

2010 Commission Report

BAJA CALIFORNIA

The two groups representing the Grand Lodge of Baja California agreed at the meeting of the Commission last year to sit down with the assistance of selected mediators and work for a resolution of their differences. This was accomplished and M :W :. Franco Magdaleno Soto representing one faction, and M :W :. Bro. Hector Pablo Meixueiro, representing the other faction signed the "California Agreement" which summarized the terms for unification of the two groups. Following that meeting, the Grand Lodge group headed by G.M. Soto ratified the agreement. The Grand Lodge group headed by G.M. Meixueiro would not concur with the agreement. During the year, several attempts to encourage completion of the ratification process were unsuccessful. Both Grand Masters attended the current meeting of the Commission, and both agreed to negotiate.

BOLIVIA

A new Grand Lodge has surfaced in Bolivia, named the Grand Lodge of York Rite for Bolivia, located in the Department (state) of Cochabamba. It was founded in June of 2008 and composed of members from the Grand Lodge of Bolivia. There is no evidence of them being constituted by a regular Grand Lodge, nor is there a pact or treaty that the Grand Lodge of Bolivia will share the jurisdiction with them. The claim of this Grand Lodge is that the Constitution of Bolivia gives them, and no one else, sovereignty in the Department of Cochabamba. It is suspected that this may be true politically, but not Masonically. This Grand Lodge has not been recognized by any other Grand Lodges, but they claim legitimacy by virtue of the fact that their members come from Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Bolivia, which is recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England. In view of the data presented, it is the opinion of the Commission that the Grand Lodge of York Rite for Bolivia does not meet the standards for recognition.

GRANDE ORIENTE PAULISTA of SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

The Grande Oriente Paulista has contacted the Commission as a prelude to establishing treaties of fraternal relations with member Grand Lodges of this Conference. This Grand Lodge was created from dissident Lodges of the Grand Orient of Brazil. They claim to have mutual consent with the Grand Lodge of Sao Paulo and the Grand Orient of Sao Paulo to share the jurisdiction of Sao Paulo, but no such documentation was presented. They claim to adhere to the ancient landmarks. They do not have recognition from any member Grand Lodges of this Conference, but they do claim to have recognition with York Rite Grand Chapters. Based on the data presented, it is the opinion of the Commission that the Grande Oriente Paulista of Sao Paulo does not meet the standards for recognition.

BULGARIA

A new Grand Master, Volodya Lozanov, has been elected and installed in the Grand Lodge AF&AM of Bulgaria. On behalf of his Grand Lodge, he is urgently requesting assistance in equitably removing the obstacles for unification of Freemasonry in Bulgaria. The Commission has been advocating action from both Grand Lodges toward their unification for the past five years, but to no avail. Grand Master Lozanov is requesting the appointment of international mediators to facilitate the process. For this to occur, the United Grand Lodge of Bulgaria, now led by Grand Master Grigoriy Va:rov must agree to engage in such a process. Several members of European Grand Lodges, namely the National Grand Lodge of France, the United Grand Lodge of Germany, and the United Grand Lodge of England have indicated a willingness to participate in this effort, if requested. It is appropriate that such action be undertaken in the European Masonic community, as it will undoubtedly be beneficial to Masonry in Europe for this to occur.

CYPRESS

After the report of the Commission was distributed last year, a letter was received from the Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Greece stating that the information given to the Commission that the Grand Lodge of Greece announced intentions of constituting another Lodge in Cyprus, is untrue. It has no such intentions, and maintains a relationship with the Grand Lodge of Cyprus that is harmonious and amicable. The relationship between the Grand Lodge of Cyprus and the United Grand Lodge of England is still unsettled. At issue is the definition of Masonic sovereignty on the island of Cyprus and what limitations may be applied. The Grand Lodge of Cyprus expresses a desire for the two Grand Lodges to "co exist and run in parallel", and a representative of the United Grand Lodge of England expressed a willingness to continue discussions to resolve any misunderstandings. The Grand Lodge of Cyprus is regular in every respect and has been recognized by a number of member Grand Lodges of this Conference. The only thing missing to completely satisfy the standards for recognition, is a formal agreement between the two Grand Lodges that they will share the jurisdiction, and this is being addressed.

MALTA'

The Sovereign Grand Lodge of Malta was consecrated in 2004 by the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the United Grand Lodge of England. Recently, three Lodges, namely, Logga Mikiel yassalli, Abercom Lodge, and Logga Fenici have withdrawn from the Sovereign Grand Lodge of Malta, and formed a new Grand Lodge named the Grand Lodge of Malta. This Grand Lodge was not regularly formed and does not have a treaty to share the jurisdiction with the Sovereign Grand Lodge of Malta, and therefore does not satisfy the standards for recognition.

MOLDOVA

The Commission reported last year the Grand Lodge of Moldova did not meet the standards for recognition because of concerns about the legitimacy of its origin. Data has subsequently been presented that modifies that opinion. The Grand Lodge of Moldova was consecrated by the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy, which has not met the standards, even though they practice regular Masonry. The Grand Lodge of Moldova has severed relations with the Regular Grand Lodge of Italy and has now established fraternal relations with the Grand Orient of Italy. The Grand Lodge of Moldova is composed of Lodges that practice regular Masonry, and has established fraternal relations with many of the regular Grand Lodges in Europe. The Commission is of the opinion that since there is no way for this Grand Lodge to correct their origin, and since they are regular in all aspects of Masonic practice, they can now be considered to have met the standards for recognition.

MOZAMBIQUE

The Grande Loja de Mozambique was consecrated on July 11, 2009 by the Grande Loja Legal de Portugal, from three lodges previously chartered by the Legal Grand Lodge of Portugal. The Grand Lodge will work in the Portuguese language and will have exclusive jurisdiction over Masonry in that country. The Grand Lodge was formed based on the ancient landmarks and traditions of regular and recognized Grand Lodges. It is the opinion of the Commission that the Grand Lodge of Mozambique meets the standards for recognition. The Grand Master is Ussumane Aly Dauto, and the address of the Grand Lodge is: Rua do Infantario, n 308, Matola, Mozambique.

PARAGUAY

As was reported last year, the two Grand Masters of the Grand Symbolic Lodge of Paraguay met under the guidance of mediators appointed by the Commission, and arrived at an arrangement to resolve the differences that divided the Grand Lodge. Both Grand Masters signed the "California Agreement" and pledged to present the document to their respective members for ratification. This process progressed very slowly during the past year and finally stalled. Upon the arrival of both Grand Masters at this Conference,

they agreed to resume negotiations toward an agreement. This has been accomplished with the assistance of the three previous facilitators, and new terms, called the "Arlington Agreement" have been signed by both parties. Assurance has been given that this will be ratified by all involved. It is very encouraging that unification of Freemasonry in Paraguay has been restored.

SLOVAKIA

The Grand Lodge of Slovakia (Vel'kej Loze Slovenska) was constituted on March 21, 2009 by the Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic, the United Grand Lodges of Germany, and the Grand Lodge of Austria. The Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia was originally constituted in 1923 and went into exile during WW II. It was officially revived in 1990 with only 23 remaining Masons. After the political division of the country in 1993 into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, the Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia was renamed the Grand Lodge of the Czech Republic with jurisdiction over lodges in both Republics. Full Masonic sovereignty was granted on March 21, 2009, when the Grand Lodge of Slovakia was constituted. from the District Grand Lodge of Slovakia, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Czech Republic. The Commission is of the opinion that the Grand Lodge of Slovakia meets the standards for recognition. The Grand Master is Imrich Beres, and the address of the Grand Lodge is: V.L.S., FazuJova 1, 811 07 Bratislava, Slovakia GL.

OTHER INFORMATION

1. A significant amount of correspondence is being sent from the Grand Lodge National of Portugal. This Grand Lodge should not be confused with the Grand Lodge Legal of Portugal, which is the one that meets the standards for recognition.
2. Several Grand Lodges have received communications relative to the creation of a new United Grand Lodge of South Africa. The Grand Lodge of South Africa is the only Grand Lodge operating as such, even though England, Ireland, and Scotland continue to operate Districts and Lodges with the arrangement under which the Grand Lodge of South Africa was constituted in 1961. Any attempt by any other Grand Lodge to consecrate a lodge in South Africa will be strongly opposed, as it is not considered open territory.
3. The Grand Lodge of California has established a treaty with the Grand Lodge of Iran in Exile that they may co-exist in the jurisdiction of California, as well as in the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.
4. It was reported that at a recent meeting of several European Grand Masters, the concept of establishing a Commission such as ours was discussed. This Commission would be concerned with issues of recognition and regularity among Grand Lodges in Europe. If such an organization becomes reality, it will greatly enhance the work of our Commission.
 - 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.