

## œ Historian Bernard Faÿ, a specialist in œ Freemasonry (www.bernardfay-historien.fr/en/)

Born in 1893, Bernard Faÿ obtained the *agrégation de lettres classiques* in 1914 on the eve of the declaration of war. Discharged because of a poliomyelitis contracted at the age of seven, he joined the Parisian administration of the Red Cross as a volunteer, then the Belgian hospital in Calais, and finally assisted surgeon Bouvier in Verdun. He was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* in 1917 and the *Cross of the Oder of Leopold II of Belgium*.

In 1924, he published his doctoral thesis *the Revolutionary Spirit in France and in the United States at the end of the 18th century*, which was translated into English by the Harcourt Brace publishing house in New York. His literary production, from then on, abounded. His most read works are *Franklin, the Apostle of Modern Times*; *Georges Washington: Republican Aristocrat*; *Roosevelt and His America*; and *Revolution and Freemasonry*. He also translated American authors and *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, written by her Jewish friend Gertrude Stein. Many French and American newspapers such as *Le Correspondant*, *Le Figaro*, *New York Times*, *Saturday Review*, *La Revue de Paris*, etc... published his papers. He was appointed chair of American Civilization at the Collège de France and was one of the most brilliant academics of his time, with some thirty books published between 1925 and 1978.

During the German occupation, he occupied, without ignoring the pitfalls, the position of General Administrator of the *Bibliothèque nationale* (National Library) proposed by Marshal Pétain. In order to protect books, he joined the Resistance through the Mithridate Network, one of the most important of the Second World War. At that time, Marshal Pétain, considering Freemasonry as a state within the State, had ordered the lodges to be closed, and their archives to be classified by the *Bibliothèque nationale*. For almost three years, many archives were made public in the review *Documents Maçonniques (Masonic)*. Yet in 1942, the Freemason Pierre Laval, who had become Prime Minister, let the lodges be reconstituted. From then on, Bernard Faÿ received death threats and became their scapegoat.

After the Liberation, his office was searched without a warrant. He was interrogated by the police inspector, Mr. Le Poittevin, whose insinuations about his alleged collaboration with the Gestapo, his alleged role in the deportation of Freemasons, were to lead him to be sentenced to death.

During the trial of the secret societies in December 1946, his lawyer, Maître Chresteil, tried in vain to present numerous testimonies in his favour, and to demonstrate that the accusations, which were not much factual, came under passionate revenge. Bernard Faÿ was sentenced to hard labor for life and to national indignity, without the possibility of appeal. Several pleas for clemency were blocked despite the support of the then President of the Republic, Mr. Auriol. After seven years in prison, seriously ill, he was taken to hospital in Angers, from which he managed to escape. He was reprieved by President Coty (signed by the then Lord Chancellor, François Mitterrand).