



È apparso sulla rivista SQUARE, il più importante magazine inglese e voce della Massoneria Emulation, un lungo articolo sulla Confederazione Massonica Francese CMF, composta dalle quattro maggiori Obbedienze francesi, che professano la pura tradizione scozzese, con leader indiscusso la Gran Loggia di Francia.

La CMF, i cui appartenenti superano i 65.000 fratelli, è nata sulla spinta del progetto della Confederazione delle Grandi Logge Unite d'Europa che aveva recepito appieno l'iniziativa della Serenissima Gran Loggia d'Italia, la quale era stata la promotrice della Confederazione delle Grandi Logge Unite d'Italia.

Infatti, dopo la dura Dichiarazione di Basilea del giugno 2013 e la altrettanto dura contro-dichiarazione del settembre del 2013 a Roma, le cinque sorelle (Germania, Svizzera Alpina, Benelux) vicine alla Gran Loggia Unita d'Inghilterra, hanno mostrato grande attenzione alla CMF con la Dichiarazione di Berlino del 2014, aprendo ad un possibile riconoscimento reciproco tra la Confederazione e la rinata Gran Loggia Nazionale di Francia. Sta forse cadendo il tabù di una sola Obbedienza per territorio. Ormai è un fatto acclarato che in ogni nazione siano presenti alcune Obbedienze pienamente regolari e che la divisione aiuta solo al nascere e proliferare di realtà associative di dubbia regolarità. Il futuro, intuito ormai da qualche anno, è questo: riconoscere l'esistenza di più obbedienze regolari per territorio, auspicando che le realtà scozzesi possano trovare cammino comune in una sola Piramide sopra il Cubo. In Italia sarà arduo il cammino del dialogo, perché si vanno a toccare piccoli feudi di pseudo potere, tanto cari ai campanilismi italiani. È giunto il momento di un pieno ritorno ad una nuova Massoneria Federiciana.

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Tutti vorrebbero cambiare l'Umanità, ma a nessuno viene l'idea di trasformare se stesso.”

Leone Tolstoj

'There is a Tide in the Affairs of Men'

Matters of Recognition: A Test of Masonic Values

[illegible]

states are excluded from being part of the 'greater regular Masonic world community'. That recognition has remained unforthcoming because of a practice, till now considered normal, that both the mainstream and PHA Grand Lodges had to recognise each other before anyone else would.

That might seem OK and fair enough, except that many of the openers upon the face of Freemasonry involve similar sorts of issues. But the world, even the Masonic world, does change and increasingly it has proved possible to read of brothers expressing dissatisfaction with such issues not being addressed and resolved upon. The problems are there. Perhaps such problems need to be dealt with. But moves such as that by the Supreme Council will also stir up old issues, because the non-PHAR-recognising Grand Lodges (and vice versa of course) will feel another Masonic body has in its hands a card which it can play. Perhaps such an amnibled by the position taken by the Supreme Council and I will watch developments.

Masonic recognitions, or recently non-recognitions, have proved an issue in France (see previous issues of *The Square*). An initiative from five Grand Lodges in the United Grand Lodges of Germany sought to encourage a wider inclusion of regular French brothers in what remained in the aftermath of the GLNF debate. The German brothers were obliged to form an umbrella organisation as the only way to avoid exclusion of the vast majority of brothers from European Freemasonry. That experience led them to provide encouragement to the French to consider doing likewise.

After extensive discussion both between Grand Lodges and Brethren, four of them got together and on 10 June signed a treaty which formed the **Confédération Maçonnique de France (CMdF)**. The participating Grand Lodges are the Grande Loge de France (GLdF), Grande Loge Traditionnelle et Symbolique Opéra (GLTSO), Grande Loge de l'Alliance Maçonnique Française (GLAMF), and Grande Loge Indépendante de France (GLIF). The treaty includes various principles that we will all recognize.

- Invocation of the Great Architect of the Universe
- Exclusive sovereignty over the symbolic Degrees
(for us the three Craft degrees)
- Independence from any Masonic structure of the Higher Degrees
- No female presence during ritual workings
- Prohibition of political or religious discussions
- The progressive and spiritual character of the Masonic approach

Once the necessary formalities and so on have been completed it is surely the intent of the original five Grand Lodges who met first in Basel (and were later joined by the Grand East of the Netherlands) and the CMdF to exchange mutual recognition. When that

occurs many observers will be delighted to have, for the first time in over a century, a majority of French brothers within the fold of recognised Freemasonry. It is worth exploring some of the background behind the situation in Germany after World War II, to gain some appreciation of the German perspective on the role of Freemasonry and recognition. In 1948 they formed a United Grand Lodge of Germany, comprising over 150 lodges. There was one Berlin Grand Lodge that did not join, whose lodges worked the Swedish Rite. Talks continued and in 1951 an agreement was reached for recognition. In 1952 the United Grand Lodge of Germany was recognised. It is important to note the plural in Grand Lodges because each Grand Lodge would continue to govern its own internal affairs while the United Grand Lodges of Germany would look after external matters and general policy. At this time they created the *Logen Rats* (Magna Charta defining the role of the new body).

In 1970 they had an amended Magna Carta, and were joined by the Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany and the American Grand Lodge of the Pacific. These Lodges were specifically formed for the benefit of the NATO member states, and were based in Bonn, the then West Germany. And with this step they were permitted to be recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England. The 1970s also saw the formation of the European Masonic community. One might say that the 1970s were a time of great change and American-Canadian Grand Lodges was the final piece in the jigsaw puzzle. The process was not without its problems, and it was not without its pains and struggles. That was evident when I was elected to the office of Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Pacific in 1978. I was elected by the Grand Temple, despite a heartfelt address on this subject by the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, that there are similarities between their situation in Germany half a century ago and that in France today. I was elected to the office of Grand Master, not from having an umbrella organisation to facilitate the process, but from understanding that it was crucial to an understanding of the route suggested by those five European Grand Lodges that issued their

At the recent conference of European Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries there was also, I have been told, an opinion expressed by the two Grand Masters of UGLE, Peter Lowndes, that 'although he was speaking hypothetically, UGLE could recognize two Grand Lodges in the same territory, even if these two Grand Lodges were not in amity with each other' (these are the words noted down by one of those present and hence may not be word-perfect but certainly carry the gist of it). It is greatly

encouraging to discover that such lateral thinking (when compared with the old style of the winner takes all and the loser gets excommunicated and consigned to purgatory) is taking place, because a more detailed exploration of such possibilities may open the door to a resolution of many of the outstanding and intractable recognition problems in Europe. These are surely steps to be applauded by all of us.

It is interesting to reflect that among those Grand Lodges attending, and having enough others considering them as being regular, were two from Italy, two from Greece and five (yes, five) from France. The five from France were the four of the Confederation and the GLNFI A decade ago such a presence would have been almost inconceivable but the acknowledgement that Freemasonry in Europe can no longer be considered as the old monolithic structure it used to be.

Whether one is a brother watching these goings-on from inside or an outsider looking in, there are questions that come to mind about the values of the Supreme Council of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America that are being applied. I am aware that just as in national politics so Masonic lodges are often divided by party affiliation and that was what made the decision by the Supreme Council of the US Southern Jurisdiction feel such a good example. Clearly they must have felt there was a need to bring together the members of the Southern PHA (Prince Hall) Supreme Council that to be recognised by them and should not be seen as being divided by party affiliation. The Rite community. The growing interest in such matters, across the world, would seem not only to be good for Freemasonry in general but also a means to bring together members of regular lodges into the broader masonic community. We will have demonstrated our true Masonic values in the next few years.

Brutus:
There is a tide in the affairs of men.
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

Iulius Caesar, Act 4, Scene 3

Left and below: The seals and signatures on the Treaty which formed the Confédération Macaronique de France

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