

# Revised O.T.O. Constitution of 1917

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## Revised O.T.O. Constitution of 1917

by Fr. Merlin, Theodor Reuss

.I.N.R.I. CONSTITUTION of the ANCIENT Order of Oriental Templars.

### Introduction

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LET IT BE KNOWN that there exists, unknown to the great crowd, a very ancient Order of sages, whose object is the amelioration and spiritual evolution of mankind by means of conquering error and aiding men and women in their efforts of attaining the power of recognising the truth. This Order has existed already in the most remote times and it has manifested its activity secretly and openly in the world under different names and in various forms: it has caused social and political revolutions and proved to be the rock of salvation in times of danger and misfortune. It has always upheld the banner of freedom against tyranny in whatever shape this appeared, whether as clerical or political or social despotism or oppression of any kind.

To this "secret order" every wise and spiritually enlightened person belongs by right of his or her nature: because they all, even if they are personally unknown to each other, are one in their purpose and object and they all work under the guidance of the one light of truth. Into this Sacred Society no one can be admitted by another unless he has the power to enter it himself by virtue of his own interior illumination, neither can anyone after he has once entered be expelled unless he should expel himself by becoming unfaithful to his principles and forget again the truths which he has learned by his own experience.

All this is known to every enlightened person.

But it is known only to few that there exists also an external, visible organisation of such men and women, who having themselves found the path to real self-knowledge, and who having travelled the burning sands, are willing to give to others, desirous of entering that path, the benefit of their experience, and to act as spiritual guides to those who are willing to be guided.

While numberless societies, associations, orders, groups, etc., have been founded during the last thirty years in all parts of the civilised world, all following some line of occult study, yet there is but ONE ancient organization of genuine Mystics which shows to the seeker after truth a Royal Road to discover the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity and to the Unveiling of the One Hermetic Truth.

This organization is known at the present time as the:

Ancient Order of Oriental Templars

Ordo Templi Orientis

Otherwise: The Hermetic Brotherhood of Light.

It is a Modern School of Magic. And, like the ancient schools of magic, it derived its knowledge from the East. This knowledge was never revealed to the profane, for it gave immense power for either good or evil to its possessors. It was recorded in symbol, parable and allegory, requiring a Key for its interpretation.

The symbols and glyphs of Freemasonry were originally also derived from the more ancient mysteries.

These symbols of ancient Masonry, of the Rosicrucians, the sacred art of the ancient Chemi (Egyptians), of Homer's Golden Chain, like those of modern Freemasonry, etc., are however but different aspects of the One Great Mystery. They all require a key to disclose the real underlying meaning. There exists, however, but One Right Key, and moreover this one right key must be used the Right Way.

This key can be placed within the reach of all those who are prepared unselfishly to study and work for its possession, if they apply for membership to the Order of Oriental Templars (O.T.O.).

The O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis) is a body of Initiates in whose hands are concentrated the secret knowledge of all Oriental Orders and of all existing Masonic Degrees. Its Chiefs are Initiates of the highest rank and recognised as such by all capable of such recognition in every country in the world. The Order is international, and has existing connections in every civilised country in the world. Every man or woman who becomes a member of the O.T.O. has an indefeasible right to the first three degrees of Masonry.

The O.T.O., although an Academia Masonica, is not a Masonic Body, so far as the Craft degrees are concerned in the sense in which that expression is usually understood in England, and therefore in no way conflicts with, or infringes the just privileges of, the United Grand Lodge of England. English Master Masons in good standing, by arrangement, on affiliation, are admitted at reduced charges. Members of the IX° become part-proprietors of the Estates and Goods of the Order. For further information see the publications of the O.T.O., and the synopsis of the degrees of the O.T.O.

## CONSTITUTION

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### Article I

#### SECTION 1.

Under the style and title: ANCIENT ORDER OF ORIENTAL TEMPLARS, an organization, formerly known as: "The Hermetic Brotherhood of Light", has been reorganized and reconstituted. This reconstituted association is an international organization, and is hereinafter referred to as the O.T.O.

### Article II

#### SECTION 1.

The O.T.O. declares that the Brotherhood of All Things Created is a fact in Nature.

#### SECTION 2.

The principle purpose of the O.T.O. is to teach True Brotherhood, and to make it a living power in the life of humanity.

#### SECTION 3.

The subsidiary aims of the O.T.O. are:

(a) to spread the doctrines of Hermetic Science, and to initiate its members in the Secret Doctrines of Hermetic Science, for which purpose its members are as a preparatory stage initiated, passed and raised in Masonry:

(b) to establish and administer schools, lodges, etc. where Hermetic Science is taught:

© to build, establish, found, manage and administer Homes, Colonies, Settlements, etc. where initiated members may live according to the tenets of the O.T.O.

#### Article III

##### SECTION 1.

The O.T.O. is part of that great and universal hermetic movement which has been active in all ages.

##### SECTION 2.

Organizations throughout the world adopting this Constitution become integral parts of the O.T.O. upon receipt of official notification of their acceptance as such. All such joining organizations to be subject to whatever conditions the authorities of the O.T.O. may impose.

##### SECTION 3.

The Central Office of the O.T.O. is at present in Switzerland, but may be removed to any country.

#### Article IV

##### SECTION 1.

There shall be One Supreme Office in which shall be vested paramount authority regarding all matters which concern the welfare and administration of the O.T.O.

##### SECTION 2.

The title of the person filling this office shall be "Frater Superior and Outer Head of the Order", hereinafter referred to as the "O.H.O."

##### SECTION 3.

The person (male or female) filling this office shall serve for life, or until his or her resignation.

##### SECTION 4.

The person filling this office shall appoint his or her successor.

#### Article V

##### SECTION 1.

The Frater Superior and Outer Head of the Order (O.H.O.) shall be the Sole Executive Officer of the Order O.T.O.

##### SECTION 2.

The Frater Superior and Outer Head of the Order (O.H.O.) shall have the Sole power of filling all general offices by appointing persons to occupy the same, and shall have the power of removing any general officer at will.

##### SECTION 3.

The Frater Superior and Outer Head of the Order (O.H.O.) shall have power to declare the policy of the O.T.O., and to direct and manage the affairs of the O.T.O.

##### SECTION 4.

The Frater Superior and Outer Head of the Order (O.H.O.) shall have the right to cancel or suspend the Charter of any subordinate organization (lodge, chapter, senate, temple, home, school, etc.) and shall also have the right to suspend or dissolve the membership of any person whenever such action is, in his or her opinion, for the interest of the O.T.O.

#### Article VI

## SECTION 1.

There shall be an Advisory Council (Cabinet) consisting of twelve members, inclusive of the O.H.O., who is the ex-officio Chairman of the Cabinet.

## SECTION 2.

The duties of the Members of the Cabinet shall be to aid the O.H.O. in promulgating and establishing the measures emanating from that office.

## SECTION 3.

The Chairman of the Cabinet together with two members thereof shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## Article VII

## SECTION 1.

There shall be an Executive Committee of Three (Supreme Council), whose duty shall be to administer the affairs of the O.T.O. under the general supervision of the O.H.O.

## SECTION 2.

The Treasurer General, the Secretary General, and the O.H.O. are the three ex-officio members of the Supreme Council and the Executive Committee.

## SECTION 3.

All official acts of the Executive Committee (Supreme Council) are void and of no effect when disapproved by the O.H.O.

## Article VIII

## SECTION 1.

Should any vacancy occur in the office of the O.H.O., the Cabinet shall have power to perform the duties of that office until the successor to that office takes possession of the same.

## Article IX

## SECTION 1.

The O.H.O. shall be the Custodian of the Archives and Library of the O.T.O.

## SECTION 2.

The O.H.O. may appoint agents for any purpose and endow them with whatever powers he or she may elect to delegate under his or her hand and seal.

## Article X

## SECTION 1.

There shall be a Finance Committee of Three, whose duty shall be to raise money and direct the disbursement of same. The Treasurer General is the ex-officio Chairman of this Committee.

## SECTION 2.

The official acts of this Finance Committee are subject to the approval of the O.H.O. and are void and of no effect when disapproved by the O.H.O.

## SECTION 3.

Every member is expected to contribute to the funds of the O.T.O. according to his or her means, but the following Dues or Fees, to be paid in advance by the members of the O.T.O. are fixed as minimum contributions (as per Manifesto M.M.M. 1912). Entrance Fee: Eight guineas, forty dollars, or 200 francs. Subscriptions:

(a) Probationers: 2 sh.; 50 cents; 2 francs a month.

(b) Students 5 sh.; 1 dollar; or 6 francs a month.

© Initiates: 10 sh.; 2 dollars or 12 francs a month.

The O.H.O. has power to reduce these fees and dues in special cases.

For diplomas are charged:

(a) Students class: 50 sh.; 15 dollars; or 65 francs.

(b) Initiates Class: Five guineas; 30 dollars; or 130 francs each.

Charters for Lodges of more than 10 members cost 25 guineas each Charter or 100 dollars or 650 francs.

No money paid into the Treasury of the O.T.O. can be reclaimed by either individual members or lodges, etc. under any pretext whatsoever.

## Article XI

### SECTION 1.

Any person of full age (male or female) who has signed the preliminary pledge form, and has been approved by the O.H.O. may become a member of the O.T.O.

### SECTION 2.

Every application for admission must be sent in writing to the Central Office, whether the office be in Switzerland or elsewhere, or to one of the authorized local organizations.

### SECTION 3.

The members of the O.T.O. are classified as:

(a) Probationers (embracing Theosophists, etc.);

(b) Students or Lay Brothers (Masonic Members);

© Initiates or O.T.O. members proper.

For further particulars see synopsis of degrees of the O.T.O.

### SECTION 4.

Applications for diplomas and charters must be accompanied by a remittance covering the statutory fees and dues. All diplomas and charters must be issued under the hand and seal of the O.H.O.

### SECTION 5.

Three or more members may apply for a Charter to form a subordinate lodge or organization.

### SECTION 6.

No person may be a member of two lodges at the same time.

## Article XII

### SECTION 1.

Every subordinate lodge or organization shall have the right to conduct its own affairs according to its own wishes and bye-laws, provided that its acts and bye-laws are not contrary to the letter or spirit of this Constitution.

### SECTION 2.

The Bye-Laws of subordinate organizations, lodges, etc. must be submitted for approval to the O.H.O. and are null and void if disapproved by the O.H.O.

## Article XIII

### SECTION 1.

A Congress of the O.T.O. may be called by the O.H.O. to assemble at such place and time as that officer may designate.

## SECTION 2.

Each subordinate organization, lodge, etc. shall be entitled to ONE vote in the Congress for its first three members, and one additional vote for each succeeding two members.

## SECTION 3.

The O.H.O. shall have power to prevent the discussion of, or action on, any subject which in the judgement of that officer is against the welfare of the O.T.O.

## Article XIV

## SECTION 1.

It shall be the duty of the Cabinet to provide Bye-Laws for the O.T.O., and its subordinate organizations.

## SECTION 2.

No Bye-Laws shall become operative until approved by the O.H.O.

## Article XV

## SECTION 1.

There shall be a Literary and Masonic Association connected with the O.T.O. to be known as: The Esoteric Rosicrucians. All its official publications shall be issued with the hermetic cipher:—"I.N.R.I."

There are at present two official organs:

The Oriflamme and The Equinox.

## SECTION 2.

There shall be a department of the O.T.O. for the purpose of teaching Hermetic Science, to be known as the "Hermetic Science College."

## SECTION 3.

There shall be a department of the O.T.O. for the purpose of doing practical humanitarian work in specially appointed profess-houses to be known as the "Homes of the O.T.O."

## Article XVI

## SECTION 1.

There exist 4 different seals which are used by the O.T.O. The respective symbolic meanings of these various seals will be made known to the members in the course of their studies. One of these seals is for the general use of the O.T.O.; and one, to be used exclusively by the O.H.O., is called the Secret Seal (S.S.).

## Article XVII

## SECTION 1.

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourth vote of a Congress. But no amendment shall take effect and become law until approved by the O.H.O. In case of emergency the O.H.O. has supreme power to amend this Constitution by "Edict" under his hand and seal, which is to be recorded in the Golden Book of the O.T.O.

## Article XVIII

## SECTION 1.

Initiates of at least ten years good standing may apply for a six months' free residence in one of the established Homes. Applications will be dealt with by rotation. The final decision for granting a free residence to an applicant rests with the O.H.O.

## Article XIX

This Constitution was first proclaimed, published and issued under the hand and seal of the O.H.O. in London (England) on January 22nd, A.D. 1906, Anno Ordinis 788, Anno V.L. 0,000,000,000.

This revised edition of the Constitution has been approved by me, and is now issued under my hand and seal this twenty second day of January A.D. 1917, Anno Ordinis 799, on Monte Verità, in the Republic of Ticino (Switzerland).

Merlin, 33° 96° X°

Frater Superior and Outer Head of the O.T.O.

Argosinus 33° 95° IX°

Quaestor

Parçevale 33° 95° IX°

Cancellarius

Profane address: Casella postale 16935, Lugano (Suisse).

[Previous](#) | [Index](#)

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