

British Assault

Mar. 30, 1999

British Freemasonry is under attack by the government. In a unprecedented move the British Commons Home Affairs Select Committee ordered the names of approximately 8 Masons revealed or the Grand Lodge of England would face contempt of Parliament .

This apparently is the result of a government investigation of 161 people, less than 10 of who were Masons, for possible involvement in a “miscarriage of justice”. This committee is also investigating the influence of Freemasonry in the criminal justice system.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has devised a plan to set up a register of Masons working in the criminal justice system such as police, magistrates, judges, crown prosecutor, prison staff and probation officers. Lord Justice Millett said “I think it is completely wrong. It is an invasion of privacy which should not be tolerated.” None the less, Straw is ready to introduce legislation to require disclosure of Masonic membership under compulsion of law.

The practical effect of Straw’s anti Masonic campaign is that an unprecedented number of Freemasons have resigned their membership, especially those working in the criminal justice system. Many believe their careers would suffer if they were identified as Freemasons.

None of this has been lost on American television. In the last year a 30 minute program was televised on the Art & Entertainment channel. The program was objective and

accurate. Charges were made by certain journalists, one of whom has written a book, about Masonic involvement in an investigation of London suburb officials who were said to have misappropriated funds, taken kickbacks, and bribes. The journalists stated that high ranking police officers and even a judge conspired in a cover up of those crimes. This case was thoroughly investigated by Scotland Yard and there was not a single shred of truth or evidence to support that there was a Masonic conspiracy.

This was not the first time a Masonic and police conspiracy in England has been suggested. The most notable probably was about Jack the Ripper.

Public suspicion about Freemasonry is always a potential problem and is relatively easy to arouse. We should not forget our own Morgan Affair of 1826. Masons were accused of kidnapping and murdering Morgan. This led to the resignation of thousands of Masons and hundreds of Lodges went out of existence. It even led to the formation of the Anti-Masonic party which had a candidate, Thurlow Weed, for President of the United States that year.