

Dirk Niemeyer

The Grand Lodge of Prussia (GLPr) and the "no-politics clause" in the Weimar Republic and the early Third Reich

1. Introduction

The Weimar Republic was founded as the first democracy on German soil, situated between the two World Wars, in both of which Germany fatally shaped world history. The reasons for the state's failure and the subsequent rise to power by National Socialists can be found in the peculiar circumstances of Prussian- German history (Schulze 1994, 425). The conditions under which democracy developed doubtlessly possessed an enormous potential for conflict. From the point of view of large parts of the population, the defeat in World War I, the Versailles Treaty, and hence burdens which these events unavoidably brought with them cast a dark shadow over the young republic. The republic inevitably failed to step out of this shadow. The major role in its failure is attributed to the bourgeoisie and its lack of support of the republic, especially in its final years (Winkler 1993, 609). Therefore, attitudes and developments within the German bourgeoisie at this time came into the focus of scientific interest, especially with the introduction of research into the history of the bourgeoisie in Germany at the beginning of the 1980s (Wehler 2000, 85). Results always depended on the authors' viewpoint and their definition of bourgeoisie (Schäfer 2009, 204). However, also within the social formation 'bourgeoisie', it is possible to identify numerous classifications according to political orientation, educational level, and social and cultural norms. Thus, what is important is a differentiated look at the composition of the respective urban bourgeoisie in one's local environment (Schulz 2005, 83). The arrangement of living environments in a certain locality can best be understood by looking at surveys on organized associations. Freemasons' lodges belonged to the most traditional organisations dealing with civic issues. At that time, members of freemasonry were primarily men entrenched in this bourgeoisie, and who, as civil servants, merchants and other prosperous citizens, had held a secured status in the German Empire (Melzer 2009, 21). They kept their distance to lower classes, so that people belonging to the petty bourgeoisie rarely gained admission to lodges. Freemasonry was primarily a Protestant urban middle-class affair, with a large number of members who sympathized with the National Socialist party and voted for it (Schäfer 2009, 208). Hence, it was of great importance for the party that it was not only accepted in the rural environments of whose support they felt secure anyway, but also in urban bourgeois organisations (Schäfer 2009, 208–10) like the lodges.

The abundance of sources which Masonic archives offer now, allows insight into a fascinating development which these organisations went through during conflicts with the fascist rulers and the following adaptation to them (Reinalter 2009, 11). How they reacted to the system's transformations from 1918 to 1933 (Schulz 2005, 89), whether they showed a lack of civil courage [1] (Kocka 2000, 93), and whether they proved to be politically inept are issues which are the main emphasis of this discussion.

2. Bourgeois Homeland: Lodges and State in the German Empire

The *Große Loge von Preußen* (Grand Lodge of Prussia – GLPr) had nearly 8.000 members at the end of World War I. Together with the *Große Nationalmutterloge zu den 3 Weltkugeln* (Grand National Mother Lodge; about 16.000 members) and the *Große Landesloge* (National Grand Lodge; about 15.000), it constituted the Old Prussian faction (Hoffmann 2000a, 350). These lodges were close to the House of Hohenzollern, rejected Ancient Charges and avowed

themselves to Christianity. Additionally, there were six Humanitarian Grand Lodges. They acknowledged the Ancient Charges and felt close to English freemasonry. Contrary to the Old Prussian Grand Lodges, they did not work in higher degrees. Despite these differences, the two factions recognized each other and constituted regular freemasonry in Germany.

The GLPr was more tolerant of religious freedom than other Old Prussian Grand Lodges, which made it an exception to the rule (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 66). Together with the *Große Loge von Sachsen* (Grand Lodge of Saxonia), a Humanitarian Lodge, it represented the liberal centre of the German Grand Lodge landscape (Hoffmann 2000a, 137). The GLPr was the only Old Prussian Grand Lodge which allowed its subsidiaries to admit Jews as members in the *Johannisgarde*, since 1872 (Howe 1982, 26). It was also possible for Jewish members to obtain an honorary membership, but the admission into the "*Innere Oriente*" was still denied to them.

German Grand Lodges were supposed to practice abstinence from daily political life, and freemasonry itself should be an apolitical institution (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 661). However, the Old Prussian freemasonry met this claim of being apolitical only at the level of everyday politics. Neither Old Prussian nor English lodges discussed daily politics. Nonetheless, the Old Prussian lodges served the state due to their general political attitude.

Because of their long and ongoing relationship with the Protestant-Prussian Royal House, they were to a certain degree obliged to behave and act as monarchists and patriots. This relationship was best seen in 1840 when the Prince, future King of Prussia, and German Emperor Frederick III was admitted as a member to all three Old Prussian Grand Lodges (Grosse 1909, 93). In line with that, mainly men with a nationalistic and conservative political attitude, who identified themselves with the state-supportive course of the lodges felt attracted to become members (Neuberger 2001, 31). On the one hand, state power exercised control, but, on the other hand, it also promised protection and privileges (Neuberger 2001, 54–6). The latter was the crucial reason why Old Prussian freemasonry developed into a 'system maintaining' force in the 19th century. Lodge members being part of a predominantly Protestant (Hoffmann 2000b, 211) and conservative middle class (Hoffmann, 2000a, 55), sympathized with the monarchy, German world domination plans, and with the patriotic pathos of the Wilhelmine Era. Political considerations gained importance during the course of the 19th century, so that sometimes loyalty to the throne was considered more important than loyalty amongst the members of the brotherhood [2] (Reinalter 2002a, 118).

When William II was crowned in 1888, it was a Hohenzoller who ascended the throne, but he never joined the freemasons (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 400). German freemasons did not always sympathize with him (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 222). Nevertheless, the relationship between lodge and dynasty was kept alive by Prince Frederick Leopold, who took over the patronage of Prussian freemasonry in 1894 (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 400). Despite the fact that the emperor disliked the lodges (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 400), the lodge members nonetheless belonged to his loyal subjects. They made toasts to the health of the Emperor (Schultz 1932, 22–3), and the Emperor himself donated his paintings to them during several lodge anniversary celebrations (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 400).

But along with the end of the German Empire, five hundred years of Hohenzollern monarchy were over as well. World War I was also marked by nationalist enthusiasm among German freemasons [3]. The initial demand for unconditional support of the home country during the war was followed by a severance of relations with Italian and French freemasonry in 1915 (Horneffer 1915, 32–4). They adjusted their conduct in order to execute a political mission and to achieve national goals (Neuberger 2001, 19).

Thus, the end of the war, the subsequent peace negotiations, and especially their results, brought about great disillusionment for large parts of German freemasonry: the Empire had lost over an eighth of its territory and one tenth of its population. Losses in the agricultural

sector and mining industry were even bigger. In addition, Germany lost all of its colonies. The requirements which limited the German army to 100.000 men and eliminated certain types of weaponry from the German arsenal came as a hard blow for German self-perception. The peace treaty was preceded by Article 231. In order to ensure reparation payments, the article declared that Germany and its Allies had the sole responsibility for the war (Kolb 2002, 32). However, a large part of the German population perceived this differently. They saw it as a means by which the Allies, particularly France, wanted to humiliate the losing countries, and above all, Germany.

Doubtlessly, this meant a heavy burden for the Weimar Republic (Wirsching 2000, 1). For many citizens the end of the Empire also meant the end of a glorious era, whereas the Weimar Republic was now perceived as the result of a disgraceful defeat. The unresolved question of guilt, arms restrictions, and much narrower borders of the Weimar Republic in comparison to the Empire (Feldenkirchen 1998, 2), were all factors which prevented the emergence of a sense of optimism in the first German democracy. Large parts of the nationalist-monarchist bourgeoisie even distanced themselves from the new state (Tenfelde 1994, 320).

Despite, or perhaps because of this, German lodges didn't develop independently from socio-political trends of this eventful time, at the beginning of which an extraordinary politicization of Germans (Fenske 1994, 163) took place. In fact, they were caught in a political crossfire all the way up until their prohibition by the NS-government in 1935.

3. The GLPr and the Challenge to be *Völkisch*: Between Resistance and Adaptation

The interplay between the *völkisch* challenge and the political-cultural mediatory function [4](Bösch 2002, 11) would turn out to be of enormous importance for the GLPr and all other German lodges. Already during World War I, there were rumours in Germany, saying that Jews and freemasons had conspired towards the outbreak of the war (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 23–6). They reduced the explanation for the military defeat to conspiracy (Reinalter 2002b, 167) by political activity (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 25).

These attacks met a lack of understanding among the affected, especially because they had also sacrificed life and limb for the fatherland in World War I, or lost family members in the battle [5].

3.1. On the *Völkisch* Course

By permitting Jews to attain membership, the GLPr represented an Old Prussian exception at the beginning of the Weimar Republic. However, even here *völkisch* tones were increasing, having gained weight through cartoons, circulars and by-laws. The way certain demands were put forward depended on the political orientation of the bourgeoisie in respective cities, but also on the extent to which its political character was reflected in the composition of the local lodge.

Even before German freemasonry recorded its highest membership numbers, in 1925, the GLPr had abandoned its liberal character and *völkisch*-orientated forces obtained a majority. This paradigm shift can best be understood by focussing on two interrelated issues, namely the attitude towards other forms of freemasonry and the attitude towards Judaism (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005, 83).

Their concession to adhere to the position of Humanitarian Lodges (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 180), which had allowed Jews to hold membership, had ignited many heated debates in these times. The issue concerning the Jews [*Judenfrage*] was a topic of intensive internal debates, especially in the *Settegaststreit* [6], but also at the turn of the 20th century [7]. Lastly, the

status quo was upheld until the issue was brought up again in the years of the Weimar Republic as a result of an increased anti-Semitic agitation (Jochmann 1988, 123). Already during the spring negotiations in 1922 and 1923, lodges and their members tried to push through a statutory change, which would have meant a complete exclusion of Jews (GStA PK, Fml, 5.1.5, No. 2640). However, the amendment was not debated on the floor (GStA PK, Fml, 5.1.5, No. 2640). While Jews already were not admitted in many lodges, the number of those in favour of the statutory change was constantly rising (GStA PK, Fml, 5.1.5, No. 2640).

One Munich lodge was especially vocal in demanding the amendment. At the spring conference of 1924, this lodge brought on the agenda the proposal to deny membership to Jewish applicants in the future, supported by a fourteen-page pamphlet with the title *Völkische Freimaurerei*, written and composed by a brother called Johannes Bühler. After having presented his basic thoughts on the issue, he attempted to suppress every doubt about the political correctness of his proposal. The proposal included a demand that German heritage of membership seekers must be traceable back to their grandparents [8]. To those who thought that “the danger of accepting elements of different blood had always been present, since even the blood of grand-grandsons could suddenly show signs of foreign ancestry”, Bühler responded that “one could never eliminate all of the dangerous bacteria and germs anyway, but that didn't render all of the hygiene and antiseptics useless” [9] (Bühler 1924, 11).

Then, the lodges *Scharnhorst zum deutschen Glauben* (Hanover) and *Georg zur gekrönten Säule* (Clausthal Zellerfeld) had already shown their support (Endler and Schwarze 1994, 172). Afterwards, more than three quarters of all lodges declared to be in agreement with the Munich lodge (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2640), whose proposal was guided by a *völkisch* train of thought [*völkische Gedankengänge*]. From there onwards, statutes allowed only German men of Christian descent to seek and gain membership (Luckas 1996a, 52).

The possibility to leave the Grand Lodge as a consequence of the resolution was left open to other and private lodges. In the aftermath of this change, the grand-archivist and grand-reporter August Horneffer was able to ascertain that not a single lodge had left (Luckas 1996a, 51) and even noticed a new momentum within the lodges (Luckas 1996a, 51).

Like very few others, he promoted this attitude because he worked tirelessly for the brotherhood (Appel 1995, 18). Horneffer, who had mainly worked on Latin and Greek translations and performed research about Friedrich Nietzsche up to then (BArch, RKK, Horneffer, August), moved from Munich to Berlin in 1923 in order to take the position of the grand-archivist and grand-reporter of the GLPr (Horneffer 1957, 122).

He had been initiated in the freemason's lodge “*Zum aufgehenden Licht an der Isar*” in Munich in 1911, which belonged to the “*Grosse Mutterloge des Eklektischen Freimaurerbundes*” in Frankfurt/Main (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 402). In his memoirs about freemasonry he declared to have moved towards the right-wing, which was the reason why he joined the GLPr (Horneffer 1957, 134), having been a member of the German Democratic Party between 1921 and 1923 [10]. As the grand-reporter of the GLPr, he was decisively engaged in the publication of the Grand Lodge periodical *Am rauhen Stein*. This periodical was the primary place where texts with racist agenda were being published on the eve of National Socialists coming to power (Fenner and Schmitt-Sasse 1982, 239). Thus, racial unity was emphasized among GLPr members as the “ideal for freemasonry and the nation” [11].

As a consequence of the war, the GLPr did not only lose numerous members like all other German Grand Lodges did. Also the relations to foreign Grand Lodges were destroyed, as well as the idea about world freemasonry (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 61, No. 113). How closely freemasons' relations were interlinked with political constellations of World War I is shown by the fact that in 1911 the GLPr recognized the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Greece and Switzerland, as well as one of the Grand Lodges in France, Belgium, and Italy (Peters 1986, 276). But in 1920 only Grand Lodges from those countries

were recognized which either had a pact with the German Empire, or which were neutral during the war. Besides the Grand Lodges of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, all recognized in 1911, there were also the Grand Lodges of Turkey, Bulgaria and Hungary (Peters 1986, 277). They all came together to form an alliance of the Middle Powers [12].

The German Grand Lodge Union had already severed relations with Italian and French freemasonry in 1915, in this representing all associated German lodges because they perceived them as the driving force of the war (Horneffer 1915, 32). The GLPr cut the term “Royal York” out of its name in 1916, as a sign of protest against England’s involvement in the World War (Endler and Schwarze 1994, 172).

There were attempts after World War I, especially from the French, to revive contacts with German freemasons (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 894–5). However, all three Old Prussian Grand Masters blocked any such efforts in a joint statement released on 23rd October 1924 (Luckas 1996a, 52). By 1932, the GLPr gave up its recognition of Danish and Hungarian Grand Lodges, but in turn recognized all Grand Lodges of Austria, one Czechoslovakian lodge, and the Grand Lodge of New York (Peters 1986, 276). It must be said in this context that relations to U.S. freemasonry benefited from a mild American after-war policy with respect to the Versailles Treaty, a position that was perceived as very constructive.

In that same year, many freemasons expressed their opinion about the issue of war guilt and about Article 231 in the Grand Lodge periodical *Am rauhen Stein*. As previously mentioned the Article 231 was part of the Versailles Treaty and declared the German Empire and its allies to be solely responsible for the war. It was also the juridical basis for reparation payments, which Germany primarily had to pay to France – a demand that was considered exorbitant by many Germans.

A freemason from Kiel questioned the legality of this article and used the term “war guilt lie” [*Kriegsschuldlüge*], which in his opinion represented a political hypocrisy (Mueller 1932, 119). A freemason from Berlin, Otto Leibrock, expressed similar thoughts about the Article 231 in the Grand Lodge periodical in 1932 (Leibrock 1932, 13). In that same year an appeal by Feistkorn which was directed at the entire brotherhood was published in the journal. Among other things, he demanded that brethren refrain from buying foreign products, protect the pureness of the German language, and help to denounce the Versailles Dictate as a deceptive pretext for acquisitive and domineering purposes (Feistkorn 1932, 3–4). He declared those tasks as primary Masonic duties of all freemasons towards their fatherland (Feistkorn 1932, 3).

The clear choice of words in this context shows the high degree of hurt to the freemasons' pride. One reason why Article 231 became a source of many discussions precisely at this time can certainly be found in the devastating economic situation. Germany had to endure the effects of the global economic crisis more than most other countries did.

The fatherland was more important to Old Prussians than brotherhood. Already in 1922 all three Old Prussian Grand Lodges left the German Grand Lodge Alliance. The alliance included all regular German Grand Lodges up to that point. Otto Zimmer, the Grand Master at that time, welcomed the resignation because according to his accusations, members of Humanitarian Lodges attempted to make contact with lodges from abroad (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2640).

On September 27th 1924, three Frankfurt freemasons – Bangel [13], Bluntschli [14], and Klein – sent a circular letter to German Grand Lodges, lodges and individual freemasons (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5. Nr. 1979/ Paper No. 75). They criticized the fact that party politics and an 'ambitious chauvinistic spirit' [15] found their way into the lodges, and thus warned that racial hatred could spread within (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5. Nr. 1979/ Paper No. 75). The Old Prussian Grand Masters reacted jointly by releasing a statement on October 24th 1924 in which they denied all accusations. In this letter they explained that their primary goal was to rebuild and

revive German freemasonry and the entire nation from inside out (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5. Nr. 1979/ Paper No. 78).

The unity within German freemasonry broke apart because of policies towards international freemasonry and Jewish membership seekers. The gulf between Old Prussian and Humanitarian lodges grew larger, and when the “regulations of relations of our Grand Lodge to other Grand Lodges” [16] came on the agenda on 22nd May 1932, the GLPr broke off the last alliances with the Humanitarian faction. Its Private lodge “*Scharnhorst zum deutschen Glauben*” (Hanover) presented a petition for the severance of relations to Humanitarian Grand Lodges, which was approved at the conference.

The reason for this step was the attempt by Humanitarian Grand Lodges to re-establish contacts with the United Grand Lodge of England, of which the GLPr consequently accused the Humanitarians (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5. Nr. 1979/ Paper No. 396).

Moreover, the members of the “*Freimaurerbund zur aufgehenden Sonne*”, which was not a regular lodge, but which, as an irregular organisation, nevertheless represented the leftist liberal wing within German freemasonry, endeavoured to establish the *Entente Cordiale* with France (Mebes 2002,123–6).

But also contacts of Humanitarians to the Grand Lodge of Austria in Vienna, which cultivated friendly relations with Roman freemasonry, were eyed suspiciously by Old Prussians.

The pacifist and international endeavours of Humanitarian Grand Lodges, which the GLPr’s leadership suspected to have relations to foreign lodges, could not be brought in line with their own values and norms. The leadership of the Grand Lodge thus experienced a large setback in its endeavours to demonstrate patriotic reliability.

3.2. In Völkisch Circles

The fact that the proposition to sever relations with Humanitarian Lodges was submitted by the lodge “*Scharnhorst zum deutschen Glauben*” seems not to have been a coincidence. This Hanoverian association maintained close contact with the Bielefeld lodge “*Freiherr vom Stein*.” Erich Awe, Master of the Lodge and also chairman of the Bielefeld Ring at that time, had already written the following to August Horneffer on November 9th 1931:

We held day-long talks here in the Bielefeld Ring on October 24th which you may have been informed about by Br. Schrader – Hannover. There was unanimity about refraining from a so-called 'sharp cut' from Humanitarians, but instead a careful acceleration of the developmental process which would one day result in a separation. From Schrader’s allusions I understood that your lodge has already done something in this respect (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445) [17].

This letter is an indication that establishing relations with the United Grand Lodge of England by Grand Lodges of Hamburg, Frankfurt and Bayreuth was the trigger for the declaration to sever relations, but also that this breakup was carefully planned. The decisive role in this development was held by so-called 'Ring movements' [*Ringbewegungen*]. By the mid-1920s, two Masonic groups with indicative names – “*Wetzlarer Ring*” and “*Bielefelder Ring*” – were founded in Gotha and Bielefeld, each with the goal of analysing the Masonic train of thought at educational and operative conferences, drawing conclusions, and therefore setting practical goals for the future (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 707). They worked according to the *Führer’s* principle and were characterized as 'German-nationalist', 'völkisch-Christian' and 'anti-Semitic' [18] (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 894–5).

While the “*Wetzlarer Ring*” recruited its members exclusively from the Grand National Mother Lodge (Freudenschuß 1988, 13), the “*Bielefelder Ring*”, led by the Bielefeld lodge “*Freiherr vom Stein*”, was also joined by the National Grand Lodge and the GLPr (Melzer

1999, 101). Such working groups within the GLPr were developed only at the beginning of the 1930s. The Bavarian Ring arose from a group of several German nationalist lodges in Bavaria [19] in 1931. It was founded on March 21st of that same year by the lodges “*Joseph zur Einigkeit*” (Nuremberg), “*Zu den drei Pfeilen*” (Nuremberg), “*Freundschaft im Hochland*” (Munich), “*Drei Schlüssel zur treudeutschen Bruderschaft*” (Regensburg), and “*Alexander zu den drei Sternen*” (Ansbach), all of which belonged to the GLPr (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

In a declaration by the Ring, lodges first expressed disapproval of any kind of traffic by German freemasons with masonic organisations from the enemy coalition, secondly, they claimed distance from lodges in German speaking areas which hold contacts with lodges from the enemy coalition, and thirdly, they declared that only men rooted in German folklore, and those who share the Christian world-view should belong to them (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

This is where the position towards the topics mentioned above (attitude towards other forms of freemasonry and the issues concerning the Jews) substantiates. In a joint newsletter from April 18th 1931, directed at all Johannis lodges, five lodges ensured that their proposition for a Jew-free Grand Lodge was not based on any anti-Semitic reasons (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

The *Friesenring* perceived itself as the association of northwest German lodges of the GLPr (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445). The first conference, which took place on January 31st and February 1st in the house of the “*Friedrich Wilhelm zur Eintracht*” lodge in Bremen, was also attended by Oskar Feistkorn and August Horneffer (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

As previously mentioned, Horneffer was frequently in contact with the chairman of the “*Bielefelder Ring*”. One day after this association had held its autumn conference on October 8th and October 9th 1932, Awe summarized the results in a letter to Horneffer:

The conference kept what it promised. Even if talking things over on Saturday night after 10 o'clock was not worth much in the intellectual sense, during occasions such as this some 'mass' has to be moved nevertheless! [...] As much as all of us were surprised by the small stature of Prof. Wirth – since I had expected a *Friesen*-Giant – his lecture fascinated us all nonetheless because the content and the manner evoked a consistent impression, despite many unanswered questions (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445) [20].

This letter indicates that these meetings had a populist character, and that the crucial thing for the organizers was not the production of useful work, but just 'moving masses'. It also seems as if Awe knew that Wirth's lecture was not quite logical [21]. Despite this knowledge, the hands-off approach was adopted. Hermann Wirth, a well-known Dutch racist, who had already been a member of the NSDAP since 1925 and who had the ID-number 20157 (Klee 2005, 680), was allowed to present his thoughts to the brothers, who subsequently succumbed to the charms of the “polished showman” (Pringle 2006, 55).

A positive reaction to the speeches by Wirth – who also lectured at “*Wetzlarer Ring*” (Freudenschuß 1988, 21) conferences and freemason celebrations of the Midsummer Night at the Externsteine [22] – seems to have been desirable. This testifies that the dubious points in lectures of the future founder and president of the *SS-Ahnenerbe* were either not noticed or generously overlooked. What is more, those who were responsible for holding conferences – or at least belonged to a historically interested, intellectual bourgeoisie such as for instance August Horneffer [23] – knew that Wirth could not be taken seriously as a scientist. His monograph *Der Aufstieg der Menschheit*, printed by Eugen Diederich's publishing house in 1928 [24], was heavily condemned by expert criticism (Kater 2001, 14). Hence, with the help and support by National-Socialists, Wirth developed from being a “*persona non grata*” (Kater 2001, 16) to one of the most famous German historians in the NS-state (Pringle 2006, 11). The monthly publication *Am rauhen Stein* published an article about Wirth, written on

Horneffer's suggestion by the chairman of the “*Wetzlarer Ring*”, Dr. Kurt Schmidt (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

Especially the “*Wetzlarer Ring*” paid enormous recognition to the “German-Dutch pseudo-scholar” [25] (Klee 2005, 680) Wirth and his theories [26].

Another reason why Wirth's theories were also interesting for freemasons is because they were pushing for a change of ancient customs and traditions. Hence, during encounters of the Ring movements it was demanded that elements stemming from the Old Testament be eliminated from them. That was the call to align symbolism with Christian and *völkisch* elements (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

Also the GLPr's private lodges undertook similar efforts. The Eilenburg lodge „*Zur Eule auf der Warte*“ set forth a proposal at the spring convention in 1932, which sought to eliminate Hebrew words, the old form of oath, as well as other signs. Besides that, the Hiram Legend should be replaced through legends from the German lore (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 306).

Furthermore, the *Eilenburger* brothers wanted to replace the term 'Masonic order' with 'German order'. The plan to extinguish Jewish terminology had already been developed by some lodges at the end of the 1920s (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2651).

Therefore, it can definitely be stated that Oskar Feistkorn, but especially August Horneffer, had a close relationship with the Rings since the beginning of 1930s at the latest, and have therefore allowed their leaders to carry their respective ideas into the GLPr.

Horneffer published an article in 1932, called “What do we expect from National Socialism?” [27], which shows the fascination for the ideas of National Socialism and for the person Adolf Hitler. In this article he expresses his fascination for Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, he justifies the rejection of humanism, and he expresses support for the goals of the NSDAP (Horneffer 1932, 228–31).

3.3. Conspiracy Myth and Old Prussian Reactions

In the aftermath of the German defeat in 1918 and the subsequent refusal of German military leaders to accept responsibility for defeat in the war, parts of the German population had tried to find a scapegoat. Among those who casted suspicion on the lodges by means of their writings in the early years of Weimar Republic, Karl Heise and Friedrich Wichtl attracted the most attention. But their attacks were first and foremost directed at Humanitarians. The Old Prussians were spared harsh criticism by the *völkisch*, or even completely exempted from it (Neuberger 2001, 54). This is, among other things, one reason why Old Prussians were able to attract more members than Humanitarians. This trend was sustained until 1925, at which point German lodges recorded about 82,000 members (Neuberger 2001, 57).

Especially attacks from ranks of the National Association of German Officers [28] caused Old Prussian lodges at this point to counter with written articles of their own (Kleferer 1924; Krüger 1925) [29]. While freemasons, especially those who were officers themselves, reacted with a lack of understanding to such attacks, nonetheless they were unable to fight back effectively these defamatory accusations. Also under the new chairman Colonel von Struensee, the aforementioned association held their course against the lodges [30], and consequently did not accept any more freemasons after 1926 (Melzer 1999, 89).

Attacks by Erich Ludendorff, which began in 1927, confronted freemasons with an even bigger challenge. Ludendorff's criticism turned out to have less impact on the GLPr's membership numbers than on those of the National Mother Lodge and the National Grand Lodge. Nevertheless, the threat by the *Tannenbergbund*, a creation established by Ludendorff and his wife, suddenly became obvious. Attacks succeeded in causing moral doubts among members who were close to German-nationalist values and who had been active soldiers (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005, 91). About 2.400 freemasons left the GLPr between 1928

and 1932 (Neuberger 2001, 61–4) but not all of them left as a result of Ludendorff's attacks. The effects of the global economic crisis on the finances of the members were of concern as well [31]. Many lodges had problems covering maintenance costs for their lodge houses. To make matters worse, foundation assets also melted away [32].

The question of how to respond to the attacks became a central topic of discussions among German freemasons. As a reaction to the attacks from outside, the "*Niedersächsischer Stuhl- und Logenmeisterverband*" [33] was founded in 1927. The chair position was assigned to the professor and secondary school teacher Paul Schrader (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 61, No. 259), who was also chairman of the lodge "*Scharnhorst zum deutschen Glauben*". The headquarter of this association, which assembled for debates twice a year and encompassed at least 31 lodges by 1928, was in Hanover [34]. Because the hostility against freemasonry took on different forms in different regions (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005, 81), regional associations were formed in order to oppose the attacks by the *völkisch* forces more effectively. Mostly members of the GLPr's Private lodges attended the meetings, but a few members from regionally-based single lodges belonging to other Old Prussian Grand Lodges participated as well (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005, 81). Former officers, journalists and lodge members who worked in public administration were the main participants (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445/Paper No. 260 and 261).

The question of how to fight back often came up during the meetings. Among other things, it transpired that the population was only insufficiently informed, or not informed at all about freemasonry (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). The attendees were mostly worried about *völkisch* propaganda among students (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). Lodges had major problems with the recruitment of the up and coming generation anyway, but still they relied principally on the recruitment from the student population. Therefore, it was obvious that something needed to be done. For all these reasons, the lack of awareness-rising campaigns was repeatedly criticized (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). Numerous lodges from Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein expressed their displeasure about this reality in an open letter (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2150).

However, Grand Officers Zimmer and Horneffer rejected preventative educational measures (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2150). They thought that lodges should comment accusations via print-media, and only in cases of imminent danger (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2150).

Hence, the issue of 'awareness-rising' led to enormous tensions between members and leadership. While Private lodges submitted a petition for a reduction, or even abolition of membership fees due to financial hardship, the Grand Lodge frequently rejected these (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2150) and even demanded costly replies in the daily press – something that was seen in a negative way by the basis (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 396). Furthermore, *völkisch*-orientated newspapers categorically rejected to publish articles written by freemasons. The "*Niedersächsischer Stuhl- und Logenmeisterverband*" did not have any other choice but to react to the attacks published in the newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* in February 1931 with a memorandum of their own, published in the newspaper *Hannoverscher Kurier*. This counterstatement, however, was only published a week after the anti-Masonic article (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 396). Consequently, it was difficult enough to reach, let alone to educate the readership which was already under the influence of anti-Masonic journalism. All in all, lodges were unable to reach those with anti-Masonic sentiments, thus unable to change people's mindsets.

Meetings of freemason-hostile organisations were also used in order to promote their own cause. But this possibility, just like the publication of defensive articles, was dismissed as useless by many at the beginning of 1930s (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). Referring to fatherland honours, especially to those of former members, and lodge activities in the public welfare sector seemed to be more useful to the freemasons (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3).

The most problematic thing for the GLPr and its Private lodges with respect to anti-Masonic agitation by the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) proved to be the fact that their members were aware of the attacks, but still unable to take a collective stand against the ambitious party like they did against the *Tannenbergbund*. In 1931, one lodge from Magdeburg tried to bring about a decision according to which all of the Old Prussian Grand Lodges should prompt their members not to vote for National Socialists (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). The Magdeburg lodge apparently believed that there were members in all three Old Prussian Grand Lodges who were considering giving their vote to the NSDAP. Contrary to Ludendorff and his followers, the NSDAP stood for a political programme which also attracted many freemasons. Oskar Schmorl, who had spoken about the intended undertaking of the Magdeburger lodge during the 1931 spring conference of the “*Niedersächsischer Stuhl- und Logenmeisterverband*”, denied such an undertaking because lodges could potentially slide into political directions (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3).

Some members tried to avoid being perceived as being completely against National Socialists. This became obvious at the spring conference of the *Niedersächsischer Stuhl- und Logenmeisterverband*, at which a discussion took place about which consequences an NSDAP participation in the government could have for freemasonry (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). There was certainly a necessity to discuss this issue, since the party had obtained 6.4 million votes during the September elections of 1930, 5.6 million more than just two years earlier (Kolb 2002, 127). The threat was trivialized and the NSDAP was considered unlikely to act in a radical way (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, No. 3). This belief was probably influenced by changes in the NS propaganda concerning the conspiracy myth. After NS press organs had reacted positively to Ludendorff’s first anti-Masonic writing in 1927 (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 72), the NSDAP ideologists now became aware of the absurdity of Ludendorff’s accusations, and thus they feared the loss of the conspiracy myth as an important instrument of agitation (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 73). In order to avoid this, Rosenberg, who attributed large importance to Ludendorff (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 59), criticized the character of his argumentation (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 73). The propaganda of the conspiracy myth by the NSDAP subsided for this reason, but also in order not to compromise relations with the wealthy bourgeoisie (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 73). The policy of National Socialists toward freemasonry was also quite ambivalent. After all, men such as Frederick the Great, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Johann Gottfried Herder or Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had all been members of the association [35].

While Ludendorff was lacking political influence in the final years of the Weimar Republic (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 65), the NSDAP was on its way of becoming the party of the masses (Pfahl-Traughber 1993, 71), and due to the high number of votes by freemasons it entered Parliament and came to power in the spring of 1933 (Fenner and Schmitt-Sasse 1982, 229).

4. The Grand Lodge in Search of its Place in the NS State

As the political landscape of the Weimar Republic polarised in the early 1930s, a larger part of freemasons who belonged to the GLPr sympathised with the Harzburg Front, an association of right-wing-conservatives and nationalist forces. On October 11th 1931, representatives from the NSDAP, the DNVP, the Stahlhelm, the All-German Association, the Association of German War Veterans, and other representatives of right-wing factions, met in Bad Harzburg, each with their paramilitary entourage. The goal of the meeting was the demonstration of their unity in the fight against Brüning’s cabinet and against democratic realities in the Weimar Republic. Among the attendees was also the former (and future) president of the *Reichsbank* and member of the GLPr – Hjalmar Schacht [36]. Members

among the present freemasons, who belonged to the *Eiserne Front* – the opposition to the *Harzburger Front* – were rather an exception (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005, 79).

It had not even taken two years until those who sympathised with the *Harzburger Front* were overwhelmed in the face of the change of circumstances. Not all of them took part in creating the change, however.

On January 30th 1933, power was transferred to Hitler. On February 1st, the *Reichstag* was dissolved. After the new regime had strengthened its authority through the Enabling Act and the Consolidation Act, freemasons were facing an insecure future. Then, when Göring had declared that there would be no future for freemasons in the NS-state (Neuberger 2001, 243), the reaction was a transformation into a fraternity on April 11th 1933.

4.1. Transformation and Reactions by Constituent Lodges

The most obvious indication of a transformation was the change of name [37]. The first official document after the transformation was published by GLPr's successor organisation, called "*Erklärung des Völkisch-Christlichen Reichsordens zur Freundschaft*" [38] (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 370/ Paper No.198). The spring convention on April 23rd was already declared as convention of the "*Deutsch-Christlicher Orden Zur Freundschaft*" [39] (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 320). With this act, the GLPr gave up its existence as a freemason's lodge (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 302). However, the debate about the name had by no means ended. A letter directed to Oskar Feistkorn by the Munich freemason Johannes Bühler proves this. In the letter, dated April 26th 1933, Bühler advocates the name "*Völkisch-Christlicher Reichsorden zur Freundschaft*" [40] (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 370/ Paper No. 144).

The change of name was accompanied by the breakup of all Masonic relationships and a reform of traditional customs. Every element that seemed to evoke the Old Testament was replaced by Nordic-Germanic terms and elements. For instance, the Solomon Temple had previously been in the centre of the working surface (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 834). It had also been visible on all working carpets. And although there had been varying designs, it was nonetheless identifiable as such (Luckas 1996b, 61). However, such symbolism was not acceptable in the NS-state. Thus, new carpets had to be woven. The Solomon Temple was torn down and a German Cathedral was erected over its ruins.

The sandstone structure, influenced by a combination of German and French cultural details, was considered as the landmark of Alsace, which had been an area of conflict ever since the French-Prussian War of 1870/71. Against the background of numerous concessions to the *völkisch* forces, voiced by the lodges in these years, the change of symbolism primarily served towards an avoidance of attacks. It also could have been understood as a demand to re-incorporate Alsace to the German Reich.

The transformation also meant that from now on the *Führer's* principles had to be followed, including the application of the Aryan clause (Melzer 1999, 118–21). The duty of secrecy and extremely traditional statutes were abolished (GStA PK, FmL, No. 302).

Partly, the members of the leadership contemplated a merger of all Grand Lodges of the Old Prussian camp. For instance, August Horneffer strived for a complete consolidation to become a single order called "*Vereinigter Orden Friedrich der Große und Zur Freundschaft*" [41] (GStA PK, FmL, No. 300/ Paper No. 185). That Horneffer actively followed this goal is reflected in the fact that he was in correspondence with the Wetzlar Ring in May 1933 (GStA PK, FmL, No. 300/ No. 259). The Wetzlar Ring had already declared the promotion of collaboration between Old Prussian lodges as one of three items on its agenda. Furthermore, it was Horneffer who was active on behalf of the collaboration with other Old Prussian lodges

during the Grand Lodge meeting of April 23rd 1933 (GStA PK, FmL, No. 370/ Paper No. 252).

At that same meeting, Feistkorn only pleaded for a closer cooperation with the “*National-christlicher Orden Friedrich der Große*“ [42] (GStA PK, FmL, No. 370/ Paper No. 224), the successor organisation of the National Mother Lodge, which transformed into a fraternity just as the National Grand Lodge, now known under the name “*Deutsch-Christlicher Orden der Tempelherren*“ [43] (Neuberger 2001, 243–5).

These transformations caused different reactions within the GLPr. There were 103 private lodges in the Weimar Republic, and all but one continued to exist up to the year 1933 [44]. Only the Nienburger lodge dissolved already on March 16th 1933. Hence, they were not confronted with the decision whether to continue being incorporated after the Grand Lodge transformed itself into a fraternity on April 11th 1933. Although the private lodges were informed about the transformation by a newsletter sent on April 15th 1933, both of the lodges from Danzig dissolved already on April 11th. Therefore, it can be presumed that at least some private lodges were informed about the resolution approving the reorganization by the Grand Lodge. The dissolution of the lodge “*Zur Eintracht und Standhaftigkeit*“ on the same day can also be considered as a direct consequence of the transformation. Ten days later, it was the lodge of Leipzig “*Mozart zur Bruderkette*“, which was dissolved, followed, two weeks later, by the Saarbrücken lodge. And although the Grand Lodge repeatedly appealed for perseverance (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 299/ Paper No. 64), the remaining lodges from Karlsruhe and Kassel dissolved in June and August, respectively. Many lodges were subjects of the first anti-Masonic terror wave by NS organs in these summer months. When the second wave overtook them in spring 1934, the lodge of Bremen “*Friedrich Wilhelm zur Eintracht*“ had already ended its sixty-year old tradition. This step was alleviated by Göring’s decree from January 4th 1934, which allowed private lodges to dissolve by means of a simple internal majority vote, without prior consent of the Grand Lodge (Melzer 1999, 137). By the end of the year, lodges in Ansbach, Emden, Kiel, Leer and Stade all dissolved as well. The fact that some of these lodges converted into secular associations [45] indicates that some members thought it was necessary to retain interpersonal relationships and maybe business relationships as well.

The correspondence between the Masonic leadership and the base often included the term “*Loge*” for purposes of self-description, although the appellations “*Orden*” and “*Ordensgruppe*” [46] were the only descriptions allowed. It was never determined, however, whether this had a legal background, since the transformation was never recognized by the state. It is possible that the leadership wanted to bind members who were willing to exit to an old tradition, which had already ceased to exist since the transformation.

4.2. Adaptation Efforts

The fraternity leadership accentuated its intentions to adapt to the National Socialist state time and again. Changes within the transformation were only one step in this direction, to be followed by numerous others. Consequently, the leadership of the “*Deutsch-Christlicher Orden zur Freundschaft*” could not have reminded its members enough of how important it was to behave inconspicuously. At the same time, high-ranking representatives of the fraternity barely missed an opportunity to express their patriotism and proximity of thought to the NSDAP by means of public and internal declarations.

The Grand Master Oskar Feistkorn expressed his gratitude to Hitler during the Midsummer Night party on June 24th 1933, giving him credit for his dedication to the German nation [*deutsches Volk*] and his efforts to maintain the purity of German-hood (Feistkorn 1933, 212). Non-freemasons were also present at the Midsummer Night assembly (Lukas 1996a, 56).

Against the background of the “Regulation for Purposes of Defending from Treacherous Attacks against the Government and the National Elevation” [47], released on March 21st of the same year, the regime-critical statements bore an extremely high risk because fraternities were monitored by NS organs. For instance, samples of fraternity papers had to be submitted to the Secret State Police [*Gestapo*] (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 1988).

Primarily the followers of Germanic, Celtic and Baltic mysticism attributed large significance to the Midsummer Night. Freemasons also cheerfully celebrated the day of their patron saint, and since the 18th century even in form of Midsummer Night festivals (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 437). National Socialists, primarily Hermann Wirth, integrated the Midsummer Night celebrations into the calendar in line with their 'Blood and Soil Ideology' [48].

On May 20th and 21st of 1933,

[...] the leadership of the two closely interrelated German-Christian fraternities “*Friedrich der Große*” and “*Zur Freundschaft*” [49] even undertook a joint voyage to a cult old-Germanic sanctuary at Teutoburg Forest, whose importance for the reformation of the national Christian fraternity is being recognized in ever larger circles within as well as outside of our community (Horneffer 1933, 174) [50].

According to Wirth, it were mainly the *völkisch* freemasons such as the brothers Oskar and Christian Zetzsche from Bad Pyrmont who made efforts to establish a connection between freemasonry and the *Externsteine*, the Midsummer Night festivals and Germanic mysticism. (Horneffer 1933, 175). Already in the May edition of 1932, August Horneffer enabled Oskar Zetzsche to promote his theses, which soon became prominent in GLPr circles (Zetzsche 1932, 157). Combined with previously held speeches about *Lichterkult* and *Externsteine*, the fraternity members should have heard enough to feel well-prepared for the Midsummer Night Party.

But the fraternity brothers did not try to curry favours with the new government merely by pledging loyalty, basically expressing their congratulations to Adolf Hitler for German withdrawal from the League of Nations in a letter dated on October 28th 1933 (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 1974/ Paper No. 48). In December 1933, fraternities offered their services to the German working front [*Arbeitsfront*] by agreeing to make their houses available for their activities at no charge. Furthermore, Feistkorn advocated the participation of fraternity groups in the newly-found NS organisation “*Kraft durch Freude*” (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 1974/ Paper No. 7). This was certainly an attempt to bring fraternity brothers closer to a membership in various NS organisations, which generally excluded freemasons or fraternity members. For various reasons, many fraternity brothers intended to join the NSDAP. Thus, the declared goal of the “*Deutsch-Christlicher Orden Zur Freundschaft*” for the negotiations with government representatives was to allow a double membership in party and fraternity (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 299/ Paper No. 47).

As the NSDAP was on the verge of officially sealing its political course with a victory at the *Reichstag* elections on November 12th, the leadership of the “*Deutsch-Christlicher Orden Zur Freundschaft*“, together with the leadership of the “*National-Christlicher Orden Friedrich der Große*“, supported the aim of the party by calling upon all fraternity members to vote for Adolf Hitler and to support him during the election campaign (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 305/ Paper No. 16–7). However, this appeal has not caused any short-term implications. The elections were manipulated anyway, and it would be others who would campaign on behalf of Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP – the only party in the country since July.

Despite numerous boycotts and cases of persecution by NS organs, which certain freemasons were exposed to, they still continued to hope for recognition of their fraternity. This in turn would secure a future in the NS-state. Hitler’s vague position on freemasonry (Pfahl-Traugber 1993, 121) and the fact that lodge member Hjalmar Schacht was member of his cabinet, made part of the fraternity members feel as if repressions against freemasonry were

introduced without knowledge of the Führer. Ralf Melzer described this attitude in a striking manner when he labelled it as a “if the Führer only knew that - attitude” [51] (Melzer 1994, 120).

4.3. Downfall

Their hopes were destroyed in spring 1935 when Hjalmar Schacht attempted to extract a clear opinion about freemasonry from Adolf Hitler during a conversation at Obersalzberg (Neuberger 2001, 257). Schacht was simultaneously the president of the *Reichsbank* and minister of commerce at that time. Since not even he was able to convince Hitler to grant national lodges a place in the NS-state, dissolution became almost inevitable. Because transformations of Grand Lodges had not been recognized by this point in time, the Grand National Mother Lodge “*zu den drei Weltkugeln*“ dissolved on June 16th 1935. The GLPr and the Grand National Lodge followed with their dissolution on July 7th and July 15th 1935, respectively. The order for private lodges of all three parent organisations was to complete their dissolution by July 21st 1935 (BArch, 0.267 I/ Paper No. 119) [52]. According to newspaper reports, Wilhelm Frick, the interior minister of the Reich and Preussen explicitly advocated an end of freemasonry in Germany at the celebration of *Gautag* by the NSDAP (1935) in Essen/Ruhr (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2150).

The meeting in the “Reich and Preussen Ministry of the Interior” was attended by liquidators of all three Old Prussian Grand Lodges, the lawyer Freiherr vom Stein as legal representation of the lodges, senior government official Dr. Hasselbacher, as a member of the department II F2 (immigrants, Jews, freemasons) (Klee 2005, 231) being responsible for the freemason-issue, and Deputy Assistant Minister Eickhoff. Eickhoff, Frick’s deputy, explained that the minister did not refer to the three Old Prussian Grand Lodges when he talked about freemasonry (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 2150). Such an unofficial correction did not bring the lodges closer to their goal, which consisted in saving the reputation of their members in public. But freemasonry had not fully served its purpose to NSDAP yet, as it presented an effective public relation and propaganda tool. The downfall of freemasonry was something the NSDAP was able to proclaim as a success of the security policy and something they were proud of. The fact that many freemasons were also among those who manifested their pride, appeared rather marginal in the face of the meanwhile rigidly established structures. The government did not depend on freemasonry and they made them feel it. Thus, National Socialists proceeded with enriching themselves from lodge assets in the course of dissolution. On March 22nd 1935, a meeting took place in the Secret State Police II 1 B2 headquarters, attended by Reg. Ass. Dr. Hasselbacher representing the Secret State Police [*Gestapo*], the Deputy Assistant Minister Eickhoff representing the “Reich and Preussen Ministry of the Interior”, the *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Brandt, and also by Mannecke and Bordes, von Heeringen, Feistkorn, who were all representatives of the German- Christian fraternity and finally by Freiherr vom Stein, the lawyer who was authorized by all three Grand Lodges. In this meeting, dissolution was agreed upon (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 306). The attendees agreed on conserving lodge archives and lodge libraries and on storing them in the Secret State Archives (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 306). This agreement was never fulfilled by the National Socialists. They used the liquidation trust and assets only for freemason exhibitions and research. Having been trapped by the NS-organs, freemasons were barely able to influence what would happen with their possessions and their situation in the future.

5. Conclusion

In the years from 1918 to 1935, the GLPr abandoned its liberal stance, which had characterized it during the years of the German Empire. It returned to Christian principles and categorically denied Jewish membership to applicants up to its dissolution in 1935. With respect to this issue, it had moved closer to the other two Old Prussian lodges and revealed a clear political tenor (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 222). The old principles of freemasonry had to give way to *völkisch* attitudes in many places, and in general, the two were not even close to being compatible with one another.

The adaptation of *völkisch* thought, which had already begun to take roots in parts of German, but especially in Old Prussian freemasonry at the end of the 19th century, was affected by attacks of *völkisch* circles. But the adaptation, just like the positive reception of national-socialist ideas, should not solely be interpreted as a survival strategy. Long before it had seemed that national-socialist rule would take over and freemasonry would become its victim, lodge members were susceptible to the *völkisch* train of thought.

Their names were on the National-Socialists's blacklists, just like the names of millions of Jews. Together they were the protagonists within the conspiracy myth, and they were considered authors of the Treaty of Versailles and of all evil in the Weimar Republic likewise. There are no signs, however, that there was any solidarity with German Jews, let alone any sense of responsibility towards them. Nonetheless, lodges did not participate in antagonistic or anti-Semitic activities [53].

The members of the Old Prussian lodges – with a few exceptions all recruited from the Protestant conservative bourgeoisie, which upheld military values – agreed in revisionist tendencies that the borders of the Weimar Republic were too narrow, thus mourning the old status of the German Empire. The ideology that supported the monarchic state was a form of conservatism which solidified itself within organisations that did not describe themselves as conservative, but rather saw themselves as “apolitical”, like the GLPr (Bösch 2002, 13).

During the days of the German Empire, the Old Prussian Grand Lodges had seen themselves as state-supportive and never violated the Masonic policy to abstain from political involvement. The Weimar conditions were rejected by a majority of its members, yet the “no-politics clause” hampered institutional attempts to work towards the change. Consequently, the state power was endured, either due to affinity to it or because of a sense of resignation. However, the Old Prussians did not remain apolitical. The conflict between nationalism on one side, and universalism, which had characterized GLPr ever since the time of the German Empire, on the other, was resolved in favour of nationalism.

Later customs and traditions, like GLPr's statutes, contained chauvinistic and *völkisch* tendencies. In this respect, the GLPr functioned as an agent of the cultural mentality attributed to the top German bourgeoisie from 1918 to 1935. The NS regime thanked those freemasons who were willing to adapt by withholding repressions against individuals, and by offering later rehabilitations: a mercy which Jewish nationalist-inspired World War veterans, Jehova's Witnesses, Romanies and Sintis never experienced.

August Horneffer, in his function as writer and editor of the Grand Lodge periodical, helped to shape the ken where Masonic intentions met national-socialist goals. National Socialists were not interested in cooperating with freemasons, many of whom hurried towards this horizon. Horneffer also had to find out about this in an unpleasant way. “*Die Freimaurer*”, a brochure written by him, was put on the index in October 1936 (BArch, RKK, Horneffer, August). The life of his brother Ernst also reflects this ambivalence. His public career as a speaker in Masonic and non-Masonic circles was violently put to an end by National Socialists (Meinhardt 1982, 445).

The ambivalence which characterised the relationship of freemasons and lodges with the NS-state can be understood by the example of the Horneffer brothers. They also felt the consequences of the regime whose ideology they shared in the most crucial points. Initially having behaved inconspicuously towards National Socialists, later they approached them in

an increasingly obvious and welcoming manner. The lodge life in Germany came to a complete standstill. Except for a very few exceptions, freemasons were entirely excluded from participating in influential positions within the NS-state (Endler and Schwarze 1994, 45). lodge archives were transported to Munich during the transformation process and later they were collected in Berlin, only to end up in the USSR after the war, where they were supposed to be evaluated by the Soviet secret service. Via Merseburg, Dornburg an der Elbe and Potsdam, they found their way back to Berlin where the largest part of the archive can now be found (Endler 2002, 340–1). Some private lodges endeavoured to get their archives back, some of which they now store in the respective city or state archives [54]. An evaluation of this collection offers an interesting basis for an examination of the bourgeoisie in particular geographical areas – something for which Jürgen Kocka voices his support in his important essay “Bürgertum und Sonderweg” (Kocka 2000, 110).

ENDNOTES:

[1] My translation, original text: “Defizit an Bürgerlichkeit” (Kocka 2000, 93).

[2] My translation, original text: “... so daß die Treue zum Thron manchmal mehr galt als die Treue der Brüder zueinander.” (Reinalter 2002a, 118).

[3] Brothers Ernst and August Horneffer published the war-time periodical *Der unsichtbare Tempel. Monatsschrift zur Sammlung der Geister*, used by many freemasons for their publications.

[4] My translation, original text: “politisch-kulturellen Vermittlungsfunktion“ (Bösch 2002, 11).

[5] Although German freemasonry lost about one percent of its members in the World War, this number was lower than the percentage for the entire population, which is three percent. Because of the high average age of the membership many freemasons did not actively participate in battle activities. However, many freemasons lost their sons in battle.

[6] The agriculturist, teacher and future professor of the Agricultural University of Berlin – Hermann Settegast – was a freemason since 1854. He became a member of all three Old Prussian Grand Lodges. Finally, through a lodge from Berlin, he was admitted to the GLPr of which he was elected as grandmaster in 1889. One aim of Settegast was the reformation of the admissions procedure. Generally, lodge members decided on the applications of membership seekers. This happened in form of a ballot, which was a secret voting. If at the end of the voting a certain number of members had voted with a little black ball, the admission of the applicant was denied. Before and during Settegast's tenure as grandmaster, some lodge members had already been influenced by anti-Semitic tendencies and frequently Jewish applicants were rejected. Settegast wanted to fight against these practices and demanded the abolition of secret votings by requesting a statement of reasons for all the black balls. Neither a black ball without a reason, nor the reference to The Creed as justification should be valid. The argument which Settegast had with and within the GLPr had decisive consequences for Prussian freemasonry. Settegast declared his resignation. After numerous juridical negotiations, he succeeded in establishing Humanitarian freemasonry in Prussia. With that he put an end to the almost 100-year-old right of the Old Prussian Grand Lodges according to which it had been reserved to establish lodges on Prussian lands (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 779).

[7] At the turn of the century there were voices in the Grand Lodge that favoured a return to a Christian point of view and wanted to exclude Jews from gaining membership. This plan failed due to an initiative by private lodges, which were in favour of accepting Jews. This was achieved by jointly presenting their case in front of the lodge leadership (Stadtarchiv Hannover, Loge Friedrich, No. 443, 444, 445).

[8] This demand and the ensuing implementation of it show clearly that the lodges did neither perceive Jews as a group of people connected to them by any cultural or philosophical ties, nor merely as a religious group. This statement indicates traits of racist thought. Old Prussian lodges wanted the exclusion of Jews also to be considered as a commitment to Christianity. The fact that membership seekers had to bring a proof of “purity of blood“ is an example for a foreshadowing of the later practice of the Nuremberg Laws. It is important to note

that consequences of a non-acceptance to a lodge are not to be compared with the degradation of the civil legal status.

[9] My translation, original text: *[Denjenigen, die der Meinung sein könnten, dass] “die Gefahr der Aufnahme blutsfremder Elemente [...] immer bestehen” [bliebe], “da ja auch ,im Urenkel [...] auf einmal das Blut des fremden Urahn zu Durchbruch kommen”[könne, entgegnet Bühler:] “Man kann nie alle schädlichen Bakterien und Bazillen beseitigen, ist darum aber alle Hygiene und Aseptik zwecklos?”* (Bühler 1924, 11).

[10] In 1919 the German Democratic Party had the highest membership among the bourgeoisie in the Weimar Republic, and belonged to parties which had an affirmative stance towards the Weimar democracy and wanted to maintain this system. In the time to come it had to take heavy vote and membership losses, until it merged with the “*Deutsche Staatspartei*“ in 1930, which in turn dissolved in 1933 (BArch, RKK, Horneffer, August).

[11] My translation, original text: “*Ideal für die Freimaurerei und das Volk*”.

[12] The Powers of the Middle, which fought against the *Entente* in World War I, were Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.

[13] The person in question is the antiquarian from Frankfurt, Georg Ludwig Bangel, who was a “leader of the pacifist elements within German freemasonry.” Moreover, he advocated reconciliation between French and German freemasons. (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 102).

[14] The person in question is the Frankfurt anatomist Prof. Dr. Bluntschli, who belonged to the “*Bluntschli-Ausschuß der Deutschen Liga für Völkerbund*” (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 139).

[15] My translation, original text: “*ehrgeiziger chauvinistischer Geist*” (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5. Nr. 1979/ Paper No. 75).

[16] My translation, original term: “*Regelungen der Beziehungen unserer Großloge zu den anderen Großlogen*”

[17] My translation, original text: “*Am 24. Oktober hatten wir hier im Bielefelder Ring eine eintägige Besprechung über die Sie vielleicht schon durch Br. Schrader – Hannover unterrichtet worden sind. Es bestand Einmütigkeit darüber, dass der sogen. Scharfe Schnitt gegenüber den humanitären nicht gemacht werden sollte, wohl aber eine pflegliche Beschleunigung des Entwicklungsprozesses, der einmal eine Scheidung ergeben wird. Aus den Andeutungen Schraders habe ich entnommen, dass von ihrer Großloge in dieser Hinsicht etwas getan worden ist*”. (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445)

[18] My translation, original text: “*deutsch-national, völkisch-christlich und antisemitisch*” (Lennhoff *et al.* 2003, 894–5).

[19] This group of Bavarian lodges was called “*Block national-deutscher Logen in Bayern*”.

[20] My translation, original text: “*Die Tagung hat gehalten was sie versprach. Wenn auch die Aussprache am Sonnabend nach 10 Uhr geistig auch nicht mehr allzu viel wert war, bei solchen Gelegenheiten muß auch etwas ‚Masse‘ bewegt werden! [...] Und so sehr wir zuerst alle von der kleinen zierlichen Gestalt Prof. Wirths überrascht waren, ich hatte mir einen Friesenhünen vorgestellt, sein Vortrag hat uns alle hingerissen, weil Inhalt und Art tatsächlich einen so einheitlichen Eindruck hervorrief, dass man von den vielen Fragezeichen aber auch nicht mehr merkte*”(GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 3445).

[21] Horneffer also seems to have been informed about this. The open manner with which he reports about “many unanswered questions” leads to this conclusion.

[21] Horneffer also seems to have been informed about this. The open manner with which he reports about “many unanswered questions” leads to this conclusion.

[22] The *Externsteine* are a sandstone formation located in the south-east of the Teutoburg Forest. Already in the Middle Ages, this place was visited by people and the caves often served as hermitage for recluses. The interest in Teutonic legends and cults by the National Socialists, particularly by Heinrich Himmler, resulted in an enormous activity around the rocks. Many celebrations were held there and archaeological excavations should provide conclusive evidence that a Teutonic place of ritual worship had existed in this location.

[23] August Horneffer graduated in 1893 with “*Abitur*” in his birthplace Treptow and had begun university studies in Berlin, majoring in Classical Philology, Philosophy, Pedagogy, Art and Music. He obtained his Ph.D. in 1898, with the dissertation topic on Johann Rosenmüller, a musician of the 17th century (BArch, RKK, Horneffer, August).

[24] Works by August and Ernst Horneffer were published by Diederichs-Verlag. Besides that, the brothers stood in close contact with Eugen Diederichs, who had been a freemason as well (Heidler 1998, 66 and 301).

[25] My translation, original text: “*deutsch-niederländischen Pseudogelehrten*” (Klee 2005, 680) .

[26] Kurt Schmidt published the article “*Völkische Weltanschauung und Freimaurerei*”, previously released by the *Wetzlarer Ring*, in which he describes Wirth as a “sharp-minded pioneer and far-looking prophet of primeval cult symbolism” (Schmidt 1932, 5).

[27] The original title of the article is: “*Was erwarten wir vom Nationalsozialismus?*“ (Horneffer 1932).

[28] Particularly the chair of the *Nationalverband*, Ludwig Müller von Hausen, a personal friend of Erich Ludendorff, attacked the lodges.

[29] Both Klefeker and Krüger held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, but were off-duty. Besides, Kefeker was pre-destined to write a reply letter as the director of the German military library.

[30] Von Struensee became the chair of the association in October.

[31] In order to give more precise details about the motives for withdrawals from lodges, an analysis of respective local circumstances is necessary (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005).

[32] The 3 Old Prussian Grand lodges were forced to dissolve the “*Kronprinz-Friedrich-Wilhelm-Stiftung*” in 1929 due to financial inability to continue operations (Advertisement in *Am rauhen Stein* 26 1929, 86).

[33] Possible translation: “*Lower Saxon Association of Chair- and Lodge Masters*”.

[34] This is how it was determined in paragraph § 1 of the “*Richtlinien des Stuhl – und Logenmeisterverbandes der Freimaurerlogen von Niedersachsen*” (GStA PK, FmL, 5.2. H 66, Johannisloge “*Scharnhorst zum deutschen Glauben*”, Hannover, No.3).

[35] Lodges knew about this ambivalence, and tried to take advantage by referring to membership of these men in lodges (Niemeyer and Papenheim 2005, 83–86).

[36] Schacht certainly tried to achieve with his performance that the *Harzburger Front* found reception within bourgeois circles as well.

[37] The fact that there were members who had their reservations about this change, is shown in a report about a telephone conversation between the Hanoverian freemason Paul Schrader and Oskar Feistkorn, in which Schrader reported that there “wasn’t any enthusiasm about the name fraternity.” (GStA PK, 5.1.5., No. 1659/ Paper No. 24).

[38] Possible translation: “*Declaration of the Völkisch-Christian Reich-Order of Friendship*”.

[39] Possible translation: “*German-Christian Order of Friendship*”.

[40] Possible translation: “*Völkisch-Christian Reich-Order of Friendship*”.

[41] Possible translation: “*United Order of Ferderick the Great of Friendship*”.

[42] Possible translation: “*National-Christian Order of Frederick the Great*”.

[43] Possible translation: “*German-Christian Order of Templar*”.

[44] It was only the private lodge “*Frisia zum Upstallsboom*” from Aurich that had joined the Grand National Lodge in 1926.

[45] The lodge from Bremen renamed itself into “*Deutsch-Christlicher Bund Friedrich Wilhelm zur Eintracht.*” A majority of the members of the lodge “*Zur Stärke und Schönheit*” of Saarbrücken met from there on in the lodge “*Zur Freundschaft*”.

[46] These terms can be translated as “lodge”, “order”, and “group or orders”, respectively.

[47] My translation, original text: “*Verordnung zur Abwehr heimtückischer Angriffe gegen die Regierung der nationalen Erhebung*” (GStA PK, FmL, 5.1.5., No. 1988).

[48] My translation, original text: “*Blut und Boden-Ideologie*”.

[49] These names can be translated with “Frederick the Great” and “of Friendship”.

[50] My translation, original text: [*Am 20. und 21. Mai 1933 unternahmen*] „*die Leitungen der beiden eng verbundenen Deutsch-christlichen Orden ‚Friedrich der Große‘ und ‚Zur Freundschaft‘“ sogar „eine gemeinsame Reise zu dem altgermanischen Kultheiligtum am Teutoburger Wald, dessen Bedeutung für die Neugestaltung der nationalen christlichen Orden in immer weiteren Kreisen innerhalb und außerhalb unserer Gemeinschaft erkannt wird“* (Horneffer 1933, 174).

[51] My translation, original text: “*Wenn das der Führer wüsste‘ – Mentalität*“ (Melzer 1994, 120).

[52] “*Vertrauliches Schreiben der Bayerischen Politischen Polizei vom 29. August an die Herrn Amtsvorstände bzw. an alle Polizeidirektionen, Staatspolizeiämter, Bezirksämter, Bezirksamtsaussensitze, Stadtkommissäre und Kreisregierungen*” (BArch, 0.267 I/ Paper No. 119).

[53] This corresponded to general tendencies within German freemasonry, including the Old Prussian (Neuberger 2001, 101).

[54] E.g. the archives of the Hanoverian lodge “*Friedrich zum weißen Pferde*” and of the Osnabrück lodge “*Zum goldenen Rade*”.

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The German citation is maintained to facilitate the readers' orientation.

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0.2671 I

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2. Secret National Archives of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation:

Citation:

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Abbreviation: GStA PK, FmL

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