

FREEMASONRY IN ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

Introduction

This paper discusses Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania together as they were all encompassed within an area called Livonia from 1796.

Livonia was within the Russian Empire until the end of World War I, when it was split between the newly independent states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. In 1918–1920, both Soviet and German troops fought against Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian troops for control over Livonia, but their attempts were defeated. Polish forces also attempted to gain control over Lithuania and disputes over Lithuanian independence were finally settled by the League of Nations in 1924.

Estonia

Estonian History



Estonia was settled near the end of the last glacial era. German invasions began in the 13th century and Estonia became a battleground for centuries where Denmark, Germany, Russia, Sweden and Poland fought their many wars over controlling the important geographical position of the country as a gateway between East and West. A timeline of Estonian territorial history is shown at the end of this section¹.

The Roman Iron Age in Estonia is roughly dated to between 50 and 450 AD. With the rise of Christianity, centralized authority in Scandinavia and Germany eventually led to the Baltic crusades. The east Baltic world was transformed by military conquest. First the Livs, Letts and Estonians, then the Prussians and the Finns underwent defeat, baptism, military occupation and sometimes extermination by groups of Germans, Danes and Swedes. Estonia remained one of the last corners of medieval Europe to be Christianized. In 1193 Pope Celestine III called for a crusade against pagans in Northern Europe which concluded in Estonia in 1227.

However, it is probably appropriate to begin this history at a time when Estonia had become part of the Swedish Empire from the 16th century to 1721. Throughout this period the Baltic German nobility ruled Estonia and the language of administration and education was German. This preserved Estonian commitment to the Protestant Reformation which began in Europe in 1517 with Martin Luther and rapidly spread in the Baltic. Language, education, religion and politics were greatly transformed. Church services were given in German, instead of Latin.

Estonia placed itself under Swedish rule in 1561 to receive protection against Russia and Poland. However, in 1721 Estonia was ceded to the Russian Empire as the result of the Great Northern War between Sweden and Russia, Poland and Denmark. Nonetheless, the legal system, Lutheran church, local and town governments, and education remained mostly German until the late 19th century and partially until 1918.

The period 1750–1840 led to the Estonian national awakening in the middle of the 19th century. By 1819, the Baltic provinces were the first in the Russian empire in which serfdom was abolished, the nobility allowing the peasants to own their own land or move to the cities. These moves created the economic foundation for national identity and culture. Germans in Estonia, who had been educated at German universities, introduced ideas that propagated freedom of thinking and brotherhood and equality.

¹ Wikipedia

The French Revolution provided a motive for the creation of literature which reflected the ancient culture of the Estonians of the 13th century before the conquests by Danes and Germans. This cultural revival included the use of Estonian as the language of instruction in schools and all-Estonian song festivals were held regularly after 1869. National literature in Estonian was published in 1861 in both Estonian and German. However, by 1889 a policy of Russification meant that Russian became the primary language.

With the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, Russia's Provisional Government granted national autonomy to Estonia and Bolshevik forces retreated to Russia. In 1918, before the arrival of advancing German troops, the Estonian Declaration of Independence was issued. An Estonian provisional Government took office following the withdrawal of German troops but a military invasion by the Red Army followed a few days later marking the beginning of the Estonian War of Independence which ensued on two fronts:-

- between the newly proclaimed state of Bolshevik Russia to the east and
- the forces of the United Baltic Duchy (Latvia) to the south

The Estonian army cleared the entire territory of Estonia of the Red Army by February 1919 and the Tartu Peace Treaty recognized Estonian independence. The Republic of Estonia obtained international recognition and became a member of the League of Nations in 1921.

A mass anti-communist movement emerged in the 1930s which sought replacement of the parliamentary system with a presidential form of government but it was thwarted by a pre-emptive coup d'état in 1934, by Head of State **Konstantin Päts**, who then established his own authoritarian rule until a new constitution came to force. Political parties were banned and the parliament was not in session between 1934 and 1938 as the country was ruled by decree.

Estonia had pursued a policy of neutrality, but it was of no consequence after the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. In that agreement, the two great powers agreed to divide up the countries situated between them (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland) with Estonia falling in the Soviet "sphere of influence" and it was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940.

The Soviet authorities immediately imposed a regime of terror and over 8,000 people, including most of the country's leading politicians and military officers, were arrested. In 1941 about 10,000 Estonian civilians were deported to Siberia. During World War II, after Germany started its war against Russia, Estonia was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1941. The Germans had limited success in recruiting volunteers to fight Russia and, when the draft was introduced in 1942, about 3,400 men fled to Finland to fight in the Finnish Army against Russia rather than join the Germans' fight against Russia.

Despite tolerance of Jews in Estonia, many Jews were deported to Siberia during the Russian period and, under the Nazi occupation, between 1,500 and 2,000 Estonian Jews were killed and an estimated 10,000 Jews were killed in Estonia having been imported by the Nazis from elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

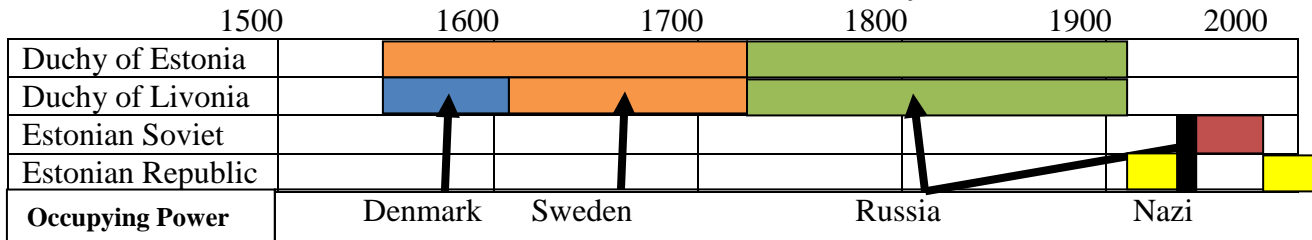
In 1944, when it appeared certain that the Allies would win the war against Germany, the only option to save Estonia's independence was to stave off a new Soviet invasion until Germany surrendered. Hence volunteer SS Estonian units saw action in support of Germany throughout 1944 but with diplomatic attempts to secure Allied support for independence.

However, as the last German units pulled out of Tallinn in 1944, the city was re-occupied by the Soviet Red Army. The Estonian government fled to Stockholm and operated in exile until 1992. Soviet forces began a new wave of arrests and executions of people considered disloyal to the Soviets. By the beginning of the Gorbachev era, concern over the cultural survival of the Estonian people had reached a critical point. The Estonian Popular Front was established in 1988 and other political parties - the Greens and the Estonian National Independence Party - soon followed.

The Estonian Sovereignty Declaration was issued on November 16, 1988. The spring of 1990 saw two free elections in Estonia and in 1991 a referendum was held on the issue of independence with the result that 83% backed independence, although all citizens, including ethnic-Russians were allowed to vote.

Estonia joined the European Union in 2004, shortly after becoming a member of NATO. Being a member of the Euro zone, NATO and the EU, Estonia is the most integrated in Western European organizations of all Nordic states but Estonia–Russia relations remain tense.

Timeline of Estonian Territorial History²



Estonian Freemasonry

Historically, freemasonry was introduced in Estonia during the period of 1771-1773 when a Masonic Lodge *Isis* was established in Tallinn by mostly German and Russian noblemen, merchants, officials, professors, clergymen and artists.

A pastor **Otto Wilhelm Masing** and a musician **Karl Friedrich Karell** were the only Estonian members of the lodge. Four lodges soon became active in Estonia but were voluntarily closed in Tsarist Russia under Catherine II in 1794, temporarily banned by **Paul I**, himself a Freemason, and banned again by **Alexander I**, also a Freemason, in 1822^{3, 4}.

Apart from the brief period of Estonian Independence prior to World War II, Freemasonry remained banned in Russia and its satellites until the Soviet collapsed.

After the fall of the Soviet power Freemasonry was re-established in Estonia in the year 1992 when a lodge called “*Phoenix*” started its Masonic activities. On 18 May 1999, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Freemasons of Estonia was consecrated. As a national association, the Grand Lodge of Estonia is a sovereign and equal member of the family of accepted grand lodges.

Today the Lodges and Chapters extant in Estonia are as listed in the following table and the fraternity includes more than 300 men from different social backgrounds and professions in Estonia⁵.

City	Craft Lodges	Mark Lodges	Royal Arch Chapters	Research Lodge
Tallin	4	3	2	1
Parnu	1	-	-	-
Tartu	2	-	-	-
Haapsalu	1	-	-	-
Viljandi	1	-	-	-

In 2010, *Hackney Brook* Lodge, No. 14 (formerly No. 7397 UGLE), working under a temporary warrant granted by the Grand Lodge of Estonia, initiated **Risto Feodorov**, the first time that the Emulation ritual had been worked by an English-speaking Lodge in Scandinavia.

² Wikipedia

³ Grand Lodge of Estonia website

⁴ “*Freemasonry in Russia*’ Andrei Priahin Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon web site

⁵ Grand Lodge of Estonia website

The meeting took place in Tallinn and the work was carried out by **Marvin Ellison**, Master of *Hackney Brook* Lodge, the last Master of No. 7397, with **Arne Kaasik**, the Grand Master of Estonia, and **Heikki Maki**, Grand Master of Finland, being present⁶.

Some Famous Estonian Freemasons

Otto Wilhelm Masing (1763–1832) was an early Livonian Estophile and a major advocate of peasant rights, especially regarding education. In 1795, **Masing** compiled and published a children's reading textbook and in 1821 published a newsletter "*Peasant's Weekly*" one of the earliest regular publications in the Estonian language. His works contain articles on farming, livestock, health and trade. He aimed to give the peasants knowledge of the world through stories of faraway countries, people, their work and way of thinking. He mastered German, Estonian, Latin, Greek, French and Italian.⁷

Friedrich Karl Karell (1791-1857), who was an organist, actor and concert performer, became a free man in Tallinn and was the first known Estonian composer. He sang and played violin in the orchestra for the German theatre. He acted in Russia, was an opera singer in Moscow and an organist and music teacher in St. Petersburg. He is known for some of his works for piano.



According to the well-known Estonian freemason **Gunnar Aarma**, the Estonian President **Konstantin Pats** and commander-in-chief **Johann Laidoner** in the 1930s belonged to Swedish lodges⁸. **Gunnar Aarma** (1916-2001) was an Estonian healer, author of esoteric books, translator, and philosopher. He wrote books about Yoga, Magic and about India and Bhutan. He was an adherent of Raja Yoga.

As a Berlin correspondent for an Estonian paper he interviewed Adolf Hitler⁹ and analysed him through the eyes of Raja Yoga, whose adherents believe one's character surrounds a person as an array of colours, or biological field. He reported that "*As Hitler answered a dozen pre-prepared questions he scrutinized the aura of the German dictator and was taken aback by what he saw. It showed Hitler was a sick man,*" he explained. "*He was deprived of this very important sexual component. He was 100 percent impotent and this would explain his peculiarities and his tendencies to come up with such esoteric political theories. I had witnessed some of his speeches,*" he recalled. "*I had seen Hitler work himself up to the point of hysteria. So I was bewildered at first when I saw so little red in his aura. He had to work himself up artificially to get into that crazed euphoric state,*" said **Aarma**. "*This man was in no sense wise, in the sense of a man who had pondered life and arrived at some meaningful insight,*" said **Aarma**. "*But he did have a certain raw intellect.*"

Konstantin Päts (1874–1956) was the most influential politician of interwar Estonia. He was one of the first Estonians to become active in politics and was condemned to death during the 1905 Revolution, but managed to flee first to Switzerland, then to Finland. He returned to Estonia, but had to spend time in prison in 1910–1911. In 1917 **Päts** headed the Provincial Government of the Autonomous Governorate of Estonia, but he was forced to go underground after the October Revolution. In 1918 **Päts** became one of the three who issued the Estonian Declaration of Independence and headed the Estonian Provisional Government (1918–1919) but was imprisoned during the German Occupation. In 1934 he organized a *coup d'etat* which was supported by the army and the parliament. During his authoritarian regime many reforms were made and the economy grew. **Päts** ruled as a dictator until a new constitution was adopted in 1938, after which **Päts** became the first President of Estonia.



⁶The Official Journal of the United Grand Lodge of England

⁷ Wikipedia

⁸ "*The Golden Crown on the Estonian Flag*", Gunnar Aarma 1992, p. 35)

⁹ "*Hitler's Colors*" - Michael Tarm



Johan Laidoner (1884-1953) was a seminal figure of Estonian history between the world wars. His highest position was Commander-in-chief of the Estonian Army in 1918–1920, 1924–1925, and 1934–1940. He received his military education in 1909 at the Nikolai Military Academy in St. Petersburg and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Russian Army. He received seven medals before the Russian Empire dissolved.

Laidoner later returned to Estonia and took command of the First Estonian Division in the Estonian War of Independence. In 1918 he was promoted to the Commander in Chief of the Estonian Armed Forces, and subsequently to the rank of Major General.

Laidoner assisted President **Konstantin Päts** to assume emergency powers. When the Soviet Union occupied Estonia on June 17, 1940, **Laidoner** was one of the few top political leaders of the country not executed by the Soviet regime. Instead, he was deported to Russia. **Laidoner** died on March 14, 1953 in Vladimir prison. During his lifetime, **Laidoner** earned medals of recognition for service and valor from Estonia as well as from Great Britain, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, France, Poland, Sweden, and Germany.

The first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Estonia in 1999 was **Arno Koorna**, who became a freemason in Finland in 1991. He was an economist and Professor Emeritus at Euro-university, a member of the Central European Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Russian Academy of Humanities. During his tenure as head of the Bank of Estonia, the Masonic symbol of the all-seeing eye was put on the 50 crown banknotes. Grand Master **Koorna** stressed the fact that the freemasons are law-abiding and loyal citizens.



Hando Nahkur is a concert pianist who made his debut with the Estonian Symphony Orchestra aged sixteen. He went on to perform with the Orchestra of the Estonian National Opera. He has played in 22 of the states of the United States, in Costa Rica, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Estonia, France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Czech Republic, Israel and Russia. **Nahkur** has garnered top prizes in both national and international piano competitions, including top prizes in Estonia, Italy, Greece, Russia, USA and Canada. In 2005 he was awarded the Golden Medal of Merit from Toronto, Canada. **Nahkur** in addition to being a performer is an arranger of music and he plays and arranges some popular and romantic music as well as classical pieces.

Latvia

History of Latvia



The History of Latvia began when the area which is today Latvia was settled following the end of the last glacial period, around 9,000 BC. Latvia's principal river, the Daugava River, was at the head of an important mainland route from the Baltic region through Russia into southern Europe and the Middle East used by the Vikings and later Nordic and German traders. Latvia's coast was known as a place for obtaining amber. Up to and into the Middle Ages amber was more valuable than gold in many places. Latvian amber was known in places as far away as Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire.

In the early medieval period, the region's peoples resisted Christianization and became involved in the Northern Crusades. Today's capital, Riga, founded in 1201 by Teutonic colonists at the mouth of the Daugava, became a strategic base in a papally-sanctioned conquest of the area by the Livonian "Brothers of the Sword". It was to be the first major city of the southern Baltic and, after 1282, a principal trading centre in the Hanseatic League. By the 16th century Germanic dominance in the region was increasingly challenged by other powers.

Due to Latvia's strategic location and prosperous city, its territories were a frequent focal point for conflict and conquest between at least four major powers, Germany, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Sweden and Russia. The longest period of external dominance of the area in the modern period began in 1710 when control over Riga switched from Sweden to Russia during the Great Northern War. Under Russian control, Latvia was in the vanguard of industrialization and the abolition of serfdom so that by the end of the 19th century it had become one of the most developed parts of the Russian Empire. The increasing social problems and rising discontent which this brought meant that Riga also played a leading role in the 1905 Russian Revolution.

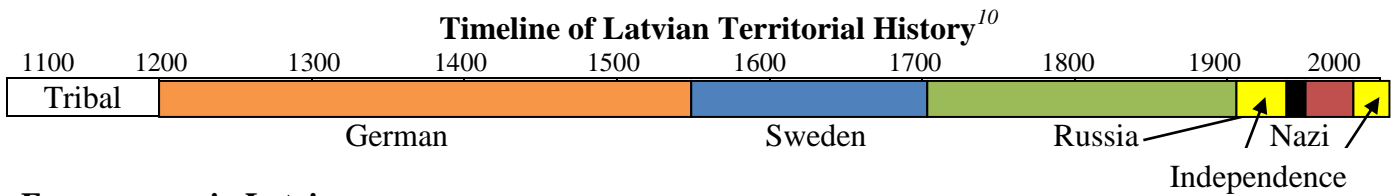
A rising sense of Latvian nationalism from the 1850s onwards bore fruit after World War I when, after two years of struggle in the Russian Civil War, Latvia finally won sovereign independence recognized by Russia in 1920 and by the international community in 1921.

Because of the world economic crisis there was a growing dissatisfaction among the population at the beginning of the 1930s. In Riga in 1934, Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis, one of the fathers of Latvian independence, took power by a bloodless coup d'état and the activities of the parliament and all the political parties were suspended. Rapid economic growth followed and Latvia reached one of the highest living standards in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

Latvia's independent status was interrupted at the outset of World War II when in 1940 the country was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union. 35,000 people were deported to camps mainly in Siberia in the first year of Soviet occupation and in June 1941 alone, 15,424 inhabitants of Latvia, including 1,771 Jews and 742 ethnic Russians, were deported. Nazi troops occupied Riga later that month. Immediately after the installment of German authority, a process of eliminating the Jewish and Gypsy population began and by the end of 1941 almost the entire Jewish population was killed or placed in the concentration camps. In addition, some 25,000 Jews were brought from Germany, Austria and the present-day Czech Republic, of whom around 20,000 were killed. The Holocaust claimed about 85,000 lives in Latvia, the vast majority of which were Jews.

A large number of Latvians resisted the German occupation but the resistance movement was divided between the pro-independence units and the pro-Soviet units. Despite the fact that the Nazis planned to Germanize Latvia after the war two divisions of Waffen-SS were formed from Latvian conscripts and volunteers to help Germany against the Red Army in 1943 and 1944. Latvians also fought with Russia and the country was retaken by the Soviets in 1944 after Germany surrendered. Latvian partisans now fought against the Soviet Union. During the Russian occupation 120,000 Latvians were imprisoned or deported to Soviet concentration camps. Some managed to escape arrest and joined the partisans.

From the mid-1940s the country was subject to Soviet economic control and saw considerable Russification of its peoples, but Latvian culture and infrastructures survived such that, during the period of Soviet liberalization under Mikhail Gorbachev, Latvia once again took a path towards independence which eventually succeeded in August 1991 and was recognized by Russia the following month. Since then, under restored independence, Latvia has become a member of the United Nations, entered NATO and joined the European Union.



Freemasonry in Latvia

The Grand Lodge of Latvia organizes the work of Freemasonry as well as maintaining relationships with foreign Grand Lodges¹¹. It has 6 Lodges.

Lodge name	Founded/Restored	Ritual	Town
Januguns (St John's Fire) N ^o . 1	1724 / 1993	German AF&AM	Riga
Ziemeļzvaigzne (North Star) N ^o . 2	1750 / 2002	German AF&AM	Riga
Pie Zobena (The Sword) N ^o . 3	1750 / 2002	Zinnendorf	Riga
Apollo Lodge N ^o 4 (English speaking)	1773 / 2006	Emulation	Riga
Enkurs (Anchor) N ^o 5	1921 / 2009	Feslera	Liepaja
Iter ad lucem (Light) N ^o 6	2008	St Andrews	Riga

Source: Grand Lodge of Latvia website

A timeline of Latvian Freemasonry follows:-

- 1750 - The first Riga Lodge renamed "The Sword" in 1765
- 1779 - Cagliostro establish "the Egyptian system" Lodges in Jelgava
- 1780 - The first Lodge of Liepaja Irene
- 1794 - Because of the French Revolution Empress Catherine II restricts Masonic operations in Riga
- 1822 - Freemasons Lodges are banned in the Russian Empire including Latvia
- 1916 - German military lodges operate in Liepaja, Jelgava and Riga
- 1919 - The first independent Latvian Lodge "Anchor" in Liepaja
- 1924 - Riga Lodge "St John's Fire"
- 1993 - Lodge "St John's Fire" renewal
- 2000 - Lodge "North Star" and "The Sword" renewal
- 2003 - Latvian Grand Lodge Formation
- 2007 - Lodge "Apollo" renewal
- 2008 - Lodge "Light"
- 2009 - Lodge "Anchor" renewal

Freemasonry came to Latvia in the middle of the 18th century, when rich merchants and nobles, who often travelled abroad, joined Freemasonry in Lodges mainly in St. Petersburg but also in Germany, Sweden and Poland, and brought it home. Latvian territory at that time was divided into three different Provinces:-

- Vidzeme Province. which Russia had recently taken from Sweden,
- Duchy of Courland, which was subject to Poland, but had a strong Russian influence, and
- Latgale, which was also subject to Poland.

This resolved into three distinct traditions of Freemasonry, which did not influence each other. Riga Masonic Lodges were most directly related to St. Petersburg Freemasonry and Courland Freemasonry, particularly in Jelgava, and was in the hands of noble families and mainly related to Prussian and Polish influence.

¹⁰ Wikipedia

¹¹ Grand Lodge of Latvia website

There is little information about Latgale Masonic Lodges, however several nobles belonged to a very active Warsaw Lodge and **Count Hilzen** and **Baron Heikingu** were members of the Craft. A Freemasons Lodge "Thalia", which was established in 1772 in the Latgale Province under Poland, was active with Polish Freemasonry, which was a major influence in the Polish resistance movement, especially **Kosciuszko**, who was a Freemason being initiated in 1774.

Lodge "North Star" was established in 1750 as the second Lodge in the Russian Empire after the St Petersburg "Lodge of Silence". The wealthy merchant **Johann Dietrich von der Heide** and **Johan Zuckerbecker** were members and the Lodge formed part of the Provincial Grand Lodge for Russia and Germany (UGLE)¹².

The Lodge in Jelgava "At the three crowned swords" was founded in 1754 by the influential Courland families after their return from studying in Germany. The first master was **Christoph von Manteifels Levin**, who had been admitted to the Lodge "The three Golden Keys" in 1743 in Halle. "The Three Golden Roses" was established in Jena with **Johann Ulrich von Bers** and **Christoph Friedrich Neander** as members. In Courland in Jelgava a second Lodge "At the three crowned hearts" was founded attached to the **Cagliostro** system. Almost no information is retained for another Lodge in Kurland, which worked for a short time in 1778, Lodge "Zum Grünen Flagg" and was associated with a German "Three Globes" Grand Lodge.

In 1765 the "Sword" Lodge in Riga adopted the Strict Observance Rite associated with Denmark and the Duchy of Brunswick. The Jelgava Lodges also belonged to Strict Observances Rite. The "Sword" Lodge in Riga continued to work the strict Observance Rite after 1782. Its 67 members in 1878 were mostly middle-class people - wealthy merchants, doctors, pharmacists, teachers and lawyers. One of the members was **Johann Gottfried Herder**, who joined in 1766 and later became one of the most famous German Enlightenment writers and philosophers. The **Herder** monument can still be found in front of the Riga Museum of History, where you can see things that belonged to his Lodge.

By 1771 the structure of Freemasonry in the Russian Empire was becoming increasingly complex. As well as the Strict Observances Lodges, some working in Berlin set up the **Zinnendorf** Rite and, in addition, some Lodges worked the English system supported by Empress Catherine II and **Elagin**. In 1770 the German Freemasons founded the National Grand Lodge of Germany and adopted a different system, which is similar to the Swedish Rite and named after **Johann Wilhelm von Zinnendorf** of Berlin. This system was adopted when Lodge "Apollo" was established in Riga in 1773 and Lodge "Castor" in Riga in 1777. In 1779 the Lodge "Pollux" was established in Tartu¹³.

In 1777 the Swedish **King Gustav III** visited Catherine II in St. Petersburg and during the visit talked of his membership in Freemasonry, which resulted in a growing interest in the Swedish Rite in Russia. In 1778 a Lodge working the Swedish Rite of Freemasonry was established in Russia with **Prince Gagarin** as its Master, who worked in trying to force the Russian National Grand Lodge to join the new Swedish system.

In 1779 the **Elagin** Lodges in Russia change from the **Zinnendorf** system to the English system and the two **Zinnendorf** Lodges in Riga followed suit although they later adopted the Swedish system. During 1778 a new Lodge was established in Riga working in the Swedish Rite named "The small world" In Russia the Swedish Provincial Grand Lodge of Russia collapsed in 1781 but the Lodge "The small world" continued to work in the Swedish system until its prohibition in 1809.

¹² Gould's History of Freemasonry

¹³ Grand Lodge of Latvia web site

The fraudulent Count Alexander von **Cagliostro** (Giuseppe Balsamo) was exposed in 1779 and the Lodge in Jelgava (Capital of the Duchy of Courland), which was based on **Cagliostro's** "Egypt's Rite" ("Misraim" ritual) had to close and when **Cagliostro** left for St. Petersburg, Elisa von der Recke sent a warning letter to Catherine II. Catherine II issued an informal order to close all Lodges in the Russian Empire in 1794. However **Count von Medem** managed to retain the Kurland lodges and there are reports that at least one Lodge in Riga, "The small world", continued to operate secretly. Immediately after the 1905 Revolution took place Freemasonry was restored in Russia, this time with assistance from the "Grand Orient de France" but were banned again in 1909.

German Military Lodges existed in Courland and Riga during the First World War but after the collapse of imperial Germany, the Bolsheviks closed the field Lodges, except in Liepaja, where the Lodge "Anchor and Sword" became a stationary Lodge under the Prussian Grand Lodge "Zur Freundschaft".

When Latvia gained independence there were two lodges, in Liepaja and Riga, Lodge "Anchor" and "Anchor and Sword" both dominated by German interests with the result that charges of "anti-state activities" were launched in 1921. The subsequent political police investigation showed that the charges were unjustified. Nevertheless, in 1925 the Kurzeme Regional Court suspended the Lodges, but by 1927 the requirement of closing the Lodges was dismissed.

In Riga the number of Lodges grew rapidly and by 1929 there were 15 Lodges for resident foreign brethren, mainly Baltic German industrialists and traders, the diplomatic corps, lawyers, doctors, and Latvian officials and businessmen.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern European countries rapidly restored Freemasons Lodges and the "Grand Orient de France" launched operations in Eastern Europe in 1988. After 1991 Russia had established four lodges in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg and by 1992 the regular French National Grand Lodge opened the first regular Lodge "Harmony" in Moscow. By 1995 the Grand Lodge of Russia was established.

In the spring of 1993 the first Latvian Lodge "Jāņuguns" was revived and early in 1995 started negotiations with the Grand Lodge of Germany AF&AM in Bremen and in late 1997 Latvia received its first international recognition. During 1997-1998 brotherly relations were established with Estonian, Finnish and Swedish Grand Lodges. The German United Grand Lodges ordained in Riga the sovereign Latvian Grand Lodge in 2003 in the presence of German, Swedish, Estonian, Lithuanian, Russian, Italian, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland Grand Lodge delegations. UGLE recognized the Latvian Grand Lodge later in 2003.

Famous Freemasons in Latvia



Andrzej Tadeusz Bonawentura Kościuszko (1746–1817) was a Polish–Lithuanian and American general and military leader during the **Kościuszko** Uprising. He is a national hero of Poland, Lithuania, the United States and Belarus. He led the 1794 uprising against Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Prussia as Supreme Commander of the Polish National Armed Force.

He had fought in the American Revolutionary War as a colonel in the Continental Army. In 1783, in recognition of his dedicated service, he was brevetted by the Continental Congress to the rank of brigadier general in a mass promotion given to all officers who had served during the war and became a naturalized citizen of the United States. He was initiated in 1774 in Lodge "Thalia".

Christian Friedrich von Neander (1724-1802) wrote Germans and Latvian religious songs. He was considered as a outstanding speaker. In 1775 the Duke Peter von Kurland entrusted **Neander** with the publication of a new Song Book.¹⁴ He was a member of the Lodge in Jelgava "The Three Golden Roses"



Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) was a German philosopher, theologian, poet, and literary critic. He is associated with the periods of Enlightenment, Sturm und Drang, and Weimar Classicism. A student of Immanuel Kant, **Herder** can justly claim to have founded a new school of German political thought. In 1764, now a clergyman, Herder went to Riga to teach and was a member of “Sword” Lodge. It was during this period that he produced his first major works, which were literary criticism. In 1770 **Herder** went to Strasbourg, where he met the young **Goethe**. This event proved to be a key juncture in the history of German literature, as Goethe was inspired by Herder's literary criticism to develop his own style.

Dr. Alfreds Bilmanis was a Latvian Foreign Ministry official and Ministry spokesman wrote¹⁵ a book during World War II while Latvia was under its second Nazi Germany occupation and while the Baltic peoples still held out for the restoration of their freedom. The early promise of the League of Nations formed in the wake of WWI proved, ultimately, a disappointment as it lacked any means for enforcement. Even influential journalists like Walter Lippmann could foresee a future where the Baltics rejoined Russia. **Bilmanis** did not anticipate the degree to which post-war policy was being rendered impotent by diplomacy. The Baltics and Eastern Europe had already been given over to Stalin even while its peoples still held out hope for freedom.



Gothards Vilhelms Nikolajs Munters (1898-1967) was a Latvian statesman and diplomat and from 1936 to 1940 Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia. As an officer candidate in St. Petersburg he took part in the October revolution, fought against the Bolsheviks and was briefly in prison. After his return to Latvia he fought against the Latvian Nationalists and the Red Army. As he spoke Latvian, Danish, German and Russian he made a career in the Latvian State Department and, not long after the coup d'etat of 1934, he was made the Minister of foreign affairs. He participated directly in the negotiations of the aborted non-aggression treaty between Germany and Latvia and the agreement with the Soviet Union in 1939. After another period in prison in Russia he returned in 1959 to Latvia and worked in the Latvian Academy of Sciences. **Munters** published articles in the Soviet press, in particular in the Investia

Lithuania

History of Lithuania



The first Lithuanians were a branch of the Balts, whose tribes included the Prussian and Latvian people. The history of Lithuania dates back to at least 1009 when Lithuanians began to conquer neighbouring lands to establish the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which was one of the last areas of Europe to adopt Christianity. In the early 13th century two German religious groups, the Teutonic Knights and the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, conquered much of the area that is now Estonia and Latvia, in addition to parts of Lithuania in the Northern Crusades.

¹⁴ GermanBaltic biographic encyclopedia; The Baltic poet book, Reval 1894

¹⁵What Latvia Wishes From This War? Dr. Alfreds Bilmanis, 1944

Through alliances and conquest, in competition with the Grand Duchy of Moscow, the Lithuanians eventually gained control of areas which included most of modern Belarus and Ukraine¹⁶ and created a massive Lithuanian state that in the 15th century stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Lithuania became the largest state in Europe having formed in 1385 a dynastic union with Poland merging the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569. From 1573, the kings of Poland and the grand dukes of Lithuania were always the same person, and were elected by the nobility.

From the 16th to the mid-17th century culture, arts, and education flourished, fueled by the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. Many educated Lithuanians came back from studies abroad and the Grand Duchy was boiling with active cultural life. Also at that time the first handwritten and printed texts in the Lithuanian language emerged, and the formation of written Lithuanian language began.

But during the First Northern Wars 1655–1661, the Lithuanian territory and economy were devastated by the Swedish army and again in the later Northern War 1700–1721.

In 1791 an attempt was made to integrate Lithuania and Poland more closely, although this terminated in 1795 and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was divided between Russia and Prussia. Lithuania ceased to exist as a distinct entity for more than a century and the Lithuanians lived mostly under the rule of the Russian Empire until the 20th century.

Lithuanians eagerly welcomed Napoleon Bonaparte's French army as liberators in 1812, with many joining his offensive against Russia. However these hopes were soon to be dashed after the French army's defeat and Lithuania continued to be administered as a Russian province. Lithuanian national movement began with the promotion of a return to Lithuania's pre-Commonwealth traditions and a renewal of the local culture, based on the Lithuanian language. It required, in order to establish a modern Lithuanian identity, a break with the Polish tradition and cultural-linguistic dependence. In 1864 the Lithuanian language was banned in junior schools. Lithuanians resisted the Russification by arranging printing abroad and smuggling the books in. Lithuanian newspapers, poems and books glorified the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, depicting the historic nation of great power and with many heroes. The period from 1890 to 1904 saw the publication of about 2,500 book titles in the Lithuanian Latin alphabet. The majority of these were published in Tilsit, a city in East Prussia, although some publications reached Lithuania from the United States. Lithuania's nationalist movement continued to grow. During the Russia-wide revolutionary uprising of 1905, a congress of Lithuanian representatives in Vilnius demanded provincial autonomy.

After the outbreak of hostilities in World War I Germany occupied Lithuania and Courland in 1915. In 1918 an elected a 20-member Council of Lithuania adopted the Act of Independence of Lithuania. The withdrawing German army was followed by the Soviet forces, who intended to create the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. By the end of December the Red Army reached Lithuanian borders, starting the Lithuanian–Soviet War. From 1919 the Lithuanians were also at war with Poland when Polish troops captured Vilnius. The Lithuanian army by the end of 1919 had pushed the Soviets out of the Lithuanian territory and the first phase of the Lithuanian War of Independence was over.

On February 16, 1918, Lithuania was reestablished as a democratic state. It remained independent until the outset of World War II, when it was occupied by the Soviet Union under the terms of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact following a brief occupation by Nazi Germany. Lithuania was again absorbed into the Soviet Union for nearly 50 years. 17,000 people (mostly former military officers, policemen, political figures, intelligentsia and their families) were deported to Gulags in Siberia, where many perished due to inhumane conditions.

¹⁶Wikipedia

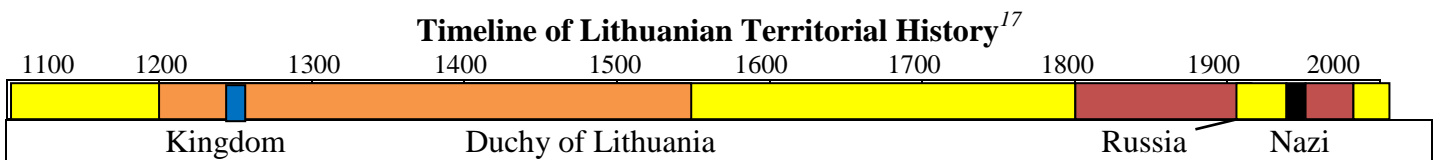
In 1941 Germany invaded controlled all Lithuania. The retreating Soviet forces massacred Lithuanian political prisoners. The Lithuanians generally greeted the Germans as liberators from the oppressive Soviet regime and hoped that Germany would restore some autonomy to Lithuania.

Despite some collaboration Lithuanians also organized armed resistance, which was conducted by pro-Soviet partisans, operated in eastern Lithuania, and mainly consisted of minority Russians, Belarusians and Jews. This group fought for the re-incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union.

Before the Holocaust, Lithuania was home to about 210,000-250,000 Jews. According to one estimate, the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators murdered around 190,000 Lithuanian Jews. There was also resistance to the German occupation, and some Lithuanians risked their own lives to save Jews; 723 Lithuanians are recognized as “Righteous among the Nations” for their efforts.

In 1944 the USSR re-occupied Lithuania and the Soviets re-established the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, with the passive agreement of the United States and Britain. Between 120,000 and 300,000 people were deported from Lithuania between 1941 and 1952.

In 1990 the Supreme Soviet proclaimed the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence and by the end of 2002, Lithuania was invited to join the European Union and one month later to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; it became a member of both in 2004.



Freemasonry in Lithuania

The first Freemason`s Lodge in the territory of present-day Lithuania was founded in Memel, which was then within Prussia. Memel in the 18th and 19th century was an international port with a population of Germans, Scots, English, Lithuanians and other nations. Lodge "Memphis" was founded in 1716 under the Grand National Mother Lodge of Prussia “The Three Globes” and, by 1782, there were 110 Members. It worked in German.

This lodge, in contrast to other Lodges in Lithuania, did not experience repressions and persecution, and as a result, worked until 1935, when all Freemason`s Lodges were banned in Nazi Germany, as, although Memel by then belonged to Lithuania, Nazi influence in Memel was very strong. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania a society of Freemasons was founded in 1776 under the Grand Orient of Poland and Lithuania and worked the Scottish rite. Due to the partition of the Lithuanian Polish Commonwealth, the lodges ceased activities in 1794. An attempt at revival was unsuccessful in 1812–1813 but succeeded in 1816 and by 1821, 12 lodges with a total of about 700 members had been created - in Vilnius (4), Hrodna (1), Navagrudak (1), Niasviž (1), Minsk (2), Raseiniai (1), Sluck (1), and Ukmergė (1).

By October 1818, the Orient of Lithuania had been formed, which was subordinate to the Grand National Orient of Poland based in Warsaw. They used the "Corrected Scottish Rite”, which consisted of seven degrees. The fourth or fifth degrees were worked in Vilnius and in Niasviž and the sixth and seventh degrees were awarded in Vilnius. Lithuania Lodges worked in Polish, with the exception of the Vilnius Lodge "Good Shepherd" which used German. After the Russian occupation the Lodge "Slavic Eagle” was set up in Vilnius which worked in Russian.

¹⁷ Wikipedia

The Lodges of the Lithuania, Poland and especially Russia maintained mutual ties. They operated until 1822 when Masonic Lodges were banned in the Russian Empire by **Alexander I**. The Klaipeda region of Lithuania Minor (Prussia) had significance in that at least one Lodge moved to Klaipeda after the Russian authorities banned Freemasonry in the Russian Empire. A Scottish Rite Lodge had been established in Klaipeda "Aurora Temple of Wisdom" since 1903. Both Russian and German Military Lodges operated on Lithuanian soil. During the Napoleonic Wars the occupying Russian army stationed in Vilnius in 1812 founded Lodge "St. George" from officers of the Russian army. During World War I the German Army had a Lodge in Vilnius "Blazing Sword".

Freemasons were active in helping to establish Lithuanian independence. Many scientists and professors of the University of Vilnius joined the University Professorship Masonic Affiliation - **Larry Gucevicius, John Rustem, John Damelis, Gottfried Ernest Gródek, Simon Zhukovskiy, Michael Mianovskis, James Šimkevičius, Jerome Stroinovskis, Casimir Kontrimas, John Frederick Wolfgang, Michael Riomeris**, (after whom a University was named) **Michael Oginski, Plater was Ludwig** and many others – and were an influenced student opposition to the Czarist authorities. Many joined the **Kościuszko** uprising in Poland. After the restoration of Lithuanian Independence in 1990 Freemasonry was re-established.

Some Famous Lithuanian Freemasons



Karol Stanislaw Radziwill (1669-1719) was the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Grand Chancellor of Lithuania in 1698. The Radzwill family are a well-known aristocratic family in Lithuania and Poland.

He married Anna Katarzyna Sanguszko in 1691 in Vilnius. He was awarded the Order of the White Eagle.

The first Provincial Grand Master was **Grand Hetman Michael Oginski** (1730-1800) who served in the war against Russia and was the Grand Duchy's treasurer.

Oginski was an elder of the town of Slonim and built a palace, a theatre, and many other buildings, established a printing office, and laid the foundation of the Oginski Canal, which developed trade and industry by connecting the River Shara with the Dnieper.



Laurynas Gucevičius (1753-1798) is considered to be the first professional Lithuanian architect. In his youth he travelled to Italy and Paris and was appointed professor at the Jesuit Academy of Vilnius, the predecessor of the University of Vilnius. Among the best known of his works are the Vilnius Cathedral, the town hall and the summer palace of bishops in Verkiai. The monumentality of forms and volume, the harmony with surroundings and a special treatment of antique architectural forms are the characteristics of his style.

Mykolas Dluskis (1760–1821) was a Lithuanian painter. From 1777 to 1784, he studied in Warsaw and Vilnius in theology and was ordained as a priest in 1783. From 1788 onwards he was a priest at Vilnius Cathedral visiting Germany and Italy from 1789 to 1792. After 1797 he was an Educational Commission member, and one of the founders of the Vilnius Charity Society. It is interesting to note that the Freemasons were among the clergy including **Canon Nicodemus Puzyna, Ignatius Hovaldas a Prelate and Michael Dluskis**, who mainly were members of the Vilnius Lodge "Good Shepherd". The revival of the old Lithuanian Provincial Grand Lodge in Vilnius in 1816 was led by **Michael Dluskis**, a Lithuanian painter.

Conclusions

The history of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is a history of savagery, beginning with the brutality of Northern Crusades, and of smaller and weaker nations fighting for independence after long periods of occupation from stronger warring neighbours – Sweden, Poland, Germany and Russia. They shared ethnic ties with all of them, which complicated the loyalty patterns of the people and did not save them from “ethnic cleansing” by German and Russian occupying powers.

Even the history of their religious loyalty has not been consistent from the early days of their forced Christianization by the vicious Northern Crusades to altering loyalties between Catholic and Orthodox sects and Bolshevik oppression of religion. It can be no surprise that there is a revival of paganism in Lithuania or that there was a fleeting fantasy with **Cagliostro**.

Freemasonry in these countries should be seen as a reflection of this history. This same pattern of changing procedures is seen in their Masonic history, with changes from the rites of Strict Observance to Zinnendorf to the Swedish Rite and to the Corrected Scottish Rite and including British Freemasonry. Freemasonry has proven its resilience in these countries despite all its violent history.

It is hoped that these countries have now found stability and peace in their independence but stability does not necessarily mean uniformity. Multi-cultural societies can be stable and a variety of Masonic rites can add interest and diversity can strengthen its procedures and practices.