

Assessment of XIX Century Spanish Caribbean Authoctionous Freemasonry by some European Historians

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Historical Context of Cuba & Puerto Rico: End of XIX C.

- 1) After the destruction of the French part of Saint Domingue (Haiti), Cuba and Puerto Rico filled its place in the world sugar market. Hundreds of thousands of new slaves were introduced during the XIX Century.
- 2) Autonomy, with a local legislature similar to Canada's with Britain, or a *Spanish Antilles Autonomous Confederation* under Spain was considered the best solution. However, Spain created many obstacles to this option, forcing Cuba to seek total independence by War.
- 3) Responsibility for Spain losing its remaining Empire were not disloyal Cuban and Puertorrican Creoles, nor Freemasonry, nor the United States but the disastrous Spanish colonial policy, implemented throughout the XIX Century by its government. For, neither the 1808 *Junta de Cadiz*, nor king Ferdinand VII, nor the Liberal government of 1820-23, nor Ferdinand VII restoration, the regency and long reign of his daughter Isabella, nor the Revolution of 1868, the reign of king Amadeus of Savoy, the First Republic, nor the restoration of King Alphonse XII, gave Cuba and Puerto Rico their long-requested Autonomy.

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- HISTORICAL TIME LINE:
 - 1859: SGC Pike sends Bro. Cassard to Cuba
 - Establishes Grand Lodge & Supreme Council Colon
 - 1862: SGC Pike sends Bro DeCastro to Cuba
 - Establishes GOCA (Grand Orient of Cuba & Antilles)
 - 1868: Start First Cuban War of Independence
 - Organized mainly with the help of GOCA Lodges
 - 1870s: Arrive First Grand Orients from Spain
 - 1880: Grand Lodge of Colon & Isla de Cuba
 - 1883: Provincial Grand Lodge of Puerto Rico
 - 1885: Gran Logia Soberana de Puerto Rico
 - 1880S: Creation of Liberal Autonomist Parties



Shared Critiques of Authothonous Grand Lodges of Cuba and Puerto Rico, raised by Several European Historians

1. GL of Colon was “*Cuban-American*”
2. A lack of a unique ideology or goal
 1. Autonomy/independence/reform
3. GL of Colon was “*Pro-Spanish*”
4. Spanish *Grand Lodges* could invade already-occupied masonic territories

I) Grand Lodges of GLCol & GLSPR were Cuban-American, suggesting they were used as tools of the United States against Spain.

■ ***Example of Charges:***

- *“Freemasonry of Cuban-American origin (...) self-defined as Autochthonous, comes from Cuba, (...) Freemasonry self-defined as Autochthonous, coming from Cuba”, Ayala.*
- *“To confront this type of [Spanish] Freemasonry, another type was created at the end of the decade of 1870, self-defined as Autochthonous, when in reality it was Cuban-American”. Ayala*
- *“Opportunistic support [of the GLSPR] to the new American regime will earn patronage of their Northern neighbor” Ayala.*
- *“The Masonic influence originated in the United States left its footprint”. Castellano*

- **Argumentation** is based upon *Masonic Law* :
- (1) at least three active lodges; (2) territory is not already masonically occupied; (3) some regular Grand Lodge provides a charter
- Same requirements apply to Spain; however:
 - Not called **Hispano-Lusitana** o **Hispano-Francesa**?
- The two Masons that Albert Pike sent to Cuba were Bros. Andrés Cassard and Vicente A Castro
- Prof. Castellano recognizes such Cuban Character when he writes: “from 1859 onward, proliferation of *Obediencias of purely Cuban character* would generate an environment full of rivalries.



II) These two Grand Lodges lacked a consistent political ideology

- *“There were Freemasons in the Conservative party, and there were also in the Liberal Party, and later in the Autonomist Party”. Ayala*
- *“We disagree that the participation of some Freemasons in the ranks of the Liberation Army determines that this Obedience may have passed into history as a Center of Pro-Independence Revolutionaries”. Castellano.*



■ Arguments:

- In the *fifty years between 1850 and 1899*, strategies toward Spanish colonial rule *varied, as political circumstances varied*. Thence, we can find at different times, trends favoring *reform, autonomy or independence*.
- “Among Masons revolting against Spanish rule, in 1868, we find *an important contingent of Lodge Buena Fe members : Carlos M. de Céspedes, Bartolomé Mas, Estrada Palma*”. Castellano
- “Masonic Institution doesn’t create conspiracies; Masonic doctrine incompatible w/colonial regime”

III) GLCol & GLSPR did not respond to Creole ideology: they were Pro Spanish

- *“The Grand Lodge of Columbus, not only set itself apart from any revolutionary or independence process, but in addition, it was against it”. Castellano.*
- *“The Grand Lodge of Columbus maintained during a long time its strong Spanish character, and only after the mid-1870s, it started showing some Cuban Masonic identity”. Soucy*



■ Arguments:

- “The *murder of Grand Master Andrés Puente Badell, of the Grand Treasurer, and several other GLCol leaders, took place in February 1870, in San Juan de Wilson, a farm near Santiago de Cuba, by Spanish forces under Major Carlos González Boet.*” Aurelio Miranda.
- “*On October 24 1887, the first Grand Master of Puertorrican Masons, Santiago R. Palmer, was arrested in Mayaguez, jointly with other prominent masons*” Luis_Santiago Ramos.



IV) Spanish Obediences felt the right to invade already-occupied masonic territories

- *Grand Lodges of Dominican Republic and Cuba were created in 1858-59. During the 1860s, several Lodges were created in Puerto Rico, dependent from Venezuela, Dominican Republic and the Cuban Grand Lodge of Colon.*
- *After 1868 the first Spanish Lodges arrived to Puerto Rico, and after 1870 to Cuba.*
- *These territories were Masonically occupied.*

Dominican Republic, an independent nation Also suffered invasion from Spanish Lodges

- “Lodge Aurora N° 82 of San Pedro de Macorís, DR, (...) supported by Spanish *Gran Oriente Español*, (GOE) from 1889 to 1923”. Ferrer.
- “Members of GLND wage continuous war against us, stating that Lodge Aurora No. 84, because it depends from the [*Spanish*] GOE, constitutes an invasion and thence, is an irregular Lodge”. Ferrer Benimeli.



Main Tasks of GLC & GLSPR

- Establish their own Masonic Territory as Authocthonous Lodges –in opposition to just appendices of Spanish Obediences,
- Develop Masonic and Civic Leaders for the process of Nation Building.

Examples of Such Leaders

Leaders Puerto Rico	Leaders Dominican R	Leaders Cuba	Professions	Studies:
Santiago R. Palmer	Nuñez de Caceres	Aurelio Miranda	Poets	Cuba
R. Matienzo Cintron	Juan Pablo Duarte	Antonio Govín	Politicians	Puerto Rico
Luis Munoz Rivera	Tomas Bobadilla	José Ma. Galvez	Teachers	EE.UU.
Manuel Fdez Juncos	Buenaventura Baez	Ricardo del Monte	Doctors	Spain
Roman Baldorioty	Ulises Espaillat	Rafael Montoro	Lawyers	Germany
Federico Degateau	Gregorio Luperon	Enrique J. Varona	Journalists	France
Cayetno. Coll Toste	Ulises Heureux (Lilis)	José A. Cortina	Industrials	England
Francisco. Quinones	Eugenio Ma. Hostos	Raimundo Cabrera	Agriculture	
José De Diego		Eliseo Giberga	Merchants	

Freemasons and Political Leadership

		Factor A:	Masons	
Factor B:		Not Masons	Masons	Total Factor-B
Participation in Autonomic	Outside the Governm ent	Persons not in the government, nor masons	Masons Outside the Governm ent	Total Outside the Governmen t
Puertorrican Politics	In the Governm ent	Not Masons inside the government	Masons inside the governme nt	Total of Governmen t Secretaries
	Total Factor-A	Total of Non Masons	Total of Masones	General Total

Contingency Table Results:

Observed/Expected

	Factor A:	Masons	
Factor B: Leadership	Not Masons	Masons	Total-B
Outside the Govment.	6997/6992.3	2992/2996.7	9989
Paart of Govment.	3/7.7	8/3.3	11
Total-A	7000	3000	10000

Statistical Analysis Shows:

- **Strong Association between Political Leadership and membership in the Masonic Institution :**
- **Observed Value = 2.5 x Expected Value.**
- **Weight of Authoctonous Freemasons in the struggle for autonomous government is incontrovertible.**

Conclusions

1. Spanish Caribbean Freemasons used the promotion of their own Creole identity as Authocthonous Lodges, in opposition to mere appendices of Spanish Obediences
2. Spanish Caribbean Freemasons operated as a real school of Leaders in their respective islands. Such Civic and Masonic Leaders had tremendous influence in the process of Nation Building.
3. *Certain European historians have been inconsistent or biased, at the time of interpreting the characteristics of the Spanish Caribbean Freemasons*
4. *It is important to set the record strait and provide an alternative view of these events.*