

The Temple That Never Sleeps  
Freemasons and E-Masonry Toward a New Paradigm

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A Cornerstone Book  
Published by Cornerstone Book Publishers  
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Published by Cornerstone Book Publishers  
Charlottesville, VA & New Orleans, LA

First Cornerstone Edition - 2006

[www.cornerstonepublishers.com](http://www.cornerstonepublishers.com)

ISBN: 1-887560-68-8

MADE IN THE USA

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# *Chapter 1*

## *A Tale of Two Cultures*

### **I. The start of a journey**

We have taken upon ourselves the task of considering the phenomenon of E-Masonry to see how popular it may be and to find out what its practitioners are saying that it is achieving for them. This includes an initial and exploratory enquiry to see if there was any evidence that E-Masonry provided anything of added value for Freemasons in general or remedies for any possible limitations that may be inherent in contemporary Masonic practice in particular. The view can be taken that the practice of Freemasonry is seriously traditional and, as a benign elder statesman, it espouses a style typical of the way that things were undertaken in former times. On the other hand, E-Masonry may be regarded as a precocious upstart whose legitimate place within Freemasonry is as yet uncertain and without integration.

In the home, workplace, and in the world of leisure and entertainment, e-communication has stormed in, virtually unannounced, and within a generation has dominated. It is connecting with all human activities bringing about rapid and quintessential change to all with whom, and with what, it engages. From “none per desk” to “one per desk” in twenty years is revolution not evolution. This was the length of time that Darwin had spent deliberating over the publication of his *Origin of Species*. How much survival challenge has e-communication posed, how much extinction has already occurred in its wake, and how much yet to come? The view is taken that adaptation is usually necessary to ensure survival in a changing environment. The more rapid the change, the more substantial must be the response. In light of this, it is perhaps inappropriate for Freemasonry to seek to be

immune from E-communication if its essential values are to survive and thrive.

No attempt will be made to solve the philosophical mystery of the Irishman's broom, the same one that has provided excellent service for over twenty-five years albeit with five new handles and four new heads. But, the question remains, to what extent can a thing change and still be what it was? What are the values of Freemasonry that are worthy of the future and in what form are they most likely to survive? Perhaps to consider what a thing was, and is, cannot be isolated from the historical accidents of its origin. However, as environments unceasingly and relentlessly change, a thing in and of its self may have to change in order to continue to achieve, in new circumstances, a sustainable role and relevant contribution: values come in packages the values may outlive the packages. That is to say, if within Freemasonry there are values worthy of the future, there should be no resistance to their form being adapted in order to ensure their survival. The future though, is an imprecise theoretical entity. Sometimes changes have been made in organizations in order to improve future prospects but have seriously damaged the present, and failed to make a positive impact upon the future. Not all adaptations achieve survival!

Before being able to suggest a form that the future might take, it will be necessary to consider the nature of some cultural strands that, when combined, provide Freemasonry with its defining characteristics. As Freemasonry does not have a single global organization (unless the reader is a member of a conspiracy theory lodge) its worldwide manifestation must be regarded, not as monolithic, but as being very diverse. Depending on disposition, some might say that it is a "broad chapel;" others ingenuously may believe it to be "with schisms rent asunder." World Freemasonry can, perhaps, be understood as a territorially based arbitrary collection of tribes, with all that this may entail, including some exclusive policies, procedures and practices.

It would be helpful to be able to turn to a volume of Freemasonry's definitive history; however, no such publication exists. There are many books with the optimistic title, *The History of Freemasonry* but the article may not be as definite as claimed. Very broadly, the view can be taken that there have been three approaches to recording Masonic history. The first was by Freemasons themselves, and it is reasonable to suggest that much of it is romantic, highly creative and is of little appeal to contemporary audiences. These, by and large, seek to demonstrate that Freemasonry began at around the dawn of mankind itself and arrived via the Pyramids, King Solomon's Temple, and the medieval Gothic cathedrals all courtesy of stonemasons organized in lodges. These histories are largely set within, and supportive of, the orthodox Judeo-Christian milieu.

Secondly, and albeit somewhat belatedly, academia has come to realize that accounts of preceding centuries may be incomplete if they do not include reference to records of Freemasonry, people who were Freemasons, and the ideas that may have underpinned their activities. Some stunningly interesting suggestions have been made regarding the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, the people, ideas and practices: soundly argued linkages have been suggested that may indicate connection with modern Freemasonry. These histories are largely neutral on specific religious tradition but, unfortunately, not many artisans are involved.

Thirdly, the rigor of academia, with its silence on matters that are without the benefit of orthodox standards of evidence, does not suit all. Therefore, to meet this market, there has been the spectacular rise of "New Age history." These authors propose highly creative and radical theories that emphasize an esoteric concept of Freemasonry; largely it fundamentally challenges religious orthodoxy and all that it stands for. Again, not many artisans are involved. The volume of such books currently being produced is challenging all previous levels of publications. We are aware of academia's intellectual hostility towards New Age history, and an at least equal hostility to the rewards and

recognition accumulated by New Age historians and authors. This story is set to run.

This exploratory and introductory essay is definitely not a history of Freemasonry, and it is not intended to be understood as such; it is an initial consideration of over seven years' experience of E-masonry, what it may have achieved, and how it may develop. But first, what is it that makes "Freemasonry," Freemasonry and more importantly, what is it that makes a person a Freemason? As indicated above, both Freemasonry and the arrival of e-communication are cultural phenomena, and it is the confluence of their respective milieu that is being considered. We suggest that it may be helpful to avoid the consideration of any differences between "operative" or "speculative" Masons. If such terms are to be considered at all, then perhaps better to consider "operative" or "speculative" lodges. We offer a definition that an "operative" lodge is a unit in the formal regulation of the construction industry of its times. This allows for the possibility that there may be members within it who are without any formal connection, whatever, to the construction industry. Whereas, a "speculative" lodge has no formal connection with the regulation of the construction industry even though, by some remote chance, there may be practicing stonemasons within its membership. It would be a routine task for economic historians to identify the lodges that might belong to either of these two categories.

We suggest that there are seven social components that, when considered in the light of Masonic traditions, combine to provide a reasonable view of the defining characteristics of Masonic culture. They are: the work ethic, the value of education, participatory citizenship, the bond of religiosity, the primacy of fraternity, the imperative of charitability, and the mystery of gender. With a most cautious retrospect, each of these aspects of culture will be very briefly outlined from earlier days to the present. The initial impact that e-communication has made in these areas will be considered and also, how this may be impacting on Freemasonry as traditionally practiced. This will pro-

vide a basis for looking at the data from the questionnaire responses, seeing if E-Masonry is making a contribution, helpful or otherwise. And, to suggest how E-Masonry could be developed to ensure the survival and thriving of what, of Freemasonry's values, may be worthy of the future, and in what form. Hopefully, it will seem like the same broom even though it may have new heads and new handles.

## **II. The Work Ethic:**

For the purpose of this introductory essay, the view will be taken that modern Freemasonry has linkages with work practices on construction sites of yesteryear. (Even though this may leave us open to accusations of a romantic indulgence which may be difficult to refute.) Such sites may have contained a temporary building called a lodge in which stonemasons kept their tools; slept, ate, and socialized; were received into the craft, trained and under whose roof, prices, wages and work standards were agreed. On the other hand, "lodge" may be more usefully understood as pertaining to the collectivity of the operatives. For our brief purposes, the term "lodge" will be used interchangeably. It may also have been the mechanism from which relief was provided for stonemasons and their dependents in time of need. Therefore, the stonemason's lodge may well then have been a nexus for the regulation of part of the construction industry; but, as is often the case, an organization takes on a life of its own and its original purposes can become subsumed by the needs of the organization itself and other matters. A time must have arrived when there was a realization that the strength of the lodge is the mason and the strength of the mason is the lodge. This would have created an ethos in the workplace indicating that work was perhaps becoming more than just a job. Also, perhaps craftsmen of all sorts were identifying with their work. They were not just conduits of divine creativity and skills, as their own faces were appearing in paintings and sculptured scenes.

It is assumed that the main clients would have been the religious, civic and military powers. It is reasonable to believe that operative lodges would have had linkages with these powers, especially if "architects" were lodge members, and that they may well have been over and above that which was strictly necessary for the regulation of the trade. Perhaps an early perception of oiling the wheels of industry? Also, and building on that, as main clients, they each would have wished to exercise some control over the industry in order to obtain priority in times of labor and material shortages, control of prices, and control over standards. This may have led to attendance and participation within the lodge by representatives of the clients. There may have been activities and arrangements within the lodge building, conducted by lodge members that, again, were over and above what was required for the regulation of the stonemason's portion of the construction industry. Many human activities are undertaken with an embellishment of some measure of ritual; over time perhaps, this ritual takes on a life of its own and becomes, of seeming necessity, the way that things ought to be accomplished now and forever and couldn't be done in any other way - so mote it be!

Perhaps it was these additional linkages and activities that became a basis for people, other than operative stonemasons to become "members" of lodges. This trend may have increased and in combination with lodges becoming less central to - and finally no longer part of, the regulation of the construction industry - the lodges became essentially centres of social activity. Yet, and for whatever reasons, there remained a central allusion to being a stonemason, albeit of a theoretical type; or of whatever type that is denoted by the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> Century English term "speculative." But, and by whatever mechanisms, these people had become what are now known as "Freemasons" - it is likely to be the case that very few of them had ever hued, cut or built with stones: but workers they were!

More through inspiration than perspiration and combining with the favorable accidents of birth, Freemasons were num-

bered among the elite at the forefront of wealth creation. Monarchs and parliaments were being required to ensure an internal peace and order that would foster prosperity and facilitate the enjoyment of surplus fruits of labor. And, through this and in the guise of traditional religious conformity, rational and self-enlightened mammon became righteousness (and officers of Grand Lodges).

Individual lodges began to amalgamate by uniting in constitutions, jurisdictions or obediences each being creations reflecting the historical accidents of their birth; their particular space and time. Social groupings do not operate in a vacuum; the implications of being a member of a lodge and the activities of the lodge must have been understood within the context of the contemporary political, religious, social and economic milieu. Freemasonry stood for the right of an individual to work, prosper, and be happy. Any activity by the powers that be that may have challenged this would have incurred, either overtly or subversively, a retaliatory backlash. It is variously claimed that Freemasons had significant involvement with revolutions in England, America and France. Such may well be the case, but interpretations of this are perhaps complicated by the possibility that there were Freemasons on both sides! But of course, bread can be buttered on both sides.

Freemasons may well have challenged the status quo when it has sought to interfere in the pursuance of wealth and happiness. This perhaps does seem to indicate a primacy of the work ethic and a celebration of its successful outcomes. The working tools are the means by which good work is produced; a modern speculative Freemason allegorically transfers the cutting edge of these working tools to carve out his own life of goodness. It is anticipated that in their professional lives, Freemasons will through assiduity produce outcomes of quality and integrity: these values allegorically transfer from the workplace to underpin the rest of life; that is to say, square work equals square life. Perhaps uniquely Freemasonry derives its ethic from the workplace and then applies it to the rest of life. (This perhaps ex-

plains, to some extent, the vocational basis of much primary education.) Freemasons are not expected to go bankrupt. Material success can be regarded as an anticipatable outcome of integrity and assiduity. By, in and through their good works and good lives, professionally, public and private, they believe that they are allegorically rebuilding King Solomon's Temple - a new world order of strength, wisdom and beauty. They are people committed to their own daily personal improvement and through their own good works they are building a better world. They are providing the means of support for themselves and their own dependents, that being the first duty of a person fit for this world and producing surpluses to be enjoyed albeit leaving some portion, without detriment to self or connections, for the deserving needy. By devoting some of that surplus to the cause of the deserving needy, perhaps fitness for another world can be demonstrated. In reality, it is a system of morality that recognizes and celebrates good works which is understood as thereby building a better world for self and mutual benefit in this life and, for those who choose to believe it, in a next.

Formerly, stonemasons may have worked in gangs and any other activities were in groups organized around the demands of the workplace; speculative Freemasons have, for the last two centuries or more, met together in their lodges. However, many of these Freemasons have been employers, professionals and self-employed people with a work flexibility that enabled attendance at lodge meetings and all the other duties commensurate with the maintenance of a thriving social organism. However, perhaps modern work patterns are a challenge to the traditional pattern of lodge meetings. Also, perhaps there are increasingly more lodge members who are not from the professional and managerial workplace and do not have the flexibility to meet the demands entailed in daily Masonic "progress." Will these emerging work styles facilitate attendance at these fixed Masonic meetings and reinforce the traditional pattern of meeting? Or, is there a gulf emerging between modern work practice and

the practice of Freemasonry as traditionally understood and undertaken?

In the generation since the birth of the personal computer, we have seen a dramatic change in the way these devices have, forever, changed the way many people perform the duties of their vocation. PCs and their software applications have made typewriters obsolete by allowing for a quicker means of “written” communications. We can calculate figures and process more data than ever before. We can subsequently send our electronic output to anyone, residing nearly anywhere on the globe, in a matter of seconds. The portable computer and network connection to company systems has allowed people to take more work home, or anywhere else in the world, with them than ever before. With technology driving the pace of business faster and faster, employers are enabling greater outputs from fewer operatives than ever before. This is understood as “productivity gains.” While originally touted as a time-saver, use of technology has allowed each of us the time to undertake more and more work. So while the time it takes to complete a certain task may have decreased, we are now performing many more tasks at a seemingly increasing frenetic pace.

The workplace is also becoming more global. As such, there is more travel involved in many professions than ever before. This, in conjunction with the many other things that now compete for our leisure time, can make attendance at traditional meetings difficult at times. This begs the question, does the content and substance of today’s typical traditional Masonic meeting have what it takes to keep its members interested and coming back for more?

Given the spread of e-working, what might be its impact on the traditional practice of Freemasonry? What limitations might be imposed and how, if at all, might E-Masonry contribute towards their mitigation. This is a fundamental consideration. But before that is examined, having claimed that Freemasonry is about the allegorical symmetry between square work and a square life, how does a person become enabled to produce square

work; what does a person have to know and how is that knowledge obtained?

### **III. The value of education:**

It has to be assumed that those who were responsible for the design and construction of large buildings were people of intelligence, education and training. It is likely that they enjoyed leading positions in the socio-economic structures of their times. Some have written on the European Enlightenment and have made mention of Freemasonry, Masonic lodges, and individual Freemasons. It would be interesting, in the case of some individual Freemasons who made their mark in the mainstream world, to know how much of that could be attributed to their Freemasonry. It may well be inadequate to consider Freemasonry in its 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century appearances, apart from the process of Enlightenment, in its rational, romantic and radical manifestations in Europe and in the European colonial holdings. It may well be the case that the Freemasonry of those times would also have elements more recognizably as being from the earlier Renaissance. But the break with the past achieved through enlightenment was in degrees variously evolutionary as well as at times revolutionary.

An outcome of The Enlightenment was to provide earthly explanations for the phenomena that occurred on earth and the visible portion of the heavens. This was underpinned by a growing belief that reason, rather than revelation, was the substantial basis for the acquisition of human knowledge. It not only enabled the generation of rules to indicate an order of the physical world but also rules for the management of human affairs - government. Science, the paradigm of describing the physical world in terms of prediction and control, enabled and facilitated experiments that could be repeated without any hidden human, or extra-human, attributes of the demonstrator. It may well have accelerated a rise in secularism over spiritualism, and an increasing awareness that the contribution sought to be made by reli-

gious authority into important areas of human life, may be an unfounded and unwarranted intrusion.

Perhaps it was largely in the 17th and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries that alchemy was replaced by chemistry, astrology was replaced by astronomy and Providence was replaced by nature. Mathematics was increasingly seen as the language of the universe providing access to a means of objectively describing the hidden mysteries of nature and science. The term "civilization" has buildings connotations. It may well be the case that those who had the skills to design and supervise construction were an elite and were set apart owing to their knowledge and possession of "secrets" that enabled marking out, constructing levels, perpendiculars in square form, calculating the necessary mass of load-bearing lintels and arches. Therefore, there were those within, or associated with the lodges, who had knowledge and skills and were driven to acquire further learning.

The demands of military strategists and tacticians may well have ensured prominence for those who could deliver fortifications, undermine the fortifications of others, design artillery and build superior ships of war. It may well be the case that those who applied themselves to the emerging learning and its practical application were most likely to succeed. It would appear to be undeniable that the lodges were places that encouraged new learning above and beyond the minimum required for the regulation of the construction industry; and, that the teachers of the new sciences visited lodges and shared the newly discovered secrets of motion, mechanics, fluids and optics – some of these teachers being themselves Freemasons. Therefore, those who can be identified as Freemasons were not so much skilled as artisans but rather the leading-edge designers of their era, taking a lead on technical innovation and progress and acquiring the wealth that was deemed to be the just reward for its successful exploitation.

It is reasonable to suggest that the newly emerging members of speculative lodges were indwelt with the spirit of Enlightenment, the compasses of the emblem and ritual points out

the advantages of education, by which means alone we are rendered fit members of regularly organized society. Just as science could reveal cosmic order and describe nature in terms of prediction and control, so education was the basis for order and control in human affairs.

Masonic ritual exhorts the study of nature and science as a proper daily pursuit. There is also an expectation to make daily advancement in Masonic knowledge and throughout the jurisdictions there are extensive avenues for advancement and “promotions” to recognize progress. Thus, whether in the discharge of daily work of quality and integrity or in the building of a better moral world, the Freemason is enabled to do both through daily study. Therefore, it is a characteristic of Freemasonry that the apprentice progresses to become a master craftsman, a person of quality and integrity and that this is achieved through education. This surely perpetuates the Enlightenment value that humanity, as individuals and collectively can be improved through education. The question has to be asked, how much education for work, home or play is to be derived from attendance at contemporary Masonic lodge meetings?

Today, in many schools and universities around the globe, e-learning at a distance has made substantial inroads into the traditional educational processes. Accredited courses can be taken on-line at the students’ convenience, providing flexibility for the student to perhaps maintain some employment and thereby support his or herself and/or family as well as paying for education. Perhaps following the Masonic tradition, learning is now a life-long process, or perhaps better, life itself is a learning process. Therefore continuous learning is a given for successful contemporary and emerging lifestyles.

Given the changes that e-learning has brought, and may yet bring, how might this impact on Masonic education? Are there opportunities here that E-Masonry in some form might be able to realize? Is e-learning a possible way of delivering Masonic learning through E-Masonry? It may well be, however, and before considering a possible future role for e-learning and given

that the compass points out that education is the only means of fitness for a regularly organized society, what is the linkage between Freemasonry and a regularly organized society?

#### **IV. Participatory Citizenship:**

Those who have read about Freemasonry's past will be aware of claims that Freemasons were active in the English, American, and French revolutions. We are not aware of any official denial of this, and it comes to mind to ask if their involvement was an outcome related to their Freemasonry. However, an understanding of such is clouded by the likelihood that there were Freemasons on either side of each conflict. It is perhaps overly romantic to suggest that the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Wat Tyler, leader of the English Peasant's Revolt was really a Wat the Tyler of Masonic constitution. The unsuccessful insurrection concluded with Tyler's own demise by drawn sword - perhaps the only Masonic connection.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Century could certainly be described as one of revolution in England. The first half concluded with the demise of the King, and again with a drawn sword - and yet again, perhaps that is the only Masonic connection. The English historical record of this half of the Century has yet to reveal any useful detail of the existence of lodges either as buildings or as identifiable groups of people. Therefore, to suggest an organized Masonic involvement on either side is perhaps extending beyond what can be demonstrated. This was not a time of mass participatory citizenship. What little might have remained of the guild system may have been picked over by the then powers that be; although, in the dispute over sovereignty between the King and Parliament, power vacuums were perhaps being created and filled - the old order breaking down and new ways of doing things were emerging.

For most people the choice between King and Parliament was perhaps hardly informed. It wasn't as though more than a handful had a vote, and it was perhaps largely a choice of which

side to die for. Whether or not a King should rule with or without Parliament, that is to say, where sovereignty should reside, is hardly a question or issue for people consumed by a daily toil against hunger, disease and poverty - the battle for survival. Unless of course they believed that one of the protagonists really held the key to a better land, either on this earth or the keys to a kingdom elsewhere. But, since the Reformation starting in the previous century, if not before, groups espousing radical forms of Christianity had been more openly questioning the status quo in general and the concept of private property in particular. Some, having sided with a victorious Parliamentary side in the English civil war, were debating with their leaders for a revised order.

If kings were those who successfully led conquests of lands and people, using the time honored means of murder, rape and pillage, then perhaps Cromwell was no different. Upon having "royalty" thrust upon him, his priority was the traditional kingly one of retaining his gains by making his foes, within or without, real or imaginary, the footstool of his feet. Perhaps it is the case that what was left of the guild regulation of trades, stonemasonry included, finally fell over. The Commonwealth Period may well have been a time for the reformation of social grouping, and perhaps it may be the case that it was from about this time that the term "constitution" was first applied to a document listing the aims and rules of an organization.

Other than for the House of Stuart, "Restoration" is perhaps not the most appropriate appellation for the times following 1660. The need to rebuild a fire-ravaged London and for improved military shipping, combined with a lack of serious religious conviction or leadership flowing from the King, may have provided a catalyst for scientific and technological advancement. That timber was no longer a preferred material for the rebuilding of London and that stone and brick were specified by regulation may have had some impact on the way tradesmen were organized in the construction industry. However, in our view, it is unlikely that speculative Freemasonry's membership was significantly

drawn from among the artisans or any outside of the existing franchise.

Charismatic King notwithstanding, he was aware that he had been invited to return by Parliament, however his succeeding brother did not likewise defer and the Glorious Revolution saw his exile. Subsequent legislation can be understood as making important statements. Sovereignty resided in Parliament by virtue of a transfer of the people's sovereignty, that of the small minority who were enfranchised, to the members of Parliament. It is likely that it was from this electoral elite and the elected members of Parliament themselves that the majority of speculative Freemasons were drawn, especially from Dr. Locke's emerging Whig party. Legislation ended the principle and practice of kings ruling by Divine Right: Religious authorities also became subject to Parliament. This ended the Divine Right of God to rule through his Church, and anointed priesthood, in matters now deemed to be secular and thus the prerogative of the state. A view has to be taken on how much of this was achieved by people of Enlightenment and how many of them were members of speculative lodges. If there were any, was this activity as individuals or was there an ethos within the lodges that was liberal, progressive and secular that supported social change in general and participatory citizenship in particular?

It may be the case that the 1723 Constitution of the self-proclaimed Grand Lodge of England, whatever that may have been, was a political document supporting a constitutional non-Roman Catholic monarchy and a tolerant established church with theological pragmatism having been cloned into the DNA of Anglicanism. Also, this Constitution may have been promoting the primacy of internal peace and prosperity with emphasis on the former to ensure the realization and enjoyment of the latter. Perhaps the age of the demonstrable and explicit sovereignty of the economy was arriving. The reason why political and religious discussion was prohibited from the lodge may not have been to prevent disputation among members at all. Rather, perhaps because there was nothing to discuss, these issues were

fixed and not open for consideration. That is to say, the politics was Whig, and the religion was prosperity. The first recognized British Prime Minister, a man who personified the body politic for nearly the whole of the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, has his portrait, painted in the regalia of Grand Steward, in UGLE Headquarters, perhaps just a coincidence? The Act of Toleration was intended to supersede violent disputation on matters of theological interpretation – domestic peace and prosperity were far more important!

The spread of speculative Freemasonry through the 18<sup>th</sup> Century was substantial. In each resting place it was adapted to suit local circumstances and its development locally had a life of its own. This spread was through diplomats, political activists, entrepreneurs and the military. This included the “colonies”.

In the former British colony now known as the United States of America, Freemasonry “officially” arrived in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Grand Lodge of England appointed a Provincial Grand Master in 1730 for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. So begins “official” Masonic history in the Colonies. Over the next forty or so years, numerous lodges were created, warranted or otherwise, from several Grand jurisdictions, most notably under the Grand Lodges of England and Ireland. Many of these lodges existed right up until the time of the American Revolution where, no doubt, those who wished to go to war mixed with those who were loyal to the crown. It may be suggested that those who had the most to lose over “taxation without representation,” were the wealthy and elite citizens of their day. It was they who perhaps saw an increasingly substantial tax burden as a threat to their pursuit of happiness and rallied their fellow citizens to their cause.

Perhaps it was in continental Europe in general and France in particular that The Enlightenment, Freemasonry, and Freemasons can be most readily identified with seriously subversive political activity. If “Brother” Rousseau and his Common Will, “Brother” Voltaire with his atheistic attacks on the ancient regime and “Brother” Robespierre with his cult of the Supreme

Being saw a harmony between their political writing and activity, and their alleged Freemasonry, then Freemasonry may well deservedly share some of the “blame” for the Revolution: the aforementioned Brethren certainly providing the vocabulary of the revolution. This may indicate the possibility of Freemasonry, in its local and regional manifestations, being a grouping of politically active people with a common agenda. They may have been people with a shared vision of the way the world should be that was inseparable from, even synonymous with their Masonic perception of rebuilding the Temple of King Solomon. But this, then, does lead to considerations of Masonic secrecy and subversion.

Kings and governments are occupied with fears of enemies without and within, and are troubled by the existence, real or imagined, of secret societies. They, by definition, can only be understood as a threat. Freemasonry has been variously denounced as a secret society and proscribed, has been exempted from legislation pertaining to secret societies, and has also been openly allowed and practiced. Perhaps there is only one secret in Freemasonry and that is that there are no secrets; but, on the other hand, if Freemasonry had and still has secrets, then not having any is what Freemasons would want you to think! (Ah, the joy of conspiracy theories.)

During the 18<sup>th</sup> to the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the franchise was extended in various polities. Given the position of Freemasons at the upper echelons of power there was a check and balance of influence to ensure that in the implementation of the ideals of democracy, it may well have been the case that nothing was done to significantly harm the interests of Freemasonry in general, and Freemasons in particular. Until, that was, the coming to power of National Socialism. Inherent within its ideology was a zero tolerance of Jews, a faith community who had achieved integration into all areas of society including Freemasonry. It is reasonable to believe that many non-Jewish Freemasons defied the law and provided rescue, shelter, and evacuation for “Semitic” brethren. In the UK, the arrival of a new Gov-