

Freemasonry



*The Square with the Compass is one of the most prominent symbols of Freemasonry. The "G" in the middle represents God, otherwise known inside Lodges as "The Grand Geometrician of the Universe", since Freemasonry demands belief in no specific faith, simply a belief in a "Supreme Being". Some also claim that it represents Gnosticism or the teachings of **Christian Rosencreutz** (or, during the French Revolution, historically once known as **Count Saint Germain**).*

Throughout its ca. 3.000 years of tradition, handworkers as well as Heads of States have belonged to Freemasonry. The American Constitution is conceived and mainly written by Freemasons. Very likely, Freemason tradition goes back as far as King Salomon and his architect Hiram, and their collaboration in building the temple.

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that traces its modern origins to the local fraternities of stonemasons, which from the end of the fourteenth century regulated the qualifications of masons and their interaction with authorities and clients. The degrees of freemasonry, its gradal system, retain the three grades of medieval craft guilds, those of Apprentice,

Journeyman or Fellow (now called Fellowcraft), and Master Mason. These are the degrees offered by craft, or blue lodge Freemasonry. There are additional degrees, which vary with locality and jurisdiction, and are now administered by different bodies than the craft degrees.

The basic, local organizational unit of Freemasonry is the lodge. The lodges are usually supervised and governed at the regional level (usually coterminous with either a state, a province, or by national border) by a Grand Lodge or Grand Orient. There is no international, world-wide Grand Lodge that supervises all of Freemasonry. Each Grand Lodge is independent, and they do not necessarily recognize each other as being legitimate.

There are two traditions within current Freemasonry: the British and the European Continental tradition. The British tradition is influenced by a military tradition and national flags and weaponry like swords are present in their rituals where as in the European Continental tradition weaponry and any piece of metal has no place in their rituals.

In general, one could say that the British tradition uses more rituals which reflect a military tradition whereas the European Continental rituals reflect much more a society and tradition of philosophers, of contemplation and dialogue.

In general, there is a significant split between the pragmatic Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition and the Idealism of the European Continental tradition (see the chapter on “The development of thinking during the last 2500 years”). At the risk of generalizing, one could say that for the Anglo-Saxon tradition (worldview) something is true when it can be applied (“evidence based”) whereas for the European Continental tradition (worldview) something is first of all true when one can think it through in a logical way. Then the European Continentalist will find ways to apply it and if he cannot but it is logical, it still holds true. In my opinion, both streams in the occidental world view should fortify, pollinize each other.



A current Freemason Lodge in the Palazzo Roffia in Rome, Italy



Seat of the Freemasonry in London, UK

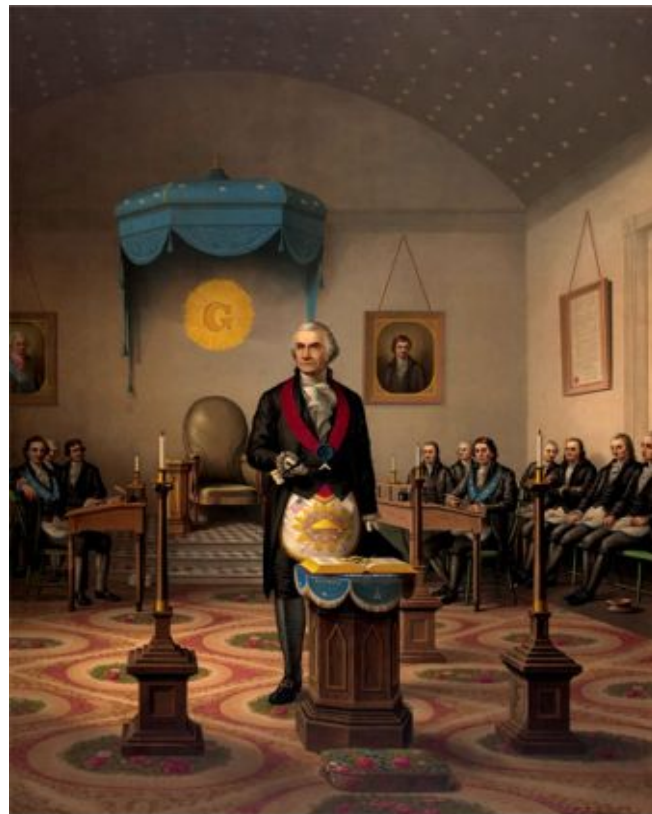
The Masonic Lodge is the basic organizational unit of Freemasonry. The lodge meets regularly to conduct the usual formal business of any small organization (pay bills, organize social and charitable events, elect new board members, etc.). In addition to business, the meeting may perform a ceremony to confer a Masonic degree or receive a lecture, which is usually on some aspect of Masonic history or ritual. At the conclusion of the meeting, the lodge might adjourn for a formal dinner, or festive board, sometimes involving toasting and song.

The bulk of Masonic ritual consists of degree ceremonies. Candidates for Freemasonry are progressively initiated into Freemasonry, first in the degree of Entered Apprentice. Sometime later, in a separate ceremony, they will be passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, and finally they will be raised to the degree of Master Mason. In all of these ceremonies, the candidate is entrusted with passwords, signs and grips peculiar to his new rank. Another ceremony is the annual installation of the Master and officers of the lodge. In some jurisdictions Installed Master is valued as a separate rank, with its own secrets to distinguish its members. In other jurisdictions, the grade is not recognized, and no inner ceremony conveys new secrets during the installation of a new Master of the lodge.

Most lodges have some sort of social calendar, allowing Masons and their partners to meet in a less ritualized environment. Often coupled with these events is the obligation placed on every Mason to contribute to charity. This occurs at both lodge and Grand Lodge level. Masonic charities contribute to many fields from education to health care to disaster relief.



Masonic initiation, Paris, 1745



Washington As Master Mason.

Standing over a meeting of the LODGE of ALEXANDRIA, VA. of which he was a member & was prepared to the laying of the Corner Stone of the National Capitol by him on the 18th of September, 1793. The position of the Lodge with which the "Grand and High" was by WASHINGTON has been carefully preserved, as has represented in this engraving. The apron was individual and presented to Washington by the Marchioness de Lafayette.

Am. Jour. Phil. Soc.

Published in 1810.

The copy of this print of "Washington as Master Mason." Description per seller, "shows **U. S. President George Washington** presiding over a meeting of the Lodge of the Alexandria, Virginia Masonic Lodge." This meeting prepared the lodge to lay the cornerstone for the United States Capitol on September 18, 1793.

"President Washington wears the full regalia of his Master Mason degree including the famous Masonic apron made for him by Marchioness de Lafayette, the wife of Marquis de Lafayette, also a Mason. The apron, one of two given by the Marchioness, still exists. President Washington holds a gavel in his right hand. He stands before a stand holding an open Bible with a square and compass on it."

These private local lodges form the backbone of Freemasonry, and a Freemason will necessarily have been initiated into one of these. There also exist specialist lodges where Masons meet to celebrate anything from sport to Masonic research. The rank of Master Mason also entitles a Freemason to explore Masonry further through other degrees,

administered separately from the craft, or "blue lodge" degrees described here, but having a similar format to their meetings.

There is very little consistency in Freemasonry. Because each Masonic Jurisdiction is independent, each sets its own procedures. The wording of the ritual, the number of officers present, the layout of the meeting room, etc. varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

The officers of the lodge are elected or appointed annually. Every Masonic Lodge has a Master, two Wardens, a secretary and a treasurer. There is also a Tyler, or outer guard, who is always present outside the door of a working lodge. Other offices vary between jurisdictions.

Each Masonic lodge exists and operates according to a set of ancient principles known as the Landmarks of Freemasonry. These principles have thus far eluded any universally accepted definition.



Benjamin Franklin, (1706-1790) was a leading North-American writer and publisher, natural scientist, inventor and statesman.

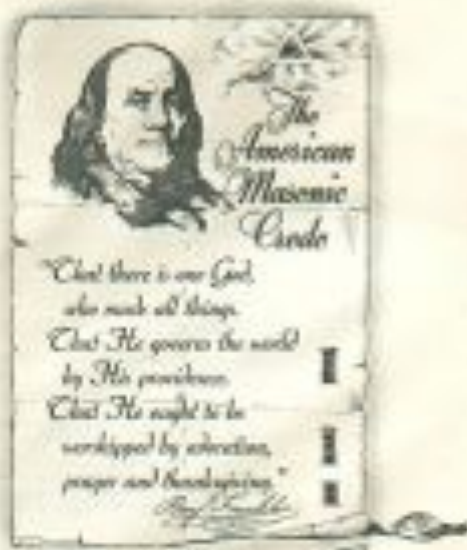
Benjamin Franklin is best known as one of the Founding Fathers who drafted and co-signed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. He was also a leading Freemason of his time.

Franklin was US ambassador in Paris and negotiated various treaties and the independence of the USA.



Benjamin Franklin (oil painting ca. 1785). This painting was used for the current 100\$ bank note in 1995.

Franklin was a man with a strong will and determined to serve the poor and the society at large. He established the first voluntary Fire Department in Philadelphia and the first public library with books to borrow without costs.



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FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Benjamin Franklin

The Mason

All Masons are justly proud of the Creed of Brother Franklin which played such an important role in the early years of our Country.

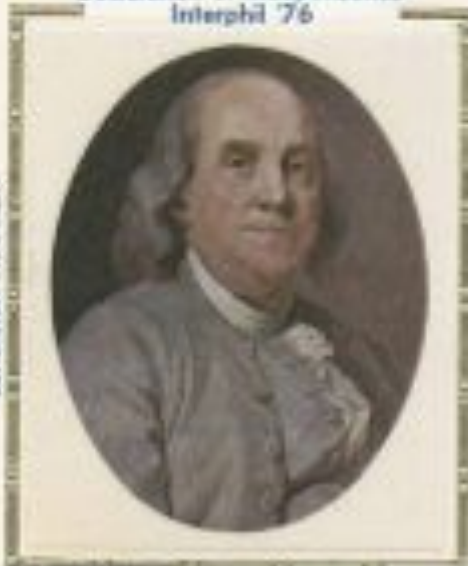
He was ever mindful of his Masonic teachings when he said:

"But that the most acceptable service of God is doing good to man."

"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

"For my own part, when I am employed in serving others, I do not look upon myself as conferring favors, but as paying debts. In my travels and since my settlement, I have received much kindness from men, to whom I shall never have an opportunity of making the least direct return; and numberless mercies from God, who is infinitely above being benefited by our services. Those kindnesses from men I can therefore only return to their fellow men, and I can only show my gratitude for those mercies from God, by a readiness to help his other children and my brethren."

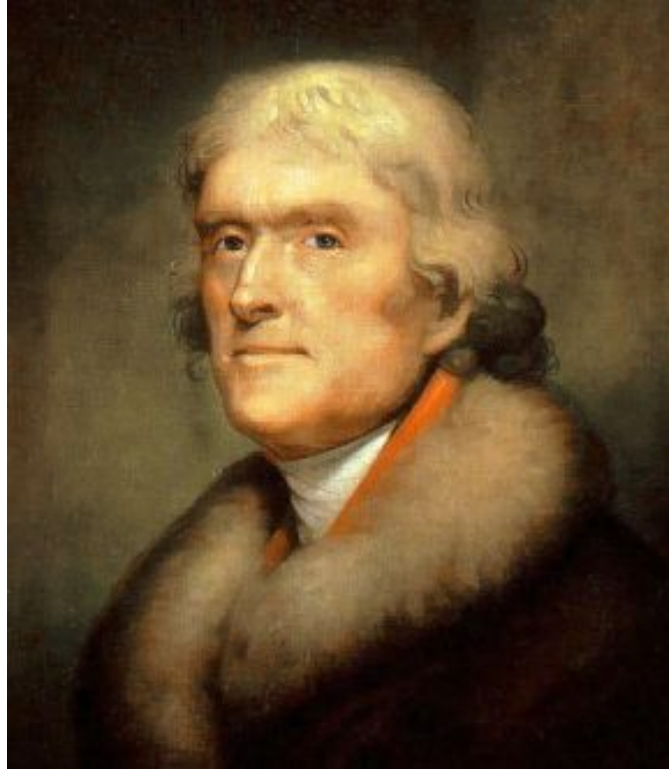
Declaration of Independence
Interphil 76



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



***Thomas Jefferson** (1743-1826) third President of the United States of America*

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) was an American Founding Father, the principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the third President of the United States (1801–1809). He was a spokesman for democracy, embraced the principles of republicanism and the rights of the individual with worldwide influence. Jefferson was the first United States Secretary of State (1790–1793) serving under President George Washington.

As a freemason and a leader in the Enlightenment, Jefferson was a polymath in the arts, sciences and politics. Considered an important architect in the classical tradition, he designed his own large mansion, Monticello, on a 5,000 acre plantation near Charlottesville, Virginia, and later, the original buildings of the University of Virginia. Jefferson could speak five languages besides English and was keenly interested in science, invention, architecture, religion and philosophy; he was an active member and eventual president of the American Philosophical Society. These interests led him to found the University of Virginia after his presidency. Although not a notable orator, Jefferson was a skilled writer and corresponded with many influential people in America and Europe throughout his adult life.



Friedrich II., also known as Friedrich der Große (1712 in Berlin-1786 in Potsdam) was one of the greatest kings in modern German history. Friedrich is a good example of the „Enlightened Absolut Monarch“ as he liked to call himself and „First servant of the State”



Friedrich II was a gifted musician and composer and he built a special pavilion for musical events around him but also invited many well-known musicians and composers, singers and philosophers of his time (like the French writer and philosopher Voltaire).

In 1728, Friedrich started secretly heimlich mit dem Flötenunterricht bei **Johann Joachim Quantz**, wodurch sich die Konflikte zwischen dem tyrannischen, nur aufs Militärische und aufs Ökonomische fixierten Vater und dem Kronprinzen weiter zuspitzten. Brutale körperliche und seelische Züchtigungen durch Friedrich Wilhelm gehörten zu dieser Zeit zur Tagesordnung in der königlichen Familie. Gleichwohl heizte der junge Friedrich diese Konflikte durch sein betont aufsässiges Verhalten seinem Vater gegenüber immer wieder an.

Friedrich suchte 1729 eine enge Freundschaft zum musischen und gebildeten, acht Jahre älteren Leutnant Hans Hermann von Katte. Katte wurde Freund und Vertrauter Friedrichs, der ihn wegen dessen Weltgewandtheit bewunderte. Beide interessierten sich zudem für das Flötenspiel und die Dichtkunst. Im Frühjahr 1730, während einer von August dem Starken in Zeithain bei Riesa ausgerichteten Veranstaltung (Lustlager von Zeithain), offenbarte Friedrich seinem Freund den Plan, nach Frankreich zu fliehen, um sich der Erziehungsgewalt seines strengen Vaters zu entziehen.



Execution (beheading) of Officer Hans Hermann von Katte, the lover of Friedrich der Große (in 1730). Witnesses have reported that Friedrich II was forced by his father to watch the beheading of his lover and this made a life-long change in his character

During the night of August 4th to 5th, 1730, Friedrich tried to flee with his page Keith from his temporary quarters in Steinfurt through France to England to end the Spartan (brutal, military) education with no space for philosophy and the fine arts, as Friedrich II was forced to receive by his father. By an unforeseen incident, Hermann von Katte was found with Friedrich II and was convicted for desertion and received life-long imprisonment by a military court. After intervention by the father of Friedrich II, King **Friedrich Wilhelm**, the conviction of Hermann von Katte into the capital punishment by beheading (compared to dying in front of a peloton of 20 firing soldiers, the worst and most demeaning death penalty one could get). King Friedrich Wilhelm also ordered the death penalty of his own son Friedrich II but for pure political reasons, his father changed the conviction into a labor camp where Friedrich der Große had to work as a farmer for several years.

Also several other persons close to the crown prince Friedrich were arrested and kept in jail for weeks to months. The daughter of the Rector of the University, Dorothea Ritter, who helped him find his way to get flute lessons from Quanz, was arrested and publically flogged 5 days on a row and then life-long put up in a mental institution. Then there was Lieutenant Johann Ludwig von Ingersleben, who accompanied Friedrich II to his musical lessons. Johann Ludwig got six months complete isolation under horrible circumstances.

First, His father wanted to execute his son Friedrich II for treason but changed his mind *only* for political reasons when he received strong letters of support for Friedrich II from Emperor Charles VIth and other neighboring heads of states, and influential nobility.



Elisabeth Christine von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel-Bevern, Queen of Prussia (1715-1797)

Friedrich II lost for a while his rank as a prince and the status and privileges that come with it. Through a political marriage with Elisabeth Christine von Braunschweig-Bevern (daughter of the Earl of Ferdinand Albrechts II. von Braunschweig), Friedrich II received mercy by his father and he was rehabilitated as Crown Prince of Prussia. However, before the end of the day of the wedding, Friedrich II had already left his bride Christine and (as far as it is known) they never met in person again.



Friedrich Wilhelm, the father of Friedrich der Große



Garnisonskirche in Potsdam, built by Friedrich der Große. Clear masonic symbols everywhere in the church, like the triangle with inside an (all-seeing) eye.

Masonic ritual and symbolism

Freemasonry describes itself as a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. The symbolism is mainly, but not exclusively, drawn from the manual tools of stonemasons - the square and compasses, the level and plumb rule, the trowel, among others. A moral lesson is attached to each of these tools, although the assignment is by no means consistent. The meaning of the symbolism is taught and explored through ritual.

All Freemasons begin their journey in the "craft" by being progressively initiated, passed and raised into the three degrees of craft, or blue lodge Masonry. During these three rituals, the candidate is progressively taught the meanings of the lodge symbols, and entrusted with grips, signs and words to signify to other Masons that he has been so initiated. The initiations are part allegory and part lecture, and revolve around the construction of the Temple of Solomon, and the artistry and death of his chief architect, Hiram Abiff. The degrees are those of Entered apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason. While many different versions of these rituals exist, with two different lodge layouts and versions of the Hiram myth, each version is recognizable to any Freemason from any jurisdiction.

In some jurisdictions the main themes of each degree are illustrated by tracing boards. These painted depictions of Masonic themes are exhibited in the lodge according to which degree is being worked, and are explained to the candidate to illustrate the legend and symbolism of each degree.

The idea of Masonic brotherhood probably descends from a 16th-century legal definition of a brother as one who has taken an oath of mutual support to one another. Accordingly, Masons swear at each degree to keep the contents of that degree secret, and to support and protect their brethren unless they have broken the law. In most lodges the oath or obligation is taken on a Volume of Sacred Law, whichever book of divine revelation is appropriate to the religious beliefs of the individual brother (usually the Bible in the Anglo-American tradition). In Progressive continental Freemasonry, books other than scripture are permissible, a cause of rupture between Grand lodges.



Frederik Hendrik, (1584–1647), was the sovereign Prince of Orange and stadtholder of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelders, and Overijssel from 1625 to 1647. Frederik Hendrik founded the first Freemasonry Lodge in The Hague in the Netherlands (The Dutch Republic).

As the leading soldier (general) in the Dutch wars against Spain, his main achievement was the successful Siege of 'sHertogenbosch in 1629, it was the main Spanish base and a well-fortified city protected by an experienced Spanish garrison and by formidable water defenses. His strategy was the successful neutralization of the threat of inundation of the area around 'sHertogenbosch and his capture of the Spanish storehouse at Wesel. As a Masonic Master, he could rely on the royalty of his officers, many of them being Freemasons themselves.



The Conqueror Frederik Hendrik by the Dutch painter Jacob Jordaens, in the “Oranjezaal”, Huis ten Bosch, commissioned by his widow Amalia van Solms after his death.

Frederik Hendrik and his wife Amalia van Solms were passionate supporters of art and that the Netherlands had a huge surge of its development of paintings, architecture, silver wear and music owe the Dutch in part to Frederik Hendrik and his wife.



Amalia of Solms-Braunfels (1602-1675), was a regent of Orange. She was the wife of Frederick Hendrik Prince of Orange. She was the daughter of Count John Albert I of Solms-Braunfels and Countess Agnes of Sayn-Wittgenstein.





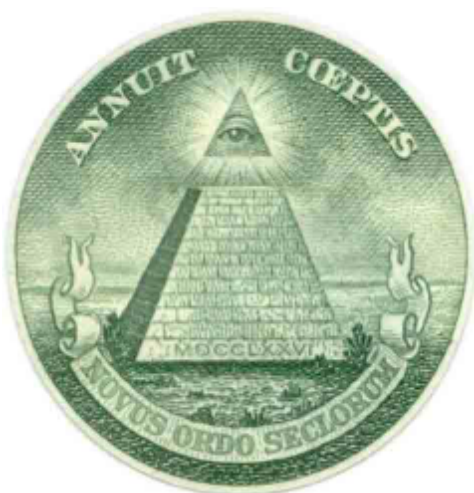
Bundesarchiv, Bild 103-W1828-007
Foto: n. Aug. 1 1948

Lodge in Erlangen, Germany. First meeting after World War II with guests from USA, France and Czechoslovakia, 1948.

Hitler prohibited all Freemason gatherings and confiscated all buildings and properties. In May 1948, the first Freemason meeting was organized by the Lodge „Zur Sonne“ („to the Sun“) in the building of the Erlanger Freemason Lodge "Libanon zu den 3 Zedern" (“Lebanon to the Three Cedars”) which was founded in 1741.



Female Freemason (ca. 1900)



Freemason Symbolism on all US \$ bank notes



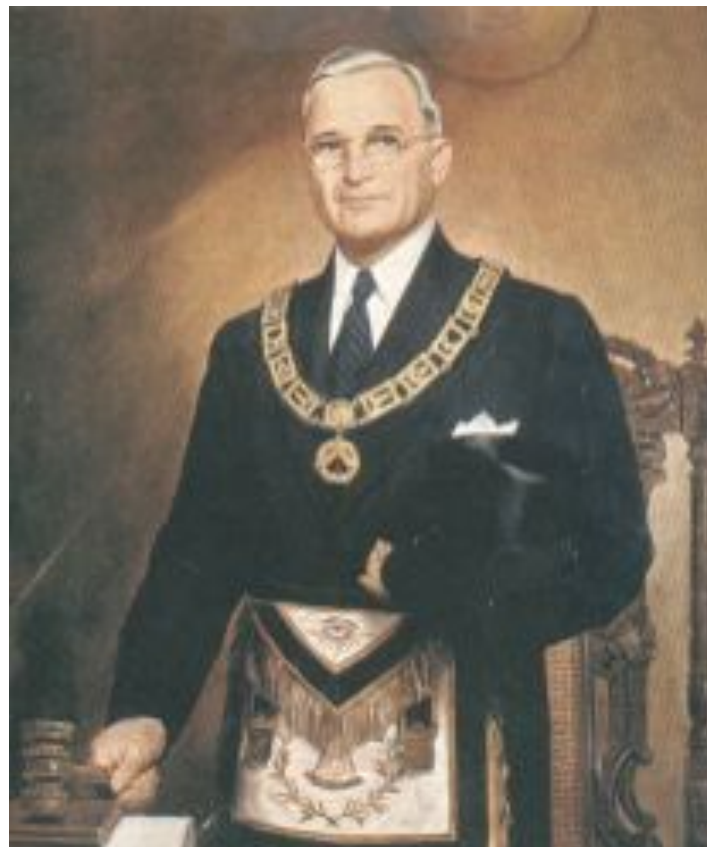
Freemason funeral meeting (USA)



At a semi-public Freemason gathering with friends and beloved ones (USA)



US President Truman in Freemason attire



33rd US President Harry S. Truman (1884-1972)

Harry S. Truman (1884-1972) was the 33rd President of the United States (1945–1953). He was a dedicated Freemason. The final running mate of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944, Truman succeeded to the presidency on April 12, 1945, when Roosevelt died after months of declining health. Under Truman, the U.S. successfully concluded World War II; in the aftermath of the conflict, tensions with the Soviet Union increased, marking the start of the Cold War.



Conference in Potsdam, Stalin (l), Truman (m) and Churchill (r)

July 1945 (notice both Freemasons Truman and Churchill)



Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill (1874-1965). He was PM from 1940-1945 and from 1951-1955 and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. Churchill was a dedicated Freemason.



Churchill (l), Truman (m) and Stalin (r)