

An Investigation of Masonic Inspiration

A series exploring the influence of Masonic thought on revolution

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[\[Part 1:\]](#) [\[Part 2:\]](#) [\[Part 3:\]](#) [\[Part 4:\]](#)

It would seem that many revolutionary leaders were inspired by Masonic philosophy resulting in patriotism, selfless sacrifice, and a desire to right a political injustice and at times took up the cause of revolution and changed the world we live in dramatically. I also wish to demonstrate to the reader through similarities and differences among revolutions that these leaders were inspired by the philosophy of Freemasonry and were not involved as a part of some grand Masonic conspiracy to take over the world as is at times suggested. To begin this investigation, we need to clarify and expand on the premise by providing a synopsis of the attributes of Masonic philosophy and the causes of revolution.

Masonic Philosophy

Freemasonry is actually an ancient fraternity or brotherhood, not a religious system or theology, that holds the hope that each Mason taking our obligations has the responsibility to make our world a better place. It is said that "Freemasonry encourages good men to become better men" by promoting a life dedicated to service to others, high ideals, and benevolence. Freemasonry as an organization consists of men from all faiths, cultures, political systems, and ideologies. As such, the ideals of our organization have always been as follows:

Be considerate of different religious, social, and political views
Uphold and maintain the principles of good government and oppose divisive or degrading influences
Practice positive relationships; give and accept help when needed
Value the internal qualities of a man over financial success
Strive to participate with the fraternity and live a brotherly life
Remain good at heart
Act with honor and integrity in everything you do
Believe in a Supreme Being and keep faith as the center of life
Strive to leave the world a better place than when you entered it

Keeping what we have identified as Masonry's basic philosophical beliefs in mind, let's consider the causes of revolution in politics, specifically the factors that might have, in some cases, inspired individual Freemasons to adopt a political ideology and inspired them to become patriots and even engage in revolution. As Freemasons we are taught to embrace philosophy and education, so let's give the Greek philosopher Aristotle a chance to shed light on another essential component involved in our premise.

Aristotle: Causes of Revolution

"Revolutions arise from inequalities, numerical or qualitative—from a numerical mass claiming equality denied them or from a minority claiming superiority denied them. A revolution may result either in a complete change of polity or only in a modification of the existing one. An oligarchy is less permanent than a democracy, owing to factions within the oligarchical body.

In all revolutions, the conditions which lead up to them are the desire of the many for equality and the desire of the minority for effective superiority. The purposes with which they are set on foot are profit, honor, or avoidance of loss or dishonor. The inciting occasions are many; jealousy of those who have wealth and honor, official arrogance, fear of the law or of its abuse, personal rivalries, failure of the middle class to maintain a balance, race antagonisms, antagonism of localities, and others.

In democracies, revolutions are due mainly to demagogic attacks on wealth, and they result in the establishment of an oligarchy or of a tyranny a 'popular' military chief seizing the power for himself, or sometimes in replacing a moderate by an extreme democracy.

In oligarchies they spring from the oppressive conduct of the oligarchy, or from dissensions among the oligarchical body—e.g. exclusion of those who think themselves entitled to membership; attraction of the role of demagogue for individual members of the oligarchy; or employment of mercenary troops, whose captain seizes power.

In aristocracies they arise from the jealousy of those excluded from power, personal ambitions, and great inequality of wealth. In these, and in constitutional governments—the most stable of all—the main cause is the incomplete fusion of the three criteria, wealth, numbers, and merit. The comparative stability of constitutions comes from the greater relative weight of numbers. They are, however, more liable to be revolutionized by external pressure. Equality in proportion to merit and security of rights are the true conditions of permanence.

For the preservation of polities, minor illegalities must be particularly guarded against. In oligarchies, personal rivalries, abuse of power by individuals (making short tenures of office advisable), insolence of privilege, tricks to deceive the masses. In oligarchies and constitutional states, excessive concentration of power in

individuals or classes and oppression of the wealthy minority in democracies and of the poor majority in oligarchies.

Of monarchy, the two types are the regal and the tyrannical. The king is the protector of the wealthy against spoliation, of the poor against arrogance. His own or his family's virtues or services have given him the kingship, his aim is excellence, and his authority is maintained by a citizen bodyguard. The tyrant is not a protector; his aim is his personal gratification.

Under monarchies, injustice and arrogance are the causes of insurrection, or fear, or contempt for incompetence coupled with ambition. Tyrannies are overthrown by collision with external forces or by private intrigues in the tyrant's entourage and generally in the same sort of way as extreme oligarchies or extreme democracies. Kingships are endangered by intrigues in the royal family, by the King's personal incompetence, or by his developing tyrannical attributes. Hereditary monarchies are in particular danger from incompetents succeeding. In a complex society, kingship proper is all but impossible.

A kingship is maintained by the royal self-restraint. The tyrant relies on the material and moral degradation, incapacity, and lack of mutual confidence among his subjects which he fosters by espionage, executions, taxation, and the encouragement of license. Occasionally, the tyrant will seek to secure his position by playing the part and assuming the attributes of a king proper. The shrewd tyrant sees to it that he has the favor of the rich or of the poor.

Neither tyrannies nor oligarchies have proved long-lived."

We observe that Masonic beliefs are incongruent with the negative political attributes of inequality, oppressive conduct, and unjust accumulation of power or wealth. This seemingly holds true with consideration to any individual revolutionary leader or nation of people practicing poor government, ultimately resulting in fraternal philosophical beliefs, not the Masonic organizations themselves, that are at least in silent support of the causes of revolution. Can we prove historically a casual relationship between the influence of Masonic philosophy on any historical person and the political movement or dynamic determined to be changed?

Historical Leaders Considered

First, I want to point out that my list of historical Masonic personalities is in no way comprehensive and that there are several other leaders that could have just as easily been included. I selected these, because I wanted to make a case for our philosophical influence not just in the United States but around the world. Here are some historical examples.

George Washington (February 22, 1732 - December 14, 1799) was a revolutionary and political leader of the United States of America. Interestingly, in his early adult

years Washington wanted a career in the British army and actually gained his command experience during the French and Indian War (1754-1763) where he served as a senior colonel in the colonial militia assigned the task to protect the frontier. Due to this experience, his military bearing, his leadership of the Patriot cause in Virginia, and his political base in the largest colony, the Second Continental Congress chose him in 1775 as Commander-in-chief of the Continental Army. Negotiating with Congress, governors, and French allies, he held together the army and a fragile nation amid the threats of disintegration and invasion.

Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention that drafted the United States Constitution in 1787 because of general dissatisfaction with the Articles of Confederation. Washington became President of the United States in 1789 and established many of the customs and usages of the new government's executive department. He sought to create a nation capable of sustaining peace with its neighboring countries. His unilateral Proclamation of Neutrality of 1793 provided a basis for avoiding any involvement in foreign conflicts. He supported plans to build a strong central government by paying off the national debt, implementing an effective tax system, and creating a national bank.

Washington's Farewell Address issued as a public letter in 1796 was one of the most influential statements of republicanism. Drafted primarily by Washington himself with help from Hamilton, it gives advice on the necessity and importance of national union, the value of the Constitution, the rule of law, the evils of political parties, and the proper virtues of a republican people. He called morality "a necessary spring of popular government." He said, "Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason, and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Washington's public political address warned against foreign influence in domestic affairs and American meddling in European affairs. He warned against bitter partisanship in domestic politics and called for men to move beyond partisanship and serve the common good. He warned against "permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world" saying that the United States must concentrate primarily on American interests. He died in 1799. Henry Lee, delivering the funeral oration, declared Washington "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Federalists made him the symbol of their party. As the leader of the first successful revolution against a colonial empire in world history, Washington became an international icon for liberation and nationalism. Historical scholars consistently rank him as one of the two or three greatest presidents.

Marquis de La Fayette (September 6, 1757 - May 20, 1834), was a French aristocrat and military officer who served as a general in the American Revolutionary War and a military leader during the French Revolution. During the American Revolution, he served in the Continental Army under George Washington. Wounded during the Battle of Brandywine, he still managed to organize a successful retreat. He served with distinction in the Battle of Rhode

Island. In the middle of the war he returned to France to negotiate an increased French commitment. On his return, he blocked troops led by Cornwallis at Yorktown while the armies of Washington and Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, prepared for battle against the British.

Back in France in 1788, Lafayette was called to the Assembly of Notables to respond to the fiscal crisis. Lafayette proposed a meeting of the French Estates-General where representatives from the three traditional orders of French society met: the clergy, the nobility, and the commoners. He served as vice president of the resulting body and presented a draft of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Lafayette was appointed Commander-in-chief of the French National Guard in response to violence leading up to the French Revolution. During the Revolution, Lafayette attempted to maintain order, for which he ultimately was persecuted by the Jacobins. In 1791, as the radical factions in the revolution grew in power, Lafayette tried to flee to the United States through the Dutch Republic. He was captured by Austrians and served nearly five years in prison. Lafayette returned to France after Bonaparte freed him from an Austrian prison in 1797. Lafayette died on May 20, 1834, and is buried in Picpus Cemetery in Paris under soil from Washington's grave site at Mount Vernon Virginia. He received honorary United States citizenship in 2002.

Napoleon Bonaparte (August 15, 1769 - May 5, 1821) was a military and political leader of France and Emperor of the French as Napoleon I, whose actions shaped European politics in the early 19th century. Bonaparte rose to prominence under the French First Republic and led successful campaigns against the first and second coalitions arrayed against France. In 1799, he staged a coup d'état and installed himself as First Consul; five years later the French Senate proclaimed him emperor. In the first decade of the 19th century, the French Empire under Napoleon engaged in a series of conflicts, the Napoleonic Wars, involving every major European power. After a streak of victories, France secured a dominant position in continental Europe, and Napoleon maintained the French sphere of influence through the formation of extensive alliances and the appointment of friends and family members to rule other European countries as French client states.

Napoleon's campaigns are studied at military academies the world over. While considered a tyrant by his opponents, he is also remembered for the establishment of the Napoleonic Code which laid the administrative and judicial foundations for much of Western Europe.

Bonaparte instituted lasting reforms including centralized administration of the departments, higher education, a tax code, road and sewer systems, and established the Banque de France (central bank). He negotiated the Concordat of 1801 with the Catholic Church, which sought to reconcile the mostly Catholic population to his regime. It was presented alongside the Organic Articles, which regulated public worship in France. Later that year, Bonaparte became President of the French Academy of Sciences and appointed Jean Baptiste Joseph Delambre its Permanent Secretary. In May 1802, he instituted the Légion d'honneur, a substitute for the old

royalist decorations and orders of chivalry, to encourage civilian and military achievements; the order is still the highest decoration in France.

Napoleon's set of civil laws, often known as the Napoleonic Code, was prepared by committees of legal experts under the supervision of Jean Jacques Régis de Cambacérès. Napoleon participated actively in the sessions of the Council of State that revised the drafts. The development of the code was a fundamental change in the nature of the civil law legal system with its stress on clearly written and accessible law. Other codes were commissioned by Napoleon to codify criminal and commerce law; a Code of Criminal Instruction was published, which enacted rules of due process.

[\[Part 1:\]](#) [\[Part 2:\]](#) [\[Part 3:\]](#) [\[Part 4:\]](#)

Simón Bolívar (July 24, 1783 - December 17, 1830) was a Venezuelan military and political leader. Together with José de San Martín, he played a key role in Hispanic America's successful struggle for independence from the Spanish Empire. He is regarded in Hispanic America as a hero, visionary, revolutionary, and liberator. During his lifetime, he led Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela to independence and helped lay the foundations for democratic ideology in much of Hispanic America. For this reason, in the United States, he is often referred to as the "George Washington of South America."

He was an admirer of both the American Revolution and the French Revolution. He admired Thomas Jefferson and sent his nephew to the University of Virginia which was founded and designed by Jefferson. Bolívar differed, however, in political philosophy from the leaders of the revolution in the United States on two important matters. First of all, he was staunchly anti-slavery despite coming from an area of Spanish America that relied heavily on slave labor. Second, while he was an admirer of the United States, he did not believe that its governmental system could function in Latin America.

By contrast, he referred to Spanish America as having been subject to the "triple yoke of ignorance, tyranny, and vice." If a republic could be established in such a land, in his mind, it would have to make some concessions in terms of liberty. This is shown when Bolívar blamed the fall of the first republic on his subordinates trying to imitate "some ethereal republic" and in the process not paying attention to the gritty political reality of South America.

Following the triumph over the Spanish Monarchy, Bolívar participated in the foundation of the first union of independent nations in Latin America which was named Gran Colombia, and of which he was president from 1819 to 1830.

Benito Pablo Juárez (March 21, 1806 - July 18, 1872) was a Zapotec Indian from Oaxaca who served five terms as president of Mexico. He was the first Mexican leader who did not have a military background and also the first full-blooded indigenous national ever to serve as President of Mexico and to lead a country in

the Western Hemisphere. He resisted the French occupation, overthrew the Empire, restored the Republic, and used liberal efforts to modernize the country.

Today Benito Juárez is remembered as being a progressive reformer dedicated to democracy, equal rights for his nation's indigenous peoples, lessening the great power that the Roman Catholic Church then held over Mexican politics, and the defense of national sovereignty. The period of his leadership is known in Mexican history as La Reforma (the reform) and constituted a liberal political and social revolution with major institutional consequences: the expropriation of church lands, bringing the army under civilian control, the liquidation of peasant communal land holdings, the separation of church and state in public affairs, and also led to the almost complete disenfranchisement of bishops, priests, nuns and lay brothers.

La Reforma represented the triumph of Mexico's liberal, federalist, anti-clerical, and pro-capitalist forces over the conservative, centralist, corporatist, and theocratic elements that sought to reconstitute a locally-run version of the old colonial system. It replaced a semi-feudal social system with a more market-driven one. March 21 is a day set to commemorate Juárez. This date has become a national holiday in Mexico, which has continued to grow in acceptance within the Mexican Culture.

Dr. José Rizal (June 19, 1861 - December 30, 1896) was a Filipino patriot and the most prominent advocate for reforms in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial era. He is considered a national hero of the Philippines, and the anniversary of Rizal's death is commemorated as a Philippine holiday called Rizal Day. Rizal's 1896 military trial and execution made him a martyr of the Philippine Revolution.

The seventh of eleven children born to a wealthy family in the town of Calamba, Laguna, Rizal attended the Ateneo Municipal de Manila, earning a Bachelor of Arts. He enrolled in Medicine, Philosophy, and Letters at the University of Santo Tomas and then traveled alone to Madrid, Spain where he continued his studies at the Universidad Central de Madrid, earning the degree of Licentiate in Medicine. He attended the University of Paris and earned a second doctorate at the University of Heidelberg. Rizal was a polyglot, conversant in at least ten languages. He was a prolific poet, essayist, diarist, correspondent, and novelist whose most famous works were his two novels, *Noli me Tangere* and *El filibusterismo*. These are social commentaries on the Philippines that formed the nucleus of literature that inspired dissent among peaceful reformists and spurred the militancy of armed revolutionaries against the Spanish colonial authorities.

As a political figure, Jose Rizal was the founder of La Liga Filipina, a civic organization that subsequently gave birth to the Katipunan led by Andrés Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo. He was a proponent of institutional reforms by peaceful means rather than by violent revolution. The general consensus among Rizal scholars, however, attributed his martyred death as the catalyst that precipitated the Philippine Revolution.

Moments before his execution by a firing squad of native infantry of the Spanish Army, backed by an insurance force of Spanish troops, the Spanish surgeon general requested to take his pulse; it was normal. Aware of this, the Spanish sergeant in charge of the backup force hushed his men to silence when they began raising '¡vivas!' with the partisan crowd. His last words were those of Jesus Christ: "consummatum est", - it is finished.

He was secretly buried in Pacò Cemetery in Manila with no identification on his grave. His sister Narcisa toured all possible gravesites and found freshly turned earth at the cemetery with guards posted at the gate. Assuming this could be the most likely spot, she made a gift to the caretaker to mark the site "RPJ", Rizal's initials in reverse.

Andrés Bonifacio (November 30, 1863 - May 10, 1897) was a Filipino nationalist, revolutionary, founder, and leader of the Katipunan movement which sought the independence of the Philippines from Spanish colonial rule and started the Philippine Revolution. The Katipunan was a secret society that sought independence through armed revolt. It was said to have been influenced by Freemasonry through its rituals and organization, and several members aside from Bonifacio were also Freemasons. Within the society, Bonifacio used the pseudonym *May pag-asa* ("There is Hope").

Despite not finishing formal education, Bonifacio was self-educated. He read books about the French Revolution, biographies of the Presidents of the United States, the colonial penal and civil codes, and novels such as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, Eugène Sue's *Le Juif errant* and José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*, and *El filibusterismo*. Bonifacio was a Freemason and a member of the *Gran Oriente Español* (Spanish Grand Lodge). In 1892 he joined Rizal's *La Liga Filipina* (The Philippine League), an organization which called for political reforms in the Spanish government of the Philippines. However, *La Liga Filipina* disbanded after one meeting as Rizal was arrested and deported to the town of Dapitan in Mindanao. Bonifacio, Apolinario Mabini and others revived *La Liga Filipina* in Rizal's absence. Bonifacio was active at organizing local chapters in Manila. *La Liga Filipina* contributed moral and financial support to Filipino reformists in Spain.

Before hostilities erupted, Bonifacio reorganized the Katipunan into an open de facto revolutionary government with him as President and Commander-in-chief of the rebel army and the Supreme Council as his cabinet. Shortly thereafter he issued the following general proclamation:

"This manifesto is for all of you. It is absolutely necessary for us to stop at the earliest possible time the nameless oppositions being perpetrated on the sons of the country who are now suffering the brutal punishment and tortures in jails, and because of this, please let all the brethren know that on Saturday, the 29th of the current month, the revolution shall commence according to our agreement. For this purpose, it is necessary for all towns to rise simultaneously and attack Manila at the

same time. Anybody who obstructs this sacred ideal of the people will be considered a traitor and an enemy except if he is ill or is not physically fit, in which case he shall be tried according to the regulations we have put in force. Mount of Liberty, 28th August 1896 - ANDRÉS BONIFACIO"

On December 31, Bonifacio and the Magdalo and Magdiwang leaders held a meeting in Imus. The issue of whether the Katipunan should be replaced by a revolutionary government was brought up by the Magdalo who argued that the Katipunan, as a secret society, should have ceased to exist once the revolution was underway. Bonifacio and the Magdiwang contended that the Katipunan served as their revolutionary government since it had its own constitution, laws, and provincial and municipal governments. Edilberto Evangelista presented a draft constitution for the proposed government to Bonifacio, but this had earlier been rejected as too similar to the Spanish Maura Law. Upon the event of restructuring, Bonifacio was given carte blanche to appoint a committee tasked with setting up a new government. He would also be in charge of this committee. He requested for the minutes of the meeting to establish this authority, but this was never provided.

The rebel leaders held another meeting in a friar estate house in Tejeros on March 22, 1897, on the pretense of more discussion between the Magdalo and Magdiwang but really to settle the issue of leadership of the revolution. Amid insinuations that the Katipunan government was monarchical or dictatorial, Bonifacio maintained that it was republican. According to him, all its members of whatever rank followed the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity upon which republicanism is founded. He presided over the elections that followed despite his misgivings over the lack of representation by some provinces. Before elections started, he asked that the results be respected by everyone, and all agreed. The Cavite leaders voted their own Emilio Aguinaldo President in absentia, as he was in the battlefield. A later iteration of Aguinaldo's government was inaugurated on June 23, 1899, as the Republica Filipina (Philippine Republic). It is considered the first Republic of the Philippines, the present-day government of the Philippines being the fifth.

Shortly after this, a party of Aguinaldo's men met with Bonifacio at his camp in Indang. Unaware of the order for his arrest, Bonifacio received them cordially. The next day, Bonzon and Paua attacked Bonifacio's camp. Bonifacio did not fight back himself and ordered his men to hold their fire though shots were nevertheless exchanged. In the crossfire Bonifacio was shot in the arm. Paua stabbed him in the neck and was prevented from striking further by one of Bonifacio's men who offered to be killed instead. One of his brothers, Ciriaco, was shot dead, his other brother, Procopio, was beaten senseless, and his wife, Gregoria, may have been raped by Bonzon.

Bonifacio's party was brought to Naik where he and his surviving brother stood trial, accused of sedition and treason against Aguinaldo's government and conspiring to murder Aguinaldo. The jury was entirely composed of Aguinaldo's men, Bonifacio's defense lawyer himself declared Bonifacio's guilt, and Bonifacio was not allowed to confront the state witness for the charge of conspiracy to murder

on the grounds that the latter had been killed in battle, but after the trial, the witness was seen alive with the prosecutors. Bonifacio and his brother were found guilty despite insufficient evidence to prove their alleged guilt and executed.

There are differing accounts of Bonifacio's manner of execution. The commanding officer of the execution party, Lazaro Macapagal, said in two separate accounts that the Bonifacio brothers were shot to death, which is the orthodox interpretation. Macapagal's second account has Bonifacio attempting to escape after his brother is shot, but he is also killed while running away. Macapagal writes that they buried the brothers in shallow graves dug with bayonets and marked by twigs. However, another account states that after his brother was shot, Bonifacio was stabbed or hacked to death and the bodies of he and his brother left unburied.

Similarities and Differences

Each of the revolutionary leaders selected for your consideration was a Freemason. The revolutions they participated in, except for Napoleon, supported variations of democratic government. The events that occurred were always initially caused by poor or oppressive government and concluded with newly established political systems becoming more responsive to the needs of the people. In all cases, these political revolutions were the major turning points in their country's history and among its people. We will examine the factors that inspired each of the leaders to engage in the act of revolution and then consider briefly two revolutions which were not inspired by Masonic philosophy and their results.

[\[Part 1:\]](#) [\[Part 2:\]](#) [\[Part 3:\]](#) [\[Part 4:\]](#)

American Revolution

There are several factors which contributed to the American Revolution. The main ones identified by historians are:

The effects of the French and Indian War: The war, although won by the British and their allies, stressed their finances and plunged them into debt. In their effort to alleviate these burdens, they began exploring options for raising revenues.

The proclamation of 1763: King George III made a proclamation that prohibited American colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains to stabilize relations with the American Indians who fought with the French and to reduce the cost of colonial defense. It was met with outrage as many colonists had purchased land or possessed land grants there.

The rise of liberalism and enlightenment ideals: Many of the founding fathers had contact with enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke and his "social contract." Many of these men, as Masons, believed in such philosophical principles as that all men are created equal, that there is no divine right of kings, and that

wicked laws should be disobeyed. However it occurred, these philosophies were brought to the masses.

The Navigation Acts and Writs of Assistance: Operating on mercantilism philosophy, these acts required that all trade between British territories be carried on using British ships going through British ports to insure that taxes were paid. To increase revenue for the British, they cracked down on American smugglers, giving custom officials writs which permitted them to search warehouses, homes, and ships as they saw fit.

New taxes and boycotts: As the British government assessed methods for generating funds, it was decided to levy new taxes on the colonies with the goal of offsetting some of the cost for their defense. The passage of the Sugar Act led to outcries from colonial leaders who claimed taxation without representation, as they had no members of Parliament to represent their interests. Parliament also passed the Stamp Act which called for tax stamps to be placed on all paper goods sold in the colonies.

Townshend Acts and the Boston Massacre: The Townsend Acts placed import duties on commodities such as lead, paper, paint, glass, and tea. Over a three year period, boycotts and protests continued in the colonies. These came to a head when angry colonists began throwing snowballs and rocks at British troops guarding the Customs House in Boston. In the commotion, British troops opened fire on the mob, killing three.

The Tea Act and Boston Tea Party: Parliament passed the Tea Act with the goal of aiding the struggling British East India Company. Under the new legislation, the company would be permitted to sell tea directly to the colonies without the additional cost. As a result, tea prices in America would be reduced with only the Townshend tea duty assessed. Aware that this was an attempt by Parliament to break the colonial boycott of British goods, groups such as the Sons of Liberty spoke out against the act. Rallying the populace, the members of the Sons of Liberty dressed as Native Americans and boarded the ships on the night of December 16. Carefully avoiding damaging other property, the "raiders" tossed 342 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. A direct affront to British authority, the "Boston Tea Party" forced Parliament to take action against the colonies.

The "Coercive and Intolerable" acts: In response to the colonial attack on the tea ships, Parliament passed a series of punitive laws. The first of these, the Boston Port Act, closed Boston to shipping until the East India Company had been repaid for the destroyed tea. This was followed by the Massachusetts Government Act which allowed the Crown to appoint most positions in the Massachusetts colonial government. Supporting this was the Administration of Justice Act which permitted the Royal Governor to move the trials of accused royal officials to another colony or to Britain if a fair trial was unobtainable in Massachusetts. Along with these new laws, a new Quartering Act was enacted which allowed British troops to use unoccupied buildings as quarters when in the colonies.

Needless to say, there were thirteen colonies in North America that were not happy over their lack of representation in Parliament and what they perceived as injustices and over taxing. Their beliefs resulted in a period of protests and demonstrations and a Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776. War followed, and the Americans emerged victorious. The effect of all this was the American republic based on enlightenment and Masonic ideals which became a symbol of freedom in Europe, Latin America, and the Philippines. The United States Constitution became a model for liberal government, and the American Revolution's success inspired others to revolt against their governments.

The French Revolution

The French Revolution had political, social, and economic causes. Politically, France suffered under an absolute monarchy, and most people were denied basic rights or a say in their government. Socially, France was divided among three classes or "estates." The 3rd Estate which constituted 98% of the population had the fewest rights, the least amount of land, and the heaviest tax burden. Economically, France faced a severe financial crisis due to overspending. Louis XVI, his ministers, and the French nobility had become immensely unpopular. This was a consequence of the fact that peasants were burdened with ruinously high taxes levied to support wealthy aristocrats and their sumptuous, often gluttonous, lifestyles.

The fall of the nobility in France may be blamed, in part, on its own rigidity. Aristocrats were confronted by the rising ambitions of the merchants, tradesmen, and prosperous farmers who were allied with aggrieved peasants, wage-earners, and intellectuals influenced by the ideas of enlightenment philosophers and Masonic ideals.

The French absorbed the ideas of equality and freedom of the individual as presented by philosophers and social theorists of the age. The American Revolution demonstrated that it was plausible for enlightenment ideas about how a government should be organized to actually be put into practice. American diplomats like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson had lived in France and associated freely with members of the French intellectual class. Further, contact between American revolutionaries and French troops who served as anti-British mercenaries in North America helped spread revolutionary ideals to the French people. As a result, many of the French began to attack the undemocratic nature of their own government, push for freedom of speech, challenge the Roman Catholic Church, and decry the prerogatives of the nobles.

The French Revolution provided another example to other nations, especially in Latin America. The democratic ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were spread across Europe. The growing middle class asserted its power and came to dominate politics throughout Europe as limitations were placed on existing monarchs or as they were ousted in favor of other forms of government.

Revolution in Latin America and the Philippines

The main causes of the Latin American and the Philippine revolutions seem to be enlightenment and Masonic ideas, the examples of the American and French Revolutions, and the basic inequalities present in their societies. By the beginning of the 19th century, many wealthy landowners in Latin America and the Philippines were tired of being controlled by the Europeans. These landowners enlisted the support of the lower classes in an attempt to gain their independence. How did these revolutions occur? Here are some of the essential points.

There was no respect for indigenous populations: By the late eighteenth century, the Spanish colonies had a thriving class of men and women of mixed European ancestry born in Latin America, Mexico, and the Philippines. Spain nevertheless appointed mostly native-born Spaniards to important positions in colonial administration. This irritated the influential native born people who correctly felt that they were being ignored.

There was no free trade: The Spanish Empire exploited the resources and produced many goods at the expense of the indigenous populations. Trade was allowed only with Spain and at rates advantageous for Spanish merchants.

Other revolutions: Latin America and the Philippines could look to other nations to see revolutions and their results. Some were a positive influence, and the American Revolution was seen by many as a good example of colonies throwing off European rule and replacing it with a more fair and democratic society. Later, some constitutions of new republics borrowed heavily from the United States Constitution.

Nationals, not Spaniards: There was a growing sense in Spain's colonies of being different from Spain. These differences were cultural and often took the form of great pride in the region that a particular group belonged to. By the end of the eighteenth century, the indigenous people were identifying with their own national cultures. Meanwhile, Spanish officials consistently treated them with disdain, imprisonment, and at times even death, further widening the social gap between them.

Racism: While Spain was racially "pure" in the sense that the Moors, Jews, Gypsies, and other ethnic groups had been kicked out centuries before, the populations of the colonies were a combination of Europeans, native, and mixed peoples.

The highly racist colonial society was extremely sensitive to minute percentages of blood. Your status in society could be determined by how many 64ths of Spanish heritage you had. Their independence was a foregone conclusion as soon as they began thinking of themselves as nationals and the Spaniards as something different from themselves.

This set of revolutions led by our Masonic brothers who were at least holding to the principles of Masonic philosophy were largely successful in gaining independence from Europe, but they struggled to address some of the social class problems that still existed which lead to over a century of continued problems with revolutions, military coups, and foreign control dominating their politics. However, it should be noted that these governments largely continue to be democratic and that Masonic ideals and philosophy continue to inspire and motivate many within the fraternity.

[\[Part 1:\]](#) [\[Part 2:\]](#) [\[Part 3:\]](#) [\[Part 4:\]](#)

There are other revolutionaries that contrast with those embracing Masonic ideals which have attempted in some instances to eliminate Masonic and other influences that might compete with their philosophy in order to maintain power. Let's consider these revolutionaries and the revolutions that occurred.

Russian Revolution

Throughout the 19th Century, Russian Czars attempted to westernize and industrialize without also importing French revolutionary ideals. They were mostly unsuccessful, and many Russian liberals called for reform, but the Czars became harsh and oppressive. A rigid social class system added to this problem by denying the majority peasant class most basic rights. The peasant class, composed of both farmers and urban workers, were mostly poor, overworked, and hungry which led them to support liberal ideas that promised better living conditions.

Russia became the first country to base its government on the writings of Karl Marx. By 1922, Lenin and the Communists had taken most of the Russian Empire, and it became the Soviet Union. Initially, the Communists fulfilled their revolutionary promises by improving basic living conditions and ending Russia's involvement in World War I but ultimately failed to provide a government of equal rights and participation.

Chinese Communist Revolution

After China freed itself from foreign control, the Nationalist Party led by Jiang Jieshi began a war against the Communist Party led by Mao Zedong. China under the Nationalists did little to improve the lives of the people as had been promised. Mao continued to fight against the government and eventually overthrew it in 1949. Mao then setup a government based on communist principles.

Under Mao and the communists, China was transformed from an agricultural society into an industrial society. Mao eliminated the old landlord and business classes and provided free health care for peasants. Mao also instituted reform that made women legally equal to men, although in practice this was never achieved. China was transformed into a one party dictatorship with Mao in total control. Similar to the Soviet Union, China never fulfilled the promises of equality and brotherhood that were originally promised when the revolution began.

Explanation for the phenomena

I have lived and traveled abroad and have been inspired by some of the ideals of these revolutionary thinkers. In the Philippines, for example, many there believe that the events that occurred during the Philippine revolution were authored by Masonic influence. I have demonstrated that the revolutionaries who died for their causes were Masonic brothers who lived by the ideals of our fraternity and authored most of the successful revolutions throughout the world. What were those philosophical ideals? The same as identified in the beginning of the article:

- * Be considerate of different religious, social, and political views.
- * Uphold and maintain the principles of good government and oppose divisive or degrading influences.
- * Practice positive relationships; give and accept help when needed.
- * Value the internal qualities of a man over financial success.
- * Strive to participate with the fraternity and live a brotherly life.
- * Remain good at heart.
- * Act with honor and integrity in everything you do.
- * Believe in a Supreme Being and keep faith as the center of life.
- * Strive to leave the world a better place than when you entered it.

This brings me to my second assertion; there could have been no Masonic conspiracy. First, these revolutionary leaders; although inspired by Masonic philosophy, enlightenment ideals, and the revolutionaries that went before; still had individual differences in the practice of democracy. Second, most of these revolutionaries, upon overthrowing their oppressors, quickly turned their attention to domestic issues and discouraged international involvement. Third, had a Masonic agenda really existed, why would we wait this long to spring it rather than at the more opportune time when the revolutions ended? Thus, given the fact that we couldn't be clever enough to organize a fraternity capable of overthrowing the whole world on one hand and then foolish enough to not implement our strategy for world domination on the other as these revolutions ended, it is inconceivable that there has ever been any grand Masonic agenda.

The truth is actually more inspiring and far better than any fiction. We were then, and continue to be today, a fraternity of individual choice with the most worthwhile agenda, for each of us to live ideals consistent with Masonry. We should take pride in our fraternity, in all its accomplishments to leave the world a better place, and in those of the revolutionaries who have attempted to live by its principles. After each of these revolutions, constitutions were drafted (most tailored after the United States Constitution); political parties and other organizations that divided or abused people were discouraged; banks, laws, and rules of due process were established; and internal structures that would better the lives of the citizens of each nation were developed. To be honest, if we were going to rule the world, would following the philosophy of Masonry be so bad? I will close by calling your attention to a quotation that applies to the revolutionary heroes from our Masonic past and to the

potential effects of inspiration on each of us. It is attributed to the Indian sage and philosopher Patanjali.

"When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds; your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great, and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties, and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person than you ever dreamed yourself to be."

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[\[Part 1:\]](#) [\[Part 2:\]](#) [\[Part 3:\]](#) [\[Part 4:\]](#)

5 5 4 9 VISITORS Since 080114 Update: August 1, 2014

[Top](#)