

# Freemasonry, Resistance & Rescue of the Jews in Denmark (1943)

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## Masonería, resistencia y rescate de los judíos en Dinamarca (1943)

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### ***Abstract***

This study is about an exclusive coexistence. At the height of the Nazi threat over Europe, only in Denmark we can find simultaneously:

- a) a freely and officially active freemasonry
- b) a resistance movement
- c) an organized aid operation for fleeing Jews.

Freemasonry carried out a clandestine activity during European totalitarian regimes, although it officially survived only in Denmark (and Iceland), Sweden, the U.K., Ireland and Switzerland. This research tries to shed a light on the likely involvement of Danish freemasonry in the rescue of Danish Jews and in the resistance movement.

### ***Resumen***

Este estudio trata sobre una convivencia exclusiva. En el apogeo de la amenaza nazi sobre Europa, solo en Dinamarca podemos observar simultáneamente:

- a) una masonería libre y oficialmente activa.
- b) un movimiento de resistencia.
- c) una operación de ayuda organizada para los judíos que escapaban.

La masonería llevó a cabo una actividad clandestina durante los regímenes totalitarios europeos, a pesar de que oficialmente sobrevivió solo en Dinamarca (e Islandia), Suecia, Reino Unido, Irlanda y Suiza. Esta investigación trata de arrojar luz sobre la probable participación de la masonería danesa en ese rescate de los judíos daneses y en el movimiento de resistencia.

## Introduction. A Comprehensive Overview

The Danish case illustrated here deserves particular attention because of its extremely exclusive nature. At the height of the Nazi threat over Europe, only in Denmark we can observe the coexistence of a) a freely and officially active freemasonry; b) a resistance movement; c) an organized aid operation for fleeing Jews.

We know that almost all the European freemasonries were suppressed before or, at the latest, during the Second World War. It happened, first of all, in Germany (1935) and then in the countries occupied by or allied with the latter; in Romania (1937), Poland, Austria, Bohemia and Moravia (1938), France, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway and Bulgaria (1940), Finland – although on a voluntary basis – Belgium<sup>1</sup>, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece (1941). In other European countries, masonic associations were banned simultaneously or even before, at the behest of the other regimes locally in force: it is the case of Russia (1917), Hungary (1919), Italy (1925), Turkey, Portugal (1935) and Spain (1939), while we cannot take into account Albania, Andorra, Liechtenstein and San Marino (countries in which freemasonry only arrived in the 21<sup>st</sup> century) and, for obvious reasons, the Vatican City. In addition, Iceland constitutes a case in itself, as Icelandic freemasonry formally represented an offshoot of the Danish one until 1951 while, politically, during the Second World War the country endured the occupation of British and American forces.

Thus, if on the one hand we know that freemasonry carried on – among challenges and difficulties – a risky clandestine activity within some of the above-mentioned European countries (above all in Italy and France), on the other hand it must be pointed out how it officially survived, and with meagre operating space, only in Denmark (and Iceland), in Sweden, in the United Kingdom, in Ireland and in Switzerland (where an attempt for the formal ban of Freemasonry was rejected in 1937 through a special referendum).

Secondly: we can only consider an actual resistance in a few cases and certainly not within those countries completely – or apparently – neutral as Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland or Turkey were.

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<sup>1</sup> See the history of the lodge *Liberté chérie*, founded in 1943 in the concentration camp of Esterwegen by Belgian partisans. See also Tyssens, “Historical Configurations of Freemasonry in Belgium: Secularity, Politics, Fragmentation”, *Revista de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Latinoamericana y Caribeña*, vol. 8, n. 1, May - November 2016, 112-129.

Finally: as we will see, behind the organized rescue of Danish Jews there were material interests, geographical opportunities and political, cultural and ideological reasons.

On this basis, this work constitutes the result of a first research with a cross approach, drawing from both the history of the Danish resistance and of Danish freemasonry, especially about the rescue of the Danish Jews.

## Materials and Methods. Freemasonry in Denmark

An involvement of freemasonry in Danish political issues may have had more or less the same relevance – in terms of quality and quantity – as in other countries during totalitarian regimes, but approaching the subject from the point of view of a foreign scholar offers the chance to make a couple of preliminary and necessary remarks.

The largest religious group within Danish freemasonry was at that time (and still is) strictly Christian, which may sound unexpected and hardly understandable especially to someone with Catholic background (the definition of ‘largest’ will be made clear later). As far as the very few past researches on this subject can attest, Danish freemasonry does not appear to have exercised any form of particular power as a ‘State within the State’: actually, it had the overtly approval and participation of the Danish monarchy<sup>2</sup>. Notwithstanding this, the current popular perception of freemasonry in Denmark<sup>3</sup> appears to be close to the one prevalent in most other countries, which involves a feeling of somehow involving an ambiguous secret, if not both secrecy and illegality.

These first two remarks lead directly to one consequence: since Danish freemasonry has somehow achieved enough political and cultural recognition – even if not precisely at a social level – historians and academia have not dedicated much attention to the subject so far. This means, above all, an evident and worrying lack of sources. There seems to be scarce scholarly evidence about freemasonry in Denmark: in fact, we can find almost no primary sources, but only secondary literature (and we must underline, academic environments paid even less attention to the matter, including those involved in studies about the Danish resistance). At the same time, we shall give particular importance to internal literature, if not for its scientific basis, then at least since it often sinks its roots into otherwise unapproachable archival sources<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, another

2 Among the freemason members of the Danish Royal Family, we should mention some: King Frederick V (born 1723), Prince Charles of Hesse-Kassel (b. 1744), King Frederick VI (b. 1768), Friedrich Wilhelm, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg (b. 1785), King Christian VIII (b. 1786) and his son King Frederick VII (b. 1808). Prince Hans of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, as a freemason, had a role in the choice of his brother, King Christian IX (b. 1818), to become a member of the Brotherhood in 1870. After only one year, King Christian IX became V.S.V. (*Viseste Salomo Vicarius*, i.e., Grand Master). And, again, other ‘Royal’ freemasons were King Frederik VIII (b. 1843), his sons King Christian X (b. 1870) and Prince Harald (b. 1876), as well the son of the latter: Prince Gorm (b. 1919). See also Kjeldsen, *I guld og himmelblaat: en bog om frimureriet i Danmark i fortid og nutid* (Copenhagen: Den Danske Frimurerorden - Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1993), 112, which is also interesting for the indications about Den Danske Frimurerorden’s (from now on DDFO) internal archival sources (175).

3 We can round off the total amount of the current Danish Freemasons to 12.000 members out of 5.5 million inhabitants.

4 For a general history of Danish Freemasonry, see Bugge, *Det danske Frimureriers Historie indtil 1765: udarb. efter den danske store Landsloges Arkiv* (Copenhagen, 1910-1927), which is an extraordinarily detailed source, even if it only covers the first two centuries of Danish Freemasonry; Starcke, *Frimureriet: dets oprindelse og udvikling* (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1923), paying particular attention to page 206. Aune, *Frimureriet: dets historie i Skandinavien* (Copenhagen, 1929); Hermansen,

specific problem concerning Danish masonic sources is the trend of a disappointing – though completely legitimate and quite internationally shared – reluctance to share the associations' archives with researchers<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, the Danish case offers the lucky opportunity to use a research tool that has almost no comparable examples in other countries: the *Matrikel for Den Danske Frimurerorden*, the list of members printed every two years at least from 1928–29 to 1960–61. The latter turns out to be a key tool for matching the resistance members' lists – the *modstandsdatabase* – with masonic membership and, most evidently, it gives the chance for an exclusive insight into the composition of the association, concerning numerical facts, social background and professional situation of each single mason. It furthermore offers a lens to closely study the rising in hierarchy during the years, internal position held, geographic origin and distribution around the lodges all over the country. Yet, the list covers the history of only one (luckily, the main one) of the masonic associations operating in Denmark. More difficult, if not impossible, is the attempt to match the resisters' lists with the lists of freemasons belonging to other masonic associations, since either similar records do not exist, they are incomplete, or there were difficulties in making them public. And here lies another crucial problem for a research of this kind: similarly to what happens in other countries, Denmark does not and – which is most important – did not have a single masonic association. During the period of time that we are focusing on – 1943 as well as the entire period of Nazi occupation – the following masonic or para-masonic groups were operating in Denmark<sup>6</sup>:

*Den Danske Frimurerorden* (from now on: DDFO) constitutes the main masonic association around which research has been conducted, as well as the oldest one (1743) and the one most evenly distributed over the country<sup>7</sup>. It follows the so-called Swedish system, which – among the other things – demands its members to belong to the Christian religion<sup>8</sup>. This kind of exclusion,

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*Den Danske Store Landsloge, 1858-1958* (Copenhagen, 1958); *Ordenens Forskningsraad, St. Johannes lærlingens første bog: kort vejledning for nyoptagne Frimurerbrødre* (Copenhagen: Den Danske Store Landsloges Studieudvalg, 1970), for the history as well as the internal rules and statutes. For general and introductory information in Danish language about freemasonry, see MacNulty, *Frimureri: symboler, hemmeligheder, betydning* (Copenhagen: Cicero, 2006). We shall indicate other more specific sources afterward.

- 5 Of all the Danish masonic orders that I have contacted, only one has replied, as well as very few among some specific members that I also approached. DDFO's Archive was founded in 1853 and contains now as many as 170.000 historical documents: for its history see Tvevad, "Den danske Frimurer Ordens arkiv og bibliotek", in *Fortid og nutid*, vol. 29-1 (1981), 68-74. Another interesting albeit less known source for the history of Danish freemasonry is the manuscript *Materiale vedr. Frimurerlogen* written by Henrik Brock (1913-1964) – a former Brother as well as a prominent member of the conservative party – and now kept by *Rigsarkivet* in Copenhagen.
- 6 The following associations are instead very recent: *Storlogen af Gamle Frie og Antagne Murere af Danmark* (splinter group of DDFO, not acknowledged by other masonic associations); *Logen Freja* and *Logen Lilium* (founded in 1989 and 2005 within the Grand Lodge of Belgium, they only admit women); *Korsridderordenen* (founded in 1967); *Tutor ordenen* (with its headquarters in Aarhus, it is a minor order founded in 1984); *OSMTH - Ordo Supremus Militaris Templi Hierosolymitani* (Great Priorat Denmark became an independent unit under the International Order in June 2012); *Storprioratet i Danmark af Hospitalsordenen Saint Lazarus af Jerusalem* (it's an Order of Hospital Riders, founded in 1995); *Sankt Georgs Ordenen*; *Maria-Ordenen* (founded in 1916 on Christian ethics bases).
- 7 The members of DDFO were exactly 7.713 on September 1942, see The Danish Order of Freemasons Grand Lodge of Denmark, *Matrikel for Den Danske Frimurerorden* (from now on: *Matrikel*), 1942-43; 7.698 on September 1943 (*Matrikel* 1943-44, with appendix from December 1945) and 7.491 on October 1946 (*Matrikel* 1946). They were just 4.665 in 1871, see Hermansen, *Den Danske Store Landsloge*, 165ff.
- 8 Which means – in Denmark – mainly protestant, with small Catholic presence. See Thomsen, "«Faste besøgende Brødre» og jødiske brøders forbindelse til det svenske system", in *AMS*, Nr. 8 (2005), 39-38. Strangely, it is still possible to find some Jews among the lists of DDFO members, e.g. in the case of the double membership of Torben Meyer, entered January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1915, in the *Nordstjernen* lodge (Copenhagen) and then passed with the 8<sup>th</sup> degree to the *Cubus Christiani Decimi* lodge (Copenhagen), see *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 33 and Margolinsky, *Danmark Loge U. O. B. No. 712. 1912-23 januar - 1962. Udg. i anledning af 50 års jubilæet* (Copenhagen: Oscar Fraenckel, 1962), 76ff.

which rather represents a sort of *unicum* within the world of freemasonry, retains ancient forms of anti-Semitism, dating back to the time when, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a trend in German culture to exclude Jewish groups that saw in participating in those kinds of associations a bourgeois path for social integration. This kind of exclusion brought in itself the contradiction of surviving in a context openly aiming at brotherhood which, however, from the point of view of Otto Dreyer was justified on the basis of a “mix of a nationalism, Protestantism (...) and social Darwinism”<sup>9</sup>.

In the years 1942-43 the following lodges appear to have operated under DDFO:

1. the *Main Lodge* (in Copenhagen)
2. the *Provincial Lodge* (in Odense)
3. the *Stuart Lodge* (in Reykjavik)<sup>10</sup>

The St. Andreas Lodges<sup>11</sup>:

1. *Cubus Christiani Decimi* (in Copenhagen)
2. *Cubus Frederici Septimi* (in Copenhagen)
3. *De fire roser* (in Aarhus)
4. *Helgafell* (in Reykjavík)
5. *Louise* (in Odense)

The St. John's Lodges<sup>12</sup>:

1. *Absalon* (in Copenhagen)
2. *Christian* (in Copenhagen)
3. *Cimbria* (in Aalborg)
4. *Dagmar* (in Nykjøbing)
5. *Den faste borg ved Alssund* (in Sønderborg)
6. *Edda* (in Reykjavik)
7. *Egin* (in Rønne)
8. *Josva til de tre broer* (in Haderslev)
9. *Kosmos* (in Helsingør)
10. *Maria til de tre hjerter* (in Odense)
11. *Nordstjernen* (in Copenhagen)
12. *Rún* (in Akureyri - Iceland)
13. *St. Clemens* (in Aarhus)
14. *St. Martin* (in Randers)

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9 Duetoft, *Frimureri - fortid eller fremtid?*, (Copenhagen: St. Johs. Logen Nordstjernen, 2003), 30.

10 These three lodges were working on 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> degree.

11 Working on 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> degree.

12 Working on 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> degree.

15. *St. Michael* (in Slagelse)
16. *St. Nicholas* (in Aabenraa)
17. *Zorobabel og Frederik til det kronede haab* (in Copenhagen)<sup>13</sup>.

*Det Danske Frimurerlaug* (from now on: DDFL) represents the second masonic association in Denmark, in order of importance<sup>14</sup>: founded in 1893, it still shares with DDFO the same Grand Master and it is much closer to the so-called English system, which implies, first<sup>15</sup>, a chance to belong to it without being necessarily baptized. Nowadays it counts more or less 2.000 members (a small number if compared to the almost 8.000 members already belonging to DDFO in 1943).

Among those of its lodges that were operating during the occupation years, the following ones still survive:

1. *Akacien* (est. 1922 in Randers)<sup>16</sup>
2. *Bertel Thorvaldsen til Haabet* (est. 1934 in Horsens)
3. *Danevirke* (est. 1923 in Copenhagen)
4. *De to søjler* (est. 1921 in Vejle)
5. *De tre hamre* (est. 1923 in Copenhagen)
6. *De tre lys* (est. 1921 in Esbjerg)
7. *De tre søjler* (est. 1924 in Copenhagen)
8. *Den flammende stjerne* (est. 1921 in Odense)<sup>17</sup>
9. *Den kubiske sten* (est. 1921 in Aalborg)
10. *Janus Vesta* (est. 1920 in Aarhus)<sup>18</sup>
11. *Lysset til de IX hjerter* (est. 1919 in Copenhagen)<sup>19</sup>
12. *Pax interna* (est. 1921 in Fredericia)
13. *Phoenix* (est. 1923 in Copenhagen)
14. *Tre løver* (est. 1920 in Copenhagen).

Among the minor associations, thus, we shall add the following ones:

*Storlogen af Danmark af Gamle Frie & Antagne Murere*: founded in 1929, most of its original lodges belong now to DDFL.

13 For this lodge, please see Rønnenfelt, Zorobabel og Frederik t.d.k.H.: 1745 - 25 Oktober - 1945, med en oversigt over logens historie (Copenhagen: Dana, 1948); Kjeldsen, 250 år med sværd og murske. Sankt Johanneslogen Zorobabel og Frederik til det kronede Haab 1745 - 25 oktober - 1995 (Copenhagen: Sankt Johanneslogen Zorobabel og Frederik til det kronede Haab, 1995), as well as Sankt Johannes Logen, Zorobabel og Frederik til det kronede Haab 1745-1970 (Copenhagen: Becher, 1970).

14 For the history of DDFL see instead *Det Danske Frimurerlaug*, *Det Danske Frimurerlaug*, cited above, while for its rituals on the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree see *Det danske ritual for laugsmureri: lektionerne for tredje grad*, also cited above.

15 Another relevant difference is about ritual nature: the Swedish system provides for twelve degrees, while the English one only provides for the first three degrees.

16 See Lai Sørensen, *Logen Akacien, Randers. 1922 - 14 november - 1997. Et tilbageblik på logelivet gennem 75 år*, (Randers: Logen Akacien, 1997).

17 See *Frimurerlogen Den flammende Stjerne nr. 810 1921 - 24 november - 1996* (Odense, 1996), which does not show any Jewish presence.

18 See Logen Janus Vesta, *Logen Janus Vesta 1920-2000: et historisk tilbageblik i anledning af Logens 80-års dag den 28 maj 2000* (Aarhus: Logen Janus Vesta, Nr. 803, 2000), that also adds something to the source on which it is entirely based, i.e. Logen Janus Vesta, *Logen Janus Vesta's oprindelse og historie* (Copenhagen: Logen Janus Vesta, 1990).

19 See *Logen lysset til de IX hjerter: 1894 - 13 oktober - 1954* (Copenhagen, 1954).

*Danske, Frie og Uafhængige Murere*: already existing in 1929, is the only Masonic association that applies the Copenhagen Ritual (*ritus Hauniensis*), based on the former British 'Emulation' ritual. Not much more information is available regarding this association.

*Det Internationale Fælles Frimureri "Le Droit Humain"*: arrived in Denmark in 1917, is a French-born association allowing the membership of both men and women.

*Otium Ordenen*: is a secret fraternity founded in 1911, which claims to aim at mutual support in daily life and in assistance towards those in need. In the 40s the following lodges were operating under its rules:

*Nadir* (est. 1925 in Aarhus)

*Orion* (est. 1934 in Horsens)

*Sirius* (est. 1936 in Randers)

*Zenith* (est. 1911 in Aarhus)<sup>20</sup>.

*Rosenkors-Ordenen (Ancient and Mystical Order Rosæ Crucis)*: arrived in Copenhagen in 1920, it merged only in 1976 with the Malmö group which was operating since 1933 on behalf of both Sweden and Finland. Stated aims of the association all regard knowledge, enlightenment, cultural and spiritual development, contribution to human activity in harmony with nature's laws and mystique.

*Cirkel Ordenen*: being another humanitarian lay brotherhood, it tried to spread public aid both inside and outside its membership since 1884, year of its foundation in Copenhagen. Its rules are also very close to the masonic ones, in terms of degrees, symbolism and allegories but the whole group is totally independent from those strictly masonic<sup>21</sup>.

*Dansk Broder Ordenen*: was born in Copenhagen during 1894 as *Dansk arbejder loge*<sup>22</sup> on clear masonic basis, with the aim of contributing to a better development of society and with strong attention to family, work, safety and mutual aid in local communities<sup>23</sup>.

*Sct. Andreas Ordenen*: founded in 1896, it somehow constitutes the most masonic among the para-masonic groups, since it works with the rules of the Swedish system (and therefore also representing another case of a Christian masonic group, despite being independent from other brotherhoods)<sup>24</sup>.

*Serapions Ordenen*: it borrows its name from the character of Serapion the Sindonite (not to be confused with Serapion of Alexandria). In 1940 the group adopted a formal resolution in order to be clearly distinguished from freemasonry and, by doing so, to avoid the Nazi ban against masonic associations. Thus, it firmly stated not to be involved in politics and to be exclusively

20 The lodges *Uranus and Neptun*, in Aalborg and Vejle, will follow them in 1968 and in 1989.

21 See Cirkel-ordenen, *Broder-bladet. Cirkel-ordenens 125 års jubilæum* (Frederiksberg: Cirkel-ordenen, 2008), and Busch, *Broderskab: en beretning om Cirkel-Ordenen gennem 125 år* (Frederiksberg: Cirkel-Ordenen, 2010).

22 It changed its name in 1964.

23 See generally Dantoft, *Dansk Broder Orden gennem 100 år: 1894 - 29 januar - 1994* (Dansk Broder Orden, 1993).

24 See Poulsen, *Sanct Andreas Ordenen: 1896-1996* (Copenhagen: Sanct Andreas Ordenen, 1996), 44.

interested in philanthropic, ethic and social issues. Yet, curiously, it kept for itself the whole masonic symbols and terminology<sup>25</sup>.

*Tempel Ridder Ordenen*: this order first entered Denmark in 1904 (and then Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Finland in 1922, '33, '49 and '52), achieving more participation in Scandinavia than in the United States – where it was born in 1845 – thanks to the innovations brought by the 'Supreme Templar' Oskar Eklund in order to pursue high ethical standards and to fix social and moral problems<sup>26</sup>.

*Independent Order of Odd Fellows*: founded in 1819 in USA, it came to Denmark in 1878 and it presently reaches the number of ca. 15.000 members. Being a fraternal benefit society with little involvement in esoteric forms, it should be of less interest in this kind of research. Yet, it still maintains signs of some common nature such as external forms, purposes and declared independence from political issues<sup>27</sup>.

*B'nai B'rith*: founder of B'nai in New York, 1843, was Henry Jones – once Heinrich Jonas –, a brother-in-law of Isac Salmonsens, from Viborg. Chief Rabbi Dr Max Schornstein established the first lodge in Denmark, in Copenhagen, in 1912. In one year, it reached 135 members (afterwards it had very little growth, reaching only 155 members in 1962). Being clearly a solely Jewish association – if not actually the only freemasonry intended uniquely for Jewish members despite their theoretically shared ideal of the universal brotherhood that should be open to all men of all religions<sup>28</sup> – its first honorary brother was Chief Rabbi and prof. David Simonsen, 'also known for the *Biblioteca Simonseniana*, the Judaic section of the Danish Royal Library', whose books originated mainly from his own extensive private library. The main activities of B'nai always belonged to the philanthropic and cultural fields and the association had the opportunity to take part in the well-known Danish Jewish humanitarian work within peasants' social farms as well as in international relief drives<sup>29</sup>.

It is clear that the landscape is extremely diverse. But one fact is the peculiar attention that totalitarian regimes have given to freemasonry over the years (regardless of the soundness of their reasons to do so) as well as some actual and interesting involvement that it had in political and historical issues. This is why an apparent quibbling about a distinction between masonic, para-masonic and merely lay groups makes sense here. The difference simply lies in the kind of entrenchment of an association within esoteric or semi-religious structures<sup>30</sup>, meanings and aspects which exactly

25 See Kofod, *Serapions-Ordenen 1888-1988* (Frederiksberg: Serapions-Ordenen, 1987).

26 See Aagaard Jensen, *Tempel Ridder Ordenen i Danmark og Ridder Templet Knud Lavard gennem 50 år* (Copenhagen, 1954). This order stopped its meetings in September 1943.

27 For some information concerning their lodges, one may see *Enig, Loge Nr. 26 "Kong Hroar". I. O. O. F. af Danmark. Erindringer og Minder fra Logens 50 Aars Virke 1893 - 19 November -1943* (Roskilde, 1943); *Rebekka Loge Nr. 10 "Birgitte Gjøe", I. O. O. F. af Danmark, gennem 25 Aar: 1920 - 24 Oktober 194-5* (Næstved, 1945).

28 Patka, "Die israelitischen Humanitätsvereine B'nai B'rith für Österreich in der Zwischenkriegszeit und ihr Verhältnis zur "jüdischen" Freimaurerei", in Stern and Eichinger, *Wien und die jüdische Erfahrung 1900-1938: Akkulturation, Antisemitismus, Zionismus* (Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 116ff.

29 Margolinsky, *Danmark Loge*, 119. B'nai helped many refugees with help programs, mainly for the benefit of children from the war countries. President K. S. Oppenheim directed a great number of activities in support of the Youth-Aliyah (see Margolinsky, *Danmark Loge*, 120-122).

30 This is the reason why I excluded some associations from this research, even though loosely connected to masonic principles. It's the case of Lions (that anyway came to Denmark in 1950), Soroptimist and Rotary. Soroptimist were born in Oakland, U.S.A., in 1921, while the European Federation was established in Paris in 1929. Rotary was founded in 1905 in Chicago and the first Danish club was founded in November 1922 in Copenhagen.



correspond to the core of features that initially brought freemasonry into disrepute (in one with perceived elitism, ethnic issues, incompatibilities possibly enshrined by creeds, and subsequent lawlessness). Anyway, by now it should be quite clear that freemasonry has little to share with proper religions<sup>31</sup> and, with equal confidence, on the other hand one should also rectify the alleged inclusion of freemasonry within that far too generic label of esotericism<sup>32</sup>. One simple incompatibility between religion and freemasonry is that the latter assumes its members to be already believers in some deity (not necessarily in the Christian god, as in the Swedish system used in Denmark by DDFO). So, one should redefine the slippery slope of these delicate distinctions among different groups by introducing a different category in between lay and religious associations, i.e., a category of *ritual associations*: something ‘more’ than lay but still ‘far’ from religious<sup>33</sup>. Whether accepting this definition or not, freemasonry may as well have had a role of its own as the other two groups in the events of the Danish resistance and of the rescue of the Danish Jews: and this role, if also played by freemasonry, could have depended on some form of expression or implementation of its own principles (among these: preserving individual freedom, aiming at a virtuous living, promoting human rights)<sup>34</sup>.

One last preliminary clarification: it is useless and even impossible to try to find an official position for an entire masonic group with regard to the context of the resistance (and certainly it is impossible if we consider the whole of freemasonry in a single country) because it never had one, and it could not have had any, certainly because of the Nazi ban but, even before the issue of the ban, because of the official masonic impartiality toward political concerns, as well as a wide range of cultural, social and therefore political backgrounds among its members. What is worth searching for is exactly the degree of participation or lack of interest of individual or groups of freemasons.

## Results. Outcomes on Nazism, freemasonry, and the Jews

The position of Nazis in regard to freemasonry was not always really unequivocal: at first almost condescending, it quickly became stricter and, eventually, the creation of the special II/111 Section of the Sicherheitsdienst (SS Security Service, later VII B 1 of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt or Reich Security Main Office) dealt specifically with this matter. It was a quite common worry among the Nazis that freemasonry “exercised actual political power, shaped public opinion through control of the press, and was thus in a position to provoke war, subversion, and revolution”<sup>35</sup>.

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1935, all remaining lodges and branches received the order to dissolve and

31 See Ravn Olesen, *Rod, vækst og erkendelser* (Frederiksberg: Unitas, 2004). An opposite and probably misguided opinion (which is also far from the official positions of many Masonic associations) is the one of Hvass, “En teologisk-videnskabelig undersøgelse af begrebet ritual og dets betydning for ordenslæren i Den Danske Frimurerorden”, in *AMS*, Nr. 3 (2000), 56-75, who (66-67), tries to give a positive answer through a personal interpretation of the classifications suggested by Schjødt, “Ritualstruktur og ritualeklassifikation”, in *Religionsvidenskabeligt tidsskrift*, Nr. 20 (1992), 5-23.

32 Bogdan, *Western esotericism in Scandinavia*, cited above, seems highfalutin and if on one hand it should dedicate its interests to Scandinavian freemasonry, on the other hand it only pays a brief attention to the DDFO also ignoring, without reason, the entire world of para-masonic associations both in Denmark and in the whole of Scandinavia. Also, the book risks depicting freemasonry in the same vein of Occultism, Paganism, Theosophy, Traditionalism, which instead lack features such as solidarity, coverage or main involvement in political concerns.

33 Or, from another point of view, something lighter than religion but still heavier than lay associations.

34 Kjeldsen, *I guld og himmelblaat*.

35 See Transou, *Freemasonry under the Nazi Regime*, in United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007187> (last visited June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

their assets were confiscated, while a few years later, approaching the war, the regime went back to something similar to the early compromises, as many civil servants – who had been forced to retire because of their masonic membership – were called back into service. Certainly, Hitler saw in freemasonry a tool of Judaims, which was definitely false: in 1928 only 4% of the 81.000 German freemasons were Jews<sup>36</sup>. Anyway, this kind of misunderstanding was a common one, if we consider that Nazi authorities had among their consultants figures like the Norwegian anti-Semitic and anti-masonic writer Mikal Sylten, who since since 1916 had been publishing the «National Tidsskrift», “the earliest and longest published anti-masonic periodical in the Norwegian language”<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, the Prussian lodges – mainly monarchic, conservative and strictly non-Jewish – had in 1933 already lost 2/3 of the 60.000 members they had in 1925 (with peaks of a 90% loss in the case of some specific lodges)<sup>38</sup>. The nationalist ideology, then, slowly gained space within a great part of the remaining German freemasonry – the so-called humanitarian freemasonry – i.e., the bourgeois one<sup>39</sup>.

Nazi anti-masonry was mainly – and not very logically – due to Nazi anti-Semitism: while in 1912 “writers, professors, and public figures who were members or sympathizers of the Alldeutscher Verband”<sup>40</sup> founded the ‘Society against Jewish Domination’, many rumours assumed that freemasons could spread anti-German actions through their international network of lodges (and the Catholic world always gladly embraced these kinds of slanders): “according to these rumours, French masons had induced their brethren in Italy to encourage its entry into the war on the side of the Allies”<sup>41</sup>, which is a pretty unlikely assumption, since freemasons could have no political weight in Italy after 1925 (if ever they had really any before). “In its activities and its periodical, the Verband was mainly preoccupied with the Jews. But, as the war continued, attention turned towards the Freemasons as well (...). Such terms as *patria* and *Vaterland* were alien to international Jewry who were assisting the Freemasons in secretly fomenting revolution”<sup>42</sup>. Hitler had, incidentally, an interest in considering freemasonry a tool in the hand of the Jews and therefore he tried to prepare public opinion for the subsequent annihilation of the whole ‘non-rational’ brotherhood that stood against the Nazi new order<sup>43</sup>. If the conservative wing of German freemasonry, i.e., the Prussian lodges, was strictly and proudly Christian, it thus, could not be depending on Jewry<sup>44</sup>, “once the propagandists had begun to attack Jews and Freemasons in the same breath, the patriotism of the Freemasons was no longer taken for granted (...). At one stage it might still have seemed possible to operate the lodges in the Third Reich on condition of their acceptance of the Aryan clause, which required the expulsion of all Jews and of all Jewish descent. The Jewish members took the hint and left”. One of the heads of the liberal lodges thanked them with ‘great gratitude’ for this gesture of

36 Horrisland, “Antifrimureri I”, in *AMS*, Nr. 16 (2013), 202-267.

37 Horrisland, “Antifrimureri II”, in *AMS*, Nr. 17 (2014), 265ff. Concerning the Norwegian freemasonry in exile, this operated via the lodge *Den Norske Broderforening i London*, see Anderberg, “Den Norske Broderforening i London under 2. verdenskrig”, in *AMS*, Nr. 15 (2012), 246-273.

38 Neuberger, *Freimaurerei und Nationalsozialismus: die Verfolgung der deutschen Freimaurerei durch völkische Bewegung und Nationalsozialismus 1918-1945* (Berlin: Bauhütten Verlag, 1980), vol. 1, 96.

39 Neuberger, *Freimaurerei*, 96.

40 Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 176.

41 Katz, *Jews*, 173ff.

42 Katz, *Jews*, 177.

43 Katz, *Jews*, 181-182.

44 Katz, *Jews*, 183. A Jew had to become Christian to belong to those lodges, and even after this transformation he would never be considered at same level as the other Brothers, see KATZ, *Jews*, 185.

“generous self-sacrifice on behalf of the general good”<sup>45</sup>. In any case, the government requested the whole German freemasonry to dissolve and disband in 1933, and they allowed no later paramasonic group (e.g. the Christian societies).

The character of Judaism in Denmark, as well as the position of the country regarding the Jews<sup>46</sup>, has changed through the centuries: while Sephardic Jews from Southern Europe were first recalled by King Christian IV, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to improve craft skills in jewellery and mint, poor Ashkenazi Jews came from Central Europe. Mainly employed in minor trade, they were not allowed to belong to traditional trade guilds<sup>47</sup>. A wave of ca. 3.000 Jews arrived in Denmark from Russia, Poland and the Baltic countries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>48</sup>. Shortly after, a new group of Jewish migrants followed them, arriving in Copenhagen during World War I<sup>49</sup> (and it is worth pointing out that, outside the capital, the total number of Jews was never significant: in 1921 there seem to have been only 465)<sup>50</sup>. The last Jewish migration to Denmark before World War II was in the ‘30s and included refugees from Germany, Austria and German-occupied Bohemia and Moravia<sup>51</sup>. As noted by Mogensen<sup>52</sup>, some among the Danes and the Danish resisters during the Swedish exile never stopped showing anti-Semitic concerns towards these Jewish refugees.

We should analyse the actions for and against the minorities by taking into account the various forms of German occupation in the respective countries. It is helpful, for instance, to cast some light on what Nazism was like in Sweden: in 1940, the Swedish diplomat Erik Boheman wrote that “Sweden’s policy of neutrality is not founded on any political ideology, but rather on the determined understanding of Sweden’s leaders and the Swedish people that this policy is the only or at least the surest way of preserving Sweden’s independence and freedom”. Yet, historian Paul Levine has well underlined how this kind of neutrality had much to do also with important, explicit and implicit ideological elements<sup>53</sup>: saving Jews was a non-neutral activity – though still a legal one – that surely “frustrated one of Hitler’s and Nazi Germany’s most fundamental and sought-after goals”<sup>54</sup>. This constituted a basis to suppose that Sweden actually had some interests in helping the Jews, which were very far from simple humanitarian reasons<sup>55</sup>, while the generic moral indifference was founded primarily upon anti-Semitism<sup>56</sup>. This was true until the high-

45 Katz, *Jews*, 185 and 193.

46 Among the most recent works on this topic it is necessary to indicate at least Stockholm Banke, “The legacies of the Holocaust and European identity after 1989”, in *Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier working paper*, n. 36 (2009); Bak, *Nothing to Speak of: Wartime Experiences of the Danish Jews 1943-1945* (Copenhagen: The Danish Jewish Museum, 2011); Keren-Carmel, “Another piece in the puzzle: Denmark, Nazi Germany, and the rescue of Danish Jewry”, in *Holocaust Studies*, 24, 2 (2018), 172-182; Stokholm Banke, Schwarz Lausten, Bergman and Trautner-Kromann, *A story of immigration: four hundred years of Jews in Denmark* (Copenhagen: Dansk Jødisk Museum, 2018); Goldbaum Tarabini Fracapane, *The Jews of Denmark in the Holocaust: Life and Death in Theresienstadt Ghetto* (New York: Routledge, 2020). As for the differences between two social backgrounds among the Danish Jews, see Hæstrup, *Passage to Palestine: young Jews in Denmark 1932-45* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983).

47 Udenrigsministeriet, *October 1943: The Rescue of the Danish Jews from annihilation*, Copenhagen, 1993, 7.

48 Udenrigsministeriet, *October 1943*, 9.

49 Trap, “Russiske og krigsindvandrede Jøder i København efter Folketællingen 1916”, in «Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift», vol. 3-25 (1917), 4-5.

50 Colding-Jørgensen, “Jøderne i Danmark omkring 1931”, in *Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift*, vol. 3-42.

51 Udenrigsministeriet, *October 1943*, 9.

52 Mogensen, “October 1943. The Rescue of the Danish Jews”, in JENSEN, *Denmark and the Holocaust* (Copenhagen: Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003), 33ff.

53 Levine, *From indifference to activism: Swedish diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938-1944* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1996), 61.

54 Levine, *From indifference*, 62.

55 Levine, *From indifference*, 64 and 74.

56 Levine, *From indifference*, 108.

ranking bureaucrat in the Swedish Foreign Ministry, Gösta Engzell, overturned the situation<sup>57</sup> implementing the so-called ‘bureaucratic resistance’ or ‘bureaucratic refusal’ that between 1943 and 1944 entailed actual risks for the official involved<sup>58</sup>. In Denmark, German occupation allowed nationalism to become stronger although it was a different kind of nationalism, quite far from fascist movements. On the other hand, the Germans tried every way to maintain good relations with Denmark, because of the close economic links between the two countries: “Danish farmers were supplying enormous amounts of food to the Germans and Danish factories produced diesel engines, airplane parts and armoured vehicles vital to the German war effort”<sup>59</sup>.

About the position of Nazism regarding the Danish freemasonry, we should note that German Reich Plenipotentiary Werner Best talked explicitly of the *Aktion* directed against Jews as well as freemasons. It is well known that the No. 1032 telegram directed by Best to the Foreign Minister on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1943, specified the following indications:

in accordance with the consistent application of the new policy in Denmark, it is my opinion that measures should now be taken toward a solution of the problems of the Jews and the Freemasons. The necessary steps should be taken as long as the present state of emergency exists, for afterward they will be liable to cause reaction in the country, which in turn may lead to a reimposition of a general state of emergency under conditions which will presumably be less convenient than those of today (...). As regard the Freemasons, a possible solution is the formal closure of all their lodges (to which all the leading personalities of the country belong) and the temporary arrest of the most prominent Freemasons and confiscation of lodge property. To this end strong operational forces are also necessary. I beg to request a decision as to the steps I should take or what I have to prepare in connection with the Jewish and Freemason problems<sup>60</sup>.

Shortly after, the Minister’s Bureau wrote requesting the Department’s opinion and the reply came on September the 14<sup>th</sup>, stating that “in conformity with the views of the relevant persons in the RSHA, “(...) at the present time is the only possible one, if we wish to impose a solution to the Jewish and Freemason problem in the near future”<sup>61</sup>. On October 19<sup>th</sup> the Secretary of the DDFO, William Fischer<sup>62</sup>, wrote to all the lodge masters informing them that there was an upcoming action against the order. Rumours assumed that the action would be carried only against high-ranking masons but, nonetheless, the DDFO asked Foreign Minister Nils Svenningsen to confirm or deny the actual danger. Werner Best, consulted by the Minister, denied any evidence of an

57 Levine, *From indifference*, 89.

58 Regarding the ‘bureaucratic resistance’, please see Wylie, ed. by, *European neutrals and non-belligerents during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 326; Friedman, ed. by, *The Routledge history of the Holocaust* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 311; Byström and Frohnert, ed. by, *Reaching a State of Hope. Refugees, immigrants and the Swedish Welfare State, 1930-2000* (Lund: Nord Academic Press, 2013), 133; Levine and Cesarani, ed. by, *Bystanders to the Holocaust. A Re-evaluation* (Milton Park: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 217. However, there was also a ‘bureaucratic acceptance’ and sometimes ‘bureaucratic enthusiasm’, as underlined by Jarlert, “Nationalsocialistiska raslagar genom statliga anvisningar vid tillämpning inom Svenska kyrkan”, in *Sweden’s Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany, and the Holocaust: a research programme* (Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet, 2006).

59 Flender, *Rescue in Denmark*, (London: W. H. Allen, 1963), 29.

60 Yahil, *Rescue of Danish Jewry*, 138-139.

61 Yahil, *Rescue of Danish Jewry*, 143.

62 An engineer, he entered on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1907, and he is then reported as a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree mason within the *Zorobabel og Frederik* (...) lodge (Copenhagen), see *Matrikel 1942-1943*, 125.

action<sup>63</sup>. The high-ranking brothers in Skive were supposed to be President Søren Pedersen<sup>64</sup>, Andrew W. Schaarup and, above all, Andreas Andersen<sup>65</sup>, whom the German Embassy asked to give up one of his two roles: being a German consul or a Danish freemason<sup>66</sup>. Andersen chose to resign as consul.

Much too often, historians and writers researching the Danish resistance repeated quaint trivia belonging to partisan *vulgata* (as in the case of the anecdotes about the King Christian X, the Danish sense of humour, the ‘cold shoulder’, the naive solidarity etc.)<sup>67</sup>: some of these, after all, emerged especially in order to be popularly misrepresented ‘for the sole purpose of improving the reputation of occupied Denmark abroad’<sup>68</sup>. Concerning the aim of this short work, the attention must instead turn towards few more serious and precise phases of the Danish Resistance, following the scheme outlined by Hæstrup and then shared by Kirchhoff:

a) An initial phase of *passive and symbolic resistance* until the summer of 1941 where opposition was directed mainly against indigenous Nazism.

b) From the summer of 1941, a *first organizational phase*, which was prompted by the ban on the Communist Party and where the emphasis was mainly on civil resistance (...)

c) From the summer and autumn of 1942 (...), a *first phase of combat* (...) lasted until August 1943, when the breakdown of state collaboration marked the turning point for the resistance.

d) From the autumn of 1943 until the winter of 1944 there was a *second and more vigorous organizational phase*. Resistance groups were centralized under the Freedom Council<sup>69</sup>.

## Conclusion: Freemasons, Rescue and Misdeeds

The rescue of the Jews during October 1943 was one of most important and decisive actions of the Danish resistance: 7.200 Jews (plus 700 non-Jewish family members) escaped from the Nazis to Sweden and only 481 were caught and sent to concentration camp in Theresienstadt (among them eight members of B’nai B’rith)<sup>70</sup>. Undoubtedly, the deportation of Jews in Denmark happened one year after the deportation of Jews in Norway and this, as well as the state of

63 Wøldiche, *Et sekel i guld og himmelblåt. Frimurerlogen STJIL Cirkelns historie gennem 100 år* (Frimurerlogen STJIL Cirklen, 2013), 124ff.

64 More precisely ‘Søren Theodor’, he was a trader in Skive, who entered *St. Martin* lodge (Randers) on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1902, and is then recorded as a 10<sup>th</sup> degree Brother within the *Louise* lodge (Odense), *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 16 and 231.

65 Precisely ‘Andreas Wilhelm’, a textiles dealer in Skive, who entered *St. Martin* lodge (Randers) on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1903, and is then recorded as a 10<sup>th</sup> degree Brother within *De fire roser* lodge (Aarhus), *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 20 and 231.

66 Precisely ‘Andreas Marinus’, trader and vice-consul, who entered *St. Martin* lodge on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1908, and is recorded as a 9<sup>th</sup> degree Brother within the *Louise* lodge (Odense), see *Matrikel* 1942-1943 23 and 231.

67 See Bennett, “The Resistance against the German occupation of Denmark 1940-1945”, in ROBERTS, *The strategy of civilian defence. Nonviolent Resistance to aggression* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), 154-172.

68 See Vilhjålmsson, “The King and the Star”, in JENSEN, *Denmark and the Holocaust*, and also Vilhjålmsson, “Christian X og jøderne. Hovedrolleindehavere i dansk krigspropaganda”, in *Rambam. Tidsskrift for jødisk kultur og forskning*, Nr. 19 (2010), 68ff. It must be said that the works by Vilhjålmsson have been often considered as biased. It being impossible to pronounce a definitive word about the rightness of some historical points of view, his works seem anyway worth to be mentioned here.

69 Kirchhoff, “Denmark”, in MOORE, *Resistance in Western Europe*, (Oxford: Berg, 2000), 97.

70 They were Josef Fischer, dr. M. Friediger, Olaf Grün, Max Hartvic, Alfred Heyman, Axel Margolinsky, Carl Metz and Morits Oppenheim. Heyman died in the camp, see Margolinsky, *Danmark Loge*, 120-122.

war, may have been the reason for the outrage in the whole of Scandinavia: Danish Jews were alerted, and the Swedish government declared that it would accept all of them (Sweden was already accepting Norwegian Jews). “Information passed by authoritative German sources to authoritative Danish ones, and thence to the Jewish leadership (...) helped to overcome some of the disbelief and psychological resistance to flight which cost so many Jewish lives elsewhere”<sup>71</sup>. Thus, we should argue that the help took place on both sides of the *Øresund* (Stockholm was the central office for intelligence work in Denmark<sup>72</sup>, while the Swedish navy contributed with patrol boats on a voluntary basis to the Swedish part of the rescue)<sup>73</sup> and, moreover, that the Nazis showed an odd and uninterested behaviour, being much more worried about the possible financial consequences rather than about racial issues<sup>74</sup>. Indeed, the wide network created because of the rescue operation was then intensively used by the resisters after October 1943. Voluntary support by the population was widespread, partially because of the “strong political and social solidarity”<sup>75</sup>, and it will be interesting to analyze the social and cultural structure of resisters’ groups: what is certain is that many of the rescuers were not members of the resistance, neither before nor after October 1943, but ordinary laymen that participated in hiding and transporting the Jews.

As shown in the first part of this work, there are well-grounded reasons not to find any actual involvement of the whole Danish freemasonry – or, better, freemasonries – within the Danish resistance: rather, we should look for a collaboration in individual cases or in subgroup cases and specific contexts. At least 40 associations, networks, organizations and social communities of various kinds – and mainly lay ones – worked actively during the rescue of the Danish Jews (the Social Democratic youth organization, socialist networks, boy-scouts, students and faculties of the Copenhagen University, Grundtvigian Lutheran clergy and lay-people, business circles, clubs, citizens’ committees, members of the Danish trade life, trade unions, working associations etc.)<sup>76</sup> and we should rather detect the presence of freemasons, if possible, among these. Proportionally, one must note, little was done by the Danish Church: the bishop of Copenhagen – already informed of the plans to persecute the Danish Jews – merely “addressed a protest on behalf of the Danish bishops to the German authorities in Denmark against Nazi anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jews”<sup>77</sup>, and it appears undoubtable that could have been done something more – and more official – than reading a statement in the churches all over Denmark the following Sunday, or having priests, theologians and members of the clergy

71 Paulsson, “The bridge over the Oeresund. The historiography on the expulsion of Jews from Nazi-occupied Denmark”, in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Nr. 30 (3), (1995), 435.

72 Kirchoff, “Denmark”, in MOORE, *Resistance*, 107.

73 Mogensen, *October 1943*, 33ff.

74 Paulsson, “The bridge”, 436. Rabbi Marcus Melchior writes: ‘the Germans knew perfectly well what was going on course, they could have put a stop to it, had they decided so. So, the fortunate thing was that they did not want to (...). Germans closed both eyes, simply did not want to see anything’, see Melchior, *A rabbi remembers* (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1968), 185. Paulsson, “The bridge”, 436 proposes an alternative explanation for the successful evacuation of the Danish Jews to Sweden. According to Vilhjálmsón, «Ich weiss, was ich zu tun habe». En kildekritisk belysning af Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz’ rolle i redningen af jøderne i 1943, in *Rambam. Tidsskrift for jødisk kultur og forskning*, Nr. 15 (2006), 72ff., Duckwitz apparently wasn’t the strictly anti-Nazis as portrayed by historian Hans Kirchoff, but rather a loyal member of Nazi Party who made very little to implement the rescue of 1943. On the alleged biased nature of Vilhjálmsón’s works see note 68.

75 Goodman, “Foundations of Resistance”, in Rohrllich, *Resisting the holocaust*, 215. About German occupation in Denmark see generally Thomsen, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Dänemark 1940-1945* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann, 1971).

76 Therkel Straede (professor of Contemporary History at University of Southern Denmark), personal communication (November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016).

77 Mogensen, *October 1943*, 33ff.

sheltering and hiding the fleeing Jews.

Among the Danish rescuers, we can detect only a couple of them whom we can indicate as freemasons: it is the case of Robert Christian Jensen<sup>78</sup>, Robert H. Petersen<sup>79</sup> and Henry P. C. Rasmussen<sup>80</sup>. But most of the several hundreds of rescuers went under cover and used fictitious names, thus it is now impossible to match their names with masonic lists.

There is also another point of view worth examining, which is paying attention to those freemasons who were found guilty of collaborating with the occupation. Indeed, when on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the Danish Government proposed a motion for a new penal code and opened investigations inside the DDFO against the freemasons who collaborated with the Danish Nazis or with the German occupation forces<sup>81</sup>. There was no capital punishment in Denmark since 1892 and its abolition occurred in 1930, but at this time was reinstated, and even retroactively used, in case of war crimes. The new law actually led to 78 death sentences, 46 of which actually took place (and one of these was against a DDFO member). As soon as the Danish Parliament proposed the new laws (May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1945) the directory of the DDFO sent a letter to all the Saint John Lodges in order to obtain information about the conduct of the masons during the occupation years and, shortly after, suggested to King Christian X – at that time Sovereign Grand Master of the order<sup>82</sup> – to set an inner Tribunal of Justice: “Six brethren with a qualified legal background were appointed members of the committee (...). The chairman was a judge of the Supreme Court, four brethren were barristers, and one brother was a managing director and Bachelor of Laws. Grounds for this procedure found in the old – and at that time still applied – version of the Fundamental Constitution of DDFO, authorized by Crown Prince Frederik (later King Frederik VIII) in 1874”<sup>83</sup>.

After two months all lodges received the request to reveal any relevant or irresponsible conduct of their members, possibly without waiting for the sentences from the ‘outer’ world. The first case concerned a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree mason who had been arrested and charged with vicious informer activity. Indeed, he had assisted the German Military Intelligence in Aarhus, Sønderborg and Randers, causing the imprisonment of 27 resisters and the death of 6 (in 1949 he was eventually executed). On September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1946, the lodges received then the information regarding the ‘measures that would be taken against brethren for conduct unbecoming during the Occupation’, which meant different kinds of exclusion from the DDFO (from 6 months to a lifelong exclusion, depending on the severity of the offense) or denial of advancement, withdrawal from an office position, official reprimands and indication of their exclusion (the last to be printed on masonic yearbooks). In 87 out of the 160 cases discussed, there were consequences for DDFO members

78 Entered on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 1930, in the *Zorobabel og Frederik (...)* lodge (Copenhagen), he has been recorded as a 7<sup>th</sup> degree Brother in the *Cubus Frederici Septimi* lodge (Copenhagen), see *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 53.

79 A manufacturer in Skanderborg, he entered on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1913, and he has been then recorded as a 4<sup>th</sup> degree Brother in the *Maria til de tre hjærter* lodge (Odense), see *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 108.

80 A postmaster in Svendborg, he entered on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1922, and after twenty years he was still a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree Brother in the *Maria til de tre hjærter* lodge, see *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 137.

81 Peter Duetoft, personal communication (March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017). Former member of Danish Parliament and Chairman of the Finance Committee, Duetoft is an active Freemason as well as a Knight of the Dannebrogordenen.

82 King Christian X was Head of the Order from November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1889, while his brother Prince Harald Christian Frederik – entered on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1886, in the *Nordstjernen* lodge (Copenhagen) and then passed to the *Cubus Frederici Septimi* lodge (Copenhagen) – was the President, Chancellor, General Lieutenant and an honorary member of the Grand Lodge of Norway. Contemporary to them, also King Gustaf V of Sweden appears as an honorary member of DDFO, see *Matrikel* 1942-1943, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 13.

83 Tønnes, “Den Danske Frimurerorden og retsopgøret efter besættelsen”, in *AMS*, Nr. 4 (2001), 9-43.

(which equals a little more than 1% of all DDFO members) and, specifically, 28 members were punished with the lifelong exclusion (cases which were punished in the civil courts with imprisonment); 38 members were excluded for 9 years (in case of membership to the Nazi Party, independently on the duration of the membership); 21 were excluded for periods from 1 to 3 years (in the case of contacts or sympathy with the occupation force, minor collaborationists and also brethren who had displayed “unworthy or imprudent conduct”)<sup>84</sup>.

It is impossible to know if there was a similar reaction within the other Danish masonic associations, or if the DDFO would have actually reacted without the 1945 proposal of a new Danish penal code. However, this reaction was quite strong and we should remember it as an example of moral rigour. A kind of moral rigour that does not appear similarly considered outside the association: we can mention, for instance, the proposal – that came in September 1943 from Helmer Rosting, head of the Danish Red Cross and member of the Danish Nazi Party – to exchange Jews for the interned Danish soldiers held by Germans<sup>85</sup>, or the expulsion of Jewish refugees from Denmark from 1935<sup>86</sup> (an issue discovered as recently as 1997 in a study on Jewish refugees in Iceland)<sup>87</sup>. Or, again, one should think of the ethics behind the mine clearance operations of 1945 (although it was a SHAEF mission, under British leadership)<sup>88</sup>, after the Liberation and therefore after the end of the War, when German prisoners had to clean the Danish shores from German mines. And, above all, among the darkest pages of the Danish resistance there is still the one concerning the financial costs of the escape from Denmark to Sweden: fishermen charged 1.000 up to 50.000 Danish kroner per person in order to hide them in their ships and take them to Sweden, when the average monthly wage was 500 kroner. We read that the total sum collected for the flight approached 20 million kroner: half of the sum came from the rescued ones themselves, the other portion from the Danish Resistance Movement, employers and manufacturers associations and occasionally from wealthy Danes (the main donor being the chairman of the Jewish Community, C.B. Henriques<sup>89</sup> plus 250.000 kroner being taken on loan by the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court H.H. Bruun, who gave the estate of the Jewish Community as guarantee)<sup>90</sup> but the whole funding operation depended on personal trust without any receipt or certificate<sup>91</sup>.

And if “many different kinds of helpers were involved: the organizers in Copenhagen, the people who sailed with the refugees to assist them on the way, people in the local areas who guided the Jews to the places of departure”<sup>92</sup>, one should wonder if everything was really done disinterestedly. All the rescue’s operations represented a gain for clandestine circles in Denmark “in the form of better contacts with Sweden (...). These organizations were run by Danes and

84 Tønnes, “Den Danske Frimurerorden”.

85 Paulsson, “The bridge”, 460. See also Vilhjálmsón and Blüdnikow, “Rescue, Expulsion, and Collaboration: Denmark’s difficulties with its World War II Past”, in *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 18:3–4 (Fall 2006).

86 Vilhjálmsón, “The King and the Star”, 35. On the alleged biased nature of Vilhjálmsón’s works see note 68.

87 Vilhjálmsón and Blüdnikow, “Rescue”, as well as Vilhjálmsón, *Medaljens bagside: jødiske flygtningeskæbner i Danmark 1933-1945* (Copenhagen: Vandkunsten, 2005). See also note 68.

88 See Hagemann, *Under tvang: minerydning ved den jyske vestkyst i 1945* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1998) as well Scharff Smith, “Helge Hagemann: Under tvang. Minerydningen ved den jyske vestkyst 1945”, in *Historie/Jyske Samlinger*, vol. 1 (2000). Also these works by Hagemann and Zandvliet have been considered biased: on these alleged nature see note 68.

89 Yahil, *Rescue of Danish Jewry*, 261-263.

90 Lidegaard, *Il popolo che disse no*, 389-392.

91 Bertelsen, *Oktober 43: oplevelser og tilstande under jødeforfølgelsen i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1993), 64.

92 Mogensen, *Oktober 1943*, 33ff.



operated from Swedish ports (...) though they had a well-developed network of contacts in Danish harbours (...). There was also a stream of traffic, above all armaments deliveries from Sweden and Britain, in the opposite direction”<sup>93</sup>. Obviously the fishermen risked their ships, and a maximum of 3-month imprisonment, but the prices requested were higher than the cost of a brand-new ship. Further research into the income of – and, above all, the consequent investments done by – Gilleleje’s fishermen (1/5 of the escapers left from this little town) would be enlightening<sup>94</sup>. Also, we have no evidence of any masonic membership among them, since the DDFL lodge that is currently closer to Gilleleje was founded only in 1994 (*Rosendal* lodge nr. 839), while, at that time, the closer DDFO lodge (*Kosmos* lodge) did not count any residents of Gilleleje among its members and counted very few among captains, shipbrokers, and naval inspectors (all resident in Copenhagen)<sup>95</sup>.

In November 1943 the Freedom Council issued the *Når Danmark atter er frit* pamphlet (*When Denmark is free again*), where it defined its aims, among which the reintroduction of democracy and the opening of legal proceedings against those found guilty of or responsible for violations of democracy and the rule of law; or of gaining ‘personal advantage’ from the occupation of the country. Punishment was to be inflicted in accordance with the ‘Danish sense of justice’, without individuals taking the law into their own hands<sup>96</sup>. One should wonder if we should rightfully include the income of fishermen among the ‘personal advantage’ according to the ‘Danish sense of justice’ or if we should simply relegate it to a sweetened vision of romantic smugglers.

As Paulsson wrote: “romanticism expressed along national lines is dangerous; to hold up whole nations to praise or blame is worse than a questionable practice: it represents a subtle triumph of the Nazi idea”<sup>97</sup>.

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93 Trommer, “Scandinavia and the turn of the tide”, in Nissen, *Scandinavia during the Second World War*, 239-245. Hendil, “How Denmark kept the door open to the free world. The adventures of the ‘illegal’ Danish routes forming a connecting link with Sweden by sea”, in OUTZE, *Denmark during the German occupation* (The Scandinavian Publishing Company, 1946), 74-75.

94 See, above all, Tortzen, *Gilleleje Oktober 1943: under jødernes flugt for nazismen* (Copenhagen: Fremad, 1970). In addition, see also Damgaard, *Haabet: Gilleleje, oktober 1943* (Helsingør: Gribskov Kommune, 2013).

95 *Matrikel 1942-1943*, 144-149.

96 Trommer, *Scandinavia and the turn of the tide*, 239-245.

97 Paulsson, “The bridge over the Oeresund”, 461.

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