

Governments, the chapter headings in Livermore give an idea of the turmoil: Provisional 1910; Constituent 1911; Constitutional 1912-15; Democratic 1915-17; The New Republic 1917-18; the Return of the Democrats 1918-26; until finally there is stability but not democracy. Economic problems were of course compounded by Portugal's commitment to the Allies during the Great War.

During all of this, leading Freemasons were to be found in government. Dr. Oliveira Marques comments that "with the proclamation of the Republic, Masonry came to be seen as something useful, a necessary part of the curriculum vitae of a ministerial candidate, of a deputy, or of a public official. In a few years the number of Masons doubled, from about 2,000 to about 4,000 . . . in Parliament half or more of the representatives of the people belonged to the Order. . . . In the Provisional Government of 1910-11, 50 percent of the Ministers were Masons, a percentage which continued in round figures during most of the Republican Governments until 1926 . . . more than half of the Ministries were presided over by Masons. . . . And three Presidents of the Republic — Bernardino Machado, Sidónio Pais and António José de Almeida — belonged to the Masonic Order . . . it does not seem an exaggeration to say that . . . the decline of (Masonry) corresponded to or was a great extent the cause of the decline of (the Republic).

The divisions amongst Republicans as to how political power should be exercised were of course reflected amongst ordinary Freemasons as well as amongst their leaders. And in 1914 an important split occurred, ostensibly over matters of ritual and formality but reflecting wider differences. The more conservative-minded Supreme Council of the 33rd Degree separated itself from the Grande Oriente Lusitano Unido and established a Grémio Luso-Escoços (literally meaning a "Club" exercising the Scottish Rite). This had the support of about one-third of Portuguese Masons and within the year the number adhering to G.O.L.U. fell from 4341 to 2800 with a corresponding fall in Lodges from 198 to 147. Within the next few years numbers further deteriorated substantially as many Freemasons sought to distance themselves from the political scene. There is an eye-witness report by the American military attaché of the sacking of the Masonic Palace in the Bairro Alto on 8 December 1918, allegedly by Roman Catholics "and the royalist pupils of the Cadet school, led by some officers and sergeants of the same kidney".¹¹ By 1920, the number of members of Grand Orient was only 1,807 in 88 Lodges.

In 1924, a letter written to an English Freemason by the Grand Secretary of G.O.L.U. contained the following information:⁷ "The United Grand Orient of Lusitania (G.O.L.U.) consists of 80 Lodges and 29 Triangles . . . the Scottish Rite predominates. The French Rite has 12 Lodges and the Symbolic Rite only one.

"The Grand Master is" (and had been since 1907) "Dr. Sebastião de Magalhães Lima, whose 33rd degree was conferred on him in Scotland and he has been elected to his high offices for another period of three years, 1923-25. There were long ago two English Lodges working under the authority of United Grand Orient, one in Funchal, Madeira, and another at St. Vincent, but now there are none". It was the intention to revive a Supreme Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, there being several active Masons "who hold a commission delegated to them by the higher bodies of the Rite in England".

The Masonic ritual was similar to the English, Lodges being opened with the words "Ad Universi Terrarum Orbis Summi Architecti Gloriam". The usual obligations had to be taken on the Bible but "seeing that in Masonry complete religious tolerance is allowed . . . it is recommended that the obligation should be taken on the Bible by Christians and Jews, and on the Book of Constitutions in all other cases".

In the Grémio Luso-Escoços interest was also failing and by 1919 the original 50 dissenting Lodges had fallen to 30 and in 1923 there were only 23. In March 1926, the leaders of both ruling Lodges saw the need to combine forces once more under the G.O.L.U. to combat the reactionary forces in the country. Already though, it was too late. On 28 May there was a military coup and the long years of the Dictatorship began. "Para a Maçonaria portuguesa era o começo da agonia. Identificada com a República, caía agora com ela", writes Dr. Oliveira Marques. "For Portuguese Masonry, it was the beginning of agony. Identified with the Republic, Masonry now fell with it".

At first however there was little change. Some of the leaders of the coup, notably General Carmona, who later was President of the Republic for many years, were Freemasons themselves and there was no repression. Indeed in October the Council of the Order evidently felt strong enough to propose a programme of political counter-offensive. But the Grande Orient suffered from internal problems. The Grand Master, the much-respected Magalhães Lima died in December 1928, his funeral at-

tended, it is said, by 15,000 mourners. His successor lived less than a year more and was able to contribute little.

On the night of 16 April 1929, Grémio Lusitano, the Masonic Palace in the Bairro Alto, in Lisbon, was attacked by a mixed group of police and civilians. Some prisoners were taken, and the premises vandalised. The Council at once proposed the “triangulation” of all Lodges, dividing every Lodge into five to facilitate meetings in private houses or cafes. The Masonic Palace was closed. On 31 December 1929 a new Grand Master was elected, General Norton de Matos. In his first message to Portuguese Freemasons, he deplored “the tremendous disaster which the victory of reaction implied for the Portuguese Nation” and called for members “to work with all peaceful and worthy means to prevent the calamities which threaten the country”. A year later he again stressed the need for a continued struggle against the Dictatorship, predicting that if the forces of reaction were victorious, Masonry would face “uma longa época de marasmo, de inércia forçada, de desanimo e de tristeza”: “a long period of apathy, of forced inertia, of depression, and of sadness”. In fact the situation was already extremely serious: hundreds of Freemasons were in prison, or had been deported or exiled, for their political activities. Many more left the country for fear of violence and persecution. By the end of 1933 there were no more than 1,500 Masons left in about 50 Lodges.

On 19 January 1935 it was proposed in the National Assembly of the Republic that all secret societies should be banned under heavy penalties, including seizure of property. All students at the age of 16, all candidates for any office, were to be obliged to swear that they were not and would not be involved. This was aimed directly at Freemasons and became law on 21 May 1935. Already though, the Council of the Order had acted to disband, reinstating the system of triangulation, and passing the powers and responsibilities of the Grand Master to the Council of the Order in such a way that it could continue clandestinely. The Grémio Lusitano was dissolved, the Masonic Palace becoming a barracks for the para-military Portuguese Legion. Throughout the country Masonic possessions were confiscated similarly, though the Library and part of the archives were placed in the Ministry of Finances.

The Dictatorship

In April 1928, Dr. António de Oliveira Salazar had taken the

portfolio of Finance, becoming Prime Minister four years later. Under his dictatorship, part benevolent as it might have seemed, all opposition was discouraged by prison and exile. For example, Dr. Mario Soares, today President of the Republic, and initiated into Freemasonry in France, as have been many leading figures in Portugal, was finally exiled to São Tome in 1969 after being imprisoned 14 times for political reasons. It is almost surprising therefore that it was not until 1935 that all Freemasonry was banned, but known Freemasons continued in office, and where Freemasons were persecuted, it was for opposition to the Government rather than for membership of the Institution.

For Freemasons the period is known as the “clandestinidade”. In June 1937 Dr. Luis Goncalves Rebordão was elected President of the Council to exercise the powers of the Grand Master. Remarkably he avoided arrest and lived to preside over the first Grand Diet to be held after the Revolution, on 26 March 1975. In his address to that Assembly, he recalled these 38 years of very limited Masonic activity.

The first Decrees of the Council had reaffirmed the universal principles of Freemasonry in terms which placed it firmly in the tradition of the main body of Freemasons throughout the world: stating also that “it is our firm intention . . . to improve relations with the (United) Grand Lodge of England”. Indeed, because of the perils of their situation, Portuguese Freemasons drew closer than ever before and approved an integration of organisation and ritual. On 1 December 1941, a Decree was signed approving a new Constitution and affirming adherence to the eight fundamental requirements of Regular Freemasonry, promulgated by the United Lodge of England on 4 December 1929. These are unchanged and expressed as follows: that a Grand Lodge must meet the following standards:¹

- It must have been lawfully established by a regular Grand Lodge or by three or more private Lodges, each warranted by a regular Grand Lodge.
- It must be truly independent and self-governing, with undisputed authority over Craft — or basic — Freemasonry (i.e. the symbolic degrees) within its jurisdiction, and not subject in any other way to or sharing power with any other Masonic body.
- Freemasons under its jurisdiction must be men, and it and its Lodges must have no Masonic contact with Lodges which admit

women to membership.

- Freemasons under its jurisdiction must believe in a Supreme Being.
- All Freemasons under its jurisdiction must take their Obligations on or in full view of the Volume of the Sacred Law (i.e. the Bible) or the book held sacred by the man concerned.
- The three Great Lights of Freemasonry (i.e. the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses) must be on display when the Grand Lodge or its Subordinate Lodges are open.
- The discussion of religion and politics within its Lodges must be prohibited.
- It must adhere to the established principles and tenets (the Ancient Landmarks) and customs of the Craft, and insist on their being observed within its Lodges.

Despite the dangers, there were initiations of new members and a new edition of the ritual in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite was issued in March 1942. In 1951 Lodges of Instruction were established "for practice and theory, for study of the symbols, and for reading suitable Masonic texts".

Portugal remained neutral during the Second World War, Salazar inclining towards the Axis Powers until 1943/44 when the Allies were clearly in the ascendant. Portuguese Freemasonry however was never neutral: "from the first hour we were with a total commitment on the side of the Allies". In a message to Franklin Roosevelt in December 1941, Portuguese Freemasons wrote: "From the bottom of our hearts we express our very best wishes for the final Victory of the United States and of all the allied peoples . . . holding faithful to the sacred and universal principles of our Order, it is our most heartfelt wish that Portugal might equally be your ally. . . ." Similar messages were sent at different times to Winston Churchill, to Charles de Gaulle, to Henry Truman, and to King George VI: ". . . we march always in the path that leads to the emancipation and the complete liberty of Humanity . . . with all men of goodwill, we continue to fight as your Ally until total victory. . . .".

With the end of the war, foreign contacts were resumed as far as possible, especially with France, and with England and Brazil, but of course

with great difficulty. However by 1957, there was sufficient confidence to resume the office of Grand Master and Dr. Luis Goncalves Rebordão was elected, together with the other customary officials. In 1959, Lodges were once more established in Porto, Viana do Castelo, and Estarreja, and later near Caldas da Rainha. In 1969 in Caldas there was a meeting of various Lisbon and Coimbra Lodges; and in 1973 in Malaposta a larger one of three dozen Masons from Lisbon, Porto, Coimbra, Viseu, and other northern towns.

The numbers were of course very small and the dangers of discovery were considerable. Some meetings were held in open country, in vineyards for example. One estimate puts the proportion of secret police and spies in the population as one in 15: it may have been higher. Throughout all this period Freemasons were amongst those who naturally opposed the regime, and left the country, or were imprisoned and exiled if they were activists. By the end of the Dictatorship there were perhaps no more than 60 Freemasons on the Portuguese mainland, although the Masonic schools of the Internato de S. João, the Escola Oficina No. 1, and the Asilo de S. João do Porto, stayed open and continued to receive support.

In Madeira in 1959 the Lodge Renovação was established and Masonry grew once more in the Island. In Mozambique there were two Lodges in Lourenço Marques, Cruzeiro do Sul and Lusitânia, and another for many years in Beira. In Angola there was a Lodge in Luanda.

Perhaps there was increasing official toleration because Portuguese Masonry now remained almost entirely apart from politics. Of course Freemasonry supported the Revolution of 25 April 1974, the almost bloodless Revolution of the Flowers that ended "the terrible night of 48 years of fascist rule in Portugal"; but amongst the group of army officers who led it, there were no Masons. Probably this was the only occasion in 200 years on which they had been absent from the leadership of such a critical event, and in the first Government that followed there was only one Freemason.

On 4 November 1974 Freemasonry under its legal title of Grémio Lusitano became once more legitimate and resumed possession of its despoiled Masonic Palace in the Bairro Alto. With his Address to the Brethren on 25 March 1975, Dr. Luis Goncalves Rebordão resigned as Grand Master: "A minha missão na chefia da Ordem estava terminada". He had had the supreme responsibility for upholding the principles of

Freemasonry in extraordinary circumstances for the 37 years of the clandestinidade.

From 1974 to the Present Day

With the explosion of radical feelings released by Revolution came political and social confusion in the country, at times chaos. With the independence of all the colonies except Macau, as many as one million refugees and disbanded soldiers had to be absorbed into a severely weakened economy. Wholesale nationalisations made matters worse. Political power was initially in the hands of the extreme left and the military. It was two years before there was agreement on a new Constitution; and another six before it could be said that Government instability was ended. For some time the voice of moderation had no place.

In this atmosphere the Grande Oriente Lusitano Unido grew again, from a basis of the six Lodges which had survived: Liberdade, Simpatia União, Candido dos Reis, União Revolta, and Liberdade e Justicia. Expansion was slow, and under its new leadership — in the spirit of the times — it moved away from some of the principles which had sustained it during the clandestinidade. It became once more strongly politicised, non-religious as to personal beliefs and to an extent anti-clerical, strengthening its links with the Grande Oriente de France. Ritual and formality tended to become unimportant and Lodge meetings usually included discussion papers on political topics. In 1993 the membership of G.O.L.U. is about 500, organised into about 30 Lodges, composed predominantly of members of the Socialist and Communist Parties, including some leading politicians. Political “correctness” is an important criterion for initiation. The election of the Grand Master every five years is contested and bitterly fought. For all these reasons the Grande Oriente is regarded as irregular.

In 1982 a group of about 80 left the G.O.L.U. to return to the mainstream of the Masonic tradition. A smaller number of these formed the Grande Loja Unido, under the National Grande Lodge of France (a Grand Lodge having no connection with the Grande Orient of France and recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England).

The larger number also began under the aegis of the N.G.L.F. with three Lodges: Fernando Pessoa, Porto do Graal, and Europe. However on 26 June 1991 they formed the Grande Loja Regular de Portugal, with Dr. Fernando Teixeira as the first Grand Master. Recognition followed

from Grand Lodges throughout the world, including that by the United Grand Lodge of England in March 1992. By 1993 there were already 15 Lodges with about 350 members and an intention to reach 1,000 members by 1996. There is unusual strictness in approving prospective members and a determination to maintain the standards on which the Grand Lodge has been founded. In some words of the Grand Master: “With a belief in God, to have respect and tolerance for others, to improve society and individual behaviour by example and teaching; to assist the less fortunate; to be obedient to the laws of the country, of morality, and of Freemasonry, avoiding any involvement of the Craft in politics; and to recognise with friendship the brotherhood of all peoples everywhere”.

Rituals of the Grande Loja Regular de Portugal are conducted in the degrees of a number of Rites, including those known as Old Scots, Rectified Scots, French, and Emulation. Other Degrees (for example Royal Arch) have been introduced elsewhere. The Bible, the Torah, and the Koran are equally displayed in Lodges; and leaders of the Moslem and Jewish communities have been initiated. Projected charitable activities include the education of disabled children and drug rehabilitation. At present the Grande Loja is without a Masonic Palace, although a number of its Lodges have Temples.

Throughout the world there are probably about 40,000 regular Freemasons of Portuguese descent, the majority being in the United States, with perhaps 10,000 in Brazil and elsewhere. It has evidently given great satisfaction to this extended brotherhood that there is now in Portugal itself a Grand Lodge unequivocally adhering to the fundamental principles of regular Freemasonry.

In 1998 there will be celebrated the epic journey of Vasco da Gama in 1497-98 which extended earlier voyages and finally opened the sea-trade route to India and the East to make Lisbon for a time one of the richest capital cities. The main focus of the celebrations will be Expo '98 in Lisbon and the Grande Loja Regular de Portugal is planning a major exhibition in a Lisbon mansion, in which Masonic Grand Lodges worldwide will be asked to take part. Earlier, in the autumn of 1993, there will be an exhibition in the Ajuda Palace to present Freemasonry to the public.

To this unfolding story of Freemasonry in Portugal has been added yet again the establishment in the country of Lodges issuing directly from

the English Grand Lodge. The first was the Prince Henry the Navigator, consecrated on 17 March 1990 in Vilamoura, as Lodge No. 9360 in the Roll of the United Grand Lodge of England. The Deputy Grand Master, Lord Farnham, officiated, assisted by five other Officers of the Grand Lodge, and by the District Grand Master of Gibraltar and other Officers of that Lodge. It was attended by many Freemasons from other countries. The name commemorates the third son of João I and Philippa of Lancaster, whose life-work led to the great voyages of discovery. Since the Prince Henry, there have been three other English Lodges: one in Portimão called Discoveries; one in Monte Estoril called Lancaster; and a Royal Arch Chapter, also in Portimão. The total membership of these Lodges in 1993 is more than 150.

In October 1993, in Northampton, England, there will be an unusual Masonic event in the consecration of a Lodge amongst the Portuguese community, which will meet only twice a year: once in Northampton and once in Lisbon. Appropriately, — in further recognition and celebration of the more than 600 years of almost unbroken comradeship between the two countries since the Treaty of Windsor in 1386, — this Lodge will be called “The Oldest Alliance”.

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