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# La Masonería en el mundo - Rusia

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Adrian Mac Liman  
Centro Ibérico de Estudios Masónicos (CIEM)  
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# Russian Masonry

*"Children's children [are] the crown of old men; and the glory of children [are] their fathers."*<sup>1</sup>

The history of the Order of Free and Accepted Masons in Russia covers many centuries. This history has been full of rises and falls, searches of Truth and dashing among social and religious trends of various epochs, participation in the public life of the country, in the development of its culture and art. As any socio-cultural phenomenon, the Fraternity in Russia has absorbed into itself the spirit of the country, its centuries-old history, its religion and culture, - and due to all this, Freemasonry has always represented something inextricably connected with the history and traditions of this one most ancient community, but at the same time, something imperceptibly original, penetrated by the authentic Russian high spirituality and wish to sacrifice, aspiration to comprehend the God and to merge with Him through spiritual search and service to mankind.

Whatever has been said about Freemasonry both by its supporters and opponents, at all times and at any turns of the steering wheel of the Russian history, it sometime became and forever remained the first and actually unique secular ideology of the Russian intelligentsia during a rather lengthy period of time, during which the intelligentsia in this country has got stronger, has crystallized and has given the country and the world a whole row of the brightest names - writers, artists, composers, military, public figures, lawyers, scientists...

Since the very beginning of its history in Russia, which many researchers state to be at the time of the reign of Peter I (the Great), Masons have always actively aspired to participate in the formation of people's ideas concerning the God, the Person and his/her place in this world, concerning the Road of Justice, and the development of the society. Masonic moral values - Freedom, Equality, the Brotherhood, Faith, Honour - became for them the guiding stars in the tormentous ocean of life, guided by which, they aspired to rightly conduct the ship, which passengers were - the society; and it is necessary to remember, that up to the end of the last century, Freemasonry has been practically exclusively meant for nobilities, who in many respects determined the life and the style of the society. Freemasonry always aspired "to take good people and to make them better", to make him a person of sincere and deep Faith and the most elevated, crystal-clear Morals.

With the golden letters are inscribed in the Russian history the of great masons: Yelagin, Novikov, Radishchev, Speranskiy, Gaaz, A.S.Pushkin and V.L.Pushkin, Suvorov, Kutuzov, Pestelj, Kovalevskiy and many, many others. According to some sources, Russian Czars Peter I, Paul I and Alexander I joined the Fraternity. By no means does the fraternity pretend to possess the "monopoly" for the formation and definition of their views, however all of them were the children of their time, and all of them partook of the philosophy, ideology and moral Light of Freemasonry, which fact should have rendered a certain influence on them.

During all its history, Russian Freemasonry developed as a part of a whole - the Universal Fraternity of Freemasons. Since the times of the Willhelmsbad Convention, the ties of Russian Masons with their Brethren in Great Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, the USA have up to this day been traditionally strong and fruitful. Russian Brethren, being abroad, usually attend meetings of foreign lodges, and foreign Brethren, during their stay in Russia, visit meetings of Russian lodges.

Unfortunately, totalitarian regimes, but for the rare exceptions, like modern Cuba, do not wish to suffer the existence of spiritually free people in their countries, who are not accountable to "the Big Brother". Freemasonry was exposed to prosecutions both during the domination in Europe of the Catholic church, and much later, under communistic and fascist regimes.

However, nowadays, after more than seventy years' break, it revives in Russia again, although it is impossible to assert, that it had once completely disappeared. Russian Brethren, after the revolution in 1917, had transferred the works abroad, first of all, to France, where the work of Russian lodges had not interrupted even for a day up to now, that is, until the beginning of 1990, when the first Russian citizens were initiated into the Order in France. Here, again it is necessary to mention that huge gratitude which all Russian brothers feel towards a great Freemason, a true friend of Russia Mikhail Vasil'evich Garder, without whose help the Fraternity in Russia hardly could have been revived.

On June, 24, 1995, the grand Lodge of Russia was founded and concecrated under the auspices of the Grand Loge Nationale Francaise. The GLR has the jurisdiction over 12 workshops (blue lodges) constantly accepting new members. The Grand Lodge of Russia has been recognized as regular, and established brotherly communications by and with the following Grand jurisdictions:

- United Grand Lodge of England;
- Grand (Mother) Lodge of Scotland;
- Grand Lodge of Ireland;
- Grand Loge Nationale Francaise;
- United Grand Lodge of Germany;
- Grand Lodge of Austria;
- Grand Lodge of Turkey;
- Grand Lodge of New York, and many other Grand jurisdictions worldwide.

The Russian Fraternity unites in its rows the representatives of the most different trades and walks of life: military, businessmen, artists, teachers, doctors, - of all ages and every possible political and religious beliefs - who are united by the Faith in the God and the power of Man, the aspiration to perfection of self and the world around,

and of the society, by the love towards people, the country and knowledge, as well as the feeling of the supreme duty towards the God and mankind.

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1 - The book of Solomon Parables 17, 6