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The Cardenista Masonic Rite

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CIVIL SOCIETY AND FREEMASONRY:
THE CARDENISTA MASONIC RITE AND MEXICO

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Abstract: Masonic studies can play an important part in the current discussion of civil society and volunteerism, but contrary to frequent assertions, not all Masonic organizations have encouraged democratization. The history of the political activities of Masonry in Mexico does not unambiguously support arguments about an intermediate zone of voluntary societies between family and state that promotes pluralism. During the 1930s, the supposed creation of a working class Freemasonry actually fell far short of the boasts that a new Mexican rite had been created.

The growth of interest in civil society means that Masonic historical studies take on a new relevance, as they enable one to examine largely unstudied attitudes towards volunteerism and associationalism. The
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President of Mexico during the late 1930s, Lázaro Cárdenas, has numerous Masonic lodges named after him and he is even credited with the establishment of a entire Masonic movement or rite, a claim examined in the following discussion.

His involvement with Freemasonry perhaps confirms those views that he had mixed motives when he refigured other Mexican NGOs (non governmental organizations) such as the unions.¹ It clearly illustrates how he had his "finger in every pot", and, as the historian Enrique Krauze remarks, that "the division of powers at any level were not important to him."²

The tradition of co-opting voluntary movements to support the state was no different during his regime than in other mexican administrations, although criticism of him is bound to arose his defenders. "No historian," writes Professor Alan Knight, "questions the importance of Cardenismo, but many disagree as to its character."³ Professor Knight comments, "Cardenismo was a much weaker vehicle for change than either supporters or opponents claimed. This not to say, of course, that its reformist record was negligible...But the eventual outcome of these policies departed from the goals that Cardenista policymakers pursue...The institutional shell of Cardenismo remained, but its internal dynamic was lost. In other words, the jalopy was hijacked by new drivers: they retuned the engine, took on new passengers, and then drove it in a quite different direction."⁴

The degree of Cárdenas' Masonic activities has been disputed, and so is discussed at some length here. He was not only a Mason but it is claimed that he founded what has been called a Masonic Rite. As understood in Freemasonry, a rite is a collection of degrees. In other words, it is not just one evening’s ceremonies but a succession of ceremonials that take months or even years to stage. An example is the Scottish Rite, which
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has had a long and controversial existence in Mexico and works or presents thirty-three degrees.\textsuperscript{5}

The claim about Lázaro Cárdenas producing a rite surfaces frequently enough to justify a detailed discussion. For example, Professor Peter Calvert writes:

To the generally known facts about the role of Masonry in the civil strife in Mexico in the two decades after independence, Brandenburg has added a great deal of detail about subsequent developments which suggest that it enjoyed considerable importance again in the 1930s. Portes Gil, Ortiz Rubio, Rodríguez, and Cárdenas were all Masons -- the last the grand master between 1929 and 1931 of the Mexican Independent Symbolical Grand Lodge (founded 1927) which under his Presidency became an important bond between government officials and local leaders up and down the country. The importance of this is twofold. it confirms the active role of Masonry as a political force in Mexico throughout the nineteenth century and even down to our own time. But it also illuminates the struggles of interpretation of the direction of the Revolution; foreign influence remained strong in many lodges into the 1920s and its removal was one of the chief causes behind the formation of the Cárdenas Rite.\textsuperscript{6}

One assertion is that Cárdenas founded the Mexican National Rite \textit{(Benemerito Rito Nacional Mexicano)}. The original Mexican National Rite arose about 1830, established to reconcile Masonic factions that confronted each other during the War for Independence. This branch of Masonry or, more likely, its successor still exists in Mexico.\textsuperscript{7} It is not the same as the supposed rite launched by the President:
Apartándose de las logias existentes creó el Gran Rito Nacional, logia herética que habría de manejar él, esencialmente con fines políticos. Y con la categoría de gran maestro se dió a la tarea de "masonizar" Michoacán. En
Possibly the claim that Cárdenas “Mexicanized” Freemasonry has suggested that there is a connection between him and the Rito Nacional Mexicano. As will be discussed, the reality is that one looks in vain for the separate Masonic organization that would support such claims about the general as the founder of a rite, a founder in the mold of the nineteenth-century general and publisher Albert Pike who rewrote the Scottish Rite degrees now widely used in Latin as well as North America.

What he did was to attempt, like other presidents, to control the nongovernmental organizations that might have challenged his power.

Jesús Fraustro, who when interviewed at the age of 96 was considered the oldest living or at least the oldest living active Freemason in Mexico, and who claims to have known Cárdenas as a brother Mason, responded to the controversy about the President's role:

As an example, I'm going to take my name, Jesús Fraustro. Everything I have done in my life, more than seventy years in Freemasonry, shouldn't be called Fraustro Freemasonry! There is no Cardenista Rite, but the Cardenistas were part of Masonic groups. The Cardenista Rite idea started with General Cárdenas and General Damián Rodríguez which were pretty close friends. General Rodríguez was a Great Luminar of the Mexican
Masonic Rite. It can be said that because of them Freemasonry got very popular...at least for me all groups that were built in the times of General Damián were Cardenista groups. ..People had a high esteem for General Cárdenas. I am one of them. Through General Pedro V. Rodríguez Trianas who was a close friend of Cárdenas, I talked to General Cárdenas in San Pedro de las Colonia in which Trianna was governor. Cárdenas came to congratulate Trianna every year in his anniversary. In that way I got to know Cárdenas pretty well. ..The Cardenista groups that were organized in most every state of the republic (eventually) joined the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry or the one that was the most powerful according to the state.10

When a lodge today in Mexico claims to be Cardenista, it is making a statement about its politics and not about its ritual. Masonic lodges in Mexico take political sides and to be a Cardenista lodge is to be a lodge with left-wing political tendencies. So there is a certain amount of cynicism about the genuinely Masonic activity of the Cardenista period, as well as other initiatives taken during that era with NGOs, with a few arguing it was all a "an immense hoax played on workers and peasants".11

There is no question but that Cárdenas firmly associated himself with Freemasonry.12 However, his involvement and that of other Mexican presidents does not justify statements that "Yet nowhere, through revolution and inquisition, war and invasion, has Free Masonry had a greater positive impact than on Mexico and its people."13 Notwithstanding an involvement
with popular heroes, Freemasonry's membership in Mexico has largely been elite and urban, and its activities have often been highly political.\textsuperscript{14} 

The reasons for this include the mirror reflection of the lodges of the centralization of government, the growth of cities, and growth of the wealth of urban centers.\textsuperscript{15} The lack of rural opportunity which has encouraged urban growth is underscored by the urban concentration of Masonic lodges -- and perhaps the situation is also colored by the simple fact that the order's elaborate jewels and costumes cost more than a working man could afford.\textsuperscript{16}

The folklore is that the supposed exception to Mexican Masonry's ruling class flavor is the more egalitarian Masonry during the presidency of Cárdenas.\textsuperscript{17} Evidence suggests that Cárdenas was keenly interested in the social development of the laboring and agrarian sectors where associations were few and weak. Certainly if he extended Masonry amongst the lower classes to empower them, he would have been ahead of his time in understanding the significance of NGOs in the process of democratization. But exactly what was it that he did?\textsuperscript{18}
However, when it comes to Mexico, the labor movement involvement in Masonry was slight. There is far more evidence for a scramble of Mexican politicians to acquire the more stratospheric and extravagant Masonic distinctions awarded (Grand Pontiff, Knight of the Brazen Serpent, Master of the Royal Secret, and so on, almost \textit{ad infinitum}) than to establish lodges for the working classes. The supposed egalitarian philosophy growing out of the movement's Enlightenment roots is not much in evidence in Mexico, and the activities of the Masons belong more to the history of political maneuverings than of philanthropy.\textsuperscript{19}

That Cárdenas was interested in the organizational possibilities of Masonry says more about a canny ability to develop support rather than a genuine desire to extend the benefits of volunteerism. The exploitable prestige that Masonic membership provides through its links with Mexican history is considerable. This begins with Miguel Hidalgo, symbolically both Catholic priest and Freemason, and who invoked Masonic themes when he led the Mexican revolt against Spain in 1810, and with Francisco Javier Mina “whose influence in the Masonic lodges put him in contact with men prepared to sacrifice their lives on the altars of their vision of human emancipation”.\textsuperscript{20} Many prominent Mexicans have been members,\textsuperscript{21} and the country from its beginnings to now offers an excellent and unused opportunity for research into the subject.\textsuperscript{22}

So, looking at Mexican history, Cárdenas could reflect his image gained in stature by virtue of Masonic associations, just as did the reputations of leaders in the United States.\textsuperscript{23} Juárez, for example, was Grand Master of the previously mentioned National Grand Lodge or its namesake.\textsuperscript{24} The idea of using Masonry as vehicle for political development is not as eccentric as it initially might seem.\textsuperscript{25} Masonry is
another example of Cárdenas establishing organizations or refurbishing old organizations which would support him, as was the case with the Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos, National Committee of Proletarian Defense, and Confederación de Trabajadores de México. Warns Victor Alba, "Cárdenas regarded his instruments of support as exactly what they were -- instruments." That might be adopted as a concise summary of the historical fate of many Mexican NGOs.

Cárdenas was almost obliged to take an interest in Freemasonry if he was to conciliate the religious and anti-religious factions that had caused so much trouble in the immediate past. At a Masonic banquet in 1919, Portes Gil told his lodge brothers, "In Mexico, the state and masonry in late years have been one and the same thing: two entities who go forward prepared, for the men who have held political power in late years have known how to fortify themselves with the revolutionary principles of masonry."

During the 1920s and 1930s, the conflicts between Freemasonry and the Church were complicated by the Cristero’s movement, mentioned already in connection with the Knights of Columbus. Masonry became deeply involved in the conflict. A letter sent by Leopoldo Ruíz y Flores, Delegado Apostólico, on December 12, 1926 to the Episcopado, the clergy and the general Catholic population warns that Catholics were forbidden to join Freemasonry, which “besides being a secret society, confounded, prohibited by the Church, is the cause of our persecution and almost all our national misfortunes.” With justification, Masonry had become a stalking horse for the conservatives.

Besides problems with the church, the Masons had problems amongst themselves. Many “regular” Masons became upset because of the enlarged political role that the organization was taking after the Revolution, and also
because what they considered irregular Grand Lodges were being created. Zalce y Rodríguez points out there was “anarchy among the practitioners of the symbolism.” (Perhaps we need the word *semiomachy.*) He suggests this was caused by the selfish political interests of Masons who were supportive of the politics of President Calles and that both regular and irregular Masons took parts in parades supporting Calles' religious policy.\(^{32}\)

Here therefore was the sort of loose cannon on the political deck which Cárdenas when he came into office could scarcely afford. In Veracruz, Masonic matters were particularly unsettled. One of the most significant Grand Lodges of the era was the R. Gr. Log. Gran Logia “Unida Mexicana” of Veracruz. This Grand Lodge is the antecedent of the “Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana” that was supported by Cárdenas and which appears to have given rise to the story that he created a Masonic rite for the masses.

During the 1920s, the Grand Logia “Unida Mexicana” of Veracruz had been losing its reputation for regularity because of the actions of some of its members. Celestino Vázquez complained in 1927, “Nowadays, the State of Veracruz is in chaos, as far as Masonry is concerned.” This was because of the divisions within the Grand Lodge 'Unida Mexicana' of Veracruz. The territorial jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge became divided into two groups: the Grand Orient of the Port of Veracruz and the Grand Orient of Jalapa, and “There is not a respectable entity that can impose its own truly Masonic force and work and unite them.”\(^{33}\)

A meeting was held in which the Masons, especially Celestino Vázquez, decided to considered "vacant of Masonic authority" the state of Veracruz, and create a new Grand Lodge with a well-defined program functioning totally apart from the Grand Lodges of Veracruz and Jalapa.
Despite the Masonic penchant for secrecy, the discussion was printed in a Folleto Histórico, and also as part of the preamble in the so-called Santa Lucrecia Compact of February 27, 1927. The brothers elected on Puerto México as their seat and gave the body the new name of “Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana”.

After its creation, the Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana announced in a manifesto issued in Puerto México on March 1, 1927 that it did not recognize as Masonic the Gran Logia Unida Mexicana of Veracruz (the port, not the state), and that the lack of Masonic authority in the state gave the dissenting brethren the right to become a Cuerpo Soberano (independent body). The reaction of the Gran Logia Unida was to organize a campaign to prevent other "regular" grand lodges in Mexico from recognizing the new Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana, the Grand Lodge Unida tried to re-establish ties with the “Valle de Mexico” Grand Lodge and the Grand Lodge Unida of Jalapa. This failed and there was a crisis in Mexican Masonry from 1926 to 1930 as competing bodies warred.

The Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana was from its inception politically active. Zalce claims that it was “susceptible to giving advantages to some masons that through this Institution, always have expected an easy benefit within the bureaucratic organisms”. The so-called regular grand lodges of Mexico also were interested in having political influence. Emilio Portes Gil and Pascual Ortiz Rubio were both active Masons, so during their presidencies there was a considerable increase in membership, and especially in the Masonic activities of those interested in politics and preferment.
This is the background to the real story of the use Lázaro Cárdenas made of Freemasonry. He had a great facility for manipulating organizations to buttress his political standing, so the sort of confusion that existed in Masonic circles when he assumed office would have been a challenge and an opportunity. He had been a Mason long before he was president. His Masonic activities during his presidency were not, contrary to claims, devoted to creating a new rite, which would have placed him in the Masonic valhalla along with Swedenborg, Pike, and Frederick the Greats. Rather, as he rose to power, he favored a variety of Masonic groups that became enthusiastic promoters of his political causes and were willing to heap dignities upon him. That ragtag movement can be called a rite, but it is not.

The support that Cárdenas gave to Masonry, and especially to the “Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana” of which he became Grand Master during his presidency, encouraged many irregular lodges. There were hundred of lodges during the 1930s called “Logias Cárdenas”, most of them were irregular and banded into irregular grand lodges, some of which are still in existence. The Grand Master of the important Grand Lodge of Valle de Mexico, Lic. Calixto Maldonado, who was ecumenically sympathetic with everything that was related to Masonry, did not care if was regular or irregular, and neither did the President.

This naturally benefited the Independent Grand Lodge and its offspring: “The benevolence of Maldonado to the Gran Logia Independiente Mexicana did not need a reason ... (Suffice to note that) ...it was public that Mr. General Cárdenas —at least that was what people said— was very interested in the progress and extension of it as supporting his personal hopes to consolidate a strong nationalism, and under the impression that the Scottish Rite ‘Antiguo y Aceptado’ was controlled by foreigners...”
The “Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana”, in which Cárdenas took such an interest, established numerous lodges in different cities during the period of his presidency. In fact, the Gran Logia Valle de México lost some members to it who were attracted by its political activities. The “Secretaría de Hacienda”, the “Secretaría of Agriculture” and the “Departamento Agrario” supported lodges during the Cárdenas administration. Elements in these ministries created at least two politically influential lodges: “Tierra y Libertad” and “Unificación Campesina”, in Mexico City and in Tlanepantla, respectively.40

The Simbólica Independiente promoted the creation of still another Grand Lodge, the so-called “Simbólica e Independiente Tierra y Libertad”, thus employing a good agrarian reform slogan. This Grand Lodge was popularly known simply as “Tierra y Libertad Estatal” and, as Zalce emphasizes: “There is not a better proof to demonstrate that this 'Gran Logia' was in politics than the energetic activities of Mr. General President of the Republic, supreme chief of the bureaucrat masons of Hacienda, Agricultura and Departamento Agrario.”41

The purpose of Tierra y Libertad was indeed to initiate the campesino into Masonic rituals and wisdom, and this is perhaps as close as the Cárdenas government came to having a truly distinctive working class Masonry, a Masonry for the laboring man. In Zalce’s opinion, and he was a Mason, while this idea of extending Masonry to the workers was laudable, the mistake of the Cárdenas Masonic movement was to try to “propagate the moral principals and fundamental ideas of the initiation, through the 'Tierra y Libertad' lodges, imposing rituals that are a copy of liturgies used by the Latin-speaking lodges, very deficient liturgies and misinterpreted.”42
The campesinos and workers in his opinion were not prepared to understand sophisticated Masonic philosophy -- but he was willing to grudgingly admit that had they been able to do so, the teaching about brotherly love and friendship probably would not have done any harm. In 1936, Wilfrid Parsons, himself a Jesuit priest, after observing the Cárdenas regime's Masonic efforts, wrote that the Masons were the more decent amongst the presidential supporters:
Was then, the Revolution merely money-grubbing hypocrisy? No. There was always among the followers of Calles what may be called an idealistic wing which really believed the doctrines that it preached. This wing was and is powerful and vocal. It is now solidly behind Cárdenas. It has a heritage of radicalism that goes back to 1820. It centers in the political Masonic lodges which have affiliations with the Grand Orient of France.43

The politicized Masonic activities of Cárdenas were viewed with dismay by a number of influential Masons. In 1938, a correspondent of the senior Scottish Rite Mason in Texas wrote from Mexico City that, "As you are undoubtedly aware, there have been clandestine or irregular bodies of spontaneous origin or create by dissenting elements." He pointed out that American Masons had not recognized them and that, "one of these irregular Grand Lodges was organized by General Cárdenas, now President of the Republic, when he was governor of one of our states. One of the most important principles proclaimed by this so-called Grand Lodge was that Masonry should be exclusively for this country. Since Cárdenas' incumbency as President, of Mexico, the lodges under the jurisdiction of his special Grand Lodges became important entities as bureaucratic and political factors, and to such an extent did the number of lodges increase throughout the country that our regular grand lodges were effected by the pressure."44
Freemasonry has continued to be an influence in Mexico, but Cardenista Masonry does not seem to have had a lasting social effect, -- for that matter it is debatable whether Cardenismo itself has had quite the immense influence sometimes attributed to it. The Masonic episode does point to the way in which Cárdenas attempted to co-opt NGOs that could have been disruptive. Judith Hellman remarks that "Cárdenas was in no position to give real power to the working class" and his involvement with the trappings of the Masonic throne of King Solomon and legerdemain of magic and ritualism substantiates the notion that there was more of smoke and mirrors to his career than sometimes has been acknowledged.

The effort to extend Masonry to the Mexican working class was a nonstarter. In the United States, in contrast, there have been a number of national secret ritualistic movements with Masonic antecedents which were specifically oriented to small town and rural areas. The Grange, for example, is a ritualistic secret society reminiscent of the Freemasons but with a particular rural and working class focus. It at one time was almost impossible to find even a hamlet of a few hundred people without its Grange hall.

There is a chance that had President Cárdenas favored a group less esoteric than Freemasonry for working class leadership development he might have had more success, although whether a ritualistic fraternity of any sort is a useful vehicle for social change is debatable. There were and are a large variety of Masonic groups in Mexico, but none of them have activities which could be described as attracting the campesino.

Masons place importance on the arrangements of their meeting rooms, relying on architecture to help impart the appropriate solemnity during the initiation ceremonies: "The furnishings used in the lodge room
buttressed the Masons’ construction of their fantastic realm. By appropriating the stylistic forms of the past, the Masons identified themselves with individuals and cultures that had come before them. By occupying massive ceremonial chairs, these men found a concrete role for themselves in a world that was in flux.”52 The most popular rite in Mexico, the Scottish, had and still has building and costume requirements which exceed what working class people could support.53 These Scottish degrees were more akin to theatrical productions and required the candidate to make a financial investment as he had to pay fees for each of thirty-two degrees (the thirty-third being honorary). Mexican Masonry grew as cities grew and wealth grew.54

On the other hand, Freemasonry is not totally absent from rural Mexico.55 It did and does exist in some small towns, usually working only the first three degrees.56 The study of Masonry's local varieties is useful in understanding the vicissitudes of civil society in Mexico, but the notion that Masonic lodges have been the principal support of Mexican civil society is spurious.57

Mexican Masonry was not and is not working class,58 and although the lodges in the 1930s espoused lofty goals they were a poor choice for bringing civic education to laborers and peasants. That continues to be the case: “A candidate for Masonry in Latin America differs somewhat from his North American counterpart. First, he usually comes from the elite class of his society. He is highly educated and socially elevated in contrast with the balance of the population. Secondly, he comes from a religiously oriented background which he generally, prior to petitioning, has strongly rebelled against...”59
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In 1938, when conservative forces settled on Manuel Avila Camacho, a Mason, as a successor to the presidency, the Gran Comité Nacional Masónico Pro-Avila Camacho had as its presidents Maximino Avila Camacho and Valenzuela Yocupicio. Thus his fellow Masons helped to dismantle Cárdenas' reforms. Today there are lodges and grand lodges still proclaiming themselves as Cardenista, but they are minor players in the complex world of Mexican Masonry.

Cárdenas himself continued to play a part in Masonry. He became Grand Master of the Independent Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico, which allegedly dated to 1878, and merged that grand lodge with the larger Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico in 1944. The resulting body to this day is one of the powerful Mexican Masonic organizations although it split again, in the 1960s, partly over Cardenista principles or the lack thereof. Today in Mexico City there are two headquarters within a few city blocks of each other claiming to be the Grand Valley, the larger being on Col. San Rafael and the other being on Edison Street. The "Edison Masons" claim to be the true heirs of Cárdenas and are contemptuous of the PRI connections of the San Rafael Masons.

These grand lodges and many lodges throughout Mexico display a picture or bust of Brother Cárdenas. His image amongst the Masons is as luminous and generous as that held of him by the Mexican labor movement: "Cárdenas is styled as something of a latter-day Jesus, a redeemer who traveled from village to village performing wonders." Those who study the history of Mexican voluntary movements may want to reflect on the travails of Cardenista Masonry. In both cases there was an appearance of great activity but one has to ask what the ultimate results were, and might
venture that his real epitaph is as a compromiser who sought to finally achieve order -- but in the Masonic case actually created disorder.  {66}

Organizations such as the Masons and the Knights of Columbus that have been significant in Mexico will be less so as more and more voluntary organizations are formed. In contrast with Professor Robert Putnam's pessimism, “A striking upsurge is under way around the globe in organized voluntary activity and the creation of private, nonprofit or non-governmental organizations.” {67} There is a decline in organizations like the Masons that are not relevant to the times and an increase in organizations that are relevant. {68} The assertion is made that this world of volunteerism constitutes a second or parallel world to that of the state, one of large numbers of networks of people. {69}

Many of the new voluntary associations in Mexico will be a mainstay of democracy. {70} But that is not guaranteed solely by virtual of their non-governmental status. The history of the activities of voluntary groups in Mexico does not unambiguously support arguments about an intermediate zone of voluntary societies between family and state that promote democracy. Study of volunteerism’s efficacy in the history of Mexico is obviously going to be on a group-by-group basis.

There is little doubt that the building of social trust through the fostering of some voluntary organizations can be contributory to democracy: "In a society that is looking for alternatives to a way of life dominated by corporations and state, social movements suggest other choices. A network of organizations that encompass broad constituencies can change our understanding of what is possible and
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desirable. Little by little we can build a new political culture based on
our own questions about the existing order."\(^71\)

Coincidentally put on the same flight from Mexico City to
Monterrey with the President’s Cárdenas son and political heir, Rich
asked Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas if he was a Mason like his father. "No,"
he replied, "Weren't they a group that had once had high principles
and became confused?" It seemed impolite to reply that possibly
Lázaro Cárdenas had something to do with the confusion.\(^72\)

1 "When Cárdenas took over in 1934, he found that the PNR reflected
Calles' personal power and lacked an internal structure capable of organizing
the country's political forces along essentially corporativist lines. After
creating the CNC peasant group and encouraging the emergence of the CTM
over other labor organizations, he therefore sponsored the formation of a
civil servants' union that could dominate a new white-color National
Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP). Finally, anxious to limit
the political ambitions of the revolutionary generals but unable to eliminate
their influence entirely, Cárdenas formed a military sector. Thus, organized
into four groups -- labor, peasant, popular, and military -- and guided by a
National Executive Committee and a President named by Cárdenas himself,

Krauze is generous in his description of Cárdenas, his ceaseless touring of
the countryside to bring hope to the campesinos, his own adoption of no less
than eighteen children, and his enormous compassion. But his presidency
built the modern corporate state, and reduced the other branches of
government to ciphers. \textit{ibid.}, 459. Even the heralded agrarian reforms further
increased the power of the state, which was the real owner. \textit{ibid.}, 463.
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4. Alan Knight, "Cardenismo; Juggernaut or Jalopy?", Working Papers of the Mexican Center, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, Paper No.90-09, 28.

5. "A rite in the extended, modern sense is a collection of degrees which are and, for a considerable time, have been customarily considered as a group or unit, either because of having a common government or being associated in a succession or schedule of working." Henry Wilson Coil, Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia, 2nd ed., Macoy Publishing, Richmond (Virginia), 1996, 526.


12. "Mexicanists are familiar with the notion that parties, políticos and presidents place great emphasis on establishing their historical, symbolic, and intellectual legitimacy. Historical precedents are religiously cited, presidents choose emblematic historical mentors; history itself becomes a significant political battleground." Alan Knight, "Salinas and Social Liberalism in Historical Context", Rob Aitken, et. al., eds., Dismantling the Mexican State?, Macmillan, London, 1996, 2-3.
Still, the Mexican population was predominantly rural at this time. John Rennee Short writes: “In 1940 two-thirds of the people in South America lived in the countryside. By 1990 two-thirds of a hugely expanded population lived in cities, especially the big cities...São Paulo in Brazil increased from 2.8 million in 1950 to 16 million in 1990, while Caracas, over the same period, increased from an insignificant 700,000 to 4 million...In Uruguay one out of every two people live in Montevideo, while in Argentina one out of every three people live in Buenos Aires. Colombia has a population of 31 million, but over 4 million live in the capital and largest city, Bogotá. The concentration is even more marked in Peru: of a population of 21 million, 6.5 million live in Lima.” Short, 42-43.

i.e. “...the simple fact that cityward migration has reduced the absolute size of the rural population to a point where many areas are no longer able to support such basic community facilities and services as hospitals, police and fire departments, shopping centers and specialty stores, public transportation systems, schools, doctors, and dentists.” Edward G. Stockwell, *Population and People*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1968, 270. Of course in parts of Latin America, these amenities never were available, so it has been a case of diminishing prospects for their possible existence rather than, as in North America, their deterioration.

In reading a first draft of part of this paper, Professor Robert Blaxton points out that “The Spanish customarily colonized by planting urban centers. I am not sure that any movement would have existed long without being urban in some way.” Bob Claxton to Paul Rich, email, 21 October 1997. Even accepting that, one still has to consider the nature of the urban movement, and of urban wealth, -- and of course the Scottish Rite especially in the twentieth century was very different in its social ethos from the York Rite.

A rite in Masonry generally includes a number of degrees, or plays, in which the initiate takes part. It certainly is not used as a term for a few cosmetic changes in the first three of "blue lodge" degrees, such as the use of the Mexican Constitution instead of a Bible for the swearing of the initiate.
It is true that there have been connections between Masonry and labor in some countries. Samuel Gompers (1850-1924) tried to incorporate Masonic ritualism into the Knights of Labor, the precursor of the American Federation of Labor, and saw Masonry as a natural ally of the labor movement. A prominent lodge in Washington D.C. is named after him and has always attracted labor leaders. Gompers himself thought Masonry was particularly a potential ally for labor in Latin America. William R. Denslow, *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, Vol.II, Macoy Publishing, Richmond, (Virginia), 1958, 124-125.


A distinction has to be made when discussing stone masonry and the supposed origins of Freemasonry in medieval guilds of masons, a problem not confusing in this discussion but which frequently does arise.

“The army, with some few exceptions, was infiltrated by Freemasonry, brought to Spain by the French near the century’s end. All the Spanish Masons were enemies of absolutism and looked forward to the advent of constitutional government. The Mexican officers, even those who had fought the insurgents, were nearly all for independence; many were also Freemasons.” Sierra, 166-167.

The 1857 constitution deliberately failed to give the Catholic Church the status of being the only religion allowed by law. When the church denounced it, clerics found considerable significance in the fact that Juárez and Lerdo were Freemasons.

See the various papers in the World Wide Web pages of Rich and De Los Reyes at http://gente.pue.udlap.mx/~rich/prueba.html

Jean-Pierre Bastian in *Los Disidentes: Sociedades Protestantes y Revolución en México, 1872-1911* remarks about the late Victorian period, “Las logias masónicas, por su parte, aunque en sus inicios contaron con la participación de muchos sacerdotes, paulatinamente se volvieron anticatólicas, tanto por las tensas relaciones entre la iglesia y el Estado liberal, a partir de 1859, como por los constantes ataques de los Papas a la masonería a lo largo del
Civil Society and Freemasonry, 22

siglo xix, y, por ello mismo, constituyeron otros tantos espacios privilegiados, en particular en el medio rural, para propagar la fe civica liberal, muchas veces con la participación de los propios pastores y maestros protestantes como oradores titulados."

27. Alba, 182.
29. E.g. see David C. Bailey, *¡Viva Cristo Rey!: The Cristero Rebellion and the Church State Conflict in Mexico*, University of Texas Press, Austin and London, 1974, *passim*.
33. qtd. *ibid*, 95-96.
35. The *Gran Logia Simbólica Independiente Mexicana* was constituted by 13 lodges. *ibid*, 101.
36. See Zalce, 102-115.
38. His initiation and lodge are disputed. One source claims that he was a member of the “Logia Unida Mexicana”. See citation of Martaelena Negrete Salas, *El Nacional*, IV-14-1937, 426 in *Ibid*, 298.
Civil Society and Freemasonry, 23

41 Ibid., 148.

42 Ibid., 151.


44 G.P. Garcia to Walter C. Temple (Sovereign Grand Inspector General in Texas), Mexico City, 10 October 1938. Supreme Council File for Supreme Council, 33rd Degree, Mexico, Correspondence, 1936, Scottish Rite Supreme Council, Washington D.C.


46 "Many believed that Cárdenas after 1937 did what was necessary to save the revolution by making concessions to more conservative domestic and foreign interests. Others believed that his action 'was not saving the life of the Revolution, it was merely preserving its corpse.' This judgement is to harsh. The dominant groups might still exploit the masses but not with impunity." William H. Beezley and Colin M. MacLachan, El Gran Pueblo: A History of Greater Mexico, Vol.II, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs (New Jersey), 1994, 312.


48 Gunther, 95, 98, 127, 266, 336, 496.


50 This is unsurprising considering the felt need for the creation of community as cities swelled. New Yorkers in the nineteenth century were offered the chance to join the “various, eclectic, and sometimes a tad bizarre”, including the Universal Independent Order of Odd Fellows and Independent Order of Faithful Fellows. Mary P. Ryan, Civic Wars:
However, note the following:

“De todos los ritos, son considerados como los principales el Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado y el Rito Inglés de York o Rito de Real Arco. Sin embargo, en algunos países han existido ritos nacionales que han demostrado gran actividad, como el Rito Moderno Francés, del que surgió la Revolución Francesa; el Rito del Celeste Imperio, que se practica en Turquía, el Rito Sueco, el Tien-Foe-Whe, de la China; el Benemérito Rito Nacional Mexicano, de gloriosa memoria en nuestro país, y muchos más. En México, la gran mayoría de los masones están afiliados al Rito Escocés Antiguo y Aceptado, aunque también existen logias yorkinas, principalmente para personas de habla inglesa, así como otros cuerpos que pertenecen al Rito Nacional Mexicano, al Rito Primitivo de la Masonería universal, al del Derecho Humano (“Droit humain”), al de Adopción y a otros más.


See email: Date: Mon, 7 Nov 1994 07:43:23 -0700
A. P. Nilsen
602/965-9577
English Department
ASU, Tempe, AZ 85287-0302

“Date: Tue, 30 Sep 1997 15:18:19 -0400
From: Christopher Nicholls <ChrisOCC@aol.com>
To: UKMASON-LIST@LISTSERV.NETFORCE.NET
Subject: City Masons Social meeting

Brethren,
I am resending this message in case anyone missed it first time. I have had several replies so an interesting evening will take place sometime in October. I work in the stockbroking industry (industry ??) and I am based in the City of London. Are there any other out there that also work in the City? If there are maybe we could organise an informal evening get together to put faces to names.

What do you think
Chris Nicholls

Undoubtedly the lodges offered a way for new urban dwellers to form relationships, just as they do now.

55. See on "not measuring molecules in parscs", Knight, "Weapons and Arches", 27.


57. Holzer and Robertson write. “In many societies relatively clear-cut boundaries are drawn in social-group terms, with matters concerning synchronic and diachronic solidarity being closely bound-up with ritual — with praxial structures of consciousness.” *op cit.* 17.


62. Coil, 419.


64. The author has found them adorning lodge foyers in the states of Mexico, Veracruz, Campeche, Zacatecas, Nuevo León...


68. Boli and Thomas, 174.

69. Proliferation of electronic networks via the Internet, including those operated by individual members of such secretive organizations as the Masonic and Opus Dei societies, gives added value to the concept of networking.


72. Conversation held in May 1998