



Grand Lodge Bulletin

Editor: S. CARL HECKBERT, P.G.M., Vermilion, Alberta

The Inquisition In Spain

This article was published in the Royal Arch Mason, the official publication of the General Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons. It is vouched for by P.G.M. Ray Denslow of Missouri, who says, "The writer of this article is an accurate and reliable newspaper writer, and a Freemason of long standing, whose work often calls him into Spain. You will understand that it is important that his name be concealed."

I have been glancing over the recently published volume 10,000 famous Freemasons and I am struck with the fact that the names of Spanish brethren are missing. A pile of documents on my desk tell the reason. These documents are from a country where the law declares Freemasonry to be an offence; they tell of scores of Freemasons who have been sentenced to twenty or more years in prison — the sole reason being that they were members of the Masonic Fraternity. It is a strange contrast with conditions in other parts of the world, but this is how it happened.

A member of the Craft in my country, deeply moved by what he had heard of the suffering of Freemasons in Spanish prisons, and about the misery of their families, wrote a short article for one of our Masonic magazines; in the article he asked his brethren to assist him in doing something for these poor people. He received some response to his appeal, and endeavoured to remit it to the families concerned.

This was not easy to do. He had to return the funds! The reason? He could find no trustworthy person, who, without risk, could pass on the money. Finally he found a way for this Samaritan action. It would be unwise to describe the method of delivery.

I have been left with that great pile of papers, legal documents, sentences of special tribunals, notices of appeal, and petitions. I can do nothing. Living in a free country, with an independent judiciary, and one which is impartial, it is difficult to imagine what it means to be exposed to a dictatorship, and to "laws" (?) and judges, all in the hands of one dictator and his henchmen — with no trace of a free press which might protest against lawlessness and injustice.

We have studied these papers carefully; they have been examined by small committees of lawyers who are Freemasons, and we think it

absolutely necessary, and our duty, to call it to world attention that here is a country which has diplomatic and friendly relations and is living under conditions which existed during the terrible Spanish inquisition. These articles completely confirm the article on "Spain" in Freemasonry in the Eastern Hemisphere, and they give the exact details of that horrible situation.

The Spanish Government classes Freemasonry with Communism, which is nothing more than cheap propaganda for those who know that Freemasonry has nothing in common with communism. I have here on my desk the photostatic copies of 21 sentences by which 21 men were condemned in terms of twelve to twenty years in prison. Some of these have been temporarily released on one or another ground, but according to information as late as May 1958, eight of the 21 are still alive, and still in prison, their families being destitute.

Do you know what their crime was? Not that they have acted against the Government of their country; not that they have in any way attempted to stir up the people against this lawlessness or persecution by the authorities. No, according to their official sentences it is only because they were accused of being Freemasons, under a law passed in March 1940, which was dictated by the Franco Government for the "suppression of Freemasonry and Communism"—probably the only place in the world where these two opponents are dealt with in the same terms.

Under paragraph 4 of this law, Freemasons are those who have been integrated in Freemasonry (the law calls it sects), who have not been expelled, or explicitly revoked their relations with it, and those who have been authorized by the "sect" to appear as if they had been alienated from it. Paragraph 5 states the penalty to be light confinement, which is changed to severe confinement under different aggravating circumstances.

According to another paragraph of the penal law, minor confinement lasts from 12 years and one day to 20 years; severe confinement extends from 20 to 30 years, which is the ultimate penalty

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EDITORIAL

Bro. J. Ray Shute, writing in the Ashlar, one of the better known and highly regarded Masonic publications expresses himself, under the title of "The Traditions of Freemasonry" as follows:

"I believe in the traditions of Freemasonry; I am persuaded that it can be a vital, motivating force in the world today. I am constrained to believe that we will meet the challenge of these times. I do know this: there never was in all the history of Freemasonry a more opportune time for our gentle, peace-loving, rational and democratic fraternity to show to the world exactly where we stand and for what we stand. It is a time for decent men and decent societies of men to stand up and be counted! This is no day for passiveness, for middle-of-the-road travelling, for inaction, for indecision, for moral neutrality—the walls of the retreats must come down.

We must leave our tiled and hidden sanctuaries and come out into the daylight of our world, where real problems are to be solved, where real battles are to be fought, where real decisions are to be made. We can no longer isolate ourselves and live apart from the realities of life—we are a part of every single event that occurs and every problem of our day should be of deep concern to us. If we, as an organization, make no united effort to help solve the burning issues of this generation, then, in my opinion, we have lost whatever right we had, to perpetuate our fraternity. Survival, then, as we want it, is predicated on Service to Humanity."

The thoughts expressed in this arresting article are in the minds of a good many members of the Masonic fraternity in these troubled times and we have a perfect right to ask ourselves if we, as Masons, are doing everything possible to help in the alleviation of the distress that is so evident on every hand. Crises are being faced almost daily by the great powers of the world, national and international problems demand the closest attention and, even in our own communities, questions arise, from time to time, that we, as Masons, always having in mind the strict injunctions so firmly impressed upon our minds in the teachings of Masonry, must lend our aid, in our own individual ways to the solution of the difficulties by which we are beset. We must ask ourselves whether or not we have the right to withhold our respective strengths from the great tasks with which our communities, our Provinces and our whole nation are faced. That we have individual and collective responsibility cannot well be denied and perhaps this is the time for a good deal of soul searching and for the exertion of the very best that we can give as an aid to peaceful and happy solution.

SCH.

MASONRY—THE MIGHTY PARADOX

Masonry is the mighty paradox of the ages. It is not a benevolent society and yet its charities are the largest of all fraternal organizations. Our charities are the natural expression of men who have learned the genuine meaning of charity.

Masonry does not solicit membership, yet its membership is the largest of any fraternal organization in the world.

Masonry does not claim to be a religion, yet its teachings embrace the fundamental principles of all true religions. It has only a single dogma, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man. It recognizes the right of each brother to the religion of his choice, while it offers men of various religious affiliations the opportunity to meet as brothers.

Masonry is referred to as a "Secret Society". It has modes of recognition which are secret, but our principles are published far and wide. More than 25,000 books have been written on the subject of Freemasonry.

The genuine secrets of Masonry are the secrets of the Universe. The acorn grows into a mighty oak, and the entire process is one of secrecy and silence. The sun proclaims a new day, and it, too, is a force of secrecy and silence.

We see the lodge building in the community but we still do not see or hear the heartbeat of Masonry. We may hear of an incident where a child is given shelter and love, or a crippled child, whose parents cannot afford to pay for hospitalization and surgery, is made to walk again; a widow may receive a basket of groceries; a young man aspires to be a Mason like his Dad, and all this is included in the vast mysteries of Masonry.

Our membership is not a membership of men who have achieved greatness, yet through the ages it has attracted the great. The poets, Goethe, Burns, Scott, Kipling, and others have left us immortal lines inspired by their love of Masonry.

Masonry is indeed the Mighty Paradox of the ages.

Masonic Messenger.

WHAT MASONRY IS—AND IS NOT

Masonry is not a Temple of Mysteries, nor a Repository of Rituals, nor a Reformatory of the Fallen, nor a Branch Office of a Benevolent Society, but the happy and restful, refined and intellectual home of men of goodwill and good sense; Brethren, not Bondsmen, men of brain and brawn, young men and mature men, drawn and conciliated together by some magnetic affinity of association for more than mere gregariousness; just average men in a world of motion and emotion, of aspiration and purposeful progress—men who discover one another and realize themselves in close and familiar association and who have realized that the Brotherhood of man begins with the Manhood of the Brother.

Trinity Valley Lodge Bulletin.



W. Bro. A. A. Pruett, King Solomon Lodge No. 41; V.W. Bro. T. A. Pruett, Mosaic Lodge No. 176; Bro. A. A. Pruett, Barclay Lodge No. 90, B.C.

WITHIN THE CRAFT IN ALBERTA

FAMILY TRADITION MAINTAINED

Barclay Lodge No. 90 at Port Alberni, B.C., was the scene of a pleasing occasion on November 24th last, when W. Bro. Dunk and a Degree Team of Royal Canadian Mounted Police personnel from Victoria conferred the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on A. A. Pruett, a member of the Force presently stationed in the Vancouver Island Detachment. The exemplary manner in which the work was conducted was an inspiration to the newly raised Brother and a pleasure to all in attendance.

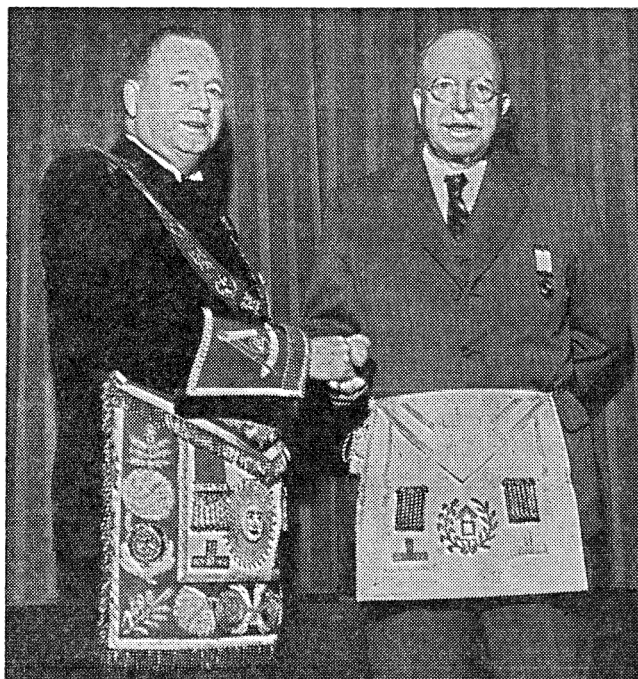
SERVICE AVAILABLE TO COUNTRY MEMBERS

For some time past the Masters, Wardens and Deacons Associations of our principal cities, Calgary and Edmonton, have been most generous in supplying hospital visits and rendering services of various kinds to members of Lodges within and outside the major centres and those confined to hospitals or needing assistance are urged to take advantage of the splendid services available to them.

It is quite evident that the kindly services cannot be obtained unless representatives of the Associations are informed as to the presence in hospital of the member or members concerned.

In the City of Calgary when the Association is advised of required hospital visits or other services contact is made with Bro. Al Geneske, Senior Warden of Lodge Renfrew, residing at 7311 - 7th Street S.W. and he in turn passes the request along to a selected Brother or Brethren who have undertaken an obligation to give careful attention to all such requests.

In Edmonton, Don Deane for many years rendered exemplary service to hospitalized Brethren; he, having now removed from the city this task has been turned over to Brother Tommy Hunter, 8715 - 68A Street, Phone 469-7265, and he should be notified by Lodges concerned when a member is desirous of securing hospital visits or other available service.



M.W. Bro. W. L. McPhee, Wor. Bro. E. R. Mattless.

HONOURED AT HALF CENTURY

During the Installation Ceremonies of Corinthian Lodge No. 22 the M.W. the Grand Master, the M.W. Bro. W. Lloyd McPhee graced the meeting with his attendance and took occasion to make the presentation of a Fifty Year Jewel to Wor. Bro. E. R. Mattless who for half a century has continued his interest in the work of the Craft, having been initiated on July 9th, 1912.

M.W. Bro. McPhee outlined something of the major contribution of the dearly beloved member and expressed the pleasure of the Lodge that Bro. Mattless had achieved the distinction of fifty years of service. The congratulations of the fraternity throughout the Province are extended to the distinguished Brother.

GRAND LODGE LIBRARY

The Research and Education Committee of the Grand Lodge of Alberta is keenly interested in having library facilities at Grand Lodge used to a wider extent that has been the case up to the present time; this Committee fully recognizes its responsibility to broaden the knowledge of Masonry and extends a cordial invitation to the membership at large to utilize the fine array of books and periodicals available.

It is desired to point out that the library is open from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 o'clock noon and from 1.30 to 5 p.m. and special arrangements have now been made to staff the library from 7 to 9 p.m. every Wednesday evening (except May 29th and July and August). Books may be borrowed for periods up to thirty days and a cordial invitation is extended to all members to take advantage of the opportunities thus presented.

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tribunals may pronounce — above which only the death penalty exists.

We have referred to "aggravating circumstances" and these consist of "having a degree between 18 and 33 degrees"; "to have attended any meeting of international Freemasonry, the (Spanish) Gran Orient of Gran Logia, or of any other Masonic organization in Spain"; or "having held any Masonic office".

One paragraph provides that those who do not offer to the government a declaration of retraction within two months after the publication of the law, or who facilitate false data, or hide information, are punishable under the law.

And who do you suppose are the tribunal which tries these Freemasons? Paragraph 12 names them: the President of the Army, two PRIESTS of different congregations, and two lawyers, all appointed by the head of the state who is completely free in making the appointments.

It is apparent that trials resulting from these special laws of 1940 are conducted by SPECIAL tribunals. From an appeal lodged on behalf of the accused, it is clear that the trials are held in secret, and even without witnesses.

These appeals asked, according to the fundamental principles of law regarding criminal inquiry, a public hearing, and given other fundamental legal privileges such as a proper legal tribunal.

Families of the accused even found a lawyer willing to defend the accused, but on the day of the trial when he applied to the special tribunal to ascertain the procedure he was not admitted. The accused had no more knowledge of the hearing or accusation brought against them than a sheet of paper containing the indictment of having been a Freemason—nothing else! Neither the accused nor his lawyer can learn anything about the procedure, the evidence or the examination. Thus it is impossible to present argument to refute the indictment. As we have already said, the session is absolutely secret and attended only by the accused, the public prosecutor and the tribunal. Then, a few days later the accused is notified of the sentence.

The sentences are much the same; they allege that the accused has been a member of such and such a lodge; that some of them have revoked their membership and "ecclesiastically abjured their error", but later have rejoined the "sect", but nowhere does one find a trace of proof, oral or documentary evidence of a witness who supports the accusation.

In some of these sentences the special tribunal recommends humbly to the government that directs the destiny of the nation to commute the penalty from 20, to say 16 years, while it sentences the accused, for example, to 18 years in prison.

All these penalties are accompanied by the accessory penalty of "incapacity to hold any political or trade union function".

Some of the condemned persons, or their lawyers, have given notice of appeal on the grounds quoted in the act, for infringement of form and violation of the law. Copy of the appeal sent to the secretary of the Ministry of the Presidency of the government is neither answered nor contested. The answer is, as in all dictatorial countries "complete silence".

The writer has available for any sincere examination the official documents which prove all the above mentioned—and much more—which would make our story too long. One such letter shows the accused to have been sentenced because he had signed a letter as "grand secretary"—which could not be, since there is no grand lodge in Spain. The same man was indicted for writing a letter to an official of the Consulate of Great Britain, from some point in Spain, a letter which asked only for information on the economic relations between Great Britain and Spain. Another letter mentioned was to the British Foreign Office. We are reminded of the darkest times in the history of Europe, when writing a letter could cost one's head.

The counsel for the accused pointed out, in one instance, that this notorious law of March 1940, circumstantially describes what a Freemason is, namely that he has to be an active Freemason, and registered in a regular lodge. In Spain there have been no regular lodges since 1938. It was then that Freemasonry lowered its columns, which means that Freemasonry was dissolved.

The Old Charges of Freemasonry specify that: A Mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers, whatever he resides or works; that he is not to be concerned in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation. He is cheerfully to conform to every lawful authority; to uphold on every occasion the interest of the community, and zealously promote the prosperity of his country.

The situation of these sentenced persons, so says our report of May 1958, is pathetic. Prisoners are only aired for thirty minutes a day in the courtyard of the prison; there is no possibility to speak to anyone—and the food is detestable. One of them was taken to the prison hospital to undergo a severe operation of the stomach, and with a heart affliction, and in need of a special diet.

How long will such inhuman conditions exist in a country which was at one time one of the most civilized in the world?

California Freemason.

*"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong
forever on the throne —
Yet that scaffold sways the future and
behind the dim unknown
Standeth God, within the shadow, keeping
watch above His own."*