

FREEMASONRY IN THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

Introduction

Interest in Freemasonry in the Scandinavian countries comes from two main sources. First, the widespread influence of the Masonic Swedish Rite and second, they had an interesting history and a complex political time during World War II, which influenced the survival of Freemasonry in Scandinavia.

Scandinavia must be studied as a group of countries because Sweden, Denmark and Norway were politically united for many years. As far back as the year 1030 A.D., Danish power controlled Norway. Then a Swedish King was chosen to rule Norway, 1036, and then in 1380 a King of Denmark became ruler of the sister nations. So it continued until 1814 when Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden and this lasted until June, 1905, when a Swedish Prince was chosen as King Haakon VII. Iceland was a dependency of Denmark until 1918 and Finland was part of the Kingdom of Sweden from the 13th century to 1809. Greenland became a Danish colony in 1814 after being under the rule of Denmark-Norway for centuries.



Sweden

History of Sweden

It is best to begin this paper at the beginning of the 18th Century when Sweden controlled both shores of the Baltic Sea through to the Gulf of Finland and derived extensive tolls from all shipping. It possessed parts of Denmark, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and had one of the most powerful armies in Europe next only to France. In 1701, emboldened by the outbreak of the War of Spanish Succession, which meant that Sweden could expect no help from the Dutch or English fleets, Augustus, King of Poland, Frederick, King of Denmark and Peter the Great of Russia sought to win back territories they saw as historically theirs. Rather than having all shipping directed through Archangel well to the North of Russia, Peter the Great gained access to the Baltic Sea and built St Petersburg to defend the Port, which was constructed there.

This Great Northern War, which ended in 1721, was devastating, as Sweden and Russia fought for control of the Baltic. Harsh conditions, worsening poverty and repeated crop failures undermined support for the war, leading to Sweden's defeat. Finland was a battleground as both armies ravaged the countryside, leading to famine, epidemics, social disruption and the loss of nearly half the population. The border with Russia came to lie roughly where it returned to after World War II and Sweden's status as a European great power was history. Russia was now the leading power in the North. George I, King of England and Hanover, was an opponent of Peter the Great and sided with Sweden, primarily because his interests lay more with Hanoverian than with Britain's interests.

It was in this rather unsettled political and economic background that Freemasonry began in the Scandinavian region.

Sweden's final war with Russia ended in 1814. All of Finland had been ceded to Russia and Sweden reduced to two thirds of its former size.

In the beginning of the 20th Century Sweden became beset by strikes and public disorder as the workers rose against the State. The socialist movement was divided into two opposing groups, the revolutionary communist movement, and the social democratic movement, the latter being the larger of the two. In 1917, the rules of democracy were changed in Sweden and in 1921, women were allowed to vote. But it was not enough and in the 1920s and 1930s, confrontations between employers and employees continued. Many Swedish communists were cooperating with the new Soviet regime, seeking a world revolution. A new, stable government, led by the social democrats, took control in 1932.

Sweden during World War II maintained a policy of neutrality although the Government made a few concessions, and sometimes breached the nation's neutrality in favor of both Germany and the Western Allies. Sweden also became a refuge for anti-fascist and Jewish refugees from all over the region. In 1943, following an order to deport all of Denmark's Jewish population to concentration camps, nearly all of Denmark's 8,000 Jews obtained safety in Sweden, which also became a refuge for Norwegian Jews.

Freemasonry in Sweden

From 1796 by Royal Edict all Swedish Princes have been members of the Craft. A Civil Order was also instituted by the King, Charles XIII, Grand Master, to be conferred on the Princes and no more than thirty others of the tenth Degree of the Rite, which is dominantly Christian.

The Swedish Order of Freemasons had its first lodge established in 1735 and the Grand Lodge was established in 1760. In addition to a Lodge of Research and 63 fraternal societies it consists of the orders and Lodges shown in the following table.

Degrees	Lodges
I to III	43 Lodges
IV to VI	23 Lodges
VII to X	7 Chapters & 1 Steward Lodge

Membership in Sweden is 14,200. In addition there are 1,000 members in Finland in 7 lodges for degrees I-III, 2 lodges for degrees IV-VI, 1 Steward lodge and 1 Grand Chapter for degrees VII-X, and 2 fraternal societies working under the Swedish Order of Freemasons.

It works according to the Swedish Rite and admits male members that must be Christian. In contrast to the working of the majority in international freemasonry it excludes believers in a Supreme Being who are non-Christians. However, a foreign freemason from a recognized obedience of any religion may attend lodges working in the degrees I to VI. Foreign visitors to lodges working in degrees VII and higher must sign at statement assuring that they are Christian. The headquarters of Swedish Masonry is the 17th century "Stamhuset" in central Stockholm, and the house is every bit as impressive as the Grand Lodge in London.



Freemasonry was brought to Sweden by **Count Axel Wrede-Sparre**, a Cavalry Officer who during service in Paris had become a Freemason. After returning to Sweden he brought together some friends who like himself had been made Freemasons abroad. In 1735, he initiated and passed his brother-in-law **Count Carl Gustaf Tessin** in Stockholm. Most of the brethren joining **Wrede-Sparre's** Lodge belonged to the higher nobility. The meetings appear to have ceased at the end of the 1740s.

Count Carl Gustav Tessin was appointed Governor by Gustav III, who was a nephew of **Frederick the Great**. **Tessin** had been Prince Gustav's tutor and had imbibed him with the classical ideas of France, where he had been an Ambassador.¹ At the beginning of the 1750s there were quite a large number of Freemasons in Sweden who had been initiated by **Wrede-Sparre** or abroad. **Count Knut Posse** established the Lodge St. John the Baptist in 1752. **Wrede-Sparre** and most of the brethren in his Lodge joined the Lodge St. John to which he handed over rituals and other documents.



The Lodge St. Jean was called "Mother-Lodge of Sweden" and considered itself entitled to issue warrants to other Lodges in the country. **Count Carl Fredrik Scheffer**, who had been made a Freemason in Paris in 1737, was elected National Grand Master in 1753. During the 1750s, the Lodges opened their doors to members of other classes of society than the nobility. In 1756, **Carl Fredrik Eckleff** together with six brethren formed the Scottish Lodge L'Innocente in Stockholm, working Scottish St. Andrew's degrees.

The next step in the development of Swedish Freemasonry was taken by **Eckleff** in 1759, when he established a Grand Chapter in Stockholm². **Eckleff** who was an employee of the Swedish Foreign Office, held a foreign patent authorizing him to form Lodges. The Grand Lodge of Sweden was established in 1760, and it was recognized as a National Grand Lodge in 1770 by the Grand Lodge of England.



Eckleff established a Freemasonry system on a Christian basis with 9 degrees called the **Swedish Rite**. The moral philosophy of the Swedish rite was further developed by **Duke Karl, later King Karl XIII**, who succeeded **Eckleff** as the Swedish Masonic Leader. By two major ritual revisions in 1780 and 1800 he created a logical Masonic system with ten degrees. This is basically the same system as is used today, though an 11th degree has been added (which is only given to the Grand officers of the Order). Freemasonry in Sweden has continued to develop under leadership of their Grand Masters, all of them belonging to the Royal House for more than 200 years.

The Swedish Rite, different from other constitutions, has a strong spiritual component and requires members to be practicing Christians and adhere firmly to the faith. Until 2000, Lutheran was the State faith. Non-Christian Brothers from other Jurisdictions can visit a Swedish lodge, but are not eligible for membership. Another difference is that unlike the international Masonic emblem of the square and compass, Swedish freemasonry uses the red Maltese cross of the Knights Templar. The degree system is as follows:-

St. John's (Crafts) degrees

- I - Apprentice
- II - Fellow Craft
- III - Master Mason

St. Andrew's (Scottish) degrees

- IV-V- Apprentice-Companion of St. Andrew
- VI - Master of St. Andrew

Chapter (Templar) degrees

- VII - Very Illustrious Brother, Knight of the East
- VIII - Most Illustrious Brother, Knight of the West
- IX - Enlightened Brothers of St. John's Lodge
- X - Very Enlightened Brothers of St. Andrew's Lodge
- XI - Most Enlightened Brother, Knight Commander of the Red Cross.

The 11th degree is an honorary degree given only to the Grand Officers of the Order (and royal princes). Sweden is unique in having a State Order which is given to Freemasons only, the Order of Charles XIII.

¹“*Gustav III of Sweden and the Enlightenment*” H. Arnold Barton

² Grand Lodge of Sweden website

Denmark

History of Denmark

The history of Denmark dates back about 12,000 years, to the end of the last ice age, with the earliest evidence of human habitation. Queen Margrethe II can trace her lineage back to the Viking making the Danish Royal Family the oldest in the world.

Denmark's history has been influenced by its geographical location between the North and Baltic seas. Being between Sweden and Germany meant it was at the center of the struggle for control of the Baltic Sea. Denmark had disputes with Sweden and Norway, and with the Hanseatic League over the duchies of Schleswig (a Danish fief) and Holstein (a German fief).

A major shipping nation, Denmark maintained a number of colonies outside Scandinavia, starting in the 17th century and lasting until the 20th century. Denmark established its own first colony on India's south coast, in 1620. In the Caribbean Denmark started a colony on St Thomas in 1671, St John in 1718, and purchased Saint Croix from France in 1733.

During the Napoleonic Wars, the British fleet attacked Copenhagen in 1801 destroying much of Denmark's navy. Denmark nonetheless managed to remain uninvolved in the Napoleonic Wars until 1807. The British fleet bombarded Copenhagen again that year and then captured the entire Danish fleet so that it couldn't be used by France to invade Britain (France had lost their own fleet at Trafalgar in 1805). By 1809 Denmark could no longer bear the war costs, and Frederick IV made peace. The Treaty of Kiel transferred Norway from Denmark to Sweden.

Denmark remained neutral during World War I, but as its economy was heavily based on exports, German submarine warfare was a serious problem. Denmark had no choice but to sell many of its exports to Germany instead of overseas nations. Commerce suffered great disruption because of the conflict and the ensuing financial instability in Europe. Rationing was instituted, and there were food and fuel shortages.

Denmark declared its neutrality at the beginning of World War II and signed a non-aggression agreement with Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, Germany occupied Denmark in 1940, meeting limited resistance. British forces, however, occupied the Faroe Islands and invaded Iceland in pre-emptive moves to prevent German occupation. Following a plebiscite, Iceland declared its independence on June 17, 1944 and became a republic, dissolving its union with Denmark.

The Nazi occupation of Denmark unfolded in a unique manner. The conditions of occupation started off very leniently and Denmark retained its own government as Germany wanted to make Denmark an exemplar of a model occupied State. During the German occupation, King Christian X became a powerful symbol of national sovereignty. The new coalition government tried to protect the population from Nazi rule through compromise. The Germans allowed the Parliament to remain in session and the police remained under Danish control. However, the Nazi demands eventually became intolerable for the Danish government, so in 1943 it resigned and Germany assumed full control of Denmark. After that point, an armed resistance movement grew against the occupying forces.

Toward the end of the war, Denmark grew increasingly difficult for Germany to control, but the country remained under occupation until near the end of the war in May 1945 when German forces in Denmark, North West Germany, and the Netherlands surrendered to the Allies. On 5 May 1945 British troops liberated Copenhagen. Three days later the war ended.

Throughout the years of its hold on power, the Danish government consistently refused to accept German demands regarding deportation of the Jews and their civil rights remained equal with those of the rest of the population. Denmark succeeded in smuggling most of its Jewish population to Sweden in 1943 when the Nazis threatened deportation.

After the war, with the perceived threat posed by the USSR and the lessons of World War II still fresh in Danish minds, the country abandoned its policy of neutrality. Denmark became a charter-member of the United Nations in 1945 and one of the original members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949.

Freemasonry in Denmark

Freemasonry in Denmark was first established in 1743 and is today represented by a number of Grand Lodges. The oldest and biggest grand lodge is the Danish Order of Freemasons also known as the Grand Lodge of Denmark but this may refer to two rival Masonic bodies based in Copenhagen as follows:-

- **The Danish Order of Freemasons** is the main governing body of regular freemasonry in Denmark, and it can trace its history back to 1743 making it the oldest Masonic organization of Denmark. It is the only Masonic organization in Denmark, which is recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England. It works in accordance to the Swedish Rite. It has today around 100 Lodges and 10,000 members.
- The rival **Grand Lodge of Denmark of Ancient Free & Accepted Masons** was established in 1929 and reconstituted in 2007. It follows the tradition of Continental Freemasonry and works in accordance to the York Rite. Membership is open to all men of any race, nationality and religion, believe in a Supreme Being and are of “good report”,

The first Masonic Lodge in Denmark was opened in Copenhagen, by **Baron G. O. Munnich** on the 11th of November, 1743, under a Charter from the Lodge of the Three Globes in Berlin. In the next year a new Lodge named Zerubbabel was formed by three members separating from the former Lodge. Both of these Lodges formally were warranted by **Lord Byron**, Grand Master of England as Saint Martin’s No. 204 and Zerubbabel Lodge as No. 197 on the English Register. The two Lodges united in 1767 under the name of Zerubbabel of the North Star and worked alternately in Danish and in German.



When a purely Danish Lodge was instituted in 1778, Zerubbabel Lodge confined itself entirely to the use of the German language. In 1749 **Lord Byron** granted a Patent to **Count Danneskiold Laurvig** as Provincial Grand Master of Denmark and Norway. A Lodge had been established at Copenhagen, by the Grand Lodge of Scotland under the name of Le petit Nombre, meaning the little number and in 1703 its Master was elevated by that body to the rank of a Provincial Grand Master.

In 1792 **Prince Charles** became the sole head of the Danish Lodges, and the Grand Lodge of Denmark (The Danish Order of Freemasons) may be considered to have been then established.

He died in 1836, and the Crown Prince, afterward Christian VIII, became the Protector of the Danish Lodges and his son and Successor **Frederick VII**, became Grand Master. It was decreed in 1850 by the Grand Master that the Swedish Rite should be used thenceforward in all Lodges. The Crown in Denmark is well disposed to the Craft, the King being Grand Master.



The Grand lodge of the Danish Order of Freemasons has a very impressive headquarter building in Copenhagen, with a separate hall for each of the 10 degrees. The Danish Masons suffered a lot during World War II when the Nazis took over the building and used it for target practice with machineguns in some halls.

Fortunately, the Masons had been warned in time and all their regalia was hidden in the basement where a section was walled up. The Germans never found it.

Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM arose in 1919. The historical roots are complex, but in Denmark they have been attributed to **Carl William Hansen** (1872–1936) who was a Danish author, Bishop and Occultist. Hansen published “*The Dawn of a New Morning, Lucifer-Hiram, The Return of the World's Master Builder*”, in 1906 under the pseudonym Ben Kadosh. His major interests seem to have been alchemy and astrology.

In 1929 these groups united and the Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM was constituted with the Worshipful Master **Max Müllertz**, a journalist, and Great Secretary **Grunddal Sjallung**, a psychologist. The Constitution is partly borrowed from English Freemasonry. The ritual used was called “The Copenhagen rites”, which borrows from French, English and German sources and is basically identified with York Rite. There were 16 Lodges originally under the Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM. By 1931 they were working the Blue Degrees plus Royal Arch and Mark Mason in strict accordance with the United Grand Lodge of England's basic principles

The Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM is recognized by the Grand Lodge of Sao Paulo, which is recognized by the Grand Lodge of England but UGLE still does not recognize The Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM. There is considerable dispute between the Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM and the Danish Order of Freemasons. The former claiming that they are the only Grand Lodge working under the ancient landmarks as defined by UGLE – the primary issue being the rules restricting the admission of non-Christians.

Norway

History of Norway

The history of human settlement in what is present day Norway goes back at least 11,000 years. The period from 800–1066 saw significant expansion, and is referred to as the Viking age. During this period, Norwegians, as well as Swedes and Danes, traveled abroad on longships, as raiders, explorers, settlers and traders. By the middle of the 11th century, the Norwegian kingdom was firmly established but the Black Death, in 1349, killed perhaps half the population.

From 1536 to 1814 Norway was effectually a tributary to Denmark and entered into an alliance with Napoleon, with the war leading to dire conditions and mass starvation in 1812. In 1814 Denmark–Norway was defeated in the Napoleonic wars and the king was forced to cede Norway to the king of Sweden in the Treaty of Kiel. Sweden and Norway adopted a loose union, in which Norway was permitted to maintain its own Constitution.

The union was peacefully dissolved in 1905 after several years of political unrest when Sweden recognized Norwegian independence. The parliament offered the throne to Prince Carl of Denmark, who accepted it after a referendum confirmed the monarchy and rejected a republican form of government. On November 18 he ascended the throne under the Norwegian name of Haakon VII.

Norway remained neutral during World War I, but 829 Norwegian ships were sunk during the war at sea, with the loss of some 2,000 sailors. Despite their neutrality, the Norwegian government went to considerable lengths to accommodate Britain, on account of both British pressure and an anti-German sentiment. These accommodations came in the form of the very large Norwegian merchant fleet, which delivered essential supplies to Britain, which in return supplied Norway with vital coal. This led to Norway occasionally being called The Neutral Ally.

As World War II erupted, Norway insisted on remaining neutral. In a surprise dawn attack in 1940, German forces attacked Oslo and the major Norwegian ports. **King Haakon**, his government and the parliament escaped the city with much of the treasury, although Oslo itself surrendered. The Norwegian armed forces, together with allied British, French and Polish forces, kept up an organized military resistance for two months but had to surrender.

King Haakon and his government fled in exile to Britain and the continued existence of a legitimate Norwegian government gave the exiles considerable room for action. The worldwide operations of the large Norwegian merchant fleet were a material aid to the Allies and the Norwegian merchant ships that were in Allied waters at the time of invasion were requisitioned by the exiled Norwegian Government in London. The main duties were those of war transports, supply services etc. including the supply of food, ammunition and reinforcements to the front lines, besides evacuating the wounded. This force had 1,081 ships with 33,000 sailors. 570 ships were lost, along with 3,734 sailors. By the end of the war, Norwegian naval vessels were also fighting alongside the British. Norway.

The Norwegian national socialist politician Vidkun Quisling attempted a coup, but was met with such strong resistance from the people that Nazi Germany deposed him within a week and installed a bureaucratic administration. A cabinet was formed with most ministers recruited among members of Quisling's Nazi party, plus some independent collaborators. Quisling's name has come to mean "traitor" in several languages. Reminiscent of the Great Northern War, six thousand young Norwegians joined German Waffen-SS divisions to fight against the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front.

The Norwegian resistance movement began on a small scale, but gained in strength, especially after the installation of Quisling's puppet government and its attempt to enforce the native brand of fascism, and to enroll labor, teachers and officials in its organizations. The resistance became very active towards the end of the war supported by the British SOE.

After the liberation, active members of the National Socialist party and those who had collaborated with the enemy were prosecuted and sentenced. Twenty-five Norwegians, including Quisling, were executed for treason and/or war crimes, and 12 Germans were executed for war crimes. Many collaborating women suffered recriminations after the war, as did their children from Nazi soldiers. Many children were sent to homes where they had to suffer physical and sexual abuse, some have been used as test subjects for medical experiments.

In 1949 Norway became a member of NATO but, in 1994, rejected joining the European Union, though it chose to remain associated with it through being part of the wider European Economic Area. Norway has been a close ally of the United States. Large reserves of petroleum and natural gas were discovered in the 1960s, which led to a continuing boom in the economy. Whaling was once an important industry and commercial fishing continues to be so. Norway has advanced in its standard of living and, according to United Nations, has the highest standard of living in the world.

Freemasonry in Norway



The **Norwegian Order of Freemasons** is the Masonic Grand Lodge in Norway and it has followed the Swedish Rite since 1818. During the union of Sweden-Norway, the Swedish-Norwegian king was Grand Master of the Order. The sovereign Grand Lodge of Norway was consecrated in 1891. The first Norwegian Lodge, Saint Olaus, was founded on the 24th. June 1749. It was founded by **Count Christian Conrad Danneskiold-Laurvig**, probably with the Danish king **Frederick V of Denmark** present at the inauguration ceremony.

The lodge is an offshoot of the Danish lodge St. Martin which existed in Copenhagen from 1743 to 1767. In 1780 the lodge changed its name to Saint Olaus to the white leopard and is still working. The lodge received its directives from Danish Freemasonry from 1749 to 1818.

In 1818, due to the union between Norway and Sweden, the lodge St. Olaus to the white leopard became a member of The Swedish Order of Freemasons. The lodge was one of the six founding members of the Norwegian Order of Freemasons.

On its foundations in 1749, St Olaus was a pure lodge of St. John, a blue lodge practicing the Craft degrees. In 1752 the lodge also gradually began to practice the high degrees of Rite of Strict Observance.

The rectified rite was introduced in Denmark and Norway in 1782. It was influenced by French Freemasonry and was less concerned with Christian institutions. Among other things, it removed the legend about the Knights Templar from the teachings.

As of 2009, the Order has 20,000 members and in addition to a research Lodge it consists of the Lodges and Chapters shown in the following table. The order is headquartered in Oslo, with a large building next to the Norwegian Parliament.

Degrees	Lodges
I to III	63 Lodges
IV to VI	19 Lodges
VII to X	3 Chapters & 7 Steward Lodge

Norway was invaded and occupied by Germany early in 1940. The Masonic headquarters were used as a hotel for German officers, and the Germans actually added to the building so it was better after the war than before. The public was invited to view Masonic records, especially correspondence with the Grand Lodge of England. On September 20, 1940, the Nazi authorities ordered the Masonic fraternity dissolved and the Temple emptied. Masonic buildings in the northern part of the country were destroyed, and the Temple in the capital of Oslo was made the headquarters for the collaborator Quisling's personal guards.³

Documents held in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum pertaining to the persecution of the Freemasons include materials relating to the history of Norway concerning the Norwegian Freemasons. e.g., "Bericht über die Freimaurerei in Norwegen, 22 September 1942.

Finland

History of Finland

The land area that now makes up Finland was settled immediately after the Ice Age, beginning from around 8,500 BCE. Most of the region was part of the Kingdom of Sweden from the 13th century to 1809, when it was ceded to the Russian Empire, becoming the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. The Lutheran religion dominated. Finnish nationalism emerged, focused on Finnish cultural traditions, including music and especially its highly distinctive language.

During the Finnish War between Sweden and Russia, Finland was again conquered by the armies of Tsar Alexander I. Following the Swedish defeat in the war and the signing of the Treaty of Fredrikshamn in 1809, Finland remained a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire until the end of 1917, with the Czar as Grand Duke.

³ "Bigotry and the Murder of Freemasonry" by Paul M. Bessel

In 1917, Finland declared independence. A civil war between the Finnish Red Guards and the White Guard ensued a few months later with the "Whites" gaining the upper hand. Relations with the West, especially Sweden and Britain, were strong but tensions remained with the Soviet Union.

In 1939 Nazi-Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, where Finland and the Baltic states were given to the Soviet "sphere of influence". The Soviet Union sent a request to Finland for a military base in Finland, but the Finns refused to give any land areas or military bases for the usage of the Red Army. This caused the Soviet Union to start a military invasion against Finland. Soviet leaders predicted that Finland would be conquered in a couple of weeks. However, even though the Red Army had huge superiority in men, tanks, guns and airplanes, the Finns were able to defend their country for about 3.5 months and still avoid invasion but had to cede most of Karelia to the USSR

The second war, the Continuation War of 1941–1944, with considerable support from Nazi Germany resulting in a swift invasion of neighboring areas of the Soviet Union, eventually led to the loss of Finland's only ice-free winter harbor Petsamo. The Continuation War was, in accordance with the armistice conditions, immediately followed by the Lapland War of 1944–1945, when Finland fought the Germans to force them to withdraw from northern Finland back into Norway (then under German occupation).

Finland managed to defend its democracy, contrary to most other countries within the Soviet sphere of influence, and suffered comparably limited losses in terms of civilian lives and property. It was, however, punished harsher than other German co-belligerents and allies, having to pay large reparations and resettle an eighth of its population after having lost an eighth of the territory including one of its industrial heartlands and the second-largest city of Viipuri.

The Finnish government did not participate in the systematic killing of Jews, although the country remained an ally of Germany until 1944. In total, eight German Jewish refugees were handed over to the German authorities. During and in between the wars, approximately 80,000 Finnish war-children were evacuated abroad. Most of the children were sent back by 1948, but 15–20% remained abroad.

Freemasonry in Finland

In the early eighteenth century Finland was part of Sweden and the first lodge in Finland, St. Augustin, was set up in 1756. It began its work two years later in Turku.

Freemasonry was suppressed, when, in 1822, Czar Alexander I issued a decree against all secret organizations. Freemasonry ceased to exist in Finland until after independence in 1917. The first lodge, Suomi Lodge No. 1, stemmed from connections with the Finns who had immigrated to the United States and it was consecrated in 1922 in Helsinki under the patronage of the Grand Lodge of New York.

The Grand Lodge of Finland was founded in 1924 is the largest union of Finnish Freemasons and forms the basis of Freemasonry in Finland. During World War II Masonic activities were suspended for a few years by the Grand Lodge but work was continued after the war from 1945 onwards. At the end of 1993 there were 4,960 members under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Finland, which enjoys mutual recognition with over one hundred other Grand Lodges all over the world. The part of Finnish Freemasonry which follows the Swedish Rite was revived in 1923. Nowadays there are over a thousand members in Finland under the jurisdiction of the Swedish Grand Lodge, most of them Finns who speak Swedish as their mother tongue.

Finland is predominantly a Lutheran country and ministerial conferences of the Finnish Lutheran Church have considered precluding Church employees from membership of Masonic organizations but in the Swedish sister church half the bishops have been Freemasons.

Iceland

History of Iceland

Iceland is a European island country in the North Atlantic Ocean on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. It has a population of about 320,000 and a total area of 103,000 km². The settlement of Iceland began in AD 874 when the chieftain Ingólfur Arnarson became the first permanent Norse settler on the island. Others had visited the island earlier and stayed over winter.

From 1262 to 1918 Iceland was part of the Norwegian and later the Danish monarchies. In 1994, Iceland became party to the European Economic Area, which made it possible for the economy to diversify into economic and financial services.

In 1814, following the Napoleonic Wars, Denmark-Norway was broken up into two separate kingdoms via the Treaty of Kiel. Iceland, however, remained a Danish dependency. An Icelandic independence movement arose in the 1850s under the leadership of Jón Sigurðsson. In 1874, Denmark granted Iceland a constitution and limited home rule, which was expanded in 1904. The Danish-Icelandic Act of Union, an agreement with Denmark signed on 1 December 1918 recognized Iceland as a fully sovereign State.

During World War II, Iceland joined Denmark in asserting neutrality. After the German occupation of Denmark on 9 April 1940, the British Armed Forces occupied Iceland, violating the country's declared neutrality.

In 1941, the occupation of Iceland was taken over by the United States so that Britain could use its troops elsewhere. Iceland formally became a republic on 17 June 1944, with Sveinn Björnsson as the first President.

Freemasonry in Iceland

Freemasonry in Iceland began in 1913 when a "society of brothers", Edda, was established, in Reykjavik. Then, in 1918 Edda became a lodge of instruction. A year later, on the 6th of January 1919, it became a fully warranted lodge. Since then, a total of twelve warranted lodges and six lodges of instruction have been established.

Icelandic Freemasonry was under the jurisdiction of the The National Grand Lodge of Denmark until 1951 when the Danish Grand Master constituted the Grand Lodge of Iceland as a sovereign Order which now has a total membership of 3,379. Icelandic Freemasonry operates according to the Swedish Rite

Greenland

History of Greenland

Greenland became a Danish colony in 1814 after being under the rule of Denmark-Norway for centuries. With the Constitution of Denmark of 1953, Greenland became a part of the Kingdom of Denmark in a relationship known as "Commonwealth of the Realm".

In 1979 Denmark granted home rule to Greenland, and in 2008 Greenland voted to transfer more power from the Danish royal government to the local Greenlandic government

Freemasonry in Greenland



Robert Peary (1856-1920) was commissioned in the US Navy as a civil engineer in 1881 and led several explorations to Greenland from 1886 to 1909. He outlined the northern limits of the Greenland Archipelago in 1898. In 1908 he embarked on his famous trip on which he arrived at the North Pole on April 6, 1909 with several other companions. He was given the rank of Rear Admiral in 1911. He was a member of Kane Lodge No. 454, New York City. He presented to the Lodge the Masonic Flag that was raised in 1895, at Independence Bay, Greenland. There is no evidence today of Masonic activity in Greenland.

A Norwegian Incident

The recent mass murder incident in Norway carried out by a Freemason, Anders Behring Breivik, a member St. Olaus Tre Søliler Lodge No. 8 in Oslo, focused world attention. He was characterized by analysts as being a right-wing extremist with a hatred of Islam, a Christian fundamentalist with a deep hatred of multiculturalism, of the left and of Muslims and attempting the creation of a Norwegian far-right nationalist party, reminiscent of the Nazis of Germany.

It would at least appear that his Oslo Lodge was insufficiently careful when checking his credentials to become a member and, although he is reputed to have only attended four lodge meetings, failed to ensure that he understood some of the fundamental tenets of Freemasonry. But his membership of the Craft does raise the question - Does the Swedish Rite by admitting only Christians as members implicitly condone anti-Islamic prejudice? His immediate ejection from the Craft raises a further question. Was he expelled because of the terrorist incident itself or because he showed that he did not respect the dignity of the Muslim religionists against which his act was directed? When made aware of Breivik's Craft membership, Grand Master of the Norwegian Order of Freemasons, **Ivar A. Skaar**, issued an edict immediately excluding him from the fraternity:-

“The expel (sic) reflects that the acts he is accused of having carried out, and the values that appear to have motivated them, are completely incompatible with what we stand for as an Order. We build our activity on Christian and humanistic values and want our members to contribute to the promotion of charity, peace and goodness among all people”⁴.

Conclusion

The Scandinavian countries and our Scandinavian brethren faced many difficulties during World War II. In summary those occupied and the fate of Freemasonry is listed in the following table.

Country	Occupation	Freemasonry
Sweden	Neutral (helped Britain mainly)	Continued
Norway	Occupied by Germany - Government-in-exile	Dissolved by Nazis
Denmark	Occupied by Germany - retained Government	Dissolved by Nazis
Finland	Fought against Russia then against Germany	Voluntarily suspended
Iceland	Occupied by Britain	Continued

Sweden had a long-standing attitude of neutrality but co-operated by allowing German troops to use the rail system to fight against Russia, Sweden's traditional enemy since the time of Peter the Great. Sweden also assisted Britain's allies with military intelligence and helped to train soldiers made up of refugees from Denmark and Norway, to be used in the liberation of their home countries.

⁴ Ivar A. Skar (23 July 2011). "The Norwegian Order of Freemasons expressing compassion and care". Norwegian Order of Freemasons

The activities of the resistance movements in Norway involved armed resistance, in the form of sabotage, commando raids, assassinations and other special operations during the occupation but due to the unusually lenient terms given to Danish people by the Nazi occupation authority, the movement was slower to develop effective tactics. However, by 1943, many Danes were involved in underground activities ranging from producing illegal publications to spying and sabotage.

In contrast to France, all countries defied German orders to export Jews to camps in Germany and many Scandinavian Jews found refuge in Sweden despite the dominant presence of Christianity in Sweden and in contrast to other multi-cultural countries. The attitude of the German invaders was well-known. Hitler is reported to have said "*Ourselves or the Freemasons or the Church — there is room for one of the three and no more... We are the strongest of the three and shall get rid of the other two.*"⁵

In 1931 Nazi party officials were given a "*Guide and Instructional Letter*" that stated, "*The natural hostility of the peasant against the Jews, and his hostility against the Freemason as a servant of the Jew, must be worked up to a frenzy.*"

In consequence the position of Freemasonry in each country reflected the extent of German influence but was able to be re-established quickly after the war ended partly due to the historical adhesion of the Scandinavian countries to the Swedish Rite which continued activities in Sweden during the war years.

The Swedish Rite while not the only rite in these countries is nevertheless dominant and the Grand Lodges adopting this rite are fully recognized despite their rule which accepts only Christians as members. Yet the rival Grand Lodge of Denmark AFAM, which admits men of all monotheistic religions and otherwise adheres strictly to the rules established by UGLE, is not widely recognized.

If Freemasonry teaches the dignity of man then it must also mean to treat his religion with dignity even though you may not share its tenets – just his faith in a Supreme Being. If Freemasonry rejects potential members on the grounds of their religion does this mean that they do not fully respect his dignity as a man?

The position of the Swedish Rite is that Freemasonry came to Sweden from Christian lodges in France. At that time, Christianity was the compulsory state religion of Sweden, and basically there were no non-Christians in the country. Up until the 1960s Sweden was 99% Christian. The Swedish system was designed around the Christian faith. The Craft degrees are still compatible with international systems.

Masonic Jurisdictions which choose to restrict their membership to Christians must be careful to ensure that people of other religions are treated with dignity. Certainly the treatment of Jews during World War II showed admirable respect but I hope that the rather extreme incident in Norway continues to underline this requirement.

The world-wide Masonic brotherhood is not uniform in its expression of “the ancient landmarks” however these may be defined. However, that there is no distinction on the basis of race or religion is usually a fundamental inclusion. Despite this, a number of Masonic jurisdictions choose not to abide by the landmarks we know. Some, like those who adhere to the Swedish Rite, do not admit persons of non-Christian religions. The Grand Orient of France admits atheists and do not require the Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL) for ritual ceremonies. We recognize both “Caucasian” and “Afro-American” Grand Lodges in USA despite their segregation on partly racial lines.

When I, as author, suggest that our acceptance of these anomalies shows our tolerance and charity, I have to ask myself if I am being hypocritical. Yet this interim tolerance is necessary if we are to continue to march towards our ideal of a world-wide Masonic brotherhood in which these landmarks are held sacrosanct.

⁵ “*Hitler Speaks*”, Hermann Rauschning. Andover: Chapel River Press, 1939; *Gespräche mit Hitler*, Paris, 1939