



# **REGULAR FREEMASONRY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

# Introduction

The leaflet 'Freemasonry's External Relations' explains relations between the United Grand Lodge of England ('Grand Lodge') and other Masonic bodies. It shows what constitutes Masonic regularity. This leaflet examines the attitude of regular Freemasonry to public affairs.

## Regularity

The basic principles or rules governing the recognition of a Grand Lodge as regular were codified by Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland (the 'Home Grand Lodges') in 1929. They include a requirement that the 'discussion of religion and politics within the Lodge shall be strictly prohibited'. The phrase 'within the Lodge' should not be interpreted narrowly but extends to Masonic circumstances generally, and must be read in the light of paragraph 6 of Aims and Relationships of the Craft.

## 'Aims and Relationships of the Craft'

The aims and relationships of the Craft (i.e. Freemasonry as practised under a Grand Lodge) have been explained from time to time in the Press in the British Isles, particularly in formal statements (in identical terms except for national names) issued by the Home Grand Lodges in 1938. Relevant paragraphs of Grand Lodge's statements are as follows:

'6. While English Freemasonry thus inculcates in each of its members the duties of loyalty and citizenship, it reserves to the individual the right to hold his own opinion with regard to public affairs. But neither in any Lodge, nor at any time in his capacity as a Freemason, is he permitted to discuss or to advance his views on theological or political questions:.

'7. The Grand Lodge has always consistently refused to express any opinions on questions of foreign or domestic State policy either at home or abroad, and it will not allow its name to be associated with any action, however humanitarian it may appear to be, which infringes its unalterable policy of standing aloof from every question affecting the relations between one government and another, or between political parties, or questions as to rival theories of government.'

'8. The Grand Lodge is aware that there do exist bodies, styling themselves Freemasons, which do not adhere to these principles, and while that attitude exists the Grand Lodge of England refuses absolutely to have any relations with such bodies, or to regard them as Freemasons.'

In 1949 the Home Grand Lodges formally confirmed that they stood by their statements, particularly paragraph 7. Their opinion has not changed.

## Public Affairs

The basic principles and the statement of Freemasonry's aims show that the rule that forbids Masonic discussion of politics is designed to prevent regular Freemasonry becoming involved in any way in affairs of State, whether they are domestic or external. Great care must be taken to ensure that nothing is done that might allow it even to seem to be so involved.

Grand Lodges which ignore these principles are not conducting themselves regularly and cannot expect to be or to remain recognised.

## References

The full 'basic principles' and the statement on the aims and relationships of the Craft are printed in Grand Lodge's *Book of Constitutions* and *Masonic Year Book*.

Basic principles are re-stated in Grand Lodge's leaflet 'Freemasonry's External Relations'..



The Grand Secretary  
**The United Grand Lodge of England**  
Freemasons' Hall  
60 Great Queen Street  
London WC2B 5AZ  
T. 0207 831 9811  
F. 0207 831 5719