

### Grading and Classification

- Freemasons were graded as political prisoners and wore an inverted red triangle.<sup>1</sup>



1. Katz, "Jews and Freemasons in Europe". In Israel Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, p. vol. 2, p. 531.

On National Holocaust Memorial Day, remember all those who died for their beliefs and their faith in the Concentration camps . . . and since!

By far the greatest number of those murdered by the Nazi regime were Jewish but many thousands of Catholics, free-thinkers, pacifists and, of course, Freemasons died. The Nazis rejected Freemasonry, banning it in January 1934, partly because it was, in their terms, associated with Jews. The secrecy associated with Masonic rituals has always made the

organisation susceptible to conspiracy theories and the Nazis believed that the Freemasons were part of a conspiracy working against the interests of German nationalism.

Criticism of Freemasons was a regular theme in Nazi propaganda – often framed in antisemitic discourse about the threat from 'World Jewry'. Thousands of Freemasons were persecuted by the Nazi regime and many were imprisoned and died in concentration camps, classed as political prisoners.

There is a well known "theory" that this was the origin of the use of a Forget-me-not (vergeissmirnicht) as a recognition badge used by Freemasons as the old Square & Compasses was a bit of a give-away . . . there is no hard evidence that this was the case but it's a good story and wearing the flower can still be seen as a remembrance of so many Brethren.