

# Freemasonry in the Philippines

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Synopsis	3
<b>1. Historical context</b>	<b>3</b>
- Before Spanish discovery	
- Spanish discovery and colonisation 1521 - 1898	
<b>2. The Introduction of Freemasonry</b>	<b>6</b>
- British Masons in the Philippines – 1762-1764	
- Spanish Prohibition - early 1800s	
<b>3. Early Spanish Masons and Lodges in the Philippines</b>	<b>8</b>
- Implications of the Spanish Revolution – 1868	
- Cavite Mutiny – 1872	
- Organisation of Spanish lodges	
<b>4. Early Filipino Masons and Lodges in Spain – 1870s</b>	<b>12</b>
- The Propaganda Movement and <i>La Solidaridad</i>	
<b>5. Early Filipino Masons and Filipino Lodges in the Philippines – 1890s</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6. Freemasonry and the Trilogy of Wars</b>	<b>15</b>
- The Philippine Revolutionary War - 1896-1897	
i. Reign of Terror – 1895-1897	
ii. Freemason against Freemason	
iii. The Pact of Biak-na-Bato	
- The Spanish-American War in the Philippines – 1898	
- The Filipino-American War – 1899-1902	
<b>7. Masonic resurgence in the Philippines – 1890s – 1930s</b>	<b>21</b>
- Philippine Freemasonry moves away from Spain	
- Towards American Freemasonry	
<b>8. Freemasonry and Philippine Independence</b>	<b>25</b>
- Japanese Occupation – 1942-1945	
- More recently	
<b>9. Insights, Tangents and Reflections</b>	<b>28</b>
- <i>The Katipunan</i>	
- <i>The Philippine Flag and Links to Freemasonry</i>	
i. The triangle	
ii. The sun, stars, and colours	
- <i>Reflections</i>	
<b>10. Epilogue – The Victorian Initiative</b>	<b>35</b>
References	36
Other texts	37

## *Synopsis*

Freemasonry has existed in the Philippines since the mid-1800s. Although the earliest lodges were composed solely of foreigners, Filipinos soon had a foretaste of the libertarian ideals of the Fraternity. This European Freemasonry aroused a craving for freedom from oppression through several wars that prompted the first Philippine President to claim that the revolution was "Masonically inspired, Masonically led, and Masonically executed".

The paper is a brief study of the beginnings of Freemasonry in the Philippines, its impact and influence on the struggle for freedom and independence, and its gradual permeation into the very fabric of Filipino society. The study draws on literature that is not readily available on the subject matter, sourced directly from the Philippines, and relies on individual research undertaken during recent visits to the country and visits to Masonic lodges of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

Through a potted early history of the Philippines and Freemasonry, the study offers some insights and reflections on the achievements, heroes and successes of Freemasonry and its role in attaining the independence of the Republic in what is a predominantly Catholic country with ancient Islamic heritage.

## **1. Historical context**

The history of the Philippines may be considered in four distinct periods as follows:

1. Before 1521            Pre-Spanish colonisation era
2. 1521 – 1898        Spanish colonisation
  - 1521 – 1750s    Early Spanish period
  - 1750s – 1810s   Middle Spanish period
  - 1820s – 1890s   Late Spanish period
  - 1896 – 1898    Anti-colonial revolution
3. 1898 – 1945        American colonisation
  - 1942 – 1945    Japanese occupation
4. 1946 – present     Post colonisation era
  - 1946 – 1965    Early post-war Republic
  - 1966 – 1986    Marcos period
  - 1986 – present   Current period

For the purposes of this paper, we will focus primarily from the middle period of Spanish colonisation until the early post-war Republic. It is near impossible to convey the various phases of Masonic progress without mention of the historical events that surrounded them and were intertwined in them. This paper is an attempt to present the authors' research and perspectives on the intrinsically entangled story of Freemasonry in Philippine history.

In this sense, Filipino Freemasonry cannot be understood outside the context of Philippine history. In order to appreciate the role of Freemasonry in the history of the Philippines, it is essential to understand a little of the country and its origins.

*Before Spanish Discovery*

When the Philippines was discovered by Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, it was a discovery to people of the West, but not to Filipinos who regard it merely as a rediscovery. The first ancient people of the Philippines came from Central Asia having walked across the connected land. Over thousands of years, immigration first by Indonesians and then by three waves of Malays the first two between 200 BC and 1300 AD.

The third of these immigrant waves was the Mohammedan Malays (Moros), between 1300 and 1500 AD, who were more advanced in culture than their predecessors, having been influenced by the ancient civilizations of Malaysia, India, China and Arabia. From the intermingling of the first settlers over thousands of years, evolved the Filipino people.<sup>1</sup>

Mohammedanism (Islam) is still an active religion in Mindanao and Sulu. With this religion came a new form of government (sultanate), a new alphabet (Arabic script), Moorish arts and sciences and the use of gunpowder.

The unit of government among ancient Filipinos was the barangay – a settlement of 30 to 100 families – ruled by a datu (chief). Ancient Philippines was divided into hundreds of barangays, independent of one another, although some would unite for mutual welfare or for improved protection. This unit of organisation continues in local government structures of today.

In the centuries prior to the coming of the Spaniards, the Germans, British, Dutch and Portuguese were already bartering goods, but not establishing permanent settlements in the Philippines. Filipinos were also intermarrying with Indians, Chinese, Japanese and Arabs, and from their contact with western countries, the Filipino race was further mingled with Spanish, American, English, French, Italian and other Western nations. In this way, the Filipino people are a product of the racial blending of East and West with the Malay predominant – brown complexion, straight black hair, dark brown eyes and well-built physique.

*Spanish discovery and colonisation 1521 - 1898*

In 1519, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese serving Spanish royalty, sailed from Spain with a Spanish expedition in search of the Spice Islands. He landed in Mactan on the island of Cebu in the Philippines in 1521 and claimed the lands for Spain, naming them *Islas de San Lazaro*.

Magellan never completed the journey himself, having been killed in an encounter with natives. In what is known as the Battle of Mactan, in April 1521, Magellan and his 100 soldiers were clearly outnumbered by Chief Lapu-Lapu's 3,000 warriors. Three Spanish expeditions followed Magellan's – Saavedra (1527-29), Villalobos (1541-46) and the most successful of all, Legazpi (1564).

In February 1565, Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legazpi set about to accomplish an almost bloodless conquest of the Philippines. He concluded treaties of friendship with the *datos*, the most famous of which was a blood compact and alliance with Datu Sikatuna on the island of Bohol. In May that year, the Island of Cebu was surrendered to Legazpi by its datu and Legazpi established the first permanent Spanish settlement and became the first Spanish governor-general.

Datus who decided to oppose Spain's colonisation were met by force, often with the aid of native alliances. The Spaniards played on old enmities of native tribes that opposed

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<sup>1</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pxii.

each other. This same methodology, of using one native group against another, was often used by the Spaniards in quelling revolts throughout its rule of the colony.

In 1570, Legazpi continued his exploration throughout the Philippine islands forming alliances with the datos he encountered to gain greater influence. Reaching Manila in the island of Luzon, Legazpi formed a peace pact with the native councils and local ruler Suleiman. Both groups agreed to organize a city council, consisting of two mayors, twelve councillors and a secretary. Legazpi established a settlement there in June 1571, and ordered the construction of the walled city of *Intramuros*. He proclaimed the town as the island's capital, and the seat of the Spanish government in the East Indies.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the discovery of spices, Spain's primary aims and intentions in the Philippines may be summed up as God, Gold and Glory, that is:

- the conversion of the natives, or "indios" to Roman Catholicism,
- the accumulation of wealth, and
- the supremacy of Spain over Portugal as a superpower.

The Manila-Acapulco galleon trade was the main source of income for the colony during its early years. The galleon trade brought silver from the Americas (New Spain) and silk from China by way of Manila. Income was earned by buying silk from China for resale to New Spain and buying silver from the Americas for resale to China.

The trade was very prosperous, but it neglected the development of the colony's local industries which in turn affected the native Filipinos who relied on agriculture as their livelihood. In addition, the building and operation of galleons meant that the natives were engaged in forced labour (*polo y servicio*). However, the cultural and commercial exchange between Asia and the Americas led to the introduction of new crops and animals to the Philippines notably tobacco which provided a new source of income that directly benefited the locals.

Spanish missionary work with Filipino natives focused on the advancement of education, culture, and architecture. Their efforts were the key factor in the virtual elimination of the ancient written literature of the Filipinos. The destruction of ancient writings and ancient cultural records has meant that only orally transmitted literature has survived.

As the country was divided into thousands of scattered barangays, it became necessary to gather the population in places where they could be conveniently administered by colonial and religious officials. During the period of colonization, the Spanish operated under two divisions of government:

- the central government in which the King of Spain entrusted the colony to the governor-general, the highest position in the Spanish government.
- the *Royal Audiencia* - the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

Other structures included:

- The *Residencia* and the *Visitador* - special courts that investigated the conduct of the governor-general and other high-ranking Spanish officials.
- Provinces were divided into either an:
  - o *Alcaldia* - which recognized Spain's possession over the land, or a
  - o *Corregimiento* - where the people had not yet succumbed to Spain's rule.
- The *Ayuntamiento* or the city government was the center of society, religion, culture and business. The pueblo (city) was governed by the gobernadorcillo, the highest position for Filipino politicians and a *Cabeza de Barangay* governed the barrios (villages).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn., pp75-79.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Spanish rule also meant the union of the church (headed by the highest office of Archbishop) and the state (headed by the governor-general). While the governor-general had power over the church, the "friars" (a collective term for priests, brothers and nuns of religious orders) had an overwhelming influence in the affairs of state.

In fact, it seemed that the church exercised more power than the government and, because of this, the Spanish government in the Philippines was referred to as a "Frailocracia," a government controlled by the friars.<sup>4</sup>

There quickly developed social or racial strata by which Spanish authorities could ensure the purity of Spanish heritage was maintained in all dealings. The racial divisions became a means of self-identity as Peninsulares banded against creoles and insulares. These strata were:

- a) Peninsulares – Spaniards born in the Iberian Peninsula.
- b) Insulares – Spaniards born of Spanish parents in the Philippines, called "Filipinos Insulares" or just "Filipinos".
- c) Criollos (creoles) – Spaniards born in the Spanish colonies (eg the Americas). Among the ranks of Spanish colonisers in the Philippines were those born in Mexico and Peru.
- d) Mestizos – offspring of Spaniards interbreeding with Indios, Chinese, and Creoles.
- e) Indios – natives of the Philippines divided into the 'pacified' and the 'savages'.<sup>5</sup>

## **2. The Introduction of Freemasonry**

The spread of Freemasonry to the Spanish colonies occurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, heralded by a number of jurisdictions establishing lodges at considerable risk, as the wrath of the Inquisition discouraged membership of the Craft.<sup>6</sup>

In 1738, the Roman Catholic objections to Freemasonry were first expressed in the Papal Bull *In Eminenti* issued by Pope Clement XII. Accusations against Freemasonry included:

- becoming popular
- binding members to secrecy
- members being compelled to swear an oath.

Despite the fact that Freemasonry is obviously not a religion, but a unique and practical philosophy of life, perhaps even a philosophical companion to religion, the Catholic Church either chose to misunderstand it as anti-Christian or was genuinely fearful of the philosophy, and confused its secular rituals with religious liturgy.

*In Eminenti* and subsequent Papal Bulls, however, did little to prevent Catholics from remaining or joining Freemasonry including many priests and Church dignitaries. Despite the automatic penalty of excommunication and being deprived of all spiritual privileges, many Catholics ignored these Papal Bulls, which led to a series of Papal edicts over the next three centuries that confirmed or renewed the Church's position against Freemasonry.

The outlawing of Freemasonry by King Ferdinand VI of Spain in 1751, brought with it a continued wave of oppression across the Spanish empire.

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<sup>4</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp81-89.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Rich, P & De Los Reyes, G, 1995, "Reappraising Scottish Rite Freemasonry in Latin America", *Heredom*, vol 4, pp245-246.

British Masons in the Philippines – 1762-1764

It is not exactly certain when or why Freemasonry was introduced to the Philippines. The strict prohibitions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries have effectively wiped any early records that may have existed. There are, however, two pieces of evidence of early Freemasonry in the country.

There is a record of individual Masons having been in the Philippines in 1756. As Pope Clement XII's *In Eminenti* was enforced by the Spanish colonial government, a record of the Inquisition shows an entry of a trial of two Irishmen - James O'Kennedy, a merchant and Dr Edward Wigat, a physician – for 'heresy' in Manila on the charge of being Freemasons. Both Masons were released because they were British citizens.<sup>7</sup>

The other piece of evidence is a record of the earliest lodge, founded by English Masons in Manila between 1762-1764.<sup>8</sup>

The confrontational relationship between Britain and France can be traced to the Seven Years' War - the last major conflict before the French Revolution to involve all the great powers of Europe - between England and France in 1756 in which Spain allied with France. This conflict extended across the empire. In 1762, after a brief struggle with Spain, the British fleet anchored in Manila Bay to mark the beginning of the British invasion of the Philippines. General William Draper (British East India Company) led the expeditionary forces to capture the Spanish colony of Manila.

Almost as if in retaliation for the trial of the two British Masons six years earlier, there are vague reports that the occupying force used the Catholic Cathedral in the walled city of Intramuros in Manila as the venue to hold military lodge meetings. This military lodge was organised by members of Gibraltar Lodge No.128.<sup>9</sup>

This is the earliest evidence of lodge meetings having been held on Philippine soil. It is also an indication of how widely Freemasonry had spread across the globe, 45 years after the establishment of the United Grand Lodge of England.

The outrage at this occurrence is best evidenced in a letter in the Archives of the Indies in Seville, Spain, wherein the Archbishop of Manila sought to have the cathedral demolished because of the desecration caused by British Masonic meetings. Fortunately, the authority to do so was not granted. The hidden door to the meeting room and the meeting room itself still exist within the cathedral to this day.

The British occupation of the Philippines was short-lived as the Seven Years' War ended in Europe in 1763 with the signing of the peace treaty in Paris. The British invaders returned Spanish sovereignty over Manila and its environs in March 1764 and sailed back to India in April that year.

While the British occupation left distinct features of Indian ancestry, as Sepoy members of the British forces chose to remain and married Filipino women, the brief skirmish also brought about ideological change among Filipinos. Knowing that Spain was vulnerable and its rule in the Philippines would not last forever foreshadowed that Filipinos could and would eventually self-rule.

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<sup>7</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, p5.

<sup>8</sup> Rich, P & De Los Reyes, G, 1995, "Reappraising Scottish Rite Freemasonry in Latin America", *Heredom*, vol 4, pp245-246.

<sup>9</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pp6-8.

Another early record of the presence of Masons in Manila is a monument erected in Plaza Cervantes in honour of an American, Bro. George W. Hubbell, the first US Consul to Manila (1822-32) who passed away in 1834. A memorial was to be put over his grave, however since he was not Catholic (but rather a Protestant and a Mason) the Spanish colonial government would not allow it in its cemetery. The monument is now located on the grounds of the US Embassy in Manila.<sup>10</sup>

### Spanish Prohibition – early 1800s

To a large extent, the impact of Freemasonry and its contribution to the development of Philippine independence echoed the progressively political, secular, anti-clerical and reformist movements in Latin America during the 18th and 19th centuries.

During the early nineteenth century, Spain was ruled by King Ferdinand VII, a devout Catholic who detested Freemasonry because of its association with liberal thinking and political unrest. The revolts in Mexico and parts of Latin America were led predominantly by Freemasons like Miguel Hidalgo (Mexico, 1810) and Simon Bolivar, who is often referred to as the liberator of South America.

The first official prohibition of Freemasonry in the Philippines was in a Royal Letter Patent dated 19 January 1812 issued by the Council of the Regency of Spain and the Indies, on behalf of the absent Ferdinand VII of Spain who was then a prisoner of the French. In 1814, Ferdinand VII abolished the constitution and re-established the Inquisition.<sup>11</sup>

In August 1824, in another Royal Letter Patent, Freemasonry was again prohibited as “one of the main causes of revolution in Spain and in (Latin) America”.<sup>12</sup>

There can be little doubt that Freemasonry in Spanish territories was perceived as a political threat, its very existence caused Spain to fear the loss of its colonies. In addition, the Roman Catholic Church perception of Freemasonry as godless, anti-Christ and heretical, meant that Freemasons in the Philippines were bound to wage a long, arduous struggle for religious freedom and against bigotry.<sup>13</sup>

### **3. Early Spanish Masons and Lodges in the Philippines**

Foreigners in the colonies neighbouring the Philippines (such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Java, Macau and other ports) had a great advantage - they were consolidated by Freemasonry. Fraternisation between them brought about a spirit of solidarity that was not present in the Philippines.

This advantage proved particularly useful to the Spanish Navy and helped to motivate the establishment of the first formal lodge in Manila in 1856 with the aim of creating a solidarity for peace and harmony. This led a Spanish naval officer, Capt. Jose Malcampo to establish “La Primera Luz Filipina” (Lodge of the First Philippine Light) in Kawit, Cavite.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, p6.

<sup>13</sup> Rich, P & De Los Reyes, G, 1995, “Reappraising Scottish Rite Freemasonry in Latin America”, *Heredom*, vol 4, p249.

<sup>14</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, p9.



In 1859, joined by officer Mendez Nuñez, Malcampo formed another lodge in the province of Zamboanga. As most of the Lodges in Spain at that time were under the Gran Oriente Lusitano of Portugal, this jurisdiction was chosen for these first two lodges composed of officers from the Navy, Army, and government employees - all Spaniards.

In 1862, Malcampo and Nuñez returned to Spain and in 1868 participated in the revolution that deposed the Monarchy and Queen Isabella II. Malcampo later served the Spanish government in different positions until he was again assigned to the Philippines as Governor General from 1874 to 1877.

In the 13 years between 1859 and 1872 existing and new jurisdictions formed lodges in the Philippines. In 1868 alone, three lodges were formed:

- Lodge Union Germanica (1868) organised by the German Consul General and other foreigners in Manila under a Scottish Rite lodge in Hong Kong.
- Lodge Nagtahan (1868) organised by the British Consul in Manila also under a Scottish Rite lodge in Hong Kong.
- Lodge Pandacan (1868) organised by exiled republican Spaniards.<sup>15</sup>

Both the German and British lodges admitted prominent "Filipinos", presumably insulares, creoles or mestizos.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Implications of the Spanish Revolution - 1868*

One of the leaders of the Spanish revolution of 1868 was a Freemason, General Juan Prim, who became Regent in 1869. Under Prim's administration there served another Freemason (and liberal), Segismundo Moret as Minister of Overseas Colonies. Moret set about reforming Spain's colonies and appointed another Freemason who was also a liberal, Governor General Carlos Maria dela Torre who was assigned to the Philippines in 1869.

The reforms implemented by Governor dela Torre included free public discussion of social and political issues; partial secularization of education and government control over some educational institutions previously dominated by the friars. He lifted censorship of the press, and provided exemptions from forced labour and payment of tributes. Dela Torre also fraternised with mestizos and native Filipinos.

These reforms and innovations were well received by Filipinos, particularly the growing ranks of intellectuals and Filipino secular priests. However, they also served to anger the Spanish friars who saw their influence threatened and who feared the promotion of nationalist sentiment and the focus given this fervour by Filipino secular priests headed by Fr Jose Burgos.

Conditions quickly changed when the Spanish Parliament restored the Spanish monarchical system, the Regent, General Juan Prim was assassinated in 1870, and Governor General Carlos dela Torre was recalled to Spain in 1871, allegedly through the agitation of the friars.

In 1871, King Amadeo of Spain appointed Lt. Gen. Rafael de Izquierdo as Governor General of the Philippines. Both the King of Spain and the governor general were Freemasons.

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<sup>15</sup> Henderson, K & Love, G (eds), 1994, *Masonic inspirations*, 8<sup>th</sup> vol, pp101-107.

<sup>16</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, p12.

### Cavite Mutiny – 1872

The year 1872 was marked by the mutiny (revolt) of native military and other personnel working at the Cavite arsenal and navy yard who protested the withdrawal by the new Governor General Rafael de Izquierdo of certain privileges granted earlier by the liberal dela Torre.

Although the mutiny leaders were wiped out, the event was exploited by the friars and Izquierdo to quell growing nationalist feelings and to implicate many prominent Filipinos and liberal minded intellectuals many of whom were Freemasons.

While many were imprisoned or exiled to distant colonies, the friars convinced Izquierdo of the complicity of Fr. Burgos, together with Fathers Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora in the so-called mutiny. The three priests were publicly executed by garrote on 17 February 1872.

A total of 41 people was executed as a result of the Cavite mutiny.<sup>17</sup> The martyrdom of the three Filipino priests inspired rebellion and the quasi-Masonic rebel force yet to be formed in years to come, the Katipunan, used the cryptonym "Gom-bur-za" as a password in its ritual.

Many others, liberals, intellectuals and Freemasons were imprisoned or deported. As persecution continued, some were able to escape to Spain to avoid arrest. Those fortunate enough to reach Spain were later joined by Filipinos who were studying in Spanish and other European universities. Together, they started a movement for reforms which also led to the organization of Masonic lodges in the Philippines.

### Organisation of Spanish Lodges

Shortly after the Cavite Mutiny, the Gran Oriente de España appointed Grand Delegate Rufino Pascual Torrejon to organise Masonic lodges in the Philippines. In 1874, together with a Spanish (Peninsulare) doctor, Mariano Marti, three Spanish lodges were established - Logia Luz de Oriente No 6 in Manila; Logia La Española in Cebu and Logia La Libertad in Iloilo.<sup>18</sup>

If there were any Filipinos that remained in these lodges, the reorganisation of the Gran Oriente de España in 1874 would have eliminated them. The Masonic lodges in the Philippines at this time were comprised completely of European membership.

By 1874, the three lodges formed in 1868 (German, British and Spanish) had all dissolved. When Malcampo (founder of the Portuguese lodge, Primera Luz Filipina) assumed the role of Governor General in June that year he reported, to the Minister of Colonies, the growth of Freemasonry in the Philippines and expressed his fears that its existence would become hostile to Spain should its native members (Filipinos) become the majority and lead the secret society into activism.

Malcampo promised the Minister that he would impede and restrain the influence of Filipinos by ordering their elimination from the lodges and reorganising Freemasonry under the Gran Oriente de España. Torrejon complied and constituted a District Grand Lodge in 1875 with himself as Grand President.

The following year, its General Regulations containing an organizational plan was approved by the Gran Oriente de España.

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<sup>17</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp145-147.

<sup>18</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pp13-17.

The next decade saw a consolidation of the Spanish lodges into a Provincial or Regional Lodge. In 1879, Torrejon's District Grand Lodge formed four more lodges - one in Iloilo, one in Cebu and two in Cavite. A Blue Lodge, a Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix, a Chamber of Knights Kadosh and a Grand Triangle of the Royal Arch were constituted in each of these cities.

In 1884, the then Prime Minister of Spain, Illustrious Bro. Práxedes Mateo-Sagasta (Sovereign Grand Commander (Scottish Rite) and Grand Master of the Gran Oriente de España) appointed three 33<sup>rd</sup> degree Freemasons (known as the *Triangulo de los 33°* or Triangle of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree) to government positions in the colony. They were:

- Emilio Terrero y Perinat, a general who served as commanding officer in New Castille and chief of the King's military. He was appointed governor general of the Philippines in 1885. A conservative at first, he became a reform-minded liberal and anti-cleric after seeing first-hand the abuses and avarice of the friars and their blatant disregard for the laws of the land.
- Jose Centeno y Garcia, the acting Civil Governor of the province of Manila, long-time resident of the Philippines, mining engineer and author of several geological works on the Philippine archipelago. He was appointed chief of the mining bureau from 1876 to 1886. From 1884, he served as Grand Delegate of the Oriente Nacional de España and it was due to his efforts that the officers and members of Logia Luz de Oriente No.6 (formed in 1874) transferred and re-chartered their Lodge from the Gran Oriente de España to his Grand Orient.
- Benigno Quiroga y Lopez Ballesteros, trained as a forester and served in the Spanish parliament as a liberal. He first served as Director General for Civil Administration in June 1887. He used the daily newspaper *La Opinion* as the mouthpiece of the Triangulo de los 33°. Most of the subscribers to this newspaper were progressive Filipinos.

The combined leadership forces of these three Spanish Freemasons helped to reduce, as far as they reasonably could, the power and prestige of the abusive friars in the Philippines. In a bold move, Terrero declared that all Filipino natives were by law Spaniards. He further decreed the establishment of schools in a province for the education of children by laypeople. This was in direct defiance of the Papal Bull – that education is the function solely of the Church. <sup>19</sup>

As a consequence, with the continued agitation of the proponents of the *Frailocracia*, the Triangle of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree was eventually dismissed, and its reform efforts short-lived.

In 1886, the Gran Oriente de España was plagued by a series of upheavals after the resignation of its Grand Master over the discovery of mishandling of funds by the Grand Secretary. This led in 1888 to a merger of the Oriente Nacional with the Gran Oriente de España. Charges of fraud marred the ensuing elections and Miguel Morayta, together with about 90 lodges, left the newly formed union of the two Orients to form the *Gran Oriente Español*. <sup>20</sup>

Morayta was a professor at the Universidad Central Madrid and became the Secretary General of the Ministry of State during Spain's First Republic. He was initiated into Freemasonry in Logia Mantuana de Madrid and served as Grand Master of the Gran Oriente Español from 1889 to 1901 and again from 1906 until his death in 1917.

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<sup>19</sup> Gonzales, JY, 2015, "Father of Philippine Masonry- Ka Selo Del Pilar", *The Cable Tow*, Vol. 92, No. 3, Sept-Oct, pp42-48.

<sup>20</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, pp19-23.

#### **4. Early Filipino Masons and Lodges in Spain**

For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Masonic lodges were centres for liberal thought leadership and, as such, Freemasonry played a significant part in the liberation of the Spanish American republics primarily because of its "anti-clerical orientation and...the opportunity its secrecy allowed for clandestine activity".<sup>21</sup>

The last two decades of the 19th century were characterised by political unrest never before experienced by Filipinos. It was also a time when improved economic conditions in the Philippines enabled some Filipinos to travel to Europe.

Growing political and social consciousness and dissatisfaction with the status quo found expression in the works of students turned reformists such as Graciano Lopez Jaena, Jose Rizal, Marcelo del Pilar, Eduardo de Lete, Pedro Govantes and others, who were among those who fled the Philippines in search of freedom, to pursue higher studies or simply to avoid arrest.



Lopez Jaena      MH del Pilar      Dr Jose Rizal      Mariano Ponce      Antonio Luna      Miguel Morayta

#### **The Propaganda Movement and La Solidaridad**

In 1872, these Filipino expatriates formed a literary and cultural (not political) organization known as the Propaganda Movement, which aimed to heighten Spanish awareness of the needs of its Philippine colony.

As part of this movement, the Asociación Hispano-Filipina (Hispanic-Filipino Association) was inaugurated in Madrid in 1888 with Miguel Morayta as president. The association, comprised of Filipino and Spanish Masons, worked with Marcelo del Pilar, Jose Rizal, Mariano Ponce, Antonio Luna and other Filipino propagandists all of whom served as key figures in Philippine Freemasonry and the campaign for colonial reforms.<sup>22</sup>

After several attempts to give voice to the plight of Filipinos under Spanish rule in the Philippines, Lopez Jaena with the support of other Filipino reformist thought leaders in Spain funded and eventually published *La Solidaridad* newspaper in Barcelona in 1889. With contributions from Filipino nationals in the Philippines and Spain, the fortnightly paper was dedicated to:

- 1) exposing conditions in the Philippines,
- 2) defending Filipinos against the malicious and slanderous attacks of the friars, and
- 3) publishing studies about the Philippines and Filipinos.

As such, it addressed Spanish and European audiences so they might know and appreciate the conditions and the need for reforms in the Philippine colony.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Schumacher, JN, 1966, "Philippine Masonry to 1890", *Asian Studies*, vol 4, p328.

<sup>22</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, pp40-41.

<sup>23</sup> Schumacher, JN 1997, *The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness: The Making of the Revolution: The Propaganda Movement 1880-1895*, pp128-138.

Morayta also actively worked to promote Filipino interests and helped the campaign for the reinstatement of Filipino representation in the Spanish parliament (Cortes). Running out of funds, plagued with internal problems and weary of the apathy shown by the central government in Madrid, *La Solidaridad* printed its last issue on 15 November 1895. Less than a year later, the Philippine revolution started. Lopez Jaena died in January 1896 and Del Pilar followed him six months later – both succumbed to tuberculosis.<sup>24</sup>

Disgusted with the role of the friars in Philippine affairs, the Filipino propagandists in Spain became closely affiliated with European Masonic lodges. It was also perhaps the fact that Freemasonry in the Philippines had not at this time accepted Filipinos as members that explains the readiness of Filipino students in Europe to join Masonic lodges that had no race prescriptions.<sup>25</sup>

The Filipinos who became Freemasons in Spain became among the *Ilustrados* or educated or enlightened Filipinos. These educated Filipino Freemasons were able to promote the democratic notion of nationhood among Filipinos in the Philippines. In this way, Freemasonry in the Philippines was associated with revolutionary thought.

In 1889, Logia La Solidaridad was founded in Barcelona by two Filipinos, three Cubans, a Puerto Rican and two peninsular Spaniards. Although the lodge dissolved after only a few months, it helped to establish Filipino contacts with Freemasons and Miguel Morayta.<sup>26</sup>

Morayta's friendship with the Filipino expatriates led to the organization of a predominantly Filipino Lodge in Barcelona, Logia Revolución (1889) and the revival of Logia Solidaridad in Madrid (1890). Chartered by the Gran Oriente Español, Logia Revolución was the first predominantly Filipino lodge with Lopez Jaena as Master, Mariano Ponce as Secretary and members Marcelo del Pilar, Jose Maria Panganiban, and two Cubans.

Logia Revolución dissolved when Marcelo del Pilar moved the propaganda campaign to Madrid, and Logia Solidaridad became the lodge of Filipino Masons in Spain and a forum of nationalistic ideas. Dr Jose Rizal was made a Master Mason in the lodge. As Master of the Lodge, Del Pilar used the Lodge to actively communicate with other lodges, and used their collaboration in various petitions to obtain reforms and rights for the Philippines.<sup>27</sup>

The lodges themselves became the focus of propaganda activities in Spain and were responsible for maintaining unity in the ranks. Some authors argue that Marcelo Del Pilar, in particular, rose rapidly through the ranks in Freemasonry to make effective use of this advantage for the political purposes of the reformist movement and to destroy the power of the friars in the Philippines.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast, Dr Jose Rizal was unwilling to make use of Masonic influence for political purposes having declared that he did not want, "to owe the tranquillity of the Philippines to anyone except the forces of the country itself."<sup>29</sup>

The leading Filipinos then thought it was opportune to secretly set up lodges in the Philippines.

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<sup>24</sup> Roxas-Mendoza, P, 2012, "Europe in the time of Rizal and the Free Masons", *Philippines Graphic*, vol. 23, no. 30, 24 December, p29.

<sup>25</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp152-153.

<sup>26</sup> Schumacher, JN 1997, *The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness: The Making of the Revolution: The Propaganda Movement 1880-1895*, pp134-135.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp173-178.

<sup>28</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn., pp143-146.

<sup>29</sup> Schumacher, JN 1997, *The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness: The Making of the Revolution: The Propaganda Movement 1880-1895*, pp173-178.

## **5. Early Filipino Masons and Filipino Lodges in the Philippines – 1890s**

In 1890, Morayta authorised a plan for the organisation of Philippine Freemasonry and the establishment of Masonic lodges in Manila and the provinces. Marcelo del Pilar and Dr Jose Rizal led the initiative with the aim of establishing a strong, united force to teach Filipinos to make use of their freedom of thought and speech and set about to establish Filipino lodges in the Philippines under the jurisdiction of the Gran Oriente Español.<sup>30</sup>

In mid-1891, Logia Solidaridad No.53 petitioned the Spanish Parliament (Cortes) for the restoration of the parliamentary representation of the Philippines which was cancelled in 1837. This right was actually withdrawn in all overseas provinces of Spain but was restored in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The petition was also sent to lodges to elicit the support of their members and followed up with another circular in 1892.

Bro. Marcelo del Pilar was considered the most able journalist that the Philippines has ever produced in his generation. Using the cryptonym, "Plaridel" (after which is named the Temple of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in Malate, Manila), he wrote fearlessly and frankly about the plight of Filipinos under Spanish rule with little thought to what the consequences might have been for himself. He was also a politician and diplomat.<sup>31</sup>

Marcelo del Pilar helped to implant Freemasonry in the Philippines and made it work effectively for the country. His seminal writings were a significant inspiration for Lodges particularly during the formative period of Freemasonry in the Philippines. Today, Marcelo del Pilar is referred to as the "Father of Philippine Freemasonry".<sup>32</sup>

Del Pilar secured an authorization from Morayta, Grand Master of the Gran Oriente Español, and Antonio Luna and Pedro Serrano Laktaw were appointed to undertake the practicalities of the task. Luna prepared regulations and a complete plan of organization but was unable to return to the Philippines. Morayta also authorised Bro. Dr. Jose Rizal to represent the Gran Oriente Español before the Grand Orient of France and lodges in Germany, with which he became affiliated.

In 1891 Lodge Nilad was formed in Manila and, in 1892, it was recognised by the Gran Oriente Español as Lodge Nilad No. 144. By virtue of being the first Filipino lodge, from where other lodges came from, it was considered as a "Mother Lodge" and granted authority to supervise other lodges. It was also known as Logia Central y Delegada (Central Lodge and Deputy). By 1893 there were 35 such lodges in the country, nine of which were in Manila. Initially, these lodges were limited to the elite class and were among the first to throw their support behind Filipino propagandists.

Catholic historian and Jesuit priest, John Schumacher, argues that the fundamental purpose and rationale for the activity and organisation of the early Filipino lodges in the Philippines was three-fold:

1. *Educative* - provide models for cooperative action and a collective life of association so as to bring about a receptiveness among Filipinos of the anti-friar, nationalist and progressive ideas of the propaganda movement as promoted in the works of Del Pilar, Rizal and others.
2. *Research* – study the problems of political, economic and military organisation of the Philippines to develop solutions for the future independence of the country.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Schumacher, JN 1997, *The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness: The Making of the Revolution: The Propaganda Movement 1880-1895*, p121.

<sup>32</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pp16-17.

3. *Fundraising* – for the reformist campaign, as initiation and other fees were collected by the mother lodge, Nilad, and used to fund propaganda activities of Logia Solidaridad in Madrid.<sup>33</sup>

It was through the lodges that the inflammatory works of Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, were distributed discretely among Filipinos. For this reason, it took some time before this practice was discovered and, by then, the works had already opened the eyes of Filipino intellectuals.

Filipino Masons themselves however were careful in their pronouncements, so as not to antagonise unduly the Spanish authorities. It could be argued that Filipino Masons were not seeking independence from Spain as such, but the right to provincial self-rule, that is, as a province of Spain rather than a colony of the empire.<sup>34</sup>

As such, Filipino Freemasonry seems to have confined itself to less disruptive activity, keeping itself free of any political or revolutionary endeavour. Although the lodges in Spain were a means of propaganda for Filipino Masons in Spain, Filipino Masons in the Philippines were not meant to be the vehicle for political action. While Freemasons may have sought and acquired membership of groups with active revolutionary agendas, such as the Katipunan, they were not dependent on Freemasonry for their existence.

## **6. Freemasonry and a Trilogy of Wars**

Freemasonry spread throughout the country as the reform movement gained momentum and support. Recruitment was done through “the triangle system”, a form of networking where a Mason invited two prospects to form a triangle, who in turn, formed other triangles. When a sufficient number of members were acquired in this manner, a lodge was established. (see also the section on *The Katipunan in this paper*)

The propaganda corps of the reform movement was composed mostly of Freemasons, and it was this fact that caused the greatest concern for the Spanish Minister of the Colonies.

In July 1892, Bro. Dr. Jose Rizal returned to the Philippines and organised *La Liga Filipina*, a peaceful, civic association of Filipinos aimed at uniting the country into one homogeneous body; providing mutual protection; defence against violence and injustice; encouragement of instruction, agriculture and commerce; and the study and application of reforms. Its motto was *Unus Instar Omnium* (One Like All).<sup>35</sup>

Rizal was soon after arrested, having alarmed the authorities with his popularity as author of the anti-friar novel *Noli Me Tangere*, and imprisoned at Fort Santiago before being deported to Dapitan in Mindanao until July 1896.

As more lodges formed to accommodate the increasing number of new member Masons, the speed with which the Fraternity was growing and spreading again frightened the Spanish authorities into coercive action. High-profile Freemasons in government positions were harassed and ousted from their offices, and some Freemasons were exiled for possessing incriminating Masonic documents.

In 1893, Logia Nilad lost its authority over other lodges when its leadership was challenged over alleged infringement of the rights and autonomy of lodges. Morayta

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<sup>33</sup> Schumacher, JN 1997, *The Creation of a Filipino Consciousness: The Making of the Revolution: The Propaganda Movement 1880-1895*, pp179-180.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, pp146-148.

acted quickly to approve the establishment of a new body, the Gran Consejo Regional de Filipinas (Grand Regional Council) to administer Philippine lodges.

After 1892, Freemasonry seemed to have disappeared in the provinces, although it could be assumed that the Fraternity went underground as a means of survival. When the revolution broke out in August 1896, Freemasonry was already deeply entrenched in the Philippines in spite of constant government persecution. Though not directly responsible for the revolution – even if Andres Bonifacio was a Mason – Freemasonry served as a pattern for the methods and organisation of the radical group, the Katipunan.

#### The Philippine Revolutionary War – 1896-1897

The failure of Spain to grant significant reforms forced Filipinos down a more radical revolutionary road. Amid the varying degrees of dissent, there were two polarities among the reformists and liberal thinkers:

- those who considered Spain as the 'mother country' and who promoted reform so as to transition the Philippines into a self-governing province within the Spanish empire (as espoused by the reformists of the propaganda movement and Emilio Aguinaldo in the first instance), and
- the adherents of revolution who considered Spain as an oppressive master bent on perpetuating itself and for whom the real 'mother country' was the Philippines that was crying out to be free from Spanish slavery (as espoused by Andres Bonifacio and his associates in the Katipunan).

As early as 1888, there were groups of revolutionaries that called themselves "katipunan" who adhered to the latter form of dissent and whose one aim was to overthrow Spanish rule.

Following the arrest of Dr Jose Rizal in 1892, a group of six Freemasons led by Bro. Andres Bonifacio was formed called the *Kataastaasang Kagalanggalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (KKK ANB or just KKK) or "Supreme and Most Honorable Society of the Children of the Nation". Unlike Rizal's La Liga Filipina, the Katipunan advocated for complete and total separation from Spain by revolution rather than through reform.<sup>36</sup>

Bro. General Emilio Aguinaldo joined the Katipunan in 1895, having been inducted by Bonifacio. After being elected Municipal Captain of Kawit, Cavite, Aguinaldo joined Freemasonry in the same year and was personally initiated by Bonifacio in Logia Pilar No. 203 in Imus, Cavite. By 1896, Katipunan numbers swelled to approximately 100,000 members, with chapters in six of the eight provinces that first revolted. The eight provinces were: Manila, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Pampanga, Tarlac, Bulacan, and Nueva Ecija.

As early as 1893, Spanish authorities were cognisant of the existence of the Katipunan and considered it an "association of notable criminals" led by Freemasons and rich Filipinos. Though they had no real proof that it existed, they believed that Freemasons were supporters of the Katipunan or were Katipuneros themselves. Some of the intelligence reports (Vigilancia) listed Katipunan chapters as Masonic lodges.<sup>37</sup>

As a result, Freemasons were even more readily associated with revolutionary thought and action, treated with deep suspicion, severely punished with many persecuted and killed. Despite some early Katipunan victories, as Spanish forces were thinly spread throughout the country, the Katipunan and Freemasons fell victim to the reign of terror unleashed by Spain.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, p160-172.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



*i. Reign of Terror – 1895-1897*

In July 1896, a Royal Decree was issued from Madrid condemning Freemasonry as a secret organization and ordering stricter measures against any member of a Masonic Order in the Philippines.

Among the measures, Heads of Spanish Orients were issued warrants of arrest, with the claim that it was Spanish Freemasonry that had implanted Freemasonry in the Philippines and therefore, shared in the responsibility for the insurrection:

*Secret societies among them and very specially Freemasonry have used their influence widely and regrettably in a most disruptive manner, in our colonial problems. These societies, by the mere fact of being secret, are illicit and illegal, harmful in every state and a source of insidious evil in a territory like the Philippines.*<sup>39</sup>

The betrayal of the Katipunan in August 1896 by the wife of a Katipunero, aggravated the increasing fear of the Spanish colonial government, egged on by Church authorities, and turned into reports of an impending plot against the government and a death threat to all Spaniards in the colony. This led to a paranoid hysteria where all Filipinos especially members of Masonic lodges and person with liberal leanings were naturally suspect.

During August, Bonifacio gathered the Katipunan to Balintawak to decide on the next course of action. Having been discovered, the Katipuneros cried out "Revolt!" as their decision, tore up their cedula or identification papers (which sealed their fate as without it arrest was guarantee) and burned them crying, "Long Live Philippine Independence!". The "Cry of Balintawak", as this came to be known, has ever since been associated with the Katipunan movement and the Philippine Revolution.<sup>40</sup>

By the end of August 1896, the Spanish Governor General issued a decree declaring the eight rebelling provinces in a state of war and laced them under martial law. Spanish authorities reacted swiftly and harshly. On 12 September 1896, in Cavite, 13 Filipinos were rounded up, jailed, and tortured and sentenced to die by firing squad in an attempt to intimidate the populace into submission. They became known as the "13 Martyrs of Cavite". Ten of the 13 executed men were Freemasons, and the list below provides some indication of the age and occupation of Masons (Filipino and Spanish) during this time:

Mariano Inocencio, 64, a rich proprietor  
Jose Lallana, 54, a tailor, former Corporal in the Spanish Army and a Spanish Mason  
Eugenio Cabezas, 41, a watchmaker and member of the Katipunan  
Maximo Gregorio, 40, a clerk of the Cavite Arsenal  
Hugo Perez, 40, a physician and member of the Katipunan  
Severino Lapidario, 38, Chief Warden of the Provincial Jail and Katipunan member  
Alfonso de Ocampo, 36, a Spanish mestizo and member of the Katipunan  
Luis Aguado, 33, employee of the Cavite Arsenal  
Victoriano Luciano, 32, a pharmacist and poet; and  
Feliciano Cabuco, 31, an employee of the Navy Hospital in Cavite.

The three non-Masons were:

Francisco Osorio, 36, a Chinese mestizo and contractor;  
Antonio de San Agustin, 35, a surgeon and businessman; and  
Agapito Concio, 33, a teacher, musician and painter.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time* (1920), pp125-128.

<sup>40</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, p170-173.

<sup>41</sup> Philippine News Agency n.d., <http://www.pna.gov.ph>

While Bro. Andres Bonifacio believed that the Katipunan should carry on the fight, Bro.Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo as military leader insisted that a new revolutionary government should be established to supervise the struggle.

In October 1896, Aguinaldo issued at Kawit, Cavite his manifesto proposing that the new government be based on the principles of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" the motto of European Freemasonry.<sup>42</sup>

The most infamous injustice was perpetrated upon Bro Dr Jose Rizal who was executed in Bagumbayan on 30 December 1896. Twelve days after his execution, another 13 Filipinos implicated in the Katipunan were executed by firing squad. All thirteen men were Freemasons:

- Domingo Franco, a tobacco merchant
- Numeriano Adriano, a lawyer
- Moises Salvador, member of the Liga Filipina
- Francisco Roxas, a businessman
- Jose Dizon, a Katipunan member
- Benedicto Nijaga, a second lieutenant in the Spanish army
- Cristobal Medina, a corporal in the Spanish army
- Antonio Salazar, a businessman
- Ramon Padilla, an employee of the Manila customs house
- Faustino Villaruel, a merchant from Pandacan
- Braulio Rivera, a Katipunan member
- Luis Enciso Villareal, member of the Liga Filipina
- Faustino Manalac<sup>43</sup>

In January 1897, 12 more Filipino rebels in Bicol were executed by the Spanish and 19 other patriots were shot to death in Kalibo, Kapis.

ii. Freemason against Freemason

Even before the outbreak of the revolution, the Katipunan in Cavite was already divided into two factions representing two provincial councils – *Magalo*, headed by Emilio Aguinaldo and *Magdiwang*, headed by Mariano Alvarez. To resolve the conflict between the factions, the Tejeros convention was held in March 1897, with Aguinaldo and Bonifacio (a *Magdiwang*) in attendance. The convention elected Aguinaldo as President of the newly proclaimed Republic of the Philippines.<sup>44</sup>

The arguments at the Tejeros convention and the manner in which the result of the election was achieved left Bonifacio and his faction disaffected. This led to Bonifacio forming an alternative military government through The Naik Military Agreement. On learning of Bonifacio's intentions, Aguinaldo ordered the arrest of Bonifacio and his brother Procopio, and their subsequent trial by the Council of War.

Their trial lasted from 29 April to 4 May 1897, after which they were found guilty of treason and sedition, despite the lack of evidence to prove the alleged guilt. Aguinaldo, now President, changed the death sentence to banishment, only to be convinced by his advisors to revert to the death sentence. On 10 May, on the orders of one Mason (President Emilio Aguinaldo), another Mason (Andres Bonifacio) and his brother were executed in Maragondon, Cavite.

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<sup>42</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp180-181.

<sup>43</sup> Dumindin, A, n.d., *Philippine-American war, 1899-1902*, <http://www.filipinoamericanwar.com/>

<sup>44</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, pp177-179.

These unfortunate events entrenched Aguinaldo as the leader of the Philippine Revolution and head of the first Philippine Republic. The fighting remained protracted and the revolution continued to spread.

iii. The Pact of Biak-na-Bato

After several attempts at a truce, in December 1897, an agreement between the Spanish colonial government and the revolutionaries known as the Pact of Biak-na-Bato, created a truce between the parties. Among other terms, the resulting Truce provided:

- 1) That Aguinaldo and the revolutionary leaders would self-exile abroad.
- 2) That P800,000 was to be paid to the revolutionaries in three instalments:
  - P400,000 to Aguinaldo on his departure from Biak-na-Bato
  - P200,000 when the number of arms surrendered exceeded 700
  - P200,000 when the Te Deum was sung and general amnesty proclaimed by the Governor General.
- 3) That an additional P900,000 would be paid to the families of non-combatant Filipinos who suffered during the armed conflict.<sup>45</sup>

Under terms of this agreement, Bro. Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and other revolutionary leaders went into exile to Hong Kong. However, despite the exile, Filipino leaders were not disposed to abide by the Truce and instead, used their new found resources to purchase arms and ammunition. The Spanish also continued to arrest and imprison many Filipinos suspected of rebellion. Such acts exposed the Truce as a mask and led to the resurgence of the revolution.

The Spanish–American War in the Philippines - 1898

The relationship between the US and Spain continued to worsen over the insurgency in Cuba. The drift towards conflict led to a declaration of war in April 1898 and, as war broke out, Commodore George Dewey sailed from Hong Kong to Manila Bay leading the Asiatic Squadron of the U.S. Navy. On 1 May 1898, Dewey defeated the Spanish forces in the Battle of Manila Bay. Later that month, the US Navy transported Aguinaldo back to the Philippines.<sup>46</sup>

With a renewed fighting spirit, and siding with the invading American forces, Aguinaldo called for the renewal of the struggle against Spain. Filipino insurgents soon won successive victories in various provinces. On 28 May, as Spanish prisoners were being marched to Cavite, Aguinaldo unfurled a new national flag which was sewn by Filipino women in Hong Kong.

The new national flag was again unfurled on 12 June 1898 at Aguinaldo's residence in Kawit, Cavite where he had the independence of the Philippines formally proclaimed. Aguinaldo's advisors, particularly Bro. Apolinario Mabini, advised against such a premature and imprudent act, as hostilities with Spain were in progress. However, some have argued that, although the declaration paid tribute to the US, it also served another purpose of delivering a message to the US of the Filipino resolve to attain freedom and independence.<sup>47</sup>

By the time the US entered the Philippine scene, Filipino revolutionaries had largely won their revolution. Under Bro. Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo's leadership, the Katipuneros had nearly succeeded in overthrowing colonial rule in the Philippines. Aguinaldo's forces had

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp184-186.

<sup>46</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp 184-187.

<sup>47</sup> Delmendo, S 2004, *The Star-Entangled Banner: One Hundred Years of America in the Philippines*, pp9-11.

laid siege to Manila at least three months before Dewey's confrontation with the Spanish military. The Spaniards' surrender to Aguinaldo's troops was only a matter of time.<sup>48</sup>

Instead, to save face by not surrendering to the native *Indios*, Spain surrendered to the US in August 1898 following an unnecessary battle in Manila Bay, having already ordered the surrender in June. The US however was keen to show its might as a new superpower defeating the old superpower and so ignored Aguinaldo and denied him a role in achieving that surrender, thus sending a clear message of US superiority. Shortly thereafter Aguinaldo moved the seat of his revolutionary government from Manila to Malolos.

The Spanish government later ceded the Philippine archipelago to the United States in the 1898 Treaty of Paris. On 12 December 1898, it was clear that the US had no intention of recognising Philippine independence when President William McKinley (who was made a Mason in 1865 at Hiram Lodge No.21, Winchester, Virginia), even while the US Senate had yet to ratify the Treaty of Paris, issued the "Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation" declaring sovereignty over the Philippines.

### The Filipino-American War – 1899-1902

The Philippine Revolutionary Government did not recognize the Treaty of Paris. When the US sought to execute the terms of the treaty, Aguinaldo's proposal for peace talks was refused and the Malolos Congress declared a state of war against the US in June 1898. The US government called it an insurrection and a three-year conflict, now referred to as the Philippine-American War, ensued.<sup>49</sup>

Bro. Gen. Aguinaldo, with the help of his chief adviser, Bro. Apolinario Mabini formed a government, created departments, appointed diplomatic agents and formulated a national budget. Decrees were issued for the election or appointment of delegates to a national congress, local schools were reopened and military and vocational colleges established.

Many active Freemasons held important positions in the revolutionary government of General Emilio Aguinaldo, among them were:

- Apolinario Mabini, private counsellor to Aguinaldo, later head of the cabinet;
- Baldomero Aguinaldo and Ambrosio Flores, Secretaries of War;
- Gracio Gonzaga, Secretary of Finance;
- General Antonio Luna, Director of War;
- Timoteo Paez, Bonifacio Arevalo and Venancio Reyes, War Commissaries;
- Mariano Llanera, Vicente Lukban, Juan Castaneda, Pantaleon Garcia, Mariano Trias, Jose Alejandrino, Manuel Tinio, Servillano Aquino, Venancio Concepcion and Mamerto Natividad - Military Generals;
- Francisco Joven, Colonel of Infantry;
- Jose Sofio Banuelos, Lieutenant Colonel of Staff; and
- Estanislao Legaspi, Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry.<sup>50</sup>

The Malolos Congress moved to draft a constitution and considered three drafts. The first which comprised 130 articles prepared by Apolinario Mabini was rejected as too Masonic. The second (Paterno) draft was too much like the post-revolution Spanish Constitution of

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp118-124.

<sup>49</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, pp211-216.

<sup>50</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, p130.

1868 and was also rejected. The third draft by Calderon was inspired by the constitutions of France, Belgium, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Brazil and Nicaragua and was accepted.<sup>51</sup>

On 21 January 1899 Aguinaldo's Malolos Congress promulgated a constitution which established a republican form of government. Freemasons led by Antonio Luna fought and won the separation of Church and State. On 23 January 1899, the Philippine Republic was inaugurated with Aguinaldo as president.

In 1900, Bro. President McKinley's First Philippine Commission (Schurman) established in the previous year, declared that Filipinos were not ready for independence. The Second Commission (Taft) was appointed in March 1900 with legislative and executive powers. A civil government was inaugurated on 4 July 1901 with Judge William H. Taft, a Freemason, as first Civil Governor, who for the passage of the Philippine Bill of 1902 establishing complete civilian government.

Bro. President McKinley was assassinated in 1901 and was succeeded by his Vice-president, Theodore Roosevelt (who joined Freemasonry that year at Matinecock Lodge No. 806, Oyster Bay, New York). Under Roosevelt, the war was pursued with more aggressive force and his army would be charged with numerous atrocities.

Against a powerful US war machine the Filipinos, short of arms, could not win the war. In March 1901, Gen. Funston arrested Aguinaldo and imprisoned him in Malacañang Palace where he was treated well by a fellow Freemason, Bro.Gen. Arthur MacArthur who was the Military Governor General at the time. Although President Roosevelt declared the end of the Philippine-American war on 4 July 1902, the war of attrition lasted for another decade.

It would be fair to say at this point that the Philippine nation, like the US, arose out of a revolution against a colonial master. However, due to the US pre-emption of the Philippine revolution, unlike the US, the Philippines did not decisively win its revolution.

## **7. Masonic resurgence in the Philippines 1890s – 1930s**

Freemasonry enjoyed a limited resurgence in the late 1890s through to the 1930s with the establishment of a number of lodges.

Among these was the first American Lodge that operated in Manila - a movable military lodge organized by Freemasons of the First Regiment of Volunteers from North Dakota in 1898. In the following year, another military lodge, the Manila Military Lodge No 63, under the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Missouri was founded by African American servicemen. In 1903 yet another American lodge was established in Cavite under the Grand Lodge of California.<sup>52</sup>

At the end of 1898, attempts were made to resume Philippine Freemasonry by Ambrosio Flores, Grand Master of the Grand Regional Council (Gran Consejo Regional de Filipinas) together with Gracio Gonzaga, by gathering Masons who survived the persecution and the revolution. Some meetings were held but plans were interrupted by the outbreak of the Philippine-American war.

In October 1899, Flores again convened several assemblies for the purpose of restoring the Grand Regional Council or organizing a National Orient. An appeal was drafted addressed to Freemasons in the United States, beseeching their influence to help bring about an end to the Philippine-American War and to recognize Philippine independence.

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<sup>51</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp190-202.

<sup>52</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pp43-44.

While the war was still raging, the first active Filipino Freemasons during this period joined the reorganised Logia Modesta which was issued with a new charter by the Gran Oriente Español.<sup>53</sup>

In 1900, an association of American Freemasons known as the Sojourner's Club, formed the Manila Lodge No. 342 under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California.

In 1901, the Grand Orient of France organized Logia Rizal, so named after the martyred Bro. Dr. Jose Rizal who affiliated with a lodge of this French Orient in Paris in 1892. There soon followed other lodges so that by 1903, eight lodges and a number of Triangles were operating. In the same year, the Americans established Manila Lodge No 342 under the Grand Lodge of California and, in 1904, proposed a Grand National Lodge under US jurisdiction. The proposal was rejected by the majority of Filipino Masons, perhaps because of the war with the US.<sup>54</sup>

In 1907, the Regional Grand Lodge of the Philippines (Gran Logia Regional de Filipinas) was organised with seven lodges as prescribed by the statutes and regulations and under the auspices of the Gran Oriente Español. In the same year, a member of the American Manila Lodge No. 342 (California) organised Lodge Perla del Oriente in Manila and Cebu Lodge No.1106 in Cebu City, both chartered under the Grand Lodge of Scotland with the aim of implanting the principles of Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry into the country for Filipino Masons who were denied admission to American lodges.<sup>55</sup>

#### Philippine Freemasonry moves away from Spain

In 1911, members of Logia Luz de Oriente No 228 of the Gran Oriente de España requested affiliation with the Grand Oriente Lusitano Unido, which was the result of the union of the old Oriente Lusitano with other Grand Jurisdictions in Portugal in 1869. The affiliation was granted in 1912 and this Orient chartered a number of lodges.

In the same year, a convention of representatives of three American lodges (Manila, Corregidor and Cavite) established the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands (GLPI) on the basis that, "the Philippines being a territory Masonically free, it was within the legal bounds of three subordinate lodges to organize a sovereign Grand Lodge." It should be noted that the present-day Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines (GLP), which is recognised by the United Grand Lodge of Victoria, acknowledges the unifying event of 1912 under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California as its foundation.<sup>56</sup>

None of the Filipino Lodges under the Gran Oriente Español were invited to send representatives to the convention that formed the GLPI because it was felt that the presence of such representatives would be looked upon by the US Grand Lodges generally, and by the Grand Lodge of California in particular, as irregular and would give them sufficient reason to deny recognition to the new Grand Lodge.

The primary concern of the convention was to proceed in accordance with the Masonic principles and procedures that guided the formation of the various US Grand Lodges. The reason given for the organization of the Grand Lodge was that "such a step would assure the permanency and promote the progress and efficiency of the legitimate and Ancient Craft Masonry in the Philippines." In 1915, the GLPI constituted its first lodge, Bagumbayan Lodge No. 4.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, pp134-156.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Fajardo, RS, 1999, *The Brethren: In the days of the Empire- Philippine Masonry from the US Colonial Era to the Commonwealth Years*, pp15-36.

<sup>57</sup> Grand Lodge of the Philippines, n.d., "A Century of Dedicated Masonic Service", www.grandlodge.ph

The Grand Master of the Grand Regional Lodge of the Philippines, Teodoro M. Kalaw, convened a grand general assembly of Masons in 1915 "to discuss "internal and external problems, so serious and so fundamental in fact, that from their solution will depend the life, the honor and the future development of national Philippine Masonry."

The general assembly elected Bro. Manuel Luis Quezon (Sinukuan Lodge No 272), as President and Presiding Officer and, among other matters, passed the following resolutions which were subsequently forwarded to the Gran Oriente Español and Masonic bodies around the world – that the Regional Grand Lodge:

- question the legality of the organization and constitution of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands (GLPI) because the Gran Oriente Español had jurisdictional primacy over the country and the American Grand Lodge assertion that the country was Masonically free did not "coincide with the truth of actual facts."
- is reorganised into an independent Masonic body called the Grand National Lodge of Ancient and Accepted Masons of the Philippines; to be known as the Grand National Lodge of the Philippines.<sup>58</sup>

From August 1915 to December 1916, a voluminous exchange of communications between the respective Grand Masters of the Grand Regional Lodge (MWBro. Kalaw) in the Philippines and the Gran Oriente Español (MWBro. Morayta) in Spain did not result in a grant of freedom and authority to form an independent Grand Lodge.

In one such communication, Kalaw warned Morayta of the growing tendency of Filipinos to favour fusion with the Americans and that prominent Filipino Freemasons were advocating for such a merger unless a favourable decision was received before the American Grand Lodge Assembly in February 1917. Grand Master Morayta died on 18 January 1917. His last letter to Kalaw was dated 21 December 1916 revealed:<sup>59</sup>

- Morayta's deep sentiments and mistrust of the Americans,
- reaffirmed the regularity and legality of the Grand Regional Lodge of the Philippines, and
- that the re-organizational plan was being considered by the Grand Council of the Order.<sup>60</sup>

### Towards American Freemasonry

The death of Morayta in 1917 cut the last ties that connected Filipino Masons with the Gran Oriente Español, and fusion with the Americans was pursued. After several joint meetings, a six-point draft agreement was prepared that guaranteed equal rights and privileges regardless of race and the freedom to adopt any recognised rite and language that a Lodge might choose for its work. Subject to ratification by each Grand Lodge, the draft agreement proposed to:

- convene a joint assembly in order to adopt, with possible amendments, the American Grand Lodge's Constitution;
- recharter the Lodges of the Gran Oriente Español; and
- elect the Grand Officers.<sup>61</sup>

In February 1917, the Grand Regional Lodge and its Lodges approved the provisions of the draft agreement. Ten days later, and one day before the joint assembly was to be

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<sup>58</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, pp163-165.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pp110-112.

<sup>61</sup> Fajardo, RS, 1999, *The Brethren: In the days of the Empire- Philippine Masonry from the US Colonial Era to the Commonwealth Years*, pp67-68.

held, GLPI representatives disapproved the terms of the agreement, rejected fusion by a constituted assembly and sought affiliation with individual lodges instead. Tasked by the committees to assist in resolving the situation, Quezon was able to overcome all opposition and persuaded the Filipino Lodges to integrate with the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands by affiliation.

Just before the scheduled assembly, the Grand Council of the Gran Oriente Español authorised the establishment of an independent Philippine Grand Lodge, leaving the final decision to an Assembly to be held in June 1917. The late arrival of the notice rendered the matter incapable of any influence on the chain of events.

On 14 February 1917, 27 Grand Regional Lodges of the Gran Oriente Español signed the document of affiliation to the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands. William H. Taylor was re-elected as Grand Master and Manuel L. Quezon (Resident Commissioner to the US) was elected as Deputy Grand Master.<sup>62</sup>

At Quezon's suggestion, the practice was adopted wherein a Filipino and an American would alternate as Grand Master, since the larger number of Filipino Lodges could easily dominate in succeeding elections. In 1918, Quezon became the first Filipino Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands. The practice of alternate succession of Grand Masters continued until the election of the last American Grand Master in 1974.

In 1919, the Gran Oriente Español mandated to reorganize its symbolic lodges and revive its Scottish Rite bodies which led to the formation of the Gran Logia Regional del Archipelago Filipino. In 1924, a disagreement between the Grand Master of the Grand Regional Lodge and the Grand Delegate gave rise to the notion of forming the Philippine Family of Universal Freemasonry. This led to the establishment of two separate organisations:

- Gran Logia Nacional de Filipinas under the "Supremo Consejo del Grado 33° para Filipinas" was founded by Timoteo Paez, incorporated on 4 July 1924, and proclaimed on 30 December with Timoteo Paez as Soverano Gran Comendador. It claimed jurisdiction over 27 Blue Lodges, one Lodge of Perfection, one Chapter Rosa Cruz, one Council of Kadosh and the corresponding Grand Consistory.
- Gran Logia del Archipelago Filipino under the Supremo Consejo 33° del Archipiélago Filipino was chartered as sovereign and independent by the Gran Oriente Español in December 1925.<sup>63</sup>

Following a resolution considered during the GLPI Annual Communication in 1937, approval was given and made effective in 1940 to change the title of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippine Islands, to the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines. This is the present day Grand Lodge of the Philippines (GLP) recognised by the United Grand Lodge of Victoria.<sup>64</sup>

Between 1930 and 1937, the GLPI warranted six lodges in China and in 1937 the District Grand Lodge of China under the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands was inaugurated in Shanghai.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, p195.

<sup>63</sup> Fajardo, RS, 1999, *The Brethren: In the days of the Empire- Philippine Masonry from the US Colonial Era to the Commonwealth Years*, pp93-109.

<sup>64</sup> Fajardo, RS, January-April 1990, *The Cable Tow*, Grand Lodge of the Philippines, Manila.

<sup>65</sup> Fajardo, RS, 1999, *The Brethren: In the days of the Empire- Philippine Masonry from the US Colonial Era to the Commonwealth Years*, pp175-200.



## **8. Freemasonry and Philippine Independence**

Despite the move towards American Freemasonry among Filipino Freemasons, there was an undercurrent movement to bring into effect the independence of the Philippines.

In 1913, under US President Woodrow Wilson's administration, Francis Burton Harrison (a Freemason) was appointed governor-general. Harrison worked for the Jones Law of 1916 – The Philippine Autonomy Act - which stated as its purpose the withdrawal of US sovereignty over the Philippine Islands and to recognize their independence as soon as a stable government can be established. Harrison "Filipinised" the government and at the end of his term in 1921 it was 96% controlled by Filipinos.

During this time, missions were formed to work for the independence of the Philippines, with the majority of them chaired and attended by prominent Freemasons - Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña, Pedro Guevarra, Camilo Osias, Rafael Palma, Rafael Alunan, Emilio Tria Tirona, Teodoro Yangco, Filemon Perez, Ceferino de Leon, Tomas Earnshaw, Quintin Paredes, Jose Abad Santos, Conrado Benitez, Jorge Vargas, Maximo Kalaw, Arsenio Luz and others. They worked with and influenced Freemasons in the US government, the media and Masonic Lodges in the US.

As early as January 1916, Senator James P. Clarke (Western Star Lodge No. 2, Arkansas) introduced an amendment to the Philippine Bill, which would grant independence to the Philippines within a few years. His amendment was approved by the US Senate, but was defeated in the House of Representatives by a slim margin.

The first Philippine Independence measure passed by the American Congress was the Hare-Hawes-Cutting bill vetoed by Pres. Herbert Hoover. Another mission led by Senate President Quezon secured the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Law approved in March 1934 by Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt (a Freemason of New York City).

It called for a Constitutional Convention to frame the Constitution of the Philippines. Held in 1935, the Convention proved a fertile ground for Masonic free thought with 41 Freemasons as delegates - among them were Manuel Roxas, Jose Laurel, Camilo Osias, Conrado Benitez, Rafael Palma, Pedro Guevarra, and Vicente Francisco.

Incorporating Masonic principles in their deliberations, they ensured that the Constitution specified that "No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights." Later, Claro M. Recto and Jose P. Laurel (both Freemasons) sponsored a bill for all students to study the banned Rizal books, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*.<sup>66</sup>

Importantly, the Convention resolved that upon the final withdrawal of US sovereignty, the US Commonwealth of the Philippines would be known as the Republic of the Philippines. Manuel Quezon became President and Sergio Osmeña Vice President.

### **Japanese Occupation – 1942-1945**

The Japanese bombed the Philippines on 8 December 1941 (the same day as Pearl Harbor). All lodges in the Philippines were forced to cease activities during the Second World War and the Japanese invasion and occupation of the Philippines.

The US Armed Forces in the Far East were under Lt. Gen. Douglas MacArthur (on whom GLPI Grand Master Hawthorne had exercised a rare privilege by making him a "Mason at Sight" and inducting him as a member of Manila Lodge No 1). Having given Europe priority, the limited US forces meant that a Japanese victory was inevitable in the short term.

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<sup>66</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, pp311-361.

During their Philippine occupation, Japanese authorities looked upon Freemasonry with aversion and revenge. They claimed that the Masonic and Shrine movements originated in Paris and were Jewish revolutionary organisations designed to overthrow established government indirectly, and that they had to be persecuted, tormented, humiliated, and reviled without respite.

Bro. Dr. Jose P. Laurel (Batangas Lodge) with fellow Freemasons Jorge Vargas, Rafael Alunan, Antonio de las Alas, Quintin Paredes, Camilo Osias, Benigno Aquino Sr. and others were ordered to serve the Japanese. In October 1943, Philippine Independence was proclaimed anew under the sponsorship of the Japanese Imperial forces. Bro. Jorge B. Vargas (Sinukuan Lodge) read the proclamation terminating the Japanese Military Administration and another Freemason (Aguinaldo) hoisted the flag marking the first time since the start of the Japanese occupation that the flag was displayed in public. The puppet government set up by the Japanese placed Bro. Dr. Laurel as President.

While these Freemasons accepted their duties to ease the consequences for the general populace and lessen the damage, other Masons refused to submit to the invaders and joined the guerrilla resistance movement. The eighth president of the Philippines, Pres. Carlos P. Garcia, was one such dissenter who served as a military guerrilla leader. Many high ranking Freemasons were lost through the atrocities of the Japanese either during the occupation or as a result of the Battle of Manila in February-March 1945:

- Supreme Court Justice Jose Abad Santos (PGM 1938) was executed in Malabang, Lanao for refusing to cooperate.
- Grand Master John R., McFie was killed by Japanese artillery fire while interned at the University of Santo Tomas concentration camp during February 1945).
- Deputy Grand Master Jose P. Guido was beheaded in the presence of his family on 7 February 1945.
- Jose de los Reyes (PGM 1940) was also killed.
- Joseph H. Alley, (PGM 1937) died 1 February 1946 after his release from concentration camp.<sup>67</sup>

Early in 1942, President Quezon with his family and other Freemasons left for the US to influence that government to support the war in the Pacific and give independence to the Philippines. Bro. Gen. Douglas MacArthur fought hard to convince the Americans to come to the aid of their colony. In June 1944, the US Congress passed Joint Resolution No. 93 authorizing the US President to proclaim the independence of the Philippines on 4 July 1946. Quezon passed away in August that year never to see his efforts fulfilled.

MacArthur returned to the Philippines and restored the Philippine Commonwealth in October 1944 with Bro. Osmeña as President. Bro. Manuel Roxas followed as President of the Commonwealth in April 1946, and independence declared in July. Bro. President Harry Truman's Proclamation was read by High Commissioner Bro. Paul McNutt, after which a third Freemason, President Manuel A. Roxas (PM of Makawiwili Lodge No. 55), raised the Philippine flag.<sup>68</sup>

In 1945, RWorBro Michael Goldenberg, Senior Grand Warden re-established the Grand Lodge of the Philippines when he became acting Grand Master after the liberation of the Philippines.

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<sup>67</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, pp183-191.

<sup>68</sup> Philippine News Agency n.d., <http://www.pna.gov.ph>

Following the end of World War II, Philippine Freemasonry spread to Japan, Okinawa, Korea and Saipan as the Americans continued the "island hopping" strategy of Bro. Major General Douglas and applied it to Freemasonry. In 1947, an English and two Scottish lodges that survived in American-occupied Japan sought, through the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, to organise lodges there. In 1950, membership of Masonic lodges was made available to Japanese nationals and, six years later, there were 16 lodges established.<sup>69</sup>

In 1948, one of the six lodges established by the then GLPI (now GLP) during the 1930s, Amity Lodge No 106 of China convened a meeting of lodges in China, which was attended by lodges of other foreign Grand Jurisdictions as observers only (Massachusetts, England, Scotland, and Ireland). The delegates from China resolved to form a Grand Lodge of China; adopted a Constitution and Regulations based on the statutes of the Grand Lodges of California and the Philippines, and elected a Grand Master.

The District Grand Lodge of Japan, under the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, was constituted in 1954. Three years later, Moriahyama Lodge No 134 convened a meeting of Japanese lodges wherein 15 lodges, after unanimously endorsing the resolution, gave effect to the formation of a Grand Lodge of Japan and elected its officers in March 1957.

The president of the first Philippine Republic, Emilio Aguinaldo outlived most of his successors and witnessed how the Philippines struggled in the hands of Spain, the US, and Japan. After his crucial roles in wars against Spanish and American invaders, Aguinaldo championed the rights of his fellow veterans by establishing the Veteranos de la Revolucion (Veterans of the Revolution) and helping them buy land on instalment from the government. Aguinaldo died of coronary thrombosis at the age of 95 in 1964.

#### More recently

Herein is an outline of some of the more recent events that have shaped Freemasonry in the Philippines and remarks regarding its role in the development of the country:

In 1998, Mabuhay Lodge No 59 was established in Dau, Mabalacat, Pampanga in the Philippines, under the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington. Prince Hall Masons are the oldest and largest group of Masons of African origin in the world. Today there are 40 Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Freemasonry in the United States, Canada, the Bahamas, and Liberia, presiding over more than 5,000 lodges.

In 2006, two districts in Samar, Leyte issued a manifesto declaring independence from the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in an unsuccessful bid to form a United Grand Lodge of the Philippines. This was followed by seven regularly constituted GLP lodges that, through their respective resolutions achieved with much angst and in-fighting, formed the Independent Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands (IGLPI).<sup>70</sup>

In an assembly held in August 2006, officers were elected and the lodges approved a draft Constitution. The IGLPI was formally constituted in September and in November that year, the Constitution was ratified during the First IGLPI Annual Grand Assembly held at the Emilio Aguinaldo Memorial Lodge No 5, Kawit, Cavite.

In February 2012, the Hon. Joseph F. Violago, representative of Nueva Ecija-2nd District on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Public Installation of Officers of Eulogio R. Dizon Lodge No 321 (GLP), quoted former President Carlos P. Garcia who paid tribute to Freemasonry in this way:

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<sup>69</sup> Fajardo, RS, 1999, *The Brethren: In the days of the Empire- Philippine Masonry from the US Colonial Era to the Commonwealth Years*, pp221-260.

<sup>70</sup> Philippine Center for Masonic Studies, n.d., *History of Masonry in the Philippines*, [www.philippinemasonry.org/history-of-masonry-in-the-philippines/html](http://www.philippinemasonry.org/history-of-masonry-in-the-philippines/html)

*I cannot help but take cognisance of the great and noble work which your grand fraternity had done and is still doing for freedom of thought and conscience, for democracy and equality. In our country and in the United States, members of your brotherhood led in the fight for the sacrosanct cause of liberty, equality and fraternity.* <sup>71</sup>

Lastly, and in conclusion, at the 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines in April 2016, on the occasion of the Grand Installation of Grand Master MWBro. Voltaire T. Gazmin (former Secretary of National Defence of the Philippines), the Most Worshipful Grand Master said of Filipino Freemasonry today:

*.... Philippine Freemasonry today is very much vibrant, active, and progressive. We have successfully nurtured the freedom secured to us by the heroism of our celebrated brethren. We have passed with flying colors our centennial year of Masonic existence in this great Filipino nation. We have expanded the number of our active lodges which now total to about 380 lodges in the jurisdiction and still growing. And when it comes to passion, loyalty and dedication to our Craft, there is no doubt that the Filipino brethren would rank among the top in the entire world of Masonry.* <sup>72</sup>

## **9. Insights, Tangents and Reflections**

### The Katipunan

The *Kataastaasang Kagalangalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (or KKK) borrowed heavily its structure and activities from Freemasonry and La Liga Filipina, since many of its founders were or had been members of one or both organisations. As a secret revolutionary society, it mirrored the survival methods of Freemasonry under persecution:

- Its recruitment was carried out using the triangle system, wherein an existing or founding member took in two individuals who did not know each other.
- New recruits were 'initiated' in a darkened room, to face hooded men and answer three questions:
  1. What were we before the coming of the Spaniards?
  2. What are we today?
  3. What are we in the future?

The previously coached answers had to be given thus:

- 1) *Before the coming of the Spaniards, the Filipinos were free and progressive. We were trading with other countries like Japan and other neighbouring countries.*
- 2) *When the Spaniards came, they colonised us and we lost our freedom. We lived in suffering and oppression.*

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<sup>71</sup> "My Homage and Clarion Call to the Masons" - speech delivered by the Hon. Joseph F. Violago, representative of Nueva Ecija-2<sup>nd</sup> District on the 15<sup>th</sup> Public Installation of Officers of Eulogio R. Dizon Lodge No 321 under the jurisdiction of the GLP, Pag-asa Gym, Talugtug, Nueva Ecija at 1:30 p.m., 25 February 2012.

<sup>72</sup> 2016, *The Cable Tow*, May-June 2016, Vol. 93, No1, Manila, Philippines.

3) *In the future, with our combined efforts, we shall restore the happiness of our people by ridding the country of its oppressors.*

Upon being accepted, the hooded men removed their masks to greet the new member.

- Each recruit had to enter into a blood compact by signing his name in blood on the register held over a skull symbolising his vow to avenge the death of his brothers.
- Like Freemasonry of the time, the members were allowed to take assumed names. For example, Andres Bonifacio was *Maypag-asa*; Emilio Aguinaldo was *Magdalo*
- Its structure consisted of three councils: a supreme council, a provincial council and a popular council.
- Membership also had three levels:
  - o associate (*katipon*) – who, at Katipunan meetings, wore a black hood and his password was *Anak ng Bayan* (son of the nation).
  - o soldier (*kawal*)- wore a green hood and carried the password, “Gom-burza” – the first syllables of the surnames of the Filipino secular priests martyred in 1872.
  - o patriot (*bayani*) – wore a red mask and used “Rizal” as a password. Bro. Dr. Jose Rizal was considered the honorary president of the Katipunan. <sup>73</sup>

Apart from its objective of political revolution to overthrow Spanish rule in the colony, the Katipunan held that an internal revolution involves a reform of individual values. These are outlined in the *Kartilla* which was originally written by Bonifacio and later revised by Emilio Jacinto. It was intended and served as primer on patriotism for the ordinary members of the Katipunan – the *Katipuneros*. In addition to the *Kartilla*, Bonifacio wrote a *Decalogue* as a guideline on good citizenship, and the love of God and fellowman.

The Katipunan also had a women’s section which, it is claimed, originated from the women’s suspicions regarding the whereabouts of their husbands.<sup>74</sup> The Supreme Council formed a women’s section into which only the wives and daughters of Katipuneros could be admitted. This section was given the task of ensuring that Katipunan meetings were not disturbed and of hiding the documents of the Katipunan. Often, the women would hold gatherings and parties while the men would hold their secret meeting in the back rooms.<sup>75</sup>

The Katipunan published its teachings through a newspaper it printed itself called *Kalayaan* (Freedom). To confuse Spanish authorities it had on its masthead that it was printed in Yokohama and stated (as an untruth) that Marcelo H. del Pilar was its editor. Del Pilar’s name gave stature to the paper and the organisation as the Spaniards considered Del Pilar as the most dangerous of the ‘subversives’.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> De Viana, AV, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, pp160-168.

<sup>74</sup> Agoncillo, TA, 1990, *History of the Filipino People*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn, p163,

<sup>75</sup> De Viana, A, 2011, *The Philippines: A Story of a Nation*, p165.

<sup>76</sup> Dioso, MM, 2004, *A Trilogy of Wars*, p52.

The Philippine Flag and Links to Freemasonry

The Hong Kong designed flag that Aguinaldo brought back with him to Manila from his exile, and which became the official flag of the first Philippine Republic, consisted of:

- two horizontal stripes, blue on top and red below
- a white equilateral triangle at the hoist
- within the triangle, at its centre, a mythological sun bearing eight rays, and three five-pointed stars, one at each angle of the triangle.  
All these in yellow or gold colour.

In the Proclamation of Philippine Independence (1898) signed by Aguinaldo and 96 other Filipino leaders, the Hong Kong-designed flag was enshrined as the national emblem of the Philippines in this manner:

*The white triangle represents the distinctive emblem of the famous Katipunan Society, which means of its blood compact suggested to the masses the urgency of insurrection;*

*the three stars represents the three principal islands of the Archipelago, Luzon, Mindanao and Panay, wherein this revolutionary movement broke out;*

*the sun represents the gigantic strides that have been made by the sons of this land on the road to progress and civilization;*

*its eight rays symbolize the eight provinces: Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Laguna and Batangas, which were declared in a state of war almost as soon as the first revolutionary movement was initiated;*

*and the colours blue, red and white, commemorate those of the flag of the United States of North America in manifestation of our profound gratitude towards that great nation for the disinterested protection she is extending to us and will continue to extend to us.*

Excerpt from the "Act of Proclamation of Independence of the Filipino People (Acta de la proclamación de la independencia del pueblo Filipino) in the town of Cavite-Viejo, Province of Cavite, this 12th day of June 1898", written by Freemason, Bro. Ambrocio Rianzares Bautista, who also raised the flag at the proclamation.

To do away with irregularities and discrepancies, a number of subsequent presidents have specified the different elements of the flag and set a uniform pattern for the national emblem.

There can be little doubt that President Emilio Aguinaldo was a zealous Masonic partisan. In one of his speeches delivered at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines on 26 April 1955, Aguinaldo said:

*The successful Revolution of 1896 was Masonically inspired, Masonically led, and Masonically executed. And I venture to say that the first Philippine Republic of which I was its humble president, was an achievement we owe, largely, to Masonry and the Freemasons.<sup>77</sup>*

In addition, during the Revolution, Aguinaldo frequently displayed a marked bias in favour of Freemasons and Masonry. He made membership in the Fraternity an important qualification for appointments to government positions. His nepotism was so pronounced, a critic of masonry denounced it as one of the "evils" of the Revolution.

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<sup>77</sup> Causing, J, 1969, *Freemasonry in the Philippines: a comprehensive history of Freemasonry during a period of 209 struggling, glorious years 1756-1965*, p27.

It is no surprise therefore, that Aguinaldo extolled Freemasonry in the Philippine flag, despite the lack of any written affirmation of a Masonic connection to the flag. Among the more credible assertions relied upon to establish a connection between Freemasonry and the design of Philippine flag are the following: <sup>78</sup>

- In 1899, Grand Master of the Gran Regional Council, MWBro Ambrocio Flores (at the time a general in Aguinaldo's army), wrote letters to US Grand Lodges appealing for their influence to help the fledgling Philippine Republic. In these letters he compared the Philippine flag to the Masonic banner in this way:

*...this national flag resembles closely our masonic banner starting from its triangular quarter to the prominent central position of its resplendent sun surrounded in its triangular position by three five-pointed stars. Even in its three coloured background, it is the spitting image of our Venerable Institution's banner so that when you see it in any part of the world, waving with honor amidst the flags of other nations and acknowledged by these nations, let us hope that with this flag, and through it, our common parent, Freemasonry will likewise be so honored.* <sup>79</sup>

and also:

*...the task already started and that so greatly honors.....American Masonry, will be carried on until the Philippine flag, that ensign carrying all the Masonic symbols and colors, is officially hoisted in our country and recognized and saluted by all other nations.* <sup>80</sup>

- In 1928, historian Teodoro M. Kalaw said:

*And the triangle appearing on the Philippine flag, the loftiest symbolism of the struggles of the Filipino people, was put there, according to President Aguinaldo, as a homage to Freemasonry.* <sup>81</sup>

#### *i. The triangle*

The most awe-inspiring Masonic symbol during the Philippine Revolution was the equilateral triangle, and the ritual referred to it as the most perfect figure that could be drawn with lines, an appropriate emblem of perfection or divinity. As such:

- Prior to initiation, a candidate was brought to a chamber, placed in front of a table upon which was a triangle – the first Masonic symbol he is shown – and obligated to answer questions on his concept of man's duty to God, to himself and to his fellowman.
- Inside the lodge:
  - the triangle was on aprons worn by all the officers and members.
  - stone triangles were placed on the chair of the Worshipful Master and on the pedestals of the Senior and Junior Wardens.
  - the tables of the Senior and Junior Wardens and Almoner were triangular in shape as were the stools provided for the initiates.
  - the perfect ashlar was represented by a "cubico pyramidal."

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<sup>78</sup> Philippine News Agency n.d., <http://www.pna.gov.ph>

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time (1920)*, pp131-133.

<sup>81</sup> Fajardo, RS, 2004, *The Filipino Flag – Its Masonic Roots*, [freemasonry.bcy.ca/symbolism/philippine\\_flag.html](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/symbolism/philippine_flag.html)

- The "Delta Sagrada" (Sacred Triangle) with the name of the Great Architect of the Universe inscribed in the centre in Hebraic characters, was suspended from the centre of the lodge - equivalent of today's suspended letter "G".

The triangle also appeared constantly in Masonic communications. Many Masonic terms frequently employed in documents, were abbreviations that ended with three dots arranged in a form of triangle. Aguinaldo used it repeatedly in his letters and documents, incorporated it in postage and telegraph stamps and coins issued by his government and on the insignias of his officers. Aguinaldo also often used triangular tables when entertaining guests. Thus, the important role played by the triangle in Masonic ritual and symbolism at the time, made it the obvious choice as the symbol to honour Freemasonry.<sup>82</sup>

ii. The sun, stars, and colours

The sun, stars, and colours - red, white and blue - are minor emblems in Masonic symbolism, overshadowed by the degree working tools. In Revolutionary times, the only place where the sun, stars, and the three colours had a degree of importance was in the "Decoracion de la Logia" (the decoration of the lodge).

The rituals of the Grand Oriente Español stated that the lodge was a representation of the universe and directed that the lodge be a rectangular shape with its four walls denominated East, South, West and North. In the East it was required that a "disco radiante" (radiant disk) be placed representing the sun. The ceiling was painted to represent a starlit sky. The altar was draped with red velvet on which was embroidered the square and compasses with a five-pointed star in the centre. A five-pointed star with the letter "G" in the centre was the symbol of the Fellow Craft degree.

Red and blue were dominant colours in the lodge:

- Lodge walls were draped with blood red colour (colgaduras encarnadas) and the altars of the Wardens, the tables of the Orator, Secretary, Treasurer and Almoner, the long benches, the stools for initiates, and all the chairs in the lodge room were upholstered or covered in red.
- The canopy over the Worshipful Master's chair was sky blue as was the ceiling of the lodge.

Thus, from a Master's chair looking straight ahead could be seen on either side the colour red, and blue if he looked up. Similarly, the banner of the Federation of the Gran Oriente Español had a blue stripe on top and a red one at the bottom.

From the above evidence, a similarity between the decoration of the lodge and the Filipino flag can be perceived. However, the counter argument is that as most Masonic meetings in revolutionary times were held on the run, because of the persecution of Freemasons by the Spanish colonial authorities, the lodge decoration and furniture (including triangular tables) had to be designed for quick dismantling and rearranging.

As such, it is highly unlikely that Freemasons would have adhered strictly to the Statutes regarding lodge set up. It is more likely that Aguinaldo must have been acutely aware of the prescribed decoration of the lodge through the rituals of the Orient jurisdictions with which he was undoubtedly familiar.

Filipino Freemasons today consider the Philippine flag not only an emblem of liberty and a symbol of the valour and sacrifices of the Filipino people, it is also a memorial to the Fraternity so involved in the fight for freedom.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Fajardo, RS, 2004, *The Filipino Flag - Its Masonic Roots*, [freemasonry.bcy.ca/symbolism/philippine\\_flag.html](http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/symbolism/philippine_flag.html)

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



Reflections

Even from a brief overview of Philippine history, it appears that no other fraternal organisation has ever been persecuted, maligned, suspected, or blamed more for circumstances and events that happened in the world than Freemasonry. In this sense, Filipino Freemasonry cannot be understood outside the context of Philippine history.

Because the Spaniards, Americans, the Church and even the elite within Filipino society censored history to hide their own atrocities, the truth regarding the role of Freemasons and Freemasonry in the Philippines was never revealed. Even the two novels by Rizal were banned for decades. Fortunately, because Filipino Freemasons were able to hide and preserve records, their archives have proven to be a great source of historical facts.

Throughout Philippine history the diverse legacy of Freemasonry – action and inaction, discord and unity, principled discourse and unabashed rivalry, philosophy and irrationality – play out all at once. Yet, it was this variety that led many Filipino reformists to European Freemasonry seeking help among Spanish liberals who happened to be Freemasons themselves.

The historical anomaly is that the various elements of Spanish rule and society deliberately introduced, openly promoted, vehemently objected to, and brutally persecuted Freemasonry in the Philippines. The Philippines and Freemasonry felt the brunt of a political climate in Spain that oscillated, albeit slowly, from conservative to centre to liberal.

Some authors have pointed out the paradox that Spain began to weaken its own position in the Philippines through its at times positive support of Freemasonry. This is particularly evident in the numerous appointments of Freemasons to civic positions within the colonial government.<sup>84</sup>

To a large extent it was Freemasonry's political rather than religious challenge to the status quo that shook the foundations of the *Frailocracia* which served the interests of the friars at the expense of the native Filipino and the colonial government itself. As was the case in colonial Latin America, the Filipino lodges in Spain (more so than those in the Philippines) were regarded as 'heralds of the new era of democracy and self-government'.<sup>85</sup>

As such, although their opposition to political and religious tyranny initially guided the Filipino brethren toward the Spanish Masonic tradition, it was the Masonic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity that drove their involvement in the building of the Philippine nation.

To a large extent, US colonisation disrupted the harmony of the Masonic Order in the Philippines and created a dichotomy between Spanish and American Masonic observances. The distinction was probably most evident in the early days, as Filipinos of the Spanish Masonic tradition, compared to their American counterparts, tended to come from the more elite class of Filipino society (much like the *Ilustrados*), highly educated and religiously oriented compared to the rest of the Filipino population.

More so in earlier times, Masonry was thought primarily to be only for the elite and well-educated, and provided an elevation of self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment and recognition, for those who strove to be a part of it. As it gradually aligned with traditional Filipino values of the extended family (where the recently acquainted would call each

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<sup>84</sup> Rich, P & De Los Reyes, G, 1995, "Reappraising Scottish Rite Freemasonry in Latin America", *Heredom*, vol 4, p24.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*.

other *Kuya* (brother) or *Ate* (sister)), and hospitality (where no one is left to go hungry), Masonry became more accessible to the middle class.

The dispersed and diverse geography of the country also encouraged Masonic principles of harmony and peace – if only to ensure viability, sustainability and development. Much of this is still the case today, although Freemasonry in the Philippines provides a strong sense of belonging and acceptance regardless of ethnicity, financial or social status and a sense of attachment to history and its heroes.

While the association of Filipinos with American lodges fostered and advanced the movement towards independence, the dichotomy created by adherents of either the Spanish or American Masonic schools of thought, also divided the Filipino brothers. To this day, many jurisdictions remain irregular according to the GLP and our own UGLV. Thus, while many famous men in Philippine history were Masons (such as Bro. Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, Bro. Dr. Jose Rizal and Bro. Marcelo Del Pilar), if these gentlemen were alive today, we could not Masonically associate with them.

Yet, in all this, it was the fusion of Latin Freemasonry with that of American Freemasonry in the Philippines that proved to be one of the most significant events in Masonic history. It was a great movement because it brought the beauty and glory of the Craft to a people who had formerly often been denied admission because of racial prejudice. It was great because the Chinese, Japanese and Malays knew that they were considered as brothers, equals of the Europeans and Americans, without the distinction of race, creed or colour.

As we were preparing this paper, we also found ourselves moved to pay homage to fallen Freemasons, who gave up their lives for Craft and Country. It is not possible to compile a list of all the Freemasons who were killed during the various persecutions and wars, so we have opted to list the names of those who lost their lives in some of the more well-known executions in Philippine history. They serve to highlight that the repeated trials and persecutions undergone by Freemasons, including during the Second World War, served to strengthen a resolve to withstand and re-establish in the fullness of time.

Perhaps, the best conclusion to this study, is a quotation from Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, MW Teodoro M. Kalaw, who in January 1920 observed:

*In these days of peace and goodwill, under a government that neither condemns nor persecutes, but rather encourages and helps those who work for the benefit and progress of humanity, Freemasonry which is a universal institution to which many honest men belong, irrespective of religion, race or nationality, will be able to teach the Filipinos that the ideal life is that in which nobody interferes with the beliefs of others; in which everybody may profess the ideas that each considers best, if within the law; in which everyone is free to adore his God in his own way; in which all may practice as they deem advisable the commandment of "Love thy neighbor as thyself; charity towards the needy, tolerance and humility towards the poor, justice and truth towards all; in which there is no hatred, but love, no division of classes, but fraternal cooperation, no monopolies for the few, but opportunities for everybody; and in which all will understand that morality is not expressed in words, or even in thoughts, but in daily deeds, in every industrial, commercial, agricultural activity, in every phase, in short, in human existence.<sup>86</sup>*

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<sup>86</sup> Kalaw, TM, 1956, *Philippine Masonry: Its Origins, Development and Vicissitudes up to Present Time* (1920), p205.

**Freemasonry in the Philippines**

*presented by Bro. Felix Pintado and Bro. Dave Angeles  
to the Victorian Lodge of Research No 218 on 28 October 2016*

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## **10. Epilogue - The Victorian Initiative**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2016 marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of formal diplomatic relations between Australia and the Philippines which commenced on that date in 1946. This auspicious occasion provided a unique background and perhaps an impetus for the re-discovery of a hidden bond in Freemasonry that was brought to light in the same year.

Geographically, Australia is one of the Philippines' most important neighbours sharing a democracy of the western pattern, the two countries are in the same ideological camp. The historical link goes back further than 1946 - Filipino pearl divers worked in Australia's fledgling pearl industry in the 1800s and some, 4,000 Australian servicemen fought alongside their Filipino brothers during the Second World War.

Australia's and the Philippines share similar perspectives and openly cooperate on many regional, economic, trade, defence and security issues. A common democratic history laid the foundations of friendship, development assistance and ever-deepening brother-to-brother links across the seas. Immigration has played an important part, as Filipinos are consistently one of the fastest growing migrant groups in Australia, with 225,000 citizens identifying as having Filipino ancestry. Today, 50,000 Filipinos reside in Victoria.

It is in this context that, in 2014, a small group of Freemasons from lodges of the United Grand Lodge of Victoria (UGLV) made initial contact with Masons of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Philippines (GLP). There then followed an informal visit by the Honorary Consul of the Philippines in Melbourne (a Freemason) to the GLP in Manila in January 2015. During the visit it was resolved to encourage and work towards sending a Victorian delegation to the GLP Annual Communication to be held in April 2016.

In October 2015, GLP Grand Secretary RWBro Danilo Angeles formally extended to the UGLV Grand Secretary and the UGLV Grand Master "our warm fraternal invitation to be our guest on the occasion of our 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand Communication". What followed was a coordinated mobilisation of UGLV brethren who seized the momentous occasion to enable the inaugural visit by UGLV Grand Master MWBro. Don G. Reynolds to the Annual Communication and Grand Installation, marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the GLP and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The UGLV delegation to 100<sup>th</sup> ANCOM in April 2016 was reciprocated by a less formal visit to UGLV by GLP Grand Master MWBro. Voltaire T. Gazmin in August 2016, at the gracious invitation of the UGLV. During that visit, the GLP Grand Master had occasion to observe some lodge ritual at Middle Park Lodge No.206 and engage in discussions on corporate Grand Lodge matters. The outcomes of that meeting included:

- the mutual realisation that each of the two jurisdictions may benefit from the respective experience and governance of the other,
- the appointment of a UGLV Representative to the GLP, and
- the formation of technical working groups to forge the initial framework of inter-jurisdictional Masonic cooperation and comity between the GLP and UGLV. <sup>87</sup>

To this end, a draft Memorandum of Understanding was prepared that set forth the terms and understanding between the GLP and the UGLV to forge and foster a mutually-beneficial sisterhood agreement by and between both grand jurisdictions.

In October 2016, at the time of finalising this paper, the respective Grand Masters were to sign the Memorandum of Understanding in Taipei, Taiwan where they were attending the Grand Installation of MWBro Dennis Liao as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of China.

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<sup>87</sup> 2016, *The Cable Tow*, July-August 2016, Vol. 93, No.1,

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