

2009 Commission Report

AZERBAIJAN

The National Grand Lodge of Azerbaijan was chartered and constituted on December 8, 2008, by the Grand Lodges of the District of Columbia and the Grand Lodge of Russia in the City of Baku, Azerbaijan. This Grand Lodge was formed from a Lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia in 2002, a Lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of Turkey in 2003, and a Lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of Russia in 2003. A fourth Lodge was chartered in 2007. The constitution and bylaws are patterned after those of the Grande Loge Nationale Francaise and of the United Grand Lodge of England. It is the opinion of the Commission that the National Grand Lodge of Azerbaijan meets the standards for recognition.

BAJA CALIFORNIA

It was reported last year that a serious split existed in the Grand Lodge of Baja California. Two sets of Grand Lodge officers were claiming to be the legitimate officials of this Grand Lodge, and it was clear that more work had to be done to resolve this problem. At this time, it appeared the situation had not materially changed. One group of Lodges using the name of Gran Logia de Estado Baja California has as its Grand Master, Hector Pablo Meixueiro Corral; and another group using the same name has as its Grand Master, Franco Magdaleno-Sato. At the request of the Commission, both Grand Masters agreed to come together with several brethren appointed to act as mediators at the close of the meeting. Brothers Thomas Jackson of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, Jean Claude Tardivat of the Grande Loge Nationale Francaise (GLNF), and Alan Englefield of the United Grand Lodge of England agreed to serve in that role. We are pleased to report that within a matter of hours, an agreement on terms for unification had been reached and signed by the two Grand Masters. This agreement reached is patterned after the one established for Paraguay, and is subject to ratification by their respective Grand Lodges. We commend these brethren for their willingness to resolve their differences and work for Masonic unity in Baja California.

BULGARIA

Little progress has been made in unifying Freemasonry in Bulgaria, as it continues to function under two Grand Lodge structures, namely the United Grand Lodge of Bulgaria (UGLB) and the Grand Lodge AF&AM of Bulgaria (GLAFAMB). Last year, the Commission again strongly encouraged the two Grand Lodges to actively meet and work toward the resolution of their differences. The services of several impartial mediators were offered to facilitate the process. These attempts have not been. The UGLB offered to relax the requirements of the "regularization procedure", but later rescinded the offer. Most members of the GLAFAMB are unwilling to be subjected to the requirements of the procedure as defined. Several options have been offered by the GLAFAMB, but none are seriously being considered. The UGLB states they believe the GLAFAMB is irregular and they therefore cannot communicate with them. After five years of unsuccessfully urging the two organizations to actively pursue avenues of unification, the Commission will not receive any additional presentations from either Grand Lodge until there is substantive evidence of progress in resolving their differences.

MOLDOVA

The Grand Lodge of Moldova submitted a request to the Commission for formal recognition of their Grand Lodge. The Commission does not and cannot grant formal recognition to any Grand Lodge; it only makes a determination as to whether a Grand Lodge meets the standards for recognition, as established by this Conference. In 2003, the Commission determined that the Grand Lodge of Moldova did not meet the standards for recognition because they were not constituted by a Grand Lodge that met the standards. The Regular Grand Lodge of Italy constituted the Grand Lodge of Moldova in 1999, and the Commission had previously determined that the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy did not have legitimacy of origin as defined by our standards. In addition, there is no evidence that the constituent Lodges from which formed the Grand Lodge of Moldova was formed had legitimate origins. Even though this Grand Lodge may now

practice regular Masonry, and is recognized by a number regular Grand Lodges in the world, the Commission has no authority to deviate from the standards established by this Conference. It is therefore the opinion of the Commission that the Grand Lodge of Moldova does not meet the standards for recognition.

PARAGUAY

It was reported last year that a split had developed in the Grand Lodge of Paraguay, in which two Grand Masters, Nemecio Lichi and Ignacio Mendosa claimed to be the legal authority for the Grand Lodge. Attempts by various parties during the year to resolve the problem had proved futile. At a meeting at this Conference, prior to the Commission meeting, representatives from a number of jurisdictions met with these Grand Masters and members of their delegations. Among those attending this meeting were Tom Jackson, Executive Secretary of the World Conference of Masonic Grand Lodges; Jean Claude Tardivat of the GLNF; Alan Englefield of the United Grand Lodge of England; Diego Delora of the Grand Lodge of Spain, and Tullion Colacioppio of the Grand Orient of Brazil. At the conclusion of the meeting, an agreement titled, California Agreement on the Future of Paraguayan Freemasonry, was signed by those present. The document contains five points on which they were in full agreement, in order to bring unity to Freemasonry in Paraguay.

OTHER INFORMATION

- The Commission expresses its sincere gratitude to those brethren who facilitated the process of reaching agreements in the disputes presented in the discussions of the Grand Lodges of Baja California and of Paraguay. Their willingness to work for the best interests for Freemasonry and for these Grand Lodges is to be commended.
- The United Grand Lodge of England has reported that the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the Grand Lodge of Scotland have joined together to consecrate the Grand Lodge of Ghana on December 7 and 8, 2008. This Grand Lodge was formed from twenty Lodges operating under the Irish Provincial Grand Lodge in Ghana, and from twenty eight Lodges meeting under the Scottish District in Ghana.
- It has been reported that two obediences still operate in Russia. The Grand Lodge of Russia, whose Grand Master is Andrey Bogdanov, has been determined to meet the standards of recognition. The other organization is composed of those members and lodges that broke away from the Grand Lodge of Russia, and after several confusing years, now call themselves the United Grand Lodge of Russia, and have affiliated themselves with the Grand Lodge of France. The Grand Lodge of Russia has 251 Master Masons in good standing at work in eighteen Lodges.
- In the nation of Cyprus, there are now operating lodges under three Masonic obediences: the United Grand Lodge of England; the Grand Lodge of Cyprus, which was constituted by the Grand Lodge Greece; and most recently, another Lodge under the Grand Lodge of Greece. In addition, the Grand Lodge of Greece has announced intentions to constitute additional Lodges there. If this occurs, the Grand Lodge of Cyprus has declared it will sever relations with the Grand Lodge of Greece, its mother Grand Lodge. *NOTE: After this report was distributed, a letter was received from the Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Greece stating that the information given us that the Grand Lodge of Greece announced intentions to constitute another Lodge in Cyprus is untrue. It has never announced or had any intentions to constitute additional Lodges in the republic of Cyprus. The Grand Lodge of Greece maintains a relationship with the Grand Lodge of Cyprus that is harmonious and amicable.*
- A number of Lodges have been chartered in this country from foreign Grand Lodges not recognized by our Grand Lodges. The Regular Grand Lodge of California was chartered in June 2008 by the Regular Grand Lodge of Nevada, and according to their website, are linked to the Regular Grand Lodge of England. There are now a number of Co-Masonic and Feminine Grand Lodges operating in this country. We need to be very diligent in examining dues cards when accepting visitors to your Lodge, and in determining the legitimacy of a Lodge you may wish to visit.

