

**100 YEARS**

1918 – FREEMASONRY IN AUSTRIA – 2018

1918 FOUNDING THE GRAND LODGE OF VIENNA



**Hope**



**Destruction**



**New Beginning**



**SPECIAL EXHIBITION**  
**AUSTRIAN MASONIC MUSEUM SCHLOSS ROSENAU**  
NEXT TO ZWETTL/LOWER AUSTRIA

[www.freimaurermuseum.at](http://www.freimaurermuseum.at)

Freemasonry evolved in Austria during the 18<sup>th</sup> century at the time of the Habsburg Empire. Between 1784 and 1794 the fraternity enjoyed its first boom years and decisively contributed to the reform policy of Empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II. But persecution and oppression followed this short intermezzo, lasting until the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918. The so-called Austro-Hungarian Compromise made it possible for Masons of the Austrian part of the monarchy to meet on nearby Hungarian territory from 1867 on and to start working in so-called “Grenzlogen” (Lodges across the border).



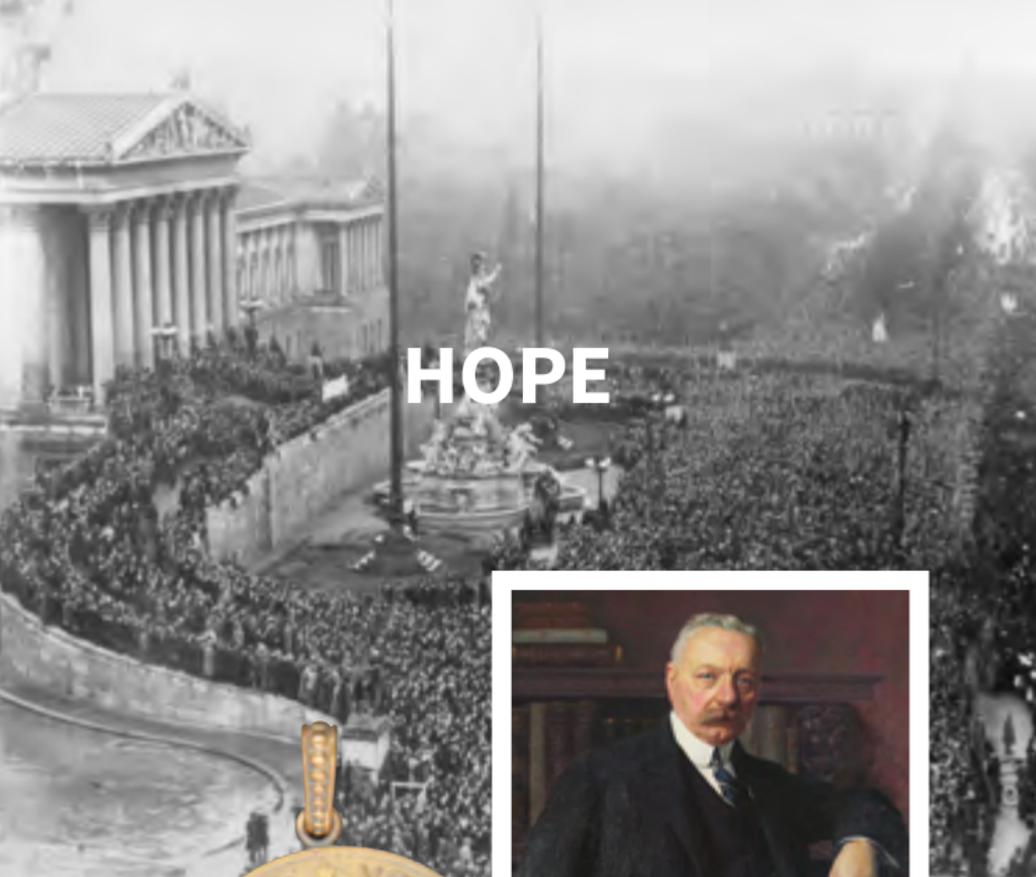
Those “Grenzlogen” were the nucleus for the first Grand Lodge on Austrian soil after the end of the First World War.



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# HOPE



Richard Schlesinger

It was the 8 December 1918, when the first “Grand Lodge of Vienna” was founded with its headquarter in the inner city of Vienna, in Dorotheergasse 12. Dr. Richard Schlesinger, a lawyer and a member of the Supreme Court of Austria, served as first Grand Master. He held office until the destruction of the Grand Lodge by the Nazis in June 1938, tortured to death in a Gestapo prison.

The Big Temple in  
Dorotheergasse 12





Julius Tandler



Ferdinand Hanusch



Alfred Hermann Fried



Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi

In the years between the Great Wars the Grand Lodge’s activities focused on social-humanitarian charity to combat hunger, housing shortage and insufficient healthcare for the plagued civilian population.

Within their political activities Freemasons such as Julius Tandler and Ferdinand Hanusch were active. In addition, personalities such as Alfred Hermann Fried, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1911, or Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi with his vision of a “Pan Europe Movement” campaigned for peace in Europe.



Nobel Peace Prize medal





# Destruction

Austrofascism and subsequently the Nazi regime brought a further destruction of Freemasonry in Austria. Already one day after the annexation of Austria by Germany on 13 March 1938, not only the Jewish population but also Freemasons were persecuted, robbed and sometimes murdered. The fortune of the “Grand Lodge of Vienna” was confiscated, the lodge building devastated and all documents, the library and all ritual objects confiscated and taken away.



Book-burning 1933



Selection at the ramp of the extermination camp Auschwitz

Shortly after the liberation of Vienna by the Red Army and the end of WWII only 48 surviving Masons decided on the new start or re-founding of the Austrian Grand Lodge in August 1945. And again, a short time later with the approval of the occupying powers the “Grand Lodge of Vienna – for Austria” began its work. Historically seen as the third Grand Lodge in Austria it turned into “Grand Lodge of Austria” after the Austrian State Treaty from 1955 and continues to exist to this day.



Back in 1945 a small community at the time removed into a devastated and once confiscated lodge building in Dorotheergasse 12.

The first Grand Master elected was Dr. Karl Doppler, a physician, two years later after his death followed by Bernhard Scheichelbauer as successor. It was him to achieve the recognition by the Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) in 1952 and thus the full involvement in the community of all regular masonic Lodges and Grand Lodges in the world. Today, the Grand Lodge of Austria comprises 78 lodges with around 4,000 members.

The exhibition „HOPE – DESTRUCTION – NEW BEGINNING“ illustrates the turbulent history during the last 100 years of Freemasonry in Austria with selected and little-known objects, biographical material on the most important personalities and never-before-exhibited documents as well as historical photo and film material.



Karl Doppler



Bernhard Scheichelbauer



Entrance Lodge building Dorotheergasse 12



Entrance Lodge building Rauhensteingasse 3





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SCHLOSS ROSENAU

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#### Opening Hours:

April – October: daily from 9.00 till 17.00  
November – March: by appointment only

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On the Zwettl ring road take exit "Weitra" and follow the signs „Schloss Rosenau“

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