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## **The Enlightened Ones**

### **The Illuminati and the New World Order**

By Michael Howard

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*The world is governed by far different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes.*

- Benjamin Disraeli, nineteenth century British prime minister, in a speech to Parliament

On 1 May 1776, the year of the beginning of the American revolution against British colonial rule, a young university professor, Adam Weishaupt (1748-1830), from Bavaria, founded the Order of Perfectibilists, later to become world famous as the Illuminati or 'Enlightened Ones'.

Weishaupt's family had Jewish ancestry, but he was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith and educated by the Jesuits. His father died when he was seven and he was fostered by his godfather, a German aristocrat called Baron Ickstett. Although schooled by priests from the Society of Jesus, the young boy spent hours in his godfather's extensive library reading learned works on philosophy and science. As an undergraduate at university, Weishaupt studied the ancient Greek Eleusian Mysteries and the mystical doctrines of the Greek philosopher Pythagoras. Even at this young age he was thinking about forming a secret society based on the pagan mystery schools. He later wrote:

At a time, however, when there was no end of making game of and abusing secret societies, I planned to make use of this human foible for a real and worthy goal, for the benefit of people. I wished to do what the heads of the ecclesiastical and secular authorities ought to have done by virtue of their offices.

Adam Weishaupt became a lay professor in canon law at the Jesuit-run University of Ingolstadt near Munich while still a young man. His sudden rise to prominence in the university and his radical views caused

consternation among the Jesuit priests. This led him to become involved in many bitter disputes with them about matters pertaining to religion.

In 1774 in either Hanover or Munich Weishaupt became interested in Freemasonry. However, he was disappointed in what he found, believing the Freemasons did not understand Masonry's occult significance, and refused to accept its roots in the ancient pagan religions. In 1777, he finally joined the Masonic Lodge of the Strict Observance Rite in Munich, which practised a form of neo-Templar-Masonry.

At this time the Order of Perfectibilists also became known as the Order of Illuminists or the Order of the Illuminati, sometimes known to its members as the Society of the Hidden Hand. Illuminati was the plural of the Latin *Illuminatus*, from *illumino* meaning lighten or enlighten, or 'enlightened one', a term used to describe the initiates of the pagan Mysteries. At first the Order had only five members who were radical freethinkers, but they soon attracted the attention of Bavarian society and within ten years of its foundation there were over 2,000 members.

Illuminism spread from Ingolstadt all over Bavaria and then to other German regions such as Saxony, Westphalia and Franconia that were at the time ruled by feudal princes. It was also exported abroad to the Austria-Hungarian Empire, France and Italy. The Illuminati's membership was largely drawn from the middle and upper classes and in this respect it is ironic that revolutionary movements are seldom started by the working-class. Instead, they are usually led by intellectuals and disenchanted members of the ruling power elite. Members of the Illuminati allegedly included doctors, teachers, lawyer, judges, university professors, priests, police and military officers, and aristocrats such as Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, Duke Ernst of Gotha, Duke Karl of Saxe-Weiner, Prince Augustus of Saxe-Gotha, Prince Carl of Hesse, and Baron Dalberg.

The inclusion of these aristocratic and royal rulers in its membership roll seems strange considering the aims of the Illuminati. Adam Weishaupt's personal vision was a utopian pacifist society without monarchy, private property, social inequality, national identity and religious affiliation. In this new state people would live together in harmony in a universal brotherhood based on peace, free love, spiritual wisdom, intellectual and scientific knowledge, and equality. According to Weishaupt's doctrine in his own words:

Salvation does not lie where strong theories are defended by swords, where the smoke of censers ascends to heaven, or where thousands of strong men pace the rich fields of harvest. The revolution which is about to break [the French Revolution] will be sterile. It is not complete.

The Illuminati's main targets for criticism were the rule of the European royal families, the power of the Roman Catholic Church and the rich landowners who kept the peasants in a feudal state of servitude and poverty. According to its enemies, this doctrine was represented in the oath of allegiance taken by new members when they joined the Order. They

allegedly promised to hate and resist, "The altar [the Church] and the throne [monarchy] and to crush the God of the Christians and utterly extirpate the kings of Earth."

#### Initiation into the Illuminati

The anti-royalist and anti-clerical nature of the Illuminati was also reflected in its initiation ceremony. The candidate was led into a small room where, in front of an empty throne, a table stood with the traditional symbols of kingship - a sceptre, sword and crown - on it. The candidate was invited to pick up these objects, but if he did then he would be refused entry into the Order. Having passed this test, he was led into a second room with a table draped in black cloth. On this table were a plain wooden cross and a red Phrygian cap as worn by initiates of the ancient Mithraic Mysteries. The cap was given to the initiate and he was told to wear it proudly as it was worth far more than the crown of any king.

New members were called Minervals, from the pagan goddess of wisdom Minerva, and the Order's primary symbol was a wreath of oak leaves surrounding an owl sitting on an open book. This represented the essential combination of wisdom and knowledge, and the owl was also the sacred bird of Minerva. This symbol was made into a pendant that the Illuminati could wear secretly under their ordinary everyday clothes. It is tempting to see a connection between this emblem and the giant statue of an owl that features in the modern rituals at Bohemian Grove in California. At this private estate an annual gathering of male politicians, businessmen and media executives takes place, and it is claimed by some conspiracy theorists to be an Illuminati front.

Adam Weishaupt believed in the eventual redemption of humanity and the restoration of human beings to the state of perfection that is supposed to have existed before the Fall and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. He also believed this redemption was only obtainable by following the esoteric teachings preserved by the pagan mystery schools who were the guardians of the Ancient Wisdom. Both men and women could become members of the Illuminati and they were taught religious freedom, and the choice to follow any or no religious belief. To live without the moral straitjacket of the sexually puritanical and corrupt Church was their birthright as human beings.

#### How the Illuminati Recruited and Expanded Across Europe

The new member was expected to recruit others into the Order like a modern form of pyramid selling. Because of Weishaupt's involvement with Freemasonry, it was decided to use the movement to spread the Illuminati message and members were encouraged to join Masonic lodges. In 1780 Baron Adolf Franz Freidrich Knigge (1752-1796), a German diplomat, was initiated as an Illuminist. He was already a Freemason and under his direction Illuminism spread throughout the Masonic lodges of Europe. He also introduced several degrees or grades of initiation into the Order. These grades were Novice, Minerval, Illuminatus Minor, Illuminatus Major,

Knight, Priest, and Magus. A Priest for instance was a person who taught the other members the occult sciences, philosophy, history, politics and the arts and crafts.

Weishaupt established a network of Illuminist agents throughout Europe with access to prominent politicians, priests and cardinals, nobility and royalty. They reported back to the Grand Master of the Illuminati supplying him with intelligence and gossip collected and used for his own personal purpose. It is possible the aim was to blackmail people in powerful positions and thereby control them. By this time his enemies were claiming Weishaupt had decided his utopian anarcho-libertarian society could not be achieved peacefully. Allegedly he began plotting to overthrow the monarchies and governments of Europe using force if necessary.

In 1784 Baron Knigge and Adam Weishaupt quarrelled about the direction of the Order and this coincided with the exposure by police spies of an alleged Illuminist plot to overthrow the ruling Habsburg dynasty of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the same year a royal edict was issued by Duke Karl Theodor, the ruling elector of Bavaria and a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, banning membership of all secret societies not officially recognised by the state. This edict specifically mentioned the Order of Perfectibilists, which was described as a renegade branch of Freemasonry.

Soldiers, police officers, judges, university professors, schoolteachers and anyone working for the civil service were forced to admit to their membership of secret societies and had to either leave or be dismissed from their posts. In 1785 Adam Weishaupt was removed from his own position at the University of Ingoldstat and banished from the city of Munich to live in the countryside on a state pension. He moved to Regensburg where he was protected by Duke Ernst of Saxe-Gotha, an ancestor of the present British royal family who are of German descent. In World War I they changed their family name from Saxe-Gotha-Coburg to the House of Windsor after anti-German protests.

In October 1786 the Bavarian authorities seized a cache of Illuminati secret documents from the home of a member of the diplomatic corp, Xavier Zwack, in Landstut and the castle of Sondersdorf belonging to Baron Bassus, both prominent members of the Illuminati. These were published in Munich in 1787 under the title *Einige Originalschiften des Illuminaton Ordens*. They revealed the full extent of the Illuminati's alleged plans to destroy Christianity, topple the monarchy, overthrow the civil governments of Europe and eventually extend their influence worldwide. Even though it was claimed these documents were blatant forgeries, as a result of their publication the Order was legally prohibited and membership of it could result in the death penalty.

Many critics of the Illuminati saw its 'hidden hand' behind both the French and American Revolutions in the eighteenth century and believed it survived underground after its prohibition. The fact that Adam Weishaupt lived for another forty-three years in apparent obscurity led to speculation the

Illuminati also survived. One of the founders of the French Revolution, the Comte de Mirabeau, was rumoured to have been a secret Illuminist. Some claim the plan for the original uprising to storm the Bastille prison in Paris that sparked the Revolution was discussed and agreed at a closed session of the Grand Masonic Convention in 1782. Count Mirabeau is supposed to have addressed the delegates and said his aim was to destroy the French monarchy and the Roman Catholic Church in France. In its place he said a "religion of love" would be established to replace it. In fact, during the French Revolution religious observance was temporally replaced with the secular worship of the Goddess of Liberty.

#### Groups Claiming to Inherit the Mantle of the Illuminati

Following the prohibition of the Order of Perfectibilists, several occult secret societies claimed to have inherited its mantle and to be carrying on its work. These included the Society of Illuminists founded in Avignon in the late 1780s by the unlikely partnership of an excommunicated Catholic priest and a Polish count. It later changed its name to the Academy of True Free Masons when it moved its headquarters from Avignon to Montpellier. Although it is rumoured the group still existed in 1812, it actually stopped functioning during the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror that followed it.

The Concordists were a Russian secret society founded around 1790 as the alleged successor of the Bavarian Illuminati. They were suppressed in turn in the early 1800s by the Russian government who outlawed them as a subversive political organisation. In the early 1900s a journalist and spy for the Prussian secret police called Albert Karl Theodor Reuss (1855-1923) used a charter of authority supplied by the English Freemason John Yarker to establish a new Academy of Masonry. The Academy was later amalgamated into the Ordo Templi Orientis, the Order of the Eastern Temple or Order of Oriental Templars founded by high-ranking German Freemason Karl Kellner.

The OTO was connected with John Yarker's Masonic Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis and Mizraim and was supposed to possess the key to all the Masonic-Hermetic mysteries. Kellner claimed to have been taught these 'secrets' by three Eastern adepts. Theodor Reuss is mostly remembered today for initiating the notorious twentieth century occultist and magician Aleister Crowley into the OTO in 1912. The Great Beast 666, as he called himself, and known to the sensational newspapers as 'The Wickedest Man in the World' (surely not compared with his contemporaries Stalin and Hitler?) became the head of the Order in Britain and Europe. He claimed that the OTO was a Rosicrucian-Illuminist group descended from the Bavarian Illuminati. Crowley was also a long-term secret agent working for MI6 or the British Secret Intelligence Service.

In the twentieth century the alleged surviving Illuminati in its various clandestine forms was seen as the eminence gris behind World Wars I & II, the Bolshevik Revolution and fall of the Romanovs in Russia in 1917, and

the rise of both communism and fascism in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. It was widely believed by conspiracy theorists that the organisation would back any political group or doctrine or social movement and indulge in left and right-wing politics to achieve its age-old aims. Because Adam Weishaupt was of Jewish descent, the Illuminati became connected with Zionism, the international banking system, and even the entertainment industry and Hollywood where Jews are prominent.

In the modern world the Illuminati have been seen as a major factor and influence in international power politics, allegedly fomenting wars, civil disorder and revolutions in their attempt to establish a one-world government. They have variously been seen behind the contrasting ideologies of globalism and neo-conservatism, multiculturalism, environmentalism and 'green' politics, the 1960s 'permissive society', and the New Age spiritual movement. The Illuminati have also been held responsible for the fall of the Soviet Union (which paradoxically they are supposed to have created) and the military policing actions by the United Nations, the Anglo-American alliance and NATO since the end of World War II.

It is claimed the draconian anti-terrorism laws introduced by Western governments in the wake of 9/11 and the emergence in recent years of a 'Big Brother' electronic surveillance society, where human rights and freedoms are restricted or infringed, is the work of the Illuminati from behind the scenes. Organisations such as the European Union (EU), the proposed North American Union (NAU) of the USA, Canada and Mexico, the UN, and the World Bank, are seen as Illuminati projects.

Secret 'Shadow Government' Groups

So-called 'shadow government' groups such as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission set up after World War II, are also said to be fronts for the modern manifestation of the Illuminati. The CFR was founded in 1921 by Colonel Edward House, a political advisor to President Woodrow Wilson and financed by wealthy international bankers. Colonel House was denounced by his political enemies as a Marxist seeking to establish a socialist government in the USA leading to a one-world government. Paradoxically before World War II the CFR was accused of supporting and financing the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party in Germany. After the war it was labelled a populariser of international socialism through the UN. The CFR's apparently contradictory political aims were explained by conspiracy buffs as typical of the Illuminati fronts that use both left and right politics. That is why the organisation recruited its US members from both the Democrat and Republican parties.

Allegedly, another sinister arm of the modern 'shadow government' and the Illuminati is said to be the Bilderberg Group. Founded in May 1954, it held its first meeting at the Bilderberg Hotel in Osterbeck near Arnhem in the Netherlands. The Bilderberg Group was organised with the support of the

CIA by Dr. Joseph Retinger, a mysterious figure involved in international Freemasonry and secret intelligence work, and Prince Bernard of the Dutch royal family. In 1946 Retinger told a meeting of the CFR in London that his personal political vision was a united Europe as a bulwark against anti-Americanism and communism. His plans took a step forward eight years later when the Bilderberg Group began its annual meetings attended by representatives of the business world, international banking, the media, the military-industrial complex and politics.

Few people attending Bilderberg meetings have ever talked publicly about what happened or what was discussed. However, Denis Healey, a larger-than-life character who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour government of the 1970s, once let the proverbial cat out of the bag in a television interview. Asked what the Bilderberg Group was, Healey admitted its ultimate political aim was "a single community throughout the world" or a one-world government.

The 2009 Bilderberg Conference was held from 14-17 April at a hotel in a town near Athens, Greece. Among the participants were the queen of the Netherlands, former prime ministers and prominent government ministers from the host country Greece, the USA, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Belgium, the Netherlands and France, representatives of NATO, the UN, the American National Security Agency (NSA), directors of international banks, and the World Trade organisation, and the editors of national and international financial newspapers and magazines.

According to conspiracy theorists and professional Bilderberg watchers, those who attended this meeting apparently agreed to produce a false picture for the public of imminent economic recovery from the global recession and banking crisis. The attendees were to encourage banks and private investors to put their money back into the stock markets. The plan is apparently to create a new financial crisis in 2010 that will plunge the world into a deeper and more serious recession than we have so far experienced. This would cause high levels of unemployment and civil disorder and pave the way for more draconian laws to control the population. Eventually the situation would get so bad that martial law would have to be declared and there would be calls for a one-world government to be set up to restore global order. The meeting also allegedly backed the Lisbon treaty, which will eventually create a European federal super-state or United States of Europe with a single currency, the Euro.

In his State of the Union address in January 1991, President George H. Bush told US Congress the impending Gulf War to liberate the oil-state of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation was part of a new "big idea" he called the New World Order. He described it as bringing together diverse nations in a common cause to achieve "the universal aspirations of humankind, peace and security, freedom and the rule of law." Many of those who heard or read the address interpreted President Bush's remarks as a coded reference to the Illuminati's aim of a global government.

With the election of the first black president in American history, Barack Obama, in November 2008, it seemed as if the neo-con forces with their New World Order agenda had been defeated. It was widely predicted by media commentators and political experts that America was entering a new stage in its development, a time of hope and change when the discredited right-wing policies of the neo-cons would be consigned to the garbage can of history. This was illustrated by postcards on sale in the UK showing the new president as a shining knight on a white horse. The picture was simply captioned 'Hope'.

It has been pointed out that for the first time in a generation there appeared to be no known links between President Obama and 'shadow government' groups such as the Bilderbergers. However, rumours of a secret tryst between Senator Hilary Clinton and Senator Obama in Virginia during the Bilderberg Group meeting of 2008 held in that state raised suspicions. It was suggested both politicians may have secretly attended the meeting. Also several prominent members of the Obama administration have been identified as Bilderberg attendees and members of the CFR and Trilateral Commission, which as its name suggests brings together leading past and present politicians from Europe, the United States and Japan. This is not surprising considering that, Illuminati front or not, the so-called 'shadow government' acts as a training and recruiting agency for the Western world's aspiring politicians.

At the time of writing President Obama's honeymoon period with the American public seem to be over. Recently he has been criticised for his radical (by American standards) health-care plans, his bailing out of international banks with taxpayers' money, the delayed withdrawal from Iraq and his acceptance of the premature Nobel Peace Prize only days after he committed a further 30,000 troops to the ongoing Afghan War. In some extreme conspiracy theory circles, Obama is an Anti-Christ figure accused variously of being an Illuminati pawn promoting a one-world government, and a secret Muslim and socialist plotting to transform the United States into a military dictatorship.

This ongoing story of the Illuminati, and the secret societies claiming to succeed it, is one of a conflict between opposing forces seeking ultimate power for different reasons. It exposes a sinister agenda on those who have hijacked democracy and the idealistic concept of a utopian form of government guaranteeing real freedom to all its citizens. It is a noble concept corrupted for selfish political purposes using xenophobia, religious intolerance and fear as its weapons of choice.

The modern heirs of the Illuminati, if that is what they really are, are hardly 'enlightened ones' as they are only interested in the acquisition of personal power, the suppression of knowledge, and the control of the masses who they want to keep in a state of ignorance. However, there is still hope that genuine initiates of the Ancient Wisdom are working secretly behind the scenes of international politics to improve our modern world and lead it to a

brighter future. [For further information on the subjects discussed in this article please visit <http://www.newdawnmagazine.com/special-issues/new-dawn-special-issue-16>]

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