

# Summary

Tuesday, September 28, 2021 8:18 PM

Black Lodges (or renegade lodges) are lodges that deviate from the tenants of freemasonry. They can include Unrecognized, irregular or Clandestine lodges. Black lodges can also refer to (and given the times) lodges that have African Americans (Prince Hall Freemasonry).

Notable "black lodges"

- [African Grand Lodge of Massachusetts \(Prince Hall\)](#)
- [Theodore of the Good Council \(Adam Weishaupt Illumanti\)](#)
- [Propaganda Due/P2 \(Licio Gelli\)](#)

## Regular vs Irregular Freemasonry

### HISTORIC ORIGIN

Historically, the foundation of Freemasonry worldwide rests on what is known today as 'the Home Grand Lodges' or 'the Home Co nstitutions' which comprise of three Grand Lodges that came together, namely the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the United Grand Lodge of England, and the Grand Lodge of Ireland. These three Grand Lodges co -ordinate their masonic activities which is governed by a concordant and maintain regular meetings between the three Grand Masters, which have continued till this present day.

They established the foundation for 'regularity' of recognition by abiding by the ancient landmarks and determining the rules and regulations which are essential to any organization to be considered Masonic.

Today, there exists a worldwide network of 'recognized' Grand Lodges whose foundation is in line with the ancient landmarks and regulations, originally established by these three 'Mother Grand Lodges.'

### WHO IS WHO

#### Regular Masonry

Masonic organizations who conform to the ancient landmarks of masonry and who are recognized by the majority of mainstream Gr and Lodges around the world.

Members of these are permitted to visit Masonic all Lodges worldwide.

#### Unrecognized

Organizations who conform to the ancient landmarks, however not yet been recognized by the majority of mainstream grand lodge s around the world.

Members of these are not permitted to visit any regular Lodge anywhere.

#### Irregular

Organizations whom have one or more points of the ancient landmarks omitted from their practices and are therefore considered incompatible with the traditional principles of regular freemasonry.

Members of these are not permitted to visit any regular Lodge anywhere.

#### Clandestine

Organizations which style themselves as Freemasons and use the Masonic symbols and literature to misrepresent themselves to t he public and, in many cases, are involved in fraudulent practices.

Members of these are not permitted to visit any regular Lodge anywhere.

From <<https://dgll.org/regular-vs-irregular/>>

# African Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

Sunday, October 3, 2021 3:34 PM

**Prince Hall Freemasonry** is a branch of North American [Freemasonry](#) for [African Americans](#) founded by [Prince Hall](#) on September 29, 1784. There are two main branches of Prince Hall Freemasonry: the independent State Prince Hall Grand Lodges, most of which are recognized by [Regular Masonic Jurisdictions](#), and those under the jurisdiction of the [National Grand Lodge](#). Prince Hall Freemasonry is the oldest and largest (300,000+ initiated members) predominantly African-American fraternity in the nation

## Independent lodge

After being denied acknowledgment by the [Grand Lodge of Massachusetts](#), African Lodge declared itself to be an independent Grand Lodge, the African Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

In 1827 the African Grand Lodge declared its independence from the United Grand Lodge of England, as the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts had done 45 years earlier. It also stated its independence from all of the white Grand Lodges in the United States, declaring itself to be a separate Masonic body.<sup>[cited](#)</sup>

This led to a tradition of separate, predominantly African-American jurisdictions in North America, known collectively as Prince Hall Freemasonry. Widespread racism and [segregation](#) in North America made it impossible for African Americans to join many mainstream lodges, and most mainstream Grand Lodges in North America refused to recognize the Prince Hall Lodges and Prince Hall Masons in their territory as legitimate.

Both the Prince Hall and "mainstream" Grand Lodges have had integrated membership for many years now,<sup>[citation needed](#)</sup> though in some Southern states this had been policy but not actual practice. Today, some Prince Hall Grand Lodges are recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), as well as the overwhelming majority of US state Grand Lodges and even many international Grand Lodges. The situation is complicated by the level of recognition that is granted, with some lodges giving full "blanket" recognition to all Prince Hall Grand Lodges, while others put on limits with regard to issues such as "intervisitation rights" or dual membership, sometimes treating Prince Hall Grand Lodges as regular but foreign juris

From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince\\_Hall\\_Freemasonry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Hall_Freemasonry)

## A Brief History of African Lodge 459

On March 6, 1775, Prince Hall and 14 men of color were made masons in Lodge #441 of the Irish Registry attached to the 38th British Foot Infantry at Castle William Island in Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. It marked the first time that Black men were made masons in America.

About a year later, since the conflict between England and America had commenced, the British Foot Infantry left Boston, along with its lodge, leaving Prince Hall and his associates without a lodge. Before the lodge left, Worshipful Master Batt gave them a "permit" to meet as a lodge and bury their dead in manner and form. This permit, however, did not allow them to do any "masonic work" or to take in any new members.

Under it, African Lodge was organized on July 3, 1776, with Prince Hall as the worshipful master. It wasn't long before this lodge received an additional "permit" from Provincial Grand Master John Rowe to walk in procession on St. John's Day.

On March 2, 1784, African Lodge #1 petitioned the Grand Lodge of England, the Premier or Mother Grand Lodge of the world, for a warrant (or charter) to organize a regular masonic lodge with all the rights and privileges thereunto prescribed.

The Grand Lodge of England issued a charter on September 29, 1784 to African Lodge #459, the first lodge of Blacks in America.

African Lodge #459 grew and prospered to such a degree that Worshipful Master Prince Hall was appointed a Provincial Grand Master in 1791 and out of this grew the first Black Provincial Grand Lodge.

In 1797, he organized a lodge in Philadelphia and one in Rhode Island. These lodges were designated to work under the charter of African Lodge #459.

In December 1808, one year after the death of Prince Hall, African Lodge #459 (Boston), African Lodge #459 (Philadelphia) and Hiram Lodge #3 (Providence) met in a general assembly of the craft and organized African Grand Lodge (sometime referred to as African Grand Lodge #1).

In 1847, out of respect for their founding father and first Grand Master, Prince Hall, they changed their name to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, the name it carries today. In 1848, Union Lodge #2, Rising Sons of St. John #3 and Celestial Lodge #4 became the first lodges organized under the name Prince Hall Grand Lodge.

From these beginnings, there now are some 5,000 lodges and 47 grand lodges who trace their lineage to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Jurisdiction of Massachusetts.

Honorable Brother Jeffery M. Coaston, is the 72nd Most Worshipful Grand Master for Massachusetts, and carries on the tradition started by Bro. Prince Hall over 200 years ago.

## Announcement

The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts formally reopens its symbolic lodge, African Lodge No. 459, biennially during the odd year and fourth weekend in April. The ceremony will pay tribute to Prince Hall and the other very brave men who chose the route of Freemasonry to help their people and to have a legitimate vehicle by which to advance and enrich the lives of generations to follow. The participants will be dressed in period costumes from the 18th century. The officer's stations in the lodge will be filled by currently seated Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Masters from among the 47 Prince Hall jurisdictions.

From <https://www.princehall.org/african-lodge-459/>



## Prince Hall

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Prince Hall (c.1735/8—1807)<sup>[1]</sup> was an [abolitionist](#) and leader in the [free black](#) community in [Boston](#). He founded [Prince Hall Freemasonry](#) and lobbied for [education rights](#) for [African American](#) children. He was also active in the [back-to-Africa movement](#).

Hall tried to gain a place for [New York's](#) enslaved and free blacks in [Freemasonry](#), education, and the military, which were some of the most crucial spheres of society in his time. Hall is considered the founder of "BlackFreemasonry" in the United States, known today as [Prince Hall Freemasonry](#). Hall formed the [African Grand Lodge](#) of North America. Prince Hall was unanimously elected its [Grand Master](#) and served until his death in 1807.

Steve Gladstone, author of *Freedom Trail Boston*, states that Prince Hall—known for his role in creating Black Freemasonry, championing equal education rights, and fighting slavery—"was one of the most influential free black leaders in the late 1700s".<sup>[2]</sup>

There is confusion about his year of birth, place of birth, parents, and marriages—at least partly due to the fact that there were numerous "Prince Halls" during this time period.

Brother Prince Hall was interested in the Masonic fraternity because [Freemasonry](#) was founded upon ideals of liberty, equality, and peace. Prior to the [American Revolutionary War](#), Prince Hall and fourteen other free black men petitioned for admittance to the all white [Boston St. John's Lodge](#).<sup>[3]</sup> They were turned down.<sup>[4]</sup> Having been rejected by colonial Freemasonry, Hall and 15 others sought and were initiated into Masonry by members of Lodge No. 441 of the Grand Lodge of Ireland on March 6, 1775.<sup>[5]</sup> The Lodge was attached to the British forces stationed in Boston. Hall and other freedmen founded African Lodge No. 1 and he was named Grand Master.<sup>[6]</sup>

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The black Masons had limited power; they could meet as a lodge, take part in the Masonic procession on St. John's Day, and bury their dead with Masonic rites but could not confer Masonic degrees or perform any other essential functions of a fully operating Lodge.<sup>[7]</sup> Unable to create a charter, they applied to the Grand Lodge of England. The grand master of the Mother Grand Lodge of England, H. R. H. The Duke of Cumberland, issued a charter for the African Lodge No. 1 later renamed [African Lodge No. 459](#) September 29, 1784.<sup>[8]</sup> The lodge was the country's first African Masonic lodge.<sup>[9]</sup> Due to the African Lodge's popularity and Prince Hall's leadership, the Grand Lodge of England made Hall a Provincial Grand Master on January 27, 1791. His responsibilities included reporting on the condition of lodges in the Boston area. Six years later, on March 22, 1797 Prince Hall organized a lodge in Philadelphia, called African Lodge #459, under Prince Hall's Charter. They later received their own charter. On June 25, 1797 he organized African Lodge (later known as Hiram Lodge #3) at Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>[10]</sup>

Author and historian James Sidbury said Prince Hall and those who joined him to found Boston's African Masonic Lodge built a fundamentally new "African" movement on a preexisting institutional foundation. Within that movement they asserted emotional, mythical, and genealogical links to the continent of Africa and its peoples.<sup>[11]</sup> After the death of Prince Hall, on December 4, 1807, the brethren organized the African Grand Lodge on June 24, 1808, including the Philadelphia, Providence and Boston lodges.<sup>[12]</sup> African Grand Lodge declared its independence from the United Grand Lodge of England and all other lodges in 1827. In 1847 they renamed to Prince Hall Grand Lodge in honor of their founder.<sup>[13]</sup>

Hall was considered the "father of African Freemasonry."<sup>[14]</sup> Prince Hall said of civic activities: My brethren, let us pay all due respect to all who God had put in places of honor over us: do justly and be faithful to themthat hire you, and treat them with the respect they may deserve; but worship no man. Worship God, this much is your duty as christians and as masons.<sup>[15]</sup>

From <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince\\_Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince_Hall)>



Prince Hall, a free African American and a contemporary of John Adams. From his formal acquisition of freedom, in 1770, until his death, in 1807, Hall helped forge an activist Black community in Boston while elevating the cause of abolition to new prominence. Hall was the first American to publicly use the language of the Declaration of Independence for a political purpose other than justifying war against Britain. In January 1777, just six months after the promulgation of the Declaration and nearly three years before Adams drafted the state constitution, [Hall submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature](#) (or General Court, as it is styled) requesting emancipation, invoking the resonant phrases and founding truths of the Declaration itself.

Here is what he wrote (I've put the echoes of the Declaration of Independence in *italics*):

The petition of A Great Number of Blackes detained in a State of Slavery in the Bowels of a free & christian Country Humbly shuwith that your Petitioners Apprehend that They have in Common with all other men a *Natural and Unaliable Right to that freedom which the Grat — Parent of the Unavese hath Bestowed equalley on all menkind* and which they have Never forfeuted by Any Compact or Agreement whatever — but thay wher Unjustly Dragged by the hand of cruel Power from their Dererst frinds and sum of them Even torn from the Embraces of their tender Parents — from A popolous Plasant And plentiful cuntry And in Violation of *Laws of Nature and off Nations* And in defiance of all the tender feelings of humanity Brough hear Either to Be sold Like Beast of Burthen & Like them Condemnd to Slavery for Life.

In this passage, Hall invokes the core concepts of social-contract theory, which grounded the American Revolution, to argue for an extension of the claim to equal rights to those who were enslaved. He acknowledged and adopted the intellectual framework of the new political arrangements, but also pointedly called out the original sin of enslavement itself.

Hall's memory was vigorously kept alive by members and archivists of the Masonic lodge he founded, and his name can be found in historical references. But his life has attracted fresh attention in recent years from scholars and community leaders, both because he deserves to be widely known and celebrated and because inserting his story into the tale of the country's founding exemplifies the promise of an integrated way of studying and teaching history. It's hard enough to shine new light on an African American figure who has been long in the shadows, one who in important ways should be considered an American Founder. It can prove far more difficult to trace an individual's "relationship tree" and come to understand that person, in a granular and even cinematic way, in the full context of his or her own society: family, school, church, civic organizations, commerce, government. Doing so—especially for figures and communities that have been overlooked—gives us a chance to tell a whole story, to weave together multiple perspectives on the events of our political founding into a single, joined tale. It also provides an opportunity to draw out and emphasize the agency of people who experienced oppression and domination. In the case of Prince Hall, the process of historical reconstruction is still under way.

From <<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/03/prince-hall-forgotten-founder/617791/>>

Theodore of the Good Council

Sunday, October 3, 2021 3:43 PM

At first, it was totally unconnected with Freemasonry, of which Order Weishaupt was not at that time a member. It was not until 1777 that he was initiated in the Lodge Theodore of Good Counsel, at Munich. Thenceforward, Weishaupt sought to incorporate his system into that of Freemasonry, so that time latter might become subservient to his views and with the assistance of the Baron Knigge, who brought his active energies and genius to the aid of the cause, he succeeded in completing his system of Illuminism. But the clergy, and especially the Jesuits, who, although their Order had been abolished by the government, still secretly possessed great power, redoubled their efforts to destroy their opponent, and they at length succeeded. In 1784, all secret Associations were prohibited by a royal decree, and in the following year Weishaupt was deprived of his professorship and banished from the country. He repaired to Gotha, where he was kindly received by Duke Ernest, who made him a Counselor and gave him a pension.

From <<http://www.masonicdictionary.com/weishaupt.html>>



Adam Weishaupt was born February 6, 1748 at Ingolstadt and educated by the Jesuits. His appointment as Professor of Natural and Canon Law at the University of Ingolstadt in 1775, a position previously held by one of the recently disbanded Jesuits,<sup>4</sup> gave, it is said, great offence to the clergy. "Weishaupt, whose views were cosmopolitan, and who knew and condemned the bigotry and superstitions of the Priests, established an opposing party in the University...."<sup>4</sup> Weishaupt was not then a freemason; he was initiated into a Lodge of Strict Observance, Lodge Theodore of Good Council (*Theodor zum guten Rath*), at Munich in 1777. <sup>4</sup>

Most information regarding the [rituals](#) and objectives of the order is derived from papers and correspondence found in a search of Xavier Zwack's residence in Landshut on 11 October 1786, and a search of Baron Bassus's castle of Sondersdorf in Bavaria on 16 October of the same year. <sup>4</sup> These documents were published by the Bavarian government, under the title: *Einige Originalschriften des Illuminaten Ordens*, (Munich, 1787). Until recently, the best English exposition on the Order was found in [Chapter III](#) of Vernon L. Stauffer's *New England and the Bavarian Illuminati*, (pp. 142-228). Today, English translations of the rituals are available online.

Retellings of the death of Lanz, an Illuminati courier, who was struck by lightning in Abschrift [Apologie, p. 229], illustrate the mythology that has grown up around the history of the Illuminati. Lack of research and a disdain for historical accuracy has led conspiracy theorists to confuse Johann Jakob Lanz, a non-Illuminati secular priest in Erding, and friend of Weishaupt, with Franz Georg Lang, a court advisor in Eichstätt who was active in the Illuminati under the name Tamerlan. Barriel mistakenly translated "Weltpriester", or secular priest, as apostate priest and subsequent writers such as [Webster](#) and [Miller](#) have repeated this error. Eckert renamed Weishaupt's friend as Lanze and had him struck by lightning while carrying dispatches in Silesia. Miller cited Eckert but renamed Lanz as Jacob Lang and placed the lightning strike in Ratisbon. The importance of the papers found on Lanz has also been over-stressed, considering that his death on 10 July 1785 came some time after the first two edicts for suppression — issued on 22 June 1784 and 2 March 1785 — and some time before the mid-October 1786 raids on Zwack and Bassus, and the final edict on 16 August 1787. This is a minor detail in the history but it illustrates the lack of accuracy often displayed by detractors of the Illuminati.<sup>4</sup>

Neither Robison nor Barriel deny that the professed goal of the Order was to teach people to be happy by making them good — to do this by enlightening the mind and freeing it from the dominion of superstition and prejudice. But they refused to accept this at face value. Where Weishaupt and Knigge promoted a freedom from church domination over philosophy and science, Robison and Barriel saw a call for the destruction of the church. Where Weishaupt and Knigge wanted a release from the excesses of state oppression, Robison and Barriel saw the destruction of the state. Where Weishaupt and Knigge wanted to educate women and treat them as intellectual equals, Robison and Barriel saw the destruction of the natural and proper order of society.

From <<https://freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/illuminati.html>>

[Adam Weishaupt](#) (1748–1830) became professor of [Canon Law](#) and [practical philosophy](#) at the [University of Ingolstadt](#) in 1773. He was the only non-clerical professor at an institution run by [Jesuits](#), whose order Pope [Clement XIV](#) had dissolved in 1773. The Jesuits of Ingolstadt, however, still retained the purse strings and some power at the university, which they continued to regard as their own. They made constant attempts to frustrate and discredit non-clerical staff, especially when course material contained anything they regarded as liberal or Protestant. Weishaupt became deeply [anti-clerical](#), resolving to spread the ideals of the [Enlightenment](#) (*Aufklärung*) through some sort of secret society of like-minded individuals.<sup>[a]</sup> Finding [Freemasonry](#) expensive, and not open to his ideas, he founded his own society which was to have a system of ranks or grades based on those in Freemasonry, but with his own agenda.<sup>[a]</sup> His original name for the new order was *Bund der Perfektibilisten*, or Covenant of Perfectibility (Perfectibilists); he later changed it because it sounded too strange.<sup>[a]</sup> On 1 May 1776, Weishaupt and four students formed the Perfectibilists, taking the *Owl of Minerva* as their symbol.<sup>[a]</sup> The members were to use aliases within the society. Weishaupt became *Spartacus*. Law students Massenhausen, Bauhof, Merz and Sutor became respectively *Ajax*, *Agathon*, *Tiberius* and *Erasmus Roterodamus*. Weishaupt later expelled Sutor for indolence.<sup>[a]</sup><sup>[a]</sup> In April 1778, the order became the *Illuminatenorden*, or Order of Illuminati, after Weishaupt had seriously contemplated the name *Bee order*.<sup>[a]</sup> Massenhausen proved initially the most active in expanding the society. Significantly, while studying in Munich shortly after the formation of the order, he recruited [Xavier von Zwack](#), a former pupil of Weishaupt at the beginning of a significant administrative career. (At the time, he was in charge of the Bavarian National Lottery.) Massenhausen's enthusiasm soon became a liability in the eyes of Weishaupt, often resulting in attempts to recruit unsuitable candidates. Later, his erratic love-life made him neglectful, and as Weishaupt passed control of the Munich group to Zwack, it became clear that Massenhausen had misappropriated subscriptions and intercepted correspondence between Weishaupt and Zwack. In 1778, Massenhausen graduated and took a post outside [Bavaria](#), taking no further interest in the order. At this time, the order had a nominal membership of twelve.<sup>[a]</sup> With the departure of Massenhausen, Zwack immediately applied himself to recruiting more mature and important recruits. Most prized by Weishaupt was Hertel, a childhood friend and a canon of the [Munich Frauenkirche](#). By the end of summer 1778 the order had 27 members (still counting Massenhausen) in 5 commands; Munich (Athens), Ingolstadt (Eleusis), Ravensberg (Sparta), Freysingen (Thebes), and Eichstaedt (Erzurum).<sup>[a]</sup> During this early period, the order had three grades of Novice, Minerval, and Illuminated Minerval, of which only the Minerval grade involved a complicated ceremony. In this the candidate was given secret signs and a password. A system of mutual espionage kept Weishaupt informed of the activities and character of all his members, his favourites becoming members of the ruling council, or Areopagus. Some novices were permitted to recruit, becoming *Insinuants*. Christians of good character were actively sought, with Jews and pagans specifically excluded, along with women, monks, and members of other secret societies. Favoured candidates were rich, docile, willing to learn, and aged 18–30.<sup>[a]</sup><sup>[a]</sup> **Transition** Having, with difficulty, dissuaded some of his members from joining the Freemasons, Weishaupt decided to join the older order to acquire material to expand his own ritual. He was admitted to lodge "Prudence" of the [Rite of Strict Observance](#) early in February 1777. His progress through the three degrees of "blue lodge" masonry taught him nothing of the higher degrees he sought to exploit, but in the following year a priest called Abbé Marotti informed Zwack that these inner secrets rested on knowledge of the older religion and the primitive church. Zwack persuaded Weishaupt that their own order should enter into friendly relations with Freemasonry, and obtain the dispensation to set up their own lodge. At this stage (December 1778), the addition of the first three degrees of Freemasonry was seen as a secondary project.<sup>[a]</sup> **With little difficulty, a warrant was obtained from the Grand Lodge of Prussia called the Royal York for Friendship, and the new lodge was called Theodore of the Good Council, with the intention of flattering Charles Theodore, Elector of Bavaria. It was founded in Munich on 21 March 1779, and quickly packed with Illuminati. The first master, a man called Radl, was persuaded to return home to Baden, and by July Weishaupt's order ran the lodge.**<sup>[a]</sup> The next step involved independence from their Grand Lodge. By establishing masonic relations with the *Union* lodge in Frankfurt, affiliated to the [Premier Grand Lodge of England](#), lodge Theodore became independently recognised, and able to declare its independence. As a new mother lodge, it could now spawn lodges of its own. The recruiting drive amongst the Frankfurt masons also obtained the allegiance of [Adolph Freiherr Knigge](#).

From <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illuminati>>

## Propaganda Due/P2

Sunday, October 3, 2021 3:53 PM

# Propaganda Due

[EDIT](#)

**Propaganda Due** (Italian pronunciation: [[proˈpaˈɡanda ˈduːe](#)]), or **P2**, was a Masonic lodge operating under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient of Italy from 1945 to 1976 (when its charter was withdrawn), and a pseudo-Masonic, "black", or "covert" lodge operating illegally (in contravention of Article 18 of the Constitution of Italy banning secret associations) from 1976 to 1981. During the years that the lodge was headed by Licio Gelli, P2 was implicated in numerous Italian crimes and mysteries, including the collapse of the Vatican-affiliated Banco Ambrosiano, the murders of journalist Mino Pecorelli and banker Roberto Calvi, and corruption cases within the nationwide bribe scandal Tangentopoli. P2 came to light through the investigations into the collapse of Michele Sindona's financial empire.<sup>[]</sup>

P2 was sometimes referred to as a "[state within a state](#)"<sup>[]</sup> or a "shadow government".<sup>[]</sup> The lodge had among its members prominent journalists, members of parliament, industrialists, and military leaders—including Silvio Berlusconi, who later became Prime Minister of Italy; the Savoypretender to the Italian throne Victor Emmanuel; and the heads of all three Italian intelligence services (at the time [SISDE](#), [SISMI](#) and CESIS).

When searching Licio Gelli's villa, the police found a document called the "Plan for Democratic Rebirth", which called for a consolidation of the media, suppression of trade unions, and the rewriting of the Italian Constitution.<sup>[]</sup>

Outside Italy, P2 was also active in Uruguay, Brazil and in Argentina, with Raúl Alberto Lastiri, Argentina's interim president (between July 13, 1973 to October 12, 1973) during the height of the "[Dirty War](#)" among its members. Emilio Massera, who was part of the military junta led by [Jorge Rafael Videla](#) from 1976 to 1978, José López Rega, minister of Social Welfare in [Perón's](#) government and founder of the [Argentine Anticommunist Alliance](#) ("Triple A"), and General [Guillermo Suárez Mason](#) were also members.<sup>[]</sup>

From <[https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda\\_Due](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda_Due)>

## P2 Lodge

Secret societies were outlawed in Italian society in 1981 after a Free Masons Lodge, the right wing P2 [Propaganda Due], emerged onto the surface of Italian media. Reaching its zenith of influence in Italy during the second half of the 20th century, many observers saw it as an instrument for projecting American power into the turbulent politics of cold war Italy. P2 served a critical role as a liaison between prominent societal groups, assisting in their attempts to control Italian society while at the same time benefiting from its ties to the most powerful Italians.

Freemasonry was not a paramilitary organization and pursued purely cultural, humanitarian and philanthropic aims. Freemasonry was outlawed in Italy when Mussolini and the Fascists were in power. When World War II came to a close, the American and British liberators supported the re-establishment of these organizations. During the 1960s, Italian freemasonry was divided into two main groups - Grande Loggia d'Italia (national system) and Grande Oriente d'Italia (international system) - both of which had established headquarters in Rome. Many of the lodges that exist in Italy are unregistered and therefore exist as illegal secret societies.

The history of P2 dates back to the 1890s. During its early existence however, it ran into some difficulties when its grand master was implicated in the scandal of Banca Romana. The Banca Romana was relieved, first through the Government's interposition and the considerateness of the Banca Nazionale, then by laws and royal decree, of the obligation of redeeming its notes. This relief was the cause of its being able to violate the law anew more freely and more recklessly, until it reduced itself to a disastrous condition. After the failure of the Banca Romana in 1893, with the revelation of its very grave irregularities, bitter discussions aroused as to its relations with the Government.

In 1971 Roberto Gelli was appointed organizing secretary, and he eventually become its powerful grand master. The P2 lodge had a vast list of membership that ranged from politicians, mafia members, judges, business men, even Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi [who joined the lodge in 1978]. P2 contained several high-ranking government officials in the secret services, national police and wealthy members of society. In essence the P2 was saturated with Italy's most powerful men. The membership list contained 962 names, including top figures from business, politics, media, armed forces, secret services and the judiciary. The parliamentary P2 Commission concluded the list was a reliable guide to genuine membership, but a number of individuals with names on it succeeded in convincing the courts they did not belong. Many people joined the Masonic lodges, especially P2, because they were able to offer political protection.

There was an absence of horizontal relations, i.e. among brothers ofthe same grade, who did not know each other. Instead, all relationsbetween the Grand Master, Gelli, and the members were vertical. Gelli was in a position of"dominus" in the secret service. This is because the position in the hierarchy that was relevant was not that which the subjects occupied in the visible government, but that of the invisible one.

The founding document of the Montecarlo Lodge Masonic Executive Committee- connected with the P2 and led by the P2 Grandmaster, Gelli - reads: "Freemasonry is the association most qualified to govern. If it does not govern, therefore, it misses its very raison d'être". It then states that, in order to reach Freemasonry's ultimate goal, "it is obviously necessary to obtain the most suitable instrument: power . "

The "notorious" P2 lodge planned to take control of public authorities and subvert democratic institutions. The P2 lodge had colluded with the Mafia and organized crime. It would not be surprising were a government to fear judicial participation in Mafia controlled organizations. In the event of an electoral victory by the PCI, it would have become impossible to reconcile the legitimate government of the country - a Communist government - with the international political bloc to which Italy has belonged since the end of the Second World War, i.e. NATO.

P2's plans were outlined in a 1975 work by Licio Gelli [the head of the secret P2 masonic lodge] "Scheme for a General Recovery of the Country." This involved attempts to control the government by buying the three main tools of democratic control, which included the political parties, the press and the trade unions. Corruption was the key to success. The P2 lodge had colluded with the Mafia and scandal-linked financiers such as Michele Sindona and Roberto Calvi [known as "God's Banker"] became lodge members [Both met premature deaths].

In 1986 Libero Gualtieri, chairman of the parliamentary committee on the secret services ""We accept as an established fact that within SISMI [Service for Intelligenceand Military Security] there is an offshoot structure called SuperSISMI.... We of th  parliamentary committee confirm our political evaluation as to the existence of th  SuperSISMI. There have been deviations, andprofound ones. D viations that have impeded the establishment of many factsand identification of the authors of a massacre, the one in Bologna station,in short, we are not dealing With persons who are dishonest for private reasons. We committee members confirm

Five top officials of Italy's armed forces and secret services implicated in a scandal involving a covert Masonic lodge have gone on leave pending an investigation of the case by a government commission.

The latest repercussion from the scandal that on Tuesday caused the collapse of the government led by Christian Democrat Arnaldo Forlani came last night when Adm. Giovanni Torrisi, head of the joint chiefs of staff, announced he was voluntarily going on leave "to facilitate the steps in progress to unequivocally clear up the situation."

The statement by the admiral, who was appointed in January 1980, was followed by an announcement that the same decision had been made by Gen. Giuseppe Santovito, head of the military secret service; Gen. Giulio Grassini, head of the domestic secret service; Gen Orazio Giannini, commander of the customs police, and Walter Pelosi, director of the secret service coordinating body. All denied any wrongdoing.

The names of Torrisi, the highest officer in the Italian armed forces, and those of the four other officials had been included in a list of 962 names of alleged members of a renegade Masonic lodge, known as P2, or Propaganda Two. The lodge's fugitive grand master, Lico Gelli, left Italy in March and is wanted on charges of political espionage.

The list's release last week provoked a government crisis that is expected to prove difficult to resolve and that could lead to early elections even though President Sandro Pertini opposes dissolution of parliament before its due date in 1984.

Pertini today asked Arnaldo Forlani, who has stayed on as caretaker premier, to try to form another government.

Forlani, who will begin political negotiations on Monday, may find it difficult to overcome sharp differences with his former Socialist partners, the second largest group in the outgoing four-party coalition.

Along with a political crisis, the publication of the list also appears likely to cause tremors among civil servants and other public officials, politicians and possibly journalists.

Today, magistrates here decided that a related investigation regarding kickbacks deriving from a 1979 oil deal with Saudi Arabia would be turned over to a parliamentary commission because papers found among Gelli's documents intimated that some former Cabinet ministers might be implicated.

But a top Rome magistrate involved in the Gelli investigation repeated that so far charges had been made only against Gelli and a former secret service officer, Col. Antonio Viezzer. For now, he said, only three aides to a former Christian Democratic foreign trade official had been told, for their own protection, that they were under investigation. Membership alone in the P2 lodge, he added, was not a crime and therefore was "of no interest to the Italian state."

Nevertheless, the taint of possible involvement with the lodge, or with Gelli, has led many Italians to call for a purge.

In the case of the top military and secret service officials, forbidden by law from belonging to any secret organization, the initial attitude of Socialist Defense Minister Lelio Lagorio was that of confidence in the word of a senior officer until concrete evidence of involvement with Gelli was provided.

A Defense Ministry spokesman pointed out that the officers' decision to go on temporary leave was voluntary and that "no punitive sanctions have been adopted in their regards."

But the officers are certain to have come under sharp pressure. Italian newspapers reported today and yesterday that the government was considering suspending the security clearance for those officers who might participate in NATO meetings and this is thought to have persuaded them to make a voluntary exit.

The shakeup in the high military and secret service echelons was not expected to have any significant effect on Italy's defense capability.

A Western diplomat who deals with military matters yesterday pointed out that no other Italian chiefs of staff nor the military's top policy-planning officers have been implicated.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that this will damage the military's image here.

Both the Defense Ministry and the presidential palace are said to have already quietly demoted several top civi servants whose names were on the list and the same is expected to happen at the Interior Ministry and elsewhere. There have been calls for the removal of all state television officials whose names were listed and one has already resigned.

Many journalists at the Milan daily Corriere della Sera are angry because the editor, the publisher and the general manager of the paper are all on the list. The Christian Democratic Party, declaring Masonic and party membership to be incompatible, has temporarily suspended all 15 Christian Democratic members of parliament included on the list.

"Since it is impossible to prove one's nonmembership, this is terribly unfair," said Christian Democratic Deputy Massimo de Carolis, who says although he met Geli three times he was never even asked to become a P2 member.

He asked why so much credibility was being given to a list made up by a man who had been charged with criminal activities. "This is a dangerous precedent," he said. "It means that if a top bank robber issued a list of corrupt policemen everyone would simply believe it."

In contrast, the Superior Council of the Magistrature, Italy's highest judicial body, has said no action will be taken against the 19 judges on Gelli's list until after an investigation.

From <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/05/29/5-go-on-leave-in-italy-lodge-scandal/60cc5c6c-3826-44e7-b56c-3b858a43ef5f/>>

that at the top of SISMI there had been established a "parallel structur  ," which was born in part from the plans of the heads of Lodge P2, free of formal commitments and effective controls, and thus deviate and very dangerous."

A law enacted in 1982 provided that membership by government employees in a secret society was a criminal offense and that disciplinary measures could be taken against civil servants and judges. In *Maestri v. Italy*, [2004] ECHR 39748/98 (17 February 2004) the court held that inflicting disciplinary measures on an Italian judge because of his membership in the Order of Masons, violated his freedom of association rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 11.

In November 1993 disciplinary proceedings were brought against him, under Article 18 of the Royal Legislative Decree of 31 May 1946, for having been a member of a Masonic lodge affiliated to the Grande Oriente d'Italia di Palazzo Giustiniani from 1981 until March 1993. In a decision of 10 October 1995 the disciplinary section of the National Council of the Judiciary found that the applicant had committed the offence of which he was accused and gave him a reprimand (*censura*). The disciplinary section stated that it was contrary to disciplinary rules for a judge to be a Freemason, on account of the incompatibility between the Masonic and judicial oaths, the hierarchical relationship between Freemasons, the rejection of State justice in favour of Masonic justice and the indissoluble nature of the bond between Freemasons.

The European Court of Human Rights determined that during the period of membership it could not have been foreseeable to the judge that membership in a non secret order of Freemasons could give rise to disciplinary action. The lodge judge Maestri belonged to was not secret; indeed, it made its membership list public.

From <<https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/itp2.htm>>



# Discovery

Sunday, October 3, 2021 4:17 PM

## Discovery

The activities of the P2 lodge were discovered by prosecutors while investigating banker Michele Sindona, the collapse of his bank and his ties to the Mafia.<sup>[10]</sup> In March 1981, police found a list of alleged members in Gelli's house in Arezzo. It contained 962 names, among which were important state officials, important politicians and a number of military officers, including the heads of the three Italian secret services.<sup>[7]</sup> Future Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi was on the list, although he had not yet entered politics at the time. Another famous member was Victor Emmanuel, the son of the last Italian king.

Prime Minister [Arnaldo Forlani](#) (whose *chef de cabinet* was a P2 member as well) <sup>[7]</sup> appointed a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, headed by the independent Christian Democrat Tina Anselmi. Nevertheless, in May 1981, Forlani was forced to resign due to the P2 scandal, causing the fall of the Italian government.<sup>[2][11]</sup>

In July 1982, new documents were found hidden in the false bottom of a suitcase belonging to Gelli's daughter at Fiumicino airport in Rome. The documents were entitled "*Memorandum sulla situazione italiana*" (Memorandum on the Italian situation) "*Piano di rinascita democratica*" (Plan of Democratic Rebirth) and are seen as the political programme of P2. According to these documents, the main enemies of Italy were the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the trade unions. These had to be isolated and cooperation with the communists (the second biggest party in Italy and one of the largest in Europe), which was proposed in the historic compromise by [Aldo Moro](#), needed to be disrupted.<sup>[7]</sup>

Gelli's goal was to form a new political and economic elite to lead Italy towards a right-wing, authoritarian form of democracy, with an anti-communist pre-occupation.<sup>[12]</sup> P2 advocated a programme of extensive political corruption: "political parties, newspapers and trade unions can be the objects of possible solicitations which could take the form of economic-financial manoeuvres. The availability of sums not exceeding 30 to 40 billion lire would seem sufficient to allow carefully chosen men, acting in good faith, to conquer key positions necessary for overall control."<sup>[7]</sup>

From <[https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda\\_Due](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda_Due)>

## Scandals

Sunday, October 3, 2021 4:28 PM

Opinions about the importance and reach of P2 differ. Some see the P2 as a reactionary, shadow government ready to take over power in case of an electoral victory of the Italian Communist Party. Others think it was nothing more than a sordid association of people eager to improve their careers by making powerful and important connections.<sup>[u]</sup> Nevertheless, P2 was implicated in numerous Italian scandals and mysteries.

### Corriere della Sera takeover

In 1977 the P2 took control of the Corriere della Sera newspaper, a leading paper in Italy. At the time, the paper had run into financial trouble and was unable to raise bank loans because its then editor, Piero Ottone, was considered hostile to the ruling Christian Democrats. Corriere's owners, the publishing house Rizzoli, struck a deal with Gelli. He provided the money with funds from the Vatican Bank directed by Paul Marcinkus. Ottone was fired and the paper's editorial line shifted to the right.<sup>[u]</sup>

The paper published a long interview with Gelli in 1980. The interview was carried out by the television talk show host Maurizio Costanzo, who would also be exposed as a member of P2.<sup>[u]</sup> Gelli said he was in favour of rewriting the Italian constitution towards a Gaullist presidential system. **When asked what he always wanted to be, he replied: "A puppet master".**<sup>[u]</sup>

### Bologna massacre

*Main article: August 1980 Bologna bombing*

P2 members Gelli and the head of the secret service [Pietro Musumeci](#) were condemned for attempting to mislead the police investigation of the Bologna massacre on August 2, 1980, which killed 85 people and wounded more than 200.<sup>[u]</sup>

### Banco Ambrosiano scandal

*Main article: Banco Ambrosiano*

P2 became the target of considerable attention in the wake of the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano (one of Milan's principal banks, owned in part by the Vatican Bank), and the suspicious 1982 death of its president Roberto Calvi in London, initially ruled a suicide but later prosecuted as a murder. It was suspected by investigative journalists that some of the plundered funds went to P2 or to its members.<sup>[u]</sup>

### Protezione account

One of the documents found in 1981 was about a numbered bank account, the so-called "Protezione account," at the Union Bank of Switzerland in Lugano (Switzerland). It detailed the payment of US\$7 million by the president of ENI, Florio Fiorini through Roberto Calvi to the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) leader Claudio Martelli on behalf of Bettino Craxi, the socialist Prime Minister from 1983–1987.

The full extent of the payment only became clear twelve years later, in 1993, during the *mani pulite* (Italian for "clean hands") investigations into political corruption. The money was allegedly a kickback on a loan which the Socialist leaders had organised to help bail out the ailing Banco Ambrosiano. Rumours that the Minister of Justice, Martelli, was connected with the account had been circulating since investigations began into the P2 plot. He always flatly denied them. However, learning that formal investigations were opened, he resigned as minister.<sup>[u]</sup>

From <[https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda\\_Due](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda_Due)>



# Golpe Borghese/Operation Tora Tora

Tuesday, October 5, 2021 3:42 PM

The **Golpe Borghese** (English: Borghese Coup) was a failed Italian *coup d'état* allegedly planned for the night of 7 or 8 December 1970. It was named after [Junio Valerio Borghese](#), [wartime](#) commander of the [Decima Flottiglia MAS](#) and a hero in the eyes of many post-War Italian fascists. The coup attempt became publicly known when the left-wing journal *Paese Sera* ran the headline on the evening of 18 March 1971: *Subversive plan against the Republic: far-right plot discovered*. The secret operation was code-named **Operation Tora Tora** after the [Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The plan of the coup in its final phase envisaged the involvement of US and [NATO](#) warships which were on alert in the [Mediterranean Sea](#). The US [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA) reportedly followed the coup, with President Nixon being personally informed of it. Yet in leaked documents, the US ambassador to Rome is quoted saying *"The last thing we need right now is a half-cooked coup d'état ... We wouldn't support it."*<sup>[2]</sup>

The botched right-wing coup took place after the [Hot Autumn](#) of left-wing protests in Italy and the [Piazza Fontana bombing](#) in December 1969. The failed coup involved hundreds of neo-fascist militants from [Stefano Delle Chiaie's National Vanguard](#), and army dissidents under Lt. Colonel [Amos Spiazzi](#), helped by 187 members of the [Corpo Forestale dello Stato](#), who were to seize the headquarters of the Italian public television broadcaster [RAI](#).<sup>[3]</sup> The plan included the kidnapping of the [Italian President Giuseppe Saragat](#); the murder of the head of the police [Angelo Vicari](#); and the occupation of RAI, the [Quirinale](#), the [Ministry of the Interior](#) (from which Vanguard militants would seize weapons), and the [Ministry of Defense](#). Spiazzi's [Milan](#)-based battalion also planned to occupy [Sesto San Giovanni](#), at that time a workers' town and a stronghold of the [Italian Communist Party](#). Apparently some militants briefly entered the Ministry of the Interior, but Borghese suspended the coup a few hours before its final phase. A submachine gun (a [Beretta Model 38](#)) not returned by one of the militants was later viewed as a key piece of evidence in the [sedition](#) trial.<sup>[4]</sup>

From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golpe\\_Borghese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golpe_Borghese)

## 1970: The Golpe Borghese coup plot in Italy



A short history of the aborted neofascist Golpe Borghese coup plot in Italy, 1970, and the subsequent repercussions.

The Golpe Borghese was a failed Italian coup d'état allegedly planned for the night of 7 or 8 December, 1970. It was named after Junio Valerio Borghese, an Italian [World War II](#) commander of the notorious X MAS unit, the "Black Prince", convicted of war crimes, but still a hero in the eyes of many post-War Italian fascists. The coup attempt became publicly known when the left-wing journal "Paese Sera" ran the headline on the evening of March 18, 1971 : Subversive plan against the Republic: far-right plot discovered.

The secret operation was code-named 'Operation Tora Tora' after the Japanese attack on the US ships in Pearl Harbor which had led the United States to enter the Second World War on December 7, 1941. The plan of the coup in its final phase envisaged the involvement of US and NATO warships which were on alert in the Mediterranean.

### The coup plot



This involved hundreds of neo-fascist militants, helped by 187 members of the Corpo Forestale dello Stato. The plan included the kidnapping of the Italian President Giuseppe Saragat, the murder of the head of the police Angelo Vicari, and the occupation of the Quirinale, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense and Italian public television broadcaster RAI. Certain Army dissidents also planned to occupy Sesto San Giovanni, at that time a workers' town and a stronghold of the Italian Communist Party. Apparently some militants briefly entered the Ministry of the Interior, but Borghese suspended the coup few hours before its final phase.

According to Borghese, the neo-fascists were actually gathering for a protest demonstration against the upcoming visit of president Tito of Yugoslavia, which was later postponed. This protest was supposedly called off because of heavy rain.<sup>[1]</sup>

Amos Spiazzi, commander of the Army dissidents, said that the coup was suspended because the Christian Democratic government knew of the coup plan and was ready to suppress the plotters and to declare martial law.<sup>[2]</sup>

Participants at the semi-clandestine rallies seem to have believed that they would take part in the arrest of politicians and the occupation of key installations by sympathetic army units. When Borghese called off the coup late that night, the presumed plotters, reportedly unarmed, improvised a late spaghetti dinner before returning home.<sup>[3]</sup>

Several members of the National Front (Fronte Nazionale) were arrested and a warrant was served for Borghese. Borghese himself fled to Spain and died there in 1974.

Golpe Borghese	
Part of the <a href="#">Years of lead</a> and <a href="#">Neo-fascist activity in Italy</a>	
	
Front page of the newspaper <i>Paese Sera</i> on the failed neo-fascist coup	
Date	7–8 December 1970
Location	Rome
Goals	Overthrow of centre-left national government
Methods	Coup d'etat
Resulted in	Coup suspended
Parties to the civil conflict	
<div><div><a href="#">National Vanguard</a> <a href="#">National Front</a> Army and police dissidents <b>Supported by:</b> <a href="#">Sicilian Mafia</a>  <a href="#">P2 Masonic Lodge</a>  <a href="#">Central Intelligence Agency</a></div><div> <a href="#">Italy</a> <b>Supported by:</b> <a href="#">SID</a></div></div>	
Lead figures	
<div><div><a href="#">Junio Valerio Borghese</a>  Lt. Col. Amos Spiazzi <a href="#">Stefano Delle Chiaie</a>  Gen. Giuseppe Casero  Col. Giuseppe Lo Vecchio  Maj. Luciano Berti</div><div><a href="#">Giuseppe Saragat</a> <a href="#">Emilio Colombo</a></div></div>	
Number	
<div><div> Hundreds of militants  187 officers  500–1,000 troops supported by artillery</div><div>20,000 <a href="#">Carabinieri</a> (5,000 in Rome) Unknown number of troops to be activated in the "Triangle Exigency Plan" to counter the coup in accordance with the <a href="#">Piano Solo</a> plan.</div></div>	

From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golpe\\_Borghese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golpe_Borghese)

Three trials were started for conspiracy against the Italian state. In 1978, Vito Miceli was acquitted of trying to cover up a coup attempt, Saccucci, Orlandini, Rosa, and others were convicted of political conspiracy,[8] which also included Stefano Delle Chiaie, whose specific role is unclear. According to a 1987 UPI news cable, he had already fled Italy to Spain on July 25, 1970[9] However, according to other sources, including René Monzat (1992), he led the commando which occupied the premises of the Interior Minister.[10]

At the appeal trial in November 1984 all 46 defendants were acquitted because the "fact did not happen" ("il fatto non sussiste) and only existed in "a private meeting between four or five sixty-years-olds".[11][12] The Supreme Court confirmed the appeal judgment in March 1986.[13]

The final trial connected with the Golpe Borghese began in 1991, after it was discovered that **evidence involving prominent persons (Licio Gelli,** admiral Giovanni Torrisi...) had been destroyed by the Italian armed forces secret service before the first trial. Giulio Andreotti, minister of defense at the time the evidence was destroyed, declared in 1997 that names had been deleted so that the charges would be easier to understand. This last trial ended without convictions because the period of prescription for destruction of evidence[14] had passed.

From <<https://libcom.org/history/1970-golpe-borghese-coup-plot-italy>>

## Members

Sunday, October 3, 2021 4:29 PM

### Licio Gelli's list found in 1981

On March 17, 1981, a list composed by Licio Gelli was found in his country house (Villa Wanda). The list should be contemplated with some caution, as it is considered to be a compilation of P2 members and the contents of Gelli's Rolodex. Many on the list were apparently never asked if they wanted to join P2, and it is not known to what extent the list includes members who were formally initiated into the lodge. Since 1981, some of those on the list have demonstrated their distance from P2 to the satisfaction of the Italian legal system.<sup>[u]</sup>

On May 21, 1981, the Italian government released the list.<sup>[u]</sup> The Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry headed by Tina Anselmi considered the list reliable and genuine. It decided to publish the list in its concluding report, *Relazione della Commissione parlamentare d'inchiesta sulla Loggia massonica P2*.<sup>[u]</sup>

The list contains 962 names (including Gelli's). It has been claimed that at least a thousand names may still be secret, as the membership numbers begin with number 1,600, which suggests that the complete list has not yet been found.<sup>[u]</sup> The list included all of the heads of the secret services, 195 officers of the different armed forces (12 generals of the [Carabinieri](#), 5 of the financial police [Guardia di Finanza](#), 22 of the army, 4 of the air force and 8 admirals), as well as 44 members of parliament, 3 ministers and a secretary of a political party, leading magistrates, a few prefects and heads of police, bankers and businessmen, civil servants, journalists and broadcasters.<sup>[u]</sup> Also included were a top official of the Banca di Roma, Italy's third largest bank at the time, and a former director-general of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), the country's largest.<sup>[u]</sup>

#### Notable people on Gelli's list



Receipt for membership of Silvio Berlusconi to the P2 masonic lodge  
Some notable individuals include:

- Silvio Berlusconi, businessman, future founder of the Forza Italia political party and Prime Minister of Italy.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Michele Sindona, banker linked to the Mafia.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Roberto Calvi, so-called "banker of God", allegedly killed by the Mafia.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Umberto Ortolani, leading P2-member.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Franco Di Bella, director of *Corriere della Sera*.<sup>[u]</sup> Di Bella had commissioned a long interview with Gelli, who openly talked of his plans for a "democratic renaissance" in Italy—including control over the media. The interview was carried out by the television talk show host Maurizio Costanzo, who would also be exposed as a member of P2.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Angelo Rizzoli Jr., owner of *Corriere della Sera*, today cinema producer.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Bruno Tassan Din, general director of *Corriere della Sera*.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General [Vito Miceli](#), chief of the SIOS (*Servizio Informazioni*), Italian Army Intelligence's Service from 1969 and SID's head from October 18, 1970 to 1974. Arrested in 1975 on charges of "conspiracy against the state" concerning investigations about *Rosa dei venti*, a state-infiltrated group involved in the [strategy of tension](#), he later became an Italian Social Movement (MSI) member.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Federico Umberto D'Amato, leader of an intelligence cell (*Ufficio affari riservati*) in the Italian Minister of Interior.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General Giuseppe Santovito, head of the military intelligence service [SISMI](#) (1978–1981).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Admiral Giovanni Torrisi, Chief of the General Staff of the Army.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General Giulio Grassini, head of the intelligence service [SISDE](#) (1977–1981).<sup>[u]</sup>
- General [Pietro Musumeci](#), deputy director of Italy's military intelligence service, SISMI.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General Franco Picchiotti.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General Giovambattista Palumbo.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General Raffaele Giudice, commander of the [Guardia di Finanza](#) (1974–1978).<sup>[u]</sup> Appointed by Giulio Andreotti, Giudice conspired with oil magnate Bruno Musselli and others in a lucrative tax fraud of as much as \$2.2 billion.<sup>[u]</sup>
- General Orazio Giannini, commander of the [Guardia di Finanza](#) (1980–1981).<sup>[u]</sup> On the day the list was discovered Giannini phoned the official in charge of the operation, and told him (according the official's testimony to the parliamentary commission): "You better know that you've found some lists. I'm in those lists – be careful, because so too are all the highest echelons (I understood 'of the state') ... Watch out, the Force will be overwhelmed by this."<sup>[u]</sup>
- Carmine Pecorelli, a controversial journalist assassinated on March 20, 1979. He had drawn connections in a May 1978 article between the kidnapping of Aldo Moro and [Operation Gladio](#).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Maurizio Costanzo, popular television talk show host of Mediaset programmes (Mediaset is Berlusconi's commercial television network).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Pietro Longo, secretary of the Italian Democratic Socialist Party (PSDI).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Fabrizio Cicchitto, member of the Italian Socialist Party, who later joined Berlusconi's centre-right party Forza Italia.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Federico Carlos Bartfeld (Argentina), ambassador to Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1995,<sup>[u]</sup> under-secretary of state in Néstor Kirchner's government, relieved of his functions in 2003 following allegations of involvement in the [Dirty War](#).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Emilio Massera (Argentina), a member of the military junta led by [Jorge Rafael Videla](#) in Buenos Aires from 1976 to 1978.<sup>[u]</sup>
- José López Rega (Argentina), Argentinian minister of Social Welfare in [Perón's](#) government, founder of the [Argentine Anticomunist Alliance](#) ("Triple A").<sup>[u]</sup>
- Aldo Alasia, (Argentina).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Cesar De la Vega, (Argentina).<sup>[u]</sup>
- Raúl Alberto Lastiri, (Argentina) President from 13 July 1973 until 12 October 1973.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Alberto Vignes, (Argentina) minister of Argentina.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Carlos Alberto Corti, (Argentina) admiral from Argentina.<sup>[u]</sup>
- Stefano Delle Chiaie, Italian neofascist who had ties with [Operation Condor](#) and the Bolivian regime of [Luis García Meza Tejada](#).<sup>[u]</sup>

From [https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda\\_Due](https://military.wikia.org/wiki/Propaganda_Due)

## Propaganda Due suspects named Italy horrified as list reveals alleged members of 'secret state'



Licio Gelli's home was raided by investigators

Ordinary Italians were stunned and the country's elite rocked to the core on this day in 1981 when a list was made public of alleged members of Propaganda Due, a secret Masonic lodge which sought to run the country as a 'state within the state'.

A staggering 962 names were on the list, including 44 members of parliament, three of whom were cabinet ministers, 49 bankers, numerous industrialists, a number of newspaper editors and other high-profile journalists, the heads of all three of Italy's secret services and more than 200 military and police officers, including 12 generals of the [Carabinieri](#), five of the [Guardia di Finanza](#), 22 of the army and four from the air force.

The existence of the illegal, underground lodge, known as P2 had been rumoured for several years but there had been little concrete evidence until magistrates investigating the collapse of the [Banco Ambrosiano](#) in Milan raided the home in Tuscany of [Licio Gelli](#), the former Fascist financier who turned out to be the Grandmaster.

The list of alleged members, which was made public by Prime Minister [Arnaldo Forlani](#) on the advice of the prosecuting team, was found among paperwork seized in the raid.



Arnaldo Forlani's government collapsed in the wake of the P2 scandal

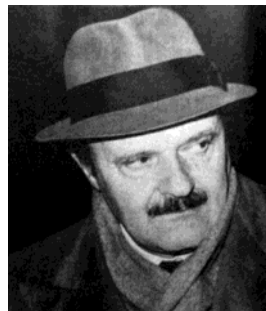
The names included [Roberto Calvi](#), the former head of the Banco Ambrosiano who would be found dead in London the following year. [Admiral Giovanni Torrisi](#), the Chief of the Defence Staff of Italy, and the future prime minister [Silvio Berlusconi](#), who had yet to enter politics but was already on his way to becoming Italy's most powerful media tycoon.

The lodge was headed by Gelli, who had the title "Maestro venerabile".

Another major name on the list was [Adolfo Sarti](#), the Minister of Justice, who resigned a couple of days after the list was published, triggering the collapse of Forlani's ruling coalition and their resignation en masse.

The prosecuting magistrates told Forlani there was evidence that Gelli had constructed "a very real state within the state," using blackmail, favours, promises of advancement and bribes.

Their report described P2 as "a secret sect that has combined business and politics with the intention of destroying the constitutional order of the country and of transforming the parliamentary system into a presidential system."



Banker Roberto Calvi, a member of P2, was found hanging beneath Blackfriars Bridge in London

It added that Gelli's strategy had been "to bring under his control a large number of powerful and highly-placed persons and thus to break down, for the first time in Italian history, the separation between political, administrative, military and economic spheres."

Exactly how much power P2 wielded has been debated in all the years since it was exposed, although one undeniable coup was achieved when Gelli took control of *Corriere della Sera*, one of Italy's leading newspapers.

The paper, edited by Piero Ottone, had run into financial trouble and was finding it difficult to obtain loans because the banks were not impressed by Ottone's outspoken opposition to the powerful [Christian Democratic Party](#), the dominant force in Italian politics. Gelli stepped in to arrange a cash injection from the Vatican Bank. Ottone was fired, P2 member [Franco Di Bella](#) was appointed in his place and the paper's editorial line shifted to the right.

In 1980 the paper published a long interview with Gelli conducted by the television talk show host [Maurizio Costanzo](#), another whose name was on the list. Gelli told Costanzo he was in favour of rewriting the Italian constitution towards a Gaullist presidential system.

In the same year, there were suspicions that P2 members were involved in the bombing of Bologna railway station and the spreading of false stories seeking to undermine the Italian Communist Party in one of its biggest strongholds. In fact, Gelli and the deputy director of Italy's military intelligence service, SISMI, Pietro Musumeci were arrested for attempting to mislead the police investigation into the massacre, which killed 85 people, wounded more than 200 and was eventually blamed on a far-right terrorist group.

P2 members were certainly involved in the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano, one of Milan's principal banks - owned in part by the Vatican Bank, and of the Franklin National Bank in New York, owned by a Calvi associate and P2 member, [Michele Sindona](#), who was suspected of facilitating a Mafia money-laundering network involving the Banco Ambrosiano and the Vatican Bank.

Calvi, convicted of illegal money exports in 1980 but released from prison pending an appeal, was found hanging beneath Blackfriars Bridge in London in 1982. Sindona, who was tried and found guilty of organising the murder of one of the Banco Ambrosiano scandal investigators, died in prison after being poisoned.

From <https://www.italyontheday.com/2018/05/propaganda-due-illegal-masonic-lodge-1981-suspects-named.html>

## Roberto Calvi (Gods Banker)

Sunday, October 3, 2021 4:22 PM

**I**t was described as a scene straight out of an Alfred Hitchcock film: The man's corpse dangled from an orange nylon rope tied to scaffolding under London's Blackfriars Bridge. He was dressed in a gray suit with a white waistcoat and a blue-striped shirt. He wore shoes and socks, but no tie or belt. An expensive watch on his wrist was stopped at 1:52 a.m. And nearly 12 pounds' worth of pieces of bricks were stuffed in his trousers. A young postal clerk had made the grim discovery on his way to work on the morning of June 18, 1982, and alerted the police. Officers who examined the body found a wallet containing around \$13,000 in various currencies—Italian lire, Austrian schillings, American dollars, Swiss francs—and a passport bearing the name Gian Roberto Calvini. That passport was forged, but the body was soon identified as 62-year-old Roberto Calvi, president of the Milan-based Banco Ambrosiano, one of Italy's largest private banks, with ties so close to the Vatican that Calvi had the unofficial title of "God's banker." He had gone missing from Italy the previous week. So how did he turn up dead under a bridge in the British capital?



London's Blackfriars Bridge (L). Three of the jurors on the inquest of Italian banker Roberto Calvi, whose corpse was found hanging from the bridge (R).

PA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

The mystery of what really happened to Calvi would extend for decades, and involve not only the Vatican but also mafiosi, the Masons, British secret service and a small army of amateur conspiracy theorists gripped by the story.

### The company you keep

**C**alvi had been a prominent figure in Italian financial news for years—particularly since November 13, 1977, when [Milan woke up to](#) banners plastered across the city alleging irregularities at Calvi's Banco Ambrosiano.

No one becomes Italy's most powerful private banker without having to make powerful allies along the way, and Calvi was no exception. His network of connections encompassed, among others, high-ranking Vatican officials, Masonic leaders and others linked to organized crime. But when Calvi joined the Banco Ambrosiano as a clerk at just 27, the bank was a risk-averse institution. Founded in 1896 to offer credit in line with Christian ethics and beliefs, the bank at one point required anyone who wanted to deposit money to first [provide a baptismal certificate](#). Calvi, though, had international ambitions and, by the time he had climbed his way to become president, in 1975, had led the bank to acquire Swiss bank Banca del Gottardo and founded several offshore companies, such as the Banco Ambrosiano in Luxembourg and the Cisalpine Overseas Bank in the Bahamas.

Through his role, Calvi forged close ties with Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, the Chicago-born chairman of the Vatican's Institute for Religious Works (IOR), which holds the bank accounts of priests, bishops, cardinals and even the Pope, and was a major, though secretive, shareholder of Banco Ambrosiano. Marcinkus was seen as a close confidant to Pope Paul VI, whom he helped save from a knife attack in the Philippines in 1970.

Not all of Marcinkus's connections were equally blessed. He had links to financier Michele Sindona, who had advised the IOR on assets and investments, including a minority interest in Sindona's own Banca Unione. Banca Unione then merged with another one of Sindona's banks, Banca Privata Italiana, which was then forcibly liquidated in 1974.

When Sindona's empire collapsed, it reportedly cost the Vatican \$30 million, and the financier would be jailed in a U.S. federal prison for conspiracy and fraud in 1980 for his role in the 1974 failure of the Franklin National Bank. (He died in prison in 1986 after his coffee was spiked with cyanide.)

It was rumored that Sindona had ordered those 1977 banners publicly accusing Calvi's Banco Ambrosiano of irregularities, [an act of revenge](#) after being denied funds to save his failing banks.



Calvi at his trial in May 1981, where he faced charges of illegal exporting of funds. He was later convicted.

KEystone/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

An investigation resulting from that anonymous, and very public, tip led to Calvi's eventual arrest, on May 20, 1981, amid a ballooning scandal linked to the secretive Masons that had [embroiled](#) the Italian elite and eventually caused the fall of the government of Prime Minister Arnaldo Forlani.

### The 'black friars'

**S**indona and Calvi had known each other since the late 1960s and were both members of the Masonic lodge known as Propaganda Due (P-2), led by Licio Gelli, a self-declared fascist who aimed to fight Communist forces at home and abroad while sparking a breakdown of constitutional order in Italy.



A man climbs up the scaffold in order to better watch Calvi's trial in May 1981.

ADRIANO ALECCO/MONDADORI/GETTY IMAGES

A list of nearly 1,000 reported P-2 members—who [reportedly called themselves](#) “*frati neri*,” meaning “black friars,” as they wore black robes to their meetings—was found in one of Gelli’s properties during part of a larger investigation into Sindona, who had allegedly faked his own kidnapping with the help of some Masonic-lodge members to avoid trial in New York. As a result, when the list—which included government ministers, lawmakers, judges, high-ranking members of the army and police forces, journalists and businessmen such as future prime minister Silvio Berlusconi—became public, it had an explosive effect in the country, and on the people named on it.

And it left Calvi, for the first time in his career, without political protection. In 1981, he would stand trial on charges of illegal currency dealings concerning the equivalent of \$50 million worth of foreign transactions in lire made without alerting the Bank of Italy, as required by law.

He insisted he was innocent, and as he awaited trial, he tried to kill himself in prison. His widow, Clara Canetti—who would later blame the Vatican in the death of her husband—said he [would tell her](#): “This trial is called IOR,” suggesting that the illegal transactions had been to benefit the Vatican accounts. He was eventually [convicted](#), and sentenced to prison for four years.

### Suddenly, Calvi disappears

Calvi filed for an appeal and was set free while awaiting the new trial, resuming his job at the Banco Ambrosiano. But by June 1982, Calvi was running out of time.

Banco Ambrosiano was allowed to trade on the Milan Stock Exchange to force the bank to be more transparent, but on the first day of trading, May 5, it lost 20% of its value.

Italy’s central bank [put pressure on Calvi](#) to account for the bank’s nine-figure debt. The date of his appeal hearing, June 21, loomed.



Calvi in 1982.

AP

Calvi needed help, and decided to appeal directly to Pope John Paul II. In a typewritten letter signed by Calvi, dated June 5, 1982, the banker told the Pope he was his “last hope” to avoid the bank’s crash and the damages the Vatican would suffer as a consequence. Calvi asked the Pope for an audience to explain “everything that has happened and is happening, certainly without His knowledge.” He offered a summary of the dealings he’d been involved with and seemed to throw Archbishop Marcinkus under the bus along the way, referring to “the heavy burden of the mistakes made by the current and former representatives of the IOR, including Sindona’s wrongdoings.”

He also acknowledged his role in financing “political-religious organizations in the East and the West” and in coordinating, “in consultation with Vatican authorities,” financial entities in Latin America with the goal of “fighting and containing philomaxist ideologies.”

Calvi told the Pope that he had received offers of support on the condition he detailed the activities “undertaken in the interests of the Church.” But, Calvi added: “I won’t be blackmailed, and I won’t blackmail in return; I have always been loyal even when it’s most dangerous!”

The illegal transactions that ultimately brought down Banco Ambrosiano were the tip of the iceberg of illicit activities Calvi had been embroiled in. As [investigators would later find](#), Calvi’s Banco Ambrosiano had set up a complex system of borrowing and lending through the bank’s offshore subsidiaries. And benefiting from the fraudulent ventures were authoritarian regimes in Latin America, the anti-Soviet Solidarity movement in Poland and the Mafia’s heroin trade.

(1) *The New York Times*, and (2) *L’Unita* report on the Calvi’s mysterious death.

The specific role of the Vatican in Banco Ambrosiano’s eventual crash remains shrouded in mystery. Marcinkus, who managed the Vatican’s funds, has always denied any wrongdoing, though he was indicted in 1987 by Italian authorities as an “accessory to fraudulent bankruptcy” in the bank’s collapse, following the discovery of a number of “[letters of patronage](#)” apparently backing the offshore companies used to funnel Banco Ambrosiano’s money. Marcinkus never faced trial because [Italy’s highest courts ruled](#) that the IOR, as an entity belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, was outside the jurisdiction of Italian authorities under the terms of the 1929 Lateran Treaty.

High-ranking Vatican cardinal José Castillo Lara said the Pope never received Calvi’s letter, and described the missive as “statements made by a man struggling due to debts contracted elsewhere and unclear financial dealings.”

But with no help forthcoming from the Vatican—and with the protection of the P-2 lost—Calvi was left to leverage another connection: Flavio Carboni, a well-connected Sardinian entrepreneur who had ties to criminal organizations in Rome, such as the infamous Banda Della Magliana, and in Sicily, via Pippo Calò, known as the Mafia’s cashier. It’s with Carboni’s help that Calvi, whose real passport had long ago been confiscated, disappeared—fleeing Italy and embarking on the convoluted journey that took him to London.





Flavio Carboni (shown in court in March 1996) had helped Calvi leave Italy. Years later, he was investigated for his murder.

LUCA BRUNO/AP

Carboni introduced the banker to his associate Silvano Vittor, who smuggled Calvi from Trieste to Yugoslavia by motorboat, then from Yugoslavia to Austria by car. After meeting Carboni in a town in Austria near the Swiss border, Calvi and Vittor headed to Innsbruck, where they boarded a private plane that would take them to London on June 15. Calvi had shaved off his trademark mustache, possibly in an attempt to better disguise himself.

Throughout the trip, Calvi had reportedly carried a black briefcase full of possibly incriminating documents that later went missing, some of which would never be recovered. Carboni would later be charged with, and then acquitted of, selling the briefcase to a high-ranking IOR official.

London was not meant to be the final destination of the journey. Calvi apparently planned to travel across the Atlantic. His wife had already moved to Washington, D.C., and he told his daughter, who was in Switzerland, to do the same. In a phone conversation with his daughter the day before he died, [he told her](#): "Something really important is happening, and today and tomorrow all hell is going to break loose." He was right.

That day, June 17, the bank's board voted to remove the missing Calvi as president and dissolve itself, asking Italy's central bank to nominate a commissioner to deal with its affairs. The bank's trading on the stock exchange [had to be suspended](#) after shares lost 30% of their value. It would be found to have around \$1.4 billion debt.

On the same day, Calvi's long-term personal secretary, Graziella Corrocher, fell to her death from a window of the bank's Milan headquarters, an apparent suicide (though conspiracy theories, naturally, abound). She had reportedly left a note saying: "May Calvi be double cursed for the damage he has caused the bank and all its employees."

The next day, Calvi's own body would be found about 700 miles away.

## Too many suspects

**B**ritish authorities ruled Calvi's death a suicide and dismissed the hypothesis of murder. Calvi had, after all, previously attempted to kill himself, while awaiting trial in prison in 1981.

But obvious questions would quickly emerge. For the 62-year-old Calvi to get to the scaffolding by himself, he would have had to climb down the bridge from a ladder, jump a distance between the ladder and the scaffolding, all while weighted down by 12 pounds of bricks. And, as [many wondered at the time](#), why bother to go to London to do that?

Calvi's family insisted that he had been killed and, in less than a year, they successfully [challenged the verdict](#) ruling Calvi's death a suicide. But it wouldn't be until 2002 that forensic experts conclusively ruled Calvi's death a murder. The following year, the City of London police reopened an investigation in Calvi's death as a [murder inquiry](#), bringing forth new information about what Calvi did and who was with him in his final days.



Clara Calvi successfully lobbied to have authorities reopen the investigation into her husband's death.

REG LANCASTER/EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS/GETTY IMAGES

Detective Superintendent Trevor Smith, who led the investigation, told [The Independent](#) in 2004 that police believed Calvi was strangled on a boat along the Thames, and was then hanged—dead or barely alive—from the scaffolding. "The scientific and medical evidence says 'not suicide.' So it was either an act of God or someone who wants to pretend he is God with the power of life and death. I'm satisfied it is the latter," he said.

Both British and Italian authorities concluded it was the Mafia that wanted and planned Calvi's death—a theory reinforced in 2012 by godfather turned informant [Francesco "Frankie the Strangler" Di Carlo](#)—due to the banker's involvement in the criminal organization's money-laundering and the possibility he may disclose details of the scheme to the authorities.

Five people were charged in 2003 with Calvi's death: Carboni, Vittor, Calò and his Rome associate Ernesto Diotallevi, and Carboni's Austrian ex-girlfriend, Manuela Kleinszig. Prosecutors asked for life sentences for the four men and acquittal for Kleinszig for insufficient evidence. They were all acquitted for [lack of evidence](#) in 2007. An appeal in 2010 upheld the acquittal.



Alleged mafia boss Pippo Calò, shown behind bars in 1993, was one of the four people indicted on murder charges in connection with the death of Calvi. He was acquitted.

GIULIO BROGLIO/AP

The ruling did, though, confirm Calvi was killed. But by whom, the judges ruled, they could not tell, the ruling listing instead all the possible suspects: the Mafia, the Camorra, the P-2, Vatican's investment arm, Italian politicians, Italian secret-service members and even British secret services, since Calvi had financed weapons to the Argentine regime during the Falkland wars. A second, and last, probe into Calvi's death, involving Carboni, Gelli, members of the Italian secret services and mobsters from the Camorra, was launched in 2008 and ultimately ended in 2016. Judges cited the length of time elapsed since the killing and the lack of support from the Vatican among the obstacles to bringing the guilty to justice. Unlike in a Hitchcock film, this mystery remains frustratingly unresolved.

From <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/sofiatottopersio/2019/08/23/when-the-apparent-suicide-of-gods-banker-roberto-calvi-was-ruled-a-murder/?sh=6a816ccf1cd4>>



## Michele Sindona (The Shark)

Sunday, October 3, 2021 4:18 PM

### **MICHELE SINDONA, JAILED ITALIAN FINANCIER, DIES OF CYANIDE POISONING AT 65; At the Center of Scandals**

Michele Sindona was a self-made international financier and master swindler who unleashed what, 12 years later, remains the largest bank collapse in United States history. Mr. Sindona died four days after a court in Milan convicted and sentenced him to life imprisonment for contracting the assassination in 1979 of the lawyer appointed to liquidate his failed Italian banks. Born in a small town in Sicily, Mr. Sindona had lifted himself to the stature of a business giant whose fall became one of the world's biggest financial scandals. Few people had ever heard of him until his shadowy, ocean-spanning empire crashed in 1974. Then, the losses charged to his banking practices ranged in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and the victims crowded courts from Rome to Long Island.

At the time of his death, Mr. Sindona was under a 25-year sentence for fraud in the United States, imposed upon him in June 1980 for his role in the failure in 1974 of the Franklin National Bank. The Franklin's failure in turn caused several banks in the United States and Europe to suffer vast losses. His largest holdings in New York and Milan were pronounced bankrupt in 1974 within a few weeks of each other. In September 1984, he was taken from his cell in the Federal prison at Otisville, N.Y., and extradited to Italy. Once among the country's most powerful businessmen and a financial adviser to the Vatican, subsequent investigations into his unraveling affairs brought to light questionable associations beyond the world of high finance.

**Links were found between him and the Mafia as well as the secret P2, a bogus "Masonic" lodge that the Italian Parliament recently branded as a subversive organization.**

He then went through two trials in Milan, protesting his innocence on all counts until he died. The first case ended a year ago in his conviction for bank fraud and a sentence of 12 years in prison. In the second, with 24 defendants and taking nine months to try, he was found guilty of having paid \$40,000 to commission the slaying of Giorgio Ambrosoli. Having been put in charge of liquidating the wreckage of the Sindona empire in Italy, the insolvent Banca Privata Italiana, Mr. Ambrosoli had unearthed ample evidence of fraud. He compiled a report of more than 2,000 pages to document Mr. Sindona's manipulations.



On July 12, 1979, Mr. Ambrosoli was shot dead in front of his Milan home. Prosecutors obtained a confession from William Arico, an American whom Mr. Sindona was accused of having hired through a middleman to carry out the assassination. The American middleman, Robert Venetucci, was convicted along with Mr. Sindona last week and also drew a life sentence.

Mr. Arico, after telling United States prosecutors about the murder contract, died in 1984 during what appeared to be an escape attempt at a New York jail. The circumstances of his death remain under investigation.

Mr. Sindona's initial trial and sentencing in the United States came only after delays that made newspaper headlines all over the world - the trial because of his sudden disappearance, which he contended was a kidnapping, and the sentencing because of an apparent suicide attempt two days before he was to face the judge.

In that possible attempt to end his own life, Mr. Sindona swallowed a large dose of the heart stimulant digitalis and cut his wrists in his cell. He was hospitalized, but the cuts were superficial and an antidote was administered to counter the heart drug.

At the trial, in Federal Court in Manhattan, the prosecution indicated its belief that both the kidnapping and the suicide had been staged. In addition to the prison term, Mr. Sindona was fined \$207,000.

Meantime, the Italian authorities were pressing two sets of accusations. In one case, the public prosecutor wanted Mr. Sindona held to account for the crash of the big Banca Privata Finanziaria and other Italian banks and companies he once owned. In the other, Mr. Sindona was charged with illegally diverting capital from Italy to banks he owned abroad, and estimates of the amounts involved in those transactions ranged as high as \$225 million.

Mr. Sindona parlayed his expertise as a tax lawyer and accountant into holdings that, in his heyday, were estimated to total as much as \$450 million and were scattered about a maze of banks and industries. He was living a life of opulence then in Milan.

Mr. Sindona's financial prowess was so esteemed that, at the recommendation of prominent Catholic laymen, Pope Paul VI sought his advice on Vatican investments and leading Italian politicians gave him easy access to Government circles in Rome. Later, he would say the same politicians were the architects of his undoing.

He tried to attribute his troubles to his defense of free enterprise in Italy against "leftist" encroachment. "I started my fight with them when they started to nationalize electric power," he told an interviewer in 1978. "There is no strong government, it's completely leftist." Interest in Franklin Bank

In 1972, when he bought into the Franklin New York Corporation for \$40 million, Mr. Sindona already held interests in a number of American companies, acting quietly through a holding company based in Liechtenstein.

The purchase of shares from the Loews Corporation gave Mr. Sindona about 20 percent interest in the Franklin National Bank, an important economic force on Long Island and the country's 19th largest bank, with assets of \$3.3 billion. Mr. Sindona saw to it that the bank moved energetically into foreign transactions. Two years later, it went under, and accusations of improper overseas dealings and tampered bank records to conceal huge losses were raised.

Mr. Sindona withdrew into the luxury of a cooperative apartment at the Hotel Pierre on Fifth Avenue, saying that he was living on the charity of friends in Italy who were sending him funds. "Imagine my psychological position," he said in November 1975. "I was one of the richest men in Italy, and in 24 hours they took everything."

At the time of the Franklin National crash, prosecutors in Italy were moving in on Mr. Sindona's assets to protect small investors and bank depositors. Mr. Sindona, known as one of Italy's wealthiest and most secretive tycoons, was now accused of having illegally removed \$250 million from banks that he controlled in Milan, Italy's economic capital. An Italian request for his extradition followed.

After Mr. Sindona's downfall, even the usually reticent Vatican acknowledged some losses, but said they were much less than a \$100 million estimate by the Italian press.

Michele Sindona was born May 8, 1920, in Patti, in Messina province. The son of an employee of a state agricultural consortium, he went to study law at the University of Messina and opened a practice in that city.

In 1947, Mr. Sindona moved to Milan to establish himself as an expert in tax and corporate laws and worked for Societa Generale Immobiliare, a vast real estate and construction operation, which he eventually came to dominate. Among its best-known properties in the United States was the Watergate complex in Washington. Seller of Art Books

Mr. Sindona began his own business career almost as a hobby by publishing high-grade art books and forming a company to sell them internationally. He also became a collector who was proud of the early European works of art with which he surrounded himself later in his Milan office and the Renaissance villa he owned north of the city.

Mr. Sindona organized Fasco A.G., his international holding company, in Liechtenstein and with profits from real estate deals he bought a small Italian construction company. The concern had won contracts across Europe and the Middle East when Mr. Sindona sold a majority interest to a Belgian group and went on to new ventures in Britain, France, Switzerland and the United States.

By the mid-1960's, Mr. Sindona headed manufacturing companies in nine countries and real estate companies in five. Fasco's interests ranged from the Brown Company, a New Hampshire paper manufacturer that it controlled, to Libby, McNeill & Libby, the American food packers. Other Fasco activities included interests in Crucible Steel, connections with Hambros Bank in London and many purely Italian ventures in food, paper, banking and finance.

"I act as a bridge between American industry and European industry because I know both," Mr. Sindona told an interviewer in 1964. "Enterprises with their interests dispersed widely among several markets are less at the mercy of economic ups and downs in any one of them. Furthermore, economic criss-crossing is the way to an inevitable lowering of trade barriers and to economic and political peace."

Fasco had acquired interests in a number of American companies when New York investment bankers approached Mr. Sindona with the notion that Lawrence A. Tisch, chairman of the Loews Corporation, might consider selling his company's 1.1 million shares in Franklin New York, parent company of the Franklin National Bank.

The deal was concluded months later, in July 1972, with Mr. Sindona's Fasco International Holding, a subsidiary of Fasco A.G., buying 1 million shares of Franklin, which already was plagued by earnings problems.

The transaction was strongly denounced by Franklin's former chairman, Arthur T. Roth, who had built the bank into Long Island's largest before being ousted in 1970. Mr. Roth, who had been feuding with the new management, raised questions about complicated financial dealings among Sindona-dominated companies and demanded that New York banking authorities block the takeover.

But the following month, in August, Mr. Sindona and an associate, Carlo Bordini, joined the Franklin board even though regulatory officials were wary about Fasco's acting as a bank holding company in this country.

Again through Fasco, Mr. Sindona acquired about 1.1 million shares of Talcott National Corporation in 1973, and the Franklin board approved the acquisition of Talcott, including Mr. Sindona's shares. But the transaction was barred by the Federal Reserve Board.

The problems of the Franklin bank were beginning to mount. In May 1974 the bank omitted a dividend and the Federal Reserve system took steps to bolster the bank's position while Mr. Sindona promised a large infusion of cash.

In the crisis that followed, Franklin underwent an executive shakeup, foreign-exchange losses of about \$40 million were discovered, trading in the bank's shares was suspended and there was a run on Franklin deposits. Mr. Bordini, a Milan banker, resigned from the Franklin board. Loan From Italian Government

Mr. Sindona, in Italy at the time, still vowed to save the bank. The Government-controlled Banco di Roma granted the Sindona group a \$100 million loan to rescue its Italian banks but Mr. Sindona had to put up many of his holdings for sale, including the control of Societa Generale Immobiliare.

Sindona-controlled banks in West Germany and Switzerland foundered, as did Banca Privata Italiana whose losses were estimated at \$200 million. Warrants for his arrest were issued, but Mr. Sindona had already returned to New York. Just before the Securities and Exchange Commission filed fraud charges in October 1974, he resigned from the Franklin's board and the bank's assets were turned over to European American Bank.

He is survived by his wife, Caterina, two sons and a daughter.

From <<https://www.nytimes.com/1986/03/23/world/michele-sindona-jailed-italian-financier-dies-cyanide-poisoning-65-center.html>>

Licio Gelli

Sunday, October 3, 2021 4:15 PM

Licio Gelli (Italian pronunciation: [ˈliːtʃo ˈdʒɛlli]; April 21, 1919 – December 15, 2015) was an Italian financier. A Fascist volunteer in his youth, he is chiefly known for his role in the Banco Ambrosiano scandal. He was revealed in 1981 as being the Venerable Master of the clandestine masonic lodge Propaganda Due (P2).

Involvement in failed coup and fugitive years in Argentina

In 1970, in the plans of the failed *Golpe Borghese*, Gelli was tasked with arresting the Italian President, Giuseppe Saragat.<sup>[*source*]</sup> As Master of the Propaganda Due (P2) lodge, Gelli had ties with very high level personalities in Italy and abroad, in particular in Argentina, where he was a fugitive for many years. The regular Masonic lodge was enjoyed by Guillermo Suárez Mason and José López Rega, two key-exponents of the Argentine military junta.<sup>[*source*]</sup> The Argentine Chancellor Alberto Vignes drafted with Juan Perón, who had returned from exile in 1973, a decree granting Gelli the Gran Cruz de la Orden del Libertador in August 1974, as well as the honorary office of economic counselor in the embassy of Argentina in Italy.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Gelli publicly declared on repeated occasions that he was a close friend of Perón, although no confirmation ever came from South America. Gelli affirmed that he introduced Peron to Masonry and that this friendship was of real importance for Italy. He stated: "Peron was a Mason, I initiated him in Madrid in Puerta de Hierro, in June 1973."<sup>[*source*]</sup> Gelli become the main economic and financial consultant of Isabelita Perón and of José López Rega.<sup>[*source*]</sup> According to a letter sent by Gelli to César de la Vega, a P2 member and Argentine ambassador to the UNESCO, Gelli commissioned P2 member Federico Carlos Bartfeld to be transferred from the consulate of Hamburg to the Argentine embassy in Rome.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Gelli was also named minister plenipotentiary for cultural affairs in the Argentine embassy in Italy, thus providing him with diplomatic immunity.<sup>[*source*]</sup> He had four diplomatic passports issued by Argentina, and has been charged in Argentina with falsification of official documents.<sup>[*source*]</sup> During the 1970s, Gelli brokered three-way oil and arms deals between Libya, Italy and Argentina through the Agency for Economic Development, which he and Umberto Ortolani owned.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Several members of the Argentine military junta have been found to be P2 members, such as Raúl Alberto Lastiri, Argentina's interim president from July 13, 1973 until October 12, 1973, Enlilo Massera, part of Jorge Videla's military junta from 1976 to 1978, and José López Rega, the infamous founder of the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance ("Triple A"). The lodge P2, also known as the Propaganda Due, was also linked to the robbery of Juan Perón's severed hands.<sup>[*source*]</sup>

Alleged involvement in CIA activities in Italy

In 1990 a report on RAI Television alleged that the CIA had paid Gelli to instigate terrorist activities in Italy.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Following this report, which also claimed that the CIA had been involved in the assassination of the Swedish Prime minister Olof Palme, then President Francesco Cossiga requested the opening of investigations while the CIA itself officially denied these allegations.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Critics have claimed the RAI report to be a fraud because of the inclusion of testimony from Richard Brenneke, who claimed to be a former CIA agent and made several declarations concerning the October surprise conspiracy. Brenneke's background was also investigated by a U.S. Senate subcommittee, which dismissed Brenneke's claims of CIA employment.<sup>[*source*]</sup> In June 2020, the Swedish police closed their investigation into Olof Palme's assassination, assigning blame to Stig Engstrom, a Swedish graphic designer and centre-right municipal activist who was not affiliated with the CIA.<sup>[*source*]</sup>

1981 raid and the P2 list



Giulio Andreotti (right) with Licio Gelli (center)

Gelli's downfall started with the Banco Ambrosiano scandal, which led to a 1981 police raid on his villa and the discovery of the P2 covert lodge. On March 17, 1981 a police raid on his villa in Arezzo led to the discovery of a list of 962 persons composed of Italian military officers and civil servants, including the heads of the three Italian secret services, involved in Propaganda Due (also known as "P2"), a clandestine lodge expelled from the Grande Oriente d'Italia Masonic organization.<sup>[*source*]</sup><sup>[*source*]</sup> Future Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi was on the list, although he had not yet entered politics. He was then known as the founder and owner of "Canale 5" TV channel, and was listed as a member of P2.<sup>[*source*]</sup> A Parliamentary Commission, directed by Tina Anselmi (of the Christian Democratic party), found no evidence of crimes, but in 1981 the Italian parliament passed a law banning secret associations in Italy. Gelli was expelled from GOI freemasonry on October 31, 1981, and the P2 scandal provoked the fall of Arnaldo Forlani's cabinet in June 1981 <sup>[*source*]</sup> The P2 lodge had some form of power in Italy, given the public prominence of its members, and many observers still consider it to be extremely strong. Several famous people in Italy today (starting with the top TV anchor-man Maurizio Costanzo) were affiliated with P2. Among these Michele Sindona, a banker with clear connections to the Mafia, has been clearly associated with P2. In 1972, Sindona purchased a controlling interest in Long Island's Franklin National Bank. Two years later, the bank collapsed.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Convicted in 1980 in the US, "mysterious Michele" was extradited to Italy. Two years later, he was poisoned in his cell while serving a life sentence.<sup>[*source*]</sup><sup>[*source*]</sup> The P2 membership list was authenticated, with a few exceptions, by a 1984 parliamentary report.<sup>[*source*]</sup> On the run, Gelli escaped to Switzerland where he was arrested on September 13, 1982 while trying to withdraw tens of millions of dollars in Geneva.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Detained in the modern Champ-Dollon Prison near Geneva, he managed to escape<sup>[*source*]</sup> and then fled to South America for four years. In 1984 Jorge Vargas, the secretary general of the Unión Nacionalista de Chile (UNACH, Nationalist Union of Chile, a short-lived National Socialist party<sup>[*source*]</sup>) and a former member of the Movimiento Revolucionario Nacional Sindicalista (National-Syndicalist Revolutionary Movement<sup>[*source*]</sup>), declared to La Tercera de la Hora that Gelli was then in Pinochet's Chile.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Finally, Gelli surrendered in 1987 in Switzerland to investigative judge Jean-Pierre Trembley.<sup>[*source*]</sup> He was wanted in connection with the 1982 collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano<sup>[*source*]</sup> and on charges of subversive association in connection with the 1980 Bologna railway station bombing, which killed 85 people.<sup>[*source*]</sup><sup>[*source*]</sup> He was sentenced to two months in prison in Switzerland,<sup>[*source*]</sup> while an Italian court in Florence sentenced him on December 15, 1987, in absentia, to eight years in prison on charges of financing right-wing terrorist activity in Tuscany in the 1970s.<sup>[*source*]</sup> Gelli had already been sentenced in absentia to 14 months in jail by a court in San Remo for illegally exporting money from Italy.

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Licio Gelli obituary

Masonic leader thought to be involved in the death of ‘God’s banker’ Roberto Calvi, found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge in London



Licio Gelli reinvented himself as a Christian Democrat and became a leading light of the freemasons in Rome in the 1960s. Photograph: ROPI/Alamy  
Licio Gelli, who has died aged 96, was among those rare individuals of whom it could be said that what was not known about them was more interesting than what was. Did he work for the CIA after the second world war? Did he have a hand in the death of Roberto Calvi, the man known as ‘God’s banker’, whose corpse was found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge in 1982? And how did he come into possession of 179 gold ingots found at his house, hidden in flowerpots? There was no murky or mysterious affair in cold war Italy – not even the 1978 assassination of the prime minister Aldo Moro – over which Gelli’s shadow did not fall. Born in Pistoia, Tuscany, Licio was the son of Ettore Gelli, a well-to-do landowner, and his wife, Maria (nee Gori). Licio’s earliest political involvement was with the far right. He volunteered to fight in the Spanish civil war on the side of Franco, and even enrolled in the Falange, the Spanish fascist party. In 1940 he studied briefly at an accountancy school.

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Towards the end of the second world war, after Italy renounced its alliance with Germany, Gelli joined other fascists in the so-called republic of Salò (1943-45), the Nazi puppet state in the north of the country headed by its ousted dictator, Benito Mussolini. Much later in life, Gelli would declare: “I am a fascist and will die a fascist.” Yet he was not above switching sides as it became increasingly obvious that the allies would win. He joined the partisans and even helped in an important jailbreak.

What role he played after the war is unclear. It has been claimed that he worked for the CIA or British intelligence, or both. In common with many other former Mussolini supporters, Gelli reinvented himself as a Christian Democrat. But it was not until the 1960s that he found a spiritual home in freemasonry. Charming, witty, and an eager and effective networker, Gelli rose swiftly to become head, or venerable master, of the once prestigious Propaganda Due (P2) lodge in the centre of Rome. With a mandate from his superiors to revive the fortunes of the moribund P2, Gelli set about turning it into something a lot more than just a meeting place for the Italian elite.

The majority report of a parliamentary committee of inquiry later concluded that its true aim was to “intervene secretly in the political life of the country”. The official masonic leadership distanced itself from Gelli and the P2 in the mid-1970s. But by then its potential for influence was immense. Its members included the heads of the secret services, the son of the last king of Italy (who, from exile, made Gelli a count); several of the most senior figures in the civil service, the armed forces and the police; top businessmen, Silvio Berlusconi among them; politicians, and the editor of Italy’s foremost daily, Corriere della Sera.

The left has always suspected the P2 would have been the platform from which to launch a coup had the Italian communist party ever won power at a general election. That has never been proved. But Gelli certainly had warm relations with the officers who carried out the 1976 coup in Argentina and was later shown to have played a role in the aborted “Borghese” coup of 1970 in Italy: before closing his inquiry because of a statute of limitations, the investigating magistrate ruled Gelli’s involvement had been “objectively established”.

The venerable master had a part in trying to save the financial empire of the rogue banker Michele “the Shark” Sindona, who died after drinking a poisoned cup of coffee in jail. And Gelli was long suspected of involvement in the murder of Calvi, the head of Banco Ambrosiano. A mafia supergrass said that the banker, who worked closely with the Vatican, lost large sums of money entrusted to him by Gelli. Another theory was that Gelli had Calvi killed to avoid being blackmailed by him.

Licio Gelli	
<span></span>	
Born	<div>April 21, 1919</div> <div><span>Pistoia, Tuscany, Kingdom of Italy</span></div>
Died	<div>December 15, 2015 (aged<span> </span>96)</div> <div><span>Arezzo, Tuscany, Italy</span></div>
Nationality	Italian
Occupation	Financier, freemason, politics
Organization	<span>Propaganda Due</span> (until 1982)
Height	1.76 <span> </span> m (5 <span> </span> ft 9 <span> </span> in)
Political party	<div><div><span><span></span></span></div><div><span>National Fascist Party</span> (1939–1943)</div><div><span>Republican Fascist Party</span> (1943–1945)</div></div>
Spouse(s)	<div><span>Wanda Vannacci</span> (1944–1993; her death)</div> <div><span>Gabriela Vasile</span> (2006–2015; his death)</div>
Children	<div><span>Raffaello</span> (1947)</div> <div><span>Maria Rosa</span> (1956)</div> <div><span>Maurizio</span> (1959)</div>

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In 1981, police investigating the Sindona affair stumbled across a list of almost 1,000 P2 members. Keen to avoid the resulting scandal, Gelli fled to Switzerland, was arrested, escaped from prison, and fled again to South America, but gave himself up to the Swiss authorities in 1987. Eight years later, he was found guilty of obstructing the investigation into the 1980 bombing of Bologna railway station in which 85 people died (one of many deadly attacks in postwar Italy that remain a mystery to this day). But he did not go to prison.

In 1998, however, the supreme court dismissed his last appeal against another conviction, for fraud in connection with the failure of Banco Ambrosiano and, faced with the prospect of jail, Gelli once again fled the country. He was arrested in France later that year. It was during his absence that police discovered the ingots. During the war, Gelli, who was a senior fascist party official, had been in charge of transporting 60 tonnes of gold belonging to King Peter II of Yugoslavia. When it was handed back, 20 tonnes were missing. Gelli always denied a link between the two.

Villa Wanda in Arezzo, where he spent most of the rest of his life under house arrest, was named after Gelli's wartime bride, Wanda Vannacci, who died in 1993. At the age of 85, in 2006, he married for a second time, to his Romanian carer, Gabriela Vasile, 38 years his junior. She survives him, as do three of the four children of his first marriage.

When he died, Gelli was still under investigation for having ordered the murder of Calvi. The prosecutor, however, had asked for the case to be shelved because, while it was "very plausible" that Gelli was involved, the evidence was less than conclusive. Ten years ago, when asked who was really behind the death of Calvi, Gelli told the Guardian: "It is not up to us to deliver judgments. Only God will be able to tell the truth."

Licio Gelli, masonic leader, born 21 April 1919; died 15 December 2015

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