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THE
BROTHERHOOD

*The Secret World of
the Freemasons*

GRANADA

London Toronto Sydney New York

Standards have been falling for twenty or thirty years. It is too easy to enter the Craft, so many men of dubious morals have joined. The secrecy and power attract such people, and when they come the decent leave. The numbers of people who would never have been considered for membership in the fifties are getting larger all the time. If only five per cent of Freemasons use - *abuse* - the Craft for selfish or corrupt ends it means there are 25,000 of them. The figure is much closer to twelve or thirteen per cent now.'

It transpired that Christopher was one of a small and unpopular group within Masonry who some time in the early seventies had decided that either they had to get out of the Brotherhood or they had to do something 'to stop the rot' which the blinkered officers of Great Queen Street refused to admit was there. His reason for talking to me was to assure me that the Brotherhood was an essentially good body of men devoted to all that was best in the British social system and which promoted brotherly love and contributed to the wellbeing of the country and to the relief of suffering. He wanted this put firmly across to the public, and his group wanted pressure brought to bear on those in positions of responsibility within the Brotherhood to put Freemasonry's house in order - to institute proper policing, to close down Lodges used for shady dealings and to root out corrupt brethren and expel them. The group - it had no name - also wanted the whole business of masonic secrecy looked into by Grand Lodge, most of them believing that secrecy was more harmful than helpful to Masonry.

Christopher explained that Masonry's nationwide organization of men from most walks of life provided one of the most efficient private intelligence networks imaginable. Private information on anybody in the country could normally be accessed very rapidly through endless permutations of masonic contacts - police, magistrates, solicitors, bank managers, Post Office staff ('very useful in supplying

copies of a man's mail'), doctors, government employees, bosses of firms and nationalized industries etc., etc. A dossier of personal data could be built up on anybody very quickly. When the major facts of an individual's life were known, areas of vulnerability would become apparent. Perhaps he is in financial difficulties; perhaps he has some social vice - if married he might 'retain a mistress' or have a proclivity for visiting prostitutes; perhaps there is something in his past he wishes keep buried, some guilty secret, a criminal offence (easily obtainable through Freemason police of doubtful virtue), or other blemish on his character: all these and more could be discovered via the wide-ranging masonic network of 600,000 contacts, a great many of whom were disposed to do favours for one another because that had been their prime motive for joining. Even decent Masons could often be 'conned' into providing information on the basis that 'Brother Smith needs this to help the person involved'.^{*} The adversary would even sometimes be described as a fellow Mason to the Brother from whom information was sought - perhaps someone with access to his bank manager or employer. The 'good' Mason would not go to the lengths of checking with Freemasons Hall whether or not this was so. If the 'target' was presented as a Brother in distress by a fellow Mason, especially a fellow Lodge member, that would be enough for any upright member of the Craft.*

Sometimes this information-gathering process - often

^{*}I discovered from other sources that this system has been long established within Masonry for the 'legitimate' purpose of bringing succour to a distressed Brother Mason or to the family of a departed Mason. It is common for details of a Freemason's debts, for instance, to be passed to his Lodge by his masonic bank manager. This 'invasion of privacy' is for no more sinister reason than for his brethren to club together and pay off his debts. This occurs most often after the death of a Mason, but by no means always. And this, apparently, is just one example of the many methods by which Freemasons obtain information *about each other* for genuine purposes.

involving a long chain of masonic contacts all over the country and possibly abroad - would be unnecessary. Enough would be known in advance about the adversary to initiate any desired action against him.

I asked how this 'action' might be taken.

'Solicitors are very good at it,' said Christopher. 'Get your man involved in something legal - it need not be serious - and you have him.' Solicitors, I was told, are 'past masters' at causing endless delays, generating useless paperwork, ignoring instructions, running up immense bills, misleading clients into taking decisions damaging to themselves.

Masonic police can harass, arrest on false charges, and plant evidence. 'A businessman in a small community or a person in public office arrested for dealing in child pornography, for indecent exposure, or for trafficking in drugs is at the end of the line,' said Christopher. 'He will never work again. Some people have committed suicide after experiences of that kind.'

Masons can bring about the situation where credit companies and banks withdraw credit facilities from individual clients and tradesmen, said my informant. Banks can foreclose. People who rely on the telephone for their work can be cut off for long periods. Masonic employees of local authorities can arrange for a person's drains to be inspected and extensive damage to be reported, thus burdening the person with huge repair bills; workmen carrying out the job can 'find' - in reality *cause* - further damage. Again with regard to legal matters, a fair hearing is hard to get when a man in ordinary circumstances is in financial difficulties. If he is trying to fight a group of unprincipled Freemasons skilled in using the 'network' it will be impossible because masonic Department of Health and Social Security and Law Society officials (see pp 189-90) can delay applications for Legal Aid endlessly.

'Employers, if they are Freemasons or not, can be given private information about a man who has made himself an enemy of Masonry. At worst he will be dismissed (if the information is true) or consistently passed over for promotion.'

Christopher added, 'Masonic doctors can also be used. But for some reason doctors seem to be the least corruptible men. There are only two occurrences of false medical certificates issued by company doctors to ruin the chances of an individual getting a particular job which I know about. It's not a problem that need greatly worry us like the rest.'

He continued for about half an hour to list examples of the ways in which corrupt members of the Brotherhood could defeat opposition, repeating every few minutes that these kinds of circumstances involved a minority of the brethren and that most would be utterly appalled at even the suggestion that such things were happening, let alone countenance them. That they were happening at all reflected the deterioration of the Craft inasmuch as its entry requirements were no longer stringent enough. Those in power in Freemasons Hall knew something of what went on, but they felt defeated by it and preferred to look the other way rather than take steps to eradicate it. If Christopher and his group failed to force the issue into the open, he said, the organization would become so morally polluted that it would simply cease to exist. But he was not solely concerned with the Brotherhood. It was the victims of those who used Masonry as a source of personal power who had to be helped as well.

'Only the fighters have any hope of beating the system once it's at work against them,' he told me. 'Most people, fighters or not, are beaten in the end, though. It's . . . you see, I . . . you finish up not knowing who you can trust. You can get no help because your story sounds so paranoid

that you are thought a crank, one of those nuts who think the whole world is a conspiracy against *them*. It is a strange phenomenon. By setting up a situation that most people will think of as fantasy, these people can poison every part of a person's life. If they give in they go under. If they don't give in it's only putting off the day because if they fight, so much unhappiness will be brought to the people around them that there will likely come a time when even their families turn against them out of desperation. When that happens and they are without friends wherever they look, they become easy meat. The newspapers will not touch them.

'There is no defence against an evil which only the victims and the perpetrators know exists.'