

Famous Anti-Masons on Postage Stamps

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Throughout history numerous people have taken a stand against the Masonic Order. Some of them have achieved a high station in life and as a result are depicted on government issue postage stamps. I am sure there are more individuals than what I present here, however, I'm confident those I show are the most notorious.

Pope Clement XII (1652–1740). Born Lorenzo Corsini, he was Pope from July 12, 1730 to February 6, 1740. In his Papal Bull against Freemasonry (April 24, 1738), entitled *In Eminenti Apostolatus Specula*, he condemned Freemasonry as being counter-Church and counter-state. According to William Denslow, the document states in part:



... the temporal and spiritual communities are enjoined, in the name of holy obedience, neither to enter the society of Freemasons, to disseminate its principles, to defend it, nor to admit nor conceal it within their houses or places, or elsewhere, under the pain of excommunication ipso facto, for all acting in contradiction to this, and from which the pope only can absolve the dying.

In 1739, Clement caused his secretary of state, Cardinal Firrao, to issue a more stringent order that pertained to the Papal States in which death was the penalty for Masonic membership.

It's a little difficult to rationalize Clement's position when one considers the ideals of Freemasonry—Faith, Hope and Charity; Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love; Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. However, in Clement's time the Roman Catholic Church took the position of "my way or the highway." In other words, you are either with us or against us.

When I questioned my Church parish priest (a Monsignor) on the Church's position in the late 1970s, I was told that decisions were made on a regional basis, and he had the authority to say "yes" or "no" in my region—he had no problems. In short, the official Church position is still essentially the same as dictated by Clement XII, however, local Church authorities can override the edict if they don't see "any ideology or practice by the local lodges that challenges or subverts the doctrine and interests of the Catholic Church." Generally speaking, I would say that US and Canadian lodges are not a problem in this regard. (*Ajman, No listing*)

John Quincy Adams (1767–1848). Sixth president of the United States (1825–1829). He was a member of the Federalist, Democratic-Republican, National Republican, and later Anti-Masonic and Whig Parties.

Among other things, Adams had two problems with Freemasonry: the trumped up Morgan affair (discussed later) and his hatred of Andrew Jackson, a Freemason. The Masonic historian Albert G. Mackey sums Adams up as follows:



He [Adams] hated Freemasonry, as he did many other things, not only from any harm that he had received from it or personally knew respecting it, but because his credulity had been wrought upon and his prejudices excited against it by dishonest and selfish politicians, who were anxious, at any sacrifice to him, to avail themselves of the influence of his commanding talents and position in public life to sustain them in the disreputable work in which they were enlisted. In his weakness, he lent himself to them. He united his energies to theirs in an impracticable and unworthy cause.

A year before his death Adams published a book of his letters against the Masonic fraternity which amounted to an exposé.

The Morgan affair (Batavia New York, 1826), whereby it was alleged that William Morgan was murdered by Freemasons for publishing Masonic ritual secrets, led to the formation of the Anti-Masonic Party which Adams naturally joined.

It needs to be stressed that the Morgan affair was simply a trumped up incident that became the catalysis for solidifying anti-Masonic sentiments which had been “simmering” for years. Some individuals thought that the Masonic Order sought “power” and would eventually take over and ruin the newly formed country (United States). Why would people think that way? The Masonic Order is not political and it does not condone civil disobedience. That individual Masons may use aspects of Freemasonry to achieve certain goals cannot be used as reason to condemn the entire Order. We have the same situation with regard to certain major religions.

Whatever the case, that Morgan was actually murdered by Freemasons has never been proven, but given he was, then the Freemasons involved were really very naive. Every Mason knows (or should know) that the “genuine secrets” of Freemasonry have absolutely nothing to do with rituals, ritual artifacts, lost artifacts or relicts (like the Holy Grail), ancient knowledge on the fate of the earth, the contents of “Area 51,” or anything else “mysterious” that has become the fodder of writers and television journalists (not to mention the wild speculators on the internet).

Numerous books have been written on Masonic ritual and they are available at public libraries. Indeed, I have even written and published ritual books for use in lodges. In recent years, Masonic ritual has been shown on television. Although Masons don’t discuss what goes on in lodge as to ritual with non-Masons, anyone can easily find out. As it is often stressed, Freemasonry is not a secret organization. (*USA #811*)

William Henry Harrison (1773–1841). Ninth President of the United States (1841 – died in office on his 32nd day as president). Although Harrison is noted as an anti-Mason, the only indication I can see of his anti-Mason tendencies is his apparent membership in the Anti-Masonic Party, which nominated him for president (1838). It may be that Harrison did not really care as to the party’s general platform. It was a legitimate political party and a lot of people had aligned with it, so why not “go with the flow.” An odd circumstance was that anti-Masonic leaders were unable to obtain assurance from Harrison that he was not a Mason. Evidently, he never answered their question.



Prior to his election as President, he was a military officer (Indian fighter) and Secretary of the Northwest Territory. He was a fairly ruthless individual, and my impression of him is that he really didn't care about Freemasonry one way or the other. (*USA #814*)

Millard Fillmore (1800–1874). Thirteenth President of the United States (1850–1853). At the beginning of the anti-Masonic period, he was one of the bitterest critics of Freemasonry, which he characterized as “organized treason.” Nevertheless, he was present at the Masonic cornerstone laying of the extension of the Capitol in Washington (1851) and took part in the ceremony.



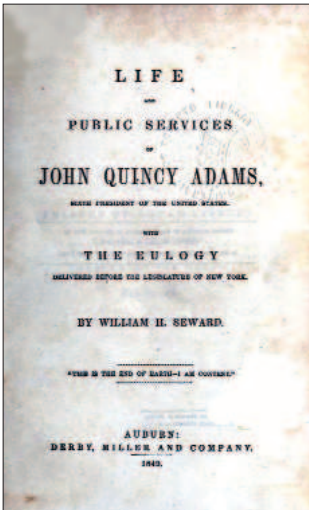
Other than the Anti-Masonic Party propaganda, there does not appear to be any public knowledge as to his reason for being against Freemasonry. We do know that he appointed Brigham Young, the Mormon Church leader, as governor of Utah Territory in 1850. We are reasonably sure Young was a Mason, and know that the Mormon lodges in Illinois had run into problems with the Grand Lodge of Illinois in 1843. The results were that dispensations for three Mormon lodges in Illinois were revoked, along with the charters for two other lodges in Iowa. We might speculate that this action caused Young to resent Freemasonry, and perhaps he passed on his opinions to Fillmore, adding “coals to the fire” of the latter’s negative opinion on the Masonic Order.

As Fillmore eventually embraced anti-Catholic sentiments in the Know-Nothing movement, we can hardly blame anything on Pope Clement XII. But then again, Fillmore might have given the Pope high credibility on the Masonic issue. (*USA #818*)

William H. Seward (1801–1872). U.S. Secretary of State (1861-69). In 1830 he was named as the anti-Masonic candidate for the New York state senate. Seward was a highly educated and intelligent individual. He was also a very skillful politician. There can be little doubt that he knew about



Freemasonry and what it stood for. This being the case, why would he become associated with the anti-Masons? I think we can rule out religion. He was an Episcopalian, and as far as I can determine, there were no problems with Freemasonry in this connection.



Title page of Seward's book.

It appears to me that the key to the issues lies in his great admiration of, and association with, John Quincy Adams (previously discussed). Indeed, Seward wrote a book about Adams entitled, *Life and Public Services of John Quincy Adams, Sixth President of the United States*, which was published in 1849, a year after Adams had died. The book is a highly detailed account of Adam's life and as such would have needed direct access to Adams himself, and all of his papers.

Looking at the age difference between Seward and Adams, age-wise we have the equivalent of a "father/son" relationship. Although I failed to find any Masonic references in the book, to me it stands to reason that Adams "schooled" Seward in the "ways of the world," as it were. In other words, Seward depended solely on Adam's opinion of Freemasonry, and his esteem for the man prompted him to accept his word rather than to look into the issue first hand. (USA #370)

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849). American author, poet, editor and literary critic. Although the general consensus seems to indicate that Poe was an anti-Mason, the question has never really been settled.



The Masonic Order in America during his time was considered to be highly prestigious and Poe, it is believed, wanted to join the fraternity but was rejected. Unfortunately, Poe would have hardly come "well recommended." It appears he had a bit of a reputation, including gambling and alcohol.

It is said that Poe was quietly connected with the anti-Masonic movement, and that he was critical of the "Brotherhood" and insulted some noted Freemasons.

In one of his books, *The Cask of Amontillado*, there is a strange Masonic reference whereby a Freemason is murdered (shackled and walled-up in a cellar). One might speculate that this was Poe's way of "getting back" at the Masonic Order.

Whatever the case, for those who know of Poe’s works, it is obvious he was a very “unusual” person, but exceedingly talented. His early death was attributed to alcohol. (USA #986)

Horace Greeley (1811–1872). American journalist, political leader and founder of *The New York Tribune*, America's most influential newspaper from the 1840s to the 1870s. The paper established Greeley as the greatest editor of his day. He also founded the Liberal Republican Party. He was a highly outspoken opponent of slavery. In his twenties, he was introduced to Universalism. His interests included spiritualism and phrenology.



That Greeley was an ardent anti-Mason is seen in *Patton’s History of the American People*, by Jacob Harris Patton. The following is quoted from the book:

Our apprentice [Horace Greeley] embraced the anti-Masonic side of this controversy, and embraced it warmly. [Imagine him doing it any other way!] It was natural that he should. And for the next two or three years he expended more breath in denouncing the Order of Freemasons than upon any other subject—perhaps than all other subjects put together. To this day secret societies are his special aversion.



A phrenology chart.

That Greeley had been indoctrinated into the mind-set that Freemasonry was “out for power” appears very evident. However, this may have been reinforced by teachings of Universalism. It is said that the movement did not condone Freemasonry; however, I have not found anything specific in this regard. As to his interest in spiritualism, at the time such was inherent in branches of Universalism. Whatever the case, Freemasonry does not get involved in this discipline, and the same applies to phrenology (a pseudoscience primarily focused on measure-

ments of the human skull, based on the concept that the brain is the organ of the mind, and that certain brain areas have localized, specific functions or modules.) However, with all due respect, phrenological thinking was influential in 19th-century psychiatry and modern neuroscience. One might argue that Greeley was a little “unworldly” and thereby understand his aversion to Freemasonry. (*USA #1177*)

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812–1870). English writer and social critic who is generally regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian period. We find the following on Dickens in Denslow’s *10,000 Famous Freemasons*:



English novelist and anti-Mason. One of the greatest writers of all times. His childhood was filled with poverty and hardship. Among his many famous books are, *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Pickwick Papers* and *Old Curiosity Shop*. Early publications often referred to him as a "brother" and there was at one time a lodge called "Charles Dickens" at Chigwell, Essex, England. Far from being a Mason, his writings ridicule the ceremonies of the fraternity and he pictures the work in a satiric manner even to the extent of writing "Freemasonry" with a small "f."

This account begs the question, why was Dickens so adamantly against the Masonic Order? The answer appears to reside in his great disgust for the deplorable conditions of the common people during his time. Indeed, although his writings and books are fiction, they paint a vivid picture of such conditions. Dickens thought (and rightly so) that all segments of organized society needed to do more for the poor. In this connection, he certainly led by example in doing remarkable charitable work with the money he received from his articles and books. From what I can gather, Dickens felt that the Masonic Order was not doing enough and that Freemasons were hypocrites—they “embraced” charity, but did not practice it.

What Dickens failed to understand was that the Masonic Order is not an “organized” charity. It is incumbent on the individual members to practice charity on their own accord. Had Dickens been able to “check the

records,” as it were, he would have found that Freemasons were making significant charitable donations and doing considerable charitable work. Dickens would not have had access to the listings of great Freemasons that we have today. I think Denslow’s book would have made Dickens think otherwise.



For the record, at this time, internationally the Masonic Family donates over three million dollars per day to various charitable works. The “Shrine” is the most recognized charity which runs twenty-two children’s hospitals. In September 2001 Canada Post issued a postage stamp that honors the Shriners (seen here). This was the first Canadian postage stamp that specifically honors a Masonic-related organization. (*First stamp: Turks & Caicos*

Islands #205; Second stamp: Canada #1917)

Miguel Primo de Rivera (1870–1930). Spanish dictator (1923–1930). He ordered the abolition of Freemasonry in his country. Masons were arrested for allegedly plotting against the government.

De Rivera’s primary anti-Masonic stand was likely first and foremost due to his staunch Catholicism. It likely goes without saying that the Catholic Church reminded him of Pope Clement’s edict on Freemasonry.



De Rivera considered the Roman Catholic Religion an essential component of Spain’s identity and “greatness.” He showed favor to the regular clergy, particularly in the matter of teaching. This irritated people, and it enraged lay educationalists.

It also needs to be mentioned that some individual Freemasons at that time were “anti-cleric.” Although the Masonic Order itself does not condone religious prejudice of any sort, and religion must not be discussed in lodges, there will always be individuals who will privately or publicly express their feelings on matters of religion. It is likely they would do so simply as a “matter of course.” In other words, whether or not they were Freemasons or part of any other organization. Whatever the case, de Rivera likely heard about criticisms made by Freemasons and this would not have sat well with him.

As to the charge of Freemasons “plotting against the government,”

The Masonic Philatelist

the Masonic Order itself does not get involved in politics, and like religion, politics must not be discussed in lodges. Again, we have people acting individually if any such “plotting” was happening. (*Spain #1610*)

Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini (1883–1943). Fascist Prime Minister of Italy (1922–1943). In 1924 he decreed that every member of his Fascist Party who was a Freemason must abandon one or the other organization. In 1925, he dissolved Freemasonry in Italy.

Fascism is defined as an authoritarian and nationalistic right-wing system of government and social organization. Generally speaking, it is anti-democracy. Mussolini joined forces with Nazi Germany’s Adolph Hitler (discussed later) in May 1939 (Pact of Steel). However, during the disastrous Second World War, Mussolini was deposed (later murdered) and Italy finally declared war on Nazi Germany (October 13, 1943).



Mussolini, right, with Hitler.

As a young man, Mussolini (who was brought up a Catholic) declared himself to be an atheist, and when in power he was an ardent anti-cleric, making violent attacks against Christianity and the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, he reconciled with the Church for obvious political reasons. He wanted to persuade Italy’s predominantly Catholic population that fascism was Catholic and he himself a “believer.” Mussolini’s widow, Rachele, stated that her husband had remained “basically irreligious” until the later years of his life. Ironically, he was given a Catholic funeral in 1957.

It appears Mussolini’s anti-Masonic stand was based on three factors:

1. Freemasonry was diametrically opposed to atheism.
2. Fascism was diametrically opposed to Freemasonry.
3. The Roman Catholic Church forbade Freemasonry.

I am sure the last reason shown got “on the list” to mainly appease the Church. However, Church opinion of Freemasonry as being “counter-state” would have been an added incentive. (*First stamp: Ajman, No listing; Second stamp: Italy #415*)

Béla Kun (1886–1939). Hungarian Communist revolutionary who proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary in 1919. One of his first decrees ordered the dissolution of Masonic lodges.



Kun's aversion to Freemasonry was likely fear of potential rivalry as with other dictators, however, in his case there was more to the story.

In 1908 (prior to Kun's rise to power) a group of individual Freemasons got directly involved in politics. These Masons thought they might be able to do something about the poor conditions in Hungary. They actually formed a lodge for a political purpose and proclaimed its goals and objective as follows:

...to formulate the potential possibilities for the progressive middle-class and the working class to conduct the historical task ahead of them and the society in the near future, which can be achieved only by the collaboration of these classes. We wish for the benefit of an educated and prosperous Hungary to unite workers and intellectuals in solidarity of the democratic and industrious middle class..

In 1914 the group, headed by Oscar Jászi (who was also the lodge Worshipful Master), launched what they called the Civic Radical Party. The party got reasonable support and was the prime reason why, in Hungary, Freemasonry was linked with progressive change.

Kun was a hard-core communist. Following the fall of the Hungarian revolution, he immigrated to the Soviet Union, where he worked as a functionary in the Communist International bureaucracy. That he was totally against Freemasonry would have been a foregone conclusion.

Although well-meaning, the Hungarian Masonic group did not consider the "big picture" with regard to Freemasonry. Individual Freemasons can of course get involved in political movements, even revolutions, but not under the "banner" of the Masonic Order. (*Hungary #1735*)

Adolf Hitler (1889–1945). Dictator of Nazi Germany (1934–1945). He was at the centre of the founding of Nazism, the start of World War II, and the Holocaust. Hitler's denouncement of Freemasonry and persecution of

Freemasons was the most wide-spread in world history. It started in Germany and then followed in the countries conquered by the Nazis. However, Masonic denouncement did not start with Hitler. He simply “followed suit” with General Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937) who devoted himself wholly to propaganda intended to prove that the First World War, the ensuing German revolution, and most other world ills had been the doing of the Freemasons.



Ludendorff had concluded that Freemasonry was a “Jewish device” in a plan for Jewish world domination. A hoaxed anti-Semitic document entitled, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, published in Russia between 1897 and 1903 espoused this theory and likely played an important part of Ludendorff’s sadly flawed analysis.

Hitler definitely embraced the “protocols.” Although admitting that he thought the document itself it was a forgery, he concluded that it provided Jewish intent. In his book *Mien Kampf* he states: “the important thing is that with positively terrifying certainty they [the protocols] reveal the nature and activity of the Jewish people and expose their inner contexts as well as their ultimate final aims.”

Although it has been over 100 years since the “protocols” document was first published, and later proven to be a hoax, it is still “making the rounds.”

For certain, Hitler would have banned Freemasonry regardless of the “protocols.” He would have regarded it as a threat to his regime. It cannot be denied that Freemasons (as opposed to the Masonic Order) played a very important part in the American Revolution, and he probably knew that.

Shown on the left above are the infamous anti-Masonic stamps issued by Serbia when under Nazi control. There are



two denominations on the stamps. One denomination was used for payment of the stamp itself, the other for anti-Masonic purposes. As can be seen, the stamp designs mix Masonic and Jewish symbolism. (*Germany #510, Serbia #2NB15 to 18*)

Francisco Franco (1892–1975). Spanish dictator (1936–1975). He came to power after overthrowing the Spanish Republican Regime. Most historians fall just short of referring to him as a fascist because he had some redeeming features. Nevertheless, he was a tyrant who accepted military help from both Hitler and Mussolini, but did not enter World War II (although provided some marginal military-related aide to his benefactors). In recent years there has been a movement in Spain to discredit Franco as a great leader—removal of public monuments sort of thing.



In 1940 Franco outlawed Freemasonry in Spain. Membership in the Masonic Order was automatically punishable by a jail term—up to six years for those holding degrees up to the 18th, and more for Masons with higher degrees. It was reported that Masons were tortured and murdered in every town in Spain. Many politicians in the old government were Freemasons, so the repercussions of Franco’s decree were particularly severe.

The fact that Franco considered himself a devout Roman Catholic would have naturally put him against the Masonic Order, as dictated by Pope Clement XII (previously discussed). Nevertheless, there were other considerations.

Francisco was influenced by members of *Opus Dei* an institution of the Catholic Church that teaches that everyone is called to holiness and that ordinary life is a path to sanctity. The movement was actually founded in Spain in 1928, but not given final Catholic Church approval until 1950. Its founder, Mgr. Josemaría Escrivá, was “suspicious” of Freemasonry, further reinforcing the Pope’s nearly 200 year-old edict.

Furthermore, Franco was a subscriber to the *Acción Española* journal (commenced 1931), which expressed a belief in a Jewish-Masonic-Bolshevik conspiracy that allegedly sought the destruction of Christian Europe, with Spain the principal target.

Under Franco, the Catholic Church was upheld as the established

church of the Spanish State, and regained many of the traditional privileges it had lost under the previous government. However, by the 1950s, even elements of the Catholic Church were opposing his totalitarian rule. Remarkably, the suppression of Freemasonry in Spain continued into the 1970s. (*Spain #822*)

Saddam Hussein (1937–2006). President–Dictator of Iraq (1979–2003). He ruled Iraq with a brutal hand and used fear and terror to stay in power. He ordered campaigns in the 1980s against certain ethnic groups in Iraq, murdering up to 200,000 civilians. With one group, the Kurds, chemical weapons were used. He led a war (1980–1988) against Iran which ended in a stalemate. In 1990 he ordered the invasion of Kuwait, but was driven back by the intervention of the United States. During 1991, Iraq launched persistent missile attacks against Israel. In March 2003, a coalition of countries led by the U.S. and the United Kingdom attacked Iraq on the pretense that Hussein was developing (or had developed) weapons of mass destruction and had ties with Al-Qaeda, a terrorist group. Hussein was overthrown and eventually captured by United States troops. He was executed by the new Iraq government. At this writing, Iraq is still on the road to recovery.



Freemasonry in Iraq was banned in about 1958. Licenses permitting lodges to meet were rescinded and later laws were introduced banning any further meetings. This position was later reinforced under Saddam Hussein. The death penalty was “prescribed” for those who “promote or acclaim Zionist principles, including Freemasonry, or who associate [themselves] with Zionist organizations.”

It appears the early leaders of Iraq (1958) and later Saddam Hussein, were totally ignorant with regard to the Masonic Order. Nevertheless, it is very doubtful they would have allowed Freemasonry even if they had proper information as their ideals were communistic in nature. (*Iraq #1392*)

Afterword

Strange as it may seem, history is a moving target. What we know and believe to be true today may be totally different tomorrow. Every day new information on old issues comes to light forcing us to “think again,” as it were.

In this presentation, I have obtained facts from what I believe to be the most up-to-date resources—Wikipedia, Masonic-related websites, other websites that I felt were credible, and books. Nevertheless, what I have written can only be as credible as my sources so I can only hope that it is reasonably correct.

My main objective in looking into the historical anti-Masonic issue was to get a better understanding of what was involved. I was certainly aware of the objections by the Roman Catholic Church and the William Morgan incident, but thought there must have been more to it than just these reasons. As can be seen, there were, and all are simply misunderstandings based on perception rather than fact.

When we take into account the thousands of great men in history who were Freemasons, and then see that the three probably greatest tyrants in history (Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco) were anti-Masons, this has to “say something” in favor of the dignity of the Masonic Order.

Whatever the case, there will undoubtedly always be anti-Masons, just as there will always be anti-Semites, anti-Clerics, and so forth. In addition, there will always be individuals in various disciplines who will “step out of line,” and cast a shadow on those organizations with which they were (or are) associated.

The inclusion of the “anti-Masons” in a Masonic stamp collection might appear to be a little odd, however, it leads us to recall the thousands of distinguished brethren who suffered for absolutely no reason other than membership in the most honorable fraternity in the history of the world.

Finally, I need to mention that there have been, and still are, countries in the world that ban Freemasonry. The Masonic Service Association of the United States sums up the reason as follow (*The Short Talk Bulletin*, Vol. 27, May 1949, No. 5):

The reason for all the attacks on Masonry, no matter how attempted or by whom accomplished, can be expressed in a word...

The word is FEAR. Fear of what?
OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT!

To include stamps of these countries in an anti-Masonic collection, it would be necessary to trace down the original leader (shown on a stamp) who made the decision to ban the Order, and/or those subsequent leaders who actively reinforced the ban.

Reference: MP Vol. 69, No. 4. December 2013