty [*zum Verschwiegenheit*] that could be somewhat compared to the *Nine Sisters* Lodge in Paris because it had incorporated numerous people from the elite circles such as Roman Vorontsov, Mikhail Dashkov, Golitsyn brothers, Alexander Sumarokov and many others.\(^{384}\) Often these upper-class and ‘intellectual’ lodges were inviting musicians, and instead of just hiring them, the lodge officers preferred to get them initiated, thus it was easier to make each event less open to the public.\(^{385}\) Yelagin himself was involved in many projects given to him by the court, earlier by Elizabeth I and later by Catherine II that included directing the Imperial theatres, expanding them by welcoming such composers as Paisiello in 1776.\(^{386}\) He was producing enlightened activity under the protection and supervision of the court, bringing culture if not to the masses, but at least to those who came from the upper classes. Educating peasants at that time in the Russian Empire was something close to impossible, and even the most educated Freemasons that were active during the days of Yelagin could not breach the social order. The rise of Freemasonry in Russia was also coinciding with the rise of absolutism at its highest in

\(^{385}\) Ibid., p. 250.
that country; Peter I and his daughter Elizabeth I, Anna Ioanovna [Anna I], Peter II, nor Catherine II were neither interested in educating the peasantry nor they sought to change its status. The growth of common education did not continue even after the introduction of some basic forms of elementary education in 1786 by Catherine II, who was probably more educated than her royal predecessors. 387 Catharine II was slightly different from her predecessors on the Russian throne. Nevertheless, she also looked merely up to expanding the borders, privileges of the ruling class, and her usurpation of power while bypassing the rights of her son Paul Petrovich, with his real birthright to the Imperial crown. The latter was well known to Ivan Yelagin, who was his mentor at some point and could practice some intellectual influence upon him or at least teach court manners and entertain. 388 It may be said that the 1770s and 80s was the time of the Masonic golden age in Russia when its government authorities were often Freemasons themselves and had experienced a lot of influence. There were no persecutions on the level of the 1738 Papal Bull, but a possible reason for such tolerance may lie in the realm of the indifference of Elizabeth I or Catherine II to yet another noble or intellectual game, which the latter often laughed at because the Martinists, Freemasons or any other group of this kind was not serious in her eyes. 389 Those who were supposed to be under submission, the peasants, could not even know or understand what Freemasonry was in their lord’s palaces, the power of the Synodal Russian Orthodox Church was controlling all the necessary aspects of life. Moreover, such personalities as Elizabeth, Peter III, and Catherine II were looking up to their relatives in other parts of Europe and sought their examples. Joseph II, Maria Theresia, the Hannoverian dynasty in Britain, and of course, Frederick II were also quite tolerant when it came to freedom, but the freedom did not exceed the nobility, this absolutist principle was very typical for the Age of Enlightenment. Carnivals, masquerades, balls, and festivals, even if they were not related to morals or the Church, could be permitted, however, as long as they did not threaten the social order. Russian Masonic intellectuals, military officers and generals, nobles and aristocrats were going through almost the same stages as their ‘brothers’ in Prussia, France, or England. Some were prone to search for mysticism, some looked for friendships or good connections, others wanted to educate, and many looked for fashionable entertainment. Once again, Freemasonry should be always neither idealized nor condemned, it is an organization that consists of regular people, who are the product of their times, eras, epochs, and characters. If one or the other historian attempts to side with one or the other group is certainly going to be incorrect. Was the Russian Freemasonry during the age of absolutism serving merely education and wishes to change the government, or was it simply another toy in the hands of many nobles and aristocrats? It was often doing both things at once and it may be the most correct answer. The rule and epoch of Catherine II was the pinnacle of Russian Freemasonry, and particularly her rule was also seen as the golden age of Russian nobility and its usurpation of the peasantry, not more and not less. These two notions may be compared for a reason because nobility was at the heart of Freemasonry in that country during that time. Nikolay Karamzin, Ivan Yelagin, Nikolay Novikov, Ivan Schwarz, Alexander Labzin, and Alexander Sumarokov were not arrested, jailed, or prosecuted, most of them would remain in


388 Aleksey Peskov, Paul the First [Павел Первый], (Molodaya Gvardiya, 1999) at p. 224.

389 Katharine Susan Anthony, Catherine the Great, (Garden City Publishing Company, 1927) at p. 296.
favor of the crown. However, this toleration of Masons would seriously change after Catherine began to suspect the fraternity of something that was exceeding their aristocratic rights and Nikolay Novikov would end up in prison for his educator's activity.

II

Mysticism, Nikolay Novikov and Royal Suspicions

As it was noted previously, neither Elizabeth I nor Catherine II was seeing Freemasonry as something dangerous or as an organization that could remove their authority. Nevertheless, these changes began to arrive, and the court life was not static, especially under Catherine’s favoritism, constantly lurking intrigues and gossip. By the 1780s Catherine II began to grow more suspicious of anything more or less secretive and mystical and in the case of Freemasonry with its influence on some circles inside the Russian elites, her fears were only getting stronger.390 It’s doubtful to think that she was somewhat jealous of an exclusively male society, which in her opinion pretended to be of an intellectual stock, and in fact, it was intellectual, but she was rather cynical to take it seriously and first chose to use satire in her relations with Freemasons. She went as far as writing a trilogy that was aimed at Freemasonry, Martinists, and any other closed society that was or could be linked to mysticism. *The Deceiver, The Deceived One* [1785], and *The Siberian Shaman* [1786] were librettos that pointed against mysticism and practically claimed that all societies and fraternities may possess some elements of obscurantism, alchemical symbolism, or just secrets are generally farcical.391 It may also be argued that Catherine II was very practical, certainly cynical, and could not withstand anything that could derail her authority, not only politically, but intellectually. There is no doubt that she knew about the visits of Cagliostro to St. Petersburg and was aware of some bizarre ideas and fraudulent actions that he was associated with in other European countries.392 Such figures as Cagliostro were never playing into the gates of Freemasonry because of their strange activities that were bringing more negativity than anything else. His intriguing, anti-rational mystical approaches to Freemasonry that cannot be seen in the traditional Masonic degree systems, were bringing shadow on the whole fraternity, taking it further away from the enlightenment. Catherine was growing more suspicious of these acts, and possibly was additionally becoming less favorable towards the all-male society with secrets upon which she could not exercise much control. Mysticism and various issues that could not be seen as serious to her had eventually played against Freemasonry in Russia and turned some actual prominent Freemasons away from it. Nikolay Karamzin, the prominent historian, and intellectual left the organization in 1789 due to the over-presence of mysticism in it. Letters of his friend A. Petrov, too, showed a similar undertaking where he was explaining the spiritual search and some

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misunderstandings that were haunting him.  

The strange influence of mystics in the Russian lodges was getting more popular than rationalism, though it did not directly make Catherine II divert from her previous tolerance, she was merely writing pamphlets so far, and did not take it seriously well until the French Revolution. In the 1780s it was all not going further than her laughs over what was so popular among the ‘brothers’ during that her reign within the Russian Masonic circles. Henry M. Nebel noted that around this time various Masonic journals were quite popular while getting more into mysticism, produced by such figures as Cheraskov and Muravyev, two literary figures that were connected to Karamzin. In parts of his book N. M. Karamzin: A Russian Sentimentalist Nebel was analyzing these particularly mystically oriented Russian intellectuals, who were also Freemasons, and concluded that many of them were in some way influenced by the works of Jacob Boehme and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. Both believed that the key to understanding our world is to look within, search for the truths in nature, and at the same time study the Holy Scriptures, which provide the moral and ethical base. Also, it may be added that Freemasonry with its system of morals and symbols shares a lot of similar views with those of Saint-Martin, but there is no clear concept of the mystical ‘truth’, which is often referred to as the concept of the Masonic secret that is known only to each Freemason individually. In other words, his Masonic ‘brothers’ cannot know that specific secret. Fundamentally, Freemasons do not possess theology, even though they must believe in some form of the Supreme Being, which may move Freemasonry closer to some form of the deist cult. Nevertheless, the Freemasons of Catherine II’s reign in Russia were keen to study various types of mystical approaches to philosophy, so it was somewhat dissenting from the enlightened rationalism, and for a certain period, it was causing only the Russian monarch’s sarcastic reaction. Nikolay Novikov is a figure that can be seen from a perspective of great respect due to his significant contribution to education and the enlightenment process among those who surrounded him in Russia - aristocrats and the city middle class. He was not belonging to aristocracy; gentry relations were not pushing him forward to make a career neither in Freemasonry nor in the social activities that were marking his life of the enlightened person. Novikov had established a club that aimed at educating the elite, publishing books, practicing some influence on Crown Prince Paul, and collecting new ideas in philosophy. This was too much for the empress. Her view of the Masons was not serious, to her, the lodge members were mystics with yet another game to play, the gentry of no clear aim, however, at this point, things began to radically change in the direction of prohibiting this society in Russia. Historian M. Dovnar-Zapolsky wrote that in the beginning Novikov was associated merely with Freemasonry, and the latter was not dangerous to the royal authority, but when he became involved with the free-publishing and Paul’s entourage, everything began to change and Catherine had decided to go against him. Even though she did not like or respect her son, Paul Petrovich, still any influence that could be associated with France, possibly Jacobins, Voltairianism or Rousseau, and surely Freemasons with their international connections, in her

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393 Henry M. Nebel, N.M. Karamzin: A Russian Sentimentalist, (Walter de Gruyter, 2016) at p. 32.
394 Ibid., p. 31.
395 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
396 Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, pp. 52-53.
397 Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, F. 262, register 1, case 46, page 1. [Центральний державний історичний архів України, Ф. 262, оп. 1, стр. 46, арк 1].
eyes could shatter the throne. Previously Catherine II was sort of playing with the enlightenment, welcomed Voltaire, and shared correspondence with him and Diderot, but after 1789 her suspicions of anything coming from France turned out to be unacceptable. In the 1780s he was tolerated along with those who were practicing Martinism or Rosicrucianism, teachings that were technically inseparable from Freemasons in Russia at that time. Those lodges that by the late 1780s early 90s were working together with Rosicrucians became even more important than the Blue or craft lodges of the first three symbolic degrees, while the latter were often closed. In 1791 the printing house that was producing Novikov’s books was shut down with him and was arrested in 1792 and to be contained in the Shlisselburg Fortress. In 1796 he was freed by the new emperor Paul I, but unfortunately, he could not continue to write anymore due to severe stress. Prominent Masonic researcher Claude-Antoine Thory thought that it became the first major blow to Freemasonry in Russia which forced them to partially go underground with facing yet semi-total prohibition to summon in 1797 after Paul I began to suspect them of treasonous acts. Aleksandr Kamenskii and David Griffiths in their book The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Tradition and Modernization, cited the letter of Catherine II [the 1780s] to one of her most favorite advisers Count Aleksandr Bezborodko in which she was very suspicious of Freemasonry. Masonic lodges and… other mystical heresies’, that ‘under the guise of an imaginary and unattainable equality that does not even exist in nature’.

III

Paul I and Freemasons

It was already said that this emperor was possibly a Freemason himself, however, as his mother, he began to see this organization as if not revolutionary but certainly connected to the revolution. Everything that was developing in France after 1789 was terrifying to the gentry, royal houses, and monarchs everywhere in Europe, so they simply wanted to close all those structures that could be associated with the enlightenment, French connections, and non-religious philosophies. Paul I of Russia was not quite different in his attempts to quell anything that was somehow linked to France and the revolution there, which had terrified him. At the same time, his activities to stop or at least limit the influence of the ruling classes on him, primarily major aristocrats, were not welcomed, and it seems that almost right from the beginning of his reign, they began to plan on how to change the situation by removing Paul and transfer power to his son, Alexander. It was not nearly impossible because his father, Peter III [Ulrich] of Holstein was secretly murdered in 1762, either following the order of his wife, future Catherine II or just with the sheer will exercised by the Orlov brothers. Killing or at least removing the emperor was not something unimaginable, especially if so many influential families or former Catherine’s functionaries supported such an idea. There were many attempts to believe that it was set up by Freemasonry in Russia, and such powerful Masons as Platon

398 Marc Raeff, *Catherine the Great: A Profile*, (Springer, 1972) at p. 73.
400 Aleksandr Kamenskii and David Griffiths, *The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Tradition and Modernization*, (Routledge, 2015) at p. 239.
Zubov or Count Peter von Palen [governor of St. Petersburg] were acting not merely out of their will but followed the will of their fraternity. There is technically no doubt or lack of information about those who were committing the conspiracy against Paul I, and there is also enough information on who these people were, what were their interests, and so on, so forth, however, there is no documentary proof of the Masonic coup d’état. There were surely some authors such as O.A. Platonov, who wrote on Freemasonry, and particularly his publications were not so much different from Augustin de Barruel in his attempts to accuse this fraternity of every sin that is possible on earth. Aristocratic individuals that were involved in Paul I murder were connected to Freemasonry, but there is no evidence of the organizational conspiracy. Many nobles and aristocrats were Freemasons, if not the overwhelming majority, they were surely not incredibly happy with Paul’s opinion of them, though it should be said that they were more unhappy with his attempts to seize their noble rights than to curve Freemasonry, and that was the major reason for conspiring. After all, the organization was not fully prohibited by Paul, it was not welcomed, thus being a Freemason was not an illegal act. N. Novikov was able to return under his reign, but did not pursue the publisher’s career anymore, most likely because of some moral or psychological defeat, and what is also very possible, due to overwhelming control. Aristocratic and intelligent Freemasons that were used to court life were not capable of any serious revolutionary activity during the reigns of Catherine II and Paul I. The only decisive people among them could be found among military officers and generals such as major-general Levin August von Bennigsen, [the future commander of the Russian armies at the battles of Preußisch-Eylau and Freidland] who was one of the central figures in that conspiracy. The whole story that surrounds Paul I’s murder was always extremely intriguing, full of mysteries and after-thoughts bringing some shadow on the possibly revolutionary activities of the Russian Freemasonry. However, all those who were involved in the Tsar’s murder were not trying to change the system, or establish Jacobinism with the republican form of government. Quite the contrary, they wanted to solidify serfdom and autocratic rule, with the only exception, that aristocracy had all the rights under the monarchy, it retained its serfs, privileges, and property. Paul was stricter and more orderly when it came to the general behavior of the ruling elite, and specifically when it was related to military service. Additionally, Paul was often considered to be a scandalous and unstable person, possibly having some psychological issues with his behavior, however, these accounts should be judged with a thorough overview and caution. Eventually, too many aristocrats from Catherine II’s court wished to destroy him and avenge their dismissals from the life of influence and fame. It may be true that many stories written about him cannot be taken as true and objective, but merely as partial sources of information. There is a doubtful opinion that his murder was to fulfill his Masonic degree, making him the real Hiram who did not provide

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404 E.S. Shumigorskiy, Emperor Paul I: Life and Reign, [Император Павел Первый: жизнь и царствование], (State Public Historical Library of Russia, 2014) at p. 212.
secrets of the Temple [Mikhailovskiy Castle-Palace in St. Petersburg], and surely such beliefs must not be taken seriously if considering the whole story of Paul and his relations to Freemasons from the academic point of view.\textsuperscript{405} Paul was indirectly connected to many Freemasons among the elite in Russia, so even though some did get involved in the conspiracy against him on March 23, 1801, most of them did not. Revolutionary principles of the Jacobins or other republican groups were not connected to Russian Freemasonry, and the whole agenda that surrounded the murder was not dictated by any plans to overthrow the monarchy. In addition, there are accounts that there was no real coherence among the murderers, and even the main conspirator, Platon Zubov [a Freemason] was forced to participate in the actual murder at gunpoint.\textsuperscript{406}

IV

Aristocratic Rights, Decembrists, Alexander I and Nicolas I

It seems that those who were involved in the murder of Tsar Paul did not plan anything more radical than the actual replacement of one ruler with another. Those assumptions that Count Peter von Palen or Count Nikita Panin were truly dreaming about constitutional rights seem to be not very well based because their future thoughts, personal beliefs, and planning of the murder did not involve any serious projects that could provide such rights to Russia. Mostly aristocratic and overwhelmingly influential, they did not really wish to follow their ‘cousins’ from France that was so badly shattered by the Jacobins, terror, and immigration, and therefore looked for stronger control over their rightless subjects. Any constitutional change could be dangerous to them, especially if recalling the Pugachev’s uprising that took place in 1773-75, and was well remembered by the landowning nobility. What if such changes would invoke the peasants? Why would anyone among them risk their future, lands, and power? There were no serious reasons for the Russian Freemasons, who were mainly nobles to remove royal authority, even though they were pressured by the royal power out of fears that their fraternity might have transferred many ideas of the French Revolution or 

illumination

or to the Russian realm. Generally, it should not be insisted that Freemasons were behind the murder itself and supported by the plans to institute the republic, but it was rather the aristocracy that looked for more personal status security that was getting under question during Paul’s reign.

Things began to change when the actual ideas of the French Revolution and \textit{parliamentarism} entered the minds of those among the aristocrats. It was not the immediate influence of Freemasonry, but again it was assisted by them with connections in other European countries and principles that were shared in the Masonic lodges. The so-called \textit{Decembrists} were young military officers or civil intellectuals from nobles that were not satisfied with the system that was ruling their homeland, and by 1816 began to form various secret political societies. After many of them saw western Europe during the conquest of Napoleonic France in 1813-15, their belief in their own Tsar began to deteriorate, especially after the latter did not

\textsuperscript{405} \textit{Sobranie}, Issues 3-4, (OOO RITS "Sobranie", 2006) at p. 94.
\textsuperscript{406} \textit{Journal of Ukrainian Studies}, [Журнал Українознавчих Студій], Volumes 14-15, (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1990) at p. 245.
proceed with the constitutional changes that they began to expect. Many of them became Freemasons while staying in France [Pavel Pestel, A. Muravyov]. Patrick O’Meara had recalled the Russian historian V.O. Klyuchevsky where the latter was noting Europe’s influence upon the young Russian noblemen that were appearing to be more like the Russian-born Frenchmen to the locals in their home country. Unlike the previous generation of Freemasons in Russia, they did not rely merely on education, the studies of mysticism, and publications as N. Novikov did, or as many others who saw Freemasonry be the door into high society with the fleur of Rosicrucianism. The new generation rather viewed this fraternity as the way to change and influence politics. At the beginning of his reign Alexander I was not so much against Freemasonry as his grandmother was or lately his father Paul Petrovich, however, he was also really suspicious of them. His position was not to welcome their activities if they could damage his authority, thus he had ordered the minister of police to have a thorough watch over the lodges, and only after Count Kiril Razumovsky, the minister of education, and a Freemason had checked the Masonic documents, then Alexander had again allowed the organization to legally exist. In other words, there were no serious restrictions, and Tsar Alexander seemed to even sympathize with them, with his liberalism during the first stages of his reign. There may be many speculations on why he was somewhat a liberal before 1812, and also why he became reactionary in his later years. On one hand, the rule of Paul I turned to be seriously restrictive against not merely Freemasons, he had freed many of them, they were suspected of the French revolutionary influences. Also, his generally restrictive model of controlling the nobility became scary to them. Strange rules that touched even the style of dress and public conduct, particularly in the large cities, were specifically tough on many people, and Paul was appearing to be slightly authoritative. Alexander granted more freedom and self-determination to the noble class, his first plan to keep everything the way it was during his grandmother’s rule, seemed very much heart-warming to the aristocracy. Additionally, it may look that Freemasonry was very influential during that time in Russia, and its high-end connections among the most prominent aristocrats were sort of controlling the monarch. After all, Alexander knew that the very same nobility came together to murder his father for being too restrictive on them, so he had to take it into account. If nobles were joining Freemasonry and did not transit revolutionary ideas, then it was fine, but also it was necessary not to halt their activities because it could simply lead to aristocratic opposition. The Russian monarch was omnipotent merely until he was supported by the nobility, which was interested in the Tsar’s power that was in return retaining the nobility’s privileges under the authority of the divine rights. Nevertheless, the ruling class and specifically the old-school eighteenth-century Freemasons were not interested in any serious revolutionary activities. Possibly N. Novikov was the only person who wanted to change something through education and publications in the direction of liberalism, but in everything else, Russian Freemasonry was not revolutionary

409 Evgeniy Opochinin, *Some Historical Evidence About Freemasonry*, [Несколько исторических сведений о франкмасонстве], (Saint Petersburg, 1883) at pp. 10-13.
410 Henri Troyat, *Alexander I or the Northern Sphinx*, [Александр I, или, Северный Сфинкс], (Molodaya Gvardiya, 1997) at p. 63.
until 1816. That year was marked by the establishment of the Union of Salvation [Союз Спасения], the organization made by those young generation military officers and intellectual nobles, who sought changes. Already mentioned Pavel Pestel and A. Muravyov were Freemasons, also such founding members of this union and later the Union of Prosperity [Союз Благоденствия] were N.F. Glinka, M.N. Novikov, G. Batenkov, N. Bestuzhev, M. Lunin and M. Mit’kov. The last four were later represented in the Northern Society [Северное Общество], which was directly involved in the planned coup against Nicolas I on December 14, 1825, in St. Petersburg. Freemasonry was then used by the future conspirators as the ramp or a model on which they were establishing their political secret societies. According to G.H. Hamburg about Militsa Nechkina, nine members of the Union of Salvation were Freemasons, however, most of the members did not belong to Freemasonry. In this case, as in the history of the establishment of the United States, it must be underlined that the role of Freemasonry should not be exaggerated and should not be seen from the perspective of any conspiracy based solely on this organization. Indeed, it was influential and could serve as a role model to anyone who wished to be progressive in Russia at that time, and there was no other group or gathering that was capable of giving so many links to other countries that were already more democratically established. Soon, more political secret societies were founded by the future Decembrists, and one of them was meant to replace the Union of Salvation. It took place in 1818 and the new organization was titled the Union of Prosperity [Союз Благоденствия]. It was somewhat like the re-establishment of the previous secret society, and practically the same people acted similar roles in its quite theoretical tasks. E.Y. Lubkova had mentioned that Duke Fyodor Shakhovskoy, a military officer who became interested in Freemasonry, had participated in three lodges in Russia, Sphinx, Three Virtues, and United Friends, was one of the members of both Unions mentioned above, and in 1817 during the “Moscow plot” proposed himself to become the Tsar’s murderer. It may appear that many high-ranking nobles and intellectuals in Russia began to follow the route of illuminism sometime after 1815. As members of the Bavarian Illuminati order, they could also be Freemasons, then their noble titles were not an obstacle to going against their social class and its privileges. The Union of Prosperity was planning the ultimate action, royal execution, or murder, but sort of remained divided on whether that is going to be necessary. S. Trubetskoy, another aristocratic member of the secret society had believed that their attempts to kill the monarch were too far-reaching, and they should limit the Tsar with some form of law, also better known as the constitution, and was believing that at least twenty years must pass before the Russian people are going to be ready for any change. Nevertheless, the whole agenda of radicalism that was participating in various concepts of the Decembrist’s thoughts cannot be excluded from the context, and their relatively well-mannered projects were sharp enough to parallel Jacobins. Additionally,

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411 Intellectual and Industrial Potential of the Russia’s Regions, [Интеллектуальный и Индустриальный Потенциал регионов России], (Vserossiyskie Nauchnye Chteniya, October 26-28, 1999) at pp. 32, 35.
each of the secret societies was modeled after the Masonic system of degrees, through which candidates had to be raised and the governing committee called the supreme council of dukes was organizing the whole structure in the Union of Salvation.415

The Union of Prosperity had nearly the same network. It was specifically akin to the Illuminati organization that was sort of adding to the Masonic experience but was completely separated from it. Surely the whole organization was based on thorough rules of conspiracy, and there is a possibility that the Union of Salvation was disbanded over those members, who had already spread too much information about its purposes. M.A. Fonvizin, one of the participants in the Decembrist secret associations, had also mentioned the Military Society in his memoirs, which were completely clandestine, but his opinion is somewhat contradicted by M.V. Nechkina; she agreed with him on the secretive nature of it but believed it was not that well concealed.416 Merely from its name, it appears to be obvious that the military officers were standing in the center of this new organization, and there was at least an expectation that the army may be the one and sole force to procure changes. Young military officers who became seriously influenced by the very ideas they were fighting against during the Napoleonic Wars, wanted to at least get rid of the absolute monarchy with its medieval system of serfdom. They understood that unless anything changed, there will be no change, not the slightest possibility to reform Russia, however, they were not supported by the most of nobility and the Tsar himself. In the case of Paul I, things was not the same as with Alexander. The first was hated for curbing the rights of nobles, those particular aristocrats who were getting all the privileges under Catherine II, they simply did not want to be put under any sort of control. Her grandson was seriously different, his welcoming position on the limitless landowning, usurpation of serfs, lawlessness, and what is significantly important, the divergence from his original liberal plans together with A. Czartoryski, M. Speransky, N. Novosiltsev417 was adding to the wishes of those young officers and liberal-minded nobles. The reactionary position of the government, and the Tsar’s retreat to the policy of military settlements, which was probably one of the worst forms of serfdom and army recruitment at the same time, made those young Freemasons, free-thinkers and liberals move towards something that may be called the revolutionary thoughts. Adding to this, was an overwhelming indifference on the side of the aristocratic majority to implement any significant change because the noble class was technically welcoming Alexander. This social class could unite and ignore any moral values if the Tsar was against them or potentially wanted to impose some legal threat against it. Not a single murderer of Paul was significantly punished, nobody was arrested, Leontiy Bennigsen was later commanding the Russian army, Count Peter von Palen was merely sent out away from St. Petersburg to his Baltic estates, and Platon Zubov could travel around Europe and live the life of luxury in Russia. Alexander was seen as an immoral and double-faced man by Napoleon when the first was asking for the additional order of merit for Bennigsen, the murderer of his father.418

415 Mikhail Pokrovsky, (editor), Pre-Reformed Russia, Volume I, (Дореформенная Россия), (Centropoligraf, 2001) at p. 76.
418 Youth Magazine, issues 7-12 [Юность], (Pravda, 1989) at p. 37.
By 1821 the Union of Prosperity was in an internal crisis, there were rumors that everything was already known to the government, and Tsar was planning massive arrests against any possible conspiracy. Surely, it could have been impossible to completely seal off the plan to murder the emperor or at least somehow isolate him from power. It could also mean more actions that would require the isolation of the royal family, too, and who knew what could have happened to the crown prince or any potential inheritor of the throne. Issues began to get more constrained when the Semenovskiy regiment went into uprising without any well-planned confirmation from the Union; notably, it later influenced Chaadaev, his views, and ideas.\(^\text{419}\) Major-general Mikhail Orlov was calling for a faster approach to remove the Tsar, but nothing had carried on and the Union was disbanded, too. Orlov was a hero of the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812 in Russia, his talents were well known, and he was well respected in the secret societies and Masonic lodges. He was another good example of that curious connection between Freemasonry and Decembrists. His personality was somewhat forgotten by many historians who were studying the Decembrist movement, he was standing slightly aside from such personalities as Sergey Trubetsky, Pavel Pestel, Sergey Muravyov-Apostol, Ivan Yakushkin, and others. He was not directly participating in the future Decembrist uprising on 14 December 1825, something which spared him from any serious punishment, but still broke down his career because afterward, he lived in exile in his estates for the rest of his life. Provincial existence was certainly better than being incarcerated in Siberian copper mines for decades or being executed as five members of the uprising - Pavel Pestel, Kondraty Ryleev, Peter Kakhovskiy, Sergey Muravyov-Apostol, M. Bestuzhev-Ryumin.\(^\text{420}\) M. Orlov was spared even though in 1820 he was calling for more radical actions that could potentially lead to the imprisonment and murder of the royal family.

The actual uprising was preceded by the above-mentioned Semenovskiy regiment revolt, and the formation of two more, final secret associations, the Southern and Northern Societies in 1821. In 1823 both organizations began preparations for the revolt or better to say a coup, however, many in the Northern Society [based in St. Petersburg] were afraid of P. Pestel and his dictatorial ambitions that could repeat Napoleon’s faith.\(^\text{421}\) The Southern Society which was based in Tulchin, Ukraine, was considered to be more radical, and its leader Pestel was more radical than S. Trubetsky, who was interested in the constitutional monarchy in Russia. Pestel wrote the so-called “Russian Truth” [Русская Правда], the program that was supposed to become a grounding document for the future constitution, but preferably without any royal authority. His plan was much closer to the American constitution, or if comparing it to France, it was somewhat related to the Girondist political position, with possible Jacobin ideas. Therefore, he was seen as a radical and was mistrusted by the more noble and aristocratic Sergey Trubetsky, and many others in the capital, where Northern “brothers” were speaking for the constitutional monarchy. Nevertheless, possibly by recalling the events from the Paul I regicide, the 1792 execution of Louis XVI, or even Charles I of England, the Northern Society

\(^{419}\) Raymond T. McNally, Chaadayev and His Friends: An Intellectual History of Peter Chaadayev and His Russian Contemporaries, (Diplomatic Press, 1971) at pp. 10, 14.

\(^{420}\) G.A. Nevelev, Pushkin about “December 14”: reconstruction of the documentary decembrist text, [Пушкин "об 14-м декабрѣ": реконструкция декабристского документального текста], (Tehnologos, 1998) at p. 46.

\(^{421}\) Avenir Karelin, Short Textbook on the Russia History, [Краткое пособие по русской истории], (Vysshaya Shkola) at p. 61.
had eventually agreed with Pavel Pestel and his propositions, and Kondratiy Ryleev played some influential role in it.\footnote{Proceedings, Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1850, (University of Florida Press, 1992) at p. 337.} It’s not a coincidence why the Tsar’s tribunal had decided to execute both of them without any mercy regarding Sergey Trubetskoy, who was spared and later sent to Siberian mines. K. Ryleev was not a military person, he was living in literature, philosophy, and planning how to change Russia, his noble birth was seen by him as something that cannot be usurping those who stand lower on the social ladder. Generally, he and many Decembrists saw serfdom and radical inequality as the defect, which must have been changed with the radical methods, and if necessary with regicide. He was a Freemason and was influenced by its ideas, symbols, and meanings that found a reflection in his poetic works.\footnote{V. Sakharov, Freemasonry and Russian Literature: XVIII-early XIX centuries, [Масонство и русская литература: XVIII-начала XIX вва.], (Editorial URSS, 2000) at pp. 234-235.} Additionally, there were certain connections to the whole generation of Freemasons that preceded K. Ryleev, P. Pestel, and many other Decembrist Freemasons. On one hand, such figures as N. Novikov or Alexander Sumarokov spread the ideas of Enlightenment in their literature and publications, on the other, being a Freemason called for inner development, the self-growth that could not be paralleled to serfdom, almost total peasant illiteracy, and the absolute monarchy, especially in its Russian imperial form. Eventually, there were examples such as the revolutionary France against which many of them had just fought, but became overwhelmed by the higher standards of living in central and western Europe, and as the result, turned to be more pro-Napoleonic than anyone else. Republican ideals were surely influencing many Freemasons and the Illuminati since the 1770s and 80s in Europe, the same ideas were slowly melding into Russia during Catherine and Paul’s reigns, even though they were sort of mixed with Giacomo Cagliostro and Louis Claude de Saint-Martin’s mystical approaches. It was not a coincidence why both of these monarchs did not trust Freemasonry, even though by its internal rules, it cannot rebel against the authorities. Perhaps it cannot do so, however, it can produce ideas and teach many principles that go against absolutism in its feudal and slave forms. Alexander I was sympathetic to freedoms, he was raised by Lagarpe\footnote{Alexander Brückner, Festreden zur Feier des hundertjährigen Geburtsfestes Seiner Hochseligen Majestät Kaiser Alexander I. gehalten am Stiftungstage der Universität Dorpat am 12. December 1877, (Dorpat, C. Mattiesen, 1877) at p. 7.}, and most likely had many influences of the age, which came from Hanoverian Britain, Republican France, the New World, and generally, the age of Enlightenment and Romanticism. This monarch was too well read and had too many examples before him not to share sympathies with the growing criticisms over his country’s backward feudal despotic system. Alexander sort of grew out of these influences and older he became less sympathetic he was toward any kind of changes. The dividing line was set by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, and as it was already noticed, the first secret political society, similar to the Illuminati organization, the Union of Salvation, was founded in Russia in 1816. Freemasons as Alexander Muravyov [a far noble relative to another Decembrist, Sergey Muravyov-Apostol] looked at Freemasonry as the possibility to enhance their political connections with the rest of Europe, and model their political clubs after the Masonic lodges in structure and organization. Moreover, their hopes of the previously liberal Alexander were eventually smothered and their pride in Russia after the victories was now
mixed with the very ideas of those over whom they were victorious. In 1822 Alexander I decided to prohibit all secret organizations and also the Masonic lodges in Russia, however, this ban was not seriously obeyed, and possibly due to his weak stance towards them, the secret societies, but not Masonic lodges, simply continued to function.\textsuperscript{425} Researcher of the given period in Russia, Patrick O’Meara referred in his book \textit{The Decembrist Pavel Pestel: Russia’s First Republican} to another historian S.I. Semevskii, who had counted around 20 percent of all Freemasons among the Decembrists, right before Freemasonry was forbidden in 1822.\textsuperscript{426} First, Alexander was welcoming Freemasonry, and in 1803 began to encourage the establishment of new lodges under the patronage of the Grand Lodge “Astraea” located in St. Petersburg; it incorporated 25 lodges in 1822, and notably even one of the most famous Russian poets Alexander Pushkin had also joined the lodge “Ovidius” in 1821, which was incorporated into Astraea.\textsuperscript{427} He was a friend of many Decembrists, shared many of their ideas, and saw Freemasonry as the source of inspiration, but did not participate in any secret society or the Decembrist revolt in 1825, thus escaping any serious persecution.

December 14, 1825, was the day when some initiative aristocratic forces that were gathering for at least twenty-five years in Russia, and at the moment when the country was between two Tsars, stood up and tried to change its destiny, or at least somewhat curb the absolutism. There was no clear plan, but at least there was a chance. The plot and uprising that was organized by different people who had disagreements, based and commanded not from one place [Southern Society was located in Ukraine, Northern in the capital] were quickly disintegrated and lost to the newly established ruler, Nicholas I. The latter had enough will and anger to disperse rebellious troops in St. Petersburg with the loyal units after General-Governor Count Miloradovich was shot dead by Peter Kakhovskiy. The additional use of artillery caused serious casualties with its fire, which killed many occasional participants in and around Senate Square.\textsuperscript{428} That gunfire was the last signature in the document which forbade the Russian Masonic organization, and other secret societies associated with it. New times were coming and Nicholas, unlike his grandmother with her relative tolerance, a father, who had also mistrusted Freemasonry but did not forbid it, and a brother with his early liberal ideas, was tough and restrictive. He will always remember that cold day at Senate Square and his decision to order his loyal troops to open fire without any hesitation. His character was despotic by nature, fears of plots and conspiracies which haunted him for the rest of his life could never go away, and Freemasonry was seen by him as the major threat. In contrast to his brother and father, Tsar Nicholas I had never participated in this fraternity, he did not understand it from the scientific or moral points of view but rather thought that it could merely spread revolutions and dangers to his throne. In his view, first, there was the revolution in France, behind which there were ideas of Enlightenment so well admired by many Decembrists, second, his father was murdered in a secret coup where many Freemasons were presented, and third, the Decembrists themselves were strongly connected to the lodges. The fact that neither Masonic lodge had ordered the French Revolution, Paul’s murder, or the Decembrist uprising, did not

\textsuperscript{425} Baldwin, \textit{Russia from the Decembrists to the Bolsheviks, 1825-1917}, p. 31
\textsuperscript{426} Patrick O’Meara, \textit{The Decembrist Pavel Pestel: Russia’s First Republican}, (Springer, 2016) at p. 41.
\textsuperscript{427} Ibid., pp. 41-42.
\textsuperscript{428} Constantin de Grunwald, \textit{Tsar Nicholas I}, (Macmillan, 1955) at pp. 7, 15.
bother him, and merely the shadow of Freemasonry was standing behind his fears and suspicions. By August 6, 1822, when the Home Secretary Count Kochubey had been ordered to close down all Masonic lodges in the Russian empire\(^{429}\) most of the Decembrist members had already left them [could be warned] before the ban, however, it was not as strict as after 1826. Tsar Nicholas thought that his older brother’s attempts to forbid anything related to secret societies or Freemasonry were not enough, so he repeated the order of prohibition of the fraternity once again the following year after the Decembrist conspiracy to overthrow him.\(^{430}\) Nevertheless, historian Anna Makolkin about Oksana Kryzhanivska had researched that the Russian police did not put any serious surveillance over Freemasons in the country well until 1837.\(^{431}\) There is a possibility that the authorities ordered by Nicholas I did not manage to halt all the Masonic meetings held privately somewhere at numerous aristocratic estates, and those members who were truly loyal to the brotherhood could carry on with just more precautions and with less ritualism. In any case, Freemasonry became illegal in the Russian empire, and Tsar Nicholas could not trust it as much as he could not accept any free-thinking in the areas of politics, religion, and education.

At this point, it may be clearly said that Freemasonry and Decembrists were standing on the side of great progress in the Russian empire and its counterpart, the absolute despotic rule of Nicholas I was regressive and feudal. It may be possible to presume that if Decembrists won their battle against the absolute monarchy, then there could be a possibility that Russia could go in a different direction by abolishing serfdom thirty years earlier and producing successful economic changes. The stagnation that was part of Nicholas I reign made it get defeated in the Crimean War, and halted the industrial revolution, so Russia had many times fewer railroads than England by 1850, though the latter was dozens of times smaller. Political underdevelopment was so huge that modernity in terms of parliamentarism, free press, and freedom of any public opinion did not virtually exist until 1905, and even then it was so limited that often it could be on paper only. Reforms of Alexander II [preceding October 17, 1905 Manifesto] were huge and gave a boost to Russia in terms of socio-economic growth, however, Decembrists among whom many were Freemasons, were proposing them half a century earlier.

\(^{430}\) *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*: Being the Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, London, edited for the Committee by W. J. Songhurst, Volume 38, (W. J. Parrett, LTD, Printers, 1925) at p. 40.
Polish Freemasons. Secret Societies in Poland and Ukraine in Alliance with Decembrists

Freemasonry in Poland was growing and made its way into Russian politics, too. There is no doubt that it was in many ways even better connected to France and England due to Poland’s cultural ties to western Europe. Additionally, Poland was determining its way in central European politics and starting with 1772 was fighting for its lands and independence. Democratic changes in Polish political life that took place with the introduction of the Constitution on May 3, 1791, were radically changing priorities not merely in Poland but gave examples to its neighbors, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Such figures as Stanisław Małachowski that were participating in the political life of Poland during the last decade of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries often were Freemasons and wished to progress their homeland and protect its sovereignty. It was even more threatening to absolutism than the developments in France because the latter was further away, but Poland could directly point at Russia, assist its democratically oriented nobles and military officers and potentially awaken Ukraine, Lithuania, and Finland. The first Masonic lodge in Poland was established in 1738 and the organizational pinnacle was reached during the second quarter of the eighteenth century under the last Polish King, Stanislaw-August Poniatowski, incorporating at least three hundred lodges including around five thousand members in Warszawa, Krakow, Radom, Lodz, and many other towns. Józef Poniatowski, Michal Kleofas and Kazimierz Nestor Ogiński, Stanislaw Sołtyk, and even some representatives of the Sapiega family, and many others, were members of the Masonic lodges. In 1784 the Grand Orient of Poland was formed and was somewhat similar to the Grand Orient of France before 1877, its Catechism was based not only on Masonic principles but also included many ideas of Polish patriotism, and its lodges could carry the names of the country’s famous political figures such as Boleslaw the Brave, Bathory, Zolkiewski and many others. In 1822 when Alexander I began to see Freemasonry and other organizations based on its model as a threat to his rule, Polish lodges were closed or forced underground on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland [Congress Poland]. Polish patriots, especially if they were sharing the ideas of republicanism, and sympathized with the American and French Revolutions, went along with their colleagues in Russia, who were sharing nearly the same principles and could intersect their ideological links. The only problem between them was the question of patriotism itself. For example, Pavel Pestel did not believe in the autonomy of Ukraine and could be skeptical about other issues that dealt with other possibly separatist tendencies in Poland or Finland. Russian pro-republican Decembrists, members of the Southern or Northern Societies [or the Union of Salvation, Union of Prosperity, etc] were not necessarily very liberal when it came to the national determination of Poland, Ukraine, Baltic countries, and Finland; they were anti despotic, that is true, however, their liberalism could have serious

432 Marek Tadeusz Lalowski, Jonathan North, Polish Eyewitnesses to Napoleon’s 1812 Campaign: Advance and Retreat in Russia, (Pen and Sword Military, 2020) at p. 212.
433 Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, F. 274, register 1, case 2088. p. 6. [Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України, Ф.274, оп. 1, спр. 2088. арк. 6].
434 Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, pp. 48-49.
435 Ibid., p. 50.
Freemasons in Ukraine had already tried to form their secret associations during the early 1820s such as the Small-Russian Secret Society [Малоросійське таємне товариство] and Palicynska Akademia, which studied Ukrainian history, and according to M. Slabchenko, its members included many Freemasons. Tendencies of the Polish political Freemasonry could spread the spirit of national awakening in Ukraine without the influence of Decembrists that were often split over their concepts on the future political system of the Russian empire. In 1819 Polish revolutionary and military officer Walerian Łukasiński founded an organization called National Freemasonry, which seized to exist in 1820, however, it helped to create another group under the name of Patriotic Society [Товарzystwo Patriotyczne] that included such people as the Duke Antoni Jabłonowski, Count Stanisław Sołtyk, and cornel Krzyżanowski. In the early 1820s this organization was trying to find some more contacts with the Russian Decembrists via one of the Freemasons in Ukraine, Vasyl’ Lukashevych, who was also a member of the local lodge in Poltava titled Love of Truth [Любов до Істини], however, he was warning his Polish “brothers” not to be too trustworthy when dealing with them. At least all of these organizations, among which many were based on Masonic examples and included members that were also Freemasons, had the same political goal, going against the Tsar and serfdom. In everything else, they could differ and share opposite views.

Freemasons in Ukraine [the 1810s and 1820s] were often defending not the national concepts of independence of a single Slavic nation but were rather sympathetic to the independence movement of all with an idea of later confederation between them. However, this confederation had to be established with the center in Ukraine. Organizations such as the Young Poland or Union of the Polish Nation were influential in Ukraine but did not share the same political and ethnolinguistic concepts with the Russian or Ukrainian Freemasons, or political secret societies in Ukraine and Russia. One more secret society that was formed in Ukraine [Novograd Volynskiy] in 1823 was called the Society of the United Slavs, and they possessed exactly that kind of federalist ideology mentioned above. In September 1825, soon before the uprising, it merged with the Southern Society following a proposal made by S. Muravyov-Apostol and M. Bestuzhev-Ryumin, both leaders of the latter association were Freemasons. Many of these organizations, including Masonic lodges, were divided by the national concepts, the factor which is often dividing Freemasonry worldwide today. Regardless of the discipline, which is typical of Freemasonry such things as national interests, cultures and languages can still allow something called the human factor and it may be enough to disperse Freemasons around different political camps.

436 M.E. Slabchenko, Materials for the Socio-Economic History of Ukraine in the XIX century: Volume 1, [Матеріали до економіко-соціальної історії України XIX століття], (Kharkiv, 1925) at p. 94.
438 Ibid., p. 96. Also see the original source. Vladimir Sabin, Decembrists and Secret Societies in Russia, [Декабристи и тайные общества в России], (V.M. Sabin, 1906) at pp. 150-154.
441 Pushkin in the South: Works of the Pushkin Memorial Conference in Kishinev and Odessa, Volume I, [Пушкин на Юге: труды пушкинских конференции Кишинева и Одессы], (State Publisher of the Moldova SSR, 1958) at p. 60.
The Russian Revolution(s) and Freemasonry

I

Masonic Revival in Russia and the Manifesto on the Improvement of the State Order

Freemasonry was not legal in Russia after the 1822 and 1826 decrees, which prohibited the very existence of any secret or semi-secret organizations. Surely there were revolutionary organizations such as the Petrashevskiy circle, Zemlya i Volya [Land and Freedom], various socialist factions, RSDRP [1898], and anarchist groups that followed Pyotr Kropotkin and Bakunin, but they were not connected to Freemasons, except for Bakunin himself [Grand Orient de France, Grande Oriente d'Italia]. The only way to join the fraternity was through emigration or travels outside of the Russian Empire. At some point, it seemed that there was no Masonic influence on the higher authorities, that there was no interest among the nobles or the slowly growing city middle class [raznochintsy] to revive this society. Even though after the death of Nicholas I, Russia underwent many life-determining reforms under Alexander II, still there was no coming back to Freemasonry. It was not interesting to those who could make a difference in such revivalism, and there was some fear that if it got restored, then the most revolutionary elements from Europe would attain yet another organizational support. It may be noted that by the late 1870s and early 1880s there was a split between the Freemasons in France [including Belgium]. The emergence of the Grand Orient of France as an independent socialist-leaning organization became notorious in the world of Freemasonry, and it was also known in Russia. It sometimes seems that if any governmental authority, and not merely in Russia, knew that there is a difference between various groups of Freemasonry, then they would most likely allow the regular branch. Often governments mix the Grand Orients [France, Belgium, etc] with the regular and traditional Masonic lodges, thus thinking that they are planning revolutions and plots. Before 1826 in Europe and Russia, Freemasonry did gather many people who disagreed with organized religion or despotism, here and there serving as a model for the revolutionary organizations [Illuminati, Decembrist secret associations], however, they were not causing revolutions directly, and did not plan them. By 1905 there were regular Freemasons that could be immediately mixed with those that believed in God and represented the middle class - UGLE tradition, and only experts were able to make a difference. More radical and politicized Freemasonry and traditional Freemasons based on the UGLE recognition were often seen as one organization.

Nevertheless, changes came to Russia in the form of the 1905 Revolution [the First Russian Revolution] which was caused by economic decline, defeat in the Russo-Japanese War and the resulting social unrest. What made things more serious in the case of this work’s

discussion, is that Freemasonry did not plot or plan any revolutionary activity because it did not exist in Russia before the 1905 Manifesto was issued by the Imperial government. What was particularly important is that it granted the freedom of religion including the right to open [install] Masonic lodges without correlating it with the government or police authorities. Previously that was completely impossible. In 1837 the special decree forbade all kinds of societies, political gatherings, and Masonic lodges once again were banned, providing district police with additional authority. In 1849 all civil servants, priests, and teachers had to sign a document, saying that they do not belong to any secret association, including the lodges, otherwise, the administrative persecutory methods were to follow those who did not tell the truth. In 1905 all of this began to change and Freemasonry had suddenly another chance to go along with a more free press, controlled, but established State Duma [semi-parliament without the constitutional rights to legislate because there was no Constitution, but with some rights to do so under the new, more democratic law] and other changes that were to go along with the Manifesto. Notably, the establishment of the State Duma was proclaimed by the monarch in another slightly earlier Manifesto of August 6, 1905 [On the Establishment of the State Duma]. Nicholas II was then under the influence of such reformers as Sergey Y. Witte, who believed that Russia needs more radical reforms, civil representation, freedom of the press, and business activity, regardless of social class and origin. Some historians such as Andrey Serkov believed that Freemasonry did exist in Russia after 1826 well until 1905 and in his work The History of Russian Freemasonry he provided some not extraordinarily strong arguments. However, other researchers and especially Boris Nikolaevskiy in his book Russian Masons and Revolution insisted that Freemasonry was not presented in Russia until 1906. Aron Avrekh also thought that there was nothing and that the only way to join the brotherhood was to travel abroad, and Russia was completely sealed from any Masonic presence. If looking at both points of view, including the above-mentioned prohibitions and bans on the organization it seems that Freemasonry did not exist in Russia before 1906. This year was specifically important for the revival of Freemasonry in Russia because one of its prominent members, former political immigrant and future deputy of the State Duma, Evgeniy Kedrin had promised to revitalize Freemasonry in Russia at the solemn meeting organized by the Grand Orient of France on September 20, 1906. Additionally, it should be underlined and discussed that Freemasonry which was about to get re-established after the 1905 Manifesto was irregular, and did not have a lot of connections to the United Grand Lodge of England. As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, the Grand Orient of France was in a schism with the UGLE and traditional Freemasons over the question of belief in God. After the Convent [1877] under the leadership of Frédéric Desmons, GOdF split with the rest of Freemasonry, and this more political and left-leaning association began to be introduced in Russia. The reason why

445 Aleksandr Papkov, Decline of the Orthodox Parish (XVIII-XIX), Historical Reference, [Упадок православного прихода], (М, 1899) at pp. 160-163.
446 State Archive of the Kyiv Region, F2, register 154, case # 126, p. 2. [ДКАО. Ф.2, оп. 154, спр. 126. Арк. 2].
449 Dmitriy Andreev, Russian periodical press about Freemasonry at the beginning of the XX century, [Русская периодическая печать начала XX века о масонстве], (Digest [Vesti] of the Moscow University, Series 8. History, # 1, 1992) at pp. 37-38.
traditional, British or German Freemasons did not get their way is still a question; possibly it was caused by the influence of French culture and the number of political immigrants that lived in France before 1905-1906. Also, the Grand Orient of France was very energetic and set up the goal to move into Russia faster than any other traditional Masonic systems that were not political and had not gone into a race with the irregular French Freemasons. Another regular French branch led by the Grand Lodge of France did not stay completely aside, but according to Sergey Karpachev, Russian Freemasons were more interested in the socio-political type of Freemasonry that was represented by the Grand Orient of France.450

Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century was on the brink of many crucial changes that could lead it in various directions, where one of them was revolutionary, and another evolutionary, but due to the lack of necessary reforms, stubborn monarchy, and archaic rules such as the pale of settlement for Jews, there was no chance for it to grow quickly. The whole class of nobles that were not dependent on the land anymore [landless nobles were multiplying all through the 19th century onwards], slowly growing city intelligentsia, merchants, and civil servants could become the middle and upper middle class if the absolute monarchy went in the direction of self-modernization as in Britain or the Netherlands. However, despite the changes that took place from 1905-1906, Nicholas II was still extremely reactionary, he simply did not believe in any limitation of his royal authority. His position and status did preserve the empire, holding it together, however, it was also stagnating the process of economic growth that could not move on under the cap of absolutism. State Duma became the only place, which could at least somehow represent different social classes, develop primitive forms of the multiple-party system, and possibly influence monarchy. It became the reason why Nicholas II was dismissing it more than once, tried to fill it with monarchists [the “black hundreds” movement], and sort of curb down more democratic or socialist voices. Eventually, the latter turned to be more and more radical, many of its representatives were rejecting the whole concept of Duma or democracy such as the Bolsheviks of course, or the radical socialist-revolutionaries or shortly ESERs. By pressuring business-oriented forces [Cadets - the Constitutional Democrats], the Duma, and parliamentarism itself, the Tsar was destroying that evolutionary, normal middle-class development, and only gave more ground for the radicals. Freemasonry became very political during the first two decades of the twentieth century in Russia, and amazingly the mere force that could at least somewhat unite various political parties in Duma, and as Nikolay Nekrasov noted, they set Masonic directives above the party lines.451 At the same time, Freemasons in Duma and generally in the whole empire were rejecting monarchism and revolution simultaneously.452 Technically, they were liberals who saw that necessary and most likely the only practical way to avoid absolutist tyranny and revolutionary terror was to somewhat unite different political groups in the State Duma. Thus, history has proved them right because their position of modernization had failed in Russia due

450 Sergey Karpachev. The Guide Through Masonic Secrets. [Путеводитель по масонским тайнам], (Center of the Liberal Arts Education [Центр Гуманитарного Образования], 2002) at pp.64-65.
452 Sergey Karpachev, Masonic Intelligentsia in Russia at the end of the XIX - early XX centuries, [Масонская интеллигенция в России конца XIX - начала XX веков], (Center of the Liberal Arts Education [Центр Гуманитарного Образования], 1998) at pp. 160-163.
to its inability to unite those different political groups during the critical 1917. It may appear to be disappointing, but Freemasons in Russia were more interested in their connections and political growth. Rituals, Masonic traditions, and principles to self-improve were not that important and most likely were not very well known to the political Freemasonry in Russia during those two decades that had determined the future of Russia as a country. Despite Karpachev’s insight referenced above, Freemasonry in Russia was not purely centrist, defending large business, but rather mingled with the social-democratic concepts, too. According to Carl Landauer, they were using their liberal principles to make links between the socialists and left-wing democrats or liberals. It was already argued that the Grand Orient of France was often involved with the socialist principles, and the same tradition was spreading around its Provincial lodges in Russia, however, if the latter Grand Lodge was keeping with the ritual, many of its Russian adepts began to move further away from the classic Masonic traditions.

II

Alexander Kerensky and the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia

This Masonic or Co-Masonic organization needs more attention because of its involvement in the State Duma, the Russian military, and the February Revolution. In other words, its influence on the process of the Russian Revolution is often questionable, and rather peculiar than speculative. First, it should be said that this branch of Freemasonry or possibly the organization based on the Masonic model, but not accepted as one by the regular or irregular Freemasonry, was purely political. To many the term, “Co-Masonry” is just yet another version of Masonry, especially if not getting into the whole concept of regularity in this fraternity. Its goals were not based on self-improvement, there was no need to memorize long ritual texts, prepare for the long and traditional initiations, etc. The role of this organization in the history of Russia is very shady and at the same time well known by now, if not paying attention to the multiple conspiracy theories. The first convention of this future Co-Masonic organization took place in 1912 in Moscow and was headed by Nikolay Nekrasov [general secretary of the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia], not Alexander Kerensky, and after some debates, especially with the representatives from Ukraine, the given title has approved. The Statute of the organization was closely modeled after the same document used by the Grand Orient of France. A. Kerensky was appointed as the head of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia after its 1916 convention, and became the association’s most famous representative member. His future political career in the Provisional Government of Russia in 1917, and his role in the February Revolution make him extremely influential in Russian history, so any connection to Freemasonry [regular or not] always kept giving fuel to numerous speculations or conspiracies.

Why did this new form of Freemasonry come into existence by that time? The political life in Russia was on the rise, its middle class, especially social democrats, the democratic constitutionalists, and conservative Kadets wanted more representation, and an organization based on secrecy, and well-structured hierarchy was probably convenient to them to get more coherence. Especially if that organization would unite different political forces with the same goal. Making friends in the parliament where there were many pro-monarchy agents, representatives of the ultra-royalist “black hundreds movement” and others, made a lot of liberal politicians join this organization, however, they were not interested in its ritualistic or certainly mystical tradition. The Grand Orient of France, which was the first one to spread its influence in Russia after the 1905 Manifesto, was always involved in politics, it possessed a lot of interests in the social aspects of life, but still kept all the traditional characteristics of Freemasonry. Most likely, many of those who became members of the Provincial lodges [representative, foreign lodges] of the GOdF in Russia between 1906-1912 was kind of tired or became not interested in the ritualistic ways of Freemasonry, however, remained attracted to its influential networking side and liberal traditions. The State Duma deputies with liberal and social-democratic or just generally anti-absolute monarchy beliefs needed some sort of unity and this unity could be provided by the Masonic connections and friendships that could be made in the lodges. Additionally, it should be underlined that liberalism at that time did not mean what it refers to nowadays in American or European politics. It meant the anti-absolute monarchy stance, principles that were standing against civil classes, which had divided society into nobles and commoners, against the pale of settlement for Jews, and often it went along with the support for more autonomy for the national minorities in the empire, and of course newly forming a business, especially among the constitutional democrats or shortly Kadets. Socialist revolutionaries and to a degree the social democrats were closer to the modern western left. Freemasonry was an organization that provided links with western Europe and particularly France, the country that was well known to many upper classes in Russia, amongst whom many could speak French better than Russian. These liberals were particularly united into the party of Kadets or the Constitutional-Democratic Party under the leadership of Pavel Milyukov, who was not a Freemason, but at some point was almost persuaded to become one, though he had rejected an offer. Here is what the researcher and historian of Freemasonry, Oksana Kryzhaniivska had written in her book Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine referring the following information to some prominent “political” Freemasons of the first two decades of the twentieth century.

S. P. Melgunov had considered that for many of the Russian “brothers”, the Masonic secrecy was like “some kind of psychological game”. O. Galpern recalled that personally he was surprised and even “somewhat warped” by it, on others it had a “very strong impression”, and E. P. Gegechkori felt “something unpleasant and frightening”. Thus, the attitude of Masons towards the ritual was particularly individual.
If looking at this information it turns out to be that political Freemasonry, which is still considered to be irregular by the British regular tradition, kept the ritual and did not completely reject it. O. Kryzhanivska had referred to Sergey Efremov, who was believing that the ritual was not completely rejected because the so-called “State Duma Freemasonry” did not want to completely snap the connection between Russian Freemasonry and French, something that was also connecting it to democracy in France.\textsuperscript{458} It makes a lot of sense, especially if their political goals were more important than the Masonic principles or at least its original concepts stated in Anderson's Constitution. If referring to and thinking about the concept of democracy and liberalism [in its more grounding eighteenth-century meaning], then the Russian Freemasons of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia did not completely reject the true Masonic concept. Surely, they were not akin to those Freemasons of the 1770s and 80s in Russia that were primarily interested either in education or in mysticism, both of these notions were not practical to Masonic deputies of the State Duma. They were much closer to the idea of political connections, democratic build-up, and the future of Tsarism in their country. They simply did not see Nicholas II as someone who could lead their country and saw the institution of monarchy as completely outdated in the environment of growing capitalism and parliamentarism. There was no need for the monarchy, especially if it was slowing down the progressive forces that could be both capitalist and socialist. Kadets were standing on the conservative, republican principles, but they were often dealing with their socialist counterparts. Nikolay Nekrasov, professor, politician, and Freemason of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, someone who was the general secretary of its Supreme Council during its foundation in 1912, was a Kadet, however, his beliefs were often closely related to social democracy and his sympathies were making some sort of a bridge between the republicans and socialists in the State Duma.\textsuperscript{459} His successor Alexander Kerensky was more of a socialist, thus providing an example of cooperation between both political camps under the authority of Freemasonry or Co-Masonry, if not considering the GOPR to be the regular Masonic organization.

Did the state know about these not very loyal associations of Freemasons? It seems that it did, however, nothing was done to curb or control them. Unlike during the Yelagin-Novikov period, when Catherine II was seriously considering Freemasons to be somewhat strange and dangerous, Nicholas II did not have much intention to limit its spread in Russia. Moreover, this new political form of Freemasonry based on either the Grand Orient of France organization or its follower the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia was truly considering the political change, when its predecessors were not, at least they established separate secret societies in 1816-1823 and did not mix their activities with Freemasonry. There are thoughts made by Oleg Soloviev, the Russian researcher of Freemasonry, that consider some political aspects of Nicholas II’s irrelevant position towards Freemasonry; Tsar was trying to keep good relations

\textsuperscript{458} Ibid., pp. 64-65. Original source: Sergey Efremov, an article, About Freemasonry in Ukraine, (People’s Newspaper [Народна Газета]; # 16[197], 1995) at p. 5.

\textsuperscript{459} From the investigatory materials of N.V. Nekrasov, 1921, 1931, 1939. Questions of history [вопросы истории], (1998) № 11-12, at p. 38.
with the French government in which there were many Freemasons.\footnote{Oleg Soloviev, an article, Freemasonry in the Global Politics, [Масонство в мировой политике], (Международная жизнь [International Life], №5, 1994) at pp. 4-5.} Also, there are some considerations provided by Viktor Brachev in his work Masons, Mystics and God-Seekers that Nicholas II was himself a member of the Rosicrucian Lodge “Cross and Star” into which he was initiated by the French doctor from Lyon, Philipp, who was working at the royal residence in Tsarskoe Selo.\footnote{Viktor Brachev, Masons, Mystics and God-Seekers, [Масоны, мистики и богоискатели в России: XX век], (Stomma, 2003) at p. 21.} The latter concept seems to be slightly out of much evidence, however, the first made by Soloviev is more logical and understandable. France and Russia were going through the formation of the Antante particularly after 1905, while relations with the Kaiser of Germany were certainly deteriorating, even though Wilhelm II was a relative to Nicholas II and the French government with, as it was said, many Freemasons was not. Progressive and modernist forces that were threatening aristocracy, even though many of its supporters were from that class themselves, were almost certainly aiming at Nicholas II and his government, setting up an invisible opposition to his rule. At this point, it must be said that Freemasonry of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia was surely influencing history to some extent and played a crucial role in the formation of the anti-Tsarist opposition, good or bad, and had indirectly influenced Russia's future. Further on it may be necessary to discuss its involvement in the February Revolution of 1917.

III
February Revolution and the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia

What was the influence of this or other Masonic organizations on the ousting of the Russian Tsar? This question was asked many times by various historians and researchers and often led to a whole variety of conspiracy theories and speculations, which may be only compared to similar speculations that arose after the French Revolution. How was the political police [okhranka] reacting to the political activity of Freemasons at least from 1912 to 1917, and particularly did it notice anything serious growing in the State Duma and military? According to Aron Avrekh, the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia was too small and insignificant, particularly at the State Duma for the secret police to notice any activity and raise the alarm of any kind.\footnote{Aron Y. Avrekh, Freemasons and Revolution, [Масоны и революция], pp. 339-340.} He was technically siding with those who do not accept the significance of Freemasonry during the revolutions and uprisings, considering that any such activity is moved by other, more important factors. Other researchers including Andrey Serkov and Nikolay Yakovlev were believing that police were simply incompetent to see any activity.\footnote{Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, p. 70.} Notably, Yakovlev, even though he was referenced by O. Kryzhanivska, was not an independent researcher and was well known for his books written on the orders of the KGB in the 1970s [on his own words and materials recovered after the fall of the USSR].\footnote{Leonid Mlechin, Yuri Andropov: The Last Hope of the Regime, [Юрий Андропов: Последняя надежда режима], (Centropolisgraf, 2008) at pp. 192-193, 512.} At the same time, Alexander Zinukhov thought that the director of the police department [part of the
Ministry of Internal Affairs] Aleksey Lopukhin was connected to the political Freemasonry and even could meet with the radical socialist Andrey Argunov to give him information about the infamous agent-provocateur Yevno Azef.\footnote{Alexander Zinukhov, *Essays on Freemasonry*, [Этюды о Масонстве], (Kharkov, 1994) pp. 147-151.} Surely, this information is difficult to prove, but such claims also have a right to exist. At the same time, it should be underlined that there was no concrete unity among the GOPR organization, especially at the beginning of World War I. Many socialists were against the war, who believed that it was fought merely in the interest of imperial expansion and nothing else; the same position was taken by many pro-left leaning political forces in Europe, too. Hence, many members of the GOPR were closely related to socialists, A. Kerensky, N. Nekrasov, and many more, so then they could not solidly agree on how to proceed and react to the new environment. As with any Masonic organization [regular or not], politics and generally saying the human factor was always setting up difficulties to provide enough internal cohesion in the lodges. Various opinions, characters, and tempers, often opposite views on the same subject made it invariably tough to reunite them under the cap of one certain concept, which is not an ideology, but rather a club. An idea that Freemasons always thought in the direction of similar concepts is not going to be true at all. This may be the basic argument against those who believe that Freemasons can bring some well-organized conspiracy - there is no ideological unifying base that can provide enough unity to do so. The GOPR was known for its internal discipline, and anti-monarchist position, and hence it was the political club rather than the Masonic Grand Lodge, there was some cohesion among its members, but still not enough to agree on everything. These internal differences became particularly obvious when its Ukrainian branch began to disagree with the Russian leadership in Moscow and St. Petersburg the organization split over the question of Ukraine’s autonomy, but at least it could hold together until 1917 because the anti-monarchist factor was unifying it.\footnote{Oksana Kryzhanivska, *Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine*, p. 137. Original source: Sergey Efremov, *About Freemasonry in Ukraine*, № 17 (198). at p. 6.} According to Boris Nikolaevskiy, members of the GOPR could not find any unified direction when World War I had begun; he was relating this opinion to one of the active Freemasons in the organization, Nikolay Chkheidze, the famous Georgian socialist [social-democrat] and the State Duma deputy.\footnote{Boris Nikolaevskiy, *The Russian Masons and Revolution*, [Русские масоны и революция], an excerpt from an interview with N. Chkheidze, (Terra, 1990) at p. 88} Dmitry Beling, the famous scientist, who was also active in the GOPR before the February Revolution, had participated in the organization’s convention of 1916 and witnessed that its members began to plot a coup, and planned to divide the future governmental positions among themselves.\footnote{Dmitry Beling, “I Was a Participant in the Masonic Lodge in Kyiv…”, [Я був учасником ложі в Києві] Issue #1(5), (Geneza, 1997) at p. 145.} The political goal of removing the Tsar was unifying this political Masonic organization [Co-Masonry] in its approaches to politics, even though it was incorporating various ideological elements. All of them included constitutional democrats and social democrats, while at the same time, these forces could be represented by different provinces of the empire, the factor which added local anti-imperial interests [as in Ukraine]. Alexander Kerensky, one of the major figures in the future revolutionary government, and from 1916 the general secretary of the Supreme Council of GOPR, had recalled that in November 1916 the plot was almost ready; it included a plan to
force Nicholas II to send the empress to Crimea or Britain, however, due to an illness of general Mikhail Alekseev it did not take place. Duke David Bebutov, one of the founders of political Freemasonry in Russia after 1905, a possible member of the Provincial lodges that belonged to the Grand Orient of France, and later a member of the GOPR had recalled that there was not enough discipline in the Russian mentality to keep up with the organizational activities of Freemasonry. It seems that his views were not very accurate, especially if comparing them to those of A. Kerensky. Moreover, it becomes evident that the Russian political Freemasonry was not very well united politically when it came to details, however, it was strongly disciplined, was able to keep the secret, and was, indeed, united by the anti-monarchist concept. The influence of the GOPR was somewhat significant, and practically it was the “bridge” between many political parties that were practically interested in removing the Tsar. Bolsheviks had a fraction in the State Duma [its legitimate wing], but most were outside of Russia. Revolutionary socialists [abbreviated ESERs] were well established, but could not reach the Tsar. Alexander Kerensky though was representing the legitimate fraction of the socialists and is considered to be a member of the ESERs party, thus through his organizational capabilities, their goal could become possible. Also, Kerensky could unite his aims with the goals of others in his and allied political camps through the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, its organizational network, and discipline. It could provide him and his political allies with some unity, which is so rare in politics. After all, the same goal was obvious, and despite all the odds, the whole organization that consisted of so many different elements was able to move in the direction upon which everyone had agreed.

Alexander Kerensky himself left well-detailed memoirs, but surely not everything can be trusted. Here is what Oksana Kryzhanivska had carefully written about the Masonic political activity while referring to Kerensky.

If trusting him, the whole Masonic role in the coup was focused on creation of “the information center of all leftist parties, in order to have an ability to step by step inform the people on the results of a coup, insisting on support, or in worse scenario, at least guarantee no negative involvement”.

Information is everything and the media in those days in Russia became very influential and quite independent from the state, directly pointing to the changes that took place there after the 1905 Manifesto. If there was no democratic change that was promoted by the Tsar in 1905, though it slowed down closer to 1907, then there would be no GOPR, and everything that came with it, including the political parties in the State Duma, newspapers, etc. Another political Freemason of that era, later a Ukrainian politician, Andriy Nikovsky was saying, “Freemasonry was giving directives to discredit those particularly hated figures in the press - Protopopov,

471 Oksana Kryzhanivska, *Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine*, p. 75. [translated by me].

Original Source: Alexander Kerensky, *Russia on the Historical Turnabout*, [Россия на историческом повороте], Memoirs, (Terra, 1996) at p. 139.
Rasputin, Sukhomlinov, Trepov." All of the above figures were extremely hated by the liberal, democratic, republican [Kadets] business and socialist forces. Gregory Rasputin was seen by Freemasons from the GOPR as an obscure and shameful influence on the Tsar and his family. Additionally, the first was viewed as someone who had reactionary beliefs represented by the peasant, something that was going completely against the socialist plans of awakening the peasantry and making it more revolutionary. Dmitry Trepov was hated for heading St. Petersburg as its governor during the 1905 rebellious crowd [the “First Russian Revolution”], and for successful orders to stop the uprising. Certainly, all the reactionary forces were seen as dangerous and pro-monarchist, so the power of newspapers became crucial in discrediting those who were defending the Russian throne. There is no evidence that political Freemasonry in Russia between 1906-1917 was involved in any terrorist activity, which was used by the radical ESERs [revolutionary socialists] and anarchists. They were applying various legitimate ways that were available at the State Duma, media, and through the use of political intrigue.

French diplomat Maurice George Paléologue wrote in his diary that first the press began to go against Rasputin, the symbol of royal decay, and it seems to be very logical if comparing his recalls to those made by Andriy Nikovsky, the actual member of the Grand Orient of Russia. He confirmed the existence of a newspaper campaign against Rasputin. Nikovsky had also noticed that during that exact time when Rasputin was mocked by the Masonic press, the GOPR had stopped going against the Ukrainian independence/autonomist movement while seeing an ally in it. It was not something unbelievable because another center of political Masonic activity was located in Ukraine, many of its members such as Mikhailo Hrushevsky were defending Ukrainian self-identity and eventually its attempts to become independent. Traditional imperial perspectives that all pro-independence ideas in Ukraine were created by the Austrians or Poles were not working in the hands of the Russian political Freemasonry when it was somewhat planning to curb Nicholas II, for the sake of saving the country from his chaotic and weak rule.

Another powerful and probably decisive force that became specifically important in the February revolution was the military. It was noted before that general M. Alekseev was possibly a part of the whole plot and was seeking to relocate the queen in November 1916. Andriy Nikovsky had witnessed in his writings that Masonic leadership in the Grand Orient was consistently preparing the army to fulfill the coup by particularly setting up the Semenovskiy, Volynskiy, and other Guards regiments. The same was planned by Decembrists in the early 1820s, but there was more support for Nicholas I in the army, one which his late successor Nicholas II did not have. There was no preparation of the military in 1905 and the ‘first Russian Revolution’ had failed; simply nobody was planning the uprising from the top, and D. Trepov could put it down. Closer to 1917 the whole situation was

472 Ibid., p. 75. Original source: Andriy Nikovskiy, Freemasonry in Russia Before the Revolution and at the Beginning of the War. [Масонство в Росії перед революцією і на початку війни], Issue # 1(4), (Geneza, 1996) at pp. 159-160.
473 Ibid., p. 75. Original source: Elvira Vatala, Grigoriy Rasputin Without Myths and Legends. The Novel in Documents, [Григорій Распутин без мифів і легенд. Роман в документах], (Armada Press, 2000) at p. 188.
474 Andriy Nikovskiy, Freemasonry in Russia Before the Revolution and at the Beginning of the War. p. 159.
475 Note: Sergiy Plokhy, The Gate of Europe: History of Ukraine from the Scythian Wars Until Independence, [Брама Європи. Історія України від скифських воєн до незалежності], (Family Leisure Club, 2016).
476 Ibid., p. 159.
becoming different, there was the State Duma, more freedom of press, and above all many generals began to believe that it is better to remove the monarchy before it will get too popular if Russia wins the war against the Central Powers on the side of France and Britain. At the same time, here is what another member of the Grand Orient, Vasily Maklakov had said in May 1917. His words were cited by Alexander Kerensky in his memoirs, and they accurately explain the position of political Freemasonry from 1916-1917 in Russia.

No, we did not want the revolution during the war… and those who understood that the revolution would be equal to catastrophe considered it to be the duty to save Russia from the revolution by a coup from the top.477

Many will ask, how did it happen that they did not see the catastrophe arriving anyway if the Tsar was removed from the top? Simply, who would fulfill the void of power? It seems that they saw their goal more or less before the February 1917 events and thought that Russia could be controlled by them. They all did not understand how difficult it may be to rule the country, which was built from top to bottom, where the absolute monarchy supported by the social pyramid of peasants and nobles was unshakable, and if the Tsar was removed, then the whole structure became too fragile to stand. Moreover, they were disunited from within, the GOPR did not unite all its members on the political front. Their reach for modernization was not planned very well, and knowledge of the country in which they had been committed to the possible coup was seriously limited. Eventually, the removal of the Tsar turned out to be the only pathway for the uneducated masses to the uprising, and just a half year later Alexander Kerensky, technically the head of the Russian government [Provisional], had to run away. In other words, what V. Maklakov had believed to be the only way to save his country from the rebellion, turned out to be the only way for that rebellion to get merely stronger. The result was that those uneducated masses were quickly organized by the new and truly violent dictatorship after the October Revolution of 1917, against which Nicholas II and the whole system that existed before or after the February Revolution of 1917 appears to be very democratic. Possibly the overwhelming majority of idealists from the left political camp in the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia [A. Kerensky, N. Nekrasov], made them blindly trust the common people, whom they saw as victims of the Tsarist regime, and according to their view, the mere thing which had to be done was to bring freedom to these people. Those common people, primarily peasants, did not look for freedom, but rather wanted to rob and pillage those who possessed more, including their class.478 The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia and its Supreme Council was not prepared for it, at least they did not understand that the radical left is far stronger than they thought. Boris Nikolaevskiy had cited N. Nekrasov, one of the leaders of the Grand Orient, where he was saying that after the coup cornel Krymov, commander of the Petrograd military district, will ‘clean up the city from the unneeded ones’.479 The Grand Orient was focusing on politics and was united primarily by the only concept, the removal of Nicholas II from power, the rest of the plan was not very well thought through, and seems to be very

naive if trusting Kerensky’s recalls of Maklakov’s words. Everything that the political Freemasonry in Russia was doing matches the Northern Indian proverb, - ‘if one is hunting for the white tiger, then one should be prepared to meet him’. Surely, those who were planning to remove the Tsar were not prepared to meet the tiger. Nikolaevskiy also believed that the Grand Orient was divided, some representatives from the Supreme Council were going against both, the right and the radical left, and more ordinary members sympathized with the ‘street’ and assisted it in organizing the protests.\(^480\) Sergey Efremov thought that the February Revolution was not something unexpected by members of the fraternity and that to a certain degree they were involved in the process of preparing it by influencing various public circles.\(^481\) This idea seems to be doubtful, they were rather trying to prevent the chaos by establishing a new and more effective, democratic government, however, the Grand Orient was not controlling its members in their everyday political adventures, so many of them could act purely independently without any consent from the Supreme Council.

At some point, all these activities may remind what was going on right before the French Revolution, except for the war. Also, there are some parallels with the Decembrists when they were carefully planning the removal of the monarchy with the help of the military. Both of these examples are not identical to the situation that was going on in 1916-1917, however, the chances to fail or succeed were relatively similar. In France, the king was weak and not energetic to make strong decisions, Nicholas II was also a meek person. Decembrists in 1825 were trying to avoid the uprising of the masses, practically limiting their actions only to the upper echelons, believing that the Tsar is better to be removed from the top. They also were not in agreement with each other, a split between the republicans and constitutional monarchists was practically the same as in the Grand Orient almost a century later. The mere difference was that Decembrists did not know about socialism and socialist democrats. After all many Decembrists were Freemasons \(^\text{regular}\), who have established separate organizations to fulfill their political aims. Political Freemasons of Russia's Grand Orient were trying to unite their work in the lodges with politics, turning it into the sole work there, denying any other aspects of the regular Freemasonry. In France there were also many Freemasons in the revolutionary activity, however, in all three cases, the role of Freemasonry should not be exaggerated and limited to the role of being the only factor behind the above-mentioned processes.

In his memoirs, Alexander Kerensky wrote a scrupulously detailed description of how the Provisional government was formed on the 27 and 28 of February 1917. He was calling the meetings of the future government, “closed summons of the group of private individuals”, which had formed the Provisional Committee with the absolute authority that included thirteen persons - Mikhail Rodzianko, Vassiliy Shulgin, Georgiy Lvov, Nikolay Chkheidze, Nikolay Nekrasov, Pavel Milyukov, Mikhail Karaulov, Ivan Dmitrykov, Vladimir Rzhevsky, Sergey Shidlovsky, Boris Engelgardt, Andrey Shingaryov (?) and Alexander Kerensky; notably, only

\(^480\) Ibid., p. 42.
\(^481\) Sergiy Efremov, \textit{About Freemasonry in Ukraine}, [Про масонство в Україні], (People’s Newspaper, [Народна газета], # 17 [198], 1995) at p. 6.
V. Shulgin, and possibly M. Karaulov and V. Rzhevsky were not Freemasons. As it was said before, the leader of the *Kadets* [Constitutional-Democrats] was not a Freemason but was agitated to become one, earlier in 1905 by Maksim Kovalevsky. Nathan Smith in his book *The Role of Russian Freemasonry in the February Revolution* referred to a member of the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, Duke Vladimir Obolensky, who in the 1930s used to say that Milyukov was not a Freemason at all. Andriy Nikovskiy thought that Pavel Milyukov was indeed a Freemason. It seems that this very important politician was at least closely involved with the Grand Orient and his role in it is still debated. Before the February and March 1917 events during which Nicholas II was forced to abdicate, Mikhail Rodzianko, Pavel Milyukov, and Alexander Guchkov used to meet privately and discussed the future of Nicholas II.

What may be concluded about the role of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia and the general influence of political Freemasonry in the country between 1906-1917 is slightly contradictory. On one hand, it looked for more democratic changes and progress, but on the other, the final result was seriously flawed. Possibly their political involvement and the retreat from many original concepts of Freemasonry led it to various mistakes in real life. Surely, they have violated one of the most important postulates of regular Freemasonry, which says that any regular and accepted Grand Lodge cannot get involved in politics. Also, any lodge is prohibited from even discussing politics during its regular meetings, it bans political discussion in the lodge and what is most important, its members cannot use a lodge as the base for revolutionary or other political activities. All of these rules were violated making this Grand Lodge *irregular* even according to the standards of the Grand Orient of France. They have possibly set up the goal of overthrowing the Tsar at some point as the most important task of their organization, the most important unifying concept. This activity gave a lot of ground for the following rumors about the greater plot of socialists and Freemasons to destroy the world. Later, many Russian emigres were seriously accusing Alexander Kerensky and others of being truly responsible for the future Bolshevik dictatorship, terror, Civil War in Russia, and other problems. Technically during that time, and due to the political activities of the Russian political Freemasonry, the idea that socialism and revolutions go along with Masons became quite popular. The idea was conspiratorial and wrong. The role of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia in the events of February 1917 is debatable, but all the above evidence shows that in one way or another its members were involved in them to correct all that ineffectiveness and degradation that was ruling under the weak authority of Nicholas II. At the same time, it must be underlined that it was not *regular* and traditional Freemasonry, but to the general public, it was actual Freemasonry, as much as different Christian denominations are part of the same religion to a non-Christian, even though from their internal theological viewpoints they are often the worst.


486 Akhmed Iskanderov, *The Downfall of Empire*, [Закат империи], (Voprosy Istorii, 2001) at p. 519.
enemies to each other. Historian Sergey Karpachev had written that the so-called “State Duma Freemasonry” between 1910 and 1917 turned out to be a special form of Russian Freemasonry and its unique version of the Masonic ‘royal art’. Nevertheless, most of its activities were not akin to Freemasonry, and the organization itself can be truly classified as Co-Masonic. The title, many symbols, and concepts were of Masonic origin, and the model was taken from the Grand Orient of France, which is also considered to be irregular by other lodges recognized by the UGLE, but due to neglect of so many Masonic constitutional articles, the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia was not Freemasonry in its traditional form. Therefore, many mistakes that could be made by its members can be separated from the Freemasonry itself. The historical value of this Co-Masonic organization, its influence on the events, and its role in the February revolution, which started the Russian Revolution process as a whole is important but not as big as many might have thought. They were rather an integrated part of the process, they tried to stop the decay, which was already going on under Nicholas II before 1917, however, despite many personal talents of its members, The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia had failed to stop chaos due to its political ineffectiveness and internal disunity.

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Freemasonry in Ukraine from the XVIII to the Early XX century

I

The Roots of Freemasonry in Ukraine

The modern land of Ukraine was not alien to Freemasonry and its openness to the Masonic influence was directly linked to Poland and the Russian empire. It was already slightly discussed before that Decembrists were presented in Ukraine with their Southern Society and the Society of the United Slavs that was located there. The Decembrist movement was based on secret societies that were modeled after the Masonic lodges and many of its leaders were Freemasons [Pavel Pestel, A. Muravyov, Kondratiy Ryleev]. Society of the United Slavs [Общество Соединенных Славян] had pro-autonomous sympathies and saw Ukraine as the area around which they united, but equal in their cultural or linguistic determination, Slavs may be able to get together. Certainly, there was no clear unity on these plans, and definitely, many Russian military officers and nobles were not sympathetic to the disunity of the empire and had no wishes supporting any tendency of that kind. Pavel Pestel488, a Freemason and leader of the Southern Society was against any federation after the removal of the Russian monarchy in St. Petersburg; his view was solid and allowed self-determination only to Poland and its nation.489 Polish and Ukrainian factors in any political developments in the Russian state with its monopolistic role of the monarchy were always seen as revolutionary and modernistic. Ukraine was influenced by the enlightened or educated movements from Europe directly via Poland, its system of the Magdeburg city law, more shallow serfdom, and later Cossack traditions of self-governing were threatening to the Russian absolutism and peculiar to liberals there. Those nobles in Ukraine who were Freemasons could bring their view of liberalism and freedoms and influence any revolutionary or progressive movement.

First Masonic lodges in Ukraine were picked up by those who were already influenced by the Enlightenment and progressive principles of the age. Historian of Freemasonry Oksana Kryzhanivska cited in her book, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine some ideas written by Mikhailo Hrushevsky, one of the leaders of the early XX century Ukrainian political Freemasonry, and the first president of the Ukrainian People’s Republic.

Ukrainian society was for a long time searching for the “non-church related, non-official morals corresponding to the age of Enlightenment, free from the old and outdated asceticism and ritualism”.490

488 Georgiy Chulkov, Rebels of the 1825, [Мятежники 1825 года], (Sovremennye Problemy, 1985) at p. 26.
489 Edited by N. Pavlenko, A History of Russia from the Ancient Times until 1861, [История России с древнейших времен до 1861 года], (Vysshaya Shkola Publishing and University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2003) at p. 464.
490 Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine [Таємні Організації: Масонський Рух в Україні], (Nash Chas, 2012) at p. 84. [translated by me].
This view was made by M. Hrushevsky and it can be connected to the above notion of liberal traditions that had existed in Ukraine way before the introduction of any Masonic concepts. At the same time Sergey Efremov, Ukrainian historian and activist believed that Masonic lodges had their prototypes in the form of the XV and XVII century brotherhoods in Ukraine, which were similarly structured.\textsuperscript{491} Those late medieval fraternities were organized based on religion to defend the Orthodox Church from Catholicism, their collections of books, personal links, and organization were similar to the lodges, however, they were not involved in any architecture-related works. It may be paralleled to the structure and system of Huguenots in France during and after the wars of religion. Technically, the first Lodge in Ukraine was opened by an identified Polish noble in the town of Vyshnyvtsi in 1742, another could exist in the early 1740s in Lviv [Lemberg] and one more in 1767 titled “Three White Eagles”, was also founded there.\textsuperscript{492} At this point, it may be said that direct Western European influence was arriving in Ukraine from Poland, which itself was influenced by the European enlightenment movement among the intellectuals and nobles. It should also be said that Freemasonry was first not seen as any political or ideological model, it was somewhat like a toy in the hands of those who sought something new and amusing. It was turning into the alternative to the Church and everyday life of an intellectual, who could share his views with another person that was willing to keep a company. It was providing something different in the overwhelmingly Catholic Poland, the Bible was presented on the altar, but its interpretations, Masonic allegories, and stories based on this holy book were different from those in the Church. Polish and Ukrainian nobles were no different from their German, French, or English peers. It was teaching religious tolerance, a more modern view of the world in terms of science, or at least questioning dogmas and possibilities to create a more just society without too many internal divisions. The Lodge “Three Standards” was founded in 1774 by the Austrian noble and military officer captain Martin Johann von Klemens, who was known as the ‘apostle of Masonry in Galicia’ and a member of the Lodge Sincérité at Klattau.\textsuperscript{493} Lemberg was also experiencing Masonic influence even before Galicia was annexed by Maria Theresia in 1772. This Lodge seems to be quite influential during the 1760s and 70s in Galicia, its role in changing the view of many nobles there was specifically notable because the whole territory of western Ukraine was well known for its ethnic, religious, and cultural struggles.\textsuperscript{494} Local Polish and Ukrainian [at that time known as Ruthenian] nobles were not always on good terms with each other; thus, Freemasonry was another way to keep a tolerant position. The city of Lviv [Lemberg] was introduced into the world of Freemasonry before any other major city or town in Ukraine if not counting the one founded in Vyshnyvtsi, but its installation and procurement may be doubted from the historical point of view. Galicia was always the most diverse area in Ukraine and each lodge that was later opened there had to deal with cultural differences and political principles that were shared by its members. The Lodge “Three White Eagles” was founded by the Grand

\textsuperscript{491} Ibid., pp. 84-85. Original source: Sergey Efremov, \textit{Freemasonry in Ukraine}, [Масонство в Україні], (Nashe Mynule, Chyslo 3, 1918) at pp. 4-5.

\textsuperscript{492} Ibid., p 85. Original source: Mikhailo Khodorovsky, \textit{Freemasonry and Ukraine}, [Масонство і Україна], following the materials on the activity of 18th century Freemasons, (Krytyka, 2004) at p. 50.

\textsuperscript{493} \textit{Ars Quatuor Coronatorum}: Being the Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, London, Volume 9, an article by Ladislas de Malczovich, \textit{A Sketch of the Earlier History of Masonry in Austria and Hungary}, (W. J. Parre H, Limited, 1896) at p. 138.

\textsuperscript{494} Mikhailo Khodorovsky, \textit{Freemasonry and Ukraine}, pp. 55-58.
Lodge of Poland [the white eagle is the country’s major symbol], however, captain Martin von Klemens re-established it by introducing the Inner Order to it after being allowed to do so from Warsaw. Even though Galicia was already annexed by Austria in 1772, still the Grand Lodge in Warsaw was controlling it for some time afterward. The Inner Order is usually referred to as the system of higher degrees that go beyond the first three craft degrees and even the fourth degree [in the Scottish Rite] in some German or Austrian lodges during the 1750s-1770s: those degree systems could look as follows - 1. Entered Apprentice, 2. Fellow Craft, 3. Master, 4. Scots Master - Inner Order begins - 5. Novice, 6. Knight. The Inner concept stood for the closed circle of members, who were initiated into the higher degrees that were meant to allegorically explain the meaning of those degrees that are located below, plus providing more symbolic truths about the new degrees, too. This structure is very typical of any Masonic higher system of degrees and particularly during the second half of the eighteenth century, it became specifically popular. Lemberg was a part of these developments and was integrated into all European traditions of Freemasonry, giving Ukraine a colorful history of this fraternity. Hence, the city was standing at the crossroads of many countries, it brought the heritage of many different cultures and political systems, Ruthenian [Ukrainian], Polish and Austrian [German]. Hence, the different titling of the city of Lviv [Ukrainian term], which was also known as Leopolis, Lemberg, and Lwow. So, Martin von Klemens did not stop at the promotion of only one or two lodges, and as was said before, he brought in the tradition of the Inner Order, a concept that was strongly associated with the Scottish Rite. In the 1770s he had continued to establish the Scottish Rite system in then Austrian Galicia, specifically making Lemberg the center of it. The Scottish Lodge titled “Joseph of the Imperial Eagle” was the result of his works, but it did not last for too long because it consisted mostly of military officers that were soon moved to another area. Also, Lemberg became acquainted with the rising mysticism and charlatanism in Freemasonry that was getting more popular in the 1780s; Rosicrucians, Martinists, and personalities akin to G. Cagliostro. Particularly those were Abbe Baudin from France, Chevalier d’Arnaud, and an individual named Beduzzi - the first two had established an unrecognized, secretive lodge in which they were selling the higher degrees initiation patents, and Beduzzi had invented his system of the Rosicrucian degrees [the Lodge “Three White Roses” 1778] that were eventually not recognized even by the Order of the Rosicrucians itself. Such things had happened and now may be seen as the signs of that particular age, when figures such as Cagliostro or d’Arnaud were looking for entertainment, duels, and intrigues. Revolutionary processes did not involve Freemasonry in Ukraine during that time, and it was mainly involved in the building of a structure that became an alternative to the Church visiting, aristocratic promenades, or political life. At least in Lemberg, it was

497 Note: Before the 19th century the lands of today’s Ukraine and Belarus were better known as ‘Ruthenia’ [lat], the lands that were directly descended from the Kievan Rus state. Toponyms Ukraine and Belarus began to be associated with the local Ruthenian population and widely used closer to the 1850s.
more as a place where people of higher class could communicate, build personal connections, and learn to tolerate different opinions.

The other side of Ukraine was under Russian control, and it was opened to the same Masonic influence, but surely under a stricter and more watchful eye of the monarchy. It was previously said that Freemasonry in the Russian Empire was bringing something nearly opposite to the whole concept of state control that existed there. Catherine II did not understand it, an all-male organization in which she could not participate, something that was independent of her direct influence became strange to her. First, she was trying to control it byoverviewing its activities and at some point, especially after the French Revolution, became truly alienated from such Masonic figures as Nikolay Novikov or Alexander Radishchev [the latter political writer was also a Freemason] because of their pro-enlightenment ideas that were more threatening to her than any kind of obscurantism.\textsuperscript{500} Freemasonry in Ukraine was growing slower than in Moscow or St. Petersburg, something which identified it to be less important in the empire due to its peripheral status. In 1784 the Lodge “Immortality” was installed in Kyiv, primarily consisting of the Russian military officers, but this Lodge was not obedient to the Grand Lodge of Russia, Reichel, or Yelagin system, and was supervised by the Grand Orient of Poland.\textsuperscript{501} Generally, it must be said that the Russian part of Ukraine was still highly influenced by Polish culture and its nobility that was scattered in such cities and towns as Kyiv [Lodge “Three Columns”], Zhytomyr [Lodges “Scattered Darkness” and “The Orient of Zhytomyr” and Kremenchuk [Lodge “Minerva” or even a small town of Dubno [Lodge “A Complete Mystery” - founded by the Polish doctor Franciszek Gincz].\textsuperscript{502} These lodges were not directly influenced by the Russian Freemasonry, even though they were located in the areas of its national and Masonic jurisdiction. Ukraine to the West of Kyiv became integrated into the Russian Empire after three partitions of Poland [also incorporating Belarus and Lithuania], so practically all the above-mentioned towns, except for Kyiv, were recently parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth state in which Polish nobles were acting a huge role. It cannot be said for sure whether it was bothering the Russian government, but it seems that those Russian officers that were joining local lodges did not share any local sentiments, neither Polish nor Ukrainian. The Austrian government was also somewhat suspicious of the Masonic activities in Galicia, so Catherine II was not the only one, however, those suspicions seem not to be connected to Polish patriotism or Ukrainian autonomism. The only example of political activity could be noticed at the Dubno Lodge titled “Charitable Pole” [active in the 1770s] consisting of primarily Polish members.\textsuperscript{503} Once again it may be underlined that the Polish factor in the Ukrainian and Russian political and social life was always inevitably bringing some factor of political resistance, cultural awakening, and liberalism. Polish nobles who were Freemasons in Ukraine did not promise anything, but a potential resistance to Catherine II and her royal followers. After the completed partitions of Poland, Ukraine became even the stronger link

\textsuperscript{500} Allen McConnell, \textit{A Russian Philosophe Alexander Radishchev}, (Springer, 2012) at p. 64.  
\textsuperscript{502} Sergiy Efremov, \textit{Freemasonry in Ukraine}, [Масонство в Україні], at pp. 6-7.  
\textsuperscript{503} Mikhailo Khodorovsky, \textit{Freemasonry and Ukraine}, pp. 59-66.
between Western European influences and Russia, primarily those that could be hardly controlled. If Catherine II was writing letters to Voltaire, a Freemason, it was not threatening her reign, just the opposite, she was appearing to be enlightened. The same may be said regarding her correspondence with Diderot, a Freemason, too. However, Polish lodges in the recently acquired Central and Western Ukraine [except for Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia] were not under her control, neither culturally nor administratively. They would serve an important role in the awakening of the Ukrainian and Russian nobility to liberal and national identity politics.

II

Masonic Lodges in Ukraine and Decembrists

Masonic lodges in Ukraine were developing primarily during the second half of the eighteenth century, and in both the Galician region administered by the Austrian Empire and Russian-controlled areas between Volhynia and Chernihiv, the situation was not much different. Vienna and St. Petersburg had similar attitudes towards the fraternity, with the first having more tolerance and regulations, after all, unlike his mother Maria Theresia, Joseph II was the cautious protector of Freemasonry.\(^{504}\) Catherine II could not join the organization and that is possible this turned out to be one of the reasons why she became so negative when it came to Freemasonry. She had neither produced any edicts as Joseph II did, nor she tried to expand it under her control, even though there were some attempts to regulate the lodges from above while not closing them.\(^{505}\) There were examples in the 1780s when she went against the Rosicrucians, especially after they began to be quite influential in Berlin, her hostile position against the Swedish government made it difficult for the Zinnendorf Rite to exist in Russia, also her literary works were ridiculed Freemasonry.\(^{506}\) Certainly, the pinnacle of her disfavor had culminated in the incarceration of Nikolay Novikov. At that point, the empress had broken with the Enlightenment.

The first most prominent Ukrainian Freemason was Semen Hamaliya, a friend of Nikolay Novikov, someone who belonged to the educated noble subclass, a person without any earthly wishes, but with only one aim to accomplish, to spread education and books among the people. He was from the Poltava region in Ukraine and was the Worshipful Master of one of the Masonic lodges in Moscow, and later after Novikov’s circle was destroyed by the government, he returned to his manor in Ukraine and lived there in poverty.\(^{507}\) His life was yet another example of how the attitude of the Russian government under Catherine II was not favoring the enlightenment, especially after 1789. Historian and writer Mykhailo Antonovsky, Mykhailo Kovalinsky, and a prominent scientist at the Moscow University A. Prokopovych-Antonsky, were Freemasons and intellectuals from Ukraine, who had a lot of influence on the

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505 *Brigham Young University Studies*, Volume 43, Issues 3-4, (Brigham Young University, 2004) at p. 46.
development of Freemasonry not merely in Ukraine, but in Russia. During the 1780s and 90s Ukraine was still viewed as a region with separatist tendencies or beliefs that could exceed the allowed limits, however, it was not connected to Freemasonry or Freemasons from Ukraine. Soon Ukraine would begin to emerge as the region that has its plans for the future and particularly Freemasons from Ukraine will have played a role in the process. Literature, links to Decembrists and Polish rebellions via Masonic contacts, of it began to grow in Ukraine during the reign of Alexander I. The Decembrist movement with its secret societies that were modeled after Masonic lodges with many joint memberships was spreading in Ukraine and became aligned with at that time not forbidden journals such as the *Herald of Zion* (1818). It became popular among the educated class, and particularly in the circles of local Freemasons, who were genuinely interested in the articles written there. In many ways, Freemasonry in Ukraine was going through all traditional paths when education was often followed by some real actions that were made by the ‘brethren’ outside the lodges. It seems that first, Freemasonry was capable of opening up the worldview, and providing new horizons, and later its members began to see how bad or unfair the political system was in their country. This notion was true for Freemasons during the 18th and 19th centuries. At least this tendency existed during those days. The same had happened in France, Poland, Italy [Garibaldi], Russia, and Bavaria where *Illuminati* began to establish their position and opinion on the existing political situation after leaving the lodges or creating secret societies separated from the Masonic organization.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were lodges in nearly every major town including Kyiv, Odesa, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv, Poltava, Lviv, and many more. One of the Lodges titled “United Slavs” was active in Kyiv in 1818 and its name peculiarly resembles the future secret society that was established in Ukraine and had been called the *Society of the United Slavs*. This secretive group was associated with the Decembrists and was involved in the works of the Southern Society, the most radical faction in the Decembrist movement. The name itself was revolving around the idea that Slavs can unite around Ukraine without having any imperial control from St. Petersburg, it was calling for some form of federation or confederation of Slavic nations. Polish lodges and later secret societies were not always very well connected to any Ukrainian groups of *Decembrists* and especially its Russian military rebellious circles, which wished for a republic, but were not too friendly with Polish patriotism. Polish organizations and lodges in Ukraine were primarily working in the direction of the independence of their country. Polish political Freemasonry established by a major Walerian Łukasiński was favoring the idea of re-establishing the Polish state in its pre-1772 borders, thus absorbing Eastern Galicia and Volhynia. The previously mentioned *Patriotic Society*, established after 1820 mostly by Polish Freemasons, had connections with the Decembrists via the Poltava region and one of its local and well-known Ukrainian Freemasons, Vasyl’ Lukashevych. However, the organization was not cooperating with the Ukrainian Masonic

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structures that were dominated not merely by Ukrainian intellectuals, but also by the Russian military officers. There was no mutual trust between all three groups, especially when they began to leave the traditional and regular Masonic lodges and began to form their political secret societies. In the end, Ukrainian Freemasons outside the lodges were favoring their country’s autonomy above all, Polish Freemasons went along with their concepts, and Russian liberals, despite their all-joint dislikes of the Russian monarchy, still favored Russian dominance, specifically in Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania. Therefore, there was no unity neither in the ranks of secret political societies nor in the lodges, although each lodge was supposed to stay away from politics, still there was no coherence because many members favored their political beliefs over Freemasonry. It becomes obvious when looking at the lack of coherence among Decembrists; the Northern and Southern societies were split and did not agree on how they would build the future without a monarchy. One of the causes of their defeat came from this lack of unity.

There are still rumors that cannot be used as a fact but are worth mentioning. During the time of Decembrists and their activities in Ukraine, some of its Ukrainian factions [possibly somehow connected to local lodges and the Society of the United Slavs] had established the so-called Malorosyske Taemme Tovarystvo [the Small-Russian Secret Society], which meant to work in the direction of more autonomy for Ukraine. At that time Ukrainian region was also known as the Small-Russia, a term coined by imperial political historiography. Slobids’ka Ukraine [contemporary North-East near Sumy region] was home to the Palitsins’ka Akademia, which had incorporated many friends of Grigoriy Skovoroda, the eighteenth-century Ukrainian philosopher and writer. This academy was closely related to local Masonic lodges and could be already linked to Ukrainian separatism inside the Russian Empire. Zakhariy Korneev, a protector of the Kharkiv University had arrived there in 1817 and had established a lodge; notably, he was a former Knight of Malta [the same which was temporarily chaired by Paul I] and the founder of the “Dying Sphinx” Lodge that was a provincial version of the same Lodge in St. Petersburg. This Lodge became specifically successful and influential, and many prominent people such as Petro Gulak-Artemovsky [future president of the Kharkiv University], Oleksii Perovsky [secret son of the famous Count Oleksiy Rozumovsky], Andriy Dudrovych [professor of philosophy] and Petro Olhovsky became members of this Masonic Lodge. It was spiritually and ideologically closely related to what Decembrists had believed, but it did not seem to be a part of any Decembrist secret organization, its members were quite neutral to the latter movement. They were eventually more like a philosophical society, not interested in politics. On the other hand, the Lodge in Poltava that was founded by a Decembrist, co-founder of the Union of Salvation, Mikhail Novikov in April 1818 was closely involved in nearly all the activities of the movement, his character though was seen as very bad by his contemporaries and friends. Another Lodge located in Ukraine called “The Love for Truth” was closed on March 12, 1819, because of its possible connections to the Union of

512 Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, p. 91.
513 Ibid., p. 98.
515 Ivan Pavlovsky, The Masonic Lodge in Poltava, [Масонская ложа в Полтаве], works of the Poltava archival commission, issue 6, part 1 (Poltava, 1909) а pp. 4-6.
Prosperity, the Decembrist secret organization. Many Decembrists and Freemasons in Ukraine were arrested in 1826 after the failed uprising, some as Gorbachevsky, a member of the Union of the United Slavs, were sent to Siberia, and some were soon freed such as Vasyl’ Lukashevych, Volodymyr Tarnovsky, Semen Kochubey, and Stepan Alekseev; Lukashevych was put under the police surveillance but it was rigid and formal. It seems that the Masonic organizations in Ukraine during the time of Decembrists were not a monolith. Some were defending Polish interests, some belonged to those that were defending Ukrainian self-determination and cultural autonomy, others worked with the Russian Decembrists, and some were just interested in philosophy.

This picture is more or less very typical of any Masonic circle[s] in the world because different people seek something that they want to find in Freemasonry. Inside the lodge, there are no politics, just symbolism, and ritual. Discussions of what to do when the new candidates arrive and whether they will be accepted or not are usual, however, outside everything can break loose and the lodge members often become different people with their interests and views. After 1822 and again in 1826 Freemasonry in Ukraine and Russia controlled by the Russian Masonic jurisdictions became forbidden. Foreign Masonic jurisdictions were not presented there at that time. Austrian Eastern Galicia was open to Freemasonry, but under thorough control of the government, particularly the latter was interested in keeping any Illuminati-like influences away from it. Polish influence in the local lodges in Lemberg and other parts of Eastern Galicia was as powerful as in Volhynia during the 1820s. Freemasonry in all of Ukraine became part of the all-Masonic tradition and as in other parts of Europe it included mostly upper classes and many prominent noble families - Kochubey, Kapnist, Kulyabok, Lukashevych, Poletika, Tarnovsky, Hanenki and others.

III

Political Freemasonry in Ukraine During the Early XX century

Freemasonry in Ukraine was not active after it was forbidden by Alexander I in 1822 and his follower and brother Nicholas I in 1826. It was active in the Austrian part, but it may be more interesting to discuss the political Freemasonry in Ukraine that had officially emerged in 1906 after the famous Manifesto issued after the first Russian Revolution in 1905. Practically, it was closely related to the Russian political Freemasonry that had emerged during the same period, however, it was trying to separate and defend its interests in the Empire. There is even some information given by the researchers Bohdan Kravtsiv and Oleksandr Ogloblyn that there was an active Lodge “Shevchenko” in Kharkiv named after the national Ukrainian poet before 1905. Additionally, according to Lyubomyr Guzar [not to be mixed with the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Cardinal], historian of Freemasonry and a member of many lodges

518 Bohdan Kravtsiv, Oleksandr Ogloblyn, Freemasonry, Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Studies, p. 1487.
519 Ibid., 1488.
In France, in 1900 the first Ukrainian Masonic Congress was summoned, which united five local lodges from Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Kamyanets-Podilsky, Odesa and Poltava; it became a historical meeting that provided grounds for the foundation of the Grand Lodge of Ukraine.\(^{520}\)

In other words, Freemasonry in Ukraine [not including its Galician part] possibly began to re-emerge before the 1905 Tsar’s Manifesto and was working on its own. It had its roots in the political goals of national awakening and was directly reflecting everything that was developing in the Russian Empire during the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, its post-1822 and pre-1905 existence in Ukraine is doubtful. Ethnic minorities were looking for more self-determination. Georgians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians and other nine major ethnic groups including Jews were not happy with the situation of their status. Recently opened former KGB archives in Ukraine [especially after 2014] show many important interrogation protocols of the famous Ukrainian political figure, cultural activist, and Freemason, Volodymyr Tschechivsky, who was later arrested and courted by the Soviet state security system in 1937. Those protocols show that when asked about the motives for his joining the fraternity, his reply was somewhat typical not merely for that time, but any time when someone wanted to describe his motives for becoming a Freemason. Brotherhood between all the people and a brotherhood between nations, struggle against the Tsarist absolutism and despotism.\(^{521}\) The only major difference with Freemasons of the past was that they did not put rituals, mysticism, and philosophy above everything, their goals were more conceptual and less theoretical.

Freemasonry in Russia and Ukraine at the beginning of the XX century was motivated by politics, modernization, the fight against tyranny, often socialist ideas of justice, at least the way they understood them, and surely self-determination of their nations. Russian Freemasons of the Grand Orient of France or the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia were not so decisive when the question came to providing more independence to Ukraine or any other minority in the Empire. They were similar to many Freemasons-Decembrists, who as Pavel Pestel were reluctant to provide more autonomy to Ukraine; the only exception was Poland. Alexander Kerensky, who was also belonging to the same political Freemasonry in the Russian Empire, and who was mentioned many times in the previous chapter, believed that educated leaders of zemstvo [representatives elected at the gubernatorial level and self-governed institutions after 1861 in the Russian Empire] and the city intelligentsia could improve their relations if communicating through Freemasonry.\(^{522}\) His motivation was very practical and later on in life was proved by the fact that he did not join any Masonic organization after 1917. It may also be supposed that the motive was strengthened by the events of 1905-1907, and the first attempt to overthrow the Tsar during that time. Those events made Nicholas II issue the Manifesto, and it sort of fuelled the elites to continue with more political involvement. Ukraine was opened to a whole variety of political activities, the Ukrainian language was finally re-legalized and newspapers, books and other materials written in this suppressed language became widely available. Freemasonry was the place to seek justice and a better future. Political Freemasonry in Ukraine was technically developing simultaneously with the Russian one and had full support from the Grand Orient of France. Odesa and Kyiv turned out to be the first to become

\(^{520}\) Lyubomyr Guzar, Ukrainian Freemasons, [Українські масони], (Universam, 1994) pp. 3-6.

\(^{521}\) State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine. # 67098 ФП, Volume 47, p. 203. [ДА СБ України. # 67098 ФП, т. 47. Арк. 203.]

\(^{522}\) Alexander Kerensky, Russia on the Historical Turnabout, [Россия на историческом повороте], pp.81-82.
available to Freemasonry, and according to Oskana Kryzhanivska and L. Hass at least by 1909 there were two active lodges in each of these cities.\textsuperscript{523} By 1910 Russian and Ukrainian Freemasons were working together, however, there was some political twist that could not make them fully friendly. Surely, it was their view of the future of both countries; the Russian ‘brothers’ sought to provide some federative system that could have replaced Tsarism, but without giving full independence to Ukraine. Ukrainian ‘brothers’ were also divided in Ukraine, some were standing together with those in Russia due to their ethnic background or simply political views, and others wanted either full independence or autonomy. A group in the general Ukrainian politics, which wanted an evolutionary attitude in dealing with St. Petersburg was called \textit{postupovtsi}, literally those who are willing to compromise. This attitude was also represented in local Masonic lodges and was often welcomed by the pro-Russian Freemasons, who were also willing to make compromises. They formed the Society of Ukrainian Postupovtsi [Товариство Українських Поступовців], in 1908 by some members of the dismantled Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party. The Council of this society was formed by many political Freemasons such as Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Sergiy Efremov, and Volodymyr Vynnychenko.\textsuperscript{524} All of these figures would plan an active role starting in 1917, practically establishing the first Ukrainian People’s Republic under the leadership of \textit{Tsentralna Rada} [Central Council]. All of them were standing on positions and principles similar to those of Alexander Kerensky and even more to the left, close to the revolutionary socialists. They were not related to the RSDRP party [split in 1903], and neither its Menshevik nor the Bolshevik factions. According to G. Aronson many were attracted to Freemasonry because it was closely related to the “theory of elites”, which shared some characteristics of the “leader principle”\textsuperscript{525} Possibly there are some truths about this particular statement, but any principle of leadership is not really a part of the Masonic ideas of any kind, however, those who establish the lodges may have enough will and determination to do so. Political Freemasons in Russia and Ukraine at the beginning of the XX century were determined to make changes and it required a lot of leadership, Alexander Kerensky, Simon Petlyura, Volodymyr Vynnychenko, and many others were strong enough to lead their governments, but only for a short period, they could also lead the lodges until it was interesting to them. It must be said that not a single personality in the Ukrainian or Russian political Freemasonry became a dictator. For example, Alexander Kerensky had even left all Masonic activity, and refused to get regularized by any existing Rite in France, or later in the United States after he escaped from Russia in 1917.

Closer to 1910 Kyiv became the center of all Masonic activities in Ukraine and such lodges as “The Dawn of Kyiv”, and the “Truth”, began to play the role of \textit{Small Council} that was capable to rival with the authority of any Masonic authority in St. Petersburg or Moscow.\textsuperscript{526} Kyiv was aiming to become the second center after St. Petersburg, it had gained enough authority and eventually turned to be independent of any Russian influence by 1917.

\textsuperscript{524} Yuriy Alekseev, \textit{History of Ukraine}, (Caravela, 2007) at p. 108.
\textsuperscript{526} Andriy Nikovskiy, \textit{Freemasonry in Russia Before the Revolution and at the Beginning of the War}. p. 155.
Once again, the topic discussed is describing merely the political Freemasonry that was ignoring many traditional landmarks and principles. Those lodges that were originally formed by the Grand Orient of France were not recognized by the mainstream British lodges. The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia was formed in 1912 and incorporated almost all the Masonic lodges in the Russian Empire while distancing itself from the traditional principles even further. After 1905 the growing political activity was transferred into political Freemasonry, one lodge was forming another, and more politically motivated people were joining the fraternal organization without questioning the core values of traditional Freemasonry. It was not that interesting to them, however, such people as Sergiy Efremov, Fedor Shteyngel, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Sergiy Chebakov, Ivan Poltoracky, and Eugene Sholpa [not a Freemason according to S. Efremov]⁵²⁷ - all members of the Kyiv Masonic Lodge, the “Truth” were also well known for their altruistic and romantic ideas in politics. Not only the idea of power and political gains was driving them into the society of connections and mysteries. Moreover, they were not looking for mysteries and what may be more important is to understand how far did the general idea get, was it only their country’s future, or still it was based on some personal career plans? It seems that both elements were at work and particularly those figures that became truly famous right before and after 1917 when their political careers were at the pinnacle, suddenly lost any interest in Freemasonry. It became useless to Alexander Kerensky for sure because he had lived a long life after his ousting by the October coup in 1917, but even though he used to be the Grand Master, the Head of the Council of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, and also the leader of Ursa Minor and Ursa Major Lodges⁵²⁸, still there was no wish on his side to re-join the organization. The same is true about the first President of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, Mykhailo Hrushevsky, who had also left the organization after getting to the place where he could make or at least tried to make big decisions. At least there is no historical evidence that these two figures continued their presence in the organization after 1917.

According to various sources, among which is the archival one, there was no unity in Ukraine, its Masonic organizations were on one hand subordinate to the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, but on the other, if trusting the evidence given by Volodymyr Tschechivsky, it was working under the authority of some “international Masonic organization".⁵²⁹ It may be assumed that this organization was the Grand Orient of France, possibly le Droit Humain, some other Co-Masonic establishment, or the Grand Lodge of France, all seen as non-traditional and irregular by the Grand National Lodge of France and other regular Masonic establishments recognized by the UGLE. Also, Sergiy Efremov noted that it was difficult to tell which ethnic groups were an overwhelming majority in the Masonic lodges in Ukraine at that time, there was no ethnic nationalism, but a mixture of some Masonic principles and political interests.⁵³⁰ Technically, the lodges were accepting everyone, except for anarchists and supposedly

⁵³⁰ Sergiy Efremov, Freemasonry in Ukraine, [Масонство в Україні], # 16 (197) at p. 5.
Bolsheviks, however, the latter was not so interested in joining the organization, which was in one way, or another connected to the bourgeois class. Radicals were never accepted into Freemasonry due to the nature of the organization and even though it was irregular under the supervision of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia or the Grand Orient of France [they were not requiring any belief in the Supreme Being], still it was Freemasonry with its major democratic principles. Radicalization in Freemasonry is virtually impossible, and the only radical or irregular view is the denial of the traditional Anderson’s Constitution [1723, 1738]. According to Mykhailo Hrushevsky, the majority was taken by the Constitutional-Democrats [Kadets], and it seems to be logical because the party could include many nobles, and they had many ancestors, who were Freemasons before its ban in 1822-26.531 Between 1900 and 1918 many Kadets were participating in the Masonic movement, and it may be called such because it was part of the general political agenda more than a part of the actual Freemasonry. Boris Nikolaevskiy had noted that such Kadets as Dmitriy Grigorovych-Barsky, a lawyer, was highly qualified by Nicholay Chkheidze, a Russian/Georgian Freemason, who was based in Moscow and St. Petersburg.532

Mykola Vasyleenko, another famous political activist and historian, governmental minister of education under the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky, was also a Freemason in the early XX century and was known for his participation in Doctor Fokin’s secret underground political organization with the radical left principles.533 In 1918 the Hetmanate was equal to the presidency during the Ukrainian State under Kaiser’s protectorate. M. Vasylanko was actively participating in the 1905-07 Revolution and was arrested in January 1906, meaning that his principles were radical enough to look dangerous to the Tsarist government.534 At the same time, some historians see him as being a regular Freemason, and those are Alexander Rybalka and Andrey Sinelnikov, first, they see that he was accepted into the lodge before 1910 when the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia only began to form but did not exist yet.535 Nevertheless, according to mainstream Freemasonry, any Masonic organization which is working under the auspices of a lodge that does not require the belief in the Supreme Being is not regular; there were no regular lodges in the Russian Empire in the early XX century holding to this regularity standard. Most likely he was a member of the Grand Orient of France, which began to open lodges before 1910 in the Russian Empire.

How was the situation between the Russian and Ukrainian political and semi-political Freemasons between 1906-1917? It seems that they had quite similar principles based on either the federative future of Russia, where Ukraine was supposed to have autonomy or their mutual dislike of Tsarism. Probably the latter concept was the strongest among them and it may be simply proved by one single fact, after February 1917 the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia

531 Mikhailo Hrushevsky, Спомини, [Memoirs], # 8, (Kyiv, 1989) at p. 132.
534 Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, [Центральний державний історичний архів України], F. 274, register I, case 12510 - A, pp. 29, 42, 68, 86, 152.
535 Alexander Rybalka, Andrey Sinelnikov, Interview with a Freemason, [Інтерв’ю с Масоном], (Olma Press, 2005) at p. 159.
had virtually fallen apart in Ukraine giving way to local Freemasons. The question of national identity was always extremely problematic for any Masonic group since 1717 in Britain and elsewhere. What is more important, Scotland, England, Poland, Ukraine, or Russia to someone who is supposed to choose between them and their Masonic ‘brothers’? Freemasonry is supposed to formulate some kind of a third position, several principles that unite various ‘brothers’ despite their different personalities and characters. However, it did not always work and especially it became seriously problematic with the political Freemasonry in Ukraine and Russia. The national self-identification turned out to be nearly impossible to overcome, particularly after Nicholas II was removed from power. Both groups or factions did not believe in nationalism or radical separation, before 1917 almost all of them had agreed that after the Revolution or any other change, there will be a federation between those nations that were controlled by the Tsarist system. They all saw the Russian Empire as a “jail of the nations” and sought to free them or at least reorganize on the principles of mutual respect and wide autonomies. Oksana Kryzhanivska had written in her book Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine that the national identity question was the “apple of discord”. There she had cited Sergiy Efremov, a Freemason, historian, and publicist.

“For the opposition speeches in Duma, the brotherhood supplied it with the right materials and gave directives for one or another speech to its friends, who were members of the Duma”. In 1914 Kyiv lodges had achieved an interpolation (appeal) in Duma of the government ban on celebrations of the 100th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko, - “had collected and given the Duma opposition a significant material that was used by Kerensky and others”. 536

Taras Shevchenko was already considered to be the national poet, the symbol of Ukrainian culture and future independence. At this point, Freemasons in Russia and Ukraine were working together in the direction of assisting Ukrainian culture. After all, the whole process of going against the Russian ultra-right chernaya sotnia movement, the most reactionary collection of forces in the imperial government and many others, who simply did not see Ukraine as a separate entity, made Freemasons more or less coherent in Kyiv, Kharkiv, St. Petersburg or Moscow. 537 However, in 1912 when the Russian Grand Orient was being established at the Convent, some issues began to get raised around what is going to be the title of the major Masonic establishment in the Russian Empire. Some wanted to name it the “Grand Orient of Russia”, but some others as Mykhailo Hrushevsky stood on the position of wider autonomies and had proposed the “Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia”, something more compromising to all.

The Worshipful Master had to call the opponents of Mikhailo Sergijovich [Hrushevsky] to order more than once, to sustain the appearance of the “brotherly” atmosphere during the meeting.

536 Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, p. 138. Original source: Sergiy Efremov, Freemasonry in Ukraine, [Масонство в Україні], # 17 (198) at p. 6. [translated by me].
537 Note: The right-wing militias established as the movement after 1905. It was grouped in such organizations as the Union of Michael the Archangel, and others. Its aim was to support the monarchy, Orthodox Church, fight against liberals, socialists, ethnic minorities including Jews and assist the police.
Eventually, the Convent participants had agreed to vote for a compromising solution: title all Russian Masonic organization, the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia.538

The above-mentioned citation from an interview with one of the witnesses of that Convent shows how important was Ukrainian influence in the capital. Masonic provinces were influencing decisions made by the Convent for one simple reason, the whole liberal and opposition movement was heavily dependent on the representatives from Ukraine, the Baltic region [Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia], Georgia, and Armenia. Hence, the political Freemasonry in the Empire was standing on the opposition principles, it was not welcoming the Tsar, then it had to get closer to those Masons, who were standing on the position of their ethnic or cultural interests. Alexander Kerensky was aware of it, he was a liberal and socialist, his view on Ukraine was certainly positive and he did not think that it must be fully Russified and incorporated into the greater Russia. He was well aware of the Russian political and historic claims to Kyiv. Once when visiting the city and its legendary Kyiv-Cave Monastery, he said that Russians will never simply give up their rights to control the place.539 It was true about an ongoing political situation in the country, which in many ways continues until today [as of 2021]. There is no actual reason to say that political Freemasonry during the first two decades of the XX century in Ukraine and Russia was undergoing an internal conflict, but surely those members of the organization, particularly the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, were belonging to often quite different backgrounds. Old Russian elites saw Russia as one undivided country, especially when it came to Ukraine and Belarus. Pavel Milyukov was most likely not a Freemason; however, he had a lot of connections to them, and many of his friends were Freemasons in Russia. As the leader of Kadets - Constitutional Democrats, he was viewed as the republican and conservative, meaning he was not standing on the principles of Tsarism when the question was raised about Ukraine and its political determination.

The Society of Ukrainian Postupovtsi [compromisers], which were supported by the Masonic part of the Kyiv Kadet faction, had wished that the Russian compromisers would support the Ukrainian public demand to give Ukrainians not merely cultural, but also political autonomy. As considered by Andriy Nikovsky, this demand was considered by P. Milyukov as daring, thus, he had categorically rejected it. Milyukov’s reaction was consequential because Russian Freemasons with whom he was closely communicating, were supporting the federal reconstruction of the Russian state only in words, but in reality were hostile to it, while being justifiably afraid of the destruction of Russia.540

Freemasons in Ukraine were standing on the side of Jews, its newspapers were defending Menachem Mendel Beilis in 1913 against ridiculous accusations in ritual murder of a Christian boy, kept standing on the side of Jewish population in 1915 when they were accused of not signing for the army. When one of the local newspapers called Kyivska Mysl’ [Kyivan Thought]

538 Boris Nikolaevskiy, The Russian Masons and Revolution, [Русские масоны и революция], an interview with A. Y. Galpern, Paris, 1928, pp. 54-55. [translated by me].
539 Andriy Nikovsky, Freemasonry in Russia Before the Revolution and at the Beginning of the War. p. 153.
began to lean towards the right political spectrum, the group of - “democratic readers, Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, and Poles” had written a letter to the readers of this newspaper, defending the Jews.\footnote{State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine. F 274, register 4, case 511, p. 174. [ДА СБ України. Ф. 274, оп. 4, справ. 511. арк. 174].} The letter itself was composed right after Alexander Kerensky had visited the city. Also, there were some accounts that Freemasons were members of the editorial board of this supposedly liberal, but suddenly reactionary newspaper, which had reshaped its political views.\footnote{Andriy Nikovskiy, Freemasonry in Russia Before the Revolution and at the Beginning of the War. p. 155.} Was this once liberal newspaper pressured by the government or not, it’s hard to tell right now, but what may be surely said is that there was no actual unity among the political Freemasons of the day. As was noted before, this newspaper and Masonic lodges in Ukraine were strongly defending Menachem Beilis in 1913. Lawyer and Freemason, Dmitriy Grigorovych-Barsky, and Alexander Kerensky were heading the defense team. Eventually, they all succeeded and Beilis was acquitted by the court in Kyiv.

When World War I began, many changes that took place since 1905 began to slow down. Military censorship was not total, but strong enough to halt various papers from getting printed, particularly when they did not speak for the Tsar or defended the Ukrainian autonomy. Some Ukrainian Freemasons became more careful, had to leave, or got arrested. Simon Petlyura [democratic socialist] left Ukraine and came to Moscow, his political ally and a Freemason, Mikhailo Hrushevsky was arrested in 1915, interrogated, and exiled to Siberia as the “Austrian spy”.\footnote{Mykhailo Yeremejiv, On the Backstage of the Tsentralna Rada, [За лаштункаму Центральної Ради], memoirs, # 1-4 (17-20), (Ukrainskiy Istoryk, 1968) p. 98.} As the war unfolded, Ukrainian and Russian political Freemasons were going to different sides of the political spectrum, and things were going sideways for the organization in general. More socialist groups in Russia did not want to fight the war, Ukrainian representatives in the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia thought that the war itself was being fought merely in the interest of the Russian Tsar, or both Kaisers and did not see any Ukrainian interest in it. Ukrainian political activists who were and were not Freemasons began to part ways even with those in Russia, who before were willing to compromise [Russian postupovtsi]. Here is what Sergiy Efremov said about that complicated situation.

The Brotherhood had split into two unequal and uncompromising parts. Majority, mostly Russians, stood on the side of winning the war... a minority, mostly Ukrainians, longed for the “defeatist” position. Arguings in the brotherhood based on this ground did not lead to a total schism or separation of the organization because previous life had united it, but had filled everything with it and was reflected on all its existence\footnote{Sergiy Efremov, Freemasonry in Ukraine, [Масонство в Україні], # 17 (198) at p. 6. Note: Oksana Kryzhanivska, Secret Organizations: Masonic Movement in Ukraine, p. 141. [translated by me].}.

These issues had truly made this organization somewhat incoherent in its actions, however, all the original principles that were voiced before did not disappear. Russians and Ukrainians in the Grand Orient were standing in the anti-Tsarist positions. This issue did not change and as was discussed before, was cementing the organization well enough to prepare the future opposition and planning of the new government that was supposed to get organized after the Tsar’s removal. In February 1917, the monarchy fell, and the role of the Grand Orient...
of the Peoples of Russia is still debatable. However, many of its members had, indeed, planned some activities since 1916, which is quite clear. Freemasons from Ukraine as M. Hrushevsky or Mykhailo Tereschenko [sugar factory magnate and a businessman] were holding top positions in Ukraine’s Tsentralna Rada [Central Council] or the Provisional government in Russia. Tereschenko eventually became the minister of finances in 1917, though he did not hold this position for too long due to the fall of the Provisional government. It may be said that Ukrainian Masonic factions in the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia, whose title was shaped by M. Hrushevsky himself, and in the Provincial lodges established by the Grand Orient of France, were certainly significant. In other words, this particular Ukrainian political Masonic factor during the early twentieth century was influential enough to shape Russian Freemasonry [or Co-Masonry if speaking about the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia since 1912]. When it was capable of changing and influencing the Grand Orient, then it was able to influence the faiths of Russia and Ukraine, making the revolutionary processes closer. Like the Russian political Freemasonry, the Ukrainian Masonic groups had failed to secure the independence of their country. By 1921 their presence in Ukraine was finished with the destruction of both the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Ukrainian State by the Bolsheviks.
Conclusion

This study is explaining the significance of Freemasonry in history; how and when it could shape the world. It was possible and, indeed, especially important to unite all major aspects of this organization, which has so many directions, details, and differences within itself. French Freemasonry may differ from the British, but various Grand Lodges in France differ from each other, too, making any study on the subject more interesting. Russian and Ukrainian political Freemasonry was able to create some form of political opposition, moving and organizing often opposite groups of people, directing them in some situations when others were completely disunited, participate in the government that was to replace the monarchy. The Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia had managed to do something that regular Masonic lodges failed to do during Catherine II and Alexander I, actually trying to influence the events. Traditional Freemasonry that was always standing away from politics had to hide its member’s political aspirations and meld them together at least to show that there is an internal ‘unit coherence’. Freemasonry was not meant to change the political systems, but it was able to do so indirectly while attempting to influence its members. Political Freemasonry, also known as Co-Masonry was always more active when it came to practical matters.

Freemasonry is an organization and a fraternity at the same time, both concepts may be applied and used, however, different opinions will always form on how to define it. Freemasons themselves always prefer to call themselves ‘brothers’ and not members; *fraternity* or the *order* is way more favorable to them. Nevertheless, it is an organizational system that regardless of its philosophy or symbolism has always structured itself as the fraternal order. The ordering principle was inherited from the past and used to portray its structural significance and to raise its importance in terms of historical meaning. Hence the Chevalier de Ramsay’s successful attempts to invent various links to the Knights Templar, which had never really influenced Freemasonry directly. There is simply no evidence of that, and it is analyzed in the study. The medieval monastic orders were a part of the larger religious establishment, its goals were directly connected to the power of one and undivided authority. The Catholic Church was leading and directing the Knights Templar until it had decided to stop protecting it and went into a silent alliance with King Philip of France in the submission of the order. Freemasonry was never meant to be a religion or a cult, the term philosophical society seems to be way more applicable. Ramsay’s work was influential enough to introduce the concept of Templars into Freemasonry. Eventually, the Scottish Rite, the system of *higher degrees* in Freemasonry, included the *degrees*, which have many direct allusions to the Knights Templar. Nevertheless, it was a later invention that got added to Freemasonry. Its original concepts were simpler and more logical, having no allegories pointing at the monastic organizations because the latter was based on religion when Freemasonry was never a religious institution. However, many indirect concepts that are hidden in the Masonic concepts may parallel these monastic organizations, their order structure, but not religion. Additionally, the Knights Templar was always somewhat connected to the Temple of Solomon, though it could just be the stables that they were taking care of, and which were located at the historical sight of the legendary Temple. Still, their title was alluding to it providing importance and respect. Freemasonry was always connected to the
Solomon’s Temple, too, technically making the lodge become the symbolic Temple, making each Freemason a builder, an inheritor of the original and Biblical architect, Hiram Abiff. This parallel with the Templars is undeniable and cannot be forgotten by any researcher. Direct connections to the Templars are hardly found though, and should not be seen as the base of any truly historical theory about Freemasonry.

Masonic connection to the medieval guilds is very real. This theory is based on historical facts, evidence provided by Freemasons themselves, and various convincing symbolisms. All Masonic regalia derive from the guilds, particularly those that were involved in the building traditions. Their organizational features, handshakes, ideas of moving freely from one building site to another, or from one country to another, aprons, gavels, and the system of three degrees, all have been transferred to Freemasonry, but gradually. It did not happen in one day or even one decade, it took at least one century to establish the speculative lodges. Operative and speculative Masons share their common past in the guilds, but if the first was building structures, the second was interested in building man and the world. Building symbolically, and making the world a better place turned out to be the goal, however, before doing so each ‘brother’ was then supposed to change himself. By building the life of one man it is possible to change hundreds and then thousands, the world can change merely if those who are taking care of it become different. This turned out to be the sole value of Freemasonry. It was not centering itself around religion because religion divides and causes conflicts, no matter how honest and great its intentions may be, so Freemasonry began to concentrate on the concepts that were important to the people in general, without going into their cultural, religious, or racial differences. At this point speculative and operative Masons were unified once again by geometry and the laws of physics, both were using them, speculative began to do it philosophically and their operative predecessor literally while building the structures. Also, operative Masons had the system of degrees or classes that was applied to many other guilds, the apprentice, fellowcraft, and master, all steps of knowledge gaining and learning before actually becoming someone, who can do something professionally. This step-by-step tradition was accepted by the speculative Masons in their allegorical and symbolic knowledge and each apprentice had to go through various, also symbolic initiations before attaining the degree of Master Mason. Allegorical meanings versus literal application of the craft.

The ideas of Enlightenment and progress coincided with the establishment of Freemasonry. Its original ideas, goals, and symbols became closely related to the developments that took place in Europe in the 1600s and 1700s, though the root went even deeper into the Renaissance, humanist values, and classical Greece. Pythagorean concepts may be seen in many Masonic symbols and rituals, their geometric and mathematical value is undeniable and is seen by Freemasons as the true revelation of God. It was not invented by human beings, but it was discovered, and its unshakable wisdom was implemented into Freemasonry by its members, who were often mathematicians themselves. Founders of Freemasonry were highly involved in the age of Enlightenment, its developments, and inventions, for example, Jean Desaguliers was trying to unite theology and science while becoming one of the first Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of England [also London before 1738]. Later, Freemasons were giving particular interest in accepting scientists and physicians, philosophers, and progressive political thinkers that were theorizing their political beliefs, not in religion, but in rationality. One such example may go to Thomas Paine, though some historians deny his membership,
however, he wrote on Freemasonry and was personally well known to them. His personality and ideas are discussed in the book. Construction guilds were based on the common collection of knowledge based on mathematics and geometry that was necessary to build cathedrals or other structures, Freemasons became involved with knowledge of the same kind to build themselves and the world.

Religion turned out to be something that could not unite Europe and bring peace, so ideas that were based on mathematics, geometry, and the five senses began to slowly replace it in the hearts and minds of many thinkers. The Reformation was one of the key historical events that shook post-Medieval Europe, it was like the cork that sprang out of a bottle and left everything else covered with sparkles. There was no ruler and philosopher in Europe during the 1500s and 1600s that was not in one way, or another involved with the Reformation. Conflicts of interests and political rivalries shattered the continent bringing destruction and progress at the same time. This paradox gave birth to other ideas that could be non-religious, however, their very existence became possible merely because of the Reformation, or at least with its assistance. If one could question the authority of the Catholic Church, then anything could be questioned, if the Anglican Church wanted to become the mere ecclesiastic and moral authority in post-Henry VIII England, then it had to face more questioning from others. This was the biggest achievement and to some the downfall of the Reformation; suddenly anything could be devalued, cathedrals could be burned, and cities pillaged on the premises of the holiest of ideas. To many, it signified more freedom and further questioning, and particularly a new mistrust in religious authority grew up in England, France, Germany, Poland, etc. Even places that did not know the conflict between Catholics and Protestants were involved in the inner Christian “holy war”; the 1600s were opened to massive uprisings and wars in Ukraine [Ruthenia] against the Catholic and Polish nobles led by the Orthodox Cossacks. Those wars were so devastating that the 1660s became known in Ukrainian history as the “Ruin”. In other words, something had to replace religion, some idea that could be the same for everyone, and it was the driving force between many humanists and philosophers. This was the breeding ground for the establishment of Freemasonry as the brotherhood that did not believe in differences based on religion or politics. Science and rationality were the answer to so many conflicts and wars of religion, but not the Masons themselves who were establishing their progressive ideas on the Seven Noble Arts and Sciences made all these changes, they were an integral part of the larger process that took place in Europe. The guilds had a tradition of welcoming various people into its ranks, as long as they were obedient to the learning process and various internal customs. Many passwords and secret handshakes later used by Freemasons, were implied in the operative Masonic lodges of the stone cutters and builders. The social club began to grow on the remnants of this old and most likely pluralistic tradition of the Medieval guilds, forming a philosophical society of friends that could value politics less than humanistic principles. Stones are cut in such a way that there is no practical or ideal way to influence the process without knowing certain geometric and physical principles. The perfect square will not become more perfect if a king or a religious authority orders it to be so, but merely knowledge can do it. Perfecting the craft of stone cutting, mixing the clay, building ladders, and many other tasks became known only to those who were in the guild, and their brotherhood was above anything else. This knowledge was based not on the religious principles
that could be changed depending on the ruler, who won yet another battle somewhere nearby, so locals had to convert to the religion of their new prince or duke.

The Age of Enlightenment was an accumulative result of it all that took place since the Renaissance had started; the newly discovered lands, the emergence of science and mathematics, and new interest in classical art, all was influencing everything in Europe. At this point, it may be said that Freemasonry became the child of the Enlightenment because it had collected the whole variety of principles of the age. Learning by ascending through symbolic degrees, symbols that reflect on mathematics and geometry, humanitarian principles of unity and brotherhood regardless of religious or political affiliations, all of it was revolutionary. Hence the relative secrecy of Freemasonry, however, its hidden agenda should never be overestimated, the society was always semi-secretive, and its secrets could be in one way, or another get out, so by the late 1700s practically most of its concepts were known to those who were curious. Nevertheless, it still did not become just another philosophical school but remained in the system of order, similar to those that existed in Europe before, particularly the Templars. The monastic system was closely related to keeping secrets of the organization; thus, the Masonic tradition had borrowed a lot from it. Later interest in the Templars and other similar orders from the past became part of these borrowings; some lodges and Rites in Freemasonry wanted to be as if they were true knighthood with chivalric codes of conduct. It was always specifically typical of the Scottish and York Rites. At some point, the latter even began to accept only Christians into their higher degrees with rituals similar to those used in the chivalric orders. Generally, the Masonic initiation is in many ways similar to the one that was used during the ceremony of knighting, turning Freemasonry into another chivalric fraternity, and not merely a brotherhood of friends. The only major difference was that Freemasons never took up arms based on political beliefs or the principles of religious intolerance, so it may be said that their goal was to raise the arms of philosophy. The Age of Enlightenment had its knights and Freemasonry can be surely put amongst them.

How did the organization evolve during those days? The issue was discussed by explaining what drew so many intelligible men into its ranks and whether it was sheer curiosity or a wish to replace everyday life with something new. Finding new friends outside the political interests or the church, was the main reason. Simultaneously, the latter falls into a few categories, some join only because they wanted to find friends and connections, some to be a part of a greater alternative to the belief systems that they were taught since childhood. Freemasonry was surely an alternative to the principles that were learned in the church of any denomination, however, the fraternity itself did not ask for rejection of those beliefs. The only thing that was required stood in the realm of tolerance towards another ‘brother’ in the lodge and surely the humanitarian and geometric concepts had to serve as the clay to hold the whole group together. In other words, the principles of Enlightenment, which were symbolized in Freemasonry, had to become that necessary principle that could not only hold ‘brothers’ together but also change their everyday vision of life. Tolerance is one thing, another is to progress and change, and stop viewing political parties as the sole source of action or religion as the only source of inspiration. In the seventeenth century England had known too many conflicts based on religion and later political infighting between Tories and Whigs, the lodge became something that could be the escaping route. Discussing politics was inevitable, but at least not during or after the ritual opening of the labors in the lodge; ‘brothers’ had to reflect
on the principles of eternity, those very concepts that unite all men on Earth. Pythagorean geometry knew no religious or political infighting, and any lodge had to project itself onto these eternal and unifying concepts. Religion turned out to be something that could be questioned if there was now an alternative. The Catholic Church did not accept Freemasonry which was asking for the oath meaning that the sacrament of confession was not fully capable for a Freemason. The fraternity took ideas of the Enlightenment higher than those of any religion, however, it did not reject religions.

Protestant Christianity was always more tolerant towards Freemasons, this idea is in one way, or another restated throughout the work. At the same time, it must be clearly said that Catholicism was always more conservative and accepted changes merely under its authority. Surely, it should not be stated that there was one big backward position of the Catholic Church. The distrust of Freemasonry could be caused by the larger rivalry between England and Spain, Protestantism, and Catholicism. The study gave a lot of credit to the Catholic Church and its influence on the collection of knowledge during the Medieval period. Renaissance became possible through the preserved classical culture, and it was done by the Catholic Church. All the original speculative Masons were Protestants or at least were raised in Protestant-oriented countries. England and Scotland did not pass any legislation against the newly forming Masonic lodges, the Anglican Church or Scottish Presbyterians also did not believe in any of these restrictions, even though its clerics could become more or less skeptical. Protestantism did not require confessions or total control, something that was crucial to keeping the secret. Many early Freemasons were also Calvinist pastors, including James Anderson and Jean Desaguliers, whose father was not a Freemason, but a pastor. Additionally, the term Grand Architect of the Universe was already previously used by Jean Calvin himself, bringing some parallels between Freemasonry and Calvinism, though there is no direct connection. At this point, it may be concluded that Freemasonry as an organization was developing in the direction of progress, not that it was creating it alone, but it was surely an integral part of it. Questions can be raised about the term “progress” because it may be defined negatively or positively depending on the context, however, Masons were closer to looking at the world the way it is today in the West, therefore they have participated in the shaping of it.

Therefore, so many extremely influential philosophers, writers, scientists, and politicians were members of this fraternity, then logically it made the fraternity influential in the process of changing this world. Voltaire, Diderot, Goethe, Lalande, Franklin, and many others did influence the world in their way, these figures were not the same, but were united by the lodge. Famous Lodge “The Nine Sisters” in Paris was so crucially quintessential in bringing the best minds of France and Europe together that its presence alone may be considered one of the most revolutionary intellectual clubs in history. It did not plan revolutions, as Freemasonry itself did not become the political party, however, it was influencing the direction of politics, science, and life in general through these influential and extraordinary figures. Moreover, it should never be forgotten that each lodge is governed democratically on the principles of the internal system of checks and balances defined in the internal regulations and constitution. This model was before the eyes of every Freemason even before the American Constitution came into existence.

Masonic participation in the revolutions is the subject of many speculations. Surely everything starting with the French Revolution had been carrying some degree of suspicion
pointing at Freemasons. First, many of the discussed revolutions involved ideas that were questioning either feudal or royal order, attempting to replace it with some other order based on constitutions and republican parliaments. Second, many Freemasons were actively participating in these revolutions, French Revolution was not led by them, not as much as the February Revolution in Russia of 1917 or even the American Revolution, however, many ideas shared by Freemasons could be reflected in the programs written by the revolutionaries. This became the biggest accusation against Freemasonry and according to so many conservatives, it was conspiring against Christianity, especially the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. At this point, the influence of Freemasonry on the revolutionary movements and democratic changes in the world could be seriously exaggerated. The study discovers many instances when the role of Freemasonry was overestimated. It was never openly speaking against any religious institution, its members could, but the organization(s) itself had never done it. Everything began to change with the great Masonic schism that took place in 1877 in France, when the Grand Orient of France, one of the most progressive Grand Lodges since the 1770s had decided to start accepting atheists and agnostics. This was not permitted in any other Grand Lodge since 1717. Therefore, the move was considered to be of schismatic nature, and the Grand Orient of France is considered to be irregular until today. Its members became more involved with political life directly, especially on the side of social democrats, socialists, and social liberals. Generally, in the Catholic or Orthodox countries, Freemasonry of both camps eventually became more anti-religious and left-leaning. The future Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia was born out of the Grand Orient of France, but took political activity more seriously and rejected nearly every ritual that was originally implemented in the traditional or regular Masonic lodges. The influence of the Grand Orient of France on the development of France and social liberalism there is quite visible, and many members of the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia had at least tried to actively participate in the Tsars’ resignation in 1917. Many believe that without this organization, which was formed in 1912, the Russian Empire would not fall or not fall that quickly in 1917. Most likely it’s an exaggeration but again, some influential members of it were participating in the February events that eventually made Nicholas II resign. The following Provisional government was mainly led by its members. The political Freemasonry in Ukraine and Russia was influential enough to influence the events, however, most likely the organization itself did not do anything, and only its members did it according to their personal political beliefs. Regular Freemasonry was not openly involved in politics, but it is discussed that Benjamin Franklin was using his Masonic connections in France to curb the country’s politics in favor of the American rebellious colonies. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that not merely Freemasonry was behind the establishment of the United States or that the ousting of Nicholas II was purely in their hands. Freemasonry, especially in its irregular and political forms was not pursuing the ideas of self-perfection only but was more interested in practical issues such as alliances, friendships, and cooperation between various political groups. Notably, it was not capable to influence the events and fell apart before or as soon as the Bolsheviks took power in October 1917. Regular Freemasonry usually sees such Co-Masonic establishments as clandestine and tries to distance itself from them, however, in the eyes of the public both remain Masonic. To most people, the question of regularity is often not known and may not be remarkably interesting.
The ideas shared by Freemasons that were closely related to the principles of Enlightenment became part of their traditions. Freemasonry should not be idealized because it could include different people, however, they did not include violent dictators or rouge individuals, quite contrary, its opponents did possess such dictators and individuals. Freemasons did not build up any ideological or clerical tyranny of any kind. Its influence on the world known today, direct, or indirect participation in the key Western revolutions should be taken into consideration. The organizational role of Freemasonry was powerful enough to contribute to any change that is now seen as something contemporary and modern, however, it was more an integral part of a larger process that shaped the modern world.
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