

Knights of Malta launch a crusade in America

by Scott Thompson

On Jan. 13, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta presented its highest honor, the Collar of the Order of Merit, to President Ronald Reagan at a dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. This was the first time that an American President had been offered and accepted an award from the Knights. It was also the first visit of the Knights' Grand Master, who holds the rank of Prince and Cardinal of the Catholic Church, to the United States in the 900 years of the Order's history. The award dinner was sponsored by the American Association of the Knights of Malta, which is the oldest and largest of three associations of the Catholic branch of the Knights of Malta in the United States, headed by J. Peter Grace.

His Most Eminent Highness Fra Andrew W.N. Bertie, the new Grand Master, presented President Reagan the award, stating: "You have defended the rights of the unborn, and the importance of moral spiritual values, at great political risk to yourself. The Order of Malta was and is an aristocracy of service, and you have personified this ideal in your service as President."

Fra Bertie, who became Grand Master of the Knights last year, is the first British Grand Master since Hugh de Revel (1258-77). In his speech, Fra Bertie stressed the potential importance of the Knights of Malta establishing closer ties with the United States, as symbolized by the award to President Reagan. Informed analysts believe that Fra Bertie is attempting to play the Anglo-American "special relationship" through the Knights of Malta.

Fra Bertie's appointment was widely regarded as a special favor to Queen Elizabeth II, who reportedly used her visit to meet Pope John Paul II to help save the Knights of Malta, which various Cardinals had decided should be disbanded as an anachronism and center of Gnosticism within the Church. Fra Bertie is the son of the Earl of Lindsey and Abington, who was a broker on the London Stock Exchange.

Otherwise, Fra Andrew Willoughby Ninian Bertie is a strange choice for the post of Grand Master. Born in London on May 15, 1929, he studied at Oxford and the School of Oriental Studies at London University. For 23 years, he taught modern languages at Worth School of the Benedictine Order, which was responsible for founding what became the Knights of Malta during the Crusades. Fra Bertie is considered one of the world's leading scholars on Tibet.

In his brief remarks on the first visit of a Grand Master to

the U.S., Fra Bertie spoke of the importance of closer ties between the Order (recognized as sovereign under international law) and the United States. The only earlier official contact between the Order and America had been when the Grand Master, after Napoleon's conquest of Malta, suggested to the American President that a portion of the United States be set aside so that the Knights could form a sovereign principality within the young republic.

Rejected in the United States, the Knights of Malta found refuge in Russia, under the insane Czar Paul I, who adopted the title of Grand Master and affiliated the Knights with the Russian Orthodox Church. Since the Bolshevik Revolution, the Kremlin has maintained a special office to keep tabs on the Knights, at least one faction of whom have remained a back-channel with Soviet intelligence, seeking to have Jerusalem made into an international city under the auspices of the Knights of Malta.

The real story of Irangate

President Reagan stressed in his speech to the Knights that private charity should become the principal means to supplant the welfare state. President Reagan was apparently unaware that the hospice movement, advocates that those with terminal illnesses or "more will than wallet" are permitted to "die with dignity," while being stupefied by painkillers. But there is another story underlying the Knights of Malta's version of charity. Under the cover of establishing hospitals for the poor, the Knights of Malta have become, according to U.S. intelligence sources, among the biggest arms-traffickers in the world.

Exemplary is the hospital maintained by the Knights of Malta under Prince Lobkowicz in the Syrian-occupied Bekaa Valley of Lebanon, the major breeding ground for international terrorism. The Knights are known to provide services to the terrorists, who fund their activities partly by having turned the Bekaa Valley into a major narcotics production spot.

When the Irangate scandal broke, U.S. intelligence sources informed *EIR* that finally the real story of the Knights of Malta might break through. Irangate Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh was allegedly investigating them. Among those members of the Knights of Malta who had a role in Irangate were: 1) Director of Central Intelligence William

Casey, a member of Grace's American Association of the Knights of Malta, who ran whole sections of the Irangate policy as a "vest pocket" operation; 2) Alexander Haig, who had a hand as NATO commander in toppling the Shah of Iran, also in 1982 initiated the strategic "Memorandum of Understanding" with Israel, under whose terms Israel supplied arms to Iran; 3) Cyrus Hashemi, the Iranian arms-trafficker and Savama paymaster, who was arrested in 1980 bearing a Knights of Malta passport; 4) Ibrahim Yazdi, the former foreign minister of Iran, who traveled to the U.S. secretly in June 1986 at the height of the arms-for-hostages deal, when he met with Oliver North; he now travels on a Knights of Malta passport.

This curious relationship of the Knights of Malta, who were always a private intelligence network in the Middle East for the old European nobility, with Iranian leaders and arms-traffickers, had been furthered when, shortly before the toppling of the Shah of Iran, the Knights of Malta opened an embassy in Teheran. The Knights reportedly also worked closely with the Shi'ite fundamentalist clergy led by Ruhollah Khomeini. Many awards similar to that given President Reagan and passports were handed out to Iranians on both sides of the conflict.

The Knights and the Narcontras

J. Peter Grace's branch of the Knights of Malta has been the primary distributor of at least \$50 million in aid to the Contras in Central America, raised by the New Canaan, Connecticut-based Americares Foundation. Some \$14 million was distributed in 1983 and another \$20 million in 1984. Figures for more recent years are not available, but the program is known to have continued apace.

This is not all private charity. Both Americares and the Knights of Malta have each, separately, become Private Volunteer Organizations (PVO) receiving grants and credits from the U.S. Agency for International Development, which has historically been employed for covert operations by the Central Intelligence Agency.

While there is no evidence that this aid was other than humanitarian, Robert Macauley of Americares has been quoted as saying that he would have also shipped weapons, if he were asked to do so by President Reagan. The Salvadoran Association of the Knights of Malta is also registered as a PVO, and it received \$178,500 for a project to build a "model town," which is believed to have been modeled upon the strategic hamlet program in Vietnam.

The chief Knight involved in distribution of the Americares aid is Roberto Alejos Arzu, who is president of the Guatemalan Association of the Knights of Malta and the Order's former ambassador to Honduras. He is a strong Contra supporter, who earlier lent his Guatemalan coffee estate for use by the CIA to train the Bay of Pigs invasion force. In interviews, Alejos Arzu admitted knowing well not only Alexander Haig, but also rogue CIA official Theodore Shack-

ley, who was the *éminence grise* in Irangate.

There is some question as to just how good a Catholic Alejos Arzu might be. In February 1968, Roberto Alejos Arzu was arrested and charged with kidnaping the Archbishop of Guatemala, Msgr. Mario Casariego (now a Cardinal).

Alejos Arzu has given interviews in which he claims to have helped create Vietnam-style strategic hamlets along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. It is suspected that Americares aid was used in this project, which included major emigration from Nicaragua in 1982, and created bases for Contra operations. Moreover, Alejos Arzu has been an outspoken advocate of drug legalization at a time when factions of the Contras have been accused of drug-and-gun running to fund their operations.

Communists and Freemasons

The Kremlin has maintained a back-channel to the Knights of Malta since the Bolshevik Revolution. Stalin offered to restore the Knights' Russian and Polish Commanderies in exchange for the Knights' opening a legation in Moscow. This involved intricate negotiations over the status of Jerusalem, which Stalin believed the Knights might become the mandatory power over. A faction of the Knights liked Stalin's offer. At present, the Kremlin is again considering diplomatic recognition of the Knights, whose sovereign state encompasses one small building on the Via Condotti in Rome.

J. Peter Grace, head of the American Association that entertained President Reagan, comes from a family with an equally long history of dealing with the Bolsheviks. His father, Joseph Grace, whose family concern started as junior partners of the British in Peru, was on the board of the American International Corporation at 120 Broadway that traded extensively with Russia, before and after the Bolshevik Revolution. A Grace-Russia corporation was formed that stayed in business with the Bolsheviks.

Under the Reagan administration, J. Peter Grace headed the President's Private Sector Survey, which, while it viewed debt payments as sacrosanct, recommended massive budget cuts in national defense, as well as the "privatization" of critical areas of the military.

The Knights of Malta have also been scandalously close to the Satanic currents of Freemasonry since the 18th century, when Joseph, Count Cagliostro (a reputed bastard son of the Grand Master) entrapped Marie Antoinette in the "necklace scandal," which helped create the Jacobin French Revolution, which had been organized through Scottish Rite Freemasonic networks. Count Cagliostro, who was inducted into Freemasonry in London, founded his own "Egyptian Lodge" in Rome, which led to his imprisonment by the Holy Inquisition, as well as a secret lodge among English Knights on the island of Malta.

Several leading Knights have also been Freemasons in the 20th century. According to French author Jacques Peyrefitte, the same Comte de Pierredon (descended from an

Ottoman Pasha) who received Stalin's offer to the Order to become partners in the division of Jerusalem after World War II, was receiving funds to advance his factions power within the Order from the Grand Orient of France. Also, then Grand Master De Mojana—allegedly imposed upon the Knights of Malta by British intelligence MI-6—was a member of the Palazzo Giustiniani Lodge, a branch of Scottish Rite, while simultaneously holding the rank of Cardinal of the Catholic Church.

Even more recently, the Knights of Malta were involved in a major Freemasonic scandal. Within days after the May 13, 1981 attempt to murder Pope John Paul II by the assassin Ali Agca, Italian carabinieri raided the villa of former Mussolini secret police (OVRA) official Licio Gelli, where they discovered a 1,000 person membership list of the secret Propaganda 2 Masonic Lodge.

As it turned out a number of prominent Knights of Malta—including the top Italian military and intelligence officers—were also secret members of the P-2 Lodge, including: Defense Chief of Staff Giovanni Torisi; Gen. Giulio Grassini, chief of the SISDE (“FBI”); and Gen. Giuseppe Santovito, chief of the SISMI (“CIA”).

Likewise, Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti was later said to have held simultaneous membership in the Knights and in Gelli's P-2 Lodge, which had directed slush funds to parties ranging from the Communists to Christian Democracy.

The P-2 Lodge was further discovered to have been involved in a series of coup d'état attempts in Italy, which started with the Dec. 7, 1970 aborted coup attempt of Prince Junio Borghese, a member of both the Knights and Gelli's Lodge. It was also the P-2 Lodge that was behind a wave of “red” and “black” terrorism, which began in the 1960s in Italy as part of a “strategy of tension” that culminated in the bombing of the Bologna train station by the neo-fascist Ordine Nuovo.

According to extensive Italian court testimony, when Henry Kissinger was National Security Adviser to President Richard Nixon, Kissinger (whose name has been linked to Gelli's Monte Carlo Lodge) directed “crocodile” funds to the P-2 Lodge for destabilizing Italy. Other testimony has charged that Kissinger personally threatened Italian Christian Democratic Party president Aldo Moro, who was later killed by terrorists. Kissinger's accomplice in these NSC-coordinated operations was Gen. Alexander Haig, a member of Peter Grace's American Association.

Licio Gelli himself, who formed this arcane association with the Knights of Malta, is what the U.S. Counterintelligence Corps during World War II would call a “Nazi-Communist.” Saved by Communist partisans he had worked covertly with during the war, Gelli established elaborate connections with the same Bulgarian and related East bloc intelligence services, which were used by the KGB for the 1981 attempt to murder Pope John Paul II.

‘Wiseguy’ says he LaRouche for the

by Herbert Quinde

A series of articles in the *Buffalo News* during early February revealed the previously undisclosed activities of a government informant who for 10 years illegally spied on Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. and associates.

Ronald M. Fino, the former president of Buffalo Laborers Union Local 210, has been a Federal Bureau of Investigation and Central Intelligence Agency informant for two decades, primarily reporting on organized crime activity in the labor movement. But, Fino told the *News*, “He had infiltrated the organization of Lyndon H. LaRouche for the CIA.” Although FBI officials have denied it, Fino was reporting to the Bureau about LaRouche's political activities as recently as December 1988.

The revelation, coming on the heels of the jailing of LaRouche and six associates, on trumped-up conspiracy charges, again confirms the claims made by defense attorneys that government agencies have directed a COINTELPRO-style operation of political harassment against the American political figure and his associates for two decades.

During the 1960s and 1970s, COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) was the codename for a broad FBI program of harassing political organizations under the guise of protecting U.S. national security.

The revelations of Ronald Fino could be the basis for reopening the LaRouche case in Alexandria, Virginia. Daniel S. Alcorn, a LaRouche defense lawyer, is quoted by the *News* saying that the Fino revelations “might be a break in the criminal case, if there was government misconduct.” Judge Albert V. Bryan, who presided over the Alexandria railroad, denied the defense much of the information sought by LaRouche attorneys. “There were hundreds of pages deleted for national security reasons,” Alcorn told the *Buffalo News*. “We don't know what's behind that shield.”

The earlier Boston trial against LaRouche and associates ended in a mistrial, in part due to the illegal activities of Ryan Quade Emerson, another FBI informant unearthed during the six-month trial. The Boston jury informally polled itself after the mistrial and told the media that it would have acquitted all of the defendants because of government misconduct against the former presidential candidate.

Fino, who had posed as a sympathetic supporter of LaRouche's presidential bids, is currently in hiding, his life threatened under a contract put out by the Buffalo mob. The FBI is trying to force Fino to join the Federal Witness