



Our Red Triangle

Freemasonry and the Holocaust

Juniata Lodge #282
09 January 2012

The Holocaust

- During the holocaust, between 10 and 11 million citizens were murdered by the Nazis.¹
 - Jews accounted for approximately 5.7 million²
 - An equal number of non-Jewish citizens accounted for the rest.³



Germans guard prisoners in the Rovno camp for Soviet prisoners of war. Rovno, Poland, after June 22, 1941.⁴

The Holocaust

- Among the half non-Jewish citizen victims were:
 - Gypsies
 - Soviet POW's
 - Polish and Soviet civilians
 - Homosexuals
 - People with disabilities
 - Jehovah's Witnesses
 - Other political and religious opponents
- Freemasons were considered political opponents.



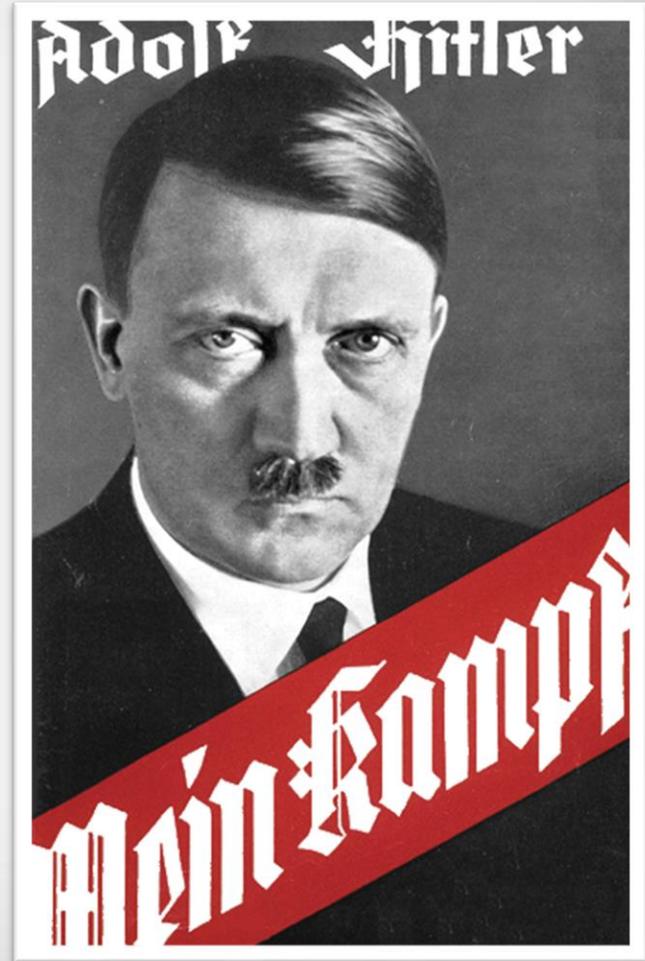
Why?

- An evolution of dislike.
- Nazi ideology believes that high degree Masons were willing members of "the Jewish conspiracy“
- Many believed Freemasonry was one of the causes of Germany's loss of the First World War.



Why?

- 1925 - Mein Kampf.
 - A semi autobiographical writing and exposition of Hitler's political ideology
 - Hitler writes:
 - "The general pacifistic paralysis of the national instinct of self-preservation begun by Freemasonry is then transmitted to the masses of society by the Jewish press."¹
 - In other words:
 - The Masons and the Jews control the press.



Common Cover of Mein Kampf

1. Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 315 and 320.

Hermann Göring

- Reichstag President
 - In 1933 stated:
“...in National Socialist Germany, there is no place for Freemasonry”¹
- Helped Pass the Enabling Act



Hermann Goering in 1932²

1. The Annihilation of Freemasonry". Volume LII, No. 206. The American Mercury. February 1941.

2. Photo: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Goering1932.jpg>

The Enabling Act

- Passed by Germany's parliament (the Reichstag) on March 23, 1933.
- Using the "Act", on January 8, 1934 the German Ministry of the Interior ordered the disbandment of Freemasonry
 - Confiscation of the property of all Lodges;
 - Stated that those who had been members of Lodges when Hitler came to power, in January 1933, were prohibited from holding office in the Nazi party or its paramilitary arms, and were ineligible for appointment in public service.
- Special sections of the Security Service were established to deal with Freemasonry.¹

Freemasonry Banned

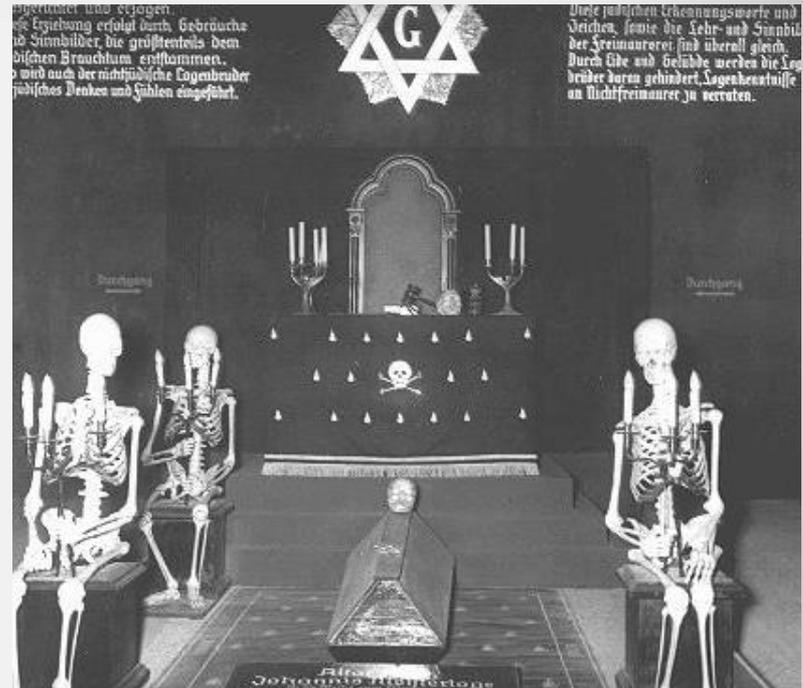
- In Aug. 1935, Hitler announced in the Nazi Party newspaper the final dissolution of all Masonic Lodges in Germany.
 - The article accused a conspiracy of the Fraternity and “World Jewry” of seeking to create a “World Republic”.¹
- The Ministry of Defense forbid officers from becoming Freemasons, with officers who remained as Masons being sidelined.²



Freemasonry Banned

- During the war, Freemasonry was banned by edict in all countries that were either allied with the Nazis or under Nazi control, including Norway and France.

– Anti-Masonic exhibitions were held in many occupied



An antisemitic and anti-Masonic display at the exhibition "Der ewige Jude" (The Eternal Jew), which sought to establish a connection between Jews and Freemasons. Munich, Germany, November 10, 1937.²

1. . Bessel, Paul M. (November 1994). "Bigotry and the Murder of Freemasonry"
2. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media.php?ModuleId=10007187&MediaId=5781>

Sicherheitsdienst

- Heydrich created a special section of the SS Security Service to deal specifically with Freemasonry.¹
 - Called *Sicherheitsdienst* or SD for short²
- The SD, like most Nazis, believed that Freemasonry exercised actual political power, shaped public opinion through control of the press, and was thus in a position to provoke war, subversion, and revolution.³
- In 1939 the SD and the Security Police formed the Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt; RSHA*) and took

Sicherheitsdienst



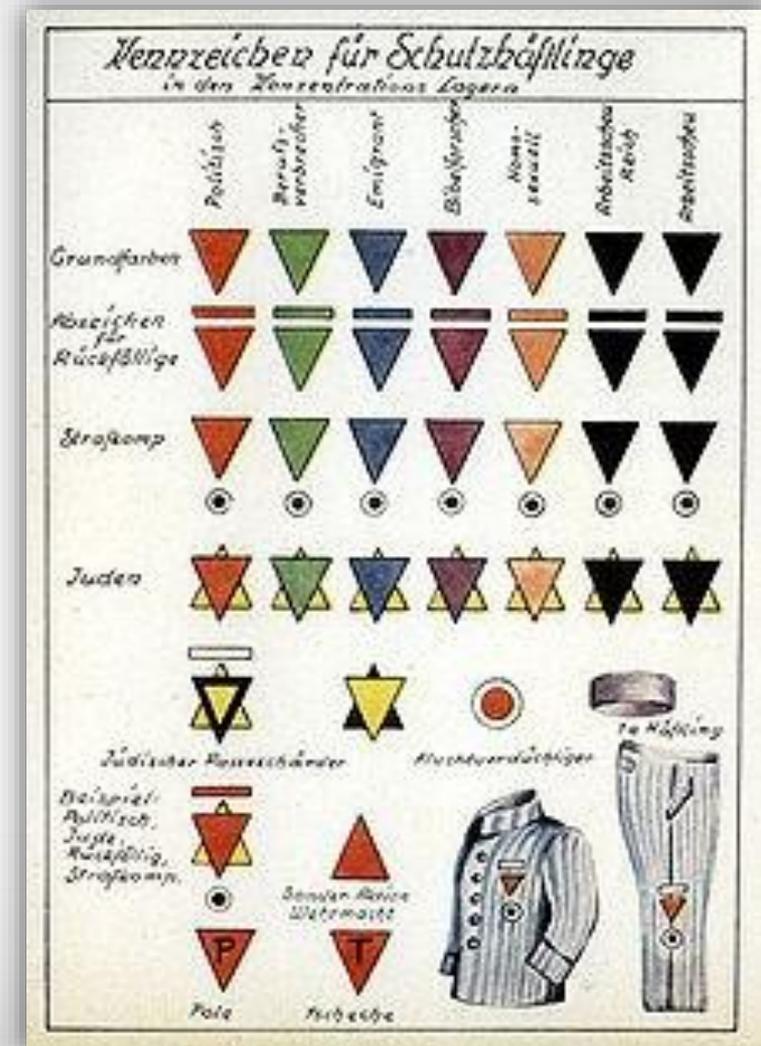
SD personnel in Poland¹

1. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicherheitsdienst>



Grading and Classification

- The Nazis used triangle badges as part of the system of identification in concentration camps. ¹
- Made it easier to identify the reason the prisoners had been placed there. ²
- The triangles were made of fabric and were sewn on jackets and trousers of the prisoners. ³



Grading and Classification

	Political enemies	Professional criminals	Foreign forced laborers or Emigrants	Jehovah's Witnesses (Bible Students)	Sex offenders (usually male homosexuals)	"Asocials"	Roma (Gypsies)
Basic colours							
Markings for repeaters							
Inmates of penal battalions (German: <i>Strafkompanie</i>)							
Markings for Jews							

Grading and Classification

- Freemasons were graded as political prisoners and wore an inverted red triangle.¹



1. Katz. "Jews and Freemasons in Europe". In Israel Gutman. *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*. p. vol. 2, p. 531.



Concentration Camps

- Freemasonry persisted even in the face of genocide.
- Evidence of at least two lodges were found to have existed inside the walls of Nazi concentration camps.^{1,2}



Inmates at Esterwegen.⁵

1,3,4, 5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lodge_Liberté_chérie 2,3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esterwegen>.
2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Rey_\(politician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Rey_(politician)) 3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obstinée>



Beloved Liberty Lodge

- Liberté Chérie or Beloved Liberty Lodge was one of very few lodges founded inside a Nazi concentration camp.¹
- Established inside Hut 6 at Esterwegen.²
 - Prisoner camp used mainly for political prisoners²
- Founded November 1943 by 7 Belgian Freemasons and resistance fighters.³
- Entered, Passed, and Raised at least 2 additional members.⁴



Beloved Liberty Lodge

- The Brethren met for lodge work in Hut 6 around a table, which was otherwise used for cartridge sorting.¹
- A Catholic Priest stood watch, so that the Brethren could hold their meetings; and protected their secrecy.²
- Members described initiation, etc., as just as simple ceremonies.
 - “Ceremonies took place at one of the tables after a very highly simplified ritual - whose individual components were however explained to the initiate;



Beloved Liberty Lodge



- Memorial raised by Belgian and German Co-Freemasons on Saturday November 13, 2004.¹
- It is now part of the memorial site of the Esterwegen Cemetery²

Obstinate Lodge

- L'Obstinée was another Masonic Lodge founded inside the walls of a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp.¹
 - Oflag X-D prisoner-of-war camp near Hamburg.²
- Founded by members of the Grand Orient of Belgium.³
- The Grand Orient of Belgium would recognize the Lodge on 14 July 1946.⁴



How Many Deaths?

- The number of Freemasons from Nazi occupied countries who were killed is not accurately known
 - It is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons were murdered under the Nazi regime.^{1,2}
 - Many Freemasons were also Jewish, so accurate numbers are hard to distinguish.



The Forget-Me-Not

- The small blue forget-me-not flower was first used by the Grand Lodge Zur Sonne, in 1926, as a Masonic emblem at the annual convention in Bremen, Germany.¹



The Forget-Me-Not

- The Nazis used it as a different symbol.
- The Winterhilfswerk (Winter Relief) was an annual drive by a Nazi welfare organization to help finance charitable work from 1933-1945.^{1,2}
- Ironically, its slogan was "None shall starve nor freeze"., and was designed to provide food, clothing, coal, and other items to less fortunate Germans during the



1935/1936 Winterhilfswerk Poster⁴

1,2, 3 <http://www.sovietstores.com/third-reich-day-badges/ww2-german-winterhilfswerk-flower-pink-and-blue>.

4. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winterhilfswerk>

The Forget-Me-Not

- In 1938 the forget-me-not badge was chosen by the Nazis as a symbol for the event.¹
- It is said that the pin was made by the same factory that manufactured a Masonic badge.²
- It is also rumored that this coincidence enabled some Freemasons to wear the forget-me-not as a



Pin from the Winterhilfswerk event

1,2. <http://www.sovistores.com/third-reich-day-badges/ww2-german-winterhilfswerk-flower-pink-and-blue> .

3, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemasonry>

secret sign of
membership during the



The Forget-Me-Not

- But, Is it true?
 - The use of the pin by interred Freemasons is debated.
 - Although plausible, there is no documented evidence that it was used as an identifying mark for captive Masons.
 - Even if this is not the case, this legend quickly placed the forget-me-not in an important position in Masonic history.



The Forget-Me-Not

- After World War II, the forget-me-not flower was again used as a Masonic emblem at the first Annual Convention of the United Grand Lodges of Germany in 1948.¹
- The badge is now worn in the coat lapel by Freemasons around the world to remember all those that have suffered in the name of Freemasonry, especially



1. Bernheim, Alain (2004-09-10). "The Blue Forget-Me-Not": Another Side Of The Story". *Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry*. 2. <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/bernheim3.html>.

Why Should I Care?

- It happened!
- In another time, this could have been us.
- Remembering history assures we don't repeat



Juniata Lodge #282 – Our Red Triangle

THANK YOU!

