

2007 Commission Report

BULGARIA

The status of Freemasonry in Bulgaria has not materially changed since the report last year. The United Grand Lodge of Bulgaria offered a plan to “regularize” those members of the Grand Lodge AF&AM in Bulgaria who wished to reunite with the United Grand Lodge of Bulgaria. This offer was rejected. The Grand Lodge AF&AM in Bulgaria subsequently offered a plan to create an umbrella organization called the United Grand Lodges of Bulgaria, which would encompass both Grand Lodges. The United Grand Lodge of Bulgaria refused to consider such a plan, and has stated they do not intend to share the jurisdiction with another Grand Lodge. It does not appear that unification of Freemasonry in Bulgaria will occur in the foreseeable future. It is the opinion of the Commission that the United Grand Lodge of Bulgaria is still the only Grand Lodge that meets all the standards for recognition, and is so considered by most regular Grand Lodges worldwide.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Grand Lodge of Bosnia and Herzegovina was consecrated by the Grand Lodge of Austria, with the support of the Regular Grand Lodge of Slovenia, on April 16, 2005. This Grand Lodge has legitimacy of origin, exclusive territorial jurisdiction, and works in regular Masonry. The Commission is of the opinion that this Grand Lodge meets the standards for recognition.

CYPRUS

The Grand Lodge of Cyprus was formed from six Lodges working under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Greece. On January 15, 2006, the Grand Lodge of Greece formally set the Grand Lodge of Cyprus to work and installed its officers. Formal consecration of the Grand Lodge was held on October 8, 2006 by the Grand Lodge of Greece, the Grand Lodge of Austria, and the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. The United Grand Lodge of England has been present in Cyprus since 1888, and has a District Grand Lodge there with over 1,000 members in six major towns. The Grand Lodge of Cyprus is claiming exclusive jurisdiction over Cyprus, which the UGLE does not accept. The Grand Lodge of Cyprus was legally formed, works in regular Masonry, and generally meets the standards for recognition. An agreement should be reached within the Grand Lodge of Cyprus that recognizes the rights of those Lodges chartered by the United Grand Lodge of England to co-exist within the jurisdiction of Cyprus.

PHILIPPINES

On July 8, 2006, nine Lodges in two Masonic districts of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines declared their independence from the Grand Lodge and announced the formation of a new Grand Lodge, subsequently called the Independent Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines Islands. The Lodges turned in their charters and were issued new ones by the new Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge of the Philippines summarily declared these Lodges, its members, and anyone else who joined them to be clandestine.

Even though the reasons for this separation may be valid and the Lodges are regular in origin and practice, the new Grand Lodge was not legally constituted, and they do not have exclusive territorial jurisdiction in the Philippines. It is therefore the opinion of the Commission that this Grand Lodge does not meet the standards for recognition.

RUSSIA

Unrest still prevails in the Grand Lodge of Russia. The current controversy centers around the legitimacy of an Extraordinary Assembly of the Grand Lodge of Russia held on May 29-30, 2006. At that assembly, two opposing factions held separate meetings. One group of delegates voted to reduce the term of Grand Master Vladimir Djanguiryan, and Roman Gorodnitskiy was elected the new Grand Master. The other group of delegates reaffirmed the actions of Grand Master Djanguiryan, and Gorodnitskiy and Grand Secretary Nikitin were expelled. The 13th Annual Assembly of the GLOR was held on June 17, 2006, at which time Grand Master Djanguiryan was reconfirmed by the delegates present. However, since June of 2006, numerous contradictory communications have been received from Djanguiryan and Gorodnitskiy, both claiming to be the legitimate Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia. This has created much confusion in the Masonic community throughout the world. A plan is being prepared to hold a joint meeting of these two factions in May, with two independent observers to review the proceedings. It is highly recommended that the issue of who are the legitimate officers of this Grand Lodge be resolved at this meeting, by members of this Grand Lodge, before a schism develops that would further damage Russian Freemasonry. The Grand Lodge of Russia is still considered to meet the standards for recognition.

SERBIA

On June 6, 2006, the Annual Assembly of the Regular Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia decided to officially change its name to the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia, effective January 1, 2007. Previous to that, in May of 2006, eleven Lodges called a special General Assembly meeting of the Regular Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia and emerged calling themselves the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia. They later changed the name to the Grand United Lodge of Serbia, and now the United Grand Lodges of Serbia. This organization claims to be the legal descendant of the Regular Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, as does the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia; however it is not accepted as such by regular Grand Lodges in Europe. The Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia, headed by Grand Master Petar Kostic, is still considered to be the legitimate extension of regular Masonry in that country.

OTHER INFORMATION

1. On May 28, 2006, three lodges in Montenegro working under the Regular Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, asked for and received permission to establish a sovereign and independent Grand Lodge to be called the Grand Lodge of Montenegro. They adopted the constitution of the Regular Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, and registered with the Ministry of Justice in Montenegro. Consecration of the Grand Lodge of Montenegro is scheduled to be held on May 12, 2007 by the United Grand Lodges of Germany, the Grand Oriente d'Italia, and the Regular Grand Lodge of Serbia.

2. An organization calling itself the Grand Lodge of All England is presenting itself as a legitimate Masonic Grand Lodge in England. It claims to trace its roots to a Lodge at York, founded in 1705, which later styled itself a Grand Lodge in 1725, first named the Old Grand Lodge at York, and later the Grand Lodge of All England at York. This Grand Lodge went dormant in 1740, was revived in 1761, and went dormant again in 1791, never to meet again. On December 23, 2005, an assembly of Masons met and "reclaimed English Freemasonry on behalf of its rightful custodians." The Grand Lodge of All England emerged and is said to be a revival of the Grand Lodge that went dormant in 1791.

It must again be stated that the Commission does not determine the regularity of a Grand Lodge; it only evaluates the facts available to determine if the entity meets the standards for recognition, as adopted by the Conference of Grand Masters of North America, and reports those findings to the member Grand Lodges of this Conference for their use.

The Commission cannot validate the claimed legitimacy of origin of the Grand Lodge of All England, since no documentation has been presented that this Grand Lodge was reinstated or reconstituted in 2005 by a recognized Masonic authority. In addition, it cannot claim exclusive territorial jurisdiction since a pact or treaty does not exist to share the jurisdiction with the United Grand Lodge of England. It is

therefore the opinion of the Commission that the Grand Lodge of All England does not meet the standards for recognition.

3. An attempt to start a new Hispanic speaking Grand Lodge in North Carolina has been reported. Apparently several such Lodges have been formed there, and a request was made to the York Grand Lodge in Mexico to grant them a charter to form a Grand Lodge. The request was denied.

4. It has been reported that the Supreme Council of Brazil has chartered a new national Grand Lodge in Brazil. This Grand Lodge would invade the sovereign jurisdiction of several State Grand Lodges, and is causing some concern there. This report is being investigated, and the findings will be reported when available.