

# The Relationship Between Russian and French Freemasonry (1905–1945)

By André Combes

## ABSTRACT

The Revolution of 1905 was going to force the tsarist regime of Russia to liberalize itself. It was at this time that freemasonry was reborn in Russia after a long period of prohibition in the 19th century. Lodges are created in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Many Russians had ties to Paris and it there that they became Freemasons. The Grand Orient de France and the Grand Lodge of France have been very much involved in this renaissance of Russian Masonry. The new Russian Lodges welcomed mainly social democrats and liberals. Between 1909 and 1917, the Russian Lodges will become more and more involved in political issues. Many of the actors of the first Revolution of 1917—foremost among them Prime Minister Kerensky—are zealous Masons. The failure of this first Social Democratic Revolution and the advent of the Bolsheviks will lead to the elimination of Freemasonry in what was to become the Soviet Union. The Russian Masons take the path of exile, especially in Paris, where they reconstituted their Lodges, either in the Grand Orient of France or the Grand Lodge of France. This Russian Freemasonry in Paris will be one of the conservatories of liberal Russian culture in exile. These Russian Lodges in exile progressively disappeared in the 1960s .... But some Masons—often belonging to the second generation of Russian exile—who attended them will participate in the rebirth of freemasonry in Russia after 1990.

*Keywords:* Russian Masonry, Maksim Kovalevsky (1851–1916), Vasily Maklakov (1869–1957), Astrée Lodge, Free Russia Lodge, Alexander Kerensky (1881–1970), Vassili Maklakov (1869–1957), Leontiy Kandaurov

## La relación entre la masonería rusa y francesa (1905-1945)

### RESUMEN

La Revolución de 1905 iba a obligar al régimen zarista de Rusia a liberalizarse. Fue en este momento que la masonería renació en Rusia después de un largo período de prohibición en el siglo XIX.

Se crean logias en Moscú y San Petersburgo. Muchos rusos tenían vínculos con París y allí se hicieron masones. El Gran Oriente de Francia y la Gran Logia de Francia han estado muy involucrados en este renacimiento de la masonería rusa. Las nuevas Logias rusas acogieron principalmente a socialdemócratas y liberales. Entre 1909 y 1917, las logias rusas se involucrarán cada vez más en cuestiones políticas. Muchos de los actores de la primera revolución de 1917, entre ellos el primer ministro Kerensky, son masones celosos. El fracaso de esta primera Revolución Socialdemócrata y el advenimiento de los bolcheviques conducirán a la eliminación de la masonería en lo que se convertiría en la Unión Soviética. Los masones rusos emprenden el camino del exilio, especialmente en París, donde reconstituyeron sus Logias, ya sea en el Gran Oriente de Francia o en la Gran Logia de Francia. Esta masonería rusa en París será uno de los conservatorios de la cultura liberal rusa en el exilio. Estas Logias rusas en el exilio desaparecieron progresivamente en la década de 1960 ... Pero algunos masones —a menudo pertenecientes a la segunda generación de exiliados rusos— que las asistieron participarán en el renacimiento de la masonería en Rusia después de 1990.

**Palabras clave:** Masonería rusa, Maksim Kovalevsky (1851-1916), Vasily Maklakov (1869-1957), Logia Astrée, Logia Rusia Libre, Alexander Kerensky (1881-1970), Vassili Maklakov (1869-1957), Leontiy Kandaurov

## 俄罗斯共济会和法国共济会之间的关系（1905–1945年）

### 摘要

1905年俄国革命强迫沙皇政权出现自由化。经历19世纪的长期禁止后，此时共济会在俄国重现。莫斯科和圣彼得堡都创建了会所。许多俄罗斯人与巴黎有联系，他们在那里成为共济会成员。法国大东方共济会和法国共济会总会所一直十分活跃于复兴俄罗斯共济会。新的俄罗斯共济会会所主要欢迎社会民主人士和自由派人士。1909-1917年间，俄罗斯共济会会所越来越涉及政治议题。参与1917年首次革命的诸多行动者—以俄国总理克伦斯基为首—都是狂热的共济会成员。第一次社会民主革命的失败和布尔什维克的出现将导致共济会的终结，此时的俄国将成为苏联。俄罗斯共济会成员开始了

流亡，尤其是在巴黎，他们在那里的法国大东方共济会和法国共济会总会所重新组建了新会所。巴黎的俄罗斯共济会将成为处于流亡的自由派俄罗斯文化的温室之一。这些流亡中的俄罗斯共济会会所在20世纪60年代逐步消失...但一些出席过这些会所的共济会成员—通常是俄罗斯流亡共济会成员第二代—将在1990年后参与复兴俄罗斯共济会。

关键词：俄罗斯共济会，Maksim Kovalevsky（1851-1916年），Vasily Maklakov（1869–1957年），Astrée 共济会会所（Astrée lodge），自由俄罗斯共济会会所（Free Russia Lodge），亚历山大·克伦斯基（1881-1970年），Vassili Maklakov（1869-1957年），Leontiy Kandaurov

The Revolution of 1905, which was sparked by the Russo-Japanese War and Tsar Nicholas II's refusal to relinquish his autocratic rule, set the stage for the reestablishment of Masonry in Russia. In the wake of the massacre of January 1905, the Tsar issued a manifesto on October 17, 1905, in which he promised a constitution guaranteeing individual freedoms and a State Duma elected by universal male suffrage, although the decisions of the Duma would still be subject to the approval of a State Council appointed by the Tsar. The first election, on May 10, 1906, was won by the Constitutional Democratic Party (K-D or Kadets), which consisted of liberals as well as former Socialist Revolutionaries (SR). It won 179 seats against the (liberal) Labor Group's 136. It formed an alliance with the Popular Socialists or Trudoviks, but the State Council opposed its plans and the first Duma was dissolved. The K-D lost ground in the elections for the second Duma in March 1907, winning

only 92 seats, while the more moderate Octobrists and the socialists performed better. In June of that year, however, the second Duma was also dissolved after a wave of attacks that shook the Empire. The electoral law was modified to the benefit of the landed gentry, and the third Duma, which was dominated by the Octobrists and conservatives, was more docile. It remained in place until November 1912, when a fourth Duma was elected with a similar composition. The February Revolution in 1917 put an end to the monarchy and initiated the only period of democracy in Russia's history. Russian Masons were finally able to gain power, although the governments that followed were weakened by military and economic difficulties.

## **I. 1905–1909: Renaissance**

It took a powerful personality, as well as several Russian Masons who had been initiated in France and had returned to their country to participate in

its transformation, to revive Masonry in the Empire of the Tsars. The principal driver of this revival was Maksim Kovalevsky (1851–1916), who had been received into Cosmos Lodge (GLDF, Grande Loge de France) and was affiliated with Les Vrais Amis Lodge (GODF, Grand Orient de France). He had been a professor of constitutional law at Moscow University but was dismissed in 1887 and went to France, where he became a close friend of Turgenev and founded the *École russe des Sciences sociales* (Russian School of Social Sciences). In August 1905, with Russia in the process of liberalization, he returned to his home country and ran for office, winning a seat in the first State Duma. He contacted other Russian Masons before writing to the Council of the Order of the GODF on January 11, 1906, to request “provisional powers enabling me to establish, in the Orient of Moscow and Saint Petersburg, a regular Lodge whose work can later be opened in due form by a delegate appointed by you.” Grand Master Gaston Bouley responded in February. On March 23, several Russian Masons gathered in preparation for the formation of the first two lodges, The Polar Star, later renamed The North Star, in Saint Petersburg, and Renaissance in Moscow. The first initiates included the lawyer Vasily Maklakov (1869–1957), one of the leaders of the K-D Party and member of the second, third, and fourth Dumas, who received the three degrees on April 18, 1906. The extremely rich, eccentric, and provocative landowner Count Orlov-Davydov, born in 1872, who was later elected to the fourth Duma as a

member of the Progressive Party, was initiated in Saint Petersburg on January 7, 1907. According to Maklakov, the fires of The North Star were lit by ten Brethren on November 15 and 18, 1906.

Prince Bebutov wrote a vivid account of his reception. He was recruited by the lawyer Evgeniy Kedrin, who had been initiated into *Rénovateurs* Lodge in Clichy (GODF) in April 1905 and was later elected to the fourth Duma. He suggested to Prince Bebutov that the latter should be received as a Mason on the same day as a gathering of the K-D was taking place, which meant enough Brethren would be in Saint Petersburg to perform the ceremony. Among them was Sergei Propokovich, writer, economist, Trudovik, and future minister of the Provisional Government, who had been initiated in Belgium in 1898. The ceremony was held on April 27, 1906, in the offices of the magazine *Strana*, edited by Maksim Kovalevsky. Prince Bebutov wrote that he was impressed by the ritual and surprised to encounter some of his friends there. He noted the names of Nikolay Bazhenov (1857–1923), a psychiatrist and leader of Moscow’s literary and artistic circle who was initiated into Amis Réunis Lodge in 1884; the writer Evgeny de Roberti (1857–1923), initiated into Cosmos Lodge (GLDF); the lawyer Vasily Maklakov; and the diplomat Iosif Loris-Melikov (1860–1950). Bebutov later felt that he had influenced the beginnings of Russian Masonry by asking the first adepts to work to transform society once the political situation had become more stable. In 1907 and 1908, Bebutov’s apartments in Moscow and Saint Petersburg host-

ed further reception ceremonies during which, after rigorous examination, numerous Russians were brought to Light and elevated to the various blue degrees and, in some cases, to the 18<sup>th</sup> degree. He listed twenty-six new initiates, a mixture of aristocrats, intellectuals, and wealthy bourgeois, with several characteristics in common: they were all in favor of constitutional reform, were either associated with or members of the K-D, and were capable of obeying the law of silence. They included the lawyer and future minister of justice Paul Per-everzev (1871–1944), who was initiated in November 1907 and received the Fellowcraft and Master degrees in 1909.

In spring 1907, Kovalevsky and Kedrin went to Paris to ask the GODF to recognize the two lodges. Kovalevsky took sole charge of the mission, however, and instead of approaching the GODF, as planned, he went to the GLDF, which gave its consent for the lodges to be established and regularized. This led to a misunderstanding when the two men returned to Russia: the Brethren of The North Star decided, predictably, to join the GODF. The ceremony to light the fires of Renaissance Lodge was arranged in January 1908 to coincide with the visit to Moscow of seven Brethren from Saint Petersburg (Orlov-Davydov, Margulies, Bebutov, Makharov, Maydell, Kedrin, Demyanov). There were enough Brethren present to open a provisional lodge, in the home and under the gavel of Bazhenov, in order to confer the Apprentice degree on Prince Sergey Urusov and Viktor Obninsky, both K-D Duma deputies; Councilor Onisim Goldovsky; the

lawyers Balavinsky and Ivan Sakharov; and the actor Sumbatov-Yuzhin.

On the following day, there was a debate about which of the French obediences the new lodges should align with. The Muscovites also decided in favor of the GODF. Bazhenov and Bebutov were chosen to travel to Paris. A meeting of Masons from both cities was then held in Saint Petersburg to endorse the formation of the Moscow lodge and the appointment of the two delegates. Kovalevsky, whose stated preference was for the GLDF, argued with Kedrin on the subject and, in a fit of anger, resigned and left the room along with several others who were loyal to him (Gambarov, Roberti, Anichkov ...). They later opened Cosmos Lodge, a daughter of the Parisian Cosmos. Orlov-Davydov replaced Kovalevsky as Worshipful Master of The North Star. Bebutov who thought Orlov-Davydov was ungenerous and dull, explained the appointment on the basis that the lodge needed a patron.

On February 2, 1908, Bazhenov and Bebutov travelled to Paris, where they were received by Louis Lafferre, Grand Master of the GODF, and elevated to the 18<sup>th</sup> degree. On their return, they sent a letter to the Council of the Order asking it to delegate Brothers Bertrand Sincholle, vice president of the Council of the Order and member of *Rénovateurs* Lodge, and Gaston Bouley, Grand Secretary for foreign affairs and Grand Chancellor of the Grand College of Rites, to establish the lodges. Their action was applauded by the two lodges, which held further initiations in

order to strengthen their numbers. The Council of the Order of the GODF approved the delegation on May 5. When Sincholle and Bouley arrived in Saint Petersburg on May 8, 1908, Bebutov and Orlov-Davydov escorted them to Kresty prison, where the lawyer and journalist Manuil Margulies (1868–1939) was imprisoned. Margulies was a leader of the K-D and personal friend of Kovalevsky. He was later minister in the government of Northwest Russia, but at this point was in prison for press offences. Warned in advance of the visit, which he had cancelled the previous day out of fear of reprisals, he was received as a Mason (or elevated to the Fellowcraft and Master degrees) in a simplified ritual conducted by the four visitors, wearing their sashes or ribbons, and witnessed by the astonished guards. The undertaking is all the more astounding given that the Okhrana had been informed of their arrival by the secret agent Rachkovsky. The four Brethren then went to Maklakov's apartment that afternoon for the ceremony to regularize The North Star. The ceremony was attended by Kovalevsky and his friends in the Orient, suggesting that the two factions had been reconciled by this point. Worshipful Master Orlov-Davydov yielded the first gavel to Bouley, who presided over the session, with Sincholle as First Warden, Bazhenov as Second Warden, Maklakov as Orator, and Bebutov as Secretary. The work consisted of the signing of the warrant by all the Brethren in attendance. Bazhenov, Maklakov, and Baron Maydell stayed after the ceremony in order to be elevated to the 18<sup>th</sup> degree so

that a chapter could be opened for the purpose of elevating Margulies as soon as possible to the Rose Croix degree.

In April, the GODF sent a copy of its Constitution to Renaissance and the lodge was consecrated in its turn by Sincholle, Bouley, and Bazhenov on Friday, May 22, 1908. The Fellowcraft and Master degrees were conferred on the Apprentices by Bouley and Sincholle, assisted by Bazhenov and Orlov-Davydov. The first tracing board, dated May 24, 1908, contains twelve names: Worshipful Master Nikolay Bazhenov; the writer Vasily Nemirovich-Danchenko (1844–1936), who had emigrated to Prague and joined Mont Sinai Lodge (GLDF) in 1905; Sergey Kotlyarevsky, a professor at Moscow University; Evgeniy Kedrin; Vasily Maklakov; and seven Brethren who had previously been initiated into Renaissance in January or on February 17, 1908: Sergey Urusov (First Warden); Ivan Sakharov (Second Warden); Dr. Aleksandr Dvorzhak; Alexander Sumbatov-Yuzhin; Viktor Obninsky; Onisim Goldovsky (Secretary); and Sergey Balavinsky. Eight lived in Moscow and three in Saint Petersburg. On May 12 or 24, Urusov, Goldovsky, and Balavinsky received the Fellowcraft and Master degrees. Two other names appear in the first official correspondence addressed to the GODF: Evgeniy Anichkov, professor of literature and future Second Warden, and Daulcheino, Master and Secretary.

The two lodges sponsored by the GODF are not listed in the GODF's Yearbook, and in 1909 they disappear from the records altogether, made dormant to escape police surveillance.

In the meantime, however, starting at least in 1908, they expanded in the two great cities and in the provinces, including Nizhny-Novgorod, Kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, Saratov, Irkutsk, and Warsaw, bringing the total number of lodges constituted before 1910 to eighteen. Bouley and Sincholle returned to Russia in 1908 and engaged in a flurry of activity, conducting initiations and elevations, including that of Kilvein Gueorgiu, president of the zemstvo of Nizhny-Novgorod and Worshipful Master of the first lodge in that city, and Aleksandr Trachevsky, who joined Astrée Lodge in Paris in 1922. According to Nina Berberova, three new lodges were constituted in Saint Petersburg, Moscow, and Warsaw; Maklakov adds lodges in Odessa and Lvov. Two lodges holding allegiance to the GODF were established in Warsaw between 1908 and 1910, named Renaissance and Liberation (a name that had originally been planned for the Moscow lodge). Several sub-lodges of Cosmos Lodge were also opened. Bebutov had to rent an apartment above a K-D office and below a club so that the Masons' comings and goings would not draw attention. Several deputies and high-ranking military officers were admitted to the lodge.

Bebutov and Margulies (Orlov-Davydov having stepped down) were appointed to represent The North Star and Renaissance at the convention of the GODF in Paris in September 1908. They kept silent in order to avoid indiscretion, but in any case the two lodges were not officially part of the Grand Orient and are not mentioned in the minutes. The two visitors did make

their presence known, however, at the banquets held by the various lodges and chapters. In November 1908, a three-day Congress held in Bebutov's and Orlov's apartments was attended by various Masons who decided to elect a Supreme Council consisting of three members (later expanded to six) to manage the lodges, while Bebutov took charge of managing the chapters. Urusov, Golovin, and Margulies were the first elected members, to be joined by Bebutov, who would handle everyday business. The outcome of this election was met with some dissatisfaction, but the Supreme Council immediately began making contact, with a view to gaining recognition, with other lodges or grand lodges in Zurich, Berlin, Budapest, Venice, and Constantinople, where the Young Turks gave them a warm welcome.

In 1909, however, rising political and social tension reduced the number of active Masons in Russia to no more than one hundred, according to Margulies. One joined a lodge, he wrote, "less to perfect oneself morally than to band together ... to gain the courage necessary for all those who believed in their duty to devote their energy to the tireless fight against the absolutism of the Tsars." Hence the frequent change of location after every two ceremonies, the lack of minutes, files, or records, the issuing of invitations only by telephone and never to the same place, the opening of a new lodge once the first reached twenty members; hence also the need to memorize the names and rites and to be able, if necessary, to convince the Okhrana toughs (who might

have received instructions not to intervene) that it was no more than a gathering of friends around a table decorated in advance.

Martinist groups also emerged in Russia following the visits of the miracle worker Maître Philippe and of Papus, who was received at the Imperial Palace. These groups consisted of aristocrats and members of the upper class, and in 1909 and 1910 three Martinist lodges were established: Apollonius of Tyana in Saint Petersburg, Saint John the Evangelist in Moscow, and Saint Andrew in Kiev. They disappeared almost as soon as they had begun because of the fear of police investigations, but, according to Nina Berberova, Martinist activity continued until 1916. Several Masons were among the Martinists, including Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, Bebutov, and the Ukrainian Markotun.

## **II. The Evolution of Russian Masonry from 1909 to 1917**

**A** Masonic report issued by the Russia Consistory in 1929 states that between 1909 and 1914, the Russian Brethren belonging to the French lodges of the GODF formed an organization called the Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia (GOPR). It specified that “this organization was Masonic in name only, lacking ritual, international recognition, or any relationship to Freemasons in other countries. Its aim was purely political: the overthrow of the autocratic regime.” Against this oversimplification, Andrey Serkov’s research offers a more nuanced interpre-

tation. The reorganization of Russian Masonry after its collapse in 1909 was driven by Aleksandr Kolyubakin (1865–1918), a left-leaning K-D member who advocated reconciliation with the Trudoviks and Mensheviks. He was among the first new initiates, joining The Little Bear Lodge, which opened in 1910, and was elected to the second Duma. He was in charge of the new lodge, while Aleksandr Halpern, an SR lawyer of Jewish descent (which was rare in Russian lodges), was appointed as Secretary. Several Masons from the previous wave, including Kedrin and Bebutov, were deemed too likely to talk and left out. One or two English lodges associated themselves with the movement, and in 1912 the first Convention of the new Grand Orient of the Peoples of Russia met and elected a Supreme Council and a secretary general. In Serkov’s view, the assembly’s goal was also to prepare for the election of the fourth Duma. Kovalevsky’s proposal that the GOPR should become a non-partisan center of union beyond differences was met with a mixed response. Those in favor wanted, at least in theory, to make the new GOPR into a center of fraternal union bound together by moral values and mutual trust, with the ultimate objective of installing a democratic regime. In that respect, the future Grand Orient was essentially continuing the struggle of French Freemasonry and can thus be seen as its descendant.

Due to the desire for efficiency and the lack of Masonic culture and experience among their members, the GOPR lodges placed less emphasis on ritual practice. The GOPR retained only



the Apprentice and Master degrees. Ritual was simplified in the extreme, and some women were admitted, including Yekaterina Kuskova (1859–1968), wife of Brother Sergei Propokovich, who organized clandestine Masonic meetings in Moscow in 1916. The Masonic offices were dismissed as useless, and the GOPR issued no diplomas. Lodges were obliged to consist of between seven and fourteen members, which fact explains their proliferation, with a total of four to five hundred GOPR members in forty-two lodges. The work of the lodges was mostly limited to lectures. There were lodges located in around twenty cities, particularly in regions with strong nationalist movements. Masons were often federalists and pacifists until the First World War, when they supported the Triple Entente. They were involved in national movements in, for example, Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, and Ukraine. The GOPR was unable to impose directives because of the diversity of its members, who ranged from Trudoviks to Mensheviks, and even some Bolsheviks, united solely to fight against the Tsar's regime. Nevertheless, the GOPR settled more to the left of the political spectrum after the arrival of figures like Kerensky, who joined The Little Bear in 1912 and became secretary of the GOPR in 1916; Nikolai Avksentiev; and the SR member Boris Savinkov, who joined French Masonry in exile.

All the governments after the February Revolution had a strong Masonic presence. Among the fifteen ministers in the government formed on May 6, 1917, were Brothers Kerensky

(Minister of War and Navy), Shingarev (Minister of Finance), Skobelev (Minister of Labor), Pereverzev (Minister of Justice), Tereshchenko (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Nekrasov (Minister of Transport), and Konovalov (Minister of Trade and Industry). To what extent did the Supreme Council suggest or impose the appointments of ministers or provincial or military commissioners during the war? Did the GOPR leaders plan to overthrow Tsar Nicholas II in a coup d'état? These questions and others remain unanswered. There were representatives of all the democratic parties among these politically engaged Masons, and in 1917 many of them were part of the center-left Progressive Bloc formed by Brother Krivoshein. The GOPR's influence was already declining, however, when the October Revolution put a definitive end to its existence. It had ultimately become a political pressure group that grew ever more inefficient as passions ran higher and collaboration between members of different parties became more fraught.

### **III. Russian Freemasonry in Exile in France (1922–1945)**

Several factors allowed Russian Masonry to flourish in France: the huge influx of upper-class refugees, the presence of a Slavic diaspora in France before 1914, the fact that the Russian ambassador in Paris was, from November 1917, Brother Maklakov, and even more importantly the fact that the Consul was Brother Leontiy Kandaurov. Kandaurov was a committed, although non-practicing, Ortho-

dox Christian with a passionate interest, like many Russian intellectuals, in esotericism, spiritism, Kabbala, and alchemy. He also had a remarkable talent for organization. After a brief period in the GODF he became affiliated with Thebah Lodge (GLDF), which was a meeting place for Guénonians and where he met fellow Russians. He received much support from other Russian Brethren in the GLDF, in particular those of LAnglo-Saxon Lodge, whilst his official duties brought him into contact with refugees, both Tsarists and democrats, applying for visas. He was able to talk about Masonry to any who were likely to be interested. Kandaurov, Maklakov, and their fellow Masons, like Vladimir Aitoff, were able to remain in France until the USSR was formally recognized by Edouard Herriot's government in 1924. The embassy archives were then destroyed and the furnishings were removed.

On December 1, 1918, Kandaurov founded the Comité provisoire de la Franc-maçonnerie russe (Provisional Committee of Russian Freemasonry) with six other Masons: Major General Voyna-Panchenko, who worked at the embassy; Count Nesselrode; the Parisian lawyers Rapp and Gruber, who were close friends of Kandaurov; the painter Chirokoff; and the diplomat Von Meck. The membership of the committee changed several times following deaths, departures from France, or arrivals of refugees. These included the lawyer Henrik Sliozberg, who would become Kandaurov's right-hand man; Vladimir Aitoff; and Piotr Polovtsov, who had been appointed brigadier general in

1917. The Committee supervised candidates for initiation, collected the necessary funds, and maintained links with Russian Masonic groups like the Circle of Russian Freemasons in London; Great Northern Light Lodge in Berlin, which had twenty-five members and was established by the journalist Vladimir Tatarinov but became dormant on April 10, 1933, to avoid having to submit to Hitler's regime; the members of the future Maksim Kovalevsky Lodge in Belgrade (twelve members in 1930); Astrée Lodge in Egypt (thirty members, half of whom were Russian, in 1930); and groups in English-speaking countries as well as in Italy, Denmark, Poland, and Belgium. Avksentiev was sent as a representative to make contact with Russian Brethren in Argentina in 1939, a trip that allowed him to avoid capture by the Gestapo, although his Jewish wife was arrested. These Masons were also active within the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union.

In France, the possibility of transferring the GOPR to Paris or establishing an Astrée Grand Lodge having been dismissed as impossible, Russian Masonry initially began to organize itself under the auspices of the Suprême Conseil de France (SCDF, Supreme Council of France) and the GLDF. This decision was preceded by debates among the Masons in the Russian Committee in Paris as well as several former members of the GOPR, including Ivan Yefremov, a progressive to the left of the K-D members, who had been a Mason since 1912 and was former Worshipful Master of the highly political Duma Lodge; Avksentiev, who joined the Pa-

risian GODF Lodge Agni in 1921; and Boris Savinkov (1879–1925), SR and former terrorist who became Minister of War in August 1917, returned to the USSR in 1924, and was executed by the Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, Kandaurov, who dominated the debate, pushed out those who opposed his plans, including the Ukrainian Markotun, and in 1921 the decision was finally made to create, first, a chapter in the AASR under the auspices of the SCDF and the GLDF, and then a Masonic lodge with the same name, *Astrée*. The chapter was constituted on April 15 and established on April 21, with Kandaurov as the first Most Wise Athirsata, a post he held until 1942. *Astrée* Lodge, which was given the number 500, was established on January 14, 1922, by Maurice Monnier, Grand Master of the GLDF. It had seventeen members, including its first Worshipful Master, Maksheev (Kandaurov's first cousin); Aleksandr Naumov, former Tsarist minister; Nikolai Tchaikovsky, SR and president of the Arkhangelsk Governorate in 1918; Aleksei Putilov, an industrialist turned banker; and Dimitri Navachine, a writer and later deputy director of the Soviet bank responsible for commercial relations between France and Russia. He was murdered in the Bois de Boulogne on January 23, 1937. It is still unknown whether the assassin, who was never caught, was operating on behalf of the Soviets or of La Cagoule, which thought, probably wrongly, that he was a Soviet agent.

The first initiates or affiliates of *Astrée* Lodge included Prince Vladimir Vyazemsky, owner of a racehorse

stables; Prince Gagarin; Prince Viktor Kocubey, who was initiated into L'Anglo-Saxon Lodge; Savinkov, mentioned above; and General Golejevsky. According to Vyazemsky, the rate of initiations was so high that the initiates were unable to integrate with the other members and the lodge was unable to devote itself to other work. It had around a hundred members in 1923, and a similar number in 1930, despite various spin-offs and members leaving to join the GODF. As well as conducting initiations, its mission was to serve as a center of union for refugees, to reflect on future Russian institutions, and to train Brethren who would go on to form a liberal and spiritualist Masonry in Russia, in other words a Masonry that was totally different from the defunct GOPR.

The second lodge, *Aurore Boréale* no. 523, opened in 1924. Its Brethren were Orthodox Christians, many of them practicing, and its work was centered around Christian symbolism and esoterism. Its first Worshipful Master was General Polovtsov. In 1930 it had forty-nine members, including former officers of the Imperial Guard, under the gavel of Vyazemsky. The third lodge, *Hermès*, opened on December 15, 1924, and counted fifty-three Brethren in 1930. Its members were senior executives and it was responsible for training new adepts. The fourth lodge was established on January 25, 1925, with the name *La Toison d'Or*. Its aim was to recruit and build a network of individuals from the Caucasus: Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, and other groups from the mountain re-

gion. The Muslims and Georgians left, however, to establish Prométhée Lodge, which opened in 1927 and closed in 1930, at which point it still had around thirty members. La Toison d'Or then changed its name to Jupiter no. 536 and became a high-degree lodge that held popular conferences. Its members were mostly academics and its Worshipful Masters included Stepan Lianozov, former mine owner in Russia, head of the government of Northwestern Russia during the Civil War, and president of the All-Russian Union of Trade and Industry, who was initiated into Astrée lodge in 1922; Aleksandr Vertennikov, initiated before the war in Copenhagen; Aleksandr Davydov; and Admiral Verderevsky, Minister of the Navy in the last provisional government. In 1932, Gemaïoune Lodge no. 624 (named after a mythical bird) opened in order to meet the needs of a new generation who were more integrated into French society. Lotos Lodge no. 638 opened on March 3, 1933, with Aitoff as Worshipful Master and Vyazemsky as Orator (both men were close friends of Kandaurov). Its aim was to study the principles and applications of morality. Hermès and Lotos had close ties to the two Russian GODF lodges.

These Russian lodges enjoyed real autonomy within the GLDF, which helped them financially. The Scottish Rite used was inspired by that of the Astrée Grand Lodge at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their work was open to the Glory of the GAOU and their oaths were sworn on the Bible, together with the Quran if the applicant was Muslim. Spiritualism was the dom-

inant school of thought, but freedom of conscience was espoused and respected. The cultural level of the members was high: eighty percent had completed university studies. In 1926, Kandaurov rented a clubhouse at 29 rue de l'Yvette (16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement). It had a dining room on the ground floor for hosting agapae, which were highly popular with visitors, while the first floor held a salon, a library, and Kandaurov's office, where he could welcome and eventually teach new initiates. On the second floor was a magnificently decorated Temple that could hold eighty people. Russian Masonry benefited from the GLDF's support, which was especially necessary as many of the Brethren were often forced to take poorly paid work. Members had a wide range of political and religious backgrounds, so topics that could lead to disagreement were avoided in the lodge. For example, there were differences of opinion about the nature of the future political system in Russia, with some preferring a federal republic while others wanted a constitutional monarchy.

The minutes of the lawyer Nikolay Teslenko's interview with the Service Spécial des Associations Dissoutes (Special Service of Dissolved Associations) in August 1942 provide insight into the psychology and circumstances of these Russian Masons. Teslenko was the director of *Editions musicales* and had been initiated into Hermès Lodge in 1926. He explained that his group consisted of political refugees, all anti-Communist, reflecting on "the ideas they used to express, which had turned out to be an illusion," and learning

about the reality of Soviet Russia from more recent émigrés. He added that the adepts were of a wide range of nationalities and religions and that the agapae enabled serious but amicable “exchanges between the most divergent views.” He also explained that for the émigrés, living in a foreign environment and “most in the position of having to earn their living, the lodges offered them moral support from their compatriots, help finding a job, sometimes even material assistance,” and that “they no longer felt the loneliness that oppressed them.” Conferences were held on subjects from history, philosophy, sociology, economics, literature, and science.

The domineering Kandaurov, who died in 1936, envisaged a Masonic scale going from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 33<sup>rd</sup> degree under the control of a Supreme Council, which differed from the vision of the GLDF. He received the 33<sup>rd</sup> degree in 1924 and saw himself as a patron of the higher degrees. He presided over the Rossia Consistory of the 32<sup>nd</sup> degree, which opened on February 10, 1927, superseding the Provisional Committee of Russian Freemasonry in its role of presenting the Russian Brethren to the higher degrees. Kandaurov’s overbearing influence eventually caused trouble, however, and Nikolay Teslenko, who had been a member of the second Duma and was a Kerenskyist, persuaded Hermès Lodge to meet in rue Puteaux in order to demonstrate its allegiance to the GLDF. There were around 250 Russian Masons in the GLDF during the 1930s, about a hundred of whom belonged to Astrée, although this figure does not take into

account Brethren who belonged to more than one lodge. A lodge of perfection called Amici Philosophae opened in 1925, but an areopagus, named Ordo ab Chao, only opened in 1933. The following year, the GLDF approved the constitution of a Groupement des loges de la GLDF travaillant en Langue russe (Group of lodges of the GLDF working in the Russian language), which was presided over first by Vyazemsky and then by Aleksandr Davydov. The latter was already head of a Russian Supreme Council of the 33<sup>rd</sup> degree established in agreement with the SCDF and the general assembly of Supreme Councils held in 1935 in Brussels. During the 1930s, the hope of reviving Masonry in the mother country grew fainter. Russian Masonry entered a period of reflection and, like all branches of Masonry in Europe, was confronted by accusations against the Order. A significant number of émigrés, hostile to democracy, which they blamed for their misfortunes, falsely claimed that Lenin and his staff were Masons. They believed that the Bolshevik leader Radek had been the Grand Master of Russian Masonry and accused the Masons, or Judeo-Masonry, of having caused the fall of the monarchy and even of hostility towards the Orthodox religion.

#### **IV. The Two Russian Lodges Within the GODF**

The two Russian-language lodges in the GODF were born out of the desire to revive The North Star and to practice a Masonry more oriented towards political and social questions. Kandaurov

saw the two lodges as daughters of the defunct GOPR but, although the older Russian left had inclined more towards the GODF, the more recently recruited Brethren were closer to the GLDF. As a result, there was frequent movement from one obedience to the other. Unfortunately, the only surviving evidence of their activities is a single Tracing Board and a circular document informing the GODF lodges about the famine raging in the USSR in 1934. The North Star, established by the Councilor of the Order Van Raalte on December 3, 1924, met bimonthly and practiced the French Rite. At its creation, it consisted of a small elite group of militant democrats. Its first Worshipful Master, Nikolai Avksentiev (1878–1943), was initiated into a GOPR lodge and became president of the *Ligue russe des droits de l'homme* (Russian Human Rights League) while in exile in France. His deputy in the League was Manuil Margulies, First Warden of the lodge. The Second Warden, Mirkin-Getzevich, was a professor of international law and member of the International Peace Bureau who was initiated into Pythagore Lodge in 1922. The Orator was Maklakov, who had rejoined L'Avant-Garde Maçonnique in 1920, while the Treasurer was Nikolay Poradyelov (1887–1948), a former colonel and head of security at the Winter Palace, Kerensky's bodyguard, and former GOPR Brother, who joined Astrée in 1922. The other lodge officers were not émigrés; some had been previously initiated into or affiliated with Astrée.

The Brethren included, among others, the Secretary Léon Kroll (1871–1931), who had been initiated into The

Little Bear in 1910 and, according to the Vichy files, was later symbolically reinitiated, as were other former GOPR Brethren in the GLDF; General Teplov, colonel of the Izmaylovsky Guard Regiment and later brigadier general and commissar of the Finland Regiment, who had been initiated in 1907 into The North Star and affiliated with The Little Bear in 1910; and Vladimir Zenzinov (1881–1953), a close friend of Kerensky, member of the Central Committee of the SR, and member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917, who had been initiated in 1909 into The North Star.

The Worshipful Masters were, in order, Avksentiev; Pereverzev in 1929; Margulies in 1931; Avksentiev again; the Doctor of Law Abram Alperin in 1933; Mikhayl Ter-Pogossian, a former SR who had been elected, like Nikolay Makeev, to the Constituent Assembly dispersed by the Bolsheviks; and, finally, Michael Ossorguine in 1938. Judging by the number of voters in the election of the Worshipful Master (thirty-four votes in 1934), the lodge likely had between eighty and ninety Brethren, including some who also belonged to Free Russia. A chapter was constituted on December 17, 1931, with Avksentiev as Most Wise Athirsata. Its members included the experienced Maklakov, who had been awarded the 18<sup>th</sup> degree by Bouley and Sincholle in 1908, elevated to the 30<sup>th</sup> by Camille Savoie in 1925, and elevated to the 33<sup>rd</sup> in September of the same year.

The second lodge, Free Russia, which practiced the AASR, was opened

on November 9, 1931, by a delegation from the Council of Order led by Georges Voronoff, who was of Russian descent, and in the presence of the current and former Worshipful Masters of five lodges as well as representatives of the Russian high-degree groups in the GLDF. It was formed as a spin-off of The North Star when that lodge grew too large. It had twenty-nine founding Brethren, some of whom never left. Besides Maklakov, Margulies, Mirkin-Getzevich, and Pereverzev, its members included the doctor Karapet Agadzhanian; the writer Agafonov; the corporate director Abram Alperin; Berberov; the painter Ivan Bilibin; the doctors Samuel Epstein and Alexandre Finikoff; the industrialist and banker Samuel Halperin; Aleksandr Khatsov (1874–1945), former mayor of Tbilisi and president of the Comité des Arméniens émigrés (Committee of Armenian Émigrés) at the League of Nations; the writer Michael Ossorguine (1871–1947), initiated into the Grand Lodge of Italy in 1914 and contributor to the Russian newspaper *Poslednie Novosti* (Latest News); the lawyers Nikolay Petrovsky and Jacob Scheftel; Grigoriy Tiraspolsky (1871–1947), who was initiated in 1907 “into a secret lodge under the auspices of the GODF” in Saint Petersburg and later affiliated with Lotos in 1935; and Marc Wolfson, a bank employee.

There is only one surviving Tracing Board showing the members of Free Russia in 1938. The lodge’s forty-seven active members met monthly. Eleven had been born between 1869 and 1875, and thirteen between 1875

and 1880, and were thus old enough to have played a role in the events in Russia from 1906 to 1917. Margulies was the only member to have been initiated under the Old Regime, in 1907. Count Orlov-Davydov, who had first joined Admirateurs de l’Univers in 1920 and then seems to have rejoined The Polar Star, became affiliated with the lodge but withdrew in 1934 when he moved out of Paris and into the Maison Russe (a retirement home for white Russian émigrés) in Villemoisson, near Epernay. The lodge’s affiliates included Ruben Barberian, who had been initiated in 1902 into Vrais Amis in Paris but only received his Fellowcraft degree in The North Star in 1930, and the lawyer Alexey Staal, initiated in 1913 into Unité Maçonnique and affiliated with Free Russia in 1932. Only six of the Brethren who had originally come from The North Star remained. After an initial period of growth, Free Russia had only a few new admissions each year. The most common professions among its members were jurists, lawyers, journalists or writers, and engineers.

Until 1939, the lodge was presided over by Manuil Margulies, who became vice president of the Council of Russian Organizations (those of a democratic bent) and received the 33<sup>rd</sup> degree. Weakened by illness and a car accident, he died in 1939, leaving the lodge in a poor condition. Because of the émigrés’ financial struggles, the lodge was deeply indebted to the GODF, which subsidized it, and it eventually moved its meeting place to rue de l’Yvette, where the rent was lower.

Some Russian Masons belonged to other lodges of the GODF or GLDF. The anarchist Volin was a member of Clarté Lodge (GODF). Some joined La Rose du Parfait Silence Lodge in 1933, including the lawyer Moise Kroll; the doctor Victor Marchak; Max Baumgarten, author of *Regard sur la Franc-Maçonnerie Ecossaise*; the ex-Bolshevik Ansky; Alperin; Eroukmanov, known as Volsky, a former SR who had joined the Bolsheviks and fought in the Red Army before fleeing Russia as a Trotskyist; and the journalist and mining engineer Jacques Delevsky, a former Menshevik, who was initiated in 1925.

In 1927, Avrora (Aurora) Lodge was founded under the auspices of Le Droit Humain and under the gavel of the writer Yevdokiya Nagrodskaya, a theosophist who welcomed Oswald Wirth and Yekaterina Kuskova to her lodge. She gathered around twenty members, mostly women, including the journalist and former K-D member Ariadna Tyrkova-Williams and Alexandra Holstein, whose salon was frequented by French and Russian intellectuals. Various Ukrainians belonged to the Grand Lodge of Ukraine, led by Petliura, which was in exile in Switzerland and was not recognized by the International Masonic Association. Among its prominent members was Sergeï Markotun, an adventurer and Martinist who founded Narcissus Lodge and had highly questionable links with the occupying forces, although his lodge was unaware of that fact and he was therefore able to remain a member of the GODF for the rest of his life. Another member was Nicholas-André Choumitsky, president of

the Union des associations des émigrés ukrainiens en France (Union of Associations of Ukrainian Emigres in France) and former government minister under Petliura, whom he had represented at the Paris Peace Conference. He was Worshipful Master of Centre des Amis, which belonged to the Grande Loge Nationale Indépendante et Régulière.

When the Germans attacked the USSR, they preventatively arrested various Russian Masons and then released them after a period of detention. Some, like Cyril Novoselov, were involved in the resistance movement. Others were in danger because they were Jewish (many of the Russian émigré Brethren were Jews). Four, at least, died in Auschwitz: Pavel Apostol, Marc Wolfson and his wife, Ilya Fondaminsky (a former SR), and Mikhail Gorlin (as confirmed by the CDJC). Novossiltsev, who belonged simultaneously to the GLDF and GODF, and Iosip Trakhterov were also victims of the Nazis.

After the Liberation of Paris, when Stalin enjoyed considerable popularity in France, some refugees began to hope for a reconciliation with the Bolshevik regime. Maklakov, as former Russian ambassador and president of the Committee of Emigrés, headed a delegation of Masons from the GODF and GLDF to the USSR embassy. The delegates included Professor Dmitry Odinets, a former Trudovik who ran the Turgenev Library in Paris and was a pro-Soviet journalist in 1945; Abram Halperin on behalf of the Association for Reconciliation with the Soviet Union; the former admiral Kedrov; Ter-Pogossian; the former SR members



Konstantin Krovopuskov and Rogovskiy; the journalist Vladimir Tatarinov; the chemical engineer Alexey Titov, who had been deputy to the Minister of Food in 1917; and the journalist Arsen Stupnitsky. They were received by Ambassador Bogomolov. Maklakov, visiting his former place of work, was able to congratulate his motherland for its decisive contribution to victory and to express a desire for reconciliation that would see several Russians return to the Soviet Union. Toasts were made by both sides. It was a remarkable visit, but in the end its only achievement was to provoke controversy among the émigré community. After the war, Free Russia changed its name to Les Jalons. By that point it had been reduced to seventeen members, including Boris Gershun, who was elected Worshipful Master in 1939, Volkovsky, and Ossorguine. Unable to recruit sufficient members,

it was forced to become dormant. The North Star was still well-attended, with twenty-seven members including Eroukmanov, Ter-Pogossian, and Abram Alperin. It remained active into the 1960s and will be secretly revived by the GODF “on the twenty-eighth day of the second month of AL 5991” in a hunting lodge near Moscow.

In the GLDF, the lodges *Astrée*, *L'Aurore Boréale*, *Jupiter*, *Lotos*, and *Gemaïoune*, which now met in rue Pu-teaux, were all still active in 1958. The scission within the Grand Lodge in 1964 affected them badly, however, and a small number of Russian Brethren joined the GLNF (*Grande Loge Nationale Française*). The only lodges that remained in existence after the move were *Gemaïoune* and *Astrée*. A minority within the lodge remained loyal to the GLDF and joined with the Brethren of *Jupiter* and *Lotos* to form a single group.

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