

The Holocaust

The preserved records of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (the Reich Security Main Office) documents the persecution of Freemasons in Nazi Germany. RSHA Amt VII (Written Records) was overseen by Professor Franz Six and was responsible for "ideological" tasks, by which was meant the creation of anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic propaganda. When the Nazis came to power, policy towards the Freemasons was equivocal. Efforts to eliminate the Freemason did not receive top priority. Those lodges that espoused tolerance and equality and had international connections or connections through their leaders to the Social Democrats or liberal democrats were subject to persecution and often pressured into "voluntary" dissolution. During the summer of 1934, after Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich completed their takeover and centralization of the Gestapo, the German police forcibly closed down many Masonic lodges and branch headquarters of the Masons and confiscated their assets, including their libraries and archives.

Masonic concentration camp inmates were graded as political prisoners and wore an inverted red triangle (with the letter "P") sewn on their clothing (image below) or in the form of an armband. While the number is not accurately known, it is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons died at the hands of the Nazis.

Forget-Me-Not Flower

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. In 1938 the forget-me-not badge – made by the same factory as the Masonic badge – was chosen for the annual Nazi Party Winterhilfswerk, a Nazi charitable organization which collected money so that other state funds could be freed up and used for rearmament. This coincidence enabled Freemasons to wear the forget-me-not badge as a substitute for the square and compasses as a secret sign of Masonic membership.

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. 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 those during the Nazi era.

