



# Freemasonry in Southeast Europe from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

*Editor Slobodan G. Markovich*

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FREEMASONRY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE  
FROM THE 19<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURIES

Edited by  
Slobodan G. Markovich

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## *Publishers*

Zepter Book World, Belgrade  
Institute for European Studies, Belgrade

## *Executive Publisher*

Dosije Studio, Belgrade

## *For the Publishers*

Mrs. Slavka Stevanović, head of Zepter Book World  
Dr Misha Djurkovich, Director of the Institute for European Studies  
Mirko Milićević, Director of Dosije Studio

The publication of this book has been supported by the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia within the framework of the celebration of the centenary of the Grand Lodge “Jugoslavia/Yugoslavia”.

1919 ∴ 2019

100 година од оснивања  
Велике ложе  
Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца  
«Југославија»



100th Anniversary  
of the Grand Lodge  
of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians  
"Yugoslavia"

# FREEMASONRY IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

FROM THE 19<sup>th</sup> TO THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURIES

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*Pictures on the covers:*

Front Cover:

Alphonse Mucha's poster for his exhibition  
"Slovanská epopěj" ["The Slavic Epic"]  
organised in Brno in June-September 1930.  
Slavic god Svantovit/Svetovid with four faces is in the background.

Back cover:

Medal of the Grand Lodge "Yugoslavia" from the late 1930s.  
From the private collection of the Homen family, Belgrade.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

In 2017, the three-hundredth anniversary of the United Grand Lodge of England was celebrated and marked in many countries. On that occasion, a special exhibition entitled “Secret of the Lodge” followed by a scholarly conference was organised in Ljubljana, Slovenia by the National Museum of Slovenia and the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia.<sup>1</sup> The collection of papers that resulted from that conference could be considered the beginning of systematic scholarly work on the history of Freemasonry in ex-Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup>

The next occasion to continue this initiative appeared in 2019, a century after the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “Jugoslavia/Yugoslavia” had been established in 1919. The anniversary was first marked in Freemasonic circles in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. On June 21, 2019, on the occasion of the centenary of the Grand Lodge “Yugoslavia”, the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia organised a special academy at the National Theatre in Belgrade. The next day, the annual meeting of the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia was attended by 17 grand masters including HRH Duke of Kent, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England.

The anniversary was also an opportunity to continue the scholarly work initiated in Ljubljana two years earlier. With this aim in mind, I approached two institutions as potential co-organisers of another international conference with a plan to organise the first conference in Serbia dedicated to the history of European, Balkan, and Serbian/Yugoslav Freemasonries. The Institute for European Studies and its director Dr Misha Djurkovich agreed to host the conference, and the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia and its Grand Master, Prof. Lukas Rasulić, decided to support it within the framework of the celebration of the centenary of the Grand Lodge “Jugoslavia/Yugoslavia.”

The idea was to gather prominent experts who would have an opportunity to discuss in an elaborate and critical manner the achievements

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1 Matevž Košir and Jože Podpečnik, *Skrivnost lože. Prostodžidarstvo na Slovenskem* [exhibition catalogue] (Ljubljana: National Museum of Slovenia and Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, 2017).

2 Matevž Košir (ed.), *The Secret of the Lodge* (Ljubljana: National Museum of Slovenia and Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, 2018). It was first published in Slovene in 2017.

and failures of Yugoslav freemasonry, to analyse its impact and contribution to the development of Southeast European societies through various Freemasonic endeavours in the previous two centuries, but also to discuss wider issues of Freemasonry and its relations with civil society. This was also a chance to strengthen the scholarly approach to this topic as opposed to various masonological, publicist and sensationalistic approaches that have obscured the whole topic.

One should particularly have in mind that, with the exception of Sweden and Switzerland, all European continental Freemasonic organisations were banned at some point in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In many cases, the bans spanned decades and it was precisely during the periods when the Craft was banned and/or persecuted that the spread of misconceptions, unfounded accusations, and sensationalist stories about Freemasonry flourished. This has left a dire legacy to researchers interested in studying and analysing Freemasonry. As papers in this collection demonstrate, in many cases, like in Hungary and Yugoslavia, authoritarian or totalitarian polities easily accepted anti-Masonic propaganda, or even anti-masonic bans, from their predecessors even if they belonged to totally opposite ends of the political spectrum. Once established, the distorted narratives had a tendency to persist for a long time. They have influenced public opinion, mainstream culture and even scholarly circles. This makes the task of researchers dealing with Freemasonry particularly difficult but even more relevant.

Another important element in studying the history of Freemasonries is the wider context within which specific Freemasonic organisations have organised their activities. Various Masonic bodies have been a part of transnational networks, and they have operated within the framework of civil society both in national and international terms. In continental Europe and elsewhere, the general cosmopolitan goals of Freemasonry were not infrequently at odds with the national aspirations of particular nation-states. Therefore, writing case studies about particular Freemasonries proves to be quite a comprehensive task that includes many aspects. Some of them are the following: 1) a scholar interested in Freemasonry needs to approach it in a multidisciplinary way, using the methods of sociology, political science, history of ideas and other disciplines, additionally to the usual approaches of political and cultural history; 2) Freemasonries have been constituent parts of their societies and can hardly be understood if analysed outside the context of history of the wider civil society of a particular country; and, 3) Freemasonry has existed as an international network of fraternal lodges. Therefore, one cannot understand the development of any particular grand lodge without studying the history and

practices of other grand lodges, especially those of neighbouring states. In the context of Southeast Europe, where Freemasonry was transmitted with the support of foreign grand lodges, policies and practices of those grand lodges also need to be analysed.

In a bid to raise some of the issues mentioned above, the Institute for European Studies in Belgrade organised the international conference entitled “Freemasonry in South-East Europe from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries”. The conference was held on October 12, 2019, in Belgrade. It was opened by Prof. Lukas Rasulić, Grand Master of the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia, and Dr Misha Djurkovich, Director of the Institute for European Studies. Twelve panellists from seven countries (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Hungary, the United States, and Costa Rica) took part in three panels at the conference. Specialists from several fields participated including historians, historians of ideas, political scientists, political philosophers, and sociologists. The geographic scope of the conference included not only the area of former Yugoslavia, but also Central Europe and Italy due to their particular influence on Freemasonry in SEE, and the conference also covered some wider issues of the history of European and global Freemasonries.

Ten of the eleven texts in this collection were presented at the conference. I would like to particularly thank Prof. Wolfgang Schmale of the University of Vienna who did not attend the conference, but was asked and kindly agreed to send his contribution after the conference.

The collection covers four parts. In the first part, two papers on interwar European Freemasonries are presented. Prof. Schmale writes on projects of the Grand Lodge of France and French Freemasonry in general on how to promote peace, on dilemmas of colonialism, and on the issue of creating a “United States of Europe”. He demonstrates that French Freemasonry possessed huge intellectual potential between the two world wars. He sees Freemasonry as a part of civil society. The article by Dr Eric Beckett Weaver portrays quite an opposite example – a case of thwarted potential, and a period of oppression which still resonates in the ongoing polemics in pro-regime newspapers against Masonry. Hungarian Freemasonry, which flourished till 1918, has had a tenebrous destiny. As the author puts it, a rare issue on which communists and nationalists in Hungary agreed was to ban Freemasonry. In a way, the Hungarian case heralded the series of bans of Freemasonries in continental Europe, first in Italy, and then throughout Europe, particularly in the late 1930s.

The second part deals with the influence of Italian and Hungarian Freemasonries on Southeast Europe. Prof. Fulvio Conti analyses the very

widespread presence of Masonic lodges in the Balkans that operated under the protection of the Grand Orient of Italy between 1870 and 1920. These lodges were established in Greece, the Ottoman Empire, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Dalmatia. He discusses the issue of the relation between the universalist utopia of Freemasonry and the nationalist aspirations that clashed in this period. Prof. Attila Pók writes on the dilemmas of modern Hungarian Freemasonry and the fascinating role the Craft played in Hungary, particularly during its golden period between the 1880s and 1918. He has calculated that during the 270 years of its history in Hungary (1749–2019), Freemasonry operated as a legal and free institution for no more than 132. Finally, Dr Ljubinka Toševa Karpowicz discusses Freemasonry in Fiume and the lodge Sirius which, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was active in Fiume (Rijeka) under the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary.

The third part deals with Serbian and interwar Yugoslav Freemasonry. Prof. Slobodan G. Markovich offers an account of how Yugoslav Freemasons interacted with the narrative of Yugoslavism and tried to make a civil religion out of it. He dismisses as a myth the claims that Yugoslavia was created due to the influence of freemasons. The integral components of this civil religion have been analysed including its holidays and ideology, main protagonists, and its reflections in the arts. Internal and external reasons on why this civil religion failed to realise its goals are given. Prof. Mihailo Milinković sketches a portrait of Prof. Mihailo Valtović both in institution building in Serbia and in terms of his contribution to the introduction and promotion of Serbian Freemasonry. Prof. Nemanja Radulović deals with the issue of esotericism in Serbian and Yugoslav Freemasonry in the interwar period and finds that Freemasonry operated in the context of a surprisingly substantial number of esoteric initiatives and organisations in Yugoslavia of that time. He identifies the “cold” and “warm” currents within Yugoslav Freemasonry and also certain regional patterns and differences. The paper of Dr Stanislav Sretenović analyses Yugoslav Freemasonry in the context of interwar European foreign relations. The author demonstrates how Fascist Italy, by exaggerating the influence of the Grand Orient of France on the political events in Yugoslavia, identified the Grand Orient’s protégé – the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “Yugoslavia” – as its enemy. At the same time, the paper gives plenty of details on the relations between French and Yugoslav Freemasonries, and it could not confirm the claims of the intense influence that French Freemasonry allegedly had on the Kingdom Yugoslavia. Finally, Dr Matevž Košir analyses the years of the eclipse of the Grand Lodge “Yugoslavia”,

# Freemasonry in South-East Europe from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries

Co-ordinator: Prof. S. G. Markovich

Belgrade, October 12, 2019  
Institute for European Studies  
Trg Nikole Pašića 11

Art design: Svetislav Todorović



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followed by its factual ban (1940), and Nazi (1941–1944/45) and communist persecutions (since 1944/45). He identifies a clear continuity in the anti-Masonic narratives between Nazi propagandists and Communist analysts. The latter were only too eager to accept the claims previously fabricated about Freemasonry within the context of the Nazi propaganda.

In the final section, Dr Misha Djurkovich deals with the very sensitive issue of the relations between the Catholic Church and Freemasonry. He sketches the main episodes in the radical conflict between the Craft and the Catholic Church up to the end of the Great War. Then he analyses the gradual rapprochement of these two institutions and the reasons that led the Catholic Church to undertake a “bringing up to date” (*aggiornamento*) in terms of its relations with Freemasonry.

In spite of our best efforts and repeated invitations, the organisers of the conference were not successful in engaging experts from Greece, Romania and Bulgaria. Hopefully, this missed opportunity will be remedied at some follow-up meetings or conferences to be organised in the future. Illustrations in the book are given within each of the 11 papers. There are also three sets of colour plates that follow the parts of the book. The first one accompanies articles 1–4, the second articles 5–6, and the third articles 7–10. I would like to thank the contributors but also Dr László Vári and Mr Dušan Babac for providing some of the illustrations.

Prepared under the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, this collection could not be realised and published without the assistance of several institutions and individuals. I would like to thank the Institute for European Studies and its Director Dr Misha Djurkovich for their decision to support both the conference and the publication of this collection. I owe special gratitude to Prof. Lukas Rasulić, Grand Master of the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia, who has personally and institutionally supported this project. I am indebted to Mr Tahir Hasanović, who has in many ways supported the organisation of the conference, and who has believed in the relevance of the whole project. Mr Svetislav Todorović has helped me on multiple occasions with the design of my publications and has, as usual, been very committed to preparing this collection together with the staff of Dosije Studio, and Ms Miljana Protić, who was a careful proofreader. Last but not least, Ms Slavka Stevanović of Zepter Book World has been kind enough to add her well-known publishing house as a co-publisher of this edition.

## THE “GRANDE LOGE DE FRANCE” IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD AND ITS GRAND DEBATES ON PEACE, COLONIALISM, AND THE “UNITED STATES OF EUROPE”

**Abstract:** During the interwar period (1918–1939), the Grande Loge de France took full part in crucial debates such as colonialism, European unity, peace, the League of Nations, and much more. Freemasonry is considered here as part of civil society. Most of the human rights leagues that flowered in this period were founded or co-founded by Freemasons. The article focuses on a selection of topics – peace, colonialism and the United States of Europe. It retraces the debates during the conventions of 1922, 1927, and 1933. The article is based on material from the archives of the Grande Loge de France, especially those stocks which had been confiscated first by the Nazi occupiers of France, and which, later, fell into the hands of the Red Army and were brought to Moscow into an archive declared “secret”. They were restituted to the Grande Loge at the beginning of the current millennium.

**Keywords:** French Freemasonry – Grande Loge de France – Peace – Colonialism – United States of Europe – Interwar Period

### Introduction: Civil Society and Freemasons

The era of the American and French revolutions not only revolutionized political orders, but also favoured the emergence of social initiatives and their organization in the form of associations and movements, which today are subsumed under the umbrella term “civil society” in common parlance, but also in historical research.<sup>1</sup>

By and large, these initiatives served to enforce humanitarian ideals and values as well as human rights. The fact that the historical begin-

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1 In my book *For a Democratic ‘United States of Europe’ (1918–1951). Freemasons, Human Rights Leagues, Winston S. Churchill, Individual Citizens* (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019), I present this connection between the history of civil society and Freemasons in more detail. The contribution presented here is based on the above-mentioned book (see the last subchapter of this article on “United States of Europe”, 1933 Convention of Grande Loge de France) and two further articles: Wolfgang Schmale, “Legacy of the Enlightenment: The Use of European History and Culture in the Interwar Years by the Ligue des droits de l’homme and Grande Loge de France”, *History. The Journal of the Historical Association*, vol. 104, No. 361 (July 2019), p. 459–472. Wolfgang Schmale, “Friedensinitiativen französischer Freimaurer in der Zwischenkriegszeit”, in Irene Dingel, Johannes Paulmann, Matthias Schnettger and Martin Wrede (eds.), *Theatrum Belli – Theatrum Pacis. Konflikte und Konfliktregelungen im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018, p. 277–284. I have revised these earlier texts and translated some parts of them into English for the first time or anew.

*Eric Beckett Weaver*

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## SHADES OF DARKNESS ANTI-MASONIC POLITICS IN INTERWAR HUNGARY, AND THE SHADOWS THEY CAST TODAY

**Abstract:** This piece gives an overview of official depictions of Freemasonry and its suppression in Hungary in the period 1918–1938, and provides reflections on how these depictions have come to the level of semi-official discourse in Hungary in 2020. The author covers the political background leading up to the Horthy period and describes how Masons, along with Jews, were depicted as complicit in, if not responsible for communism and the dismemberment of Hungary after the First World War. The article closes with a description of anti-Masonic ideologies as they have re-appeared in Hungary an association with the one hundredth anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon.

**Keywords:** Freemasonry, Hungary, Trianon, communism, liberalism, Miklós Horthy, Béla Kun, antisemitism, conspiracy theories

Over the past decade, the government press in Hungary has periodically published articles alleging that prior to and during the First World War Hungarian Freemasons worked in concert with foreign Masons to destroy old Greater Hungary. According to these charges, the Versailles Peace Treaties, particularly the Treaty of Trianon of 1920, were the fruit of the work of Freemasons. This charge is a very serious one to make in Hungary, where Trianon is depicted as Hungary's greatest historical tragedy, a "peace dictate" through which the majority of Hungarian lands were awarded to neighbouring states, and nearly one Hungarian in three ended up outside of truncated Hungary's borders.<sup>1</sup> Accusations that Freemasons caused Trianon reached a crescendo in Hungarian government press in 2020, the one hundredth anniversary of the treaty. These accusations were presaged by a series of books on the Masonic conspiracy published over the past decade. Although these books and articles claim to reveal hitherto

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1 In point of fact, the Battle of Mohács (29 Aug. 1526) in which the Hungarian King was killed, and the subsequent dismemberment and occupation of Hungary by Ottoman and Habsburg forces was, without a doubt, a far greater historical tragedy. As a result of the battle, Hungary lost its independence and would only regain it in 1918, when the country left the Habsburg Empire. Despite the fact that there is a Hungarian folk saying about the battle that "More was lost at Mohács," today the majority of Hungarians regard Trianon as the greatest tragedy to befall the nation.



## THE GRAND ORIENT OF ITALY AND THE FREEMASONRIES OF BALKAN AND DANUBIAN EUROPE

**Abstract:** Between 1870 and 1920, the Grand Orient of Italy (GOI) had an important role in the revival and spread of Freemasonry in some of Europe's Danubian and Balkan countries. In particular, the GOI founded several lodges in Serbia and Romania, in which some famous representatives of the local cultural and political life participated. Italian Freemasonry looked sympathetically towards the local nationalist movements and encouraged their anti-Habsburg and anti-Turkish actions. The First World War, however, opened up deep divisions between the GOI, which claimed Italy's rights over Rijeka and Dalmatia, and the Serbian and Croatian Freemasonries, which defended the expectations of the rising Yugoslav state. The article reconstructs these events and, more generally, seeks to shed some light on the GOI's relations with the various Masonic organizations in Danubian and Balkan Europe between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Keywords:** Freemasonry; Grand Orient of Italy; Balkan and Danubian Europe; Nationalism/Universalism.

1. The Grand Orient of Italy was founded in 1805 at Napoleon's urging when most of the Italian peninsula was occupied by the French. During these years, Italian Freemasonry became a sort of the emperor's extended arm, serving as a tool to build consensus and integrating the bourgeois elites within the new regime. In the eyes of the absolute monarchs overthrown by Napoleon, Freemasonry ended up being identified as the emblem of the French Revolution and its Jacobin ideals.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when the 1815 Congress of Vienna decreed Napoleon's downfall and the restoration of absolutism, Freemasonry was banned in all Italian states, unleashing a kind of witch hunt against the Masons.<sup>2</sup> Freemasonry was identified as a source of inspiration for revolutionary forces, harshly opposed by the Catholic Church with reiterated excommunications by all popes starting with Clement XII in 1738 and persecuted by the police.

The Grand Orient of Italy was reconstituted only in 1859, after the end of the Second War of Independence and a few months before Gar-

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1 Gian Mario Cazzaniga, "Nascita del Grande Oriente d'Italia", in Gian Mario Cazzaniga (ed.), *Storia d'Italia, Annali 21, La Massoneria* (Torino: Einaudi, 2006), pp. 545–558.

2 Fulvio Conti, "Massoneria e Risorgimento: fra storia e leggenda", in Mario Isnenghi, Eva Cecchinato (eds.), *Gli Italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai nostri giorni*, vol. I, *Fare l'Italia: Unità e disunità nel Risorgimento* (Torino: Utet, 2008), pp. 164–171.

## THE DILEMMAS OF MODERN HUNGARIAN FREEMASONRY

**Abstract:** The paper gives an overview of the history of Freemasonry in Hungary in the period of 271 years (1749–2020). The author covers the emergence and the development of Freemasonry in Hungary in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its links with the Hungarian Enlightenment. The main part of the paper covers the period between 1867 and 1918 in which two grand lodges emerged (in 1870 and 1871) and were united in 1886 as the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary. The role of this grand lodge in the period 1886–1918 is analysed and it is viewed as a part of Hungarian civil society, but also an institution whose membership sometimes had opposite attitudes that oscillated between social activism and contemplation, and between strong liberalism and traditionalism. The issue of the Austrian border lodges (*Grenzlogen*) is also covered. Freemasonry was banned in Hungary between 1919 and 1945 and had only a short revival till 1950, followed by a new ban by the Stalinist regime. It was re-established only in 1989.

**Keywords:** Freemasonry, Hungary, Enlightenment, Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, Liberalism

Bearers of modernisation, a workshop of ground-breaking reform ideas, or meeting point for destructive social and political movements? Strength, Wisdom, and Beauty are symbolic pillars of modern Freemasonry. Did this worldwide movement with these pillars contribute to the successes or failures of Hungary from the late eighteenth century till the collapse of the bipolar world of the Cold War? This brief overview<sup>1</sup> of the major turning points in the history of Hungarian Freemasonry aims to make a modest contribution to this discussion.

### First steps

Hungarian Freemasonry emerged not very long after the first lodges were founded in Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> We have sources about lodges in Brassó (Kronstadt, Romanian Brasov) (“Zu den drei Säulen” [“To the three pillars”], founded in 1749 by Marton G. Seulener Seuler, a citizen initiated in Germany) and Nagyszeben (Hermannstadt, Ro. Sibiu) (“St. Andreas zu

1 See the most important works on the general history of the Hungarian Freemasonry in the selected bibliography at the end of the article.

2 According to the research of Róbert Péter, editor-in-chief of a monumental work on the early history of British Freemasonry, Antal Pál Eszterházy was the first Hungarian freemason. He was initiated in 1733, in a British lodge. See Rawlinson MS C. 136, Bodleian Library, Oxford, in: Róbert Péter (General Editor), Jan A. M. Snoek – Cécile Révauger (eds.), *British Freemasonry 1717–1813*, Vol. 5: Representations (New York: Routledge, 2016), 20.

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## THE RELEVANCE OF FREEMASONRY FOR THE HISTORY OF FIUME (RIJEKA)

**Abstract:** The article covers the history of Freemasonry in the Adriatic port of Fiume (Rijeka) from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century till the 1920s. The author covers the history of the Craft in Fiume during the years of the Napoleonic Wars when the Illyrian Provinces were established. The paper follows the subsequent activities of persons who were Freemasons or had relations with Freemasonry, and is focused on the activities of the Fiuman lodge “Sirius” established in 1901 under the protection of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary and the lodge “XXX Ottobre” founded just after the Great War.

**Keywords:** Freemasonry, Illyrian Provinces, Fiume, the lodge “Sirius”

### I. Freemasonry in Fiume until the formation of the *Illyrian Provinces* (1809–1812)

Although the small harbor-city of Fiume was promoted into a free port in 1719, it was only the edict of Empress Maria Theresa (1740–1780) of 1779 that gave the city the status of a *corpus separatum*. It laid the ground for the development of the city into an important port in the north Adriatic. Slowly but steadily, merchants from the vast territory of the Habsburg Empire moved to Fiume, bringing their own capital. The growth of the harbor-city was slow but persistent. The city had the status of a municipality and was administrated by a governor as the executive administrator responsible directly to the Crown. Rich magnates from the eastern provinces of the Empire were nominated to become governors. In 1749, the first military lodge, which belonged to the military Order of *Strict Observance*, was created in Transylvania, and the position of governors was given to magnates from the eastern parts of the Monarchy who were members of the Order of *Strict Observance*, with the aim of avoiding their separate movement. So, the first governors dedicated themselves not only to commerce and to amassing wealth, but also to the foundation of the Freemasonic movement in Fiume which, at that time, was an association of free-thinking persons.

When, in 1785, Emperor Joseph II enacted the so-called *Freimaurerpatent*, this led to a reduction in the number of lodges or, in some cases, to their end. But this does not seem to have been the end of the Templar Freemasonry. One Templar lodge operated in Fiume in the Capuchin convent under the protection of Governor János Péter Szapary (1788–1791). This governor was a member of the Wast Szapary family – the founder of the first lodge in Vienna in 1742.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Paul Szapary from the *Zur Grossmuth Lodge* of Pest was a close associate of Joseph II together with other Freemasons, especially Karl von Zinzendorf, the person who

*Slobodan G. Markovich*

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## YUGOSLAV FREEMASONRY AND YUGOSLAVISM AS A CIVIL RELIGION

**Abstract:** The author first discusses research dilemmas in studying continental Freemasonries. He lists the pro-Yugoslav activities of Serbian and Croatian freemasons during the Great War but dismisses as a myth the claims that Yugoslavia was created due to the influence of freemasons. In the main part of the paper, he discusses the content of the narrative of Yugoslavism, identifying two periods in the history of royalist Yugoslavism: Vidovdan Yugoslavism (1918–1929) and integral Yugoslavism (1929–1939/41). Yugoslavism is seen within the concept of civil religion, and the contribution of Yugoslav freemasons to the development of the concept is analysed. Among Yugoslav freemasons, Viktor Novak, Vladimir Ćorović, Ferdo Šišić, Milan Marjanović and Niko Bartulović are singled out as the main codifiers of the Yugoslav civil religion. Special attention is given to the four main components of the concept of the Yugoslav civil religion as seen by leading Yugoslav intellectuals who were freemasons: 1) Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day) as the main holiday of Yugoslavism; 2) the construction and sacralisation of the “Yugoslav spirit” and “Yugoslav thought” in art (Rudolf Valdec and Ivan Meštrović) and in narratives (V. Novak, V. Ćorović, M. Marjanović); 3) the role of King Alexander as the archpriest of the Yugoslav civil religion; and 4) the efforts to build a temple of the Yugoslav civil religion – the Vidovdan (Kosovo) Temple designed by Ivan Meštrović. The question of the relationship between national and cosmopolitan elements in Yugoslav Freemasonry is also discussed. Finally, the paper explains the reasons why the Yugoslav civil religion was not able to be more successful in contributing to its overall aim: the creation of the “Yugoslav spirit”.

**Keywords:** Freemasonry, Yugoslavism, Yugoslav Civil Religion, Vidovdan, “Yugoslav Thought”, “Yugoslav Spirit”, Rudolf Valdec, Ivan Meštrović, Viktor Novak, Vladimir Ćorović, Milan Marjanović.

Freemasonry is usually defined by its opponents as a secret society and by its members as a discrete society. A challenge for historians is that the archives of such societies are not always easy to access. An additional problem is that in the 1920s and 1930s the freemasons of continental Europe often suffered various forms of political persecution. In the inter-war period, almost all continental European grand lodges were eventually banned and in this period Freemasonry was not outlawed only in Sweden and Switzerland. Not surprisingly, under such circumstances, many members of the Craft destroyed their private masonic correspondence as well as the official documents of the lodges to which they had belonged. In Yugoslavia, officials of the Grand Lodge also destroyed many documents of their Grand Lodge upon its “self-suspension” in 1940. During the Second World War, many archives of grand lodges were confiscated and moved by the authorities of the Third Reich. At the end of the war, the Soviet authorities came into the possession of several of these archives and had them transferred to the Soviet Union. Some of them have been since returned to grand lodges or national archives. Many documents were, however, destroyed or lost, and hence almost all surviving archival collections of continental grand lodges

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## MIHAILO VALTROVIĆ. A PIONEER OF SERBIAN FREEMASONRY

**Abstract:** The article deals with the public career and Masonic activities of Mihailo Valtrović (1839–1915). His public activities in Serbia included his decisive contribution to the establishment of the National Museum in Belgrade and his key role in establishing archaeological studies in Serbia. The author also gives some insights into his personality. The other part of the paper is dedicated to his Freemasonic activities. He is seen as a pioneer of Serbian Freemasonry. In 1883, he was the founder and the first master of the lodge “Concord, Labour and Perseverance”, the only active lodge in Serbia till February 1891.

**Keywords:** Mihailo Valtrović, National Museum in Belgrade, Serbian archaeology, Freemasonry, Lodge “Concord, Labour and Perseverance” (“Sloga, rad i postojanstvo”)

Mihailo Valtrović was an enlightened man, one of those persons who supported progress in the Principality, later in the Kingdom of Serbia, and who took part in its institution building. With assertive and patient work, Valtrović laid down the foundations for a number of scholarly disciplines, as well as for some institutions that still exist in Serbia.

Valtrović was born in Belgrade in 1839. His father Filip Walter (1803–1862) was of German origin. He was the manager of the State Printing Press.<sup>1</sup> His mother was Josefa, born Prohaska. In the relevant documents, he self-identified as a Serb of the Orthodox faith.<sup>2</sup> Valtrović completed elementary school and the Belgrade gymnasium and then enrolled in the Department of Sciences at the Lyceum in Belgrade. After that, he got a state scholarship to study at the Polytechnical School (Polytechnische Schule) in Karlsruhe, Germany. There he studied “preparatory mathematical sciences” and architecture. He finished his studies in 1866. Having returned to Belgrade, he was admitted to civil service as an archivist at the Ministry of Civil Engineering. From 1874 on, he was an adjunct professor of architecture at the Grand School in Belgrade, the precursor of the University of Belgrade. By the next year, he had already become a professor there, teaching courses in architecture. Finally, in 1881, Mihailo Valtrović became the first professor of

1 S. v. “Valter, Filip”, *Srpski biografski leksikon*, vol. 2 (Novi Sad: Matica srpska 2006), 38.

2 Official personal file of Mihailo Valtrović, ANMB [Archives of the National Museum in Belgrade].

## ESOTERICISM AMONG THE SERBIAN AND YUGOSLAV FREEMASONRY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The distinction between the “cold” and “warm” currents within Freemasonry (M. Introvigne), i.e. the rationalistic and esoteric is taken as the methodological framework for the analysis of Masonic ideology in interwar Yugoslavia. While both currents were represented, it is worth noting that they largely overlap, with some differences between the lodges in Belgrade and Zagreb, the latter being more inclined to esotericism. Their interest was mostly shaped by Theosophy and authors associated with it, like Schuré. Those who were in the “warm” current were also active in satellite bodies of TS, like the Co-Masonic *Le Droit Humain* obedience, Order of the Star in the East, the Liberal Catholic Church and the cremationist movement, with some even forming an irregular secessionist lodge.

**Keywords:** esotericism, Theosophy, Co-Masonry, Le Droit Humain

### Two Esoteric Currents

To better understand the role esotericism plays in Freemasonry, I rely on the distinction Massimo Introvigne makes between the *cold* and *warm* currents within it. The cold one – constituting the majority – follows the ideals of rationalism, Deism, humanism, relativism, emphasizes ethics and humanitarian work, and can even be hostile to esotericism. In Catholic countries, it is often associated with anticlericalism. The warm current displays an interest in esotericism (including its forms that can from the 19<sup>th</sup> century be subsumed under the term occultism).<sup>2</sup> The warm current is mostly associated with Rosicrucian symbolism or the Templar legend of higher degrees, and especially with those forms of Masonry usually described as fringe. Probably the most influential in this sense was the Rite of Memphis-Misraim. Moreover, Introvigne points out that many occult societies emerged precisely from this current of Freemasonry, especially

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1 My research has benefited from the help of Léo Bernard, Konstantin Burmistrov, Karolina Maria Hess, Vasilje Krestić, Suzana Marjanić, Slobodan G. Markovich, Radovan Pilipović, Stanislav Sretenović. I thank them all.

2 Massimo Introvigne, *Il cappello del mago. I nuovi movimenti magici, dallo spiritismo al satanismo* (Milano: SugarCo Edizioni, 2003), 22–40. Introvigne relies on the terminology used by E. Bloch regarding Marxism: the cold current is utopian and hiliastic, while the warm one is rationalistic and materialist. Introvigne is not a Marxist but borrows these terms by analogy. This dichotomy is reminiscent of Levi-Strauss’ distinction between cold and warm societies, at least terminologically.

## THE FRENCH FREEMASONRY AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND THE KINGDOM OF SERBS, CROATS AND SLOVENES IN THE 1920S

**Abstract:** Taking into account their generational, social, professional and political affiliation, as well as their experience of the war, the author deals in this paper with the symbolic and concrete aspects of the influence of French Freemasons on the relations between Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the First World War. Imbued with a specific culture based on the Franco-Serbian alliance during the war, the members of *Grande Loge de France* and *Grand Orient de France* wished to reconcile the opposed views of their Italian and Serbian friends under the aegis of *Association Internationale Massonique* established in 1921 in Geneva, even if it was not their main subject of interest and activity. It was only in 1925, in the context of the *Cartel des Gauches* government, that the Franco-Yugoslav Lodge “Général Peigné” was created in France with the aim of strengthening the links between the two French obediences. However, the Italian diplomacy, both liberal and fascist, constantly exaggerated the role and influence of French Freemasonry in lending support to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. In fact, it was the survival of the young Kingdom and its uncertain internal and external prospects that were at stake. By dealing with Serbian and South Slav issues, even symbolically, the French Freemasons constantly incensed Italy, France’s ally and rival in Central Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

**Keywords:** France, Italy, Serbia, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Yugoslavia, Freemasonry

Among the “Serbophiles” in the French diplomacy, military, economy, parliament, academia, culture and civil society after World War One, some were Freemasons.<sup>1</sup> They were imbued with a specific culture inherited from the war that saw victorious Serbia as the pillar of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (SCS) proclaimed in Belgrade on 1 December 1918, grouping Serbs from Serbia with Slovenians, Croats and Serbs from the dissolved Austria-Hungary. In foreign policy, they saw the new South Slav state as being in the French orbit and in accordance with Italy, the French and Serbian ally and rival from the war.

But with Serbia’s support of Croatian and Slovenian nationalism under the umbrella of the Yugoslav ideology and the creation of the new South Slav state, Serbia opposed Italian nationalism and territorial claims on the Eastern Adriatic coast, which had been promised to Italy in April 1915 by the Treaty of London. France supported Serbia

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1 Stanislav Sretenovic, “Les ‘philoserbes’ en France au temps du Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes, 1918– 1929”, *Etudes danubiennes*, XXIII, 1–2 (2007), 119–148.

## DECLINE OF THE GRAND LODGE OF THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA 1940–58

**Abstract:** Media attacks on the Grand Lodge of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (hereafter GLY) intensified after the assassination of King Alexander Karadjordjević (Karageorgevich) of Yugoslavia in October 1934. Foreign influence, especially that of Nazi Germany, added fuel to the anti-Masonic propaganda in Yugoslavia. The pressure of Nazi Germany increased after 1938, and it redoubled in 1940 when Nazi Germany compelled the Yugoslav government to ban Freemasonry. Consequently, the Yugoslav government pressured GLY into suspending its activities. GLY was informed about the banning of Masonic associations. Wishing to avoid forcible dissolution, GLY decided to go dormant. On 1 August 1940, GLY ceased all its activities and disbanded itself and all the lodges operating under its auspices. These measures put an end to Freemasonry in the country. Authorities allowed GLY to carry out its liquidation: close its accounting and safeguard its valuables, archives, and libraries. The Axis forces attacked and subsequently occupied Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941. Leading Freemasons and presumed Anglophiles who hadn't managed to escape risked arrest and repressive measures, including extrajudicial killings at the hands of the occupying forces. Mass arrests of other Freemasons followed in November 1941, but most of them were released in 1942. The new post-1945 communist government considered Masonic organizations illegal and their activities both suspicious and hostile to the state. Some Freemasons were prosecuted as members of the bourgeois opposition. Others were victims of show trials. In exceptional cases, Freemasons were also extrajudicially executed by the Yugoslav State Security Administration (UDBA).

**Keywords:** Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, Dissolution, Fascism, Second World War, Communism

### Intensification of the propaganda war

The anti-Masonic campaign, directed at the Grand Lodge of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (hereafter GLY), intensified in the wake of the assassination of King Alexander Karadjordjević (Karageorgevich) of Yugoslavia in 1934. The anti-Masonic crusade had been confined to the Catholic circles before the murder of the Yugoslav king but, after 1935, it spread to the general public. Freemasons were occasionally held responsible for the assassination and calls for disbanding of Masonic organizations in the country became louder. Far from being indifferent, GLY responded to the anti-Masonic campaign with pro-Masonic publications. GLY also issued an international circular against the false accusations spread by the news agencies of fascist Italy. Internally, conflicts also appeared between GLY and the police authorities. GLY did not hold its annual assembly in 1936 because the police authorities requested that a police representative be present.



## RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE FREEMASONS

**Abstract:** In this article, the author discusses the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Freemasons over the last three centuries. It starts with the first condemnations and follows the radical conflict between the two organizations that lasted until the First World War. The reasons for which the Church saw Freemasonry as its greatest enemy during that period are analyzed. Their relationship is then retraced through the twentieth century, which brought the termination of condemnation, rapprochement and even cooperation in certain fields. The author emphasizes that the Church has embraced a number of phenomena and teachings that it previously considered Masonic products.

**Keywords:** Roman Catholic Church, Freemasons, popes, condemnation, “aggiornamento”, infiltration.

The relationship between these two spiritual, social, value but also political<sup>1</sup> subjects has been one of the most important issues in the Western world for the last two to three centuries. Unfortunately, there is a lack of relevant material and resources available on this topic. Most of it was written in the press marked by so-called popular conspiracy theories,<sup>2</sup> while the academic world continues to avoid topics related to Freemasonry, and thus the processing of this relationship. Admittedly, that has begun to change, especially depending on particular traditions. The three centuries since the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England have been marked by the emergence of a number of interesting relevant researches, many of which are academic in character, even though they often work with hypotheses, analogies, and “blank spaces”.<sup>3</sup>

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- 1 Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Freemasons traditionally refuse to place their institutions in a political context. However, in practical terms, these are organizations whose existence and practice have undeniable, far-reaching consequences for politics and political developments.
  - 2 In Serbia, only the controversial Ratibor Djurdjevic, a doctor of psychology who returned from America in 1992, founded the IHTUS publishing house and published extremely anti-Masonic and anti-Semitic publications, has written on this topic relatively seriously. In 1997, he published the book *The Breakthrough of Judeo-Masons into the Roman Catholic Church*, where he proposes some interesting hypotheses and some useful material. However, as in his other publications, the problem is that this is packaged within the general framework of brutal and unfounded anti-Semitism, which disqualifies the possibility of a serious approach to his work. See Ratibor Djurdjević, *Prodor Judeo-masonerije u Rimsku katoličku crkvu* (Belgrade: IHTUS, 1997).
  - 3 Colleagues involved in this project have participated in two such proceedings. See Matevž Košir (ed.), *Skrivnost lože* (Ljubljana: National Museum of Slovenia, Archives

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published the monograph *Francuska i Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* [France and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, 1919–1929] (Belgrade 2008), and co-authored the book *Francuska ambasada u Beogradu/Ambassade de France à Belgrade* [French Embassy in Belgrade] (Paris, 2013).

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ISBN 978-86-7494-164-5

