Rascal from above, scum from below

The dissolution of the Templars was directly responsible for the dramatic increase in acts of piracy which affected Europe, America and even the Indian Ocean during the Renaissance.

Pirates have been portrayed as bands of adventurous, trigger-happy daredevils since the days of writer Daniel Defoe. The reality is less picturesque – and more interesting. While, as Defoe writes in his delusional General History of the Most Famous Pirates , most pirates did indeed have "short but happy lives", others lived much longer than the crewmen of the British Navy. They ate better, were treated less harshly, and were entitled to a larger share of the spoils.

The pirates were bound by covenants which guaranteed them better protection than that offered by maritime law and which they confirmed by a vote each time they sailed. The pirate ship and pirate ports, such as that of Sainte Marie in Madagascar, were the laboratories of democracy. The democratic practice ("one man, one vote") was current on pirate vessels before being more or less taken over by the American Revolution.

The pirates bought provisions and weapons, sold ill-gotten goods (wool, jewels, etc.) and with the proceeds of their sales they bought estates or, at the very least, farms, where they were tidying up. To take their place in society, they needed connections. To make connections, they had to belong to a brotherhood. At that time, the heirs of the Templars founded lodges and old links were renewed. Freemasonry, which had remained more or less underground until the early eighteenth century, provided housing, work, food and even clothing for its members. Freemasonry also allowed them to establish a network of contacts, which was clandestine and often above the law.

Those who sailed under the flag of the Crossbones Skull could find protection in ports and in courts, where a certain handshake or code phrase compelled their fellow Freemasons to come to their aid.

The large fortunes made by pirates and by those who chartered their ships and bought their spoils survived the "golden age of piracy". Dynasties based on clandestine activities and membership in secret societies gave rise to a power that continues to exist in modern times.

The pirates themselves were organized into brotherhoods (1), they swore to work for the good of the group, they promised to share the spoils fairly and they fought under the same flag as the Templar battle fleet. The pirates' bases – the ports in Scotland, Ireland and America where they could dock and openly sell their booty – were protected by Masonic cells which, as we saw earlier, had their entrances in courts and parliaments.

Smuggling also became a real business all over the world, despite its illegality. From Salem and Newport to the Caribbean and Bermuda, ports that harbored and facilitated the trade of pirates had no qualms about conniving with smugglers. Just as Masonic organizations formed corporations of craftsmen to protect the livelihood of their members, so it was necessary to ensure the loyalty of individuals who engaged in contraband. In Bermuda, where two-thirds of trade was illegal in the eighteenth century, trading partners were required to maintain secrecy about their activities. The island was and still is a stronghold of Freemasonry. The customs office here looks more like a Masonic temple than a government building.

The slave trade was also encouraged by the Templars. In fact, the Knights of Christ helped organize the importation of slave shipments into Europe and later helped legalize this trade in the Americas. (2) The orders of chivalry which controlled the governments of Portugal and Spain sold licenses to other governments, which in turn created companies to extend this trade. The royal families of Europe were the first beneficiaries; in exchange for a share of the profits, they granted licenses to merchants and businessmen attached to the court. These then sold them to the highest bidders, who did not all belong to the merchant class and who, thanks to these licenses, could thus enter them. In America,

When the American Revolution broke out, Benjamin Franklin turned to France's pseudo-elite Freemasons, who controlled the slave trade, for arms, supplies, and soldiers. In the first eighty years of American history, all the slave ports from Charleston to Newport were under the control of a handful of families united by Masonic ties.

These merchants were not prepared to give up this lucrative trade and would stop at nothing to fight abolition. Members of the pseudo-elite believed that the presidency could be bought and, when money could not decide an election, they employed other means to achieve their ends. After the sudden and suspicious deaths of Presidents Harrison and Taylor, anti-abolitionists were parachuted into the vice presidency. When death itself failed to stop the abolitionists, the country descended into the most destructive war it had ever known. For the pseudo-elite, the Civil War did not end at Appomattox, where the armies of Jefferson Davis surrendered. Members of the quasi-Masonic association of Knights of the Golden Circle plotted a conspiracy against President Lincoln to invalidate the Emancipation Proclamation and remove its effects on US trade with England. In the post-war period, reconstruction was marred by the activities of another Masonic group of Knights, the Klu Klux Klan.

Although smuggling and piracy had not been so profitable in America since independence, institutions such as the slave trade and drug trafficking flourished there. The fortunes that the slave trade enabled the pseudo-elite to amass would form the foundation of American industry. The drug trade that the Americans and the British united to organize in the early part of the nineteenth century would become a scourge whose effects continue to be felt today. There too, a small group of families controlled this trade and, in the United States as in England, they were organized into Masonic cells.

While it is not surprising that the Founding Fathers were mostly slaveholders, since slavery was legal at that time, it is even more so that they were often also smugglers. Profits from drug trafficking, smuggling, slave trade and even piracy are directly responsible for the founding of the most important banks in the country, which are still in operation today. New England's insurance companies were born and flourished on the profits of insuring ships laden with opium and slaves. The great railway network that was built in the United States in the nineteenth century was financed by the drug trade.

The family of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt had grown rich through drug trafficking. Blood ties were essential in the opium trade. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's father made a fortune smuggling opium, lost everything, and went back to smuggling it to get his money back. Ulysses S. Grant married a woman from a family of opium traffickers who had connections in America and Europe. The capital necessary for the creation of Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Princeton, which the first great families of New York and New England provided in the form of donations, came from the drug trade. These are the same families who would build the railway network and the textile factories, would found the banks and the insurance companies,

Other presidents had indirect links with piracy. John Tyler entered by marriage into a family which owed its social status to a fortune acquired by buccaneering. Millar Feelmore's grandfather (3) was tried for acts of piracy. Like the opium trade, piracy was a business that depended on an extensive system of obligation and trust. From Cape Cod to Long Island, New York City to North Carolina and New Orleans, pirates trusted each other and knew leaders who could provide them with shelter, legal protection and an outlet for their spoils. . Upon disembarking, the pirate captains reported to the powerful few who protected their trade. Their links were woven and consolidated in the Masonic lodges.

Pirate ships were floating lodges in which rituals, secrecy, and blood oaths cemented the union of pirates. But ordinary pirates were not welcome at the meetings of Holland's Lodge No. 8 in New York, from where the Livingston family happily funded pirates like Captain Kidd and from where, a century later, they would protect more pirates like Lafitte.

Piracy was not the only illegal activity on the high seas; the American colonies also prospered thanks to smuggling. One of the most famous smugglers of this era, the wealthy merchant John Hancock, was both a Freemason and a pirate; it was the seizure of one of his ships, Liberty, by Boston Customs that was to be the origin of the Tea Party and the revolution. One foot in the pseudo-elite Masonic lodges where shipowners and captains were welcome, the other in the lodges where laborers were accepted, Hancock gave work to one-third of the people of Boston.

It was England's desire to enforce its anti-smuggling laws that propelled the United States into revolution, as the colonies relied on smugglers to supply them with arms, food and supplies in their struggle. against England.

The role of America's smuggling partners in the Caribbean and Bermuda has rarely been examined by historians, but it was pivotal, as smuggling and piracy served many American political dynasties that are still in power today. .

The revolution put an end to the large profits of smuggling. Piracy also ceased to be a source of easy profits. The slave trade became the new way to get rich, thriving in ports that were strongholds of Freemasonry. From Newport to Charleston, membership in a lodge provided access to finance and insurance and the chartering of slave ships. It was also synonymous with market access.

But membership in Freemasonry did not simply offer opportunities in the milieu. Benjamin Franklin recognized that success in the printing press depended on which lodge in Philadelphia one belonged to. John Jacob Astor, who at one time owned one-fifteenth of America's personal fortunes, joined the prestigious No. 8 Holland Lodge to advance his business. Only the sons of the wealthy, who could be educated at Temple , (4) were certain to succeed in the legal professions, a prerequisite for holding government office. pass the baris an expression that was created in this Templar stronghold of London and it is a rite of passage that must still be completed today to become a lawyer. Advancement in the army was denied to many who were not part of a military lodge such as that founded by George Washington and into which Lafayette and the American privateer John Paul Jones were initiated.

The secret pseudo-elites who built America's business empires and family fortunes hid their history well. At a time when the slightest indiscretion can destroy the reputation of a candidate for public office, the origins and murky family histories of the Founding Fathers are noteworthy. We have inherited great schools and universities named after slavers and opium traffickers. We honor presidents and politicians whose fortunes rest on banditry. We finance companies created by individuals whose wealth comes from illegal activities.

The skeletons that most families that are considered America's finest have in their closets would make members of today's criminal organizations look like angels. They weren't horse thieves or snake oil sellers, or even crooks being chased out of town on the first train. The Founding Fathers amassed considerable fortunes. Their offspring still enjoy today the wealth they bequeathed to them – as well as the power that flows from it and which is protected by the institutions they established and which allow them to keep control of key positions. The system, through ill-gotten gains and illegitimate power, is self-perpetuating.

In a country where everyone could start from scratch on an equal footing, it is interesting to note that the gap between the rich and the poor widened considerably after the revolution. This was not due to chance but to the maneuvers of the secret societies which had been imported from Europe, where they had been established for centuries.

To understand the current ubiquity of pseudo-elite secret societies and the defining role they have played over the past few centuries, one must go back to the day in 1307 when the largest organization the world had ever known been destroyed. (5)