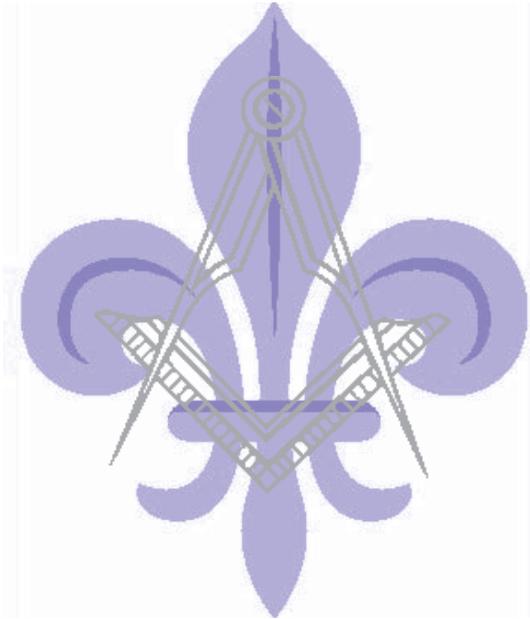


The  
Miracle  
of  
1913



by  
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# THE MIRACLE OF 1793

by Nat Granstein

This is the story of a small grand lodge not quite 80 years of age. Its creation was the result of the determination of a man of exceptional integrity whose desire to reestablish regular freemasonry in France was limitless. His name was Edouard de Ribaucourt.

No one at the time could possibly conceive that what he wrought, would have such a great impact on the future of the Craft toward its perpetuation in France, beyond its borders and that it would in a small degree at least, assist in the preservation of democratic government and on occasion even influence its introduction.

To comprehend what the French National Grand Lodge accomplished in such a short time, requires an explanation of the circumstances surrounding its, own birth. The reasons were manifold but primarily it was a question of regularity and the belief in the Supreme Being.

He who professes a belief in nothing is to be pitied, for he walks through life without a goal, without sincere happiness. His laughter is hollow and his sorrow false. He contributes nothing, receives nothing and he goes to his grave as if he had never existed.

The history of the Grand Orient of France was like that of the country, animated and eventful. This grand lodge was constituted May 24, 1773 and after the Revolution of 1789, it merged with the National Grand Lodge and became the major grand lodge in the country.

Contrary to the fable which was accepted as fact for a very long period, the Revolution of 1789 was not instigated nor supported by freemasons. On the contrary, it was responsible for its almost total disappearance. Hundreds of masons were guillotined and many fled to exile. It was only by the courage and fidelity of a handful of masons which prevented the whole Order from becoming completely eliminated.

The members of the Swiss Guard were members of the lodge William Tell that disappeared with the total massacre of the Swiss when they heroically defended the Royal family. There were many similar cases until the end of the Terror.

Lodges were reopened but freemasonry took on a new philosophy. There ensued a new masonic mentality in the Grand Orient of France. It acquired liberal ideas, then Republican and finally socialistic. It is undeniable that the lodges played a large role in fermenting the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

The late Brother Jean Baylot, Prefect of Police of Paris and Resident General of the French zone of occupation where he reactivated Germany freemasonry, authored a book which he titled "The Substituted Road" which referred to the deviation French freemasonry followed during that period.

The substitution stigmatized by Jean Baylot was in effect that of one road for another. In this respect, it is the substitution of the initial authentic masonic road by one radically and essentially political.

Politics is an art of governing, the search for the best form of government. It is in this sense that Aristotle defined man as a political animal, a being living in society.

This, however, is not the role or goal of freemasonry. The enormous error of French freemasonry in the nineteenth century was not to recognize this analysis.

The alteration was extremely serious. It was a blow to the fundamentals of the Order. From 1723, the Constitutions of Anderson, in article VI, had put on guard the future generations of Freemasons against the corruption of principles, degradation after degradation which could only precipitate the decay of the fraternity.

In 1877, the Grand Orient made its historical decision to erase from its Constitutions the name of the Grand Architect of the Universe, logically ending the anticlerical war they had waged for such a long time.

The Grand Lodge of England reacted in consequence. They withdrew recognition from the Grand Orient which had disowned the first principle of the Craft. The act had been a conscious one, deliberate and with full knowledge that they had placed themselves in a -position of banishment.

They were no longer a masonic body. Other regular grand lodges followed the example of London. The Grand Orient protested this English excommunication, but nothing could be more false, they had excommunicated themselves. Instead of endeavoring to restore their regularity, they persisted in political and fanatical anti-clericalism on the Substituted Road. In a number of their grand assemblies, the same slogan reappeared, "We are the antichurch".

In 1894, the Supreme Council of France seeing its country masonically isolated from the rest of the world founded the Grand Lodge of France and in 1895 gave it independence to confer the first three symbolic degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Naturally, the members of this new grand lodge remained members of the Grand Orient from whence they came and became dual members which was authorized, encouraged and inter-visitation was and is still considered proper. The two grand lodges were separated only by the administration of each.

The Grand lodge of England was not duped by this attempt at prestidigitation. They insisted on complete observance of the principles, tenets and practice of regular freemasonry. This the Grand Lodge of France nor its members were prepared to accept.

The holy columns which supported the Temple were broken and lay sprawling on the ground. There was no longer freemasonry in France.

This was the situation on the eve of that earth-shattering day when Edouard de Ribaucourt and his fellow pioneers were about to embark on the adventurous road of regularity.

This remarkable brother was born in 1865 of French parents in Switzerland. He was initiated in a lodge of the Grand Orient but he became more and more distressed with the attitude of that grand lodge regarding its position concerning the belief in the Grand Architect of the Universe.

The culminating point of his dismay, which changed to disgust, came after he had attended a conference in a lodge whose subject was "The So Called God". He then understood, without too much difficulty, that this grand lodge practiced pseudo-masonry.

Supported by a group of brothers, who like himself, desired to find once again traditional freemasonry, he requested permission from the Grand Lodge

of Helvetia (Switzerland) to reactivate the lodge, Centre des Amis which had closed during the Revolution of 1789 and now lay dormant in Geneva. They were accorded a warrant permitting them to work in France. Always respecting legality, they presented a request to the Grand Orient for permission to work with an open bible on the altar. They received a brutal but logical refusal. Not because of the open bible request but a grand lodge could not accept a lodge under a foreign Obedience to work on its territory.

In 1891, after indeterminate negotiations, an accord was finally reached whereby the lodge would have an autonomous status under the Grand Orient and its members would be permitted to work to the glory of the Grand Architect of the Universe.

There followed a period when visitors attending the meetings of the lodge would vocally scoff at the ceremonies with an open bible on the altar and on one occasion, the President of the ruling council of the Grand Lodge, in open assembly, complained that God had been flung right into his face.

All of this was proof of the impossibility to return to regularity under the Grand Orient. The solution could only lie in creating a new Grand Lodge.

Lord Ampthill, Pro-Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England attended the installation meeting of the lodge, La France, whose members were all French nationality residing in London. At the banquet following the meeting, he proposed a toast... "My brothers, I am the son of an Ambassador, son of a man whose profession was to give birth and encourage friendly contact between our country and foreign nations. These traditions are stronger than me. This is why I am happy to be amongst you, citizens of a foreign country. Also why nothing is more pleasant to me than to encourage amicable relations between my country and others.

Your Worshipful Master when he wrote to me stated that he knew I loved France. He was correct. I love France and the French. My Norman blood that I have, has conserved through the ages, the great sympathy I have for your country.

But alas, why is freemasonry in France so different than freemasonry in England? This saddens me. This difference adds nothing to the Entente Cordial, which exists between France and England. Even though we are friends and neighbors we cannot meet as Freemasons. There does not exist friendly relations between the Grand Lodge of England and that of France which we enjoy with grand lodges in other nations.

What a pity! And is it not deplorable? You know the reasons and I ask you, is there nothing to be done? Your particular mission perhaps is to remedy this sad affair.

There must be in France some Freemasons who profess the same masonic faith as ours and who desire to maintain Masonry in the goals that we limit our noble science.

If these brothers would assemble and form a group and constitute a new grand lodge with which it would be possible to restore productive friendship which would unite our grand lodges, what a splendid event that would be. We could then offer new life, and strength to universal freemasonry..."

Edouard de Ribaucourt read this speech in the "Freemason" magazine and wrote to the Pro-Grand Master who replied in June 1912 that there could only

be Franco-Anglo fraternal relations with a French grand lodge duly constituted.

Ribaucourt then wrote to his friend Dr. Roerich, head of the Rectified Rite, a Swiss, but also an English Grand lodge officer who enjoyed close relations with Amphill.

The Frenchman communicated with Roerich week after week informing him of the urgency to influence England in his request for an independent grand lodge. Although Roerich was seriously ill, he sent letter after letter to Lord Amphill, who took the affair in hand. He had the authority because the Grand Master, the Duke of Connaught having been named Governor of Canada, in his absence the Pro-Grand Master possessed all the power. He acceded to the desires of the French that it was an urgent affair and informed Ribaucourt of his decision to accept the petitioners' request to become a grand lodge and assured him of recognition from the Grand Lodge of England.

November 5, 1913, the historic step was taken. A handful of men constituted a grand lodge and it represented France in universal freemasonry. Its name was the Grande Loge Nationale Française Indépendante et Régulière for France and the French colonies and in the name of the Grand Architect of the Universe. The Substituted Road was closed.

Another lodge joined Centre des Amis. It was the Loge Anglaise n° 204 at Bordeaux. It had been founded in 1723 by English military. It was the most ancient of all lodges in France and it became number 2 in the register of the Grande Loge Nationale Française.

The year 1913 can be considered to French freemasonry as the most important date after that of universal freemasonry in 1717.

November 20, 1913, Lord Amphill wrote to Grand Master Edouard de Ribaucourt... "We have the authority to act in the name of our Grand Master, the Duke of Connaught, who as you know is actually, the Governor of Canada and in the name of his Royal Highness, we want to immediately assure you that the Grande Loge Nationale Indépendante et Régulière is recognized by the Grand Lodge of England as a sovereign grand lodge with whom we desire to establish fraternal relations.

We can assure you in all confidence that the renewal of friendly relations with a certain number of French Freemasons will give a great deal of satisfaction to our Grand Master and a sincere joy to all English masons who have desired for such a long time to renew masonic relations with the citizens of the great Nation of France.

Thus there will be a new tie between our two nations, a new knot of friendship and mutual interest which will not become untied by those inevitable differences of religious or political opinions which divide humanity and our association will be rendered sacred by our common faith in the Grand Architect of the Universe".

The Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, the Duke of Connaught, also sent a letter to the Grand Master of the new grand lodge... "It is with profound satisfaction that I am able to mark our Centenary of the Union of Grand Lodge of England in 1813 with a happy sign which augurs well the future of the Craft in France. I am certain this will result in a veritable celebration throughout the Order.

A corps of Freemasons of France placed before a formal interdiction by the Grand Orient to work in the name of the Grand Architect of the Universe were

resolved to be faithful to their masonic engagements to maintain the true principles and doctrines of the Order. They have united several lodges into the Grand Loge Nationale Independante et Régulière for France and the French colonies.

This new grand lodge has requested recognition from the Grand Lodge of England and having received assurance that it will adhere to the principles of freemasonry which we hold to be fundamental and essential, I have given, with joy, my assent to the establishment of fraternal relations with an exchange of Representatives”.

The original Rite practiced by the lodges forming the new grand lodge was the Rectified Scottish Rite or simply Rectified Rite and it was derived from the Strict Observance. Its composition is felt in its extremely complex history. The first three degrees are under the grand lodge but it is also composed of three higher degrees, Scottish Master of Saint Andrew, Novice Squire, and Charitable Knight of the Holy City (C.B.C.S.). The last three are under a separate Body, the Grand Priory of Gaules, bound to the Grand Lodge by a treaty.

The Rite is essentially Christian. The masonic obligation is taken on the Gospel according to Saint John, it contains an engagement of fidelity to the Saint Christian religion and it is the baptismal name which is requested from the candidate at the same time as his name. At the same time the Masonic Rule drawn up by J. B. Willermoz, the father of the Rectified Rite, underlines his character in these terms

“Bow before the Verbe incarnate and bless Providence who gave you birth among Christians. Profess everywhere the divine religion of Christ and never blush that you belong to him. The Gospel is the base of our obligations. If you do not believe in him, you will cease to be a Mason”. The Christian character accentuates with each higher degree and the supreme grade has a dinner following the meeting which is a reminder of the Last Supper with a recitation of the Dominical Oration.

Traditionally, the Rectified Rite has a logical consequence in the exclusion of masons of other religions, not for racial reasons, but for the unique motive of the terms of the obligation. Very few Jewish masons have endeavored to join a lodge using this Rite.

The Rectified Rite is practiced in France, Scandinavia, Germany and in Switzerland. It is unknown in Anglo-Saxon freemasonry.

The Grande Loge Nationale Independante et Règulière was off and running. Then destiny stepped in and stopped it in its tracks. Sarajevo and the assassination of the Archduke François-Ferdinand, the Crown Prince of Austria, June 28, 1914.

This was a period when every one seemed to hate everyone else. Russia against Austria because of the Balkans, France against Germany because of Alsace-Lorraine, Germany against England because of the Colonies, England against Germany because of its naval rearmament, Italy against Austria because of the irredenta provinces and Austria against the Serbs because of the Slavs in the South.

The 28th of July, Austria declared war against Serbia, August 1st, Germany against Russia, August 3rd, Germany against France, the 4th England entered

the war; the 5th Austria against Russia; the 6th, - Serbia against Germany; the 12th England and France against Austria; the 20th Germany entered Brussels; the 22nd Austria declared war against Belgium; the 1st of November Russia against Turkey, the 2nd Serbia against Turkey. England and France against Turkey; Germany and Austria against Portugal; Germany, Austria and Turkey against Romania and finally in 1917 the United States entered the war against Germany and Austria.

When we consider this situation, it can be understood why the new grand lodge's efforts were halted. But it was only postponed for a later day. Regular freemasonry had returned to France to stay.

In 1914, when war was declared, the Entente Cordiale played an exceptional part in the cooperation between France and England. This was prepared and executed by King Edward the Seventh, a francophile of the first order. This Mason was an exceptional diplomat and unofficial ambassador. He died in 1910 too soon to see his efforts crowned.

When we consider that without the Entente Cordiale, which played such an important part in the cooperation between France and England the war would have been a fatal blow against the young grand lodge.

From 1914 British, Canadian, Australian and in 1917 American military units arrived in France and the masons amongst them found a regular masonic Obedience waiting to receive them. The grand lodges to whom these military units were attached were far from France and the new grand lodge served as a unifying force enabling them to meet when circumstances permitted. Fraternal friendships were made and French regular masonry became the cement which made it possible to assemble the stones. At the same time it rendered it possible for the French grand lodge to save itself. An example shows at what point this double necessity became vital. In 1916, the Grand Lodge of Ireland had not yet the time to formally recognize the Grande Loge Nationale when an Irish military lodge consisting of members of the Irish Red Cross, was constituted at Le Havre a major port on the western part of the country. Administratively it was impossible to request consecration from the French Obedience not yet recognized by Dublin to obtain a charter. Agreement was reached between the two Grand Lodges and in February, 1917, the Provincial Grand Master, Charles Barrois installed the first -Worshipful Master of the lodge. The name of the lodge was later changed to Godefroy de Bouillon, the hero of the first crusade. It is listed as n° 6 in our register.

A group of English masons residing in France constituted St-George Lodge n° 3. This lodge has remained active to this day. The 23rd of February 1918, Britannic n° 9 and Fidelity Lodge n° 10 were consecrated.

The Armistice was signed at 11 a.m., November 11, 1918 and a month later Edouard de Ribaucourt Grand Master wrote his letter of resignation.

His task had been equal to Hercules. To continue would have been beyond human force. He therefore left the future to Charles Barrois who had been Provincial Grand Master during the war.

The new Grand Master served from 1919 to 1929. He was an architect by profession, a very religious person, and a bit severe. He directed the Obedience with rigor; he established the grand lodge's benevolent association and a lodge of research.

In spite of the efforts of the first Grand Masters, there remained mistrust amongst regular grand lodges throughout the world of the new French grand lodge. A half a century of anti-clericalism gave rise to universal scorn and the policy of antichurch campaigns set six millions masons against French freemasonry.

France's sincere friends suffered from this nondiscrimination between the good and the bad. In 1928, Lord Amphilhill decided to go against the current in a spectacular manner.

All the eminent English masons accompanied him to attend the annual installation of the Worshipful Master of lodge Fidelity n° 10. They were so numerous that it was necessary to rent a dance hall to hold the meeting.

The successor to Charles Barrois was H. de Mondehare, who ascended to the Grand Mastership in 1929. He had known only English freemasonry and his term in office was a noble one. He founded Phoenix lodge n° 30 which is today a bilingual lodge of research.

Gabriel Jollois, who had been one of the original companions of de Ribaucourt, became Grand Master at the death of his predecessor in 1933 and his term in office was one of implantation and consolidation.

Marcel Vivrel was elected Grand Master in 1938 and it was he who had the dubious honor of presiding over the Grand Lodge during the approaching inhuman hostilities.

The year 1939 heralded the Nazi Anschluss, occupation of Czechoslovakia, the invasion of Poland and World War II had begun.

The occupation of France like in other countries was both brutal and devastating. It was a vivid realistic tale of concentration camps and a blot of collaboration. Freemasonry was outlawed and the law of August 3, 1940 against it, proclaimed by the Vichy government of Marshal Pétain, was brought to bear on the Craft and its members.

The names, addresses, professions, and dates of their degree work were published in the Official Journal and even names of those deceased were on the lists. A propaganda film was produced portraying masons as devil worshipers with falsified paraphernalia ridiculing the Craft. A masonic exposition with a guided' tour was arranged to explain to the ignorant the dangers of belonging to an organization consisting of anti-Christ, Jews and communists.

It was anti-masonry of the worst sort and a typical specialty of Goebbels and his teachings.

During this atrocious period, masons were deported, shot, tortured, the lodges closed and despoiled, the equipment stolen and destroyed, and all the archives confiscated. Many of those responsible for these horrors were members of the French Militia who worked in close association with the Gestapo.

Brother Auguste Louis Derosière, future Grand Master was thrown into prison and barely escaped the firing squad. He had been furnishing London with valuable information.

World War II had ended. The Nazi's had surrendered unconditionally and the survivors of deportation began trickling home. The Masons amongst them joined their fortunate brothers who escaped the horrors of the camps and prisons and began to resume masonic activities.

Lodge rooms and offices of the Grand Loge Nationale Française had long disappeared but the records, saved and hidden by courageous dedicated Arquest Louis Derosière were uncovered and brought forth to enable those survivors to reassemble the brothers therein named. Derosière became Grand Master in 1971 and served masonry in that post until his death in 1980.

Without fixed lodging, the meetings were held in any tiled room, which could be found. France was still in a state of shock and remained an undernourished, unheated country. Time was required to recuperate from its bleeding and destruction.

The generous offer by the widow of an English brother W. L. Smythe, to have the use of her mansion in Neuilly a suburb of Paris was quickly accepted and the Grande Loge Nationale Française was almost properly housed.

Obtaining reparations from the Germans and with contributions from the brethren, a new grand temple was contemplated.

Designs were drawn for its construction and in 1964 the mansion was demolished, the cornerstone was laid and temporary barracks were used for lodges for a period of more than 3 years while the permanent house as building. During the whole period the brothers met in their respective lodges both in summer and winter, with lack of sufficient heat and freezing air pouring through the knotholes in the unsteady walls.

Finally, June 7, 1967, during the raging 6 days war in the Middle East and in the presence of Brother General Lyman Lymnetzer, Chief of Staff of the United States Military Forces and many of the leaders of the masonic world, doors of the new Grand. Lodge, were thrown open to permit future occupants to perpetuate the Craft

Twenty-five years later not even a handful of brothers remember any of the trials and tribulations of the period. All accept what they see and use as having always existed. And this is perfectly normal. One does not think of what one has never lived.

In 1948, The Grande Loge Nationale Indépendante et Régulière became the Grand Loge Nationale Française. The change was indicated by the role now played by the French grand lodge among the other regular grand lodges on the world scene.

The same situation as during and after World War I appeared for the good of the Craft. NATO was organized and had its headquarters in Paris, housing most of the Allied military headquarters. Hundreds of thousands of military personnel were living and working in all parts of France. Thousands of Freemasons desired to affiliate and practice freemasonry in recognized lodges. Thirty lodges were consecrated between 1946 and 1965, date when the NATO organization departed France for Belgium and Holland. These lodges were located in every corner of France and its members consisted of practically every nationality of Europe but mostly Americans and English.

Candidates thronged to the lodges desiring to be initiated into freemasonry. Some lodges met four times a month to perform the rituals of California, Texas, New York, Nova Scotia, and the English ritual of Emulation. With the continuous rotation of the military, Worshipful Masters were elected and succeeded in very short periods but the rituals were performed from memory and in a perfect

fashion. More than eight thousand masons were made under the Grande Loge Nationale Française. They returned to their native lands, many to become leaders in the masonic fraternity and more than two thousand have retained membership in the lodges whence they came.

A magnificent brother, Ernest Van Hecke became Grand Master of the Grand Loge Nationale Française. He arrived at a time when an incident of importance occurred endangering the very existence of the Obedience.

Ernest Van Hecke was born in Flanders in Belgium and served in the Belgium army in World War II. He was wounded several times and decorated for his bravery. With dual citizenship he moved to France and became Provincial Grand Master of the: Province of Flanders. When the unpleasant situation with Grand Master Pierre, Cheret arose for which he was impeached, Van Hecke was chosen to replace him and the choice must have been made in heaven. He was an extraordinary simple man with the Wisdom of Solomon. His whole being was dedicated to being friendly, doing good for someone and in maintaining the purity of regular freemasonry. He was without material ambition and for a living had a small shop wherein he sold nylon thread and fishing equipment. His lodgings for himself, his wife and daughter consisted of a third floor walk up flat. His face was lighted with an impish smile and his voice was calm and soft. He was Grand Master for thirteen years.

Under the Grand Mastership of this wonderful mason, regular freemasonry flourished in France and with the departure of the military members out of the country, the transfer to the many thousands of Frenchmen was assured under his guidance.

He initiated the annual trip to the Conference of Grand Masters of North America to establish contact with the leaders of the masonic world and assure them of the regularity of his grand lodge. Thirty-six years later, this annual voyage has been maintained.

In 1959, ten grand lodges yet withheld recognition from the Grande Loge Nationale Française but in 1961, A.J. Lewis, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana visited Paris and informed Van Hecke that his grand lodge henceforth would enjoy fraternal relations with that of France. Thus the last of those hesitating entered the fold and the Grande Loge Nationale Française became universally known as the recognized regular grand lodge in France. Brother Andrt Coquard, a native of Paris and a grand lodge officer, had an office in Casablanca, Morocco, where he was now residing. Feeling abandoned in his quest to practice regular freemasonry, he contacted several English brothers in Gibraltar and Tangiers and consulted as to what they could do to ameliorate the situation. They decided to consecrate a lodge in Morocco. After finding a place to meet in the basement banquet room of the Comedie restaurant, named after the Comedie theater opposite it, in Casablanca, they consecrated Concorde n°42 under the Grande Loge Nationale Française.

Morocco had been a French protectorate since 1912 and the United States and its citizens enjoyed extraterritorial rights subjecting them only to their own laws. This was the situation when Coquard and his brothers founded the first regular lodge in Moroccan history. The date was February 21, 1953.

The cold war had begun which resulted in the United States and France agreeing that air bases should be built for American long-range aircraft. Hundreds of American construction workers arrived amongst whom were many masons desiring to pursue the practice of the Craft. The lodge room at the Comedie restaurant becoming too small, the Commander of Nouasseur air base, a member of the organization furnished the brethren with a Quonset but for their use.

From this lodge, three others were constituted, one at the naval base at Port-Lyautey, and the others at air bases of Sid! Slimane and Ben Guerir. The District Grand Lodge of Morocco was created by the grand lodge in 1957 with Andrd Coquard as District Grand Master.

The Moroccans founded the Istiglal party and uprisings became the daily fare. Attacks were made against the French with planted bombs; assassinations and it became increasingly more difficult to travel the only route through the crab section of the city to arrive at the air base for meetings. Hundreds of stone throwing youths bombarded the vehicles attempting to pass. Several of the brothers were injured by flying glass and projectiles.

The French government exiled the Sultan which worsened the situation. When conditions became too explosive a hasty retreat was made with his return from Madagascar. Independence was proclaimed and the Sultan announced himself as King Mohammed V.

After the death of his father, King Hassan II an excellent friend of the United States ascended the throne but, unfortunately for the Craft, he interdicted all organizations which had not been authorized by his government.

Freemasonry forbidden with all other societies remained active on the air bases. So much so, that an extraordinary number of masons were being made during eight scheduled monthly meetings. In 1963, the bases were transferred to the Moroccan government and the lodges in that country were declared dormant.

Many Iranian nationals lived in France and desired to become Freemasons. The Grande Loge Nationale Française accepted them. Upon their return to Iran they solicited the French to create a District Grand Lodge which would eventually be constituted an independent grand body. After creating nine lodges and visits there to observe the work they were considered sufficiently prepared. Accordingly, a District Grand Lodge was constituted in 1959 with Brother Issa Malek, Senator and Doctor of Medicine, as the first District Grand Master.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland and Germany also chartered a lodge in Teheran and when it was assumed that all the lodges were considered sufficiently imbued with the beliefs and practices of the Craft, they were consecrated into the Grand Lodge of Iran under the auspices of the Grande Loge Nationale Française, the Grand Lodge of Scotland and the United Grand Lodge of Germany.

The Commission on Information of Recognition at the Conference of Grand Masters of North America in February 1970 reported that pursuant to the joint efforts of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Nationale Grand Lodge of France, the United Grand Lodge of Germany and their respective Grand Masters, the Grand Lodge of Iran was instituted on March 1, 1969 with impressive ceremonies. The Three Grand Masters, Brother Major Sir Ronald Orr Ewing of Scotland,

Brother Ernest Van Hecke Grand Master of the Grande Loge Nationale Française and Brother Werner Romer, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Germany, were all present and participated in the ceremonies of consecration, dedication and the installation of the new Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother J. Sharif Emani, who was President of the Iranian Senate.

This new grand lodge constituted regularly, practicing freemasonry in the manner as prescribed by the fathers was unfortunately doomed. Destiny brought forth a religious tyrant to destroy it. That grand lodge is now demolished, its temples sacked, its records burned, a prominent member Prime Minister Hoveda executed, the others exiled and scattered throughout the world.

In 1931, King Alfonso XIII abdicated the throne of Spain and a Republic was proclaimed resulting in a temporary reactivation of freemasonry which of course terminated with Francisco Franco becoming head of state. During the brief period of the Republic, freemasonry continued with two or three grand lodges, two or three: Supreme Councils, but the principles of many of the members were sound and many even followed the general regular rules of the Craft.

Then the dreaded day in history arrived and became a sad story of ravage and ruin. Of masons killed, starved, or left to rot in prison, their temples wrecked and left unfit for use. Some faced firing squads, others vanished into concentration camps. A Spanish Grand Lodge in exile was founded in Mexico, others went to join the Grand Orient in Paris and the law of 202 for the Repression of Communism and Freemasonry was passed and put into force.

World War II was over and Stalinism raised its hideous totalitarian head and stretched out its tentacles to envelope and enslave the free world. The United States negotiated for and obtained the right to construct air bases in Spain as they had done in Morocco.

To practice freemasonry was, of course, forbidden to the many hundreds of construction workers and military personnel arriving in Spain, however, a Square and Compass Club was formed on the base of Torrejon air base at the outskirts of Madrid. The members of it requested permission to send candidates for initiation in lodges situated in Morocco. Permission was granted by the Grande Loge Nationale Française and candidates began flying down in great numbers, so many, in fact that the burden on the lodges became almost insupportable. There were now more petitioners arriving than from their own area. It was necessary to consecrate lodges on Spanish territory.

The Commanding Office of the air base near Seville was a dedicated brother who agreed to furnish the temple for the future lodge and it was consecrated October 29, 1960. George Washington n° 60 was its name. Liberty n° 70 was born. Its consecration took place in Biarritz, France just across the frontier. It moved to Torrejon Air Base. Pyrenees n° 77 came next in Zaragoza. Two lodges which had become dormant in Morocco were reopened in Spain. John J. Kestly n° 69 moved to Rota Naval Base and Arthur T. Weed lodge n° 59 to the center of Madrid. All remain open to this day.

The situation of freemasonry even on military bases in Spain was different than that in Morocco. It became dangerous for all those involved.

Nevertheless, the lodges worked to capacity. Weekly meetings produced ceremonies which were the envy of visitors. Influential brothers assisted in

liberating imprisoned Spanish masons and supplied needed clothing 'and foodstuffs to needy children of Protestant orphanages.

On Saturday, October 29, 1960, George' Washington Lodge n° 60 comprising 32 founder members was formed and consecrated. At the dinner following the meeting, the Installing Master proposed a toast: "This is a wonderful thing we have accomplished for the Craft in general. Many years will pass; other lodges will be formed, created, and consecrated. No doubt this lodge will eventually disappear. The Masonic world may never know what we have done, what we have created, what magnificent purpose our actions may perpetuate. Some day, regular lodges practicing regular freemasonry will spring up over the and in this country where its practice is illegal. It matters not whether we shall slip into oblivion. What is important is what we have initiated an irreversible process for the good of Masonry, for the good of our successors, and for the good of Spain, and I am convinced the future will prove it to have benefited mankind".

1976 and a new day was at hand, the end of an era, the end of a system, the end of a dictator. It was the beginning of a monarchy and the start of the democratic process. Spain became a multi-religion, multi party state. The end was in sight for law 202. Masonry would soon have the right to assemble in temples all over the land.

The Grande Loge Nationale Française received Spaniards from the Barcelona area and formed lodges for them under the Provincial Grand Lodge of Occitanie in Toulouse, near the Spanish border. Two years later the District Grand Lodge of Spain was constituted and a grand lodge was planned. As soon as article 22 of the new Spanish Constitution permitting freedom of associations to assemble was passed by the Spanish Cortes, the lodges moved to Barcelona and to Madrid.

Several masons returned to Spain from exile, from Mexico and the Grand Orient of France. Each desired to form their peculiar kind of freemasonry in competition with the new District Grand Lodge of Spain. Several European grand lodges also attempted to usurp the territory for themselves and threatened to form their own Districts. All of this was reminiscent of the XVIII Century when each country invented new kinds of freemasonry containing mysticism and supposed legends of nonexistent origin.

The Grande Loge Nationale Française prevailed. It arbitrated and the results were successful. The opposition agreed to join the new grand lodge.

November 6, 1982, four hundred masons convened in the banquet room of the Hotel Castellana, Avenue Castellana in Madrid, Spain and the Grand Lodge of Spain was constituted with Most Worshipful Jean Mons as Installing Master. Brother Luis Salat-Gusils became its first Grand Master. This grand lodge now has lodges in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Malaga, the Palma de Majorca and Zaragoza. Most of the regular grand lodges of universal freemasonry have established fraternal relations with it.

The Grande Loge Nationale Française refused to recognize the Grand Orient of Belgium. Almost half of its members met in Liege rendering it convenient to maintain relations with their friends in lodges of the Grand Lodge of France and the Grand Orient just across the border.

At the urging and insistence of the regular French Body, the Belgian brothers desiring to practice regularly, created the Grand Lodge of Belgium which was recognized by most of the world's grand lodges.

This should have been the happy ending, however it was obvious the Belgian masons were continuing to surreptitiously cross the frontier to pursue their evil ways with visits to the irregular French lodges. Their conduct became flagrant. The Grand Lodge of England and those in the United States were increasingly concerned with the tendency of the Grand Lodge of Belgium to inch its way back to complete irregularity. Warnings were issued to no avail.

In 1978, the Commission for Recommendation for Foreign Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America issued a solemn injunction to the Grand Lodge of Belgium to halt its irregularity or lose its recognition by the grand lodges of the Conference.

March 14, 1979, Herman Buskens was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Belgium. His first official act consisted in sending a circular to his officers exhorting them to assist him in attacking the so called minority in his grand lodge who insisted on practicing freemasonry in a manner normal in other countries but inconsistent and incompatible with Belgium and its grand lodge.

Religious practice, Christian, or otherwise which is predetermined and restraining is incompatible with the Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of Belgium. The problem according to him was to resolve a way to practice masonry as the members of his grand lodge desired without conflicting with their own opinions and principles and at the same time to not lose recognition from the foreign grand lodges.

He insisted that his members were firmly attached to the principle of philosophical pluralism and religion which is the support of Belgian identity. Also that no conditions be posed to a candidate of a philosophical or religious nature. He persisted that the Grand Lodge of Belgium was open to any man, honest, upright and free who believes in anything which goes beyond his material interests and that he can satisfy the Symbol of the Great Architect of the Universe. Soon after, the Grande Loge Nationale Française and the Grand Lodge of England withdrew recognition from Belgium. The Grand Lodge of New-York, followed immediately.

Most Worshipful Brother Auguste Louis Derosière, hero of World War II who had escaped the Nazi firing squad, and savior of the grand lodge archives, had become Grand Master in 1971. His contact with Sir James Stubbs, Secretary of the Grand Lodge of England, relative to Belgium bore fruit. With the support of W. Brother Waggemans, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Belgium it was agreed that the brothers who desired to practice freemasonry in a regular manner; resign and constitute the Regular Grand Lodge of Belgium which would be recognized immediately by the Grande Loge Nationale Française and England. Thus was the Regular Grand Lodge of Belgium consecrated and recognized.

Lodges in Black Africa in the first half of the twentieth century, were composed of civil servants from lodges of the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France, which influenced the countries on that continent. Initiations were performed on

any freeborn native and once initiated they were influenced politically and commercially.

In all areas of its political and diplomatic action by France in Africa, freemasonry always played an important role for the simple reason that its presence has always been maintained there since its Colonial period and the cultural action of masonic lodges in the whole African empire was a predominate force. The lodges contributed to the formation of the elite which subsequently furnished the necessary executive and civil servants to those areas which eventually became independent. The unrecognized grand lodges continued to spread the inevitable political divisions assuring easier control of the independent entities.

President Charles de Gaulle offered independence to France's colonies with the opportunity to remain in a monetary and cultural community. Senegal, Mali, and Guinee negotiated a union but in 1960, Senegal withdrew and declared itself a Republic. Guinee decided not to accept the offer of being part of the Community and remained aloof under its President Sekou Tours who mismanaged his country's economy with his socialistic methods.

Charles Pidoux, Doctor of Medicine, Psychiatrist and Anthropologist had been initiated into freemasonry in Morocco in Concorde lodge n° 42. He accepted a position to head the psychiatric anthropology department under the United Nations with headquarters in Niamey, Niger. Whilst there, he met an old friend and brother Marcel Royat of Perservance Lodge n° 27 in Paris.

Marcel Rouyat was accompanied by an acquaintance, Dr. Doudou Gueye who requested the two Frenchmen to arrange his initiation in freemasonry but insisted that it had to be in a regular recognized lodge that he might be enabled to introduce it later in his home country, Senegal. Arrangements were made for him to be initiated in Paris and on his return to his native land; he influenced many friends to follow the same path in regular freemasonry instead of the irregular bodies using it for other purposes.

Leopold Sédar Senghor, President of Senegal was highly incensed against freemasonry after the attempted assassination, attributed to freemasons of his close friend, the President of neighboring Ivory Coast, Felix Houphouët-Boigny.

Brother Doudou Gueye, friend of both Presidents, convinced them a new kind of freemasonry existed, a regular one in the Grande Loge Nationale Française He arranged a meeting with Grand Master Ernest Van Hecke and the two Presidents. The 30th of May 1968: Brother Van Hecke with the assistance of 'Charles Pidoux consecrated in Dakar, Senegal, the first regular lodge of freemasons in Black Africa. After consecrating lodges in the Ivory Coast and Togo, the District Grand Lodge of Black Africa was constituted. Charles Pidoux was offered the appointment of District Grand Master but refused because he was white, considering it unfair to the blacks. He reasoned this would retard the future expansion and prosperity, of regular freemasonry in Africa. His decision was sagacious: '

In 1980, the District Grand Lodge of Black Africa became the District Grand Lodge of Senegal with Brother Armand Agbogba at its head. The official language of Senegal is French and the masonic work is performed in an excellent manner. The present President of the country, his Excellency Abdou Diouf met the officers

of the Grande Loge Nationale Française and indicated his desire to have an independent grand lodge in his nation. It will be constituted in the near future.

The Ivory Coast with its population of 10 million inhabitants became one of the wealthiest countries of Black Africa after its independence. The French language welded the 60 different ethnic tribes and agriculture was its principle source of revenue.

President Felix Houphouët-Boigny was elected President in 1960 and has remained in office ever since. Both he and his friend President Leopold Senghor of Senegal being extremely erudite poets and authors were elected to the French Academy, which consists of 29 members. A vacancy by death must occur before anyone can be elected to it by a majority vote. It was founded in 1615 by Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu for grammarians to control and refine the French language.

February 11, 1982, the District Grand Lodge of the Ivory Coast was constituted in Abidjan by Most Worshipful Jean Mons and the 18th of February 1989, the Grand Lodge was consecrated by the Deputy Grand Master André Roux who installed Brother Magloire Clotaire Coffie as Grand Master. Most Worshipful Brother Jean Mons was unable to attend due to an illness to which he succumbed four months later.

The change in policies of the Grand Lodge of France is to say, bewildering. Each change depended on the Grand Master in office. In 1959, Grand Master Richard Dupuy, decided to suspend administrative relations with the Grand Orient. From that date, he entered into serious negotiations with Ernest Van Hecke Grand Master of the Grande Loge Nationale Française toward merging the two grand lodges. Brother Van Hecke agreed to an amalgamation provided the Grand Lodge of France entered into regularity by adhering to the standards required by regular freemasonry.

The discussions endured until September 1964 when by a vote of 149 to 82, the Grand Lodge of France voted to reinstate its friendship with the Grand Orient and this evolved in a treaty of alliance between those two irregular grand lodges. Needless to say this eliminated any further discussion. As a result, almost 1.000 members of 36 lodges of the Grand Lodge of France quit in disgust and after regularization by taking their three obligations again, became members of the Grande Loge Nationale Française, the only recognized Grand Lodge in France. Thus the symbolic three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite became an additional ritual practiced in the regular grand lodge.

Until the critical date of 1894, when the Supreme Council of France consecrated the Grand Lodge of France, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite was represented as a pyramid of the thirty-three degrees, harmonious and coherent. The organism of the Rite was autocratic and its composition largely noble and a great number of the nobility lined the lodge rooms. The Supreme Council kept only those degrees from the fourth to the thirty-third and permitted the blue lodges to practice the first three degrees.

There are certain differences in the traditional degrees. On the aprons appear the letters M and B and the collars are boarded with red. The signs of the Scottish Rite are slightly different as are the steps of each degree. The ceremonies also have the ritual of the clapping of the hands with a Scottish

acclaim of “Houzzai! Houzzai! Houzzai! and like the Rectified Rite it uses the “chain of union”.

The Rite already existed in the XVIII Century. The lodges using it also have a penchant for conferences on any subject which can be associated to freemasonry and the imagination of the young masons assigned the task for its preparation usually runs rampant.

Irregular lodges existed in Gabon, another member of the French Community whose leaders chose to remain in their sphere of French culture. The country's president, Omar Bongo and his first vice-prime minister, Georges Rawiri had been initiated in a lodge of the Grand Orient of France. Reflecting on the question of masonic regularity and its position in the world, they decided to leave irregularity and request admission in a lodge in the Grande Loge Nationale Française Their request was examined and permission was granted for them to come to Paris and regularize their situation in the same manner as all those who had come before.

This was authorized by Grand Master Derosière who after several trips to Libreville consecrated the District Grand Lodge of Gabon in 1980.

Gabon is a relatively small country on the equator with immense riches of natural resources, oil, uranium, and ebony wood. Its population is less than a million inhabitants and its official language is French. There are more than 40 ethnic tribes and as many dialects. Its citizens are docile, non belligerent and very pro-western. The country is in a great measure politically stable. Doctor Albert Schweitzer founded his hospital at Lambarene in 1913 a year of plenty.

November 12, 1983, Jean Mons, Grand Master consecrated the Grand Lodge of Gabon and installed its grand lodge officers with the President of Gabon, Brother: Omar Bongo as Most Worshipful Grand Master. Brother Georges Rawiri was installed as Pro-Grand Master.

Most of the elite and rulers of the country are members of this grand lodge. The prime minister and practically all the members of his cabinet, the heads of education, customs, and the commanders of the military and police practice freemasonry in that newly created body.

Visits by qualified grand lodge officers of the Grande Loge Nationale Française were made to Gabon to view the work performed. All were impressed with what they had witnessed. The work in emulation ritual was worked with excellence and from memory.

Robert L. Dillard, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of the Commission on information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons of North America, at the invitation of Grand Master Jean Mons, attended the ceremonies as an observer. Brother Dillard reported a very cordial reception by the officers of the Grand Lodge of Gabon with impressive ceremonies of consecration and installation by Brother Mons and the other officers. There were more than 300 masons present.

Most Worshipful Brother Jean Mons replaced Auguste Louis Derosière in 1980 and his term of office continued for almost nine years. His life and career were filled with heroism and leadership. He was born in a small village in the central part of France. He became a school teacher and joined the government of Leon Blum in 1936. When France was occupied by the Nazi's he immediately

joined the Resistance movement endangering his life at every instant. After the Liberation of France by the Allies in 1944, he emerged from the shadows to be appointed Prefect of Police of Paris, then Resident General of Tunisia which was then a French Protectorate after which he became Secretary General of Defense. His last post in the service of his country was President of the Comptrollers Office.

His contribution to the Grande Loge Nationale Française and to regular freemasonry was the consecration of the Grand Lodges of Spain, Gabon and the tremendous increase in the number of lodges consecrated on French territory. His most important gift to freemasonry in France were his contacts in government which enabled him to obtain land in the center of Paris where upon to construct a new grand lodge building which is in the process of being erected and which will be ready for occupancy at the end of 1992.

The Country of Togo was originally a Germany colony becoming a Protectorate. After the defeat of Germany in the First World War, it was occupied by France and England, the first receiving a mandate for its administration. This politically unstable country has a population of three million inhabitants with French its official language. There are nine major ethnic groups and many dialects.

Brother Charles Pidoux was contacted by several Togolese while he was in Niamey. They requested the establishment of lodges in Lomé, Capital of Togo.

Brother Pidoux informed them of the necessity to first become masons and suggested Dakar, Senegal. Despite the distance involved, many Togolese were initiated in lodges of the District Grand Lodge of Senegal and subsequently lodges were consecrated in Lomé. In which the members worked admirably under the guidance of Brother E.K.K. Nathaniels.

The District Grand Lodge of Togo was consecrated in Lomé in 1983 by Grand Master Jean Mons. Emmanuel Kokou Kogtso Nathaniels was installed as District Grand Master.

The District now has 10 lodges with many of its members among the leaders of the government including the Prime Minister and several ministers in his cabinet. Recently the government has had many problems with its military forces but has managed to maintain democracy without the usual use of force.

The consecration of The Grand Lodge of Togo was scheduled for Saturday, January 4, 1992 in Paris but the turmoil and unrest among the military rendered impossible the absence of the brothers from Togo, resulting in a postponement of the ceremony.

Freemasons in the Congo, Volta, and Cameroon have asked for permission to establish lodges. These requests are under study.

The masonic history of Portugal is known to most masons. In no country have freemasons been more persecuted, both physically and mentally by government and church. But once freemasonry had been introduced neither decrees of state nor tortures of the Inquisition ever succeeded in completely suppressing the Craft and at no time did lodges cease to exist in more or less secrecy.

In 1869, two Grand Orients amalgamated and became the Grand Orient of Lusitania. With the exception of internal divergences, Portuguese freemasons operated without fear of further persecution until 1928 the year General Carmona

the only candidate was elected President. He conferred all powers to Antonio de Oliveira Salazar his Finance Minister who was promoted to Prime Minister and went several steps further in assuming dictatorial powers. He ruled Portugal with an iron hand sending the Portuguese freemasons into darkness and exile.

The Iberia peninsula was occupied by tribes of Iberias or Lusitanians before becoming a Roman province. The country of Vasco da Gama, the discoverer of the route to the Orient, was attached to Spain on several occasions until 1668 when Spain recognized the independence of Portugal.

Oliveira Salazar ruled without contestation or opposition. His politics and conduct were completely contradictory. He organized a fascist youth party to fight with Franco during the Spanish civil war and six thousand of them were killed in the battles. He made a concordat with the Vatican prohibiting divorce and in 1943 he abandoned neutrality in World War II according facilities to the Allies in the Islands of the Azores. In 1945, he declared a half a day of mourning at the death of Adolph Hitler but: became a member of NATO in 1950. Freemasonry remained outlawed.

In 1968, Salazar suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died in 1970. Freemasons emerged from their places of refuge, some returning from the Grand Orient in Paris and others from different grand orients elsewhere. The same circumstances ensued in Portugal as that in Spain. The Grand Orient reopened its doors on Lusitania Street; however, universal freemasonry now required complete regularity before according recognition. The Grand Orient of Portugal was in close association with the Grand Orient of France and in fraternal relations with no regular body in the world.

This was the situation when two brothers of the Grande Loge Nationale Française entered the scene. Marcel Laurent and Jean Charles Danier who traveled frequently to Portugal had close connections with men who were interested in becoming masons. Laurent spent as much time in Lisbon as in his native France. He was also contacted by several members of the Grand Orient of Lusitania who were determined to join a grand lodge in fraternal relations with the others.

The two brothers concerted their efforts and entered into discussion with the Sovereign Grand Committee of the Grand Loge Nationale Française which authorized the creation of lodges in Portugal provided men who were not masons traveled to Paris for initiation and those from irregular grand lodges to become regularized in the usual prescribed manner.

Three lodges were formed and constituted a District Grand Lodge by Most Worshipful Grand Master Andre Roux. After consulting with the Grand Lodge of England which had two lodges in Portugal, it was arranged that the Grand Lodge would be consecrated June 29, 1991.

The consecration took place at the Hotel Palacio in Estoril, Portugal as scheduled, after which Most Worshipful Brother Andre Roux installed Brother Fernando Paes Coelho Teixeira as first Grand Master.

Witnessing these historic events were the Grand Masters of the Grand Lodges of Hungary, Ivory Coast, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Greece and Brazil. The Grand Lodge of England sent an observer.

Brother Robert L. Dillard, Jr. animator and Secretary-Treasurer of the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America attended the consecration of the Grand Lodge of Portugal in Estoril. It was the second time he had been present at a consecration of a new grand lodge by the Grande Loge Nationale Française. He attested to the perfect Winner and regularity of the ceremonies performed. His presence encouraged the determination of the members to pursue the road of regularity in a manner to merit the esteem of universal masonry. To add to Brother Dillard's pleasure was the presence of 40 Apprentice Masons assuring the future of that new grand lodge.

Brother Dillard also had the privilege of having a televised audience with Mario Soares, President of Portugal who is a member of the Craft:

The Grande Loge Nationale Française established lodges in the Antilles and constituted a District of the Caribbean in 1986.

Most Worshipful Brother Andre Roux was elected Grand Master in December 1989. He accepted the responsibility of raising funds for the construction of the new grand lodge building, which will be ready for occupancy at the end of 1992. The task is gigantic but he is certain of success. He is a noted Notary and a Judge in children's courts. His work in reintegrating children in society has earned him the Legion of Honor from the hands of the President of France.

Was the decision to create lodges in Black Africa judicious? This is a question asked on numerous occasions. Was it good for the Craft, the masons on that Continent and in the countries involved? Those countries where hundreds of ethnic tribes exist with so many dialects, of political instability, overthrow of governments and assassinations? In face of these conditions, what was the correct decision?

The Grande Loge Nationale Française decided to conform to the principles of regular freemasonry and to imitate the standards established at its birth. During the first century there existed a tremendous disparity in social levels and only the nobility and the professional elite were able to become freemasons. Illiteracy was common and the uneducated and those suffering from poverty were not even aware that such a body existed.

In time, however, the masses produced offspring aspiring to higher levels of education, increasingly more available and became interested in the philosophy of freemasonry, and on occasion succeeded in becoming a part of it.

Such is and was the policy of the Grande Loge Nationale Française in introducing and spreading regular freemasonry throughout Black Africa. Its efforts were not directed toward any self-interested political or material goal. Its reasons were strictly beneficial for those masons it created. It also prevented the implantation of irregular bodies with their selfish motivations.

The efforts by the French National Grand Lodge to date have been crowned with success. But even if many of the governments involved are overthrown, assassinations occur or change in government by military force take place, success will have been assured if only one single nation remains democratically stable and if freemasonry is one of the contributing actors. This is the very basis of freemasonry. To endeavor to make one single good man better is our role and our assignment to aid humanity will have been reached.

In the first months of 1990, the editor of a major masonic publication in the United States published an article voicing his chagrin at the masonic situation in France. He was unhappy with it and berated the French to the point of castigation, particularly placing the onus on the French National Grand Lodge. He indicated categorically that lit was responsible for the divisions existing in freemasonry in that country.

The editor of the magazine and author of the article is either naive, ignorant of the facts or merely provocative to raise interest in his subject matter.

If divisions in freemasonry in France do exist, the only regular obedience in the country, the French National Grand Lodge is in no way responsible. As far as it is concerned there is no other regular recognized grand lodge in France. As for the Grand Orient, it is so far outlawed from the standards of the Craft that any further discussion of it would be futile.

The members of the Grand Loge of France could enter regularity if its leaders would proclaim loud and clear its adherence to the principles of freemasonry and then join the French National Grand Lodge. However, it has no intention of following this path.

Its members still visit lodges of the Grand Orient, become dual members with it, visit the Feminine grand lodge and the Droit Humain (a mixed lodge named Human Rights).

It remains a hybrid organization, not knowing exactly which direction to take. If it becomes regular by declaring unequivocally that a belief in God is the first essential requirement to become a freemason and to interdict its members from any association with the Grand Orient and other irregular grand lodges, it would lose more than fifty percent of its members.

The French National Grand Lodge has on numerous occasions offered to negotiate with the Grand Lodge of France but only on their acceptance of a professed belief in God, a required Holy Bible, not as a symbol, and to interdict categorically under penalty of exclusion, a complete severance of any contact with the Grand Orient and other irregular lodges. This has always been rejected. In 1965, when the thousand members of the Grand Lodge of France, unhappy with the irregular situation of it, resigned and joined the French National Grand Lodge, Jean Mons and André Roux, future Grand Masters were part of that group. Not one single member of the French National Grand Lodge has ever left for the purpose of joining the Grand Lodge of France. This must prove something.

At a recent annual assembly of the Grand Lodge of France, its Grand Master made an opening and closing speech consisting of eight pages: He used the words "humanism and spiritualism" 41 times but not once did he allude to God, the Supreme Being to the Great Architect of the Universe. He did, however, criticize those of bad will, those hypocrites practicing traditional and Anglo-Saxon freemasonry who opposed liberal and latin type freemasonry. According to masonic law, there can be only one recognized grand lodge in any given territory. Otherwise, the seed of undisciplined disorder would be sowed that would eventually cause its destruction.

The standard of recognition as established by the Commission for Recommendation for Foreign of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America are:

- . Legitimacy of origin.
- . Exclusive territorial jurisdiction.

Adherence to the ancient landmarks, specifically a belief in God, the Volume of Sacred Law as an indispensable part of the furniture of the lodge, and the prohibition of the discussion of politics and religion in the lodge.

As naive, ignorant or provocative as the editor of the masonic magazine may be in his denunciation of the lawful body of freemasons in France for not entering into illegality with the unrecognized grand lodges, the Grande Loge Nationale Française will never follow the "Substituted Road". This grand lodge incarnates universal freemasonry in France. It alone is regular.

Constituted and recognized by the Grand Lodge of England and then by all the grand lodges in the world, it was as first considered a bridgehead of Anglo-Saxon freemasonry inside the country's frontiers. It suffered from the prolonged notion that it was of a different race.

All that is far in the past. The English and Americans have massively returned to their respective lands since the end of World War II. Lodges of Americans and English still exist but there are also other lodges that work in Russian, Ukrainian, Greek, German, Italian, Spanish, and Hebrew. Candidates arrive from two sources, initiations and those regularized when coming from irregular Obediencies.

Its international situation is eminent and is considered the stable lawful Body on the Continent. It is frequently consulted for information regarding other countries in the event of doubt concerning irregularity and even feared by those in irregular situations because of its determination to maintain fraternal relations only with those who profess and share the same principles.

It is only a grand lodge among so many others, with the same vocation. It does not forge its own doctrine. Its teachings are testimony of what was taught and learned from the genuine history of the Grand Lodge of England, the mother grand lodge of all those on the planet.

The brothers who compose the Grande Loge Nationale Française are not perfect. Perfection is unknown in man. They have certain failings as well as certain qualities. They are endowed with the same senses and emotions as all men, but those joining this grand lodge appear to have that extra little bit necessary to receive the instruction that renders them better.

This grand lodge with limited means now numbers almost twenty thousand and increases 10 percent annually.

In its short existence, the Grande Loge Nationale Française authored and introduced regular freemasonry in Iran, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Gabon, Ivory Coast, and Senegal. It was directly responsible for Belgium's return to regularity and recognition. It created lodges in the Antilles, in New Caledonia and the Island of Reunion in the Pacific. It supported the consecration of grand lodges in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and it has created lodges in France composed of Rumanians in preparation for the day that country will be prepared to receive them masonically.

It has established freemasonry in countries with a total of over 200 million inhabitants, 15 different languages, 150 ethnic tribes with as many dialects and more than ten different religions.

It rose as a Phoenix from the ashes at a time when the country was a masonic desert, a nation that had once ruled Europe. It repulsed all attempts from within and without to abandon regularity.

It surrounded itself with a stars war barrier of impenetrable regularity and parried all efforts by its foes by coercion and enticement to deviate from its goals.

The future successors of the members of the Grande Loge Nationale Française and of the grand lodges, district grand lodges and lodges it created or enabled to be constituted will have become accustomed to the comforts of regularity, to the temples in which they work and the opportunity to visit any regular lodge in universal freemasonry.

With the exception of very few masonic researchers, they will never know that it all began with the **"Miracle of 1913"**.

March 1992.

## EPILOG

The 20th day of January 1991 Grand Master André Roux driving to Grand Lodge suffered a fatal heart attack and was replaced by his Deputy, Claude CHARBONNIAUD who was elected Grand Master.

Most Worshipful Grand Master Claude CHARBONNIAUD entered the Resistance movement against the Nazis at the age of 17 and fought in the underground until he joined the regular French Forces landing in Southern France. He subsequently became Prefect and ended his career as High Commissioner of France's departments in the South Pacific.

He consecrated the Grand Lodge of Senegal in Dakar installing the District Grand Master Armand Aggaboga as head of this newest independent grand lodge in Africa.

The formidable task of completing the erection of the new grand lodge building faced the Grand Master of the G. L. N. F. Equal to the problems facing him, he officially consecrated the House of Masons, June 12, 1993 in the presence of hundreds of distinguished visitors from regular recognized grand lodges of the world.

1994 was an extraordinary year for universal freemasonry. A trip to Israel to create a lodge of the GLNF; June 6th, the 50th anniversary of "D-Day", the invasion of Normandy, and a commemorative masonic meeting with veterans of the landings from the allied countries who participated in the battles to free France and Europe.

June 10th, the same year, in the grand temple of the new grand lodge building, M. V. Claude Charbonniaud, consecrated the lodge La Banniere Etoilee, (Star Spangled Banner Lodge) No. 900 to honor the veterans who fought and those who died for freedom and to further cement the bond which unites the United States and France.

A lodge was consecrated in Bangkok, Thailand, and the Grand Lodge of Benin was created in Cotonou, January 14, 1995 with X.V. Brother Vincent licoue as its first Grand Master.

Thus the Grande Loge Nationale Française has continued its role to disseminate in all its purity and regularity, Universal freemasonry throughout our planet. And it all began with the "MIRACLE OF 1913".

February 1995

#### ADDENDUM

In thirty day we shall have arrived at the year 2000. The succeeding accomplishments of the Grande Loge Nationale Française since 1995 have proven the Miracle of 1913 was predestined to grow in its categorical determination to maintain masonic regularity not only within but also abroad in the world.

Our new building has already become too small to house the ever increasing number of candidates flocking to become initiated in the only regular French Grand Lodge practicing freemasonry as originated in England.

Membership exceeds 27,000 masons, the elite of the country and increases 10 percent annually.

Our annual Grand Lodge Assemblies have become legend with more than 2000 masons in attendance among whom more than 200 delegations from Grand Lodges throughout our planet rejoice at our meeting and the Ladies Banquet following the same evening.

Grand Master M.W. Claude Charbonniaud maintains his visits to recognized grand lodges on every Continent in addition to Provincial Grand Lodges in France.

We persevere in our goal of perpetuating regular freemasonry throughout unoccupied masonic territories where there are good men available.

We created Districts in Morocco, Djibouti the Camerouns, and in the Principality of Andorra.

After making Districts whose members have proven worthy, we consecrated Grand Lodges in Togo, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Benin, Mali and recently in Guinde.

We are cognizant of the difficulties involved in preserving regular freemasonry. We are aware that regularity consists of a belief in the Supreme Being. That a lodge must be regularly constituted with a prohibition of the discussion of Religion and Politics.

The Miracle of 1913 is being perpetuated by generations of masons who emulate the precepts of our extraordinary fraternity established and adopted by the leadership of the originators of what is the Grande Loge Nationale Française, and as Grand Master Claude Charbonniaud states, » if only a few Grand Lodges in the world practice Regular Freemasonry, with a belief in God, we shall always be one of them ».

Nat Granstein

Assistant Grand Master

December 1, 1999