

Jews and Freemasons in Europe 1723-1939

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Preface to the English Edition

The theme of this book—the relation between Jews and Freemasons—has been the subject of countless books written, mainly in German and French, by propagandists of anti-Jewish or anti-Masonic leanings or by apologists in counterargument. Historians, however, have paid little if any attention to this subject. This is not surprising, for to the scholar presumed connection between Jews and Freemasons seemed little more than myth; any sources that could have clarified the assumption were hidden in the libraries and archives of the Masons, and usually inaccessible to the probing historian.

My own interest in this subject arose from studying the emergence of Jews into modern society, and my attempts to trace the routes by which these former ghetto-dwellers found their way into the social circles of their neighbors. It occurred to me that the semi-clandestine societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries might have been among these. My initial inquiries indicated that I had come upon an important but unknown facet of a social process; but only later investigations, which took me from country to country, library to library, and archive to archive, revealed the wealth of material on the subject and its significance to modern Jewish history—indeed, to the history of modern Europe.

My work on this subject was begun in 1962-63 when I was a visiting professor at Harvard University. The treasures of Widener Library afforded me the first clues on the subject. I thank the personnel of this and of many other libraries where I pursued my research. I should like to make special mention of the Masonic libraries of Berne, Zurich, Frankfurt, and Paris, which assisted me with great courtesy. Most significant was my acquisition from the library of the Grand Lodge of Holland in The Hague, where I was graciously admitted and where I spent many fruitful hours in research. I extend my gratitude to Mr. B. Croiset Van Uchelen, the Curator of the Library, a great expert in Masonic bibliography, who assisted me in solving many problems related to my work.

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Chapter 1

The Problem and Its Background

The two names, Jews and Freemasons, joined together will most likely arouse different associations in different minds, each association reflecting the individual's cultural and national background. Although almost everyone has heard of the name "Freemasons;" only to a few will the term denote more than the image of a selective secret society, active at one time or another in history, and still claiming the allegiance of some individuals. Yet, if the

Freemasons themselves constitute a puzzle, their being coupled with Jews seems even more astonishing. Are the two in any way connected? Any person of European extraction (Polish, Rumanian, Hungarian, German, or French)—or anyone familiar with the recent history of these countries during the rise of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe and Germany in the years between the two World Wars, and before and during the Dreyfus Affair in France, will recall that the combination of the two names became a popular slogan. Anti-Semites kept reiterating it in their speeches, in the press, and in inflammatory tracts. They tried to convey the impression that the Jews and the Freemasons had formed an alliance to endanger the states where they happened to live. A special notoriety was achieved by the brochure *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which purported to contain the proceedings of a session of the elders of the Jews, who were plotting, in league with the Masonic lodges, to seize control of the world. This pamphlet, which first appeared in Russia, circulated widely in a German translation prepared in 1919, and subsequently was disseminated in millions of copies in a variety of languages.

As for the German Freemasons, their outcry was motivated by a special consideration. Hitherto they had been more readily suspected of an aversion to, rather than sympathy for, Jews. For the most part, their lodges were considered hives of anti-Semitism—and not without reason. Indeed, with the rise of political anti-Semitism in Germany during the 1880's, Jews found their position in the Masonic lodges becoming precarious. Even such lodges which had heretofore been accustomed to accepting Jews as members or admitting them as visitors now barred them. Actually Jews had never gained free access to the German lodges—not even during the period of greatest social advances, the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century. In some lodges, membership was made conditional upon adherence to the Christian faith. Nor was the stipulation rescinded during the years when liberalism reached its peak. Such were the lodges of Prussia, for the most part, with their centers in Berlin and their branches extending beyond its borders. Starting at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a long and protracted struggle, a war of words and ideas reflecting a social conflict, raged incessantly between the upholders of the Christian restriction and their opponents. Among the participants were, firstly, all those Jews who had been initiated into Masonry in other countries, or who had themselves founded lodges in Germany under the auspices of the French and English branches of the movement. They were joined by non-Jews as well and, during the thirties and forties, by entire lodges who argued that Masonry stood above all religious differences. The upholders of this principle enjoyed the support of the Masonic associations abroad: in Holland, England, France, and even the United States of America. From this fact, it becomes evident that the Masons of those countries never acquiesced in any restriction based on religion. In fact, if we trace the history of the Freemasons back to its very inception, we find that the principle of religious toleration was already incorporated in the very first constitution compiled in England in the 1720'S. Historical research will have to find the answer to the question: how far was this principle enforced in the areas where it was accepted in theory, and how and why was it rejected in other areas, in both theory and practice?

This brief survey has proceeded in the reverse direction, from the present to the past. It has brought to light the changes and transformations in the attitudes of Freemasons to Jews. That the Masons found it necessary to take a stand against Jews shows that the latter kept on pressing to enter the order. We should bear in mind that the first, the London Grand Lodge, was founded in 1717, and that lodges in the continental countries sprang up from 1730 to 1750. At that time a new type of Jew was emerging, one who had acquired some Western education and had adjusted his behavior to conform to the standards accepted among gentiles, to the extent that he now could aspire to full membership in their society. This new Jew first made his appearance among the Sephardim of England, Holland, and France and afterward among the Ashkenazim of all Western countries. After the 1780's he became a

permanent feature of European social life as becomes evident from the number of Jews who kept knocking at the doors of the Masonic lodges. From then onward, the stream of entry seekers flowed incessantly. All the efforts to block their admission failed to deter them. As a result, struggles and conflicts ensued between those clamoring for the lodge doors to be opened and those who strove to keep the doors closed.

As far as the history of the relations between Jews and the Freemasons is concerned, there can be no doubt 'where the topic belongs. Here we have an unobserved sideshow of the process of Jews becoming absorbed in European society. One aspect of this phenomenon is the desire of Jews to find a common social framework uniting them with non-Jews, usually referred to as assimilation. Nor was this in truth the unilateral aim of Jews. No assimilation can be effective unless the absorbing body is willing to assimilate the foreign body. Indeed, many segments of the surrounding society encouraged the assimilation of Jews, and exemplary instances of this attitude can be found among the Freemasons. Yet the readiness to accept Jews into European society was not universal, and even Freemasons imposed restrictions, often showing distinct reserve and even open hostility. This aspect of the phenomenon belongs in the category usually referred to as social anti-Semitism which, as is common knowledge, consists of many types and varying degrees of intensity. In our account of the relations between Jews and Freemasons, we shall encounter various forms of reservations against Jews, ranging from outright rejection, the utter refusal to establish any social contact with them, to avoidance of them on account of the religious attitudes separating Jews and Christians. Religious antagonism produced its effects, even though both groups had, at that time, abandoned the dogmatic and behavioral patterns of their churches and congregations.

The acceptance of Jews into European society was conditioned by the change in their civil status. Previously regarded as foreigners who were granted residence privileges by special decree, Jews had now, as a result of the emancipation, acquired civil rights. Yet such rights were not conferred upon them automatically. In most localities, Jews were forced to engage in a protracted struggle. They achieved full citizenship step by step, having to wrest each new position in turn. Surprisingly, the Jewish effort to secure emancipation ran parallel with the history of their relations with the Freemasons. It could not by any means have been foreseen that methods suited to the state-an institution which coerces by the authority of law - should also make their appearance within the framework of a voluntary movement, where membership in the association of affiliated societies was a matter of free choice. Historical facts, however, defy reason, and our description will show that there was a close and far-reaching correspondence between the struggle of the Jewish community to acquire civil rights and Jews striving for equality among the Freemasons. We can discern the initial explanation for this phenomenon if we keep the nature of the Masonic order in mind. Although the association is basically voluntary, nevertheless its laws and regulations are absolutely binding upon all its members. Since the original constitution had laid down that in the lodges no man could be discriminated against on the grounds of his religion, the striving for the implementation of the rule, wherever it was assailed or violated, was fully justified. On the other hand, that this principle, permanently recorded in the written constitution, could be violated, shows what obstacles lay in the path of its practical implementation. In all these respects, there is a close resemblance between Masonic emancipation-a term coined and used by the Masons themselves, in their time-and the over-all civil emancipation. The history of Masonic emancipation is a mirror clearly reflecting the problems inherent in civil emancipation.

If we have spoken of assimilation, anti-Semitism, and emancipation in the general community and in the Masonic society as manifesting similarities, we can also speak of a fourth phenomenon in which a direct, reciprocal influence was exerted by both. We refer here to the Reform movement, which rose and developed at the same time as an ever-increasing number of Jews directed their steps toward the Masonic lodges. Are these two movements, then,

connected by some common bond? Indeed, the Masonic lodges did not merely constitute some mere social framework; they represented a *Weltanschauung* bordering on religion. The humanistic lodges, which had opened the doors to Jews, adopted a universalistic position, claiming that there was fundamentally only one religion common to all mankind. This view coincided to some extent with the tenets of the Reform movement. The question arises whether some of the adherents, in word and deed, of the movement were not also active in the Masonic lodges. To this question my book will give an unequivocal answer.

From what I have written so far, we find that the history of Jewish-Freemason relations will lead us into the thick of all the problems claiming the attention of the historians of Jewry's recent past: assimilation, the Reform movement, emancipation, anti-Semitism. A complete literature dealing with these topics has been produced; yet, their connection with the Masonic movement has hardly been paid any notice. This curious fact may be accounted for by the peculiar circumstances affecting the bibliography of Masonic literature, a consequence of the nature of the movement itself. Since the lodges conducted their activities in complete, or semi-secrecy, their affairs did not attract the attention of research scholars. As for the existing histories of certain, specific lodges, as well as the accounts of the movement as a whole, these were compiled, for the most part, by lodge members who alone possessed free access to the relevant source material. Most of these writers were amateur historians. Only very few of the studies in the history of the movement were written by scholars of any competence and in accordance with the canons of scientific, historical criticism. Furthermore, like other works on Masonry, these history books have not been disclosed to the scrutiny of ordinary readers. Most Masonic works contain the note that they "have been published as manuscripts for brethren" -not for distribution in the book market, but for circulation among the members of the Masonic lodges only. From time to time Freemasons published works explaining the nature of the movement, designed for the general reading public. These writings, however, were apologetic in nature, aiming only to refute adverse criticism. Both the attacks and the rebuttals are available to anyone interested in tracing the history of the Freemasons. Yet both are rather dubious sources for the construction of an authentic historical account. No wonder that most, and especially Jewish, historians have overlooked the problems connected with the history of this movement. With the exception of a small book in Russian, describing the first encounters between Jews and Freemasons at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, no book on modern Jewish history has ever grappled with this problem.

The same difficulties encountered in the past continue to impede research to this very day. True, the comprehensive bibliography prepared by August Wolfstieg in 1923, which alone contains 23,000 entries, is at the disposal of the research scholar. It has been enlarged by several supplements since then. Yet, for the reasons mentioned above, the works listed in the bibliography have not been placed in public libraries. Even the largest collections, as, for instance, in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek (now housed in Marburg) or the Cornell University Library, are far from complete. The person desirous of studying any topic in Masonic affairs must of necessity have recourse to the Masonic libraries themselves and the archives of the lodges. These sources are usually totally barred to non-Masons. Furthermore, in the last generation the quantity of extant Masonic material has been greatly reduced, especially in Germany. The Nazis confiscated the libraries on the pretext that they were going to expose the historic truth hidden in these sources. They failed to accomplish very much, even in the carrying out of this design.⁶ In the meantime, the materials were scattered far and wide; no one knows whether they were destroyed during the war or hidden away somewhere. A more favorable situation obtains in France. The Grand Orient archive has been entrusted to the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and is open to readers. A number of scholarly works on various aspects of the History of the Freemasons in France could therefore be written, although in that country, even now, the subject arouses strong feelings between the ardent adherents and the vehement opponents of Masonry. In England the archives of the Grand Lodge are still

closed to outsiders.

Among the Freemasons of that country, however, there are a number of genuine historians, or at least individuals who have acquired some proficiency in historical research. These members have joined together in a single lodge and their publications approach proper professional standards.

Holland, among all the countries, provides the outstanding exception. The lodge library located in The Hague, which comprises a large collection of books and manuscripts, is open to the inspection of scholars. This library was confiscated during the Nazi occupation, but by far the major portion of the material was subsequently recovered. Among these items is the "Kloss Collection," the legacy of George Kloss (1787-1854) of Frankfurt, one of the great Masonic historians of the nineteenth century. Kloss participated actively in the struggle between the humanistic and Christian currents in masonry and collected the documents pertaining to the controversy. Complete chapters of this book are based on materials discovered in his collection; nor could it have been written altogether had not the rich resources of the library of the Grand Lodge of Holland been available.

The materials for this work have been culled from sources scattered abroad in several countries. For the most part, these materials touch upon the history of one particular country, Germany. Although the Jews constituted a problem in the lodges of all countries -and we shall investigate the underlying, compelling causes - nowhere did it reach such a pitch of intensity or create such disturbances as in Germany. In England and Holland the problem was solved in principle when the first candidates applied for admission. From then on the question, though not disappearing entirely, only arose at intervals. In France, the Revolution had inculcated the ideal of equality among the Masons as well, and the problem vanished almost entirely. On the other hand, the Jewish problem claimed the attention of the German lodges throughout their entire existence, created wide schisms among them, and at times erupted into fierce, disruptive controversy. The object of their concern was whether Jews were fit to be accepted as members, or else admitted as visitors once they had been accepted as Masons elsewhere. Generation after generation in Germany continued to debate the question and an entire literature, pro and con, accumulated. Now, just as the German attitude is the exception among the countries in Jewish- Masonic relations, so is it unique, too, in the second topic coming into the purview of this book, the spurious Jewish-Masonic plot. The allegation that such a plot existed gained wide credence in many countries. Yet in none, was the belief so widespread or so decisively influential as in Germany. Only in that country did a movement arise and adopt the slogan "Jews and Freemasons" as the point of departure in a campaign to destroy both.

The historian is not justified in projecting from the present to the past. Hence he cannot regard the fate of the Freemasons and especially the Jews in the Third Reich as an indication of an inherent weakness in their position in earlier times. When the historian does seek to explain later events by their roots in the past, he must first uncover the roots as they existed before, and then proceed to show the causal connection between earlier and later events. The questions of how such events could take place in Germany during the thirties and forties of the twentieth century, and whether they were conditioned by past German-Jewish relations will occupy the attention of historians for many generations to come. No well-grounded answer can be given without a prior, meticulous examination of the relations that arose when Jews were first becoming absorbed in German society. Apparently the history of these relations in the Masonic movement could provide a not insignificant contribution to the understanding of the problem from two different points of approach. On the one hand, the Jewish struggle to gain entry to the Masonic lodges exemplifies the difficulties encountered by Jews in becoming absorbed in Germany, as compared with the rest of Western society. On the other hand, a similar, though not identical, fate suffered by Freemasons in the Third Reich shows that here a profound revolution transformed German society itself, to the extent that

wheels of fortune turned on a group like the Freemasons which had been hostile to Jews, and now the Masons were attacked and, in great measure, crushed along with the Jews.

The abundance of topics touched by the subject of this book requires a careful balancing of the material so as to avoid the omission, as far as possible, of relevant details, and yet permit the establishing of certain generalizations. My presentation is chronological. In the end, however, we shall have to return, sum up our findings, and place them in proper perspective, and at the same time analyze their historical significance.

I shall first present the problem arising from the confrontation of Jews and Freemasons. We have already established that the emergence of the Freemasons and the entry of Jews into European society took place almost simultaneously. The question is whether this was a pure coincidence of discrete social events, or whether the two processes were in some way connected. The two events—the founding of a new society, a community of lodges; and the acceptance of a rejected group, namely Jews—are the symptoms of the growing transformation of the old European society. The mind of eighteenth-century man could no longer acquiesce in the rigid division of society into estates. Similarly, to evaluate man by reference to his origin or religion seemed absurd. Eighteenth-century man, therefore, proceeded to found lodges open to members of all groups. The individual Jew—or the Jewish group—had now acquired a new defender, and was here and there even welcomed into the surrounding society.

These developments were not mere fortuitous events. They were logically justified by the principle which holds, as its main theme that man is to be judged by his individual worth and not by the social collective to which he belongs. This appraisal of a person in accordance with his individual, human characteristics is the point of origin for the establishment of universal rules valid for every man as man. The principle of universality was the justification for most of the social transformations of the eighteenth century, among them the founding of the Masonic lodges and the opening to Jews of the doors of European society.

Had the principle of universality been applied with complete consistency, Jews would have been granted free access to all sectors of society and above all to the Masonic lodges. In reality, the doctrine only provided Jews with the opportunity to demand the practical implementation of a principle accepted by all in theory. The narrative of this book will show how formidable were the obstacles obstructing the attainment of this goal. The survival power of preconceived ideas and the burden of the religious heritage of the recent and distant past, and on the part of both Christian and Jew, combined to impede the fulfillment of the principle. The key to understanding the subsequent events lies in the fact that even in the age when the doctrine of universality received general assent it was not converted into a practical guideline for public conduct.

The characteristic feature of the latest period—the topic of my final chapter—is the retrogression occurring on the plane of social reality and, even more so, on the ideological plane. In Germany the direction was reversed and even such lodges as had previously admitted Jews now barred them. Jews who had considered themselves socially integrated were thrust back into their own confines. Conditions were different in France. There the Masonic movement maintained its allegiance to the ideal of universality. No barriers were erected in the way of Jews seeking to enter the lodges. Yet a directional change occurred in both countries. In the broad stretches of public life, a halt was called to the progress of the ideal of absolute universality. Here and there its validity, by virtue of which Jews were, at least formally, integrated into the community, was now challenged. In France, as in Germany, demands to abolish the emancipation of Jews and to abandon its underlying principle of universality made themselves heard. Within this context, however, Jewish-Freemason relations differed in both countries. The Freemasons in Germany were divided among themselves; there were the proponents and opponents of the principle of universality. In France, by contrast, Freemasons formed a united front in favor of absolute universality. There, clearly, the Masons stood

together on the side of the Jews.

This is the background, then, for the cry, "Jews and Freemasons." In tracing its rise we will be concerned with the conscious exploitation of a political instrument. If, in the first part of the book, attention is concentrated on what transpired between Jews and Freemasons inside the lodges, our attention, in the last section, will be directed outward to the public, political arena where the subject of Jews and Freemasons had been dragged by the propagandist's brutal hand.

Chapter 2

Early Encounters

Masonic literature devotes considerable attention to the history of the movement. Here legend, wild speculation, and serious historical studies are mixed indiscriminately. The Masonic expositors were interested in tracing the movement back to some genealogical tree rooted in the human past. They attached their movement to similar groups, like the Templars, which had emerged in the Middle Ages, or even ascribed its beginnings to antiquity, to early Biblical times; King Solomon, the builder of the Temple and Hiram, King of Tyre, who assisted in its construction, became central figures in Masonic history. Yet factual historical considerations as well gave rise to numerous discussions and investigations. After all, the Freemasons did not constitute the first exclusive society ever to be formed; societies, more or less secret, beginning with the craft guilds and ending with the Alchemists, Theosophists, and Rosicrucians in the seventeenth century had preceded them. Whether the Freemasons were no more than a variation of these groups was a question that could quite seriously be asked. The answers, however, were not always based on serious research or factual studies, but stemmed instead from individual preferences for a particular point of view. Some attempted to blacken the movement by associating it with former groups like the Alchemists or Theosophists. The Freemasons themselves were interested at times in discovering or inventing some ties binding them to guilds previously existing in their own country, thereby demonstrating that the movement was a local outgrowth, French or German as the case might be, and not a transplant from a foreign country, namely England.

Historically, the truth is that the movement did originate in England, the year 1717, from which the annals of the Freemasons are normally counted, being particularly significant. Obviously certain noteworthy events had occurred prior to that date, events which were the precursors of what took place in that year. Long before them, craftsmen in the building as in other trades had banded together to promote higher standards of workmanship and to protect their common interests. At the same time, these associations or lodges served as the framework for the cultivation of social relations, education, and discipline which were not without some spiritual significance.

These masons were divided into three classes or degrees: apprentices, fellow-crafts, and masters. Their respective rights and obligations were defined by the constitutions of their societies. Members of the same class would assist one another, and be recognized by one another through certain secret signs and passwords. Here and there, too, opportunities presented themselves for spiritual and religious edification by the transmission of specific traditions, legends, and concepts and by the observance of ceremonies on certain, appointed occasions.

In the seventeenth century events occurred which decisively influenced the history of these guilds. Attracted by the side benefits of the associations, individuals who were not craftsmen sought and gained admission to the guilds. These new members were accorded a special designation: speculative, as distinct from the regular or operative Masons. Apparently circumstances inherent in the technological or economic history of England, but which are not quite clear to us, influenced the guilds progressively to reduce their professional functions and benefits to the extent that the speculative Masons outnumbered and finally completely displaced the operative Masons.

Then, in 1717, the four lodges of London met together and elected an over-all executive, known as the Grand Lodge. All four had previously divested themselves of any professional character and had become Freemason lodges in the later denotation of the term. Dignitaries of the city of London, including clergy and noblemen, were among the members. The Master of Grand Lodge was John, Duke of Montague, and he appointed, four years later, the Rev. James Anderson to frame a new, Masonic constitution which would become binding upon all the lodges. This work was completed in 1723 and the results were published in the same year. The existence of a printed constitution ratified by the Grand Lodge of London induced other lodges to accept its rules, and new lodges, conforming to these by-laws, were established first in England and, during the thirties and forties, in continental countries as well. The Grand Lodge of London was recognized as the body empowered to authorize new lodges. It was referred to as the Mother Lodge; those founded under its auspices, as daughter lodges. In the course of time, Grand Lodges were established in other countries as well. Occasionally several Grand Lodges existed side by side, each granting independent authorization to individual daughter lodges.

The constitution compiled by Anderson was not entirely invented by him and the colleagues collaborating with him. Much of what had been incorporated in it was part of the tradition preserved in the lodges, and this tradition, in turn, was permeated with Christian concepts and symbols. So, for instance, June 24, John the Baptist's day, was appointed a Masonic holiday on which the members were to assemble, perform certain rites, and partake of a common meal. Nevertheless, the influence of ideas current in England at the time is perceptible, and this is clearly evident in the opening paragraph, "The First Charge," where the relation of the Freemason to God and religion is defined. Since the controversy on whether Jews were or were not fit to become Freemasons later hinged on this clause, its text should be examined.

I. Concerning GOD and RELIGION. A Mason is obliged by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law: and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that country or Nation, whatever it was, yet it's now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; That is, to be good Men and true, Or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.

At first sight, this paragraph appears to place Freemasonry beyond the confines of any particular, positive religion. The moral law based on the "religion in which all Men agree" was to be the sole condition determining the worthiness of any individual to become a Freemason. Such a formulation rests upon the premise that belief in God is the natural heritage of every man and is a sufficient guarantee of his obedience to the moral law. Here we find ourselves within the atmosphere of eighteenth-century deism which adopted an attitude of indifference to the particular, historical religion claiming the allegiance of any specific individual. The author of the constitution assumed that Freemasons had belonged to various religions in the past, and so Freemasons could belong to any religion, including the Jewish, at present as well.

This last conclusion is a logical consequence of the wording of the paragraph. Yet there is no explicit proof, or even an allusion, in the words of the author that he had such an idea in mind at the time of writing. His purpose was to transcend the individual differences of the Anglo-Christian sects: Anglicans, Catholics, and Puritans, and their various denominations. He wanted them to join together in a single association which would overlook individual dogmas and rites. Hence his formulation was couched in the terminology current in deistic thinking which claimed that not only the Christian denominations, but all religions, possessed a common foundation. At that time Jews had been living in England for the past two generations. Their numbers were small and they lived as recently arrived immigrants on the fringe of British society. Yet, even if some of them did aspire to become integrated in English society, it must not be assumed that an exclusive group like the Freemasons regarded Jews as constituting a problem which required the wording of the constitution

to be adjusted to accommodate them.

That certain doubts did arise concerning the deistic basis of the constitution is evident from the amended version of the second edition published in 1738. I shall quote the sentences in which the original formulation has been changed:

A Mason is obliged by his Tenure to observe the Moral Law as a true Noachide ... In ancient Times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian Usages of each Country where they travell'd or work'd: But Masonry being found in all Nations, even of diverse Religions, they are now only charged to adhere to that Religion in which all Men agree (leaving each Brother to his own particular Opinions) that is, to be Good Men and True Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever names, Religions or Persuasions they may be distinguished: For they all agree in the 3 great Articles of Noah, enough to preserve the Cement of the Lodge.

The "Religion of that country" is now replaced by "the Christian Usages of each Country" with which Christian Masons had been obliged to comply in the past. Yet even this second formulation assumes the existence of non-Christian Masonic lodges. The author regards the adherents of all religions as being subject to the moral law but, in the later versions, these religions are held to subscribe to a common concept: the three "great Articles of Noah." The author responsible for the wording of the constitutions of 1738 wrote as if the concept, "Noachide" and the "great Articles of Noah," were universally known. As the learned opponents of the Masons in the nineteenth century pointed out, however, these terms were culled from John Selden's *De jure naturali et gentium juxta disciplinam Ebraeorum*, which had described the seven Noachide laws as part of the ancient Jewish legal heritage. Christian tradition had never known of any such concept as Noachide commandments. It was, however, current in Talmudic and medieval Judaism as the grounds for tolerance toward such gentiles as Jews considered deserving of respect. If a prior revelation had occurred in the time of Noah and this revelation was vouchsafed to all mankind, then all who acknowledged and obeyed the commandments given at the time would attain salvation. Christianity lacked a principle of this nature and so found difficulty in according any positive religious status to those beyond its pale. The introduction of this concept, culled from ancient Jewish jurisprudence, into European thought by identifying it with the law of nature provided non-Jewish thinkers with an intellectual instrument which allowed them to justify toleration without abandoning their belief in divine revelation. Here is the train of thought behind the amended text of the Masonic constitutions.

Far removed as these constitutions were from any intention of making provision for Jews, they nevertheless, consciously or unconsciously, absorbed some traces of Jewish teaching. The amended formulation provided the basis for the German version prepared in 1741. On the other hand, the later English editions of the constitutions restored the original text, which was based on pure, formal, deistic foundations and was no longer tied to any particular, theological concepts.

As has been stated, there is no reason to assume that the authors of the English constitutions intended, in their universal tolerance, to provide for Jewish candidates in the flesh. Yet, when such candidates did apply for admission, the principle was followed in practice. The first instance of a Jew's being admitted to a Masonic lodge took place, as far as we know, in 1732. One, Edward Rose, was initiated into the London lodge in the presence of Jews and non-Jews. This event was a novelty and excited attention. Soon afterward the lodges began debating the propriety or otherwise of admitting this Jew. That the final decision was not unfavorable is conclusively proved by the fact that Jews in significant numbers were admitted to membership in the ensuing years. Obviously Jewish names are found among the participants in the affairs of the Grand Lodge of London even before 1740, and several of these individuals rose to high office. One, Allegrì by name, declared before a lodge in Frankfurt that he had been initiated in London as early as in 1735. In 1759 a petition was presented to the same Grand Lodge asking that authorization be granted to a new lodge; about half of the twenty-three signatures on the petition seem to have been Jewish names.

It is evident that at least some of these Jews sought to retain their own religious principles within the framework of the lodges. In 1756 an anthology of Masonic prayers appeared in print, among

them one to be recited “at the opening of the lodge meeting and the like for the use of Jewish Freemasons,” while the other prayers were addressed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Jewish prayers contained nothing at variance with the Jewish tradition. Moses is referred to here as the Master of a Lodge in his time, teaching the Torah to Aaron, his sons, and the elders-an allusion to a Talmudic passage. Clearly the prayer was composed by a Jew. The title page of the book containing the prayer offers the information that this prayer was intended for the use of "Jewish lodges." This would indicate that the number of Jewish Masons had increased so greatly that they had already formed a lodge of their own by that date. Another source reveals the existence of a Jewish lodge some ten years later.

One of the first countries where the Masonic movement gained a foothold and then spread was Holland. There the local lodges followed British leadership and adopted the same attitude toward Jews as had prevailed in England. In principle, the lodges were open to Jews, and Jewish members were accepted in practice. Some evidence, by no means sufficiently clear and belonging to a later date, seems to indicate that a Jewish lodge did exist in Holland.

The earliest Jewish Freemasons in both Holland and England were Sephardim. The participants in the Grand Lodge of London, mentioned above, included the Mendez, De Medina, De Costa, Alvares, and Baruch (the last named may possibly have been an Ashkenazi) families. Among the petitioners of 1759, such names appear as Jacob Moses, Lazars Levy, and Jacob Arons, all of whom may have been Ashkenazim. We know the exact text of a membership certificate, dated 1756, of a Jew, Emanuel Harris, a native of Halle, Germany, who had changed his name from Menachem Mendel Wolff. The text of this certificate was published in 1769 by the research scholar Olof Gerhard Tychsen, who mentioned as a commonly known fact that in England, as contrasted with Germany, Jews were admitted to the Masonic lodges as a matter of course. Tychsen was even able to relate that one of the affiliates of the Grand Lodge of London was referred to as "The Jewish Lodge" on account of the composition of its membership.

The admission of Jews into the lodges of England and Holland is a sign that tensions between Jews and their surrounding environment, at least for some segments of both populations, were abating. Rational principles had not entirely eliminated the Christian elements in Masonry, but had so tempered extremism that the brethren were now ready and accustomed to allowing Jews to mix in their company. Naturally, Jews also were affected by similar processes. Participants in the predominantly Christian lodges and especially those who shared in the common meals were forced to make compromises at the expense of their Jewish traditions. They were able to justify their behavior as conforming to the mood prevailing among the Christians-and this was one of the main forces impelling the spread of Masonry-the feeling that the specific precepts of a particular religion did not constitute its significant feature, nor its ideological content its exclusive possession. Membership in a Masonic lodge, on the other hand, offered great advantages. It was surely worthwhile to belong to an association composed of prominent members of society. Belonging in their company would enhance one's prestige, and sometimes even confer tangible benefits. It afforded opportunities to be introduced to, and establish contact with, circles which Jews could never otherwise have reached. Membership was especially desirable for those whose business affairs took them to other cities and even abroad, Wherever the Mason might happen to be, his membership in one lodge opened the doors of all the others to him. These social considerations must certainly have contributed to the spread of Freemasonry throughout Europe. And all these incentives were especially attractive to Jews.

Nevertheless, the existence of separate Jewish lodges indicates some hesitancy which presumably was felt on both sides. The existence of a principle as such that admission should not be denied to Jews did not guarantee that no restraints would be imposed in practice. The application of any candidate for admission had to be voted on by the members of the particular lodge, and they enjoyed the right to reject his application without stating any reason for their action. An individual's Jewishness could conceivably have provided the pretext for his rejection without any objection being raised in principle against Jews as such. It is difficult to believe that French and Dutch

Masons always stood above the prevailing anti-Jewish prejudices, and not in respect of religion alone. We do find that a lodge in London decided in 1793 not to allow the recommendation at any Jew for membership since there was no possibility of his being accepted. We also learn of an explicit complaint emanating from Holland at the beginning of the nineteenth century against anti-jewish discrimination in the admission practices of certain lodges.

Alleged or real discrimination, however, did not imply that complete rejection or discrimination was enforced. In principle, the British and Dutch lodges still remained open to Jews as the occasion required.

A sudden change turned the development of the Masonic movement in France in a new direction. There, too, the first lodges founded in the 1730's followed the English example, and as long as they adhered to original Masonic conceptions they could not cast any doubt upon the acceptability of Jews as members. Within the first generation of the penetration of Freemasonry into that country, however, a new attitude became evident in France, one which sought to find the basis of Masonic ideology in Christian foundations. The upholders of this view tried to trace the genealogical roots of Freemasonry back to the medieval Christian orders, and argued that the lodges were only a reincarnation of the Knights of Saint John of crusader times. A new, Christian element was introduced into Masonry, and a new rule stated that only Christians were worthy of being brethren in the lodges. In 1742, a book entitled *Apologie pour l'ordre des Franc-Maçons* appeared. One of its paragraphs asserts: "The order is open to Christians only. It is neither possible nor permissible to accept any person outside the Christian church as a Freemason. Hence Jews, Moslems and pagans are excluded as nonbelievers. The constitution of the Grand Lodge of France, which was ratified in 1755, contained an explicit passage which made baptism a prerequisite for membership.

This identification of Freemasonry with the Christian faith emerged from a group which owed allegiance both to Freemasonry and the Church, and sought to affect some compromise between them. The very title, *Apologie*, indicates the point of departure of the book; its underlying motive was the need of Freemasons to defend themselves against the charges leveled at them by churchmen. In fact, from the very inception of the movement, Freemasons had been subjected to severe attacks. They were suspected of harboring intentions to subvert the foundations of the Church. The neutrality of their first constitution to the patterns of positive religion, even if this was interpreted as indifference to the variations of dogma and modes of worship, was sufficient of itself to provoke antagonism, especially by the Catholic Church. Nor was the reaction slow in coming: on April 28, 1738, Pope Clemens XII issued his bull against the Freemasons. Their principal transgression was their willingness to accept members of all religions and sects, and their adoption of "natural righteousness" as a substitute for the true faith. The Church regarded the banding together of a group in membership based on pure humanistic principles as threatening to remove the individual Catholic from the sphere of Influence of his Church. Hence it forbade its adherents to join the association under pain of excommunication.

If the above-mentioned *Apologie*, which appeared four years later, was not actually a direct reply to the Papal bull, it did at least answer the arguments presented in that document. The book's emphasis on the Christian character of Freemasonry was intended to dull the edge of the contention that the Masons were drawn from diverse religions. On the contrary, the movement was declared to be exclusively Christian. Jews being non-Christians, it was possibly on these, not on personal, grounds that they were denied admission. It is difficult to conceive that Jews should have constituted any real problem in France at the time with regard to Freemasonry-any more than could Moslems or pagans. It may be assumed that the three religions were declared unacceptable only to emphasize the Christian character of the brotherhood. Even during the succeeding decades we hear nothing about Jews struggling to enter, or of efforts to bar them from entering, Masonic lodges. Instead we find one source upholding the Christian character of the movement and at the same time declaring Jews acceptable in exceptional cases. Masons were obliged, at least, to be "familiar with the sacred mysteries of the Christian faith" "Only as an exception, as an expression of deference to the Old Testament, is a Jew able, on rare occasions, to take part in it." These observations appeared in the

first Masonic "encyclopedia to be published in France in 1766 and convey the impression of being an attempt to justify the fact-infrequently as the phenomenon may have occurred-of Jewish membership in the lodges, a fact which was in conflict with the basic principles of Freemasonry, as it was now interpreted in France.

The question of Jewish acceptability assumed much more serious proportions in Germany. Its cities, at least some of the larger centers, had larger Jewish populations than the English or French (though not as large as the Dutch). Had many Jews begun all at once to knock on the gates of the lodges, then granting them membership would have constituted a grave problem for the Masons. This did happen at a later date, as we shall see in due course, when the process of social change had mass-produced a type of Jew who sought to enter Christian or Judeo-Christian society. Yet during the first decades of the widespread emergence of Masonic lodges in Germany (that is, until the 1770's), German Jews were, with few exceptions, too securely tied to and concentrated within their own society and culture. We hear of three Jews visiting one of the Hamburg lodges in 1749, that is to say, they came armed with membership certificates acquired elsewhere and were permitted to take part in the proceedings of the lodge. They were "Portuguese Jews," presumably belonging to lodges in England or Holland, like those cases referred to earlier.

We must, however, revert to those instances since they afford an indication of the infrequency of such occurrences. That same Allegri, who claimed to have been admitted to membership in London in 1735, spent some time in Germany in the sixties. He recounted that he had visited lodges in Mannheim and other German cities, but had refrained from doing so in Frankfurt because of the "prejudices of the German Jews." Similarly, O. G. Tychsel noted in 1769 that the few Jews who had become Freemasons were constrained to hide the fact from their coreligionists for fear of being branded as "heretics." He likewise remarked that, when the Jewish Freemason who had printed his certificate passed through his city of Bützow, his religiosity was questioned by local Jews. His Masonic affiliation had rendered him suspect in their eyes. Apparently, in the sixties, membership in the movement 'was still regarded as a breach of the Jewish faith, and this fact is both the reason for, as well as an indication of, the rarity of the phenomenon.

It may reasonably be assumed that Jewish candidates for admission to the movement appeared more frequently in Germany than in France. Yet no need had arisen as yet to treat them differently there than in France. The German movement had also stemmed from English roots; Anderson's constitutions had been translated into German in 1743 and this version was reprinted several times thereafter. An appendix had been added to the by-laws, but this was nothing more than a German translation of the French Apologie. The two documents, as we have seen, diverged from one another in their aims, and were in direct contradiction in their respective attitudes to the candidate's loyalty to a particular religion. In its original, English version the constitutions had laid down that adherence to any particular positive religion was a matter of no consequence. Yet the supplement asserted that adherence to the Christian religion was an essential precondition for membership. The incompatibility of the two statements now brought together in the same volume did not escape the notice of some of the members. Nevertheless, in those times the problem did not loom so large as to require an authoritative and decisive solution, as Jews were only admitted here and there into Masonic membership. With the passage of time, however, the tendency grew increasingly stronger to regard Freemasonry as a Christian institution where a Jew had no business to be found.

The oldest and the pre-eminent Berlin lodge was the Grosse National-Mutterloge zu den drei Weltkugeln. Together with the Grosse Landesloge van Deutschland, it later waged a bitter and unrelenting struggle to bar the entry of Jews. At first, however, no definite policy was adopted. On February 7, 1763, the application of a Jew, Bruck by name, was considered and rejected. In spite of- or perhaps on account of- his offer to pay 100 guilders to the lodge treasury, some blemish in his character or conduct was discovered. His Jewishness was not held to disqualify him. The by-laws which were adopted three years later set down the same qualifications for membership stipulated in the French Apologie: "Only a Christian is eligible for membership in our respectable [ehrwürdigen] order, but on no account Jews, Moslems, or pagans. Lodges which have admitted any of these to

their community have thereby clearly proved that they have no knowledge of the nature of the Freemasons." The last sentence is polemical in tone and is directed against those lodges who had shown leniency in practice and had admitted Jews. Actually I have evidence that the Royal York, the lodge competing in Berlin with the Mutterloge, accepted a Jew a year later. His name was Moses Tobias, and the minutes we have report his initiation, noting that the candidate swore his Masonic oath on the Pentateuch. This precise designation was obviously meant to exclude the New Testament, the book used for this purpose at the initiation of gentile candidates. Tobias, who subsequently left Berlin, was presented with his membership certificate by the Royal York as late as in June 1774 with the express approval of the other Mother Lodge, the Landesloge, with which it had been connected for some time. In the course of time, the Royal York too succumbed to the prevailing anti-Jewish pressure, even though in theory it still maintained the principle of Jewish acceptability. In 1784 its Essingen affiliate inquired of the leaders of the Berlin lodge whether it was permissible to grant entry to wealthy Jews as members, in the same way as they were being admitted in England. The Berlin lodge replied that it was true that Jews from England bearing membership cards had made their appearance at intervals, for indeed there were Jews worthy to be admitted to all lodges, were it not for the prejudice against Jews in general which was not entirely baseless. The advice offered to the inquirers was that the Jewish applicants should be most carefully scrutinized and that, in any event, appropriate initiation fees should be levied on them. Another precondition for the admission of Jews was that they be clean-shaven.

There were similar divisions of opinion in Frankfurt and vicinity at that very time. A lodge founded in Kassel applied for authorization to the Zur Einigkeit lodge in Frankfurt. Which, in turn, acted on behalf of the Grand Lodge of London. One of the signatories to the application was a Jew—a clear indication that his townsmen found him worthy to mix in their company. His name, however, provided the Frankfurt lodge 'with the pretext to deny the lodge the authorization it sought. Two Jews, Baruch and Tonsica, were admitted to membership in a Winkelloge (one not officially recognized by the Mother Lodge) in 1758. When this lodge finally received its authorization, the Jews were forced to resign.

These examples reflect the state of affairs that came into being and continued until the 1780's, A description written by one of the leading German Masons sums up the events of those years. The author, Johann August Strack, compiled this apologetic work in 1770 and republished it in an enlarged edition in 1778. Replying to the accusation of indifference on the part of the Masons to the Christian faith, Strack repeated the answer already advanced in the French Apologie: that Masons adhere to the Christian religion is attested to by the fact that no member of any other faith, be he Jew, Moslem, or pagan, is accepted by them. "And even if examples are cited of Jews who were Freemasons, no responsibility devolves on us. It should fall instead upon those spurious [unachte] lodges which have, at times, formed such unnatural connections. It is essentially impossible for any persons other than Christians to be Freemasons." Those lodges, then, which sought to represent the main or official outlook of Freemasonry expressed their uniqueness by emphasizing their Christian exclusiveness. Evidence to this effect is found in the contemporaneous Masonic classic, Lessing's *Ernst und Falk* (1778-1780), whose contents will be examined in some detail further on. "Allow enlightened Jews to come and seek admission?" The author aims this challenge at the Freemasons. He himself formulates the answer: "A Jew? The Freemason is at least obliged to be a Christian." Jews striving for admission were forced to content themselves with membership in one of the non-authorized lodges, which by their very nature never acquired more than a marginal and doubtful status by the side of the central and Grand Lodges.

In the same period Jews aspiring to Masonic membership occupied a marginal status in their own community. The Jewish names listed in the Masonic rosters of those days are not known to us from any other source. We must assume that, if they were not doubtful and unprincipled characters, like some mentioned before, they were at least unconventional persons who were anxious to find their way individually into the non-Jewish world. Socially, the vast majority of Jews were at this stage certainly confined within their own community. Yet, by the seventies at the latest, a circle of

enlightened Jews becomes discernible, concentrated especially round Moses Mendelssohn, a group of people who looked longingly for some social and intellectual contact with the surrounding society. The Masonic lodges, however, hardly seemed to suggest themselves as the suitable and effective instrument for social integration. Mendelssohn was somewhat critical of his friend Lessing's membership in the Masonic movement. It is related that Mendelssohn taunted his friend, whether seriously or in jest, about the secrets he had unlocked as a result of the revelations vouchsafed to him as a Mason. "From our earliest youth, we have been seeking for the truth. From the beginning of our acquaintance, we have searched together 'with all the effort and earnestness such a search fittingly requires. Yet, is it now possible that truths exist which Lessing has solemnly sworn not to divulge to the person who has been his faithful friend for these twenty-five years?" Apparently Mendelssohn resented his friend's presuming, as a Freemason, to possess certain knowledge which he was not permitted to share with one who had been his faithful ally in the very search for truth.

In his 'written remarks on Lessing's *Ernst und Falk*, Mendelssohn dealt with the more serious issue of principle. The book itself is apologetic and consists of the conversations of the two friends whose names form its title. Here Freemasonry is presented, at times, as the area where universal brotherhood in all its purity is aspired to in theory; and at others, as it exists in reality, as an association of persons belonging to a specific class and religion, as a society protected against intrusion from without and embroiled within, and as a group the members of which are more interested in satisfying their mystic curiosity and craving for a chemistic adventure rather than in cultivating human perfection. Yet, despite Lessing's inclusion of such criticisms in his work, his intention was, understandably, to judge Freemasonry by its lofty ideals and not as it existed in practice. Mendelssohn accordingly pointed out that here Lessing resembled the modern Berlin theologians, and all the criticism leveled at them applied to him as well. The implication of the analogy was apparently that Freemasonry was similar to rational theology, in proclaiming universal principles without following them in practice.

Whether Mendelssohn's critique was expressing the resentment of the Jew at having been excluded from the Masonic association is not clear. His philosophical detachment kept him from aspiring to goals beyond his reach. In any event, he remained outside, while all his friends belonged - as did anyone who had made a name for himself in the intellectual world - to some Masonic lodge or other. Whatever motives may have inspired Mendelssohn were unique to him and could not furnish any example for the many in the succeeding generations.

Chapter III. The Order of the Asiatic Brethren

The generation growing up in the shadow of Mendelssohn accepted his ideal of the removal of all barriers separating Jews from Christians, but did not inherit his virtues of patience and moderation. His disciples and followers desired to attain in practice what they had been taught to believe in, and sought to hasten the process of absorption into the cells of their social environment-and here the Masonic cells were held to be of basic importance. Although these individuals were unable to crush the opposition, they would support every effort on the part of the Freemasons to create new frameworks where the principle of equality of Jews and non-Jews would be upheld. Three or four such attempts took place around the end of Mendelssohn's lifetime (1786), the period of the enactment of the first laws aimed at the removal of civil disabilities from Jews and of the first agitation for the integration of Jews into the general society. The initial attempt led to the flaring up of the first controversy over the acceptance of Jews in Masonic lodges.

The earliest attempt to found a Masonic order with the avowed purpose of accepting both Jews and Christians in its ranks was the formation of the Order of the Asiatic Brethren or, to give it its full name, *Die Brüder St. Johannes des Evangelisten aus Asien in Europa*. We are

fully familiar with the history of this society which was more important than all the others because of the scope of its activities and its influence. Founded in Vienna in 1780-81, its central figure and promoter was Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen, of Bavarian extraction. He and his younger brother Hans Carl (whom we shall meet again) had behind them a rich past in the history of the Masonic societies in Germany. The Eckers were of the type of aristocrats who had lost their property and forfeited the economic support of their class. Yet, because of their illustrious name, their family connections, and their confident bearing they had succeeded, at least outwardly, in preserving their associations with the ruling classes. They were not at all discriminating in their choice of occupation—so long as it allowed them to maintain their standard of living. This could best be achieved through association with those who wielded the real power in the states: the absolute princes, and the rising capitalists who enjoyed their patronage. Members of Masonic societies were at times drawn from the upper and propertied classes, but because these organizations often had need of individuals ready to perform remunerative functions, they also served as a refuge for those searching an easy, but not always honest, livelihood. Heinrich was a man of this type. He had been active among the Rosicrucians in Bavaria and Austria, whose dabbling in alchemy served as confidence schemes to swindle money out of the naive and reckless. As a result of some quarrel, he severed his connections with them and, in 1781, published a book denouncing them. At that very time he was busy forming a new order, later to become renowned as the Order of the Asiatic Brethren but known in its first manifestation as Die Ritter vom wahren Licht.

I have no firsthand evidence on the immediate causes for the emergence of this order. Information has been culled from statements of members who became active later. According to them, an erstwhile Franciscan monk, Justus, whose civil name had been Bischoff, had taken a prominent part in its founding. Justus had spent years in the Orient, especially in Jerusalem, where he had struck up an acquaintance with Jewish Cabalists. He studied their disciplines and even obtained from them manuscripts which constituted the source for the Order's theosophic doctrines and ceremonial regulations. Although these details have not been corroborated, the traces of such a personality are very real, so that little if any doubt can be cast on his existence. On another figure, Azariah by name, who is reputed to have given Justus the manuscripts, the evidence is rather doubtful. According to the testimony (which we shall examine presently) of Ephraim Joseph Hirschfeld, Azariah belonged to a cabalistic sect identified, according to another version, as a vestige of the Sabbatai Zevi movement. He entrusted all his affairs to his sons, while he himself traveled from place to place as an emissary of the sect. Nevertheless, even though the connection of the Asiatic brethren with the Sabbatian movement is conclusively proved by another source, as we shall soon see, the personality of Azariah lacks substance; information about him is too meager and full of contradictions. It seems that his existence was invented by members of the Order to lend credence to the assertion that their tradition had come from the Orient. The participation of a third person is beyond all doubt. He was Baron Thomas von Schoenfeld, an apostate Jew, who had made a name for himself as a prolific writer. His participation is prominently featured in the historical description of the Order, and his share in its founding is known from another source. Schoenfeld had much of the character of an adventurer, in both the intellectual and common connotations of the term. He turned up in Paris during the French Revolution and was executed during the Reign of Terror. For the Order of the Asiatic Brethren, Schoenfeld fulfilled the function of copyist and translator of Jewish Cabalistic works. The Order's historian, Franz Josef Molitor, had it by tradition that Schoenfeld was a grandson of R. Jonathan Eybeschütz, whose collection of Sabbatian cabalistic works he had inherited. We, however, are better acquainted with Schoenfeld's pedigree. He was a member of the Dobruschka family of Brunn and was in no way related, either by blood or marriage, to Eybeschütz. Nevertheless, the assertion was not altogether fortuitous for Mosheh Dobruschka, alias Thomas von Schoenfeld, actually had been an active adherent of the Sabbatian

movement. As we shall see later, he incorporated liberal portions of Sabbatian doctrines in the teachings of the Order. It is doubtful whether Ecker und Eckhoffen was capable of distinguishing between the various Cabalistic systems of thought, and it is improbable that he was especially interested in the Order's possessing a specific Sabbatian character. Yet it is equally obvious that he wanted to tie the Order to a tradition derived, in some manner, from the Orient, as the name, "The Asiatic Brethren in Europe," clearly shows. The Order had to possess some novel trait to set it off from the other lodges and orders, and its novelty was the tracing of its descent to some Oriental source. Justus' connections with the East and Schoenfeld's provision of Cabalistic source material gave this contention some semblance of authenticity.

On the other hand, it is also doubtful whether Ecker had ever intended to make his order the catch-all for a mixed society of Jews and gentiles. In his above-mentioned book he had taken issue with the Rosicrucians for sinning against Jews by not accepting them as members unless they were extremely affluent. His present, knightly order was presumably prepared to accept Jews-yet took no steps to pave the road for them to enter. True, the doctrines of the Ritter vom wahren Licht contained elements derived from Cabalistic sources. At this stage, however, the ideas were still clearly subject to Christian interpretation, and no syncretistic tendencies are discernible for merging the two religions. Ecker had intended to present his program for the new order to an assembly of all the Freemasons which was to have gathered in Wilhelmsbad near Hanau in 1782. The assembly had been convened by the head of all the German Masons, Duke Frederick of Brunswick, for the purpose of reviving the movement by introducing improvements in the conduct of its business. In this endeavor, he received the cooperation of the Landgrave Carl von Hessen, who administered the province of Schleswig on behalf of the Danish monarchy. Through Landgrave Carl, Ecker hoped to exert some influence in the forthcoming conference. He traveled to Schleswig at the beginning of 1782 and tried to gain an audience with the Landgrave. What occurred between them is not known. Ecker did not, however, succeed in his quest, since a protest was filed against his appearance in Wilhelmsbad from a prominent quarter in the Berlin lodge. Had Ecker, even then, included in the opening of his constitution any paragraph providing Jews with the prospect of being accepted on an equal level with Christians, he could never have hoped to have his constitution ratified by the conference at large. The tenor of the Berlin protest, too, proves that the Jewish question had nowhere been placed on the agenda. Here the purity of Christianity, which the Masons were obliged strictly to uphold, was at issue. Ecker had been held to have contaminated Christian purity, not by attempting to open the gates of his proposed order to Jews, but by his Rosicrucian activities which were still held against him, and because he had been denounced as a magician consorting with occult powers.

Possibly Ecker's failure to impose his patterns upon the existing lodges impelled him to build new organizational units of his own and, in so doing, he encountered Jewish candidates seeking to join his group. These were, after all, the years when the Edict of Toleration had been promulgated (in Bohemia, in October 1781, and in Austria, in January 1782). In the other German principalities as well, the eighties constituted the period when hopes ran high for a change in the political status of the Jewish community, as an ever greater number of Jews withdrew from the social and religious framework of their own people. The time seemed opportune for the removal of the barriers keeping Jews from joining gentile company and for the founding of a society composed of members of both faiths. The first paragraph of the general constitution of the Asiatic Brethren, which was completed in November 1784, announced the removal of these barriers:

Any brother, irrespective of his religion, class, or system, may join the Order, provided he is an upright person in thought and deed. Since the good and welfare of mankind are the sole purpose of our approach, these cannot be dependent on any other circumstance, be it a man's religion, his birth, or the class into which he has been bred.

The permission to enter presumably was intended for the rich Jews of Vienna and the enlightened Jewries of other cities, who were attracted to Ecker's company for social reasons. It is even more astonishing that Ecker should also have found a Jewish associate who assisted him in promoting the spiritual activities which were to justify the existence of the group.

Having failed in Schleswig, Ecker returned to Austria and took up residence in Innsbruck, in the Tyrol. There he worked to spread the Order until his return to Vienna in 1784, and there he became acquainted with Ephraim Josef Hirschel (later Hirschfeld) who was introduced to him as a rather unusual young Jew, well-educated but persecuted by his coreligionists on account of his ideas. Hirschfeld had been living in Innsbruck since 1782. He was employed as a bookkeeper by the wealthy Jew, Gabriel Uffenheimer, to whom the Tyrolian salt mines had been farmed out. Later, employee and employer quarreled, litigation ensued, and Hirschfeld was awarded a considerable sum of money by the court. While the proceedings were still in progress, he entered the local institution of higher learning and also accepted occasional, part-time employment as teacher and bookkeeper with the local aristocratic families. Through his work, he was brought into contact with the Baron who had him copy the writings of the Order, only to discover that the copyist himself had, in the meantime, become interested in their contents.

We are now familiar with Hirschfeld's origin and early life. He had been born in Karlsruhe. His father was a cantor and Talmudic scholar, author of a work on rabbinic law (novellae on treatises of the Babylonian Talmud), learned in Cabalistic literature, and had produced a Yiddish translation of Rabbi Mosheh Alshekh's commentary on Genesis. The elder Hirschfeld was highly ambitious. He did not live at peace with the local rabbi, Nathaniel Weill, whose commentary he set out to attack in his own work. However, he received the written approbation of prominent rabbinic authorities in other cities, among them the renowned Rabbi Ezekiel Landau of Prague. Most extraordinary of all was the fact that he had prefaced his work with a dedication in German, addressed to the Margrave, Karl Friedrich of Baden—indicating that the father sought to attract the attention of people of high station. His son, Ephraim, reaped the benefit of the father's endeavors, Johann Georg Schlosser, Goethe's brother-in-law and a leading official in the Margrave's service, provided for the son's education, perhaps after the elder Hirschfeld had died. He enrolled him in the local gymnasium and later sent him to the University of Strasbourg to study medicine. Hirschfeld did not complete this course of studies; instead he acquired a grounding in languages, philosophy, and literature and became accomplished in the social graces, a rather unusual feat among his Jewish contemporaries. In addition to the habits acquired through education and training, Hirschfeld possessed unusual innate traits: on the one hand he tended to isolation and solitude, while on the other he excelled in the art of conversation, exuded charm and confidence, and stoutly defended his considered opinions. This combination of features drew attention to him as an original, though somewhat odd, person. After his sojourn in Strasbourg, Hirschfeld moved to Berlin, taking with him the recommendation of his benefactor, Schlosser, to Moses Mendelssohn. There he obtained employment as tutor and bookkeeper in the household of David Friedlander. According to the testimonial given to him by Mendelssohn, when he left Berlin two years later, Hirschfeld had been a frequent visitor in the Mendelssohn home as well as in the homes of the city dignitaries. According to Friedlander's brother-in-law, Isaac Daniel Itzig, Mendelssohn took an interest in Hirschfeld and tried to find an explanation for his strange conduct. (At times he would sit speechless, even in company, behavior which Mendelssohn ascribed to extreme hypochondria.) Mendelssohn befriended Hirschfeld just as he had befriended others who had entered his house and had subsequently developed into admirers and disciples. Hirschfeld, however, was an exception. Apparently he never had subscribed to Mendelssohn's rationalistic doctrines, even when he was closely associated with his mentor, and he later openly turned against them. At all events, he refused to throw in his lot with this circle of intellectuals, which apparently is

the reason there is no record of his stay either in Berlin or Vienna among the written remains of that group. From Berlin, Hirschfeld went to Innsbruck where, as we have seen, he struck up an acquaintance with Ecker. There too he was admitted to the Order of the Asiatics and its spiritual world. Hirschfeld frequently accompanied Ecker on his travels, and so made the acquaintance of other leaders of the Order. In the spring of 1785, he joined Ecker in Vienna and became attached to his home. They became firm friends and constituted, as one of the Vienna circle dubbed them, "a pair of originals."

By the time Hirschfeld joined it, the Order already possessed a written, ratified constitution, and the Vienna group at least was governed by these laws. It is worthwhile to cast a glance over this group and see who (in addition to the founders we have met before) participated in its activities. There were outstanding dignitaries among the non-Jewish members. Molitor mentions the Duke of Lichtenstein, Count Westenburg, Count Thun, and, anonymously, the Austrian Minister of Justice (N.N.).

Another source, relying on hearsay, lists the following: Max Joseph Freiherr von Linden, Otto Freiherr von Gemmingen, Freiherr von Stubitza, and others. The documents in my possession mention several other members by name: J. B. P. Hartenfels, Franz Meltzer, Joseph von Juhósz, Johann Gottlieb Walstein, Franz de Nevoy, Fr. van Ost, Jacob Jg. Zuz. Three of these were army officers; two, court officials; one, a doctor of medicine; neither the status nor occupation of the one remaining is known. As for these Christian members of the Order, Jews would have been only too proud to associate with their class on intimate social terms. Three wealthy Viennese Jews did belong to the Order: Arnstein, Eskeles, and Hunig, and there is no reason for presuming that there were no others. The information concerning this Order comes to us purely incidentally. We have no roster of its members, nor do we know when each individual was initiated into membership and whether it was before or after the arrival of Hirschfeld. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear that Hirschfeld actively endeavored to attract Jews to the Order, and that the three honorable gentlemen were accepted through his intercession. He maintained connections with wealthy bankers and engaged in financial transactions through the agency of Itzig in Berlin, Arnstein's brother-in-law, to the extent that his operations not only benefitted the coffers of the Order but filled his own pockets as well. He became financially independent as a result. In spite of his continuing to live in Ecker's home, credence should be accorded his statement-made after the dissolution of their association-that he gave his hosts more than he took from them.

As time progressed Hirschfeld's functions in the Order of the Asiatics increased. True, the constitution had been completed before he arrived in Vienna and, according to Molitor, who derived his information directly from Hirschfeld, the other, basic writings of the Order were not compiled by him but by Baron Schoenfeld. There were current needs, however, to attend to. Instructions had to be written down, which would guide the members in their "work"; these consisted of reflective interpretations of the symbols, word and letter combinations, and so on. Consistent with the origin of the doctrine of the Asiatics as a whole, the material for this spiritual activity, too, had been culled from Cabalistic literature. Very few members were at all familiar with these writings, and the group had been forced to rely on Justus and Baron Schoenfeld. Hirschfeld claimed to have received his instruction in gaining understanding of this literature from the former, but it is possible that he had acquired the rudiments from his own father. Some time later, he wrote a book incorporating Cabalistic concepts. It should not be assumed however that he really understood Cabalistic systems with any profundity. Yet he was a "discovery" as far as Ecker was concerned. Until then, Ecker had been utterly dependent on Schoenfeld, who had exploited his advantage by exacting, whatever remuneration he wished. Now Schoenfeld was challenged by a competitor. Hirschfeld's abilities, however, fell short of the work he was required to perform, and so he conceived the idea of inviting his younger brother, Pascal-who was apparently better qualified, since his education had centered mainly in studying the Jewish traditional sources-to join him. (Pascal

was, however, his brother's inferior in personality traits and mental powers.) As a result of the presence of the two brothers, Schoenfeld was relegated to an insignificant position in the Order. Some time later he was expelled from the Vienna circle, though as we shall see, he did not sever his connections with the members altogether.

From 1785 to 1787, the two brothers served more or less as secretaries to the Order, and Ephraim Joseph was dignified by the title of *Oker Harim* (literally, "uprooter of Mountains). The various offices, too, were designated by Hebrew terms, and the members were addressed by names culled from Hebraic sources. Heinrich von Ecker was called Abraham: his brother, Israel: Justus, Ish Zaddik (righteous person), and Baron von Schoenfeld, Isaac ben Joseph. The use of the Hebrew language was no novelty, since this had been an accepted practice among Freemasons. The latter, however, generally restricted their choice to Biblical expressions, while the former drew upon the vocabulary of rabbinic literature, an indication that Jews who had received a traditional education exercised a considerable influence. In their use of alien concepts, the Asiatics differed from the other Freemasons, whose reliance on Hebrew was intended only to surround Masonic activities with an exotic aura. Here it was intended to give prominence to the Jewish element incorporated in the Order. The full purpose of this custom is exposed by the fact that Hebrew names were assigned to Christian members only, while Jews were given names with Christian overtones. In their decision to admit Jews, the Asiatics relied upon the well known paragraph of the English Masonic constitution, which limited the religious qualifications for membership to the universal principles common to all the sons of Noah. In contradistinction to the English lodges, however, Jews and Christians were not accepted here without regard to their denominations. The two religions were not ignored. The intention was to extract principles from both faiths and to create from the combination a composite pattern of ideas which would serve as a basis on which the ceremonial procedures in which Christian and Jewish symbols both played their parts could be constructed.

In theory, the Order of the Asiatics had not been founded as a substitute for Freemasonry but to construct an upper level above the regular Masonic structure. The assumption was that the members had already become familiar with the three main levels of Masonic lore and that a new order had come into being which promised to open doors to additional mysteries. In this respect, the Asiatics were following the example of, among others, the Scottish rite, which also had been constructed over and above the three original degrees of the Masonic order. This is the implication of the sentence, quoted above, from the first paragraph of the constitution that members would be accepted regardless of their religion, class, or "system"-the last term referring to the "system" of the Masonic lodge through which the candidate had previously passed. Yet, to follow this procedure in practice was quite difficult. Jews had not been permitted to become Freemasons; they should therefore have been ineligible for membership in the Order of the Asiatics.

It appears either that Ecker exerted considerable effort to pave the way for Jews to enter the Masonic brotherhood, or that he deluded Jewish dignitaries into believing that his efforts might meet with some success. Yet anyone who might have given credence to his assurances was doomed to disappointment. The regular lodges were still barred to Jews. If the leaders of the Order of the Asiatics desired to follow the practice of admitting only former Masons, they would have to find some substitute to serve the needs of the Jews. A solution was found. Special Melchizedek lodges, so called to distinguish them from those named after John the Baptist, were founded. The writings of the Order of the Asiatics speak of the Melchizedek rite as well-known, the proof being that "Jews, Turks, Persians, Armenians, and Copts labor in it." Yet, as we shall see later, this was an invention, a makeshift measure, but sufficient to show that some effort was being made to include Jews in the same order as gentiles. Jewish admission was made conditional, however, in practice if not in theory, on the candidate's relinquishing the Judaism prevailed at that time.

The ideology of the Asiatic Brethren has been subjected to a critical analysis by Professor Gershom Scholem. His study has revealed that on its theoretical level this ideology was a conglomeration of principles drawn from Christian and Jewish sources. Cabalistic and Sabbatian ideas were jumbled together with Christian theosophic doctrines. The same applied to symbols and festive and memorial days, which were fundamental to the activities of the various degrees of the Order. Along with Christian holidays, such as Christmas and John the Apostle's Day, Jewish festivals, such as the anniversaries of the birth and death of Moses, of the Exodus, and of the Giving of the Law, were celebrated. The Christian Asiatic, however, did not have to suffer pangs of conscience. He could easily have regarded himself as completely faithful to the tenets of his religion-and even look upon himself as reverting to the same pristine form of Christianity which was preserved within Judaism. The Jew, on the other hand, could hardly remain oblivious to the fact that he was trespassing beyond the boundaries of his own traditions. The adoption of Christian symbols could on no account be reconciled with the doctrines of Judaism. And, if these acts were not a sufficiently serious breach of his faith, he was also required, as a member of the Order, to eat pork with milk as part of some solemn celebration. Even the most ignorant of Jews was fully aware that he was thereby violating a law of his own religion. Such antinomian tendencies could only be found in Sabbatian conceptions, and this influence, as we have seen before, was clearly prevalent. The apostate and Sabbatian Moses Dobrushka-Schoenfeld served as the transmission line, carrying this influence to the Order of the Asiatics. Others too may have possessed a similar Sabbatian background, and their sectarian past paved the way for their participation in a Judeo-Christian society which had adopted their previous doctrines and observances.

The readiness of the Jewish members to transgress the boundaries of their religion might have been derived from another source. Hirschfeld had become estranged from Jewish observance even before he made the acquaintance of the Asiatic Brethren. His sojourn among the "enlightened" Berlin Jews and his earlier academic career at the gymnasium and university might very likely have led him away from his past. The other members of the Order were not known as past Sabbatians, but rather as adherents of the disintegrating tendencies of the Haskalah which, explicitly or tacitly, provided the justification for abandoning Jewish traditions. The histories of the Itzig and Arnstein families in Berlin and Vienna respectively furnish a clear example of this process of alienation, which impelled many to forsake Judaism altogether and left others behind, with their bearings lost and the security of their environment destroyed. The lost souls of the latter group were easy targets for recruitment in orders of the Asiatic Brethren variety, since such an association offered them a new social haven, beyond the borders of Judaism, but where they were not called upon to sever their former connections and to adopt Christianity. The religious syncretism of the Order, which might be interpreted as according a status to Judaism within Christianity, was less of a restraint and more of a stimulus and an attraction.

The Masonic orders were not local organizations. Their tentacles penetrated into numerous cities and countries. Following suit, the founders of the new order also sought to spread beyond the limits of Vienna. But Ecker failed in his attempt to establish his order as a superstructure for all German Freemasons, and was forced to divert his efforts to the founding of new societies in various localities. We have already met him between 1783 and 1785, traveling through Austrian and German cities, conducting his propaganda tour. As to the measure of his success, we have no reliable information: still, it seems to have been considerable. The center of the movement remained in Vienna until the end of 1786 or the beginning of 1787. There the "Sanhedrin" which governed the order had its seat. It was a body composed of seven members as well as several officeholders and salaried employees. The "Sanhedrin" delegated powers to the heads of the districts-four in number-for all of Europe and these heads conferred authorization on the individual cells in their respective regions.

In theory, restrictive entrance requirements and a certain measure of supervision were

supposed to be enforced by the "Sanhedrin." In practice, however, membership and new lodge authorizations were granted with the utmost generosity. We know of the existence of Asiatic lodges in Prague, Innsbruck, Berlin, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. The *Encyclopedie der Freimaurerei*, published in 1822, mentions that the cities of Wetzlar and Marburg were teeming with devotees of the Order. A strong chapter must have existed in Prague, although we have almost no information on it. In Innsbruck the society was composed of the local aristocracy. As for Berlin, the sources yield only the name of Itzig, but other relevant literature mentions Bischofswerder, Wullner, and even the Crown Prince, who was later to become King Frederick William. From Hirschfeld's 1787 visit to Frankfurt we learn of a lodge in that city; its members are not referred to by their real names, but by the pseudonyms conferred on them by their lodges, better known are the Hamburg brethren. Here lived Carl, Ecker's younger brother. He had been an active Mason even before the Order of the Asiatic Brethren came into existence. In his attitude toward Jews he showed himself ready to follow in his brother's footsteps. In 1783 he founded a lodge which admitted two Jewish members: Isaac Oppenheimer and Gottschalk Samson. This society was short-lived, but two years later Carl von Ecker founded a new lodge, which was formally initiated in December 1785. His older brother, who lived in Vienna, happened to be in Hamburg on that occasion and he persuaded the group to join the Order of the Asiatics. The 1786 membership roster gives the names, ages, occupations, and class of twenty-four persons, no distinguished persons are included, for, unlike Vienna, Hamburg was not the residence of high nobility. Eight of the names, however, bore the prefix "von"; the others too seem to have been borne by men of substance, to judge by their occupations: bankers, merchants, physicians, and even a clergyman. Six can definitely be identified as Jews. Beside Samson, mentioned previously, they are Isaac Guggenheimer, Jacob Gutz, Wolf Nathan Liepmann, Hirsch Wolf, and Marcus Jacob Schlesinger. Two were bankers; two merchants; one a court agent; one a physician. With the exception of the physician, Hirsch Wolf, these Jews were not among the culturally distinguished of the generation. Their principal title to membership rested on their readiness to support the Order financially and their aspirations to rub shoulders with non-Jews.

From data on the Hamburg and Vienna groups, we can project conclusions about the other cities where branches of the Order were established. Its swift spread is a clear indication of the internal disintegration of a specific stratum of Jewish society in Western Europe. We must also take notice of the fact that a certain section of non-Jewish society was ready to establish social and spiritual contact with Jews. Yet we should not exaggerate the dimensions of this section, even for the period of greatest social progress, the eighties and nineties of the eighteenth century. Only a few years after the Order of the Asiatics had been founded, its declared policy of including Jews and gentiles together in a single group framework was challenged.

The first public attack on the principle of equality in Freemasonry was launched in Hamburg in an eight-page brochure. According to its title, it purported to convey "unbiased and basic information on Jewish Masonic lodges and other secret societies in Hamburg." The author describes the admission of Jews into the local lodges as a startling innovation. Until that time even unauthorized lodges had categorically refused to accept Jews, since these lodges too assented to the basic Masonic doctrine that Jesus Christ was the cornerstone of their structure. Yet now certain lodges wished to enjoy the benefits of Jewish wealth, and whispered in Jewish ears that, in return for 100 reichsthaler, admission to the Masonic order could be obtained. According to the author, this hunt for souls was undertaken in the name of a certain prince, a Masonic *Grossordensmeister*, who had ordered that Jews be accepted from now on, "since sufferance and tolerance now prevailed universally." Hardly any doubt remains that the prince in question was Carl von Hessen, who, as we shall soon see, became the *Grossmeister* of the Asiatics, and who could be described as tending to show tolerance to Jews. The founder of the lodge open to Jews must have been Ecker. Essentially the observations of

the anonymous author agree with what is known to us from other quarters. He must have drawn his information from firsthand sources and was even aware that the initiation ceremony was concluded with a meal at which pork was served.

The author was not as much interested to inform as to condemn. He scorned the Jews for having accepted the offer, as they usually did, but refusing to pay the price. His bitterest resentment was reserved for the founder of the lodge who had removed the restrictions against Jews entering the Masonic movement. He wanted to focus the attention of the city government on what had taken place in the hope of having an end put to this state of affairs. That same year a reply was issued. The rebuttal did not deny a single allegation of the brochure. It rejected the slurs on Jewish behavior as being applicable only to the crude masses. In defending the existing practice, the rebuttal points to the custom of the English lodges which had never discriminated between Jew and gentile. It is most reasonable to assume that the author of the reply was none other than Carl van Ecker himself.

This minor controversy which occurred in Hamburg in 1786 may be regarded as the opening shot in a crushing barrage which rained down upon the heads of the Order of the Asiatics a year later. We have already noted that Heinrich van Ecker had come from Vienna to Hamburg to attend the induction ceremony of his brother Carl's lodge. The older brother's journey to northern Germany had a clear, deliberate purpose: he was seeking the protection for his Order of one of the princes who had some sympathy for Freemasonry and its mystic ramifications. Such persons were Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick and the Landgrave, Carl von Hessen, and Heinrich tried his luck with both. He was in sore need of this protection, since his personal standing and the existence of the entire Order in Vienna had been put in jeopardy. The heads of the Freemasons (they belonged to the uppermost classes and had influence in government circles) had fought the Order of the Asiatics from its very inception. By the end of 1785 they had succeeded in persuading Kaiser Joseph II to promulgate a law which would have placed all Masonic lodges under strict government supervision. Ecker sought to nip this threat in the bud by finding refuge in royal patronage elsewhere, and in Schleswig he found a sympathetic response on the part of the Landgrave, Carl von Hessen, with whom he had exchanged words previously. All his life Carl had longed to uncover the secrets hidden in Masonic doctrine, and he believed Ecker's assertion that these were known to the members of the Asiatic Order. He therefore consented to become the head of the Order, and invited Ecker, and through him, Hirschfeld, to come and settle in Schleswig. Hirschfeld's brother, Pascal, remained for the time being in Vienna. Some time later, Prince Ferdinand too responded, and Carl, the younger of the brothers, left Hamburg to join the Prince's court in Brunswick.

The removal of the center of the Order to Schleswig alerted the Masons outside of Hamburg. At the time, Schleswig was under Danish tutelage and Carl von Hessen exercised his office as the deputy of the Danish King. Freemasons in Copenhagen, afraid lest the Order of the Asiatics acquire influence in their territory, resolved to oppose it openly and expose its nature in public. This was not difficult to do. The members of the Order had not been at all particular in whom they admitted. Their constitution was therefore not properly guarded and was passed from hand to hand. The Copenhagen Masons decided to publish the entire constitution together with an introduction and critical notes, so as to show how far the new Order had strayed from the authentic principles of Freemasonry. A person capable of handling the assignment was found, and the book, *Authentische Nachrichtl von den Ritter und Bruder --Eingeweihten aus Asien, Zur Beherzigund fur Freymaurern*, was published anonymously in 1787. The author, however, son of a local Protestant clergyman, is known to have been Friedrich M̄nter, a Freemason, who afterward became famous as an Oriental scholar and the Bishop of Copenhagen.

In his introduction, inter associated the Order of the Asiatics with the occult current in Rosicrucianism which had achieved notoriety for its extortion of money from the gullible and

for its frauds and swindles. Admittedly, the members of the Order of the Asiatics had held themselves out as opposed to the Rosicrucians, but the two were, in truth, of the same type. Their common feature was their pursuit of spurious, secret doctrines which confused minds and dulled senses. Munter spoke in the name of reason, of the sciences and philosophy of the enlightenment, which alone were the guarantees for the freedom, truth, and happiness of mankind. Hand in hand with these disciplines went rational theology, which stood in no need of any allegorical or mystical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, which claimed authority "in spite of human intelligence." Munter represented the position of the educated and enlightened Christian. What does occasion surprise is that this position, which had normally served as the starting point for a closer approach to Jews, now became his pretext for opposing the opening of the lodge doors to Jews.

Munter appended his notes to paragraph after paragraph of the constitution of the Order of the Asiatics. As for the paragraph which allowed Jews to be accepted in Melchizedek lodges from where they would become eligible for membership in the Order of the Asiatics, he attacked it from all sides. Jews were never, according to him, admitted into legitimate lodges conducted in accordance with the laws of the Grand Lodge of London. The exceptions were a few lodges in Holland, and they had acted illegally in this instance. The other lodges which had accepted Jews had never been granted authorization. He asserted that it was an established rule among all Freemasons, regardless of their rite, that only Christians were eligible, "and the entire constitution of the Order is predicated on this principle." As for the Melchizedek lodges, they were a pure invention of the Order of the Asiatics. Their story that such lodges existed in Oriental countries and included "Jews, Turks, Persians, Armenians, and Copts" was a figment of the imagination, intended to legalize the entry of Jews into the Masonic lodges in the European countries. Thoroughly familiar with Masonic affairs, Munter possessed in addition a keen sense for historical criticism. In this remark, he had undoubtedly hit upon the truth. Hirschfeld himself later conceded that the Melchizedek lodges existed only in the mind of Heinrich von Ecker.

Munter's vigorous attack produced its effect. The Ecker brothers took the attack to be directed at them. Heinrich's name had been mentioned explicitly by Munter as one who had been an active member of the Order in Vienna and was now living in Schleswig. Heretofore the brothers had always been mentioned in the same breath and each was made to suffer for the sins of the other. Both depended for their positions on the existence of the Order -- Heinrich because he had been invited by Duke Carl of Schleswig as a result of the latter's belief in the truth of the Asiatic doctrines, and Carl because the group flourishing in Hamburg provided him with his keep. Now, however, the representatives of the Order had been portrayed as money grubbers and the Order itself as possessing a false and confused ideology. It was not surprising that both felt constrained to reply. Heinrich compiled a book of one hundred pages to which he appended his full name, while Carl published his eighty-page reply anonymously.

Possibly the brothers deliberately divided the functions between them. On the other hand, each might, on his own, have replied to those accusations which affected his personal circumstances. Heinrich, who had made his future dependent upon Duke Carl's belief in the spiritual benefit lying hidden in the ideology of the order, denied Munter's accusations on this aspect. He admitted the existence of the Order openly and even proudly. He delineated its history during the past generation and alluded to a prior genealogy from which the Order, as it now existed, had descended. All this argument was obviously intended to support the contention that the Order of the Asiatics indeed had access to the true interpretations of all Masonic symbolism. Such interpretations also entailed uncovering the very secrets of nature itself, and, although the Asiatics were not alchemists seeking to produce gold, they were nevertheless "far-seeing investigators of nature, possessing profound insights." They sought to be no more than a group "engaged in the ultimate deciphering of all Masonic hieroglyphics,

and as a group they occupied themselves, with all the truths and cognitions of natural things following from that." This modest claim advanced on behalf of the Order was calculated to pacify its adherents: as for Duke Carl, there was no limit to his credulity. For if it was true that the Asiatics possessed knowledge of the secrets of the world, then all other possible deficiencies, were of no account in comparison. Heinrich von Ecker dealt only cursorily with Munter's other accusations. He referred in passing to the Jewish question. He denied, though not too vigorously, that the Asiatics had founded lodges of their own to provide themselves with members. But he flatly contradicted Munter's allegation that Jews had never been accepted in legitimate lodges. He himself cited the names of three Jews who had been admitted into the movement—one in London, one in Paris, and one in Gibraltar, where many Jews visit the lodges."

What was of minor importance to Heinrich was of major significance to his brother. Carl hardly touched on the question of the Asiatic Order. He contented himself with the assertion that there did indeed exist higher degrees than the basic three of the Masonic movement, and that those who reached these higher levels were vouchsafed revelations not disclosed even to the best among the Masons. It was therefore quite possible that the Order of the Asiatics did in fact contain these higher degrees. Nevertheless, preparation in the three Masonic levels was a precondition for ascending to the higher degrees. Yet what were the prerequisites for the acceptance of members in the Masonic lodges themselves? Munter had asserted that such acceptance depended upon the candidate's adherence to the Christian faith, and so Jews were ipso facto excluded. This contention Carl von Ecker undertook to dispute, as the title of his work explicitly shows: *Werden und können Israeliten zu Freymaurern aufgenommen werden?* (Would and should Israelites be accepted as Freemasons?). This was the first time that the problem had been aired in public, and Ecker's book was the beginning of a whole series of publications which took up the question during the succeeding generations. Ecker's affirmative answer to this question was the fruit of the prevailing circumstances of his time and his locality.

Like Heinrich, Carl refuted Munter's contention that lodges using the English rite had never accepted Jews. In England Jews had been and were still being granted membership. He mentioned the names of Jews known to him personally, which had appeared in the publications of the English lodges. For added support, he reprinted the authorization conferred by an English lodge on a Jew named David Hertz, in London, on July 24, 1787. Those lodges which had accepted Jews conducted themselves in accordance with the original principle of Freemasonry, and here Carl von Ecker quoted the paragraphs of the constitutions discussed in Chapter II. It was true that most of the lodges in Germany and some in France and Italy had deviated from this principle. It had been acknowledged by the German Freemasons that no lodge could legally function unless it had been authorized by the Grand Lodge of London. Yet they had adapted their constitutions to the conditions existing in their respective states, and these circumstances had been responsible for Jews being excluded from the lodges since, in Germany, discrimination against Jews was prevalent even among Freemasons, occasioned by religious fanaticism or hypocrisy or from fear of attacks by fanatics. The barring of Jews and the prejudice against them also stemmed from their inferior political status, for Jews had not been granted citizenship in the states where they lived.

So far the defense rested on blaming the opponents of the Jews. Yet German Jews themselves were guilty to some extent. They lagged behind their brethren in England, France, and Italy. They did not follow the law of Moses, but observed absurd rabbinical customs. Carl found fault even with the enlightened Jews. These ostentatiously paraded their culture, yet found difficulty in liberating themselves from their original mentality. They forced themselves to discuss scientific topics, while their attention remained riveted on mortgage foreclosures and bad debts. Their very singsong intonation set them apart from the rest of civilized society.

It is worthwhile to examine this argument in its various aspects. Here we have a description of

an intense emotional revulsion in which elements of actual impressions are mixed with stereotyped imagination. Such portrayals emerge quite frequently in contemporaneous literature, which dealt extensively with the Jewish problem and the possibility of Jews being allowed to enter Christian society. Among those in favor of granting civil rights to Jews, revulsion was coupled with the rational reflection that a change could occur in the future. Carl von Ecker adopted this attitude, and so he was able to justify opening the doors of the lodges to Jews. At bottom human nature was the same. "Christians and non-Christians alike are suitable for this instruction [of the Freemasons] which includes, basically, what is known as the law of nature which is impressed on the heart of man by God:" Christians, however, must take the first step. Since they have oppressed the Jews for so many generations, they are now obliged to restore human dignity and civil rights to Jews and to remove from the latter all the blemishes, which had become attached to them as a result of their exclusion from society. A special responsibility devolves upon the Freemasons. "Why bar the way to Freemasonry against this people-the only way perhaps to enlightenment, the way through which they will more easily become reconciled with the rest of the human family and through which they will mend their habits and refine their ways of thinking?" Hamburg Jews, who belonged to the lodge headed by Ecker, could then see themselves as marching steadily forward, as a result of their Masonic membership, toward integration in the general, human society. And so they certainly did regard themselves at the time.

Carl von Ecker pointed to the anomalous situation. Precisely those lodges which acknowledged no other Masonic authority than that derived from the Grand Lodge of London were the ones to deny the principles of that very Grand Lodge in matters affecting Jews. It is no less paradoxical to see the representatives of the Order of the Asiatics, so utterly removed from the rationalism of English Freemasonry, justify the admission of Jews by reference to that rite. In actuality, principles, tendencies, beliefs, and ulterior motives, all together in utter disorder, influenced Masonic attitudes toward Jews, so it should not be surprising to find in the history of the Asiatic lodges twisting and vacillating and a lack of consistency.

The representatives of the Order apparently stood the test successfully. They had publicly defended the right of Jews to be admitted to their society and to all Masonic lodges. The Jewish participant in the leadership of the organization, Ephraim Joseph Hirschfeld, maintained his position in Schleswig, and we find him there fulfilling an important part in the functioning of the Order. Sent in 1787 by Duke Carl, he had undertaken an extensive tour on behalf of the Order. He traveled to Frankfurt and from there, by way of Nuremberg and Regensburg, to Prague and Vienna. After his return, he settled in Schleswig, but still maintained contact with Hamburg. The center of the movement was now located in northern Germany: in Schleswig under the patronage of Carl von Hessen, and in Brunswick under the patronage of Duke Ferdinand. Senior officials in Carl's administration were active in the Order, and Hirschfeld made friends even on this level of society. There, as in Vienna, his function was to provide the Order with exercises in meditation culled from Cabalistic printed works and manuscripts. Although he had drawn upon others and had even accepted assistance from his brother when he was in Vienna, in Schleswig he relied, at least during the earlier years, upon his own resources. To this end, he fortified himself during his Frankfurt sojourn with the necessary textbooks. It is doubtful whether anyone else in Schleswig was capable of reading a Hebrew book or of expounding the texts of the Order which had been compiled by the founders in Vienna and were based on Cabalistic writings. The members needed to understand the doctrines of their Order, and so they, and Duke Carl, their leader, were forced to depend on Hirschfeld. His position now seemed secure because he was indispensable.

Nevertheless, Hirschfeld did not enjoy peace and quiet in his new home. He was obviously more isolated in Schleswig than he had been in Vienna. Here he was an alien, a foreigner,

probably the only Jew in the group. Although the Ecker brothers had defended the principle of equality in their Order, the Schleswig members were reluctant to accept its validity. Some were of the opinion that, although Jewish members already in the Order should not be expelled, new applicants should not be admitted in large numbers. According to Hirschfeld's own account, the Schleswig "Sanhedrin" rejected a Jewish candidate on the grounds of his religion, and Hirschfeld undertook the defense of the principle and the struggle to have it implemented in practice.

This information is corroborated by another source which recounts an incident occurring in Hamburg. Carl van Ecker sought to obtain Masonic authorization for his Order from Ferdinand of Brunswick, and the latter made the granting of his authorization dependent upon the expulsion of Jewish members from the group. Duke Carl, who wanted to save the Jewish members, proposed that they be organized in a separate lodge named Melchizedek, such membership being intended to confer the right on Jews to visit Christian lodges. Carl thereby acknowledged the distinction instituted between two types of lodges by the Order of the Asiatics, but without raising the status of Jews to equality with Christians. The Jewish members of the Order, whose number had risen to twenty, rejected the proposal and left the Order.

Duke Carl tried to placate the Jews, but not at the expense of his connections with Christianity. Though he longed to learn the meanings of the secrets by having recourse to Jewish sources, he believed that such revelations would lead him to truths that were basically Christian. Heinrich von Ecker, too, adapted himself to the Schleswig atmosphere and made sure that he was seen reading Scripture with all due Christian fervor.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that Hirschfeld began to feel that he was a victim of discrimination. Although rumors spread upon occasion that he had been or had appeared to be converted to Christianity, the truth is that he refrained from taking this step. Even in his religious position he remained an exception, as we shall see later. Not everyone considered this a fault, and several persons in Schleswig were attracted to his unique personality. Nevertheless, here as in every court society, social standing was determined by the mere fact of a man's belonging to a particular class or religion. Carl von Ecker's friendship for the Jew availed him nothing. The honors conferred on Ecker, the noble, were denied to Hirschfeld, the Jew. Social discrimination strained their relations and in the end led to an open breach between the two old friends.

Details and minutiae of the quarrel and the resulting litigation do not fall within the scope of this discussion. In brief, Hirschfeld sued Ecker for the payment of debts owing to him, and Ecker, in turn, accused Hirschfeld of threatening his life in the presence of Duke Carl. As the trial progressed, it became evident that Ecker was exerting an increasingly strong influence on the Duke and the officials conducting the proceedings. Distraint was levied on Hirschfeld's personal effects and the manuscript in his possession, and he was placed under house arrest. The Order of the Asiatics, too, turned its back on the very person who had once been its central spiritual pillar. It was resolved to expel Hirschfeld from the Order, and a circular was sent to all branches explaining why this disciplinary action had been taken. The legal proceedings and the act of expulsion clearly reveal anti-Jewish overtones and warrant our attention as evidence that the social status acquired by Jews. Even in a marginal group such as the Order of the Asiatics, was of a doubtful nature.

In the course of the trial both parties gave accounts of the history of their association and cooperative efforts. Ecker did not fail to relate how he had promoted Hirschfeld, even in Innsbruck, despite his Jewishness. To refute Hirschfeld's contention that he had given him financial assistance in Vienna and Innsbruck, and not vice versa, Ecker invited high-level acquaintances to submit their testimony in writing. Many of these letters reek with contempt for the Jew, Hirschfeld--and undoubtedly echo Ecker's call for aid in his suit as a wronged

noble against a Jewish extortioner. One of the Innsbruck writers stated quite bluntly that in his locality no Jew would have the audacity to institute legal proceedings against a nobleman of the social eminence of Ecker und Eckhoffen.

A similar tone is sounded in the notification of the Order of Hirschfeld's expulsion. He was accused, among other things, of having imposed a Jewish, Cabala-derived pattern on the rites of the Order. The authors of the circular acknowledged the value of Cabala as a source for Masonic meditation, but argued that the object of these intellectual exercises should have been to lead the Christian far beyond the limits attainable by a Jew. Nor was this all. I do not have the complete text of the circular, but the reaction to it --other than on the part of Hirschfeld-- shows clearly that its arguments could have proved injurious to all the Jewish members of the Order.

What is most interesting about Hirschfeld as a person and the stand he took is, that, although he was most sensitive to, and would defend himself most vigorously against, any affront to his honor, he did not regard himself as being attacked as a Jew. Nor apparently did he feel that his Jewishness had played any part in the deterioration of his position. Once his doom had overtaken him and he was imprisoned, he turned wherever he could to prove that he was innocent and had not committed any crime. Yet nowhere is there any indication that he had been made to suffer because he was a Jew. This might have been sheer simulation, yet it is possible that his fervent desire to regard himself above any Jewish-Christian conflict may have inhibited him psychologically from identifying his lot with that of his people. This neutral attitude may have crystallized within Hirschfeld over the course of years. In his reply to the circular's accusation he denied that the Cabala was dependent on any positive religion, and argued that anyone, be he Catholic, Moslem, or Jew, who occupied himself with it would thereby pass beyond the confines of his specific religious tradition and reach "the one and only, true, pure, and over-all religion. It is also true in this instance that he was here giving Carl von Hessen, to whom he had addressed his reply, the grounds to believe that the Christian would eventually find, in the authentic wisdom of the Cabala, the truths of Christianity heretofore concealed from the ordinary member of that religion. In his distress, Hirschfeld went so far as to deny his own conception, which had been based on the belief that there was a single, mystic wisdom common to all religions.

Hirschfeld's oblivious attitude to the attacks upon him as a Jew was not shared by all the Jewish members of the Order. We know of the reaction of one of the more important members, the wealthy Berlin banker, Itzig, previously mentioned as being active. He was one of those to whom Hirschfeld had appealed to extricate him from his present predicament. By using his influence with the royal court, Itzig could have obtained a Prussian government position for Hirschfeld who would then have enjoyed diplomatic immunity. Instead of this wild plan, Itzig tried a more direct approach. He addressed a long letter to Carl von Hessen to intercede on behalf of the distressed Hirschfeld. He praised Hirschfeld's character and cited Moses Mendelssohn's encouragement of him as a young man in Berlin. Itzig also indicated that he was prepared to defray any costs involved in settling Hirschfeld's affair with Ecker, if financial considerations were in fact involved.

Itzig's plea did not refer to the personal instance of Hirschfeld alone. He also submitted his own claims to the Duke in respect to the anti-Jewish accusations which had risen above surface in the publications of the Order dealing with the Hirschfeld affair. Itzig protested most vehemently against the insults hurled against "the entire Jewish people, and especially the Jewish brethren" of the Order." How can a few individuals have the effrontery to cast aspersions for the second time upon a people with whom they have no acquaintance and which has no acquaintance with them?" Such an attempt had in fact been made once before in the worthless pamphlet *Werden und können Israeliten zu Freymaurern aufgenommen werden?* Itzig's remarks prove that the negative portrayal of Jewish character by Carl von Ecker at the time in his brochure had not gone unnoticed, at least by the Jewish members of

the Order. It also proves that the circular contained some of the very allegations disseminated by the pamphlet, and that both had issued from a common source--the hands of the Ecker brothers. The whole affair throws a lurid light upon the true nature of the tolerance of the Eckers and their like. This was a product of cold, intellectual calculation to be destroyed by the first, emotional outburst fanned by personal considerations.

We do not know whether Itzig's protest made any impression on the Duke. Help reached Hirschfeld from an unexpected quarter. His antagonist, Heinrich von Ecker, suddenly died in August 1791, before the trial had ended. Even before that, help had been extended to Hirschfeld in the field of communication by the publication of a book entitled *Der Asiatic in seiner Blossse oder grundlicher Beweis dass die Ritter und Bruder Eingeweihten aus Asien aechte Rosenkreuzer sind* (The Asiatic in his nakedness, or a thoroughgoing demonstration that the initiated Knights and Brethren from Asia are genuine Rosicrucians). This served as the last stage of the controversy over the acceptance of Jews into Masonic lodges, at least at this period of the history of the problem.

The booklet was anonymous both in respect of its author and the place of publication. The author proceeds to attack the Order and especially the Ecker brothers on the basis of new material which had not been available to the author of the *Authentische Nachrichten*. He adduces numerous proofs for the assertion that the Asiatics merely constitute a manifestation of the former Rosicrucians. He reverts to the question whether Jews are fit for membership, not in the Freemasons this time, but in the Asiatic brotherhood. He argues that they had been deceived, since they had been induced to swear allegiance to Jesus the Redeemer and his laws. Now the author had failed to detect the syncretistic intent of the Order, and so he hoped that some Jew would come forward, divest himself of the false oath he had been unwittingly tricked into swearing, and expose the Order's secrets in public. It is almost certain that he had good reason to believe that this would happen. Taking a definite stand on the Hirschfeld-Ecker controversy, he argued that all the wisdom of the Asiatic Order had been derived from Marcus ben Binah, alias Hirschfeld, whom in the end the very Asiatics themselves had persecuted and imprisoned. He called upon the Christian Freemasons to rally to the rescue of the victim, but at the same time indicated another means to secure his release. Pascal, Hirschfeld's brother, was still alive. Let him threaten to disclose all the secrets of the Order unless his brother was freed.

Ecker's death put an end to Hirschfeld's confinement. He proceeded to make peace with the Duke, and later effected reconciliation with Carl von Ecker as well. The Duke granted him an annuity in lieu of the debt owed him by the deceased Ecker, and still took an interest in Cabalistic material supplied by Hirschfeld, as well as in his advice on the times, favorable and unfavorable, for engaging in its study. But Hirschfeld never was restored to his former standing in the Order, the Duke himself stipulating that he was to keep away. In addition to the previous resentment against him, Hirschfeld was now suspected of having been the author of the expose, *Der Asiatic*, which had subjected the Order to such vicious attack. To clear himself of the suspicion, he undertook to write a pamphlet which would demolish all the arguments of *Der Asiatic*. Work on this reply became bogged down, and Hirschfeld, was called upon to explain his inaction. The truth is that he was probably not the author, but had only supplied the author with the material in his brother's possession to prepare his defense. No wonder his stay in Schleswig had become uncomfortable! But he had become burdened with debt--probably because of the expense of the litigation--and was unable to leave. He relied on his tested means: an urgent call for help went out to his former groups in Berlin and Vienna, and they hastened to his rescue.

In February 1792 there appeared in Schleswig a person referred to as I. Ben Jos. He was introduced by Hirschfeld as a leading member of the order. Having heard of, but never having seen him, the Schleswig brethren found it difficult to believe that he existed. This leading brother paid 550 thaler to discharge Hirschfeld's debts, and now all barriers to departure

were gone. Hirschfeld wanted to take advantage of the presence of his guest to gain prestige. Unfortunately the Landgrave Carl was not home at the time. So Hirschfeld introduced him to all the other important members, and then took him to Brunswick, hoping to introduce him to Duke Ferdinand. There they dined at the table of Carl von Ecker. During the meal the guest was identified as a Jew. Though he neither denied nor admitted the fact, all hope for an audience with the Duke vanished. Thereupon, Hirschfeld and the leading brother left northern Germany, and we find them in Strasbourg in May or thereabout. There they parted company. Hirschfeld returned to Germany, arriving in Karlsruhe, his birthplace, in the middle of June. There he waited for the promised return of the leading brother.

Who was this obscure person? Molitor's account gives the solution by relating that Hirschfeld had accompanied Thomas van Schoenfeld to Strasbourg: (where they made the acquaintance of the famous spiritualist St. Martin, author of *Des erreurs et de la verite*). From another source we learn that Schoenfeld arrived in Strasbourg in March 1793, and that from then onwards he appeared under the name of Junius Frey. The data agree, and the facts leave no room for doubt. What can reasonably be deduced from them is that Hirschfeld's appeal to the veteran members of the group led them to summon the aid of the arch-adventurer Thomas von Schoenfeld. He came to Schleswig from the city of "P.," that is, Prague, by way of Vienna, Berlin, and Hamburg. Certainly he did not draw the money to discharge Hirschfeld's debts from his own pocket. The money had been raised among the rich brethren in Vienna and Berlin, who had involved themselves in the issue and rallied to Hirschfeld's aid. Schoenfeld took the opportunity to cross into France--or else this was his original destination, and his mission to Schleswig was later incorporated into his itinerary. It is a fact that his brother and sister joined him in Paris when he arrived there in the middle of June. Hirschfeld waited for him in Karlsruhe. Declaring later that he had seen his bitter end in a dream. Hirschfeld claimed that Schoenfeld might have been engaged in a mission on behalf of the Austrian government. This suspicion may have been well founded; yet it is equally possible that this was a post facto supposition. One thing is clear: the leading brother had abandoned his spiritual, for the much higher stakes of the great political adventure that had seized Paris. He died on the guillotine on April 5, 1793.

Hirschfeld's rescue was the last activity, as far as we know, of the Jewish group within the Order of the Asiatics. There are grounds to assume that Jews continued to leave the Order, and that the Order itself went into decline. Soon after Hirschfeld's departure from Schleswig, the Order lost one of its patrons with the death of Duke Friedrich of Brunswick (July 1792). Carl von Hessen lived on. He did not reject the doctrines of the Order but turned to other groups and ideologies for explanations of the Masonic secrets. He maintained some contact with his spiritual mentor, Hirschfeld, as for the latter, he settled in Offenbach--near Frankfurt--the center of the Frankist movement. From time to time he tried to interest people in his spiritual, conceptual system, and in the next chapter we shall meet these two remnants of the Order of the Asiatic Brethren in a new context.

Chapter 4

The Frankfurt Judenloge

The Order of the Asiatic Brethren was a broad attempt to erect some type of Masonic framework within the borders of which both Jews and gentiles would be included. But it was not the only attempt. In 1790, even before the Order had finally ceased to exist, two Christians, Hirschfeld and Catter, had founded the Toleranzloge in Berlin with the avowed object of admitting both gentiles and Jews. These two men were by no means original thinkers. Their conceptions were a diluted solution of humanistic principles: belief in truth, brotherhood, and beauty, mixed with the vestiges of certain Christian doctrines: the fall of

man and the necessity of his moral regeneration. They even retained some of the Christian symbols current in Masonic usage: Jews took their oath on the Gospel of Saint John, not "on a Hebrew Old Testament." Nevertheless, the founders proclaimed that "Freemasonry is obliged to bring Jews and Christians closer together and to eliminate outworn prejudices. It is their duty to make Jews, if one may say so, more human and to raise them to higher levels of culture." It was admitted, however, that only such Jews were worthy of membership as had already approached more closely to Christianity and whose open adherence to that religion was only obstructed by family circumstances. In the eyes of the founders, men like the Itzig brothers, Professor Herz, and Levi, the banker, were considered to fit into such a category. It may be presumed that these Jews, and especially Isaac Daniel Itzig, had a hand in establishing the lodge. Its founding possibly may have been from the very beginning a reaction to their disappointment at the anti-Jewish mood then pervading the Asiatic Order. At all events, Itzig became busily engaged in searching for a patron for the new lodge. The founders had approached the Grand Lodge of Germany to grant them an approved constitution. Their request was refused. Instead, Itzig was able to procure a letter of approval from King Frederick William--whose trusted banker he was-- stating that the King consented "to tolerate the lodge in question and to protect it as long as it harbored no tendencies toward *illuminatismus* [an order which had gained notoriety for its social and political extremism] and toward Enlightenment." This royal patronage was not the equivalent of actual recognition, but at least it allowed the lodge to function for more than ten years and to earn the praise of the cultured as an organization with an exemplary humanistic goal.

A second attempt occurred that very year (1791-92)--this time in Hamburg. The initiative was taken openly by a Jew named Israel. No details can be elicited from any other source, and the information on the lodge itself is meager. Israel, who had been initiated as a Mason in London, now wanted to bestow the benefit on his Jewish brethren of an education "by social contact with the Christians." His lodge was called Toleranz und Einigkeit, and among its members echoes of slogans of the French Revolution could be heard. He found Jews who wanted to belong to his lodge (we do not know whether they were former members of the Asiatic Order or not) and even obtained the support of gentile dignitaries. Yet he could not gain recognition from a Mother Lodge. In Hamburg, Berlin, and London his applications were refused. The excuse given by the London lodge for its rejection was rather ironic: authorization should not be granted to a Jewish lodge, since religious questions were beyond the scope of Freemasonry.

Both the Berlin and Hamburg lodges represented a direct attempt to absorb Jews into the Masonic fraternity. There were other lodges, not founded with this specific purpose in mind, which accepted Jews de facto. These lodges paid no special heed to the accepted Masonic rules and were branded as unauthorized. Having until then suffered complete exclusion from the surrounding society, Jews could look upon their admission, even to these marginal associations, as a significant social advance. Yet if one aspired to acceptance as an equal in the surrounding society, he could not fail to consider his admission to a Winkelloge as a mockery rather than a fulfillment.

A case history throws light on the prevailing state of affairs. Sigismund Geisenheimer, later to found the Frankfurt lodge (to be discussed soon), described in a letter (a copy in his handwriting is still extant) to Dr. Ludwig Baruch (Borne) how he first made his way into the Freemasons. He was a native of Bingen, and was subsequently employed by the House of Rothschild in Frankfurt as head clerk. He had read about the Freemasons, and it occurred to him that the lodges might serve as the most useful instrument for uniting Jews and Christians, or at least bringing them closer to one another. He was by nature a very practical man, as he demonstrated later by his founding of the Jewish lodge, and earlier by founding the Philanthropin Jewish school, which earned him even greater renown. In this instance, too, Geisenheimer immediately took steps to carry his idea into practice. First he sought to become

a Freemason himself. To this end, he traveled to Berlin and enlisted the aid of Itzig. The latter recommended him to a certain group--we may venture the guess that it was the Toleranzloge--and he was initiated with all due ceremony. Armed with his membership certificate, Geisenheimer now approached a regular Masonic lodge, but he was very politely refused admission. Slowly the realization dawned on him that the first lodge had received no real sanction and that its membership certificate was utterly worthless, meaning nothing to genuine Freemasons. He considered himself cheated, and the insult smarted for many years. It may be assumed that the hurt impelled him to press all the more energetically in his struggle to pave the way for Jewish entry into the legitimate Masonic lodges.

With the spread of the French Revolution, new prospects opened up for Jews even, apparently, within the framework of the Masonic movement. In France itself all restrictions against Jews seem to have been lifted completely. As the conquering French armies advanced into the various European countries, the soldiers, and the civilians who followed them, opened Masonic lodges; and these Frenchmen behaved in their new environment as they had at home. The changed situation is reflected in the lives of the founders of the Frankfurt lodge. Before they opened this lodge, all twelve of them (eleven were Jews) had been registered as members in other lodges: four (among them Geisenheimer) had been members of Les Amis Indivisibles, and one of Anacreon, both lodges located in Paris; four, of two London lodges, Hiram and Emulation; one, of the French, Trois Palmes, in Darmstadt; and one, of the Trinite in Frankfurt itself. We know that Geisenheimer gained admission to the Paris lodge during one of his business trips to that city: the other members probably succeeded in entering lodges outside their home towns in the same way.

Certainly membership in a distant lodge was no more than a substitute for the true fulfillment of their desires: they still aspired to acceptance in the lodges of their own localities. But the Frankfurt lodges were not open to Jews, even when they presented themselves with the certificates of authorized out-of-town lodges; otherwise they would never have undertaken to found a lodge of their own. We accept as reliable the remarks of Dr. Jacob Weil, one of the veteran members, in the speech he delivered in 1832 on the occasion of the semi-jubilee of the Frankfurt lodge: "Our workshop came about by the founders' knocking on other gates in their birthplace. These were not opened because the monopolists of the light looked upon the believers in the Old Testament as doomed to everlasting darkness." The founders of the new lodge could not, therefore, entertain hope of obtaining recognition from any local Masonic body. A district lodge known as the Zur Einigkeit had existed in Frankfurt since 1789, and it has been empowered by the Mother Lodge in London to open new lodges in the vicinity. But the members of the new lodge had to seek authorization from afar and they communicated, through the medium of Hypolite Cerfbeer, with the Grand Lodge of Paris. The authorization was formally granted on June 17, 1807. The solemn installation ceremony took place on June 12, 1808, and the lodge thereupon assumed the name of Loge de St. John de L'aurore Naissante (in German, Loge zur aufgehenden Morgenrothe). Representatives of lodges from Paris, Toulouse, The Hague, Mayence, Metz, and Bonn--and even from a French lodge in Frankfurt itself --attended the ceremonies.

The description of the installation and the texts of the speeches --most in French with a few in German--delivered on that occasion were printed. From these records we can ascertain how the guests and hosts evaluated the event in which they had played a part. Most of the speeches were encomiums of Freemasonry--the soil destined for the cultivation of brotherly love, for the promotion of virtue, and so on. Here and there, however, the remarks are directed to the present and its background, as for instance the observations of the delegates from the French Amis Reunis of Mayence and from one of the Paris lodges.

The first speaker described the occasion as a day of victory for reason, in that members of different groupings, whom prejudice and religious fanaticism had driven apart, were now united. The second praised "the great nation, which had previously possessed a fruitful land,

but is now scattered over the various continents of the earth," yet had nevertheless succeeded in preserving its unity, its freedom, its mode of worship. Membership in the Freemasons, however, from now on obliged the sons of this nation "to double and redouble their efforts, so as to broaden more and more the dimensions of their moral perfection [*les relations de la morale perfectionnee*] by means of a deep feeling of brotherhood.... Now all men are equal."

A special significance was ascribed to the event by a Christian member, Franz J. Molitor, who had joined the lodge a few months after its inception. In Molitor the lodge had acquired a personality of intellectual stature, one able to view matters in their philosophical perspective. His remarks seem to vacillate between mourning over the decline of the old world and rejoicing at the dawn of the new. The old world consisted of a unified existential totality: state, religion, and mysticism (Masonry). The advantage of the new world lay in the abolition of the notion that there existed "a natural, absolute division between men. All classes are beginning to look upon each other as brothers, and on the differences forced upon them by circumstances as having no substance. And so the Illumination of the Enlightenment penetrates to all classes of society, and estates that diverge in the State return united in the world of the spirit." In the forging of this unity, Molitor assigned an important role to the Freemasons. In the political events of his time--the Napoleonic heyday--he discerned the renewal of the face of the earth.

The initiation of the lodge could have been a source of gratification to the Jewish members. Whether their rejoicing was complete is rather doubtful. As has been shown, the Christians present at the affair were either the few unconventional individuals who had joined the lodge or else were representatives from abroad. As for the Frankfurt long-standing lodges, the Loge zur Einigkeit and the Socrates zur Standhaftigkeit, they had certainly been invited, but had sent no delegates, stating explicitly that they did not recognize the new lodge as legitimate.

Permission to visit other lodges was denied to the members of L'aurore Naissante, even if they presented themselves as members of a different lodge. Geisenheimer and Baruch had obtained membership in a Mayence lodge, which was subsequently invited to attend a celebration of the Socrates lodge in Frankfurt. The invitation was accepted. Among the others, the two Jews were also appointed to represent the Mayence lodge on that occasion. The Frankfurt hosts, however, refused to admit the delegation to their meeting hall on the grounds that two of the representatives belonged to the unacceptable L'aurore Naissante. The delegates protested to the Grand Orient in Paris, and a great many letters were exchanged between Frankfurt and Paris. Nor was this an isolated instance. Jewish members of lodges authorized by the French Grand Orient were confronted with refusals on the part of German lodges. Complaints reached Paris from the Grand Lodge of Baden and from others under French patronage. The entire matter was brought up for discussion in the Grand Orient, which rendered as its considered and authoritative ruling that lodges should not occupy themselves with political or religious questions. A candidate's application for admission should be considered on its merits, without reference to the person's religion. In the deliberations preceding the decision, the question was put whether a Jew could be raised to the fourth, Scottish degree, which possessed a definitely Christian character. The opinion was expressed that a Jew could not, and would not want to, be accepted into that degree--but the Grand Lodge members concurred that this deficiency should exert no influence in respect of the first three degrees. A proclamation issued on June 19, 1811, brought the views of the Grand Orient to the attention of the lodges, but avoided all mention of the problem of the fourth degree. It merely stated the principle that a man's adherence to a particular religion was not to affect his rights to membership in the Masonic movement.

Although the course of events which led to the formation of the new lodge is self-explanatory, its significance becomes even more profound when viewed against the background of the historical events affecting the Jewish community at large. 1807, which witnessed the founding of the "Jewish lodge," was just one year after the old order in Frankfurt had been abolished,

after an independent, royal city had become transformed into a minor principality under the tutelage of Napoleon. This change marked the time for the Jews of that city to begin their struggle for the same rights that Jews in France and the other regions overrun by the Napoleonic armies had begun to enjoy. Hampered, hindered, and delayed by the hesitancy of Prince Dalberg and the obduracy of the city council, the struggle continued till 1811.

The years 1806 and 1807 also saw the convening of Jewish dignitaries and of the "Sanhedrin" in Paris. Frankfurt Jewry participated by sending a letter of encouragement and by dispatching a delegation of two members, one of whom, Isaac Hildesheim (who later changed his name to Justus Hiller), was a founder of the new lodge. Some of the Jewish community viewed the latest events as harbingers of a radical change in their political and social status. Among these no doubt were the members of the new lodge. The proceedings of the group, like all other Masonic activities, were conducted with secrecy. At their very first meeting the members had pledged each other to silence. The lodge had never entertained any declared political or social objective: nevertheless, it's founding was a sign of the times, and it was so interpreted by the more conservative members of the Jewish community. According to information emanating from Geisenheimer himself, he was placed under the ban by the rabbi of Frankfurt, Zvi Hirsch Horowitz, who lifted it only when he became convinced of the sincerity of Geisenheimer's motives. Geisenheimer might have exaggerated in recounting the difficulties he had to surmount--no actual ban may have been pronounced against him. His account does, however, contain an audible echo of the opposition of the conservative elements to this bold innovation.

The period was one of radical change. What had seemed most improbable before now became an accomplished fact. Despite opposition from within and from without, the lodge became consolidated within a very short time. I have a copy of the membership list for 1811 and the roster of lodges with whom the L'aurore Naissante had succeeded in establishing contact, either through mutual recognition or through the exchange of information. From these lists, we can gauge the measure of success achieved by the lodge on all fronts. In that year the lodge numbered eighty members, the overwhelming majority of whom resided in or near Frankfurt. Their proximity to the lodge permitted active participation in all its affairs. A significant part was played by those who had settled in Frankfurt in the last generation, like Geisenheimer himself. The old, established families were also well represented: the Adlers, Speyers, Reisses, and Sichels. Even the richest and most powerful Frankfurt families were included: the Ellisons, Hanaus, Goldschmidts, and Rothschilds. [Footnote: See the relevant entries in Alexander Dietz, *Stammbuch der Frankfurt Juden* (Frankfurt am Main, 1907)]

Solomon Meir (who afterward moved to Vienna), the second of the five Rothschild brothers, became a member if only for a short time. [Footnote: Rothschild had been initiated on June 14, 1809 (Brull, *Geschichte*, p.24, and resigned on May 4, 1812 (ibid. ,p.35).] Several members were over forty-five years old at the time, but the majority were between twenty-five and thirty-five. It may confidently be asserted that the lodge possessed a particular attraction for a specific type among the younger generation. As for Geisenheimer, we have already stated that his motives in joining the Freemasons were to create some framework within which Jews and Christians could approach closer to one another, and perhaps even become united. Naturally not all the members entertained his far-reaching intentions. Such aspirations were quite typical, however, of intellectuals and energetic men of affairs who were eager to hasten the process which had begun to transform the Jewish community in the last generation or two. Of these, there were two or three in this lodge: Geisenheimer, Michael Hess, principal of the Philanthropin school, and Justus Hildesheim (Hiller), who had raised his voice in the counsels of the Paris "Sanhedrin" and who had been appointed Orator to the Lodge. In the address he delivered on the occasion of the founding of the lodge he too emphasized the common foundation of all religions, which differed from one another as did the diverse languages with which all expressed the same thoughts. Another, who joined as early as in 1808, was Dr.

Ludwig Baruch (later Borne); but he withdrew in 1811 for some time, and so his name does not appear on the roster of that year. Most of the members were engaged in commerce. Having received a practical education, they were well versed in worldly affairs. Without being committed to any world-shattering ideals, they sought new areas of social contact beyond, if possible, the barriers of the isolated Jewish community.

In its social composition and in its spiritual goals the lodge differed from the other marginal associations which had, in the previous generation, sought to include both Jews and gentiles. It is almost obvious that, in choosing between limiting their degrees to the first three and instituting the higher ones, or between humanistic aspirations and mystic or quasi-mystic doctrines, the lodge decided in favor of the former in each instance. During the very first stage of its existence, it was proposed that the Scottish rite with its high degrees be instituted, but this idea was summarily rejected. The members experienced no special craving either for unraveling secrets or for attaining spiritual elevation. Their goals were far more modest: to discover some social environment offering possibilities for associating with Christians, through the cultivation of brotherhood and friendship based on the belief in the brotherhood of man entailed in monotheism. The new lodge fulfilled this function. Precisely because it was from its inception a reaction to the exclusion of Jews from other lodges, it strove to assume a nondenominational character. Within a short period of time it succeeded, during the French hegemony, in achieving its aims. Of the eighty members of the lodge in 1811, twenty-five were Christians. The latter were accorded a distinct priority in the managing of the lodge's affairs; it was headed from 1809 to 1812 by a Christian, Josef Severus, and five other Christian members occupied high offices in the nineteen-member executive committee.

The desire to accord the lodge a nondenominational character is especially noticeable in the election of honorary members, men living elsewhere whom the lodge chose--presumably with their consent--to dignify with such an appointment. Of the fifty who received this recognition, only five can positively be identified as Jews. All the rest were Christians, and we shall presently take account of their national and social origins. The Morgenrothe could justifiably be proud of its connections with other lodges. Seventeen maintained reciprocal relations (*affilies*) with it, that is, these lodges were prepared to conduct joint activities with it or to allow each other's members to attend meetings as visitors. All seventeen were located either in Paris or in West German capitals which had fallen under French control (such as Mayence, Cologne, and Mannheim). Twenty-seven other lodges corresponded with the Morgenrothe, some from as far away as Leipzig, Dresden, Nuremberg, Hannover, Bremen, Amsterdam, and even Berlin (Du Bellier). Whether the lodge was recognized as Jewish or not, it succeeded in attracting gentile members and in gaining access to gentile lodges.

Impressive as this success may have been, it was only an outflanking maneuver rather than a direct victory. Only one of the twenty-five Christian members was a native of Frankfurt. The honorary members, who lived in other areas, either possessed French names or were French soldiers or officials residing in Germany. In those years a circle of admirers of France and of Napoleon in particular, had emerged in Germany. They believed that the future of their country was bound up with the success of the new Emperor Prince Dalberg, the governor of Frankfurt from 1806 to 1813, is an outstanding example of this circle. They adopted new, French attitudes and were prepared to conduct themselves accordingly in their social relations. This accounts for the ability of the Frankfurt lodge to gain the favor of gentiles of the highest rank.

The new outlook did not by any means penetrate to the general citizenry. Its population was still locked within its traditional organizations and tied to conservative ideas. The two older lodges in Frankfurt also still persisted in their stubborn refusal to recognize the Jewish lodge. They now even invented some device specifically aimed at forbidding the acceptance of Jews. In 1811 new ceremonial procedures were introduced in the Eclectic Covenant, which was headed by the two Frankfurt lodges. At the initiation ceremonies this question was now

addressed to the candidate for membership: "Do you acknowledge that religion which was the first to open the heart of man to the desire [*Wohlwollen*] for human brotherhood and which we call, after its sublime founder, the Christian [faith]?" Until now Jews had been excluded de facto; now they were barred de jure.

That year the citizens of Frankfurt had been compelled to consent to the granting of civil rights to Jews. They were powerless to resist the force of circumstances, the French conquest. Yet they made no effort to conceal their chagrin at the Jewish success, and they translated their feelings into action in areas beyond state control. One expression of this resentment was the device of that year excluding Jews from the Masonic lodges. The members of the older lodges even tried to reverse the process of events. They petitioned Prince Dalberg to grant them the exclusive right to maintain lodges in the city. "Only so will it be possible to remove French influence and to send the Jews back to the synagogue."

How short-lived the Jewish success was became manifest with the political changes that followed in the wake of Napoleon's defeat. All the circles that had emerged under the rule of the Emperor and on which the members of the Jewish lodge had pinned their hopes vanished in an instant. Even though lodges were obliged to keep their affairs free of political involvement, the reliance of the Jewish lodge on the authority of the Grand Lodge of Paris now appeared as a blemish. No sooner had Napoleon suffered his first reverses on the battlefield than the members hastened to eradicate the words "under the patronage of the Orient of France." Once the French retreated from the conquered territories it was decided formally to sever relations with Paris. Even in the internal affairs of the lodge attitudes became adjusted to the new conditions. If in previous years the members had indulged in lavishing praise in speech and song upon human brotherhood, and even at times in mentioning Napoleon as the unite of peoples, they now transferred their highest approbation to the conquerors of Napoleon, the liberators of the German fatherland. Expressions of patriotic pride in the German War of Liberation stole into the songs of the Jewish Masons. Attachment to the Grand Orient was no longer desirable. It is not surprising that the members cast about for some connection, however tenuous, with German patronage. This was not easy. They had nothing to hope for as far as the other Frankfurt lodges were concerned. But light seemed to emanate from another quarter. Since 1812 the lodge had appointed as its head Franz Josef Molitor, a close personal acquaintance of Ephraim Joseph Hirschfeld. The latter still maintained his connections with Carl von Hessen of Schleswig, who had been accepted as the head of all German Freemasons. Hirschfeld arranged for the two to meet, and Molitor set out for Schleswig, his mission being to obtain a new constitution and authorization for the lodge.

Whether Carl von Hessen knew that the lodge represented by Molitor was for the most part composed of Jews later became a subject for debate. At all events, Molitor returned from his journey much more richly rewarded than his fellow members could have dared to expect. First of all, he brought with him the constitution for a lodge of the first three degrees to be named after Saint John. Secondly he was given a document authorizing the formation of a lodge to be conducted according to the Scottish rite, to which the lodge of Saint John would be subordinate. In theory, the lodge now had been raised to a degree higher than that on which it was maintained during its French affiliation.

For the Jews, however, there was an obvious disadvantage. The Scottish rite was distinctly Christian in character, and, though the fact had not been stated explicitly, it was understood that only those who acknowledged Christianity could find their place in it. And even the lodge of the first three degrees leaned toward Christianity. During the French affiliation, candidates for admission took their oath, after the French custom, on the constitution of the Freemasons; now they were forced to swear allegiance on the Gospel of Saint John, in accordance with the practice obtaining in the German lodges. In addition, it was laid down that the two highest offices, the master of the lodge and the Orator were to be reserved for Christians. The Jewish

members felt trapped. They were subjected to severe restrictions in their own home. Some members were not prepared to submit to the directive that they swear on the Gospel of Saint John. When Molitor submitted the constitution to the lodge, they gave notice of their intention to challenge many of its paragraphs. Their appeal was brought to the notice of the Prince. Very possibly it was only then that he realized that he had granted authorization to a lodge which, in the composition of its members, was basically Jewish. He was, however, prepared to compromise. The restrictions in regard to the Master remained in force, but he would allow a change in the administering of the oath: Chapter 14 of Genesis could be substituted for the Gospel of Saint John.

It is not difficult to guess at the cause of this choice. In that chapter of Genesis, the name of Melchizedek appears. As we have seen before, this was the name given to the lodges founded by the Asiatic Brethren, and these lodges differed from those bearing the name of Saint John in that they were open to Jew and gentile alike. Carl von Hessen himself had applied this distinction during his connections with the Asiatic Order. He had allowed a Hamburg lodge composed of Jews to function on the condition that the members be known as Melchizedek Masons. In choosing the chapter mentioning Melchizedek as a substitute for the Gospel, he was hinting at that very condition.

The new proposal did not placate the Jewish members. They saw themselves falling from the frying pan into the fire. If the oath on the Gospel was an outrage of their religious conscience, the new one branded them as Jews. They had founded their lodge to create some framework that would stand above religious difference, and now the distinctions had been set forth in all their stark clarity in the very rites of the lodge. An attempt was made to remove this obstacle. A delegation of three members was sent to negotiate with Prince Carl. Molitor was the leader, and one of the three, Frank by name, was apparently Jewish. Yet this delegation succeeded only in obtaining concessions that were in effect a further compromise. Carl agreed that Jewish candidates should take their oath on a Bible with the Old and New Testaments bound together. The Frankfurt lodge was duly authorized to accept Jews and to raise them to the third degree. By contrast, the Scottish rite was to be restricted, and it was expressly stipulated that here only Christians could enter. The Jews were assured, however, that parallel degrees would be instituted for them. In addition, the document of authorization stated that the assent of the Prince was granted with the hope that, through the acceptance of Jews in the lodge, "it would be possible to show them the path to the light"--the path, naturally, to the acceptance of Christianity. Clearly the Prince and the Christian members of the lodge, among them Molitor himself, did not unreservedly acknowledge that Jews were fully fit for Masonic activities. They also apparently clung to the opinion that for the leading positions in the Frankfurt lodge only Christians could be eligible.

The conduct of Carl von Hessen in the affair is hardly surprising. Although he had been an ardent member of the Asiatic Order and had sought to insert Cabalistic elements into the Masonic pattern of symbolism, he never had yielded on the preferred position of Christianity as compared with Judaism. Whether the nature of the request addressed to him had been clear from the first, or whether it only later became apparent that he was dealing with a Jewish lodge, he could not now come to terms with the situation except by way of concession and compromise. Molitor's attitude on the other hand lacked consistency. He had originally joined the Jewish lodge and subscribed to its principles--the complete equality of Jew and gentile--on the assumption that within the lodge all religious differences would be ignored. In the address delivered at the opening ceremonies in 1808, he had upheld humanistic principles. In the later period, however, Molitor came to view Masonry as a many--storied construction, the upper floors of which could only be reached by an acceptance of the symbols of the Christian religion. His position, then, had changed. In the end, he developed a philosophical historical system consisting of a synthesis of the Jewish Cabala and the beliefs and ideas of the Catholic Church. Molitor's retreat from a simple, humanistic standpoint occurred between

1808 and 1815. He himself had stated that he had begun to lean in the direction of Christianity even before his trip to Schleswig. His meeting with the Landgrave Carl ("only through him did I become a Christian") completed his change of heart. Here is the explanation for his attitude toward the new Masonic constitution, which no longer maintained the complete equality of the adherents of the Jewish faith with the rest of the Freemasons.

Hirschfeld's function and position in the entire episode are somewhat mysterious, though by no means inexplicable. As has been stated, he was the intermediary between Molitor and Prince Carl von Hessen, and he did not cease his behind-the-scenes manipulations even afterward. He reported to Prince Carl on what was transpiring in the lodge and attempted to induce the Jewish brethren to accept what, they felt, conflicted with their religious principles. We know of this from a letter written by Hirschfeld on April 6, 1816, addressed to one of the non-Jewish members, and the information is corroborated by Molitor's testimony concerning certain details of Hirschfeld's biography. According to this letter, Hirschfeld made an attempt to introduce the rites of the Asiatic Order in the Frankfurt lodge. We can therefore accept as reliable the information emanating from a hostile source that, while negotiations with Carl von Hessen were still in progress, Hirschfeld himself initiated several members in the Asiatic rite, and that his failure filled him with grief. We are familiar with Hirschfeld's weltanschauung from his letters (in print and in manuscript). This was a Jewish-Christian syncretism based on the Cabalistic system of ideas, a conception which had formed the foundation for the Asiatic Order from its very beginning. Hirschfeld adhered loyally to this view, and when he came into contact with the Jewish lodge in Frankfurt he thought that he had discovered fertile soil where he could implant his doctrines. It is not surprising that he was deeply disappointed when the members of the lodge rejected his ideas and publicly disowned him.

This disavowal of Hirschfeld came as the result of a pamphlet published in 1816 attacking the Jewish lodge while the negotiations were going on. The anonymous author, known to have been Dr. Johann Christian Ehrmann of Frankfurt, was thoroughly acquainted with the lodge and its difficulties. As far as he was concerned, the very fact that it was founded as an affiliate of the Grand Orient of Paris during the French conquest rendered it suspect, and he insinuated that the lodge had repaid, as it were, the French police for the courtesy extended to it. He jeered at the panic that had seized the Jews when Napoleon was finally overthrown, and he described their frantic efforts to find a German patron for themselves through Hirschfeld's intercession. Fully grasping the syncretistic nature of Hirschfeld's conception, he accused the latter of plotting by this Jewish admixture to contaminate both Freemasonry and Christianity. The entire argument was pervaded by a hatred of Jews and Judaism in general, and was openly inflammatory in nature, after the manner prevalent in anti-Jewish publications in Frankfurt and the rest of Germany in that year. Ehrmann's specific contribution to anti-Semitic literature was to cast suspicion on the Jews as penetrating into the Masonic movement so as to convert it into an instrument for world domination. The title of the brochure loudly proclaimed its purpose: *Das Judenthum in der Maurerey; eine Warnung an alle deutschen Logen* (Jews in Freemasonry, a warning to all the German lodges).

The members of the Morgenrothe could not afford to ignore this attack. In reply they published an excerpt of the minutes of the lodge meeting held on August 13, 1816, which expressed their vigorous protest against the allegations of this agitator. Concerning the aims of their lodge, they declared that it had confined itself to the three basic degrees, and had operated in conformity with the principles of the Masonic constitution, the purpose of which was to "foster true culture and humanity among men." The lodge had never occupied itself with speculations or alchemistic pursuits, rabbinic or otherwise. No individual by the name of Hirschfeld was a member.

This declaration avoided any reference to previous hesitations about introducing the Scottish rite, and it denied all knowledge of Hirschfeld as if he had never had any connection with the

lodge. True, the entire episode now belonged to the past. By the time the reply to Ehrmann was made public, all connections with Carl von Hessen had been cut off, and there was no longer any need for Hirschfeld to act as intermediary. The delegation headed by Molitor had returned in the middle of June, and immediately afterward elections were held for the "Grand Master of the Chair." Despite the stipulation that this office be reserved for Christians, a Jew, Carl Leopold Goldschmidt, was elected to fill it. In reaction to this choice Molitor brought a notice from the Prince withdrawing his authorization and ordering the lodge to disband. The members refused to obey, and sought to gain time by endeavoring to establish direct contact with the Prince. In reality they despaired of continuing to function under his auspices, and were looking about for help from other quarters. Goldschmidt succeeded in communicating with the Mother Lodge of London. On May 22, 1817, he was able to report to his colleagues the good news that he had in his possession a letter of authorization signed by August Frederick, Duke of Sussex, which empowered the Frankfurt brethren to operate as a Masonic lodge without any restriction. This recognition seemed a signal victory. The conflicts with Carl von Hessen had placed the very existence of the lodge in jeopardy. Now, by virtue of its connection with London, it could safely continue to function as fully authorized. Yet its being once more compelled to seek support from abroad only served to emphasize the weakness of its position. What the lodge really wanted to achieve, ultimately, was the recognition of the local lodges in Frankfurt and nearby states, and the admission of its brethren as welcome guests, perhaps even as full-fledged members. Yet the Zur Einigkeit formally disputed the validity of the London authorization. This lodge, as we have seen, was granted the power by the Mother Lodge of London to grant authorization to other lodges in the Frankfurt region. The members argued that by acceding to the request of the Morgenrothe, the Mother Lodge had broken its signed agreement and committed an illegal act. To this allegation, the Mother Lodge replied that the Einigkeit itself had exceeded its authority by instituting, in contravention of the principles of the Mother Lodge, the statute of exclusion against Jews. Nor did the controversy end there. Relations between the two became progressively more strained until they were finally sundered. The Frankfurt Zur Einigkeit, together with the Socrates lodge which was bound to it by the Eclectic Covenant, proclaimed itself an independent Mother Lodge in 1823, and was recognized as such by the other German Mother Lodges. A circular letter renouncing connections with London in consequence of the authorization granted the Morgenrothe bristled with anti-Jewish animosity that had finally succeeded in breaking through to the ranks of the Freemasons themselves. The Christianity of Masonry was no longer advanced as the pretext for denying access to Jews. Now Judaism was branded as the disqualification. It is common knowledge, the circular stated, "that the essence of Judaism cannot be reconciled with Freemasonry," and it protested against "Jewish interference in Freemasonry"--a wording both venomous and insulting.

The strained relations between London and the Zur Einigkeit on account of the Jewish lodge did not ingratiate the Jewish lodge with its non-Jewish counterparts. Even lodges that had no formal cause for complaint against the Grand Lodge of London resented its interference and refused to recognize its authorization. German lodges near and far refused to have anything to do with the Frankfurt Morgenrothe, and protests and warnings not only emanated from the district lodge of Frankfurt but were issued in the name of the three Grand Lodges of Berlin.

Condemned to utter isolation, the Frankfurt lodge became almost totally Jewish. Once the Prince withdrew his patronage, Molitor and his associates left and formed a lodge of their own. A few Christians still remained behind. These served as a front, symbolizing the nondenominational character of the lodge when the occasion arose. In 1820 the lodge entertained an important guest, Mirza Abdul Khan, the Persian ambassador. The reception committee consisted of three members: a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Jew. The Grand Master of the Chair delivered an eloquent address on the function of Freemasonry, namely

"to unite in a brotherly, purely humanistic covenant that which differences of tribe, nation, and mode of worship could divide but not split asunder." But such events and declarations could not rescue the lodge from isolation. Members who tried, by virtue of their belonging to this recognized lodge, to join in the activities of other lodges in their city or elsewhere, were met with a firm refusal. The Morgenrothe members were entitled to invoke the protection of the Mother Lodge in London, which could have repaid in kind the refusal to admit members enjoying its patronage. Such an attempt was made, and in 1820 the Mother Lodge sent a warning to the five Hamburg lodges: if they persisted in denying admission to members of the Frankfurt lodge, the same treatment would be meted out to their members in England. These pressure tactics, however, achieved no tangible results.

The members of the Jewish lodge found some consolation in their own activities. Their strong cohesion conferred benefits upon them, even in areas beyond the scope of Masonic activities, and their dependence on their own lodge served as a basis for organized mutual aid. Already in 1819, they had founded their Sustentation-Fond (mutual aid fund) which was open to paid-up members upon the additional payment of an entrance fee of 100 guilders. The purpose of the fund was to assist members in time of need, and to help support their widows and orphans when they died. In the preamble to the constitution, the reason for restricting membership in the Fond to lodge brethren was given: Masons have a special duty to help one another.

Force of circumstances or free choice limited the lodge to intramural activities. It had abandoned for the time being any attempt to breach the walls of alienation surrounding it. And if it did so by design, this was with the full recognition of the existing reality. The exclusion of Jews permeated all public life in Germany. Struggling against the status quo offered no prospects of success. The student societies, known as *burschenschaften*, after many debates and much hesitation decided upon the exclusion of Jews from their ranks. All types of organizations, from learned societies to sports clubs and newspaper-reading circles, enacted their statutes of restriction. As for the Freemasons, the question of Christian principle was never absent from their deliberations and found its way into all their literary organs. Here the problem revolved round the very definition of the aims and essence of the entire Order. Yet even in that epoch, there was no complete dearth of weighty opinion which sought to base Freemasonry on elements independent of any positive religion. Obviously the members of the Frankfurt lodge derived encouragement from such openly expressed views, just as they drew support from the declaration of the London Mother Lodge that the exclusion of members from lodges on account of religion was an "un-Masonic act." In 1827 the Frankfurt lodge issued a circular--the work of the intellectuals among the members: Michael Hess, Jacob Weil, Michael Creizenach, and Ludwig Borne--containing an exposition of the principles followed by the lodge in conducting its Masonic activities. The circular protested vehemently against the "mysticism" that was penetrating Masonry, where mysticism was equated with Christian content. Yet again no perceptible results were achieved. Nor did any positive results emerge in consequence of the views of Christian Freemasons who tried to draw a distinction between their adherence to the Masonic movement and their loyalties to their own religion. For all practical purposes the principle of Christian exclusiveness was securely entrenched in the German Freemason movement during those years.