

Anti-Masonry



Anti-Masonry, or Anti-Freemasonry is defined as "avowed opposition to Freemasonry". However, there is no homogeneous anti-Masonic movement. Anti-Masonry consists of radically differing criticisms from sometimes incompatible groups who are hostile to Freemasonry in some form.

Freemasonry has attracted opponents from early in its history. Nineteen years before the formation of the First Grand Lodge in 1717, a pamphlet appeared in the streets of London attacking Freemasonry as being a devilish sect of men and evil-doers. The Grand Lodge did nothing to stop the attacks on Freemasonry.

In 1826, William Morgan disappeared from the small town of Batavia, New York, after threatening to expose Freemasonry's "secrets" by publishing its rituals. His disappearance caused Anti-masons to claim that he had been kidnapped and murdered by over zealous Masons. Arrests and trials in connection to Morgan's disappearance sparked a series of protests against Freemasonry, which eventually spread to the political realm. Under the leadership newspaper editor Thurlow Weed, an Anti-Jacksonist movement became (since President Jackson was a Mason) the Anti-Masonic Party. This political Party ran presidential candidates in 1828 and 1832.

There is an extreme end of the persecution men have been subject to because of their affiliation with Masonry. In 1922, Bolsheviks outlawed Freemasonry in Russia and was not permitted to return until after the fall of communism. In Italy, Mussolini began jailing and murdering Masons when he came to power in the 1920s. Franco in Spain set aside a special budget to suppress Masonry and imprisoned thousands. In 1934, Hitler ordered the disbandment of Freemasonry considering it a threat against the Reich. Masons were imprisoned in concentration camps and graded as "Political" prisoners, and required to wear an inverted (point down) red triangle. The exact number of Freemasons from Nazi occupied countries who were killed is not known, but it is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons perished under the Nazi regime. Freemasonry is illegal in most of the Islamic world. It is prohibited in all Arab countries except Lebanon and Morocco.

Some anti-Masonry results from a misunderstanding of the Fraternity, some from jealousy of those who are not members, and some from political regimes who are intolerant of those who are not under their control. But some anti-Masonry results from the actions of Masons and our inability to more simply explain Freemasonry to the world at large.

Freemasonry does have secret signs, tokens, and words by which we are known to one another, but we are not a secret society. Masonic "secrecy" has nothing to do with hiding anything from non-Masons that we do not wish the world to know. Our principles and teaching are, and should be, public. How we communicate those principles and teaching forms the basis of our "secret" work – the ritual through which Freemasonry is taught. We owe no apology of explanation to the world for this fact. But we should never shy away from telling the story of Freemasonry openly to others. Light is an important Masonic symbol, and it is an important privilege and duty to share the light of Freemasonry with others.

