

SPANISH-AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY MASONRY

THE MYTHICAL MASONRY OF FRANCISCO DE MIRANDA

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AS A CONSEQUENCE of my article in *AQC* 90 on 'Simón Bolívar, The Liberator' I was urged from more than one quarter to investigate similarly the case of Francisco de Miranda, *El Precursor* (The Forerunner), another outstanding figure of the Spanish-American revolutions against despotic Spanish rule. He was a man of some genius, a scholar and visionary, soldier and conspirator, yet one who largely failed in the practice of war and came to an even more tragic end than did Bolívar.

That he was a freemason has had the broadest credence, and in addition the creation and propagation of a whole system of political pseudo-Masonry used as a cover for revolutionary intrigue has been generally and firmly attributed to him over a large part of the Spanish-speaking world, and indeed in Anglo-phone parts also. For these reasons the pursuit of proof of these ascriptions must necessarily be an intriguing and often baffling task, made the more difficult by the tendency to unreliability of so many well-reputed historians of the Latin-American scene, chiefly due to an intense patriotism that led them to exaggerate the role of the personages of their own countries in the events of the time, to accept blindly the *dicta* of their predecessors when these were favourable to their heroes or unfavourable to their enemies, and even to fail to compare and correlate attested facts and time elements that might have given the lie to some of the earlier writing. Strong religious and partisan factors also played their part. Hence, while most historians have written in good faith according to their lights and are of course accurate in much of what they wrote, these fatal weaknesses vitiate the whole and create the need for a sceptical approach and careful research.

I must say at the outset that I am now convinced that not only was Miranda not the inventor of any system of pseudo-Masonry (the true derivation and personalities of which I shall relate in the second part of this article), but that he was not even a member of it. Though this of course greatly reduces his interest as a masonic subject, but by no means his importance as a personage and revolutionary patriot, the question as to whether he was or was not a regular freemason remains of concern to a very large number of masons, particularly in the northern part of South America, to whom the man Francisco de Miranda is a legend and his name one to conjure with.

Let us first see, therefore, who the subject was and the relevant parts of his history and movements. As with Bolívar, a great deal has been written about Miranda in Spanish but in fact the latter's classic 'life' was written in English by an American, William Spencer Robertson, Ph.D., Professor of History at the University of Illinois, (*Life of Miranda*, University of North Carolina Press, 1929), who had access to his papers and to the copious diaries, edited and inedited, that Miranda kept for the greater part of his mature life, as well as to his other papers.

BIRTH AND EDUCATION

According to Robertson, then, Sebastián Francisco de Miranda Rodríguez was born in Caracas, capital of the then *Capitanía General de Venezuela*, on 24 April 1749, the first-born of Sebastián de Miranda y Ravelo and Francisca Antonia Rodríguez Espinosa. The father, a prosperous merchant who came of a noble line of Spanish warriors, had emigrated to the New World from Tenerife in the Canary Islands; the mother's family was obscure and creole. There were later children of the marriage and of these Francisco Antonio was born on 9 June 1756. This was long taken to be the date of our subject's birth but it has transpired that at the age of 23 he dropped his first name, Sebastián, thereafter always calling himself plain 'Francisco'.

He was educated at the University of Caracas and in 1771 applied to the *Capitanía General* for a permit to go to Spain and serve the king, Carlos III. This was granted and Miranda sailed on 25 January 1771, reaching Cádiz, the main Spanish port for the Americas,

on 1 March and Madrid, the capital, four weeks later. For a year he collected books, studied, and visited other Spanish cities before applying for an army commission. On 7 December 1772 he entered the service as a captain in a battalion of the *Princesa* regiment. He was stationed at Cádiz but fought in 1774–5 against the Moroccans who were then besieging Melilla in North Africa. He gained distinction but was dissatisfied with his subsequent treatment by the Spanish authorities. At the end of 1775 he visited Gibraltar and became acquainted with the officers of the English garrison there, being invited by the Commandant to a ball on 3 January 1776. He also met John Turnbull, a prominent English resident of Gibraltar, who was later to be of great assistance to him and whom he met again in Cádiz in the Spring of 1777.

MILITARY UPS AND DOWNS

Miranda experienced vicissitudes in his military career, at times being well reported on, at others censured and even placed under arrest. In December 1779 his commanding officer made serious complaints against him but he was absolved and posted back to Cádiz. His diary reveals that at this time he was reading French philosophical works proscribed in Spain.

Meanwhile Spain had been drawn by France into the American revolutionary war against Britain and in April 1780 Miranda sailed with a Spanish fleet for the New World. He took part in the Pensacola campaign and is said to have helped the French Admiral, de Grasse, to find the funds to take his fleet to Chesapeake Bay. On 9 August 1781 Miranda, now a lieutenant colonel, was sent to Jamaica to arrange an exchange of prisoners and in May 1782 he negotiated the surrender to Spain of the Bahamas, where a combined American and Spanish force was besieging New Providence. On his return to Cuba, however, he was accused along with his superior, General Cajigal, of malfeasance of funds, lost his commission and was sentenced to prison.

IN NORTH AMERICA

On 1 June 1783 Miranda fled to North America. He had been expected to return to Spain to vindicate himself before the King but instead began a tour of the United States, now at peace with England. During 1781–2 he had been in correspondence with would-be revolutionaries in Caracas and become an admirer of the political system of England, which country he may even then have hoped would help him to free his native land from the Spanish yoke.

Between mid-1783 and the end of 1784 Miranda visited a number of American cities and met many distinguished Americans and foreign emissaries. After about two months in Philadelphia it came out that he was a Spanish deserter and he was banished from society, so he went on to New York where he again met many leading military and political figures and also the English liberal Tom Paine. He discussed with General Henry Knox and Alexander Hamilton a plan to liberate Venezuela and it is probable that at this time the idea of freeing the whole of that part of South America crystallized in his mind. By November 1784 he had formulated with General Knox a definite scheme to raise 5,000 men, with arms and ammunition, in New England.

MIRANDA IN ENGLAND

However, before putting his revolutionary plans into operation Miranda wanted to see Europe and on 15 December 1784 he sailed for London with a letter of introduction to George Rose, Secretary to the English Treasury. The Spanish authorities had already warned their Minister in London that Miranda was on his way, instructing him to ask the British Government to arrest Miranda and hand him over. However it did not do so and on 26 April 1785 Miranda called at the Spanish Legation and left a petition to King Carlos III asking him to dismiss him and refund the price of his captaincy. He was short of money at this time – as on many later occasions.

Miranda thought England was too upset at the loss of the American colonies to take up his cause at this juncture, but he met many important people to whom he aired his plans. He also met John Turnbull again, and Colonel W. S. Smith who was secretary to the United States Minister in London. On 9 August 1785 Smith left with Miranda for Holland and Prussia, in which latter country Miranda again met the famous Marquis de Lafayette, whom he had already seen in the United States – and, according to his diary, heartily disliked!

TOUR OF EUROPE

Miranda's itinerary included Saxony, Austria and Hungary, and also Italy where he visited Rome and other cities. From Italy he travelled via Ragusa to Greece, which he reached on 30 July 1786. As 'Count Miranda' he entered Russia and at Kherson in the Crimea met the Empress Catherine's current favourite, Gregory Potemkin, who invited him to Kiev. There he met many leading Court personalities and on 25 February 1787 was presented to Catherine herself. She took a liking to him and subsequently questioned him on many subjects. There is no evidence that he became one of her numerous lovers but his diary records that he revealed his revolutionary plans to her and claims that she said she would be the first to support the independence of South America.

From the Crimea Miranda travelled via Moscow to St. Petersburg where he remained for three months, meeting many more personages and being well entertained. Again he saw the Empress who supported him in a dispute with the Spanish Minister and gave him permission to wear the uniform of a Russian colonel. She also gave him £2,000 and letters to the Russian ministers in various countries.

October 1787 found Miranda in Stockholm; though supposedly incognito, he was presented to King Gustav III. In Copenhagen on Christmas Day he was warned that the Spaniards were still after him and in Amsterdam, which he reached via Hamburg and other cities, he was told by an American acquaintance that he had seen General Cajigal, Miranda's former superior in Cuba, still in prison in Spain.

Miranda went on to Switzerland and in September 1788 was in Zurich. After visiting other Swiss towns he entered France disguised as a Livonian. In the December he was in Marseilles and from there he travelled by way of various towns to Paris, which he left in June 1789 for London, where he took lodgings in Jermyn Street.

This European tour, as revealed by Miranda's diaries, was truly remarkable. He was probably the first Spanish American to accomplish such a journey and he took full advantage of it to make powerful acquaintances, learn languages, improve his military knowledge—even to indulge in some orgies! He had investigated Spanish forms of government and the various revolts against Spain in Spanish America and had searched for a suitable form of government after liberation.

FROM ENGLAND TO FRANCE

In London Miranda inquired after his petition to Carlos III, but finding Spain unrelenting he formally renounced his allegiance to that country and its king. He kept in touch with South Americans and wrote to General Knox, now the United States' Secretary for War, asking if the plan they had worked out had been approved. He made many English acquaintances and was eventually seen by William Pitt, the English Prime Minister, who in anticipation of war with Spain thought that a revolution in Spanish America might not be without its advantages for Britain. Negotiations dragged on until October 1790, when the threat of war receded and Pitt lost interest.

Miranda was hard up at this time and was aided by Turnbull. Pitt also helped him to some extent but inadequately, so on 19 March 1792 Miranda left London for Paris where he was well received by the ruling Girondists and was offered a high military post. In the November he was promoted to general of division, but one military success was followed by two failures for which he was blamed, though his culpability is doubtful. He was arrested but had much support and was triumphantly acquitted of treason. He recovered his property, which had been sequestered, but his service was terminated on 1 June 1793 and he was living quietly outside Paris when Robespierre seized power and put him under surveillance.

In the following month Miranda was arrested and was imprisoned until January 1795 when he was released and given some compensation. (Napoleon later admired him but believed him to be a spy for Spain and England!) Miranda was again arrested on 27 November 1795 as a conspirator opposed to France's expansionist plans but was released and ordered to be expelled to Switzerland but he hid, remaining near Paris and keeping in touch with foreign friends until the coup of 4 September 1797 when he was scheduled for deportation to Cayenne. He therefore left in disguise for London on 3 January 1798.

MIRANDA KEPT DANGLING

In the meantime, British interest in using a revolution in Spanish America to distract Spain had somewhat revived. A conspiracy in Colombia having been uncovered, several patriots were arrested, among them the well known Antonio de Nariño y Álvarez, who on 28 November 1795 was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment and sent to Spain but escaped at Cádiz and made his way to Paris via Madrid. He left for London on 29 July 1796 after a five-week sojourn in Paris and was joined by Pedro José Caro from Cuba. Nariño returned to Paris on 4 October 1796 and Caro may have gone with him, as he was certainly welcomed there by Miranda who gave him letters to Turnbull and others. Unfortunately he was a Spanish spy and reported on Miranda to the Spanish authorities. Nariño too must have seen Miranda in Paris, either on his first or second visit, and on 12 December 1796 sailed for Venezuela and his native Colombia where he later played an important role in the liberation.

Once in London Miranda soon saw Pitt again, this time representing himself as a plenipotentiary authorised by a group of delegates from New Granada, Venezuela, Mexico, Perú, La Plata (Argentina) and Chile to renew relations with England and to plan an expedition to liberate South America and institute a monarchical system there. This was the so-called Paris Convention of 22 December 1797, the bona fides of which is now denied and of which more anon. Miranda also approached the United States Ambassador who seemed interested but was told by the English Foreign Secretary that he did not favour any present action, but would keep Miranda 'on ice' as it were.

England and the U.S.A. dillied and dallied as the foreign situation varied; they were of course all along motivated by their own trading concerns. Miranda continued to conspire and elaborate his plans but in a vacuum. He was hard up too and at one point took in pupils. His lodgings continued to be a centre for Spanish-American refugees and malcontents. The British Government would not help him any further but Turnbull again came to the rescue until the Government, refusing to let him leave for the Caribbean as he asked, allowed him £300 a year.

IN FRANCE AGAIN

Towards the end of 1799 General Cajigal and Miranda were at last cleared by the Spanish Government of the charges against them and Miranda was invited to return to Spain. However he was suspicious and declined, again applying to the British Government for leave to go to the Caribbean and being again refused, though they increased his allowance.

In January 1800 Miranda, disillusioned with Pitt, wrote to Napoleon, the First Consul of France under the new régime, complaining of his treatment by the previous one. He also wrote to Pitt, pointing out that, as between England and France, whichever helped Spanish America to gain its liberty would enjoy its commerce. He again sought leave to go abroad; this time a passport was granted and in October 1800 Miranda reached The Hague. From Antwerp he wrote to the French Minister, Fouché, and learned that Napoleon had agreed to his living in retirement near Paris to settle his affairs. He went but on 1 December Fouché had him arrested as a spy and, though he was soon released, he was ordered to leave Paris by 14 March 1801 when he returned to England via the Low Countries, arriving on 21 April.

In response to a request Miranda submitted to the British Government a draft of a representative but monarchical Spanish-American governmental system based on modified Spanish institutions. He wrote in his diary that he had been promised financial, naval and military aid, and had drawn up a list of his requirements.

THE VENEZUELAN RAID

Miranda was then granted a permit to proceed to Venezuela or the United States. War with France ended in March 1802 with the Treaty of Amiens but broke out again in May 1803. All the time Miranda was held as it were on a string. His American contacts kept him informed of conditions and possibilities on their side of the Atlantic. Preparations were begun, then stopped; his hopes were raised only to be dashed. He saw and corresponded with leading personalities, drew up plans and sought decisions. In 1805 relations between Spain and the United States deteriorated and, as war seemed imminent, Miranda decided to use his passport and go to the States, leaving on 2 September 1805 and arriving at New York under an assumed name on 9 November. He communicated with several personages and on 29

November set out via Philadelphia for Washington where he saw President Jefferson and Secretary Madison, the latter warning him that, so long as America was not actually at war with Spain, any hostile action against that country initiated in the United States would be punished.

Nevertheless Miranda went ahead with plans for an expedition and succeeded in raising some £11,000 and a ship, while an American supporter recruited 200 men who put to sea on 2 February 1806. However the Spanish Minister got wind of this and warned the authorities in the Spanish colonies, while protesting to the United States regarding its alleged unethical conduct.

Exciting as is the story of this eventually unsuccessful expedition to Venezuela, there is no point in relating it in the present context other than to say that Miranda received help from the English Admiral Alexander Cochrane and other (though not all) British authorities in the Caribbean, but eventually had to give up and retire to Grenada, arriving there on 21 October bankrupt and desperate. It is possible that had he been able to retain and enlarge his foothold in Venezuela he might have been given adequate British support, but this was not to be.

It may be worth noting at this point that in 1806 the English Admiral Popham decided, without authority, to attack the Spanish colony of La Plata and capture Buenos Aires and Montevideo. He took the former city on 27 June and in his report mentioned plans which he and Miranda had previously made up for Lord Melville.

BACK IN LONDON

On 16 November 1807 Miranda left the West Indies for London and on 5 January 1808 saw Lord Castlereagh, to whom he put new military and political plans that were well received. But events were moving in Europe and in that year Napoleon invaded Spain, who appealed to Britain for help against the common enemy, so an expedition being prepared under Wellesley to invade Venezuela was diverted to the Iberian peninsula.

After this episode Miranda lived quietly in London, reviving his literary pursuits. In 1802 he had acquired an English mistress, one Sarah Andrews, and in 1803 they bought a house at 28 Grafton Street (some authors have given the number as 26 or 27; it is now 58 Grafton Way and was recently acquired by the Venezuelan Government who have named it 'Casa de Miranda') where Miranda lived with Sarah and their two children until his final departure in 1810.

He was also busy writing to contacts in the Americas but his letters were intercepted and returned. In January 1809 Britain and the Central Junta in Cádiz who represented what Spanish authority there was signed a treaty that put an end to Miranda's hopes of British co-operation, and in May he was warned against maintaining a 'seditious correspondence'. However he went on writing, receiving dubious advice from some quarters while others betrayed him, and he was again warned by the British Government. From 1808 he had been trying to influence English public opinion through journalism and published *El Colombiano* in London, which drew vain Spanish protests. All this time he continued to receive Spanish-American patriots and to mix in London society.

TURMOIL IN SPANISH AMERICA

At this time Spanish America was itself in turmoil. Early in 1810 a Regency took over from the Junta in Spain and on 19 April the *cabildo* (town council) of Caracas, Venezuela, ejected the Spanish Captain-General and vowed fidelity directly to King Fernando VII. A Supreme Junta was then formed which called on other Spanish-American *cabildos* to follow suit, which those at Bogotá and Buenos Aires and others in New Granada and Chile did, though others opted for full independence from Spain. Miranda was invited to return to his native land but declined as he did not consider the moment ripe. In June 1810 a Venezuelan mission comprising Simón Bolívar, Luis López Méndez and Andrés Bello came to London and by 19 July Miranda had met them all, though the Supreme Junta had warned them not to get involved with him.

DEPARTURE FOR VENEZUELA

Wellesley, though sympathetic to the revolutionaries, had formulated a policy of neutrality and mediation as between Spain and her colonies, so that the mission's representations fell on

deaf ears. When Bolívar, whom Miranda had been guiding in his dealings with the British Government, invited him to return with him to Venezuela and take part in the struggle for liberty Miranda agreed. Wellesley held him back for a time but he was finally able to depart on 10 October 1810, separately from Bolívar, and arrived at La Guaira, the port for Caracas, on 11 December of that year. Many there received him enthusiastically though the Venezuelan authorities were suspicious of him. Nevertheless the *cabildos* of Caracas and San Carlos and the Junta at Bogotá welcomed him and the first appointed him a lieutenant-general.

It is unnecessary to relate in detail the complicated path by which Venezuela became, with the signing of a Declaration on 17 August 1811, fully independent of Spain; suffice it to say that Miranda took a leading part throughout. None the less the move was not entirely popular and there were revolts against it, a serious one at Valencia being put down by Miranda who by the end of the year was Vice-President of the ruling Congress.

In February 1812 one Domingo Monteverde, a naval captain, arrived in Venezuela to lead the Royalist faction and was already having some success when a severe earthquake struck that country and wrecked Caracas and several other towns with great loss of life. This disheartened the Republicans whom the populace, stirred up by the priesthood, accused of invoking the wrath of God by their actions, and encouraged Monteverde who continued to make ground. Miranda, who had fallen somewhat in disfavour, was recalled and given plenary governmental, military and financial powers. He reorganized the republican army and recruited mercenaries, leading his troops out of Caracas on 1 May. On 18 May he was given dictatorial powers but, though he sought outside aid, he remained militarily inert and lost support. The Royalists on the other hand grew stronger and Bolívar, commanding the key port of Puerto Cabello, was forced to surrender it.

CAPITULATION AND CAPTURE

This seems to have broken the ageing Miranda's spirit and on 12 July 1812 he told his government that he would have to negotiate with the Royalists. This ended in the abject capitulation of San Mateo for which Miranda was blamed, and it was said that he had betrayed the Republic for money. This he denied, but he certainly transferred 10,000 pesos of government funds to La Guaira where he put this sum, another 12,000 pesos and his books aboard the British warship *Sapphire*. He then returned to Caracas, saying later that he had obtained approval there of the terms of surrender, but his secrecy throughout led to the worst interpretation being placed on his actions.

On 30 July Miranda was back in La Guaira to embark in the *Sapphire* but made the fatal decision to stay ashore that night. He later claimed that all the money was his own and that he had intended to seek help from New Granada in regaining Venezuela, but this was not revealed at the time and Bolívar and others, believing him a traitor, arrested Miranda and handed him over to Monteverde, who at first kept him chained in dungeons at La Guaira and Puerto Cabello. His condition was ameliorated but in June 1813 he was sent to Havana, Cuba, and later that year to Cádiz in Spain where he remained imprisoned until he died on 14 July 1816. Friends had tried to improve his lot and an escape was planned but his illness frustrated this and he came to his miserable end in a Spanish jail. Eventually he came to be called *El Precursor*, lauded as a hero of the Spanish-American revolution and revered as a martyr.

This brief relation of his life as reflected in Robertson's thoughtful and well-documented pages will have revealed much of Miranda's character and development. He emerges as a man of contradictions and not unnaturally, amid a general chorus of belated adulation, some voices betray a sour note. The Swedish Ambassador to Russia at the time of his visit, for instance, held him to be rude, imprudent and violent, though 'of rare genius'; perhaps Miranda had trodden on his toes in some matter! His troubles as a Spanish officer suggest that he was at least hasty, probably arrogant. It is said that he would tergiversate when it suited his purpose, was financially unscrupulous and was vain, particularly in his later years; to sum up, a poseur and adventurer.

Yet he must have been able to call on great charm to make so many important acquaintances and some friends loyal to the end. He was a man of catholic tastes, a voracious reader with a library large for those days and very well-travelled. He accumulated immense military knowledge and experience, even though they eventually failed him. He had a quick mind and great energy, and was persevering. He could be eloquent and seldom failed to impress his hearers. He may have been an opportunist who swayed with circumstances but he

was ever single-minded in pursuit of Latin-American liberation, though he was also ambitious and saw himself as most fitted to be the leader of it. He studied the theory of government and it has been said of him that he was a 'great maker of constitutions'.

It is my own impression that Miranda's virtues derived from an innate nobility, his faults in part from his race and in part from the lifelong pressures of circumstances on a visionary impelled by his dreams who nevertheless had continually to face up to reality and to try to turn it to his guiding purpose. Certainly there was a measure of genius in the man, fully recognised only after his death, and he did not deserve his miserable end.

MIRANDA AND MASONRY

So much for the man, his life and his character. Let us now try to see him in relation to Freemasonry. It could hardly be said, in the light of his times and when things were going well enough with him, that he would not have been accepted into the Order, had he wished to be, in several countries including this. It is in no way clear however that he did so wish. His own references are very sparse; a list of his books in 1783 included some on Masonry; his diary records a visit in October 1787, in company with a Mr. Anker, to a foundling hospital in Stockholm supported by masons. The following month he saw a masonic temple at Christiania (now Oslo) and another at Mastrand. All this may indicate no more than that Masonry had come to his omnivorous attention and he was satisfying a fleeting curiosity, for all authorities concur in that nowhere in his copious documentary is there any further reference to Masonry, except one in a letter that will be referred to later on.

On the other hand membership of the Craft has been ascribed to Miranda by so many writers, including reputable historians, that there is a duty on us to examine as closely as possible the opportunities he might have had at various times and in various places to join Masonry, regular or irregular. It is unlikely that he could have done so in Venezuela, which he left some nine months after coming of age and where Masonry was proscribed by the Spanish Crown, nor whilst he lived and served in Spain, where it was even less tolerated.

INITIATION IN GIBRALTAR?

Indeed the earliest time suggested by anyone is 1775-6 when in Gibraltar, where it is alleged that Miranda was initiated in an English lodge founded in about 1726, probably introduced by his acquaintance, later his faithful friend and helper, John Turnbull. If the story is true this lodge might have been St. John of Jerusalem No. 51, warranted in 1728 by the premier Grand Lodge. The only list of members in Grand Lodge records is for 1731 and no returns were made before 1787, after which two were made covering the period to 1799. No other records of the lodge have survived and no doubt it lapsed. St. John's Lodge No. 148 was founded in 1767 by the Antients but the only entries in the Grand Lodge Register are two brief ones in 1777 and 1780. It ceased activity after the Great Siege of 1783. John Turnbull could well have been a member in 1775-6 as he was a founder of Lodge No. 178 in His Majesty's Ordnance' (now Inhabitants Lodge No. 153) in 1777. Curiously, the Minutes (in Grand Lodge records) of the 'Ordnance' Lodge for 15 August 1778 show a 'J. Turnbull' as Junior Warden and a month later as Senior Warden, but in those of 15 March 1779 he is reported as having been censured for disregarding three summonses, refusing to pay his dues or clothe himself, and leaving the lodge without permission! Why he offended in this manner is not stated.

All in all, whilst it is not an impossibility that Miranda was made a mason in Gibraltar at the time stated there is no extant evidence thereof, and in view of the brevity of his stay and of the fact that he was a foreigner serving in a foreign army it would seem extremely unlikely. It is apparently held in Gibraltar that, when Ferdinand VII ascended the throne of Spain, Miranda with other liberals escaped via Gibraltar en route to South America and also visited Gibraltar again at some later date. But Carlos III was king from 1759 to 1788, while we know that Miranda did not 'escape' from Spain at any time, nor did he return to South America until his raid on Venezuela in 1806, while there is no record of his ever having returned to Gibraltar. Hence I think this story can be wholly discounted.

INITIATED IN THE NEW WORLD?

While he was with the Spanish forces in the New World from 1780 to 1783 Miranda would

have found no lodges to enter in the Spanish-speaking lands, though there were ones in Florida when he was fighting there with the North Americans against the British – which would hardly be a recommendation! He also spent nearly five months in Jamaica from August 1781 at a time when there were many local lodges in existence, but no record of him as an initiate or member of any of them has come to light,¹ and, whilst merchants there resented having their trade with the American colonies stopped by a British blockade and no doubt indulged in a good deal of smuggling, this would hardly have made a Spanish officer who had fought with the American rebels welcome in a Jamaican lodge, and would certainly have put it in bad odour with the authorities.

Some South Americans hold that Miranda was initiated in a regular lodge in Philadelphia or Virginia² towards the end of 1783. He was in the United States for a year and a half at this time, so once more he *might* have been made a mason in either of those places – or anywhere else he visited for that matter, though he spent the longest single stretch in Philadelphia, leaving there however under the cloud of his desertion. But in any event I have been unable to obtain any evidence, documentary or otherwise, to support these claims and must therefore regard them as at best ‘not proven’.

Given the speed and extensiveness of Miranda’s European travels in 1785–6, it again appears highly unlikely that he could have entered masonic circles and have been initiated in any of the countries he visited – apart from Russia, which is the next possibility. Russian Masonry certainly existed at this period. English lodges had been founded there from 1771 and it was intended to establish a Province but no progress was made and the leading figure, Senator I. P. Yelaguin, turned instead to Sweden where the Strict Observance Rite was being worked. However a Grand Lodge of Russia founded by Yelaguin soon collapsed, as King Gustav III of Sweden for political reasons persuaded some Russians to found another Grand Lodge, presided over by Prince Gagarin, under Swedish influence. This both angered other masons and aroused the Empress Catherine’s suspicions – with justification, as it appeared, since the two countries went to war in 1788!

INITIATED IN RUSSIA?

The Empress ordered Yelaguin to close down his lodges and Gagarin went to Moscow and continued to found clandestine lodges working the Swedish system. The further history of these two ‘Grand Lodges’ is either lost or out of reach in the maw of Soviet archives, so that if Miranda was initiated in one of their subordinate lodges proof would be hard to come by. Moreover since both were under the Empress’s formidable interdict Miranda, who enjoyed her favour, would have been uncharacteristically foolish to risk losing it by such an act.

As for the ‘regular’ lodges, it must be significant that nowhere does Miranda’s name appear in the pages of Bakounin, Lenning, Pypine, Vernadsky, Longionov, Sokolovskaya and so on, the copious and authoritative writers on Russian Masonry of the period, and the conclusion must be that if Miranda ever was initiated into Masonry, it was not in a Russian lodge.

An Argentine source³ passes on a claim that the *mémoires* of Prince Alexander Ypsilantis, an aide-de-camp to the Tsar, contain a reference to his meeting Miranda in a ‘Lodge La Paix’, where Miranda was presented to him by Count John of Capodistria. If this was in Russia (and where else could it have been?), an authority⁴ on Russian history of that period, as well as on its contemporary Freemasonry, states categorically that there has been no known Russian lodge of that name. He also points out that, at the time of Miranda’s only visit to that country, Ypsilantis had not been born! He was in fact born in 1792 and became a mason in 1810 (at the early age of 18 – and thereby losing the favour of Tsar Alexander I, though he was appointed an aide-de-camp to the same monarch in 1816). There was of course no Tsar at the time of Miranda’s stay in Russia, as the Empress Catherine then reigned. John of Capodistria, like Ypsilantis of Greek origin, was doctor to the Tsar but is not listed as a mason. As for meeting Ypsilantis in a lodge elsewhere than in Russia, this could obviously not have been before 1810 when Ypsilantis was initiated, and at that time Miranda was in London, soon to leave for Venezuela. We may therefore safely discount this sole ‘sighting’ of Miranda in a lodge anywhere as fiction.

Miranda’s next stops were in Scandinavia where, as has been noted, he visited some masonic buildings. Nevertheless there is no evidence, nor indeed has the suggestion been made, that he was initiated in any of the Scandinavian countries. What might conceivably have pointed to it, namely the five-degree system similar to the Swedish that was worked in

the Spanish-American pseudo-Masonry attributed to Miranda, falls to the ground when it is shown (as it conclusively will be) that he could not have been a member of it.

A FRENCH INITIATION?

Miranda continued his extensive travels in Europe until he returned to London in June 1789. Again there has never been any suggestion that he might have been made a mason in any of the countries he visited until he reached France where it is alleged⁵ that he was initiated in a Parisian lodge working a five-degree system, introduced by the Marquis de Lafayette, whom he had met in the United States while the Marquis was making a triumphal progress – and, according to his diary, strongly disliked. An American source points out⁶ that it was in Prussia in 1785 that Miranda and Lafayette met again, when the latter set out to be agreeable and invited Miranda to visit him in Paris, but he was suspicious and never went.

If indeed Miranda had been introduced by Lafayette into a lodge in Paris it would most probably have been the *Contrat Social*, of which Lafayette became a joining member on 24 June 1782. Bro. Jean Bossu, the leading authority on European and particularly French Freemasonry, has mentioned numerous lodges visited by Lafayette in France and North America, so he would certainly have been capacitated to sponsor Miranda if he had desired and had the opportunity to do so.

Another source⁷ claims that Miranda's entry into a French lodge took place in 1796, not 1789, but this was at a time when Masonry had been suppressed in France after the Revolution and Miranda was himself suspect and living more or less in hiding and under the threat of arrest or deportation. In any event, Bro. Bossu, who has a vast index of Continental freemasons, says categorically that in none of the works and records available to him concerning French (and Russian) Masonry does the name of Miranda appear, though on the other hand Bro. Bossu remarks on the number of places in Europe visited by Miranda during his travels, the number of acquaintances he made (some of them undoubtedly masons or relatives of masons), and the several pseudonyms he used. Hence it cannot be said definitively that Miranda was *not* initiated during the post-Russian part of his European tour but only that its speed and circumstances do make such an initiation most unlikely.

MADE AN ENGLISH MASON?

Miranda had already spent eight months in London and now returned for nearly another three years. He knew many important people and some of them are known to have been masons, but not only is there no suggestion that he himself became one, but the archives of Grand Lodge do not contain any mention of him.

On 19 March 1792 he left London for Paris and began his career as a French officer under the Girondist republican government. Twice the ruling régime was overthrown and Miranda, after an early military success, all the time lived precariously. Masonic lodges, which had been the playthings of aristocrats, ceased to meet and when he returned to London in January 1789 Miranda could hardly have been more of a mason than when he went to France six years previously. Trying to return to France three years later, he was again arrested so could not have become a 'Napoleonic' mason.

Miranda returned to London for a further four years, following which he left for New York in September 1805 to prepare and undertake his disastrous expedition to Venezuela. Back in London in the early days of 1807, he remained there for almost four years more until in October 1810 he left again for Venezuela and the final events that led to his capture, imprisonment and death. His absorption in revolutionary planning and preparation, and the difficulties and disappointments he suffered, not to mention his desperate penury after the failure of his Venezuelan expedition, were scarcely conducive to his becoming a mason in the United States or during the nearly six months he spent in various British West Indian colonies, while in London afterwards the records are as silent as during his previous English sojourns.

Miranda spent in all some 13½ years in England, acquiring an English house, a mistress and a family. Though usually penurious, he had highly-placed friends and acquaintances among whom some are known to have been freemasons. Surely then he would have been accepted into a regular lodge during one or other of his stays had he wished to be. Against this possibility however must be set the following facts: (i) his name nowhere appears in the records of Grand Lodge; (ii) nowhere in his copious and compendious diaries nor in his

letters⁸ is there any mention of his having been or having become a mason: so far from having founded in London and propagated abroad the system of pseudo-Masonry so often ascribed to him, he could not even have become a member of it.

NEVER A PSEUDO-MASON

I say that with complete confidence because there is incontrovertible documentary evidence, on which I shall elaborate in the second part of this paper, that this pseudo-Masonry did not originate in London at all but in Spain, most probably in Madrid, whence it retreated before the Napoleonic invasion first to Seville and then to Cádiz, from whence it was propagated to Caracas, Philadelphia and elsewhere in the New World; but it was opened up in London only in 1811, months after Miranda (and Bolívar) had left England for South America, never to return.

As for the *Gran Reunión Americana* (Great American Union), *Gran Logía Regional Americana* (American Regional Grand Lodge), *Gran Oriente de Londres* (Grand Orient of London) and any other grandiose foundations attributed to Miranda not only as 'evidence' of his masonic standing, but to represent him as having masterminded, controlled and synchronized the entire revolutionary movement in Spanish-America, the last two are certainly figments of the overheated imaginations of historians and others writing from a half-century to a century and a half after the events. If Miranda contributed anything to the fictions it may have been unconsciously by way of his alleged Paris Convention of 1797, whereof no signed document has ever surfaced but only a draft in Miranda's handwriting among these papers, a version presumably handed to the British Prime Minister of the day and now in the Public Records Office in London, and yet another, similarly handed to the American Ambassador in London, now in United States archives.⁹ Nothing in Miranda's own records indicates however that he applied any of the above names to this 'Convention' or to any other gathering or body.

Gran Reunión Americana as a name may just possibly have authenticity, though not in connection with Miranda. Bernardo O'Higgins, a Chilean who afterwards became famous in connection with the southern revolutionary sector of South America, is said to have frequented Miranda's London lodgings around the turn of the century and to have been highly regarded by him. W. Spencer Robertson (*Life of Miranda*, pp. 199-200) refers to the 'fragmentary reminiscences of Bernardo O'Higgins . . . Writing in the third person the Chilean averred that the continuance of hostilities between France and England "furnished a new theatre that stimulated the meditations of Miranda" who had awaited this war to initiate his operations. "O'Higgins left England for Spain with plans that had been framed in London with the South Americans, Bejarano, Caro, and others - plans that upon the arrival of O'Higgins in Spain he presented to the Great American Reunion, reserving for its secret committee the most private measures that he could not reveal to the members of the Great Reunion. This society fixed its headquarters at the columns of Hercules whence there sallied forth the emissaries who were to destroy the tyrant's throne in South America: O'Higgins for Chile and Lima, Bejarano for Guayaquil and Quito; Baquijano for Lima and Perú, as well as the canons Cortes and Fretes who were also bound for Chile".'

The Argentinian non-masonic historian Dr. Enrique de Gandía maintains¹⁰ that these alleged reminiscences of O'Higgins are apochryphal, and I am inclined to agree that they are at best secondhand, quite possibly invented as part of the Mirandist myth. But one thing they do do and that is to place the *Gran Reunión Americana* (if such a body ever existed, a possibility I shall examine more closely in the second part of this paper) in Spain and not in London; hence it might have been the 'mother-lodge' so to speak of the various pseudo-lodges that will be discussed in the second part.

Finally, a Venezuelan writer¹¹ asserts that in 1811 a lodge named *Colombia* was founded in Caracas by Miranda; it was, he says, the first to be founded in that city and lasted barely a year, vanishing with the fall of the first republic. However the late Américo Carnicelli, the leading authority on Venezuelan Masonry, told me that he had not found any trace of such a lodge and, whilst a record might have existed and later have disappeared, there must be considerable doubt that such a lodge was ever founded and, even if it was, that Miranda had had anything to do with it. For my own part I am inclined to think that the writer was confusing it with *La Colombiana* formed in the British Legion, allegedly under a Warrant from the English Provincial Grand Lodge of Jamaica, though no trace of it remains in Jamaica or here in London.

MITRE AND ZAPIOLA

That so many writers, among them historians of note,¹² should have originated or perpetuated the Mirandist myth is a curious phenomenon, compounded partly of misunderstanding, partly of a credulity somewhat surprising in such company, and in part for the reasons mentioned in the second paragraph of this paper. Where the misunderstanding may have arisen is from an interview given to the Argentinian historian Bartolomé Mitre by the then nonagenarian General José Matías Zapiola who, some seventy years before, had been a member of some of the revolutionary lodges. He said that meetings of one in London had taken place at the apartments of the two 'Venezuelan delegates' (Luis López Méndez and Andrés Bello) and Mitre seems to have taken it that their rooms were at Miranda's house and that therefore Miranda must himself have been involved with the lodge; from this Mitre built up an entire Mirandist edifice. It is noteworthy though that authors such as José Manuel Restrepo, writing in 1827 and thus much closer to the actual events, in speaking of Miranda make no mention whatsoever of any masonic connection – as indeed is the case with some later ones.

For whatever reasons so many writers have supported this myth (and may well go on doing so, for it seems to be embedded deeply in the South American consciousness), there can be no shadow of doubt that that is what it is – a myth and nothing more. The writer who has probably done most to dispel the shadows is the Argentinian academician already referred to, Dr. Enrique de Gandía, in a paper published in Vol. XLIX of the *Bulletin of the Argentine Academy of History*. His argument is explicit and powerfully reasoned and he cites an imposing bibliography of the few writers who did not connect Miranda with Masonry and the many who did.¹³

Another modern and masonic writer who is in step with Dr. de Gandía is Bro. Dr. Alcibiades Lappas, a fellow academician also resident in Buenos Aires. His earlier work suggests that he may at the time have accepted the Mirandist fiction, but he certainly does not do so now and his works, and Dr. de Gandía's, will be often referred to in the second part of this paper.

To sum up, there can be no doubt as to the numerous opportunities Francisco de Miranda must have had of becoming a mason; yet wherever he was, despite the wishful thinking of all those who would have him be one, the records are ominously silent. So whilst it remains impossible to say whether he was one or not and the verdict must therefore be 'not proven', it is in my considered view far more likely that this famous and colourful South American never was a member of any masonic body, regular or irregular.

THE REAL SPANISH-AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY PSEUDO-MASONRY

It has now, I hope, been definitively established that whilst Francisco de Miranda could justly claim to have been the earliest proponent of the liberation of the American sub-continent from Spanish domination, and certainly kept the eyes of England, France and North America fixed on Spain's transatlantic colonies for more than two decades, it was by no means through or in conjunction with any sort of Freemasonry.¹⁴ Having thus disposed of the widespread but baseless Mirandist masonic myth, it remains to investigate the real revolutionary pseudo-Masonry – for real it unquestionably was, however misty its origins and its progress confused by historical distortion.

But first it must be explained that the eventually victorious struggle against Spanish rule in the early 19th century was not a single movement controlled from one centre but two distinct and separate series of undertakings. Some of their protagonists met, conspired and may have planned together in Europe and North America, but in the end Venezuela, Nueva Granada (Colombia) and Ecuador conducted their own wars of liberation, and La Plata (Argentina and Uruguay), Chile, Peru and Upper Peru (Bolivia) fought theirs, to coalesce briefly only when Bolívar invaded Guayaquil in 1822 and met San Martín whose forces were invading from the south.

As for the South Americans who came together in Europe and North America, it is possible that none in either group had ever met in South or Central America previously. It is possible that they had not even heard of each other and knew nothing of one another's countries, for Spain discouraged trading between colonies and they would have had little or

no occasion to intervisit. Though thrown together fortuitously for a time there might have been little natural sympathy between them either.

THE ORIGINS

However there is no question but that many of them did come together in Spain for a time early in the 19th century. There is some evidence that their companionship began in Madrid some time before the French invasion of Spain in 1808. Most of the following in this connection is attributable to the Argentinian masonic historian, Bro. Dr. Alcibiades Lappas (*San Martín y su Ideario* by Dr. Alcibiades Lappas, Buenos Aires, 1978), who cites chapter and verse from earlier historians' works. Thus Dr. Bernardo Frias wrote (*Historia del General D. Martín Güemes etc.* by Dr. Bernardo Frias, Salta, Argentina, 1902) that two of the leading Americans at the Spanish Court, José Moldes and Francisco de Gurruchaga, disgusted at the increasing decadence and uselessness of the monarchy, founded a secret association or *conjuración* (conspiracy) of Americans directed at taking advantage of the situation to proclaim the independence of their native lands. The leading spirit was José Moldes and the year 1807.

Among those said to have been members were Col. Eustáquio Moldes, Dr. Juan Antonio Moldes, José Gurruchaga, Bernardo O'Higgins, the naval lieutenant José Matias Zapiola, Balcarce (no other names given), Manuel Pinto, the Lezica brothers (no other names given), Carlos de Alvear and many others. The society also got in touch with Americans serving in the Spanish forces, including José de San Martín and José Miguel Carrera. A sour note here is the name of O'Higgins as he was never in Madrid and returned to Chile in 1802, not again to come back to Europe.

According to the Peruvian Dr. José Gálvez Barrenechea, a contemporary of the events, one José de la Riva Agüero, recorded in his papers that in 1807 a lodge of *Caballeros Racionales* was founded on the remains of an association created by Pablo de Olavide, called the forerunner of the ideal of American liberty. It had José Moldes as President. I am chary of the connection with Pablo de Olavide but the statement is at the least a reinforcement for the existence of a patriotic society in Madrid which may well have borne such a name and have been given a five-degree system by a member who had learned his Masonry in France. Who this could have been remains unknown but the possibility, indeed the probability, is there.

A version in an earlier work of Dr. Lappas¹⁵ claims that, according to the findings of Zalce and other Mexican masonic historians, Pablo de Olavide, said to have been made a mason in France, in 1794 held a sort of 'lodge' under the disguise of a 'junta of deputies of the towns and provinces of South America' in which were involved the Venezuelans Francisco de Miranda and Antonio Nariño; the Argentinians José Moldes and José and Francisco Gurruchaga, the Lezica brothers, Carlos de Alvear and Fr. Ramón E. Anchoris; many Mexicans; the Chilean Manuel de Salas; the Peruvian José del Pozo y Sucre and others. From among these came the elements which formed the lodge of *Caballeros Racionales* in Cádiz.

It is true that many of these names turn up as members of this undeniable lodge in Cádiz and the connection with Olavide is suggested, but it does not say where his alleged 'lodge' was held. At that time Olavide was living in retirement at Meung in France while Miranda, though also in France, was in prison. Hence the intrusion of the name of Olavide and the existence of his 'lodge' or junta must remain suspect, and it is a moot point as to whether the latter did exist and inspired Miranda's bogus Paris Convention or this inspired later writers to invent Olavide's junta.

Dr. Lappas goes on to say that a lodge was founded in Cádiz in 1804 under the Regional Grand Orient of Seville, which he says was in close contact with the English lodges in Gibraltar. This lodge, which worked a five-degree system, bore the number seven and could well have been Lodge *Integridad No. 7* in which José de San Martín is alleged to have been initiated. It would presumably have been 'regular' by the standards of the times but could very well have become the basis of an irregular revolutionary lodge named *Caballeros Racionales* and given the number three after the arrival of Spanish-American patriots in Cádiz from Madrid and Seville in face of the advancing French.

Be all this as it may, evidence every much to the point is that of José de Rivadeneira, afterwards sentenced by the Spaniards and kept for years in a Spanish prison until released during Riego's uprising in 1820. A member of the 'society' in Madrid, he relates that his fellows retired to Seville before the French advance and, when that city fell, dispersed and made their way to Cádiz where the society/lodge met again and grew to sixty-three members who, he said, came together every night despite the dangers and difficulties. He writes that,

when he eventually reported to San Martín in Argentina in 1821: 'He embraced me, recalled our old friendship and our work in the society in Cádiz towards making America independent.' He gives a long list of members, among whom were the Colombians Mérida, Tobar, Caicedo and Castillo; the Mexicans Pérez, Toledo, Ruiz and Obregón; and the Guatemalans Suárez, Pinedo and Juanos (*Homenaje a San Martín*, by José Gálvez Barrencechea, Lima, 1952).

LODGE No. 3, CÁDIZ

Whether or not the society/lodge was named by the more leisured and less pressured 'rational gentlemen' in Madrid, '*Caballeros Racionales*' was indisputably the name it went by in Cádiz. It seems likely that the members' three stages in the retreat from Madrid were given numbers after they had reformed in beleaguered Cádiz, where the lodge was ever afterwards called 'No. 3'.

It may be worth noting that Dr. Enrique de Gandía (*La Política Secreta de la Gran Logía de Londres*, Buenos Aires, 1976) says that Dr. Lappas opined that Nos. 1 and 2 might have been situated at Santa Fé de Bogotá, Colombia, and Philadelphia in the U.S.A., with No. 5 or 6 at Mexico City; but it is quite clear from the foregoing that he places No. 1 in Madrid and No. 2 in Seville, while in a letter to me dated 22 February 1980 he puts No. 5 at Bogotá and No. 6 in Philadelphia.

In addition Dr. de Gandía cites a letter from Bernardo O'Higgins, written in September 1826 when he was in exile, claiming that in the years 1806 to 1809 he was 'an active member of a select society organised in Cádiz in 1802, not only with the aim of liberating Chile from the Spanish yoke, but also of collaborating with Buenos Aires in the same task'. This seems at first sight an anomaly since O'Higgins returned to South America in 1802 and *Caballeros Racionales* began, on the evidence, in 1807 in Madrid where O'Higgins never went. However it may well be that O'Higgins, who as will be seen had earlier fallen under the influence of Miranda whilst in London, gathered some proselytes about him when in Cádiz (the group having nothing to do with any kind of lodge at the time) and kept in touch with them from Chile when he was beginning to work for independence there.

It will be seen shortly that there is absolute documentary proof of the lodge of *Caballeros Racionales* being situated as No. 3 at Cádiz, as No. 4 at Caracas, Venezuela, and as No. 7 in London. We also have the probable whereabouts, as above, of Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6. Dr. Lappas states that there were other lodges of *Caballeros Racionales*: No. 8 formed at Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March or April 1812; No. 9 (if it had a number) at Jalapa, Mexico, founded by Fr. Servando Teresa de Mier, who with Fr. Ramón Eduardo Anchoris and Fr. Juan Pablo Fretes made up the three priests known to have been members of Lodge No. 3 in Cádiz; and No. 10 (again if it bore a number) founded by Carlos de Alvear at Montevideo when he took the city in 1814 (this lodge was later named *Caballeros Orientales* because it was situated in the *Banda Oriental*, formerly a part of the Viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata that is now Uruguay).

There are also references in Dr. Lappas's work on Argentinian masons to lodges founded by José de San Martín at Santa Fé and Córdoba in that country, though they are not named there as *Caballeros Racionales*. A history of Argentina edited by the *Academia Nacional de la Historia* in 1939 claims that San Martín established lodges at Tucumán and in the Army of the North, though these are generally ascribed to General Manuel Belgrano who then commanded that Army and was a mason initiated in Lodge *Independencia* before 1812 and hence 'regular'. A patriotic lodge at Lima, Peru, will also be referred to later, though it was probably never in the *Caballeros Racionales* series.

THE DOCUMENTARY PROOF

We may now examine the irrefutable documentary proof of the existence of Nos. 3, 4 and 7 (and by extension of Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6 at least). This consists of letters dated 28 October 1811 sent by Carlos de Alvear in London to Rafael Mérida in Caracas. With others they were entrusted to John Brown, supercargo in the English brigantine *Rosa* destined for Venezuela, but which was taken on 3 January 1812 by the private corsair *San Narciso* out of Puerto Rico. All the letters were handed over to the Spanish authorities who made due use of them; they are now to be seen in the *Bazán* section of the Naval Museum in Madrid whose Director, Vice-Admiral Julio Guillén, published them in *Bulletin No. 63* (second half of 1960) of the Chilean Historical Academy. They are of course in Spanish but are here given in translation.

They consist of a personal letter to Rafael Mérida with three annexes (unfortunately a fourth mentioned in the letter was not ready in time for posting or we might know a good deal more) and an 'official' one from Lodge No. 7 to the President of No. 4.

The first reads:

My most esteemed Brother, at last I have escaped the tyrants' grasp and find myself here accompanied by the brethren shown in the lists. I am very sorry not to have seen here any news of yourself or your progress. I am thinking of leaving next month for Buenos Aires with the above-mentioned brethren and from there will let you know what is happening, hoping that you will do the same as regards your doings since our separation. Spain is at her last gasp; everything is in the same chaos as when you left.

I have established a lodge to serve for communicating with Cádiz, Philadelphia and your [lodge], also as a shelter for brethren who may escape from Cádiz. Our [Bro.] Román de la Luz has left the Castle and has the city for his prison; I am expecting him at any moment. Murguiondo and Valbín should leave soon. Nada is quite well again and is one of the most zealous and active brethren Armenteros, however, has been very lukewarm, apparently for fear of the Government. From the story you will see what happened to Larrea and López Conde.

If you cannot let me know what has happened direct to Buenos Aires, you can do so via London, sending it to Bro. López Méndez, the delegate from your country, who will probably become the President of this lodge.

Please give best wishes from me and from Zapiola to Bros. Caicedo and Toledo; not to have been able to lay hold of the latter hurt the despotic Spanish Government very much; within a fortnight of your departure they missed him and immediately gave orders to search carefully all ships about to leave, while they promised the advance guards of the Islands and Armies that they would be rewarded for bringing him in dead or alive, as his escape would be very damaging because he would be able to tell the whole story.

Bro Roche has had the misfortune to lose his brigantine near San Lúcar, a loss we have all regretted as he was a Brother, whilst you know what activity, zeal and other virtues characterised him. You know how much I esteem you and therefore it is unnecessary to tell you to see in what ways I can be of help to you. Your affectionate brother.

Carlos Alvear

C.A.V.P.

P.S. I can't send No. 3 for lack of time, as they are asking for the letters right away.

(Annexe) No. 1

List of the Brn. taken into Lodge No. 3 since the departure of Bro. Mérida:

Antonio de Valle	}	natives of Havana
José Sotolonga		
Miguel Santa María	}	ditto of the Kingdom of Mexico
Vicente Acuña		
Joaquín La Carrera Ortiz	}	ditto of Havana
José Herrera		
Andrés Arango	}	ditto of Guatemala
Vicente Quesada		
Juan Vatres		ditto of Santa Fé
José María Vergara		

(Annexe) No. 2

List of Americans who constitutionally cannot be admitted any lodge of *Caballeros Racionales* because they declined to join No. 3 for fear of the Spanish despots:

Don Manuel Rodrigo, a native of Buenos Aires and assistant deputy of that city.

The Marqués de San Felipe y Santiago, a native of Havana and assistant deputy for Cuba.

Don Luis Velasco, a native of Buenos Aires and assistant deputy of that city.

Don Andrés Savariego, a native of Mexico City and deputy of that kingdom.

Don Joaquín Obregón, a native of Mexico and Director of the Lottery of that city.

(Annexe) No. 4

List of brethren received into the Lodge of *Caballeros Racionales* No. 7:

Manuel Moreno, a native of Buenos Aires

Luis López Méndez, a native of Caracas
 Andrés Bello, a native of Caracas
 The Marqués del Apartado, a native of Caracas.

THE 'OFFICIAL' LETTER

The second letter, obviously addressed to the same person in his character of President (Master) of the Lodge No. 4, reads:

Lodge No. 7
 Union, Stability and Fortitude
 Good Health

To the Worshipful President of Lodge No. 4:

In pursuit of our obligation, I go on to relate what happened in Lodge No. 3 after your departure: Immediately you and the worthy brethren who accompanied you had left, Lodge No. 3 was about to stop working because of the rumours that, as you know, had begun to circulate in Cádiz. To discuss what should be done, I called together the brethren of the 5th Degree and, after having taken all the measures that prudence dictated, we resolved to carry on working at any cost and risk. Providence, which blinds tyrants, favoured us this time, as our work continued with the greatest success and happiness despite the Government's stratagems. After your departure the society was augmented by the brethren listed in the attached annexe No. 1. Of these, one has gone to Mexico and six should leave soon for different parts of America to take an active part in the just cause we espouse. No. 2 is the list of those Americans who, having proposed to join the lodge, excused themselves out of fear of the Spanish Government, and I send it so that you can pass it on to the lodges in your area, as under our constitution they are excluded forever. I also enclose a statement of certain events that occurred through the mistakes of certain brethren and this is attached to annexe No. 3. Having reached this city in company with Bros. Zapiola, San Martín, Mier, Villa-Urrutia and Chilavert, we have founded, on the instructions of Lodge No. 3, one bearing the number 7, and we have taken in the brethren I list under annexe No. 4. Bro. Ramón Eduardo Anchoris remains as President of Lodge No. 3. I tell you all this so that you may pass it on to your worthy lodge, charging you likewise to let us know all that has happened to you all in Philadelphia and in your city.

London, 28 October 1811.

Carlos Alvear
 C.A.V.P.

Earlier there existed in Caracas a *Sociedad patriótica* (patriotic society or association), possibly founded by a Chilean priest, Rev. Dr. José Cortés de Madariaga (*La Masonería en la Independencia de América* by Bro. Américo Carnicelli, Bogotá, 1970, Vol. 1, p. 94), then resident in Caracas who in March 1811 went to Bogotá as delegate from the Supreme Junta at Caracas to that at Bogotá and may have been influential in forming a similar association there, both being taken over by or serving as the bases of lodges of *Caballeros Racionales* in those cities. However this is suppositious and the time element may not fit. On the other hand the Marqués de Rojas (*El General Miranda*, Paris, 1884) refers to a patriotic society founded by Miranda and Bolívar shortly after their arrival in Caracas towards the end of 1810. This though may well be no more than a piece of the Mirandist myth. In either case, both societies/lodges would have been extinguished when the respective revolutions collapsed in July 1812 and during 1815.

THE PURPOSE

Two other points stand out in the above correspondence: first, that the lodge members who escaped from Cádiz to set out purposefully to return to their native lands to further there the cause of revolution against the Spanish yoke. This was confirmed in later years by José de San Martín who, writing from France to the then President of Peru on 11 September 1848, referred to '... a meeting of Americans in Cádiz (when) we resolved to return each one to the country of his birth in order to offer our services in the struggle ...'.

Secondly, that the lodge already practised in Cádiz (and therefore almost certainly in Madrid and Seville) a five-degree system. Alvear's reference in the 'official' letter above to the

'Brn. of the 5th Degree' makes this absolutely clear while the aged Zapiola's statement to the Argentinian historian Bartolomé Mitre that the first degree was called 'Independence' and the second 'Republic' confirms that candidates for the first had to swear to work for the independence of Spanish America and those for the second to strive for the establishment there of a republican system of government. Several authors have imparted details of the five-degree system, though chiefly as it related to the revolutionary lodges in the southern part of South America to which we shall come later. They agree that the first three degrees were employed to initiate, pass and raise non-masonic recruits, while the last two were directed to the lodge's revolutionary aims, the fifth degree in particular being kept highly secret and open only to the members most committed to the cause and involved in the plotting and planning connected therewith.

John Heron Lepper, in notes on Mitre's interview with the nonagenarian Zapiola (now in the Library of Grand Lodge), remarks that, while the European revolutionary lodges were purely political, those in the southern part of South America – often called *Lautaro* lodges – were masonic in their initiatory degrees, but I would take issue with him if he meant thereby that they were *regularly* masonic. Incidentally it was Zapiola's confusion of the names *Caballeros Racionales* and *Lautaro*, placing both of them in Cádiz and London, that heightened, if indeed it did not start, the mystification that has existed up to now.

Bro. Dr. José R. Levi-Castillo, a masonic historian living in Ecuador, states in a letter to me dated 13 April 1980 that the Cádiz lodge operated under a dispensation from an English lodge in Gibraltar, given in or about 1808, but he cites no evidence for this and I am inclined to think that if this applied at all, it was to Lodge *Integridad* No. 7 or some sister-lodge that preceded *Caballeros Racionales* No. 3 and not to that lodge itself. In any case, I have found no evidence of any such sponsorship. However, the whole question of Masonry in southern Spain prior to the Napoleonic invasion in 1808, though separate from the present subject, is wide open and calls for investigation of some indications that have recently come to light.

PARTING OF THE WAYS

When the Argentinians Alvear, San Martín, Zapiola and others set out from London for Buenos Aires late in October 1811, no doubt leaving Lodge No. 7 under the leadership of the Venezuelan Luis López Méndez, the 'marriage of convenience' between natives of the northern and southern parts of South America ceased and the emphasis shifted to the latter area. What happened to the lodges in Europe and Philadelphia is not known and they almost certainly played little if any further part in the events of the times.

Alvear and the others to a total of fifteen or twenty reached Buenos Aires in the brig *George Canning* in March 1812 and lost little time in forming a revolutionary lodge there, presumably named *Caballeros Racionales* like its predecessors.

It may be useful to give at this stage brief biographies of the three most outstanding figures among the revolutionary leaders in the south, and in particular those most concerned with revolutionary Masonry there, namely Alvear, San Martín and O'Higgins. We can also outline the historical events in which they played their roles until they all eventually fell from power.

Carlos María de Alvear was born in 1789 at Misiones, Argentina, and like many South Americans of the period he later went to Spain where in 1806 he joined the Royal Corps of Carabineers, fighting against the French when they invaded Spain in 1808. He finally made his way to Cádiz, joined up with other South American patriots and entered Lodge No. 3, becoming one of its leading members. There is no evidence, however, that he was already a mason. Papers published by his biographer (*Historia de Alvear* by Gregorio F. Rodríguez, Buenos Aires, 1913) affirm that he was 'the centrepiece of the intimate relationship of all the Americans and my signature a recommendation for them to be admitted into the service of the revolution . . .' (probably meaning the lodge). Alvear also said that he disbursed large sums from his future inheritance to help any South Americans to escape from Cádiz and join the revolutionary forces, 'seeking them out, encouraging them, and paying their expenses without expectation of repayment'. This is borne out by a document dated 4 September 1811, seen and quoted by the biographer; it was executed by Alvear's father, Diego de Alvear, who by it paid large amounts either to a Cádiz merchant on behalf of his son Carlos, or direct to Carlos in Cádiz or on his behalf to attorneys in London and Buenos Aires, all in anticipation of his inheritance.

Incidentally Alvear was married while in Cádiz to Carmen Saenz de Quintanilla of Jerez de la Frontera, and took her with him when he left. He also procured the release in Cádiz, probably by bribery, of Colonel Rossels, an aide-de-camp to the French General Victor who was besieging that city, and helped him to escape to the French lines on condition that he asked Victor to release all the Spanish-American prisoners of war so that they could assist in the revolutionary struggle. In London Alvear took the lead, perhaps because he was in funds, and assumed the presidency of Lodge No. 7; he also ruled the first one in Argentina when that was set up. Dr. de Gandía cites some evidence suggesting that the French encouraged and funded the Americans' departure from Cádiz but, though such help is a possibility and a motive not hard to find, the lack of means would hardly have been a factor.

SAN MARTÍN, A MASON?

According to the Argentinian historian Bartolomé Mitre,¹⁶ José de San Martín was born at Yapeyú, Misiones, Argentina, on 25 February 1778, the fourth son of Captain Juan de San Martín, Lieutenant-Governor of the Department of Yapeyú. When José was eight the family moved to Spain and after two years at the Seminary of Nobles he joined the Murcia Regiment as a cadet. When a soldier he campaigned widely against the Moors, the republican French, the English and the Portuguese. In May 1808 he was in Madrid and witnessed the massacre of rioters by the French invaders that triggered the Spanish War of Independence. He was probably already an advocate of Spanish-American independence but, before leaving Spain, he honourably sought a discharge from the Army and did not depart until it came through in September 1811. Dr. Lappas states (*San Martín y su Ideario*, Buenos Aires, 1978) that San Martín was a mason, having been initiated in Lodge *Integridad* No. 7 in Cádiz while the Master was General Francisco María Solano, Marqués del Socorro, to whom San Martín was aide-de-camp. Carnicelli (op. cit., p. 234) gives the name of the lodge as *Legalidad*, but adduces no evidence. Lappas on the other hand says that San Martín's son-in-law, Mariano Balcarce, held documentary proof that he later refused to release, saying that such was his father-in-law's wish. Ferrer Benimeli does not mention such a lodge in any of his works and opines that if it existed at all it must have been a 'political' lodge. A question mark must therefore rest in regard to the whole proposition though the possibilities were aired earlier. In any case San Martín joined Lodge No. 3 when it was established.

The revolt against Spain had begun earlier in the River Plate province (Argentina and Uruguay) than elsewhere in South America. In 1806 the English Admiral Popham decided without authority to capture Buenos Aires and Montevideo and took the former on 27 June. The English were at first hailed as liberators, but when they began to look like a permanent occupying force the patriots turned on them and helped the Spanish army to drive them out. A second English expedition in 1808 was a failure and the province continued, albeit uneasily, under Spanish rule until the French invasion of Spain brought matters to a head. By the time Alvear and his group arrived early in 1812 the revolution was in full swing.

The whole group at once joined the patriotic army, San Martín founding a military school and generally reorganizing the forces so as to create a disciplined army. He also founded the famous regiment of Mounted Grenadiers and took overall charge of the cavalry, while Alvear was responsible for the infantry and Baron von Orenberg, a German engineer said to have brought letters from Napoleon, for engineers and presumably artillery.¹⁷ (It is possible that this name is a mishearing of Baron von Holmberg, mentioned in Alvear's papers and by Dr. Lappas as a member of Lodge No. 3 and of that at Buenos Aires.)

A REVOLUTIONARY LODGE

In about the middle of the year 1812 a lodge was formed at Buenos Aires on the model of *Caballeros Racionales* and working the same five-degree system. According to an article reproduced in *Masonic Miscellanea* No. 95,¹⁸ San Martín was the moving spirit, having been introduced by the patriot Bernardo Monteagudo to a *Sociedad Patriótica* in Buenos Aires and, not considering it secure enough, decided to form his own society out of its most trustworthy members. He is said to have looked for a pre-existing, genuine masonic lodge named *San Juan de Jerúsalem* but could not trace it, the founder, a Portuguese named Silva da Cordeira, having died and the Secretary, Vallejo, having disappeared. Another version of this story¹⁹ claims the pre-existence of a Lodge *Independencia* under the mastership of a Dr. J. B. Alvarez who introduced San Martín and his companions into local Masonry and society. There is,

however, a distinct possibility that the lodges *San Juan de Jerúsaalem* and *Independencia* were identical, the latter being the post-revolution title of the former.

In any case San Martín formed a 'triangle' or masonic group, later established as a full lodge whose first three degrees were initiatory and constituted a 'Blue Chamber', while the remaining two (given as *Rose Croix* and *Kadosh*) made up a superior 'Red Chamber'. The fifth (and most secret) degree was known as the Grand Lodge of Buenos Aires and seems to have been presided over by Alvear – whether at San Martín's express wish or because the latter was too immersed in his military activities is not clear; in any event he was to regret it. All the degrees met at a house in Barranca (now Balcarce) Street.

THE 'GRAND LODGE'

There is no other authority than the article in question for some of the foregoing details but they have the ring of authenticity and do not contradict other sources. Whether the name *Caballeros Racionales* was ever applied to this lodge is uncertain though very possible. It certainly caught on; General Enrique Martínez, a member of it, writing of it to Dr. Andrés Lamas nearly forty years later, said: '... all the masons joined, and the civil, military and commercial sectors, and it spread so quickly that soon nothing was done in the provinces except with its agreement.'

Initiates had to swear that they recognized as a legitimate government only one chosen by the free will of the people, and a republican form of government as that most acceptable to them. Under the stringent rules only Americans could become members and if any member was 'elected supreme ruler of the State, he could take no important step without consulting the lodge; he could not appoint a diplomatic agent, general-in-chief, governor of a province, judge of an upper court, high church dignitary, nor general officers, and could not punish any member of the brotherhood, by his own authority. It was a law of the society that all members should mutually assist each other in all the exigencies of civil life; that at the risk of life they should uphold the decrees of the lodge; and should inform it of anything which could influence public opinion, or affect the public security.'²⁰

The outstanding fact is that the so-called Grand Lodge, or *Logía Matriz*, under Alvear so interfered in politics as to become a ruling influence in the country.²¹ But to return to the revolution, in October 1812 a popular movement supported by San Martín, Monteagudo (who had a strong following among the more youthful) and the lodge led to a new Constituent Assembly's meeting in Buenos Aires on 31 January 1813. This was eventually undermined by the persistent secret and irresponsible influence of the 'Grand Lodge' under Alvear, which effectively split the whole lodge into two sections.

San Martín at first commanded the Army of the North, but in August 1814 he was appointed Governor of the state of Cuyo, the capital of which was Mendoza. Alvear was ousted in 1815 and with his chief followers fled the country when the power of the 'Grand Lodge', and indeed that body itself, ceased to exist. Meanwhile San Martín was governing Cuyo very successfully and in April 1816 opened a revolutionary lodge there, based on a pre-existing, probably revolutionary lodge founded by José Moldes. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Alvear eventually redeemed himself by returning to Argentina to fight in the war against Brazil and to hold various public offices. He died in the United States in 1852.

THE CHILEAN REVOLUTION

The scene now moves to Chile and this demands a sketch of the leading figure there, the same Bernardo O'Higgins who was in Cádiz at the turn of the century (*Bernardo O'Higgins* by Jay Kinsbruner, New York, 1968). He was born on or about 20 August 1778 in the town of Chillán to Isabel Riquelme Rodríguez, daughter of a good creole family that may have had some Araucanian Indian blood, as the illegitimate son of Ambrose O'Higgins (or Higgins), an Irishman born about 1720 who was educated by and worked with relatives in Spain. He went to Chile in 1763 as an engineer (after a previous, unsuccessful visit there and return to Spain) and proved so competent that he was commissioned and in 1788 was appointed President (Captain-General) of Chile. In 1790 he was elevated to Viceroy of Peru with the title of Marqués de Vallemar y Osorno.

Though he saw him only once, O'Higgins did not forget his illegitimate son and had him educated at Talca in Chile, Lima in Peru and Cádiz in Spain. In 1795 the boy Bernardo was sent to England where he proved a good scholar, but is said to have fallen under the influence

of Francisco de Miranda who was able to imbue him with ideas of independence for Spanish America and Chile in particular. However he was kept short of money, probably dishonestly, by his father's English agent and decided to return to South America, but got no further than Cádiz where he found himself without a welcome in the house of a friend of his father, without money and very unhappy. He contracted yellow fever and nearly died. Nevertheless he managed to exist and to make friends, so that when the last straw came with his father's command to his friend to expel Bernardo from his house on the excuse that he was idle and unfilial, they helped him to survive. The real reason for his father's anger was said to have been that he blamed his son for his relationship with Miranda and his revolutionary machinations; this had got back to the Spanish authorities and had caused the King to deprive the father of his high post.²² Bernardo wrote in his own defence, but before the letter arrived his father died and in a deathbed turnabout left his only son a considerable estate, so that he was able to return to Chile, sailing from Cádiz on 14 April 1802.

It took Bernardo, who called himself O'Higgins rather than by his mother's surname of Riquelme, some time to obtain possession of his inheritance but eventually he did and was able to make it prosper. By 1806 he was *alcalde* (mayor) of the *cabildo* (town council) of Chillán. As Chile became involved in the turmoil caused by Napoleon's invasion of Spain, Chilean patriots were by 1810 encouraged to revolt under José Martínez de Rozas in the name of King Fernando VII. The uprising failed through internal dissension, but in the following year the young radical José Miguel Carrera, who had served in the Spanish army, took over the government and was joined by O'Higgins. After another internal struggle the Chileans threw off their allegiance to the Viceroyalty of Peru.

VICTORY AND DEFEAT

On 27 March 1813 a Peruvian army invaded Chile. O'Higgins fought and won several small battles, becoming something of a national hero. Meanwhile Carrera had proved a military failure and was removed, and his command was offered to O'Higgins who, after typical hesitation, accepted it and was appointed Chilean General-in-Chief. Early in 1814 he was appointed Governor of Concepción and hence the political head of southern Chile.

After more trouble with Carrera a fresh Peruvian invasion brought them together, but their joint forces were defeated at Rancagua, south of the capital Santiago. However while Carrera fled the country O'Higgins held out as long as he could and at last escaped to become the hero of the hour. Nevertheless his country had fallen to the forces of Spain once more and so he went with his family to Buenos Aires.

THE ARMY OF THE ANDES

The Chilean historian Jaime Eyzaguirre (*O'Higgins*, Santiago, Chile) says that O'Higgins, while in Buenos Aires in the autumn of 1815, was initiated in the revolutionary lodge there by his friends of their Cádiz days, Father Juan Pablo Fretes and Colonel Juan Florencio Terrada. No evidence is cited and there is none that places all three in Cádiz together before O'Higgins returned to Chile in 1802. On the other hand he could have been initiated by San Martín in his lodge at Mendoza, where O'Higgins was sent after offering his services to the Argentine Government in February 1816 in anticipation of an invasion from Spanish-controlled Chile; again there is no evidence of this. San Martín was at this time planning to form an army to cross the Andes and reconquer Chile and in pursuance of this aim he offered O'Higgins a senior military post.

This force was mobilized in January 1817 as the 'Army of the Andes' and at once set out on its bold and perilous mission. On 12 February O'Higgins, in disregard of general orders, engaged the Royalists at Chacabuco and defeated them decisively, though they still held southern Chile. As soon as Santiago was freed an interim Chilean government was formed and twice offered the governorship to San Martín, who as often declined it and recommended O'Higgins, who was installed on 16 February 1817 as Interim Supreme Director. O'Higgins is said to have known that his appointment had already been planned as part of an Argentinian scheme to liberate the greater part of South America and establish a united State there, probably monarchical rather than republican. Certainly O'Higgins was ever after grateful to the Argentinians and showed it by his subservience.

SAN MARTÍN'S DREAM

We must now return to the events in Buenos Aires after the fall of Alvear and the reorganization of the lodge there. On 9 July 1816 the Congress formally declared the independence of the 'United Provinces of South America', no doubt mirroring the scheme already mentioned, which was largely the brainchild of San Martín, though other members of the lodge shared his dream. He was in fact offered the highest political office of Director but declined it on account of his commitment to the forthcoming military enterprise; so Juan Martín de Pueyrredón assumed the post and also the presidency of the reformed lodge.

Pueyrredón's appointment was not popular however and the English agent Mariano Castilla wrote that much money was spent to secure his election and that it had to be French money as 'in Buenos Aires no one would have spent money in his favour'. In this Castilla may of course have been echoing the current fears of the French. General Enrique Martínez, in the letter previously quoted, says that the lodge 'brought about the meeting of the Congress of Tucumán and the declaration of independence, and named Pueyrredón as Director, but he did not belong to the Lodge and in Buenos Aires they would not have him, so San Martín went to Córdoba and there arranged that Pueyrredón should join the lodge, when he was accepted'. (Gandía, *op. cit.*)

The foregoing suggests that there was also a lodge at Córdoba and indeed Dr. Lappas (*San Martín*, *op. cit.*, p. 254) states that revolutionary lodges were in fact established there and at Santa Fé, both towns in the foothills of the Andes where San Martín certainly went. Dr. Lappas also mentions lodges formed during the same period at Tucumán and in the Army of the North, but ascribes these to General Manuel Belgrano who then commanded that Army. As Belgrano was a member of Lodge *Independencia* his foundations would presumably have been 'regular' by contemporary standards.

When San Martín departed with the Army of the Andes he left the lodge at Mendoza to Toribio de Luzuriaga who, when he in turn left for Chile, handed the mastership to Tomás Godoy Cruz. As for San Martín, he took with him a lodge formed in the bosom of the Army of the Andes and of which he was the Master. Dr. Lappas (*La Masonería Argentina*, *op. cit.*, p. 72) cites the following documentary evidence. In a letter dated 14 June 1816 to Tomás Guido, Secretary of the lodge at Buenos Aires, San Martín says: 'It would be useful to take from here the ready-made means of public education', which Professor Ricardo Piccirilli (*San Martín y la Política de los Pueblos*, Buenos Aires, 1957) calls '... an allusion which without doubt refers to the lodge'. Next there is in the archives of the Argentine Grand Lodge a list of the founders of the regular Lodge *Asilo del Litoral* at Paraná whose first Master was a Colonel Joaquín María Ramiro who gives his masonic qualification as 'San Martín, Ejército de los Andes' (which suggests that, even in 1860, the year of the Paraná lodge's foundation, initiation in San Martín's lodge was considered 'regular' in the Argentine Republic – but let that pass). A letter dated 19 December 1853 from General Enrique Martínez to Dr. Andrés Lamas ('San Martín, el Hombre de las Logias' in *Revista Símbolo* No. 71–2, pp. 191–2) also refers to a lodge within the Army of the Andes, and Dr. Lappas lists²³ a number of its members.

THE LAUTARO LODGE

As soon as San Martín and O'Higgins arrived in Santiago they founded a revolutionary lodge and in my opinion it was at this point and nowhere previously, unless it may have been mooted in the briefly-existing lodge in the Army of the Andes, that the name '*Lautaro*' was given to any lodge. It is that of an Araucanian chief who, in Chile many years before, led an uprising against the Spaniards and, after a gallant but unavailing struggle, was put to death by them, afterwards becoming a folk-hero. It is true that Dr. Lappas believes that the name came into play earlier. He recalls that after the fall of Alvear in 1815 a commission was set up that examined several of his followers and severely questioned Posadas, Vieytes and Larrea, the last being asked: 'Do you know or have you heard of a private society which under the name of *Racionales*, or any other, was established by Americans in Cádiz or in London and afterwards here ... ?' Dr. Lappas stresses that nowhere in the interrogations was the name '*lautaro*' mentioned, but he thinks it may have been applied at the time when San Martín in Mendoza was planning an army to liberate Chile – a plan he had conceived and confided as early as in April 1814 to Nicolás Rodríguez Peña, whom he later left in charge of the reformed lodge in Buenos Aires when he departed for Mendoza. Dr. Lappas quotes the Argentinian

historian Vicente Fidel López (*Historia de la República, Argentina*, Buenos Aires, 1944, vol. III, p. 447) as saying that the name was not taken from the poet Ercilla's well known work on the subject, but was one 'intentionally masonic and symbolic, whose specific signification was "expedition to Chile" '.

However it is my opinion that, whilst San Martín might conceivably have selected the name beforehand, it was not actually put into use until it was given to the new lodge opened at Santiago in Chile, and was never applied contemporaneously to the revolutionary lodges already in existence at Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Mendoza and elsewhere. It has always seemed out of place that the name of a native Chilean martyr should be given by non-Chileans to lodges elsewhere than in Chile, but one highly appropriate when applied to a lodge opened in Chile with the aim of appealing to Chileans so as to be a vehicle, as it unquestionably was, to win them to the Argentinian concept of a broader hegemony.

THE LODGE'S INFLUENCE

This *Lautaro* Lodge (or *Logía Lautarina* or *Lautaria*, as it is sometimes called) was to consist of Argentinians and Chileans in equal numbers with O'Higgins as its first President (Master). San Martín was of course a member along with most of the Argentinian officers and officials then in Chile. Although no lodge records are known to exist, a compilation of those who are reported by various sources as having been members is shown (along with those similarly reported as belonging to the other revolutionary lodges) in Appendix II. The draconian statutes prescribed the death penalty for any member betraying the secrets of the lodge and laid down that no member could make an important official decision without first consulting his brethren, except in an emergency when he must report to it as soon as possible. Thus the lodge effectively governed Chile from 1817 to 1820, when San Martín and most of the leading members left with a Chilean-Argentinian army to liberate Peru. The lodge's influence then declined and it virtually died out.

Meanwhile O'Higgins was very much under its thumb despite his high-sounding title, and gradually the Chilean people began to turn against him, partly because his liberal reforms cut across the interests of the leading families and partly because his somewhat high-handed methods offended many, but chiefly because they saw him as a tool of the Argentinians. Though an able soldier and administrator he had a certain simplicity of mind which, as the Chileans saw it, allowed him to be used by San Martín to extend and maintain the Argentinian influence in Chile with the ultimate aim of annexing the country to a visionary 'Kingdom of the River Plate'. Whether this was truly San Martín's purpose is uncertain and to some extent depends on the view taken by the historians of the different countries involved, but as far as O'Higgins was concerned, though he might have been a candidate for the throne if such a plan had come about, he later reiterated his preference for the republican form of government.

Nevertheless he did the bidding of the lodge and when at its behest he led an army to fight the Royalists in southern Chile, its choice as his deputy in Santiago was an Argentinian, a Colonel de la Quintana. Then, when O'Higgins had to return to Santiago, the lodge insisted on a leading member, Colonel Luis de la Cruz, taking over the command. Throughout, the arrogance of the Argentinian members, the lodge's manoeuvres, and O'Higgins's demands for ever more funds to prosecute the war inflamed the Chilean public and drained his popularity.

THE INVASION OF PERU

The United Provinces also had their troubles and in 1818-19 suffered a civil war. San Martín, intent on invading Peru and finishing the war of liberation, would not intervene and kept the Army of the Andes as intact as possible in Chile. However when it came to it the Chileans, without money and tired of the war, were lukewarm and it was not until San Martín threatened to withdraw the army and leave them open to invasion again that they realized that their safety depended on agreeing to his plans. The lodge in Santiago urged him to go ahead, O'Higgins agreed and the lodge, one of whose members, José Ignacio Zenteno, was the Chilean Minister of War, sent another member, Sgt. Major José Manuel Borgoño, to finalize plans for the expedition. These were ratified by Buenos Aires and Mendoza and San Martín was appointed Generalissimo of the liberating army.

It will be seen that the *Lautaro* Lodge in Santiago, prodded by the Argentine Ambassador, Tomás Guido, took a leading part in obtaining Chilean assent to the Peruvian venture.

It also exerted its influence when the touchy English Admiral, Lord Cochrane, who had organized a Chilean navy (one of whose ships was named *Lautaro*), quarrelled with the Government and proffered his resignation. The lodge put pressure on O'Higgins to keep Cochrane at all costs and he refused to accept the resignation.

San Martín's campaign opened in October 1820 and on 28 July 1821 the independence of Peru was proclaimed. The *Lautaro* Lodge invited San Martín to head an administration and he accordingly named himself 'Protector of Peru'. In the meantime the Province of Guayaquil and the Intendencia of Trujillo had also risen against Spain and declared their independence.

DECLINE OF O'HIGGINS

Reverting to Chile, and to O'Higgins whose popularity was falling away for the reasons already given, a new cause of discontent arose with the execution in Buenos Aires of José Miguel Carrera, and that of his two brothers at Mendoza, after the decisive battle of Maipó; followed by the killing after his arrest of Manuel Rodríguez who had led an uprising against O'Higgins. Eyzaguirre names the assassin as Rodríguez's guard, a Lieutenant Navarro, and the lodge members Bernardo Monteagudo and Rudecindo Alvarez as those who gave the order. They were protected under Rule 14 of the lodge which laid down that 'One of a Brother's obligations . . . is to aid and support another in any civil conflict . . . but when this is opposed to the public good, he must at least remain silent.' This is what O'Higgins in fact did at the cost of much prestige while Navarro, who refused to claim that Rodríguez had been shot while trying to escape, was eventually transferred on promotion.

It has never come to light whether O'Higgins himself was a party to these killings, though Carrera was an old enemy and O'Higgins had been told previously by the Chilean Legate in Buenos Aires, Zañartu, that the lodge there favoured Carrera, particularly when his friend Manuel de Sarratea briefly ruled the Argentine; while Rodríguez had actively tried to oust O'Higgins. In any case the Chilean people regarded Carrera and Rodríguez as representing their national aspirations and took out their resentment on O'Higgins, who lasted until 1823 and then went into exile, where he played no more part in the wars or in revolutionary Masonry.

A LODGE AT LIMA?

At this point we must return to the possibility of there having been some sort of revolutionary lodge at Lima in Peru, though it is more likely to have been, at any rate up to San Martín's arrival in 1821, something more on the lines of a *sociedad patriótica* like those at Buenos Aires and Caracas in 1812. There is however chapter and verse for its existence among the documents San Martín left, in the shape of a letter dated 6 November 1817 from 'Salamina' (Lima) to 'Our Bro. Inaco' (the symbolic name by which San Martín, in accordance with a Spanish masonic custom exported to the New World, was known to the Peruvian patriots) and signed 'Capolicán' (which according to the Peruvian historian Dr. Tomás Catanzaro, cited by Dr. Lappas,²⁴ was the symbolic name of José de la Riva Agüero, who with Francisco de Paula Quiroz and Fernando López de Aldana ruled the 'patriotic lodge of Lima'). Dr. Lappas also cites Ricardo Palma (*Tradiciones Peruanas Completas*, Madrid, Spain, 1957) as saying that the lodge met in a house in Lima known as Casa de Pilatos, 'preparatory to the arrival of San Martín'.

THE DEPARTURE OF SAN MARTÍN

After the liberation of Peru San Martín moved to assist Simón Bolívar in Ecuador and they met briefly at Guayaquil in July 1822. But San Martín, whose character was much more modest and public-spirited than Bolívar's, saw that the latter was avid of conquest and glory and that his own continued presence would be bound to lead to friction. His monarchical ideas had lost him the confidence of his army and so he resigned its command and devoted himself to its reorganization. On 20 September 1822 he was publicly loaded with honours but the very next day left for Chile and later returned to Mendoza where he remained until he departed – a voluntary exile – for Europe, dying on 17 August 1850 at Boulogne-sur-Mer in France.

The wars of Spanish-American independence ended with the battle of Ayacucho on 9 December 1824 and the various newly-established nations embarked on their turbulent

history. With the end of revolution, revolutionary pseudo-Masonry – already in decline and somewhat discredited – faded from the scene and was replaced by regular Freemasonry. There are still many unanswered questions concerning the who, when and where of this ephemeral politically-motivated quasi-Masonry and some answers may be hidden in archives, libraries or private collections but others may never be known.

One subject for research is the 'patriotic societies' that were evidently widespread prior to the arrival from Europe of fully-fledged revolutionary Masonry. Were they at all masonic and, if so, of what did any masonic element consist and who introduced it? It seems to me that most of these societies were not masonic at their inception, but that is only an opinion and opinions are subject to verification, not to say change.

NOTES

¹ *An Historical Account of Jamaican Freemasonry* by Bro. F. W. Seal-Coon, Kingston, Jamaica, 1970.

² *La Masonería en la Independencia de América* by Bro. Américo Carnicelli, Bogotá, Colombia, 1970 (vol. I, p. 73, but source not provided). Fernando Pinto Lagarrigue in his *La Masonería y su Influencia en Chile* claims that George Washington initiated Miranda in Virginia.

³ In a letter from Bro. Dr. Alcibiades Lappas, B.A., LL.B.

⁴ In a letter from Dr. A. G. Cross, University of East Anglia.

⁵ In 'Francisco de Miranda e la Massonería' by Alfonso J. Freile in *Rivista Massonica* No. 5 of July 1973.

⁶ *Miranda* by F. Thorning, Florida University Press, 1952.

⁷ 'La Logia Lautaro y la Independencia de América' by Antonio R. Zúñiga in the official publication of Argentinian Scottish Rite Masonry, 1922.

⁸ There is one exception: an Argentine historian, Bro. Dr. Alcibiades Lappas, in his *La Masonería Argentina a través de sus Hombres* (Buenos Aires, 1966, second edition, written at a time when he may still have subscribed to the Mirandist myth), refers to a letter from Miranda dated 16 October 1810 to an Argentine contemporary, Saturnino Rodríguez Peña, in which he mentions that one Juan Larrea was a mason. This letter, if authentic, must have been written just before Miranda's departure for Venezuela, but in the absence of the correspondence it is impossible to say why he had written to Rodríguez Peña, who was a mason, having entered an English lodge in Buenos Aires in 1806. He may have asked the well known Miranda to report on Juan Larrea who, as a Spaniard arriving at or on his way to Buenos Aires, could have attracted the Argentinian patriot's suspicions; but in my view the whole matter is open to doubt and in any event does not indicate that Miranda himself was a mason.

⁹ This matter is dealt with by Dr. Enrique de Gandía in his *La Política Secreta de la Gran Logia de Londres*, Buenos Aires, 1976, pp. 223–5, and is important because, as will be seen later, masonic connections have attached to the alleged Paris Convention of 1797. One of the versions, dated 8 October 1797, related to an alleged meeting in Madrid on that date of representatives of the various parts of Spanish America to discuss its independence and who delegated José del Pozo y Sucre and Manuel José de Salas to go to Paris to meet Miranda and Pablo Olavide. Pablo José Antonio de Olavide was a Peruvian who went to Spain and acquired by marriage great riches and a title. He became very powerful and as a statesman instituted numerous reforms, but in doing so made many enemies and finally fell victim to the Inquisition which imprisoned and humiliated him. He escaped with his life however and eventually fled to France. His fate caused a tremendous scandal all over Europe and his name became one to conjure with. He lived in Paris from 1780 to 1791, then went to Meung but left there in 1795. In 1798 he was pardoned and reinstated and his riches restored, so he returned to Spain. Miranda did in fact try to get in touch with him in France but never succeeded; nevertheless he used Olavide's name in the Convention documents, but placed him at Meung which he had long left. The two other documents, otherwise identical with the first, refer to an alleged similar meeting of South American delegates in Paris on 22 (or 2) December 1797 with Miranda and Olavide, who were said then to have been empowered to deal with the British and United States governments on behalf of all South America to secure its independence. These documents were solely intended by Miranda to influence the governments to whose representatives they were shown and no credence can be given to them.

¹⁰ 'La Política Secreta de la Gran Logia de Londres' by Dr. Enrique de Gandía. Page numbers refer to the Bulletin in which this thirty-six-page article appeared, and it must be explained that the title (in English 'The Secret Policies of the Grand Lodge of London') is not in reference to either of the English Grand Lodges then operating, but to the revolutionary Pseudo-lodge in London – and probably only the fifth degree or innermost circle thereof – called *Caballeros Racionales* No. 7 which will be described later. Dr. de Gandía makes this completely clear when he states on page 237 that 'the secret policies of the Grand Lodge of London, Lodge No. 7, were the same as those of the *Caballeros Racionales* de Cádiz, Lodge No. 3' ('La política secreta de la Gran Logia de Londres, la Logia número 7, era la misma de los *Caballeros Racionales* de Cádiz, de la Logia Número 3').

¹¹ *Historia de Carúpano* by B. Tavera Acosta, pp. 171–2. This little work purports to give a brief history of Venezuelan Masonry, with particular attention to Carúpano.

¹² Dr. de Gandía cites in his work (see notes 21 and 23), out of the enormous number of writers about the Spanish-American struggles for freedom from Spanish rule, well over a score of otherwise reputable historians who have perpetuated the fiction of Miranda as a founder of lodges, of his having had links with Olavide, or of his being concerned with 'Conventions' in 1797 in Madrid and Paris, as against a mere three or four (mostly early) writers who did not.

¹³ I also consulted *Biografía de Miranda* by Dr. Vicente Dávila, Caracas, 1933. This little work makes no mention whatever of Masonry, but lists a very large bibliography relating to Miranda that underlines the absence of any such mention.

¹⁴ This, of course, invalidates any ascription of a masonic role to Francisco de Miranda in my 'Simón Bolívar, Freemason' (AQC 90); before investigating the question I accepted, like so many before me, the legend as it stood.

¹⁵ *La Masonería Argentina a través de sus Hombres* by Dr. Alcibiades Lappas, Buenos Aires, 1966 (2nd col.), pp. 49–50. This book lists some 3,000 well known Argentinian masons. The author says in his preface that many names

had been omitted for lack of biographical details. It is understood that a further edition is in preparation that will have 10,000 names.

¹⁶ *The Emancipation of South America* by William Pilling, London, 1893 (being a translation of *História de San Martín* by Bartolomé Mitre, Buenos Aires, 1887).

¹⁷ See the letters of an Argentinian, Mariano Castilla, in the English service, and of Robert Staples, English Consul in Buenos Aires, in the archives of the Foreign Office, London (cited by de Grandia, *see* note 6).

¹⁸ 'The Romance of Early Argentine Masonry and Pseudo-Masonry,' published in *Masonic Miscellanea* no. 95, Buenos Aires. The editor, Bro. Fred Neild, says that the article has been known since early in this century but that its original authorship has been lost to sight since. Though interesting it contains a number of factual errors.

¹⁹ *See* note 15.

²⁰ Pilling, *op. cit.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²² It is only fair to say that the historian Diego Barras Arana, in his *História General de Chile*, doubts the stories of O'Higgins's troubles arising from his relationship with Miranda and says they appear to have been invented ('parecen ser inventados').

²³ *See* note 15.

²⁴ 'Las Sociedades Patrióticas Secretas de la Emancipación' by Dr. Tomás Catanzaro, in *Revista Luz* No. 9 of March 1952, p. 30, Lima, Peru (cited by Lappas, *see* note 2).

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