



Published by the Board of General Purposes
of the United Grand Lodge of England

Freemasons' Hall
Great Queen Street
London WC2B 5AZ

1988



Introduction

This leaflet is intended to expand a topic mentioned in the leaflet "What is Freemasonry". It explains the United Grand Lodge of England's view on Freemasonry and Society.

Grand Lodge's Policy

It must be clearly understood by every member of the Craft that his membership does not in any way exempt him from his duty to meet his responsibilities to the society in which he lives. The Charge to the new Initiate calls on him to be exemplary in the discharge of his civil duties; this duty extends throughout his private, public, business or professional life.

Respect for the law

Freemasonry demands from its members a respect for the law of any country in which a man may work and live.

Principles

The principles of Freemasonry do not in any way conflict with its members' duties as citizens, whether at work or at home or in public life, but on the contrary should strengthen them in fulfilling their public and private responsibilities. Thus there is no conflict of interest between a Freemason's obligation and his public duty.

If an actual or potential conflict of duties or interests is known to exist or is foreseen, a declaration to that effect should be made.

It may on occasions be prudent to disclose membership to avoid what others mistakenly imagine to be a potential conflict or bias, but this must be a matter for individual judgement.

Use of Membership

A Freemason must not use his membership to promote his own or anyone else's business, professional or personal interests. This is made clear directly or by inference several times during a Freemason's early career so that no Freemason

can pretend to be ignorant of it. A Freemason who transgresses this rule may be suspended from Masonic activities or even expelled.

Family

Freemasonry should not be allowed to harm a man's family or other connections by taking too much of his time or his money or causing him to act in any other way against their interests.

Duty as a citizen

A Freemason's duty as a citizen must always prevail over any obligation to other Freemasons, and any attempt to shield a Freemason who has acted dishonourably or unlawfully or to confer an unfair advantage on another Freemason is contrary to this prime duty.

Personal or business difficulties

If it could be proved by evidence that any personal failure or business difficulty was attributable to 'Masonic influence', Masonic authority would take a serious view of the fact, as it would be contrary to the principles of Freemasonry.

Secrecy

- Freemasonry is not a secret society.
- Like many other societies, it regards some of its internal affairs as private matters for its members.
- There is no secret about its aims and principles. Copies of the constitutions and rules can be obtained from Freemasons' Hall by interested members of the public.
- The secrets of Freemasonry are concerned with its traditional modes of recognition. Its ceremonies are private.
- In ordinary conversation there is very little about Freemasonry which may not be discussed.
- On inquiry for acceptable reasons, Freemasons are free and will be proud to acknowledge their own membership.