

SECRET SOCIETIES --ISLAMIC AND CHRISTIAN

The history of secret societies in the west goes back to one particular group with which the crusadors came in contact in the early 12th century. This group, which still exists, is the Islamic society known as Nizari Ismailis, or Assassins. Thus, we will deal with them fairly extensively since they are the prototype of all secret societies, religious and secular, of Europe.

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PERSIAN NIZARI ISMAILIS ("ASSASSINS")

The order of assassins began with a man Hassan son of Sabah, when he gained access to the shah of Iran. He, however, was betrayed by another courtier, a Turk, and was exiled in 1078.

Hassan had been brought up in the secret doctrines of the severer Shi'ah and recognized the possibilities of power inherent in such a system. He also knew that Cairo was a nucleus of it.

He had decided that it was not enough to promise paradise, fulfillment, eternal joy to people. He would actually show it to them; show in the form of an artificial paradise, where houris played and fountains gushed sweet-scented waters, where every sensual wish was granted amid beautiful flowers and gilded pavilions.

Hassan chose a hidden valley for the site of his paradise and began to attract young men from the surrounding countryside, between the ages of 12 and 20. He particularly chose those who he marked out as possible killers.

Using various drugs, mainly hashish, he gave them the illusion of being in paradise, surrounded by lovely women and wine. When brought to his presence they would answer that is where they had been. This reinforced their obedience.

Suicide was at first attempted by some; but the survivors were early told that only death in the obedience of Hasan's orders could give the key to paradise.

Hasan used other ploys to gain the required obedience (a man standing beneath the floor with his head surrounded by a platter and blood would tell of the joys of paradise. Hasan would claim to have re-animated him to do so.)

PHASE TWO - ALAMUT

in 1090, Hasan, by trick, gained the castle of Alamut and from there began assassinating anyone in their way. Within two years he had killed the shah (by poison) and within a decade controlled all of Persian Irak and many forts thruout the empire

The orthodox religious leaders pronounced one interdict after another against their doctrines but to no effect. The "Sheikh of the Mountain" became the terror of every prince and the Crusador chiefs included.

Richard the Lionhearted was at one time accused of having asked the "Lord of the Mountain" to have Conrad of Montferrat killed, a plot which was carried out. The order of Assassins had perfected their method of securing the loyalty of human beings to an extent and on a scale seldom if ever paralleled.

ASSASSINS AFTER HASAN I

Hasan lived 34 years after acquiring Alamut and only on 2 occasions had he left his room, yet he ruled an invisible empire as great as anyone before or since. He made arrangements for the continuation of the assassins after his death, which came when he was 90 years old in 1124.

He gave the world a new word, assassin, in Arabic Assasseen signifies Guradians. More fully, "Guardians of the secrets." Under Hasan the Order called for Missionaries, Friends (who were disciples) and devotees. This last group were the trained killers.

Under the second grand master, Buzurg-Umid, the order began to spread in Syria where the continued contact with the Crusaders was established. The Crusaders had been in the Holy land for about 30 years and the Assassins decided that they could usefully form an alliance with them aimed against baghdad.

HASAN THE HATED

The third grand master was weak and it was the 4th, Hasan the hated, his son, who captured the imagination of the assassins with his magnetic personality.

Hasan soon had them believing that he himself was none other than the power of all Powers, the hidden imam, an incarnation of all greatness. Since this was a part of Ismailism, they accepted it. His father, Kia Mohammed, had 250 of his followers killed and he held back.

in 1163, his chance came when Mohammed died. He issued an order for all Ismailis to collect below the castle of Alamut. He assured them that he had received a message from Allah that as from now on, all the bonds of religion were loosed: everyone might do as he liked. It was not necessary to keep up pretenses. Since he was the imam, his word was law.

This is called the ruz-i Qiyamat, or Great resurrection. The Assassins of Alamet signalled this general amnesty by drinking wine for lunch in the middle of Ramadan, breaking their fast forever and celebrating the arrival of paradise on Earth.

This meant a new cycle had started. For each one the path now begins with esoteric interpretation of the koran and shariah

Prayer becomes any process or act which serves to open the conscious self to the Imam-of-ones-own-being;

fasting becomes the avoidance of anything which impedes this enlargement of awareness;

pilgrimage signifies major efforts to unify individual consciousness with its ultimate manifestation as the Self;

Belief in Allah, prophets, and angels means the esoteric understanding of theology as symbolic;

Almsgiving means generosity of self, the open interdependence and mutual realization of all life;

Justice (6th pillar of shi'ism) means the simultaneous realization of the Self in oneself and in others, in all life, and giving it its due in every situation;

The Last Judgement means Resurrection Day as taught by Pir Hassan II. Hell and heaven are interior states.

It was known that Hassam II was not a descendent of Mohammed, the requirement for an imam. He claimed he was adopted and had been from the Calipate in Egypt. This went for 4 years, when he was assassinated by his brother in law, Namwar ("the famous").

MOHAMMED II, son of Hassan II, ruled for 35 years with an iron hand. He began the cultivation of letters and sciences which was to distinguish successive Grand Masters of the order from here on. They, of course, being the greatest theologians, poets etc.

the observances of ritual Islam were abolished. The syrian branch grew in power while the eastern assassins were quieter, sending missionaries to India and as far as the border of China and Russia. even today, adherents of the sect are found there.

MONGOL INVASIONS - it was the Mongols who finally crushed the power of the assassins in Persia. What remained of the members were ordered to conceal their faith and wait on a signal that the cult was in full operation again. The Syrian headquarters alone remained.

In 1260 the sultan of Egypt overcame the Mongol thrust and restored the fortress of Alamut and other properties of the Assassins, who were strongly surviving underground. Now it was the Sultan of Egypt who commanded them.

The Assassins were widely dispersed thruout Asia. The thugs of India owe their secret assassination society to the Ishmails.

MODERN PHASE - the modern phase of Ismailism dates from 1810, when the French consul at Aleppo found that the Assassins in Persia recognized as their divinely-inspired chief a reputed descendent of the 4th grand master of Alamut.

AGHA KHAN - (which means cheif, master or Lord in Turkishe) is the hereditary title of trhe head of the Nizarite sect of the Ishmalis yet today. It was originally bestowed on Hasan Ali Shah by a ruler of the Qajar dynasty of Iran, who died in 1834. He was also appointed governor of Kirman.

When the dynasty weakened, the Agha khan lost his governorship and went to live in Mahallat, the most important post-mogul ishmaili center in Iran, and a Sufi stronghold.

In 1866 he came to the publics gaze in a court case decided in Bombay. the Agha Khan had sent an agent to Bombay to claim from the Khojas, the assassins of that city, the annual tribute due to him. The claim was resisted and the British court was appealed to.

The Agha proved he was descended in a direct line from the 4th grand master of Alamut and the Khojas were members of the Assassins, to which they had been converted 400 years earlier by a missionary. Thus, they owed him the 10,000 #s.

After his death in Bombay in 1881 he was succeeded by his son Agha Ali Shah, who died in 1885, 4 years later. He was succeeded by his 8 year old son, Sultan Mohammed.

This Agha Khan visited India and east Africa from time to time to meet with his followers and established himself in Europe

The present Agha Khan IV, Karim, counted by the Nizarites as their 49th imam, succeeded his grandfather in 1957. From his headquarters in Paris he provides both temporal and spiritual guidance to his followers.

From the Ismailis the Crusadors borrowed the conception which led to the formation of all secret societies of Europe. The institutions of the Templers and Hospitallers; The Society of Jesus (Jesuits); the ferocious Dominicans and the milder Franciscans--may all be traced either to Cairo or to Alamut.

The Knights Templar especially, with their system of grand masters, grand priors and religious devotees, and their degrees of initiation, bear the strongest analogy to the Nizarite Ismailis.

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KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

In 1118, almost 20 years after the foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by Godefroy de Bouillon and his crusaders, nine French knights under the leadership of Hugues de Payns arrived in the holy land and installed themselves next to the site of the former Temple of Solomon.

They came to create an order which was both ;military and monastic and one of their first acts was to pronounce vows of chastity, poverty and obedience before Theocletus, the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Because they had camped on the site of Solomon's Temple, they and those who joined them became known as the Knights of the Temple, or Templars. The overt purpose of the order was to protect pilgrims who came to visit the holy places. Ten years later the number of Templar knights had reached 300 and with them an army of some 3000 men.

ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, one of the most powerful figures of the time, supported the Templars. He was head of the Cistercian order and at a very young age had founded the abbey of Clairvaux on lands donated by Hugues de Champagne, who later abandoned his family and possessions to join Hugues de Payns in founding the Order of the temple.

St. Bernard was the closest confidant of Pope Honorius II and obtained the backing of the Pope in giving the Church's official recognition to the Templars.

ORGANIZATION

In 1128 a Council of the Church was held at Troyes in France to prepare a constitution for the new order. St. Bernard, despite ill health, was one of the driving forces at the Council and participated actively in the drafting of the rule which would govern the order and the life of the Templars.

The order based on these rules turned out to be a very closed brotherhood restricted to men of noble birth. The brotherhood itself was composed of Knights, chaplains, and sergeants to whom a large number of artisans and manual workers were attached.

The head of the order was the Grand Master (as in the Assassins), and next in rank was his deputy, the Senechal, followed by the Marshal and the commander. The order was divided into provinces and commanderies each run along the same hierarchical structure.

The Rule granted the Order virtual sovereignty vis a vis local government and ecclesiastical authorities wherever it was located, with the right not only to be exempted from taxes but to impose its own.

The order also enjoyed judicial immunity with authority to exercise justice within its territories. In its relationship to the church, the order was responsible only to the Pope and was given the power to appoint its own clergy.

A candidate for entry into the order had to undergo severe tests before he was admitted. He had to endure a long period of probation when his character and sincerity were tested by being asked to perform many types of unpleasant tasks.

TEMPLARS HEIGHT AND DECLINE

In less than a century the Order became a power to be reckoned with both in Europe and the Middle East. Its influence and wealth, which developed during the Crusades, came about because in contrast to other armies in the Holy Land, the Templars were disciplined and their organization and life style completely adapted to Middle Eastern conditions.

Because the fortunes of the Templars were intimately linked with those of Christendom in the Holy land, the failure of the second crusade marked the begining of the end for the Templars.

Jealousy, the rivalry of the Hospitallers --the Knights of St. John-- and a gradual decline in their purity and idealism further contributed to their decline.

The capture of Jerusalem by the Moslems in 1244 and the fall of St. Jean d'Acre in 1291 ended European presence in the Holy Land, and the Templars and their rivals the Hospitallers left the area; The Templars returning gradually to France thru Cyprus, where they set up new headquarters, and Sicily.

In France, they enjoyed a brief period where they lived and exercised their privileges unmolested. The order was resented because people dislike their creditors. The high-born resented the privilaged knights who barely needed to pay homage to any monarch. The lowly resented that because of special tax-exemptions the Templars undersold wine and wool from their estates. The orders reputation for avirice grew alarmingly as knights seized domains they considered rightfully belonged to them.

THEIR FALL - Show "Knights Templar DVD" - Legend - arrests → end
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It was for their wealth that the Templars were destroyed. Philip IV of France was eager to raise as much money as possible to finance his wars, and taxed his people unmercifully, while scheming to gain ascendancy over the papacy.

He wanted to ruin the Templars in order to acquire their wealth and cancel his own debts to them, and curtail their power. Heresy was the safest accusation to bring, for the inquisition was bound to act on it and no way to get free of it.

For the Order's possessions to be confiscated in France the order had to be dispossessed thruout Europe, and to do that Philip needed the cooperation of Pope Clement V. The threats and exchanges between these two was dubious and dishonourable.

On October 13, 1307, 140 members and their grand master, Jacques de Molay were arrested in the Paris Temple, and their wealth impounded. All over France, other members were seized. Philip encouraged popular hatred of the order and announced that if the order were dissolved all debts would be canceled, since the templars had bled France white.

Torture was used to extract confessions. In most cases they admitted their guilt: they were accused of putting their order before every other principle; swearing to enrich it by any means; at initiation a neophyte was required to spit or urinate on the cross and renounce Christ; indecent kisses were exchanged and unnatural sex practiced.

they were accused of worshiping Baphomet, sometimes said to be a stuffed human head, sometimes a head with three faces or a

human skull. Like many other heretics, they were accused of making an ointment from murdered babies, worshipping the devil, not consecrating the host in mass, etc.

Anyone who confessed was to be spared. but an element of truth may be in some of the cofessions as many templars had adopted some of the gnostic theories and ritual magic.

Homosexuality may well have been practiced as well.

on Nov. 22, 1307 Clement, forced by Philip, issued a Bull ordering all soverigns to arrest the Templers and seize their property. In 1312, Clement had to admit there was not enough evidence to prove definate heresy but the Templar's reputation was damaged beyond hope so he dissolved the order, stipulating that its funds should be transferred to the Hospitallers. The remaining Templers were allowed to join other orders.

Philip held onto the orders property and found reasons to make the Hospitallers pay him large sums. However, in Spain, Portugal and Germany they were protected and allowed to keep their estates and funds and could be absorbed into existing orders or found new ones.

DEATH OF JACQUES DE MOLAY - on March 19 after nearly 7 years in prison, Jacques de Molay was taken from prison to make a public confession after which he would be imprisoned for life.

to the consternation of the authorities he declared himself guilty of only one offense: that of allowing torture to force him to lie, and he declared the order to be pure and innocent.

At sunset he was burned to death at the stake protesting his innocence and winning the admiration of the crowds, some of whom collected his ashes as holy relics.

It was rumored that de Molays last words were to summon the Pope and the King to meet him before God's throne within a year. Strangely enough both Philip and Clement died within that time.

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LEGACY OF THE TEMPLARS

There are several versions of what happened after de Molay's death. The one thing they all have in common is that the succession form De Molay on thru to the present of the continued. In one version, the order began the Roscrucians and the grades of Scottish rite Freemasonry.

In another version we have yet another way they hid by becomeing freemasons. In yet another, Under Napoleon I the Knights Templar had a document proving a line of succession from DeMolay. This is questioned.

The knights Templar believe that their line of tradition would always be present at important moments in the evolution of our planet. Modern Templars therefore strive to revive the Templar tradition today because they believe we are at a capital moment in the History of the Earth. They call this the resurrgance of the order.

They believe that templars have a role to play in the current transition from the age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius. Or, put another way, a role to play in the paradigm shift now taking place.

Some Templar orders claim that the souls of former Templars have reincarnated in this century in order to continue where they left off in the fourteenth century.

Many in Europe connect the Freemasons with the Templars, especially Scottish rite masons, as some of the Templars had taken refuge in Scotland after the order was abolished. No one can be sure of this connection.

What is known is that there are hundreds of orders in France and other countries claiming to be part of the Templar resurgence. In the US there are several Masonic Orders with Templar overtones. But these seem more interested in the romantic, ;mythical and fantasy side of the Templars, providing no real spiritual content in terms of living a Templar life.

The fact remains that there continues to be, especially since the 1960's, various groups claiming to be the true heirs of the Templar succession. None of these has managed to go any further than earlier generations in solving the question of succession in a definitive manner.

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HERMETIC TRADITION -A SHORT BACKGROUND

This traditon is based on 18 tractates called the corpus Hermeticum from Egypt which are in the form of dialogues of the God Thoth (Hermes in Greek) which date from the 1st cent. AD. It is neo-platonic seeing Everything as emanations from the Divine, AS ABOVE, SO BELOW is the basic principle.

This tradition crops up, even today, in Kabbalah, alchemy, numerology, gnosticism and astrology. The idea behind it is to decalre a divine revelation of God in ones own being which brings salvation.

ALCHEMY is the "great work" which is really about the transformation of the person, not about turning lead into gold. The "Philosopher's Stone" would be discovered which would lead to the Elixir of Life that would transmute the human body into an incorporate "body of light" so the adept would have omniscience, omnipotence and the joy of divine love.

This is done thru bringing together Sulpher (man's earthly part), Salt (the intellect) and above all Mercury (the spirit). This is done with the fire of love which transmutes the natural into the spiritual person.

ASTROLOGY - comes originally from Babylon, but the belief that all parts of the universe are interrelated, again, as above, so below. Thus in Alchemy, astrology is important as the alchemical process will be invalid unless carried out with the appropriate conjunction of heavenly bodies.

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ROSICRUCIANS

The Legend of Christian Rosenkreuz goes back to three pamphlets published in Germany between 1614-16, but it is said the organization goes back further to the 15th century in Germany. Up to 1614, this order had been unknown.

Basically the 1st pamphlet told the story of Christian Rosenkreuz, son of a poor but noble family. He was placed in a monastery at age 5 and while traveling to the holy land, his companion died in Cyprus. Christian continued the journey alone, learning wisdom along the way in Damascus, then to other Arab wise men in Damascus Arabia and Egypt.

He returned to Germany, built a house and began writing. He was joined by 3 monks from his old monastery where they formed the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross. They produced a whole library of books on every conceivable subject.

Before splitting up they formulated a number of rules: First, None were to practice anything but medicine and take no payment; second, no distinctive dress would be worn, dress like the country you are in; third, annual gathering on Corpus Christi day; fourth, each was to look out for a successor to take his place. Finally, the identity of the fraternity was to be a secret for 100 years.

In the 2nd pamphlet it was revealed that Christian was born in 1378. Christian lived to be 106 and had predicted he would return in 120 years. Ironically, this coincided with the publication of the 2nd pamphlet (1615). This one included 37 reasons of purpose and intention and invited membership, though it

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didn't tell how. It did state it was opposed to the Papacy, Islam, and quack alchemists.

The third original pamphlet was a fairy story, A Hermetic romance, again an attack on the false claims of the vulgar alchemists and their occult pretensions. All three tend to be the views of a soacial reformer and an attempt to reconcile ancient beliefs with pietistic Christianity (the author was a Lutheran).

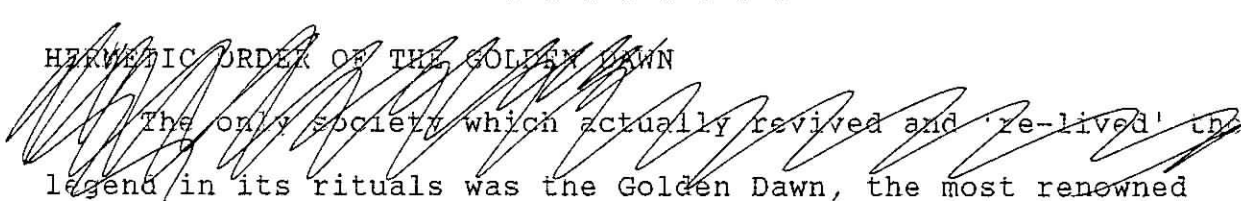
These created a sensation and many wished to join the Roscrucian brotherhood. However, no one was able to find a single person who belonged to it or a slight clue where their headquarters might be. Many defended its aims, including Decartes, who looked for but never found a member.

About 1620 interest in the Rosicrucian "phenomenon" began to decline and the movement (if it can be called that) went underground. In Germany there was a lively concern with alchemy till the end of the 18th century.

From this time on all the groups, fraternities and associations that have incorporated such words as Rosicrucian, Rozenkreuz or Rosenkreuzer, Rose Cross and so on, in their titles have, with one exception, completely ignored the alleged existence of Christian Rosendrez and his order. The story has been forgotten and the name alone survived.

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HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

The only society which actually revived and 're-lived' the legend in its rituals was the Golden Dawn, the most renowned

THE ROSICRUCIAN'S IN THE UNITED STATES

The Rosicrucians didn't arrive in the US, even with all the hype in Europe, until the early 20th century. When it did, it came in several versions. The most durable of the three groups that came was the ANCIENT AND MYSTICAL ORDER ROSAE CRUCIS OR (AMORC) of San Jose, Calif.

This group claimed lineage back to 1693 thru a group of German immigrants (mystics) from Pennsylvania who sought the "elixir of life". near Germantown. They broke up in 1801 in accordance, say the Rosicrucians, with an ancient 108 year cycle.

under H. Spencer Lewis, an occultist, self-styled Ph.D and advertising man a manifesto was produced incorporating the ancient rosicrucian teachings. This was published in 1915 and AMORC was established.

After Presumably turning a piece of zinc into Gold Lewis's group rapidly outdistanced all rivals. He advertised in leading magazines inviting women and men to join who were "sincere in wanting to better their own life and advance humanity."

for 5.00 initiation fee and 3.50 a month in dues the member would receive a card, the secret password, a detailed diagram of the secret handshake, a magazine and twice monthly lessons teaching the mastery of life.

There were 12 degrees which would eventually lead to cosmic consciousness, which included belief in reincarnation and the meaning of life. They initiated themselves standing in front of a mirror tracing a cross on the glass while repeating "hail rosy cross" This put them in company with Plato, Pharaoh Akhnaton and others, including Jesus.

Lewis's son Ralph took over on his father's death in 1939. and in 1987, upon his death, Gary Stewart took over. It is the largest group bearing the rosicrucian name and boasts as many as 60,000 members in 100 American lodges and 26 foreign affiliated ones.

The headquarters is in San Jose, Calif at Rosicrucian park which occupies an entire city block with splendid gardens, impressive buildings with Egyptian motifs. there is a museum with some of the finest Egyptian and babylonian antiquities in the western U.S.. A Science museum, modern planetarium, auditorium and instructional complex, etc. Parapsychology, physics, Chemistry, biology and photography are all studied there..

HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN - The only society which actually revived and re-lived the legend in its rituals was the Golden Dawn, the most renowned

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magical society of modern times. Founded in 1887, this esoteric society was a by-product of the Rosicrucian Society in England, which was established in 1866 by a group of Freemasons who were primarily interested in occultism, spiritualism and to a lesser extent, Masonic symbolism.

There were four grades relating to the Tetragrammaton, the name YHWH, in the O. T. They admitted both men and women on equal terms, unlike the Freemasons. Their main interest was magical, Kabbalah, Tarot (which several of their members A. E. Waite, Eliphas Levi, and the most infamous, Aleister Crowley interpreted and are still used today).

The original intention of the Order was "to prosecute the Great Work: which is to obtain control of the nature and power of one's own being." The Order was quite specifically Christian to begin with, even Evelyn Underhill was a member at one time.

Three varieties of magic were taught and each adept had to prepare their own magical apparatus: cup, wand, dagger and pentacle, together with an elaborate symbolic Rosy Cross.

The central rituals were based on the "original" pamphlet of 1614 and part of the initiation was a "viewing" of the uncorrupted body of Christian Rosenkreuz, symbolic of the buried sleeping higher self.

However, problems arose almost immediately as the leader, MacGregor Mathers got into black magic and Aleister Crowley broke away and proclaimed himself the Antichrist.

By 1905 the order had dissolved as most people didn't stick to it. It was the only repository of magic in the west. * * * *

FREEMASONS

One definition of Freemasonry is that it is "as system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." It is not a religion nor a substitute for same, but embraces all who beleive in a supreme being.

Why secrecy? This dates back to the original Operative or working masons who, because of the mobility of thier trade, formed a flexible network and required proof of professional skill from itinerant colleagues. A newcomer had to know certain signs and answers before being accepted.

Later, the speculative (non-operative) Freemasons took over the traditional questions, passwords and signs to emphasize the oaths of fidelity and fraternity. Hence, even freemasons secrets are symbolic.

the transition from operatiave to speculative freemasonry is obscure but all freemasonry in existence today can ultimately be traced to the Grand Lodge of England constituted in 1717.

In the 1720s and 30s, Freemasonry spread thurout Europe. The first papel bull against it was proclaimed in 1738 by Clement XII and it is still forbidden in Catholic Spain and Portugal.

On the continent, the craft attracted a lot of notable men who joined. In both France and Germany, there were a number of masonic sects that dabbled in alachemy and occultism. The Order of the Gold and Rosy Cross in Germany and the Golden dawn both used masonic grades.

It is probably a fact that various Freemason groups, thru their ideals of toleration and Free thinking, influenced both the

American and French revolutions. In the US, Freemasonry had taken root by 1730. Both Benjamin Franklin and Washington, (who was a master mason when he became president) were members.

SECRETS OF INITIATION

Strangers are prevented from entering and the lodge has to be "opened" for whatever level is going on and to remind the participants of the symbolical or allegorical nature of the ceremony.

If there is an initiation it is opened in the first degree. He is led in blindfolded (indicating spiritual blindness) and stripped of his money (showing acceptance even if poor). There is an oath to not reveal any of freemasonry's secrets.

He is shown certain grips and signs which refer to the symbolical building of Solomon's temple. He is then given the first degree Mason's working tools with explanation of their significance. The 24 inch gauge = 24 hours of a day to be divided between prayer, work, refreshment and helping a friend.

The gavel = the power of conscience; the chisel = the advantages of education; then finally the rectangular plank using the symbols appropriate for the first degree.

The Apprentice will be advanced about every three months, with the 3rd degree of Master Mason which is nominally the end. However, he can proceed thru the Royal arch to other degrees such as Mark Masonry, the Knights Templar and the Rose-Croix, etc.

One can know the outer ritual but must be involved to know the inner meaning of the rituals.

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MISCELLANEOUS SECRET SOCIETIES

This will be a catch all for a few other interesting but not very major secret groups.

THE PRIORY OF SION

This group first came to US attention with the publication of the book by Baigent, Lincoln and Leigh in 1981 called Holy Blood, Holy Grail. It is wildly speculative, but sounds authentic enough to have convinced many people.

Basically, it says Jesus married Mary Magdalene at the wedding At Cana, and after his demise, she and Joseph of Aramathia went to France with the children and that today in Europe Jesus descendents are alive and well in various Royal families of Europe.

Supposedly this Holy blood line was discovered about 800 years ago and the Priory of Sion was formed then to keep track of Jesus Descendents.

This is mostly tied up with the Church Rennes le Chateau, the mysterious town where Father Sauniere found the parchment about Dagobert (one of Jesus royal descendents).

Among other things, there was a secret and that was that the Earth is hollow and that in this church there is a secret door leading down to the underworld, which is inhabited by a race of immortal superhumans. Jules Verne, by the way, was a member of the Priory and hinted at this idea many times in his novels.

The secret door has never been found but it is one of the weirdest churches in Christendom, over the door is a sign that says "this place is terrible" Among the stations of the cross is

a group of conspirators removing the late Redeemere from the
gravae during the night, as if to fake the resurrection. The
church is officially dedicated to Mary Magdalene.

The bottom line is that no one really knows what the priory
of Sion is all about. There are several theories, any one of
which could be true.

1)it is a left-wing occult group with the intent of re-
instating gnostic Christianity;

2) it is a front for the Knights of Malta, masquarading as
freemasons, who would be blamed if things are found out.(this
worked in Italy already);

3)the Priory is really a front for Archbishop Lefebvre and
Catholic traditionalism with intent to abolish liberalism and
modernism.

4) this is just another commercial "conspiracy" group with0
a Continental flavor of art and culture about it.

The whole Priory of Sion saga seems to shed a new light on
the famous remark by Ismael Reed: "The History of the world is
the history of the warfare between secret socities."

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SKOPTSY - the Castrators of Russia

The name skoptsy means "eunuchs" and there is a long tradition of this phenomenon going back at least to the cult of Attis and Cybele. Origin, of course, castrated himself because of the verse in Matthews gospel about being eunuchs for the kingdom of God.

The Christian church has long since condemned as heretical the attitude which stigmatizes all appetites of the flesh but from time to time sub groups have gone against this teaching. Usually this is caused by social factors rather than adherence to misinterpreted doctrine.

Russia did not see the Reformation, but in the 17th century there was massive splintering of the population into factions when the power of the Russian orthodox church was broken.

The immediate ancestors of the Skoptsy were the Flagellants, themselves one of the offshoots during the 17th century. The Flagellants under Danila Filippov, the peasant founder, sought the gifts of the spirit by denying sex with their wives, drink alcohol, or eat red meat.

But, those who felt they had attained the Spirit considered themselves above human laws. They considered extra-marital relations to be especially sacred. Skoptsy arose as a reaaction to this with sexual excesses being the main target.

Kondrati Selivanov, the founder, claimed that the only possiblility of salvation for mankind was to renounce sex totally. Thus in 1757, at age 26, as an example to all, he had himself castrated. He lived to be 100 years old.

The Skoptsy believed that as soon as 144,000 converts had been found to follow the path, the last judgement would descent upon all humankind. Unlike many secterian groups of the time in Russia, the Church and the Tsarist regime held them in awe.

SPIRITUAL CASTRATION- It became the practice for a male follower to father a small family before becoming a "full member". Before long, some leaders preached "spiritual castration" as the ideal rather than physical ones.

As an act of violent protest the physical mutilation would increase. Soviet sources have admitted that in 1929 there were as many as 2000 adherents of the sect and their number was increasing.

Self-mutilation seems to be a Russian trait when conditions are desperate. After WW II, many women who had lost their husbands cut off their breasts. However, The last recorded instance of a castration in the Soviet Union was in 1951, by a certain Lomonosov, who was leader of the sect.

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