

**MONAGAS AND PAEZ:  
BEING A BRIEF  
VIEW OF THE LATE  
EVENTS IN VENEZUELA**

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Monagas and Paez: being a brief view of the late events in Venezuela by José Tadeo Monagas

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**JOSÉ TADEO MONAGAS**

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# MONAGAS AND PAEZ:

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A BRIEF VIEW OF THE LATE EVENTS

IN

## VENEZUELA.

*By S. W. Benedict, Esq., of New York.*

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1850.

## MONAGAS AND PAEZ.

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For the last three years the press of the United States has been teeming with articles, emanating from a party in Venezuela which had been long accustomed to monopolize to itself all the first offices of a country, that it had ruled over solely with a view to its own selfish interests: this party, we say, on finding the reins of government falling from its grasp, made the most strenuous efforts to recover its lost power, and both in Venezuela and in the United States have used every means to vilify those who had overthrown them. The facts are simply these. From the period that Venezuela separated from Colombia, Paez has been the virtual President of the country. He was twice elected to that high office, and the other persons nominally raised to that dignity were entirely subject to his influence, or, as in the case of Dr. Vargas, were obliged to withdraw from it. It was, therefore, Paez who, for seventeen years, actually governed the country. At the election of 1847 he gave his support to the nomination of General Monagas, in the expectation that he would prove as submissive to his domination as other Presidents had been, but he was fearfully mistaken. General Monagas was well disposed towards the party who had elevated him to power, but their pretensions were so exaggerated, the policy they required him to adopt was so unconstitutional, the measures they insisted upon were so sanguinary, that he resolved to free himself from the shackles they attempted to impose upon him and govern for himself. Paez, on finding that Monagas was not the puppet he had expected—

and that he could no longer pull the wires as he had so long done, was determined to rid himself of so unexpected an obstacle to his views, and raised the standard of rebellion. The result of this has been seen. Paez has been sentenced by the Congress of his country to perpetual exile. The people of New York, misled by the pretended facts and arguments they had so constantly read in a few journals of this city, looked upon him as a martyr to his patriotism, and received him with open arms. The Paez party had styled themselves Constitutionalists, when every act of theirs was an attack upon the constitution they had sworn to defend; but the people of the United States having heard only one side of the question believed these unfounded assertions. Within the last few months a portion of the press of the United States, having obtained more positive information with regard to these matters, has placed it fairly before the public, and has produced some change in public opinion. It is for the purpose of entirely dispelling the mist of error which has so sedulously been raised, that we present a review of the occurrences which compelled Venezuela to banish from her soil one of her leading men. The act was necessary for her own tranquillity and the security of her institutions, which were threatened with destruction by the inordinate ambition and self-will of one who ought to have been the foremost to sustain her freedom and defend the Law. The greater part of the following pages have been extracted from the work of a Venezuelan, who was, for many years, the friend and adherent of General Paez, one who has long been intimately connected with the administration of the Republic, having held some of the highest offices in the State, and who was consequently in a position to obtain more accurate information on the events in question than almost any other person. The work is entitled "*Apuntes para la Historia,*" or "*Notes for History, on the Conspiracy of Paez against the Institutions of his Country.*"

We also present sketches, drawn by the same hand, of the character of Monagas and Paez, that all their antecedents may be fully understood in this country, and because they answer satisfactorily many of the charges brought by the latter against the former, in his letter to the Tribune of the 23d October. We might have much enlarged upon the subject with regard to Paez, by bringing forward matters which were even contained in the sketch we mention, but as they were not purely political we have refrained from doing so. What we now give will enable every unprejudiced person to judge correctly of the public life of these two men.



## NOTES FOR HISTORY.

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At the opening of the electioneering campaign of 1846, Gen. Paez publicly declared that he had no candidate, that he had no one to propose, and that he would obey any one the nation might select according to the constitution. He remained firm in this idea until the month of June, when, on his return from Apure, perceiving that Guzman's chance of being elected had greatly gained ground, and having a decided terror of such an event, he thought that he ought to favor one of his opponents, and the one who was the most likely to succeed. Being in Calabozo, he there first manifested his inclination for the election of General José Tadeo Monagas, then remembering that this General had said to him in 1839, that thenceforward their two swords should be but one, or something to that effect.

Public opinion manifested itself still more openly towards September, when it appeared divided between Monagas, Guzman and Salom. Guzman being set aside by the revolution of September, Blanco became the third candidate; the latter and Salom were both utterly offensive to Paez, for they were perhaps the only two chiefs in Venezuela who would not in any way recognize his influence and preponderance. To this being added the appointment of General Monagas by General Soublette as second in command of the constitutional army, and indubitably by agreement with Paez, gave additional importance to the Monagas party, and the conduct of the latter in the September crisis turned the scale of public opinion completely in his favor.

It would be most curious to expose all that then took place ; we cannot flatter ourselves that we know all the secret springs which were set in motion at that period ; we shall, however, set forth that which we are positive is correct.

General Paez was convinced that the Presidency of General Monagas was the most suitable to his views, and this from many special personal considerations which were important to him, and that he possessed sufficient popularity to insure success ; he was also convinced that the result of the election of senators and representatives was such, that either he himself, or some of his friends, could influence at least the half and one more of the members of Congress to return the candidate he favored. Angel Quintero, whom he had retained near him after the events at Yuma, saw with alarm that Monagas was a candidate for the presidency, and offered, in a thousand ways, to make up matters between Salom and Paez. His offer, which many thought judicious caused, the question to be settled in another manner.

It was necessary, above all, to ascertain what was the feeling of Monagas with regard to the fate of Guzman,\* and how he would conduct himself towards Paez, and with this view commissioners were sent to him to promote an interview. Their meeting in the plains was twice prevented by the sudden illness of General Monagas, and at last it remained as an understood thing, that Paez was to go to La Guaira to receive him on his landing there. General Monagas, who could not comprehend that a man was to be killed merely because a party desired it, pointing him out as a necessary victim ; a party at the head of which was Paez, and who, seeing things only from a distance, judged of them from what he had read in the public papers, considered Guzman as the most guilty man in all Venezuela, and

\* During the progress of the election, an insurrectionary movement took place. Guzman was accused of being the chief instigator and leader of it, and was condemned to death by the oligarchical party, then in power.

so considering him, his language would necessarily be the expression of his opinion. He had seen General Paez supporting the government, he knew that he was aiding his election, had received flattering letters from him; he could not, therefore, express himself in any other terms than such as would be pleasing to Paez, and the commissioners would necessarily repeat to him what Monagas said. All this was very natural, and notwithstanding the suspiciousness of Quintero and of many of the Oligarchists of Caracas, who had been alarmed at the non-realization of the proposed interviews, yet as they were obliged to vote for somebody, and the moment had arrived for doing so, they determined to stand the hazard of the die and to vote for Monagas. It was not in the hands of the President whom they elected that they thought they were placing the reins of government, but in those of Paez, whom they thought capable of fascinating Monagas, and of making him bend to all his caprices. Monagas was not the President for whom they voted; it was Paez; and all that they have written attributing to the President a breach of faith and want of consistency, because he did not follow out the views of the party who had elected him, is without any species of foundation, for Monagas well knew that they had not elected him of their own free will, but that being compelled to choose between men who were not of their own exclusive faction, they inclined towards the one who appeared to them as the most likely to be managed by Paez; so that this very election of Monagas was an insult offered to him, and a further proof that they thought not of the welfare of their country, but merely how they could most securely continue their abominable domination. But let them say what they will, let them allege what they may please, this is the naked truth, divested of all the ornaments with which they have sought to conceal it, and General Monagas is not, as they have imagined him, so dull of comprehension as not to have seen through them. To prove