

ANTONIO SAN AGUSTIN SALAZAR
(d. 1897)

Bagumbayan Martyr

Antonio Salazar y San Agustin was one of the 13 Masons and revolutionaries who were executed by the Spanish authorities in Bagumbayan on January 11, 1897.

Not to be confused with Antonio San Agustin y Lacsamana, a Caviteño martyred on 12 September 1896 in Cavite, Antonio Salazar y San Agustin was also a native of Cavite, and a member of La Propaganda. As such, he was always seen in the company of other Filipinos who figured prominently in the reform movement prior to the outbreak of the 1896 Revolution such as Domingo Franco, a neighbor on Nagtahan Street in Pandacan; Moises Salvador, Luis Enciso Villareal, Francisco Roxas, and Salvador Villaruel. According to historian Teodoro M. Kalaw, who called him an industrialist, he joined Masonry in June 1892, affiliating first with the Nilad lodge and later with the Taliba lodge. He rose to Worshipful Master of the Lodge Modestia, No. 199, established in Manila in December 1893 with former members of the lodge Taliba. The aims of the Modestia were to continue performing “masonic work” including charitable acts and reciprocal assistance among members, as well the conduct of intellectual discussions and dissemination of liberalist ideas. As Worshipful Master (W.M.) Salazar headed the lodge, whose other officers were Jose Reyes (Secretary), Domingo Guason (Senior Warden), Valentin Polintan (Junior Warden), Epifanio Cincia (Chaplain), Modesto Español (Tyler), and Anacleto Reyes (Guard of the Temple).

His wife, together with Rosario Villaruel, the first woman mason, was likewise a member of the “Masonic Rite of Adoption”.

Even as he was busy organizing for the Masonic movement, Salazar meanwhile had joined La Liga Filipina, the reformist organization founded by Rizal following his return to the country in mid-1892. In February 1893, Salazar, blindfolded, underwent initiation rites presided over by fellow Mason Estanislao Legaspi at the residence of Tranquilino Torres, which was then serving as the Liga’s Binondo council base, on Calle Elcano.

Pio Valenzuela in his declaration before the Spanish court on September 3, 1896, stated that Antonio Salazar was the owner of the Bazar El Cisne, and was an “active member” of the Consejo Supremo Superior of the Katipunan.

The premature discovery of the Katipunan, the secret revolutionary society with which disgruntled Filipino reformists had affiliated themselves, would eventually seal the fate of Salazar and many of his fellow Masons. The Catholic clergy, seized the opportunity to reduce their ranks by linking them with the Katipunan. Homes of suspected members were searched, arrests were made, and many were imprisoned and tortured in the frantic efforts of authorities to extract confessions. Because Salazar’s home was reported to have served as a Masonic lodge, he was among those arrested. Held incommunicado in the *Comandancia* of the Guardia Civil Veterana, he was called to testify in a military court for several days in September 1896—on the 17th, 18th, 19th, and the 22nd.

Rizal and Domingo Franco were among those he implicated in his testimony, divulging Franco’s connection with *La Propaganda*, a clandestine organization that helped fund the Propaganda Movement abroad. He also told the Spaniards about the disbandment of the *Liga Filipina* with the exile of its founder, Jose Rizal, to Dapitan, and about the failure of the plan to revive it, except when it served the purpose of other leaders in winning adherents to the new organization that was the Katipunan. In his confession dated September 19, 1896 soon after his arrest, Salazar stated he knew Bonifacio because he was present during Bonifacio’s initiation into the Masonic lodge “Taliba”. In turn, Franco cited him in his declaration dated 30 September 1896 as being the president of the local council of the Liga Filipina in Santa Cruz, which was under the

jurisdiction of the Compromisarios. On the other hand, Jose Dizon, another captured Katipunero and Mason, testified on 22 September 1896 that Salazar was a member of the popular council of the Liga Filipina based in Binondo, allegedly headed by Estanislao Legaspi.

Domingo Franco, Numeriano Adriano, Jeronimo Cristobal y Medina, Jose Dizon, Eustacio Mañalac, Benedicto Nijaga, Ramon Padilla, Braulio Rivera, Francisco Roxas, Moises Salvador, Luis Enciso Villareal, Faustino Villaruel, and Antonio San Agustin Salazar – these 13 men were executed by a firing squad on January 11, 1897 and, now, are remembered as the “Bagumbayan martyrs.” The historian T.M. Kalaw cited him as among the masons “shot during that period of terror”.

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