

# FREEMASONRY AND TOTALITARIANISM

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Why do Dictators stamp out Freemasonry? Why is Freemasonry forbidden in Italy, Germany, what was Czechoslovakia and Austria, Russia?

Perhaps no question is more often asked by American Freemasons or more seldom answered intelligently.

It is not sufficient to say "Oh, Dictators cannot afford secret societies - they might foment plans against the totalitarian State." Nor is it a complete answer to say "Totalitarian States. control religion, dictate the one and only worship of God permitted, or forbid church and religion altogether, and Freemasonry is predicated on a belief in and worship of the Great Architect." Both these reasons are a part of the whole, but the whole is much larger. Completely to understand why Russia, Germany, Italy have outlawed Freemasonry, it is necessary clearly to understand just what a totalitarian State is, and why it comes into being.

It is a fundamental law of humanity that men cannot live together without order, and order presupposes rules and laws. The earliest cave men must have had some simple laws, or they could not have existed. Suppose one hundred men are cast away on a desert island. Individualists all, they agree among themselves that they will live without any laws, each doing exactly as he pleases. One man begins to till a field, that he may plant, reap and eat. Another constructs a house, that he may have shelter. A third gathers wood that he may build a fire. Come three other men, who would like to eat, to live in a house, to be warm. They kill the first three men and take possession of their work. A third set of three men. seeing this, steal the labor and the products of those who have murdered to possess what they have. A fourth three capture the third three and tie them up. Come six men who liberate the prisoners and all nine fight with the rest. Murder, theft, imprisonment without justice, all result when brute desire and force are uncontrolled by laws. Finally all that are left of the hundred get together and agree that for the, mutual protection of all, they will not kill, steal, imprison, interfere each with his neighbor. But a few individualists insist on doing as before - therefore, penalties for the infraction of law are provided. One or two are made policemen, to enforce the will of the majority, expressed in the law. The men live more happily, more comfortably. Gradually more and more rules and laws are made. Property is protected, human rights are respected. A man is safe from attack.

Individualism persists - it is more controlled now, but it still interferes with the good of the whole. So more and more laws are made: if three laws make us happy, six ought to make us happier, and sixty, happier still, is common, if fallible, human reasoning. Gradually the laws interfere with a man's fight for existence; not only can he not kill, steal, imprison at his own will, but he cannot have as much land as he wants, cannot kill game when he, wants, cannot destroy his forest as he will - and he finds his laws (his civilization) getting more and more complicated, his struggle for existence more difficult, his success in the pursuit of happiness, less and less.

It is from such a society, infinitely ramified and extended, multiplied, that totalitarianism evolves. The struggle for existence becomes a greater load than many men can bear; the idea that if the State controls all it will provide all, gains headway. Presently a Dictator arises, or is forced out of the population, into power. Instead of people making their own laws, he makes them. Instead of a rule of law, there comes into existence a rule of men, or of one man. Individuals gradually come to the point where they are more contented without the individualism which they have sacrificed for protection, security, the comfortable sloth of letting some one else do their thinking for them.

Behind every law of man by which men live together is the power of force. Do as the law says or go to jail. Obey the rules or have your property confiscated. Police, soldiers, jails, fines, concentration camps, torture chambers - they add up to one word - fear. Instead of obeying their mutually agreed upon laws for the protection of all, because they will, men learn to obey laws because they fear the consequences if they do not.

When the law is that of a monarch or a dictator, his penalties are also his own. Fear grows. And from growing fear comes revolt; first hidden; then collective and secret, finally open - and we have a French Revolution, or a Declaration of Independence and thirteen Colonies fighting their way to freedom.

What has happened abroad has followed the old familiar pattern of history. The present success of Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini must be in large part ascribed to the belief of their peoples that security is better than freedom, that a State which is more important than its people can also give its people more than a State in which the people are most important.

All this may be phrased a "swing to the left." But the natural laws governing any pendulum also control the swing of emotion and thought. The very individualisms which, uncurbed, brought the need for law, now begin to fight against too much law, too much power, too much loss of inherent rights which every man knows to be his, be his vocabulary to phrase them no matter how small.

Freemasonry, like all other philosophies, religions, ideals, ways of living, came being in response to a demand in men's hearts for spiritual freedom. A man needs mental and moral food as much as he needs food for his stomach. He will get it, in some way: by church; by Lodge; by association; by club; by organization; by "the men's house"; by philosophy; by preachers; by a Great Light containing his idea and ideals of religious and moral thought.

Man is as incurably religious as he is incurably an individualist. He is not responsible for this; it is a condition, not a theory, which surrounds, permeates and controls him. His whole life a struggle for existence, a pursuit of material and mental happiness, he is as dependent upon the idea of a Higher Power, a future and better life, as upon bread and water. Billions of men in a thousand religions feed this inner want, this insatiable demand for something better, through church and religious teachings.

Millions find in the Ancient Craft an additional outlet for their inner yearnings; its universal symbols, its simple if profound philosophy, its gentle if steel-strong teachings, welded into a

whole through uncounted years, provide for each man what he can take to nourish his individual spiritual requirements.

Here, then, is a fundamental conflict. The Dictator says "I am the law. What I say, you do. You must give me unquestioning obedience. You are but a part of a whole, and the whole is infinitely more important than a part. I will control your labor, your purchases, your eating and drinking. I will tell you whom to marry, how many children to have. I will tell you how many hours to work and what work you shall do. That you may have no gods before me, you shall have no God at all. You shall not think for yourself - I will think for all of you. In return, I will insure you a job, security, protection, happiness."

Freemasonry says nothing like this. She offers every man a wide choice of what he will believe in regard to life and religion. Her laws are never a compulsion; men obey the laws of Freemasonry because they wish, rather than because they must. Masonic trial and punishment are extremely rare (compared to the total number of Freemasons). Freemasonry believes in and teaches respect for law and obedience to country and to ruler.

But the idea of country and of ruler is that of a nation made for the people, not a people made for the nation. Her ideal of a ruler is one who carries out the will of the people, not one who carries out his will on the people.

Freemasonry encourages men to think for themselves. She teaches by symbols, and every man may interpret those symbols as he will. Dictatorships encourage all men to stop thinking for themselves and to leave to the authorities the interpretation of everything. Freemasonry believes in the right of the individual to earn, to hold, to own. The totalitarian State believes that the earnings of the individual belong to the State, that the State alone may hold, that all property, as all human rights, are vested in the State.

Freemasonry's greatest, most fundamental, most important teachings are those of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The totalitarian State says no god is above the State; if worship of and obedience to God conflict with obedience to the State, God is to be thrown out the window, His churches destroyed, His Holy Writ burned.

The brotherhood of man is predicated upon the idea that men can live together in harmony, even with different ideas and ideals, if they construct their lives along lines laid in unselfishness, toleration, mutual trust and respect.

The totalitarian State is built upon force; upon the idea of punishment not only for infractions of law, but for infractions of the will of the Dictator.

Freemasonry encourages men to believe what they will, so those thoughts, interpretations and beliefs are within her fundamental teachings.

The totalitarian State not only forbids thinking, interpretation and belief, but even to listen to a contrary doctrine is a crime.

That which is built upon force and the imposition of a superior will upon a subject nation, can only be maintained by force which compels obedience to the superior will.

That which is built upon love of God, respect of man for man, humanitarianism, the Golden Rule, must be eradicated, stamped out, done away, if the rule of force is to exist.

It has always been so. And in every land, in every age, in every country where men have made themselves as gods, and ruled as gods with all power over man and over law, over family and over liberty, all free associations of men have been forbidden. As night cannot exist while the sun shines, as an object cannot be both in motion and at rest at the same time, as sound and silence cannot be coexistent. so dictatorships and Freemasonry, totalitarian States and free religion cannot have being at the same time.

When force is the major law. all other law must go. When the higher law is a greater desire in men's hearts than the servitude - bought security of the State for the sake of the State then dictatorship ends, and human freedom once more asserts itself.

There is no man living wise enough to say when conditions abroad will be different; no man can say when Freemasonry may rise from tier destroyed temples, her confiscated bank accounts, her ruined organizations.

But that she will rise again, even as will destroyed religion, burned books, broken churches, is as inevitable as that day follows night. The history of the world proves it; the line on the chart of man's search for light goes up and down, but in the long perspective and the greater years, the slant is always up.

During all the years of ebbing and flowing civilizations, rulers, tyrants and dictators have tried to kill ideas and ideals by force.

It has never yet been done.

It is not being accomplished now.

The totalitarian State cannot live if the ideas of Freemasonry survive - therefore, the need for the eradication of Freemasonry.

But Freemasonry, like religion and God, is not inherent in temples and books and charters and meetings and organizations.

The foreign eclipse of Freemasonry can only be temporary because no dictator, no totalitarian State, has ever found a way to control a man's heart.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." And Freemasonry abroad, even as here, lives as it must begin: in men's hearts.