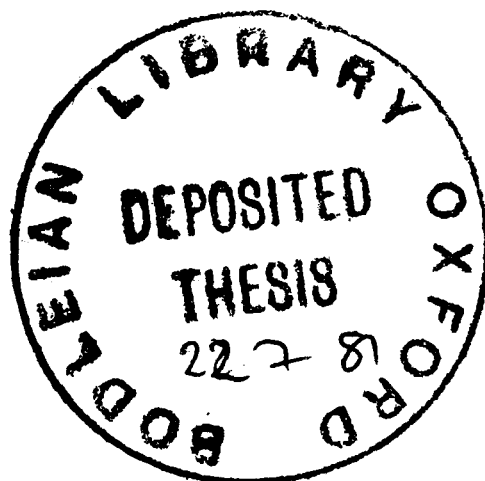


THE FIRST MONAGAS ADMINISTRATION
IN VENEZUELA, 1847-1851

A thesis
submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Oxford

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PREFATORY NOTE

The Archivo Documental Rafael Ramón Castellanes (ADRRRC), recently acquired by the Fundación para el Rescate del Acervo Histórico Documental de la Nación, Caracas (FUNRES), is uncatalogued. This collection of papers relating mainly to the private correspondence of Antonio Leocadio Guzmán and Antonio Guzmán Blanco is held in plastic envelopes comprising fifty volumes, usually of 299 folios each. These folios are not numbered. For the retrieval of any document to which I refer I have treated the plastic folios as pages in a book, and have counted from the front of each volume. In this way, the front of the folio is folio 1, the back is folio 2. Each volume usually reaches folio 598. The collection is currently held at FUNRES's office in Los Chorros, Caracas.

Throughout the text the monetary figures to which I refer are in pesos fuertes, equivalent to the U.S. dollar and using the same sign (\$), unless otherwise specified.

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I dedicate this thesis to my parents with affection and gratitude
for their constant support, both moral and financial.

ABSTRACTThe First Monagas Administration in Venezuela, 1847-1851

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This thesis attempts an impartial enquiry into the events surrounding the power struggle between José Tadeo Monagas and José Antonio Páez, 1847-1851. The political, economic, and social aspects of Venezuela at that time are considered. The contribution of Monagas to the country's historical process is then examined: how the country changed during this time, and how Monagas changed it.

Chapter I considers Monagas's background and his ascendancy at a local level before and during the War of Independence. Chapter II examines the post-independence period until his election as president, 1829-1847, with particular emphasis on the growth of his prestige at a national level.

Monagas's first year in power is covered in chapter III, including discussion of the issues he had to face, and the tensions created with the conservative ruling group. Chapter IV examines the event of 24 January 1848 in depth for a clearer picture of the break between the Conservatives and the Congress they controlled and Monagas and his Liberal supporters.

Civil war breaks out in chapter V. Liberal policy and the efforts made by both sides to maintain the struggle are covered in chapter VI. Páez's defeat and exile and Monagas's policies are considered in chapter VII. Chapter VIII shows the consolidation of Monagas's power and his success in having his brother elected to succeed him.

Chapter IX argues that Monagas was a clever political and military leader who was able to challenge Páez successfully and to perpetuate his own rule. He presided with some skill over a necessary evolution in Venezuelan politics.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AANH	Archivo de la Academia Nacional de la Historia. Caracas.
ADRRRC	Archivo Documental Rafael Ramón Castellanos. FUNRES. Caracas.
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación. Caracas.
A.M.A.E.	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Paris.
AMAE	Archivo del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores. España.
AMREV	Archivo General del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Venezuela.
ANH	Academia Nacional de la Historia. Caracas.
<u>BAGN</u>	<u>Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación.</u> Caracas
<u>BANH</u>	<u>Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia.</u> Caracas.
C.P.-V.	Correspondance Politique - Vénézuéla. A.M.A.E.
Desps. U.S. Cons.	Despatches from U.S. Consuls in (various Venezuelan ports). USNA.
Desps. U.S. Mins.	Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Venezuela, 1846-1851. USNA.
D.I.D.S.	Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, Venezuela, 1835-1865. USNA.
F.O.	Foreign Office Papers. P.R.O. London.
FUNRES	Fundación para el Rescate del Acervo Histórico Documental de la Nación. Caracas.
<u>HAHR</u>	<u>The Hispanic American Historical Review.</u>
HSAAR	Hojas Sueltas del Archivo Arístides Rojas, and Hojas Sueltas de Monagas en el Archivo Arístides Rojas. AANH. Code - Archivo 5, Gaveta 1, Carpeta 2, no. 3 = Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 2,m.3
I y J	Secretaría de lo Interior y Justicia. AGN.
P.R.O. ;	Public Record Office. London.
RDAGN	República Dominicana. Archivo General de la Nación. Santo Domingo.
S.P.-V.	Sección de Política. Venezuela. AMAEE.
USNA	United States National Archives. Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER I

MONAGAS'S BACKGROUND AND LOCAL ASCENDANCY

José Tadeo Monagas Burgos was born on 28 October 1784 at the edge of the Amana river south of Maturín. His father, Francisco José Monagas Hernández, had been born in Petare in 1750, and he married María Perfecta Burgos de Villasana of San Carlos (Cojedes) in Aragua de Barcelona in 1789. The origins of the Monagas family are not clear. Family tradition states that the first Monagas was an Irishman called Monach who fought against England and settled in the Canary Islands.¹ One source claims that José Tadeo's paternal great grand-parents had been born on the island of Gran Canaria, while another states that he was the fourth generation to be born and bred in the llanos. Another source explains that his grandfather had arrived from the Canary Islands and had settled down in Petare while his brother settled in San Carlos, whereas, according to another, that same grandfather had been born in San Carlos and had married in Petare.² It is commonly believed that the Monagases were related to one of the richest land-owning families of colonial Venezuela,

¹ Conversation with Carlos Martín Monagas Iztúriz (great-grandson of José Gregorio and great-great-grandson of José Tadeo), Caracas, 23 June 1978.

² Respectively: David W. Fernández, 'La Familia Monagas', Boletín Histórico (Caracas), 43 (Jan.1977), 75. General Pablo Giuseppi Monagas to Romualdo Mota, Barcelona, 24 July 1908, in Inauguración en la Ciudad de Maturín del Busto en Bronce del Ilustre Prócer de la Independencia, Gral. José Tadeo Monagas. 9 de Diciembre de 1908 (Maracaibo, April 1909), p.21. Ramón Azpurúa, Biografías de Hombres Notables de Hispano-América (Caracas, 1877), iii.49-50; see also Rafael E. Castillo, 'The Monagas Family and Their Role' (University of Oxford M.Phil. thesis 1976), pp.7-14,44. P. Giuseppi Monagas to R. Mota, ibid., p.13. Family tradition claims that two Monagas brothers were brought to Caracas from the Canaries by a maternal uncle who was a bishop. Conversation with C.M. Monagas, ibid.

the Fernández de Mirandas, and that José Tadeo's father had moved East to administer the ranching possessions there 'as partner and relative'. José Tadeo's grandmother, María Ignacia Hernández Fernández, may have been the niece or granddaughter of Manuel Fernández de Miranda.¹ However, that relationship has yet to be established.

The eastern llanos were just beginning to be developed at the time of Monagas's birth. The first news of the founding of Maturín came in 1780.² There was plenty of land for the taking, and although not of very good quality, cattle bred very well there. The trade of the provinces of the East and Guayana was controlled by the Royal Commerce Company of Barcelona (Spain). This Catalan monopoly began operations in 1752 in the East and in the Caribbean Islands,³ but does not seem to have had a strong hold on the East because of that area's long-standing smuggling tradition.

The East was isolated from the rest of Venezuela not only by the Barcelona Company's trade monopoly, but by the colonial administrative system as well. While the central and western parts of present-day Venezuela were administered from Santo Domingo, the East was controlled by the authority at Bogotá. The East was only incorporated to the Centre and the West with the creation of the Captaincy General of Venezuela in 1777. In 1786, the Real Audiencia de Caracas controlled judicially Maracaibo, Cumaná, Margarita, Trinidad and Guayana.⁴ Until then the

¹ P. Giuseppi Monagas to R. Mota, ibid., pp.13-15. Castillo, ibid. D.W. Fernández, ibid.

² For a greater discussion of the East, see Castillo, ibid., pp.16-41, p.30 for news of Maturín.

³ Eleazar Córdova-Bello, Aspectos Históricos de la Ganadería en el Oriente Venezolano y Guayana (Caracas, 1962), p.7.

⁴ Ibid.

East had been on its own, isolated and independent, and this new alliance with more developed regions caused friction. By the time that independence was declared twenty-five years later the East had not been greatly integrated into the rest of Venezuela.

José Tadeo Monagas grew up in this isolated and underdeveloped region whose principal products were dried beef, hides and cattle. Humboldt stated that Barcelona exported 98,017 arrobas of tasajo (dried, salted beef) to Cuba in 1792, and that Venezuela exported a total of 200,000 arrobas in 1809. Most of the jerked beef was sent to Cuba to feed its slaves, some also going to Puerto Rico. Cattle and hides were exported to these islands too. At approximately 14 reales an arroba Venezuela's export of tasajo was worth roughly \$350,000 pesos, and Barcelona's share totalled about \$170,000 pesos.¹ These figures may seem small, but were important in an area that was only rich in cattle. Smuggling also played an important role in the East's economy though its extent is not known. Trinidad was the centre of eastern contraband.²

Oriente was sparsely populated. In 1804 Depons calculated that the whole of the East held only about 128,000 people. The area of the East that concerns this study, the llanos, might have held 60,000 or 70,000 at most. The cattle centre for exports, Barcelona, boasted 14,000

¹ Alexander von Humboldt, Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America, During the Years 1799-1804 (London, 1889), iii.138. Venezuela was producing 100,000 hides yearly in 1814; Luis González Vale, Datos para una Historia de la Ganadería Venezolana (Caracas, 1969), p.14. Castillo, 'Monagas Family', pp.24-5.

² Castillo, ibid., pp.25-6.

inhabitants in 1802, while Maturín had only 6,000 or 7,000 in 1803.¹ Clearly, there was plenty of land for the taking, and few people to take it, even before the loss of life caused by the war of independence. Life was harsh in the llanos. The plains are dry and consumed by fire in the summer. The heavy rains of winter bring a great number of insects and flood the land so as to make travel particularly difficult. Yellow fever, smallpox, cholera, typhus, and malaria did not help to lengthen life expectancy. Only the greatly devoted missionaries would choose to work in these lands. Even the church was weakly represented in these llanos because of their harshness.² This was the land in which Monagas had been bred.

José Tadeo is thought to have received a very elementary education. '... he learned to read and write, the rudiments of the Christian doctrine, and to add and subtract to some degree.' Early on he became 'an able rider, an untiring worker, and a laborious shepherd [of cattle].'³ By the time the War of Independence reached Oriente in 1813, he was twenty-nine years old, and his brother José Gregorio was eighteen. José Tadeo was busy administering the hatos, and had a commanding knowledge of his native area, a knowledge that would help him during the war.⁴

¹ Francisco Depons, Viaje a la Parte Oriental de Tierra Firme (Caracas, 1930), pp.62, 339, 446. Castillo, ibid., pp.26-9.

² Castillo, ibid., pp.31-41, for the church pp.36-41. For a description of llanero life see Karl Ferdinand Appun, En los Trópicos (Caracas, 1961), pp.256-7.

³ R. Azpurúa, Biografías, iii.51. '... aprendió a leer y escribir, los rudimentos de la doctrina cristiana, y a sumar y restar medianamente.' '... en habil ginete, trabajador incansable y laborioso pastor.'

⁴ Castillo, 'Monagas Family', p.15.

The Monagas family joined the struggle for independence at the defence of Maturín on 18 March 1813 after Santiago Mariño had landed at Guiria to lead the eastern fight against the royalists.¹ The two brothers may have been at the disastrous battle of La Puerta in June 1814 against Boves. The eastern army, commanded by Mariño, retreated to Caracas and then to Oriente to escape from Boves's furious troops. With Boves killed at Urica, his second Morales captured Maturín in December 1814. This defence of the town was particularly painful to the Monagases. Their father, Francisco José was killed on 11 December along with a brother-in-law; both supposedly had their throats cut. Their elder sister was 'macheteada', killed by machete. Two younger sisters were 'sacrificed'. José Tadeo just managed to escape the surrounded town after two horses had been killed under him.² By January 1815 the country had been subdued, and the revolutionary leaders had been forced to flee to Curazao, Jamaica, Southern Haiti and Trinidad. The Monagas brothers escaped to the Delta region, unhealthy swamp land left to the Indians.

Two months later, José Tadeo led his band out of the Delta, across to El Tigre and the plains of Barcelona. This initiative and the effort made by his band during the following two years gave him his reputation as a capable leader able to survive almost any misfortune. A meeting of the revolutionary leaders who still operated in the region chose José Tadeo as its commander. Among those present were the two eldest Sotillo brothers, Carpio - a sometime bandit and ruffian, and the Inuian chiefs Manaure, Manaurito and Tupepe.³

¹ R. Azpurúa, Biografías, iii.52, 374-6. Castillo, ibid., pp.42-3.

² Castillo, ibid., pp.44-6. R. Azpurúa, ibid., iii.57. Letter Clara Antonia Monagas de Giuseppi (José Tadeo's daughter) to Daniel Ramírez, n/p, c.1908, in Inauguración Busto José Tadeo Monagas, pp.9-11.

³ R. Azpurúa, ibid., iii.58. Castillo, ibid., p.46.

The role of the Indians in the eastern campaigns cannot be stressed enough. They often formed the bulk of the forces in that region, and usually fought with nothing more than bows and arrows. José Tadeo had been wounded by an arrow at Maturín. In fact, half of his fighting force consisted of Indians during this period of the struggle. Family tradition claims that as a child José Gregorio had been kidnapped by Indians for three or four years, and raised as an Indian by a piache, a medicine man. Since that time the Monagases could depend on the loyalty of those Indians.¹

José Tadeo carried on against the royalists by the only method available, guerrilla warfare. He was able to take Aragua de Barcelona at the same time that news of the arrival of Morillo's expedition reached him. He decided to retreat across the Orinoco river, doing so on 8 June 1815 with 1,000 men. Another meeting was called the next year at San Diego de Cabrutica to choose one leader to coordinate the guerrilla operations until Bolívar's return. José Tadeo was chosen on the fifteenth ballot - 67 votes to Pedro Zaraza's 25, on 26 May 1816. The combined eastern forces were able to take Barcelona in September 1816. When Bolívar reached Angostura José Tadeo marched south to join him. Because of Monagas's command of the region and his dogged campaign during two long years he was appointed governor of Barcelona province and returned to the coastal town with Bolívar in September 1817.² Bolívar was busy building his forces for the 1818 campaign to Caracas, but did not find much sustenance in Barcelona because of the destruction caused by the war.

¹ Conversation with C.M. Monagas, Caracas, 23 June 1978. In the 1850s there were still 10,000 Carib Indians on the Barcelona plain; Karl Ferdinand Appun, En los Trópicos, p.359.

² R. Azpurúa, Biografías, iii.59-63. Manuel Acereda La Linde, Historia de Aragua de Barcelona, del Estado Anzoátegui y de la Nueva Andalucía (Caracas, 1959), i.604. Castillo, 'Monagas Family', pp.46-9.

At this time, Captain Carlos Castelli, an Italian under Monagas, was reportedly keeping alive by feeding his troops donkey meat at Barcelona for lack of cattle.¹ If the East had held 200,000 head of cattle in 1799, it had only 30,500 by 1817.² The only products that the revolutionary army could sell were cattle and mules. A mule usually fetched fifteen U.S. dollars, while an ox brought seven dollars. These would be traded by the Angostura government for flour, maize, tobacco, and other necessities, so that troops had to go with as little meat as possible in an effort to raise credit.³

Monagas was now thirty-three years old, and had become one of Bolívar's favourite fighting officers. As proof of his esteem for José Tadeo, Bolívar asked for the hand of sixteen year old Luisa Teresa Oriach Guevara 'for General Monagas'.⁴ In one sentence Bolívar married José Tadeo into a distinguished Barcelona family and promoted him to general. If Monagas had even questioned his loyalty to Bolívar the events of this period would have dispelled his doubt.

The 1818 thrust to Caracas was a disaster. Monagas moved south, making his headquarters at El Pao to protect Angostura during the long period that Bolívar would be fighting in New Granada. One letter to Bolívar in early 1818, before the thrust, shows Monagas's respect for him.

¹ Augusto Mijares, La Interpretación Pesimista de la Sociología Hispanoamericana (2nd edn., Madrid, 1952), p.119.

² Julio de Armas, La Ganadería en Venezuela - Ensayo Histórico (Caracas, 1974), p.286.

³ John H. Hambleton, Diario del Viaje por el Orinoco Hacia Angostura (Julio 11 - Agosto 24, 1819) (Bogotá, 1969), pp.57-9. Charles C. Griffin, 'Economic and Social Aspects of the Era of Spanish-American Independence', Readings in Latin American History, Volume II: Since 1810, ed. Lewis Hanke (New York, 1966), p.3. Castillo, 'Monagas Family', pp.54-5.

⁴ R. Azpurúa, Biografías, iii.64-7. Castillo, ibid., p.49.

Calling Bolívar 'padrino', godfather, he signed himself 'ahijado', your affectionate god-son.¹ In June Bolívar approved of Monagas's proposal to name his guerrilla companion Colonel Francisco Parejo chief of staff of Monagas's brigade.² We are fortunate to have an eyewitness account of Monagas and his troops at the end of 1818 during the retreat when he reached the Orinoco river and sent his infantry up-river to Apure where the army was regrouping. J.H. Robinson described the men and the scene at Palmar on the Orinoco on 26 December 1818.

'... he [Monagas] could bring only 400, and these were almost all naked. They all, however, had English muskets and cartouch-boxes. They were solely infantry; as his cavalry had all deserted.

'This afternoon, one hundred and twenty of Monagas's men were put on board the Bombard, and the remainder were distributed among the small craft; and, while preparing to get under weigh, and but a short distance from the shore, Monagas made his appearance on the beach.

'He was dressed in a blue jacket, white vest, and trowsers, a cap made of a leopard's skin, with one shoe entire (stockings were out of the question) and the other so shattered that he had been obliged to tie it about his ankle to prevent its dropping off. Now that he was about to be separated from his infantry, for the purpose of endeavouring to collect his run-away cavalry, he seemed very much affected. The vessels were about to sail, when he waved his hand and all was quiet. "Soldiers," said he, "I am about to be separated from you, for the first time since we assembled for our country's good; let me earnestly beg of you to be strictly obedient to your superior officers, and firm in the hour of trial. In one month you may depend on my joining you, to share in your toils, and in your glory." Again he waved his hand, and was about to depart, when a call issued from every throat of the 400 men for money to get tobacco! He stopt; and, after musing for a moment, as much as to say - Where am I to get it? he put his hand in his pocket, and told them eight reals was the amount of all the money he possessed, which was at their disposal; and he sent it.

'General Monagas is about thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, is stout, very well made, and so extremely active, that very few men in this country, can excel him in hunting or in throwing the wild bull. His forehead is high and broad, his eyes black and

¹ J.T. Monagas to Jefe Supremo (Bolívar), Calvario, 4 Apr. 1818, BANH (Caracas), 84 (Oct.1938), 454.

² Bolívar to J.T. Monagas, Angostura, 22 June 1818, BANH (Caracas), 88 (Oct.1939), 811, also 821.

of a dull expression; but when he is animated, they become quick and piercing. He was originally major domo, or manager of a farm, and latterly he possessed a farm of his own near Palmar. He is married, and very much attached to the quietness of domestic life. He prefers being much alone; and he speaks very little in company, because he feels sensible how much his education has been neglected in early life, and he chooses rather to be silent than commit himself. This I conceive to be a strong mark of his good sense. He is a soldier merely from love of his country, and wishes for peace only that he may return to the cultivation of his farm, and to the enjoyment of those domestic comforts, of which the revolutionary commotions of his country have long deprived him. He is General of both infantry and cavalry; and, in action, he is very animated. It is a regular practice with him in the field, should any of his men run, to cut them down with his own hand. Yet, he is very unfortunate in battle, and has many about him who, from whatever motives I know not, are readier to detract than to praise him.

'These squalid troops presented a very motley group. They were of every age, from eight years to fifty, or even more. Some were completely naked; some had a hair rope bound round their body, to which was attached a piece of cloth, behind and before, which passes between the thighs, called "Yayuco" or "Guayuco"; some had a jacket; some, a kind of short pantaloons, of very coarse linen; some a cap; some, an old hat; some, a hat made of straw; but none of them were completely clothed; while all of them had a knife or dagger hid about some part of their body. They were all furnished with muskets.'

In addition, the Indians carried charm bags that they had bought from priests. These held a piece of the umbilical cord of some exemplary figure, or the hair or toe-nails of a virgin, or some similar relic.¹ Another account made in 1819 mentioned only that Monagas, a brigadier general, commanded a troop of cavalry under Bermúdez and that he had a reputation as a brave officer.² He was wounded seven times during the war.³

¹ J.H. Robinson, Journal of an Expedition 1400 Miles Up the Orinoco and 300 Up the Arauca (London, 1822), pp.134-8,145.

² J.H. Hambleton, Diario, p.65.

³ José Manuel Olivares, Bosquejo Histórico de la Vida Militar del Ilustre General en Jefe José Tadeo Monagas Durante La Guerra de Nuestra Independencia (Caracas, 1855), ANH, Folletos 1855 (4).

José Gregorio fought under various leaders, and he was at Carabobo on 24 June 1821, the battle that ended the general war in Venezuela. He returned east to join his family with his reputation as a fierce warrior untarnished.¹

After Carabobo José Tadeo issued the following declaration to the people of the province of Barcelona in his capacity of provincial commander:

'Citizens! You are free; but this precious freedom is perhaps more difficult to keep than to win. For the one only valour is needed; for the other austere, constant, and steadfast virtues are necessary.

'Use all your strength to reach freedom and equality.

'Observe the most austere customs, because without virtues there is no liberty.'²

He was promoted to Divisional General on 1 October 1821. A year later he appointed José Gregorio, then a colonel, military commander of the town of Barcelona. The appointment was withheld by the eastern military Intendente on the grounds that they were related. José Tadeo appealed to Santander³ arguing that blood relations should never interfere with the appointment of the best candidate. Santander's reply of 7 January 1823

¹ Castillo, 'Monagas Family', pp.51-2.

² R. Azpurúa, Biografías, p.67.

'Ciudadanos! Vostros estais libres; pero esta libertad preciosa es quizas mas dificil de conservar que de conquistar. Para lo uno basta el valor; para lo otro son menester virtudes austeras, constantes y firmes.

'Emplead todas vuestras fuerzas para alcanzar la libertad y la igualdad.

'Observad las mas austeras costumbres, porque sin virtudes no hai libertad.'

³ Santander had been elected Vice-President of Gran Colombia at the Cúcuta Congress with the understanding that he would be the actual ruler while Bolívar was still fighting. At the Congress, called soon after Carabobo, Bolívar dictated a constitution that established a strong centralized government with a bicameral congress with representatives from Venezuela, New Granada, and Ecuador, and a capital in Bogotá. For more information see David Bushnell, The Santander Regime in Gran Colombia (Westport, Conn., 1970), pp.10-22.

stated that the law did not prohibit brothers from entering a military career, and that José Gregorio was therefore entitled to take his post as commander of Barcelona despite his brother's appointment as commander of the province.¹ These letters are the earliest documented evidence that the Monagases acted as most leaders did by favouring their own before all others and grasping as much local power as possible. These letters are also clear evidence of that regional factionalism which became apparent at least as soon as Gran Colombia was established.

José Gregorio remained at his post until 1824 when he marched to Peru in the last auxiliary force that the Colombian executive and the department of Venezuela sent to Bolívar.² José Tadeo stayed in Barcelona as military commander, and busied himself in expanding his regional power. He redeveloped and undoubtedly used his office to gain friends and supporters.³ In 1824 he was invested with the masonic thirty-third degree by the Supreme Council of Colombia, which met at Caracas.⁴ It must have been during this time that José Tadeo became the owner of the famous hato of San Antonio del Tigre which had belonged to the Fernández de Mirandas. It is still not clear whether he had inherited it or bought it, or had gotten it as a war exaction or through a forced sale.

¹ Fundación John Boulton, Caracas. Sección Venezolana del Archivo de la Gran Colombia, A, CI, 12-14.

² R. Azpurúa, Biografías, iii.376.

³ Castillo, 'Monagas Family', pp.52-3.

⁴ Many other 'ilustres próceres' were rewarded with the thirty-third degree that year, among them: Santiago Mariño, Rafael Urdaneta, Páez, Diego Bautista Urbaneja, Colonel Francisco Vicente Parejo, José Félix Blanco, José Francisco Bermúdez, Juan Bautista Arismendi, Tomás José Sanabria, Francisco Aranda, Carlos Soublette, Judas Tadeo Piñango, Francisco Carabaño, and Bolívar. See Américo Carnicelli, La Masonería en la Independencia de América (1810-1830). Secretos de la Historia (Bogotá, 1970), i.180-2,284,314,353;ii.26-33.

The famous hato of El Tigre had reached a yearly rate of sale of 16,000 head of cattle in 1796.¹ After the war Monagas had to rebuild its stock. At the end of the war the eastern plains had reverted to their early colonial characteristics - no agriculture, few people, few towns, and practically no cattle. The hostile and exhausted land was available to any interested party.

The end of the war left the military leaders to establish themselves in their areas. Officers and men were paid with land, confiscated from royalists or in the public domain, by the new government for lack of other credit. Many men of no social status now became landowners.² Mariño controlled the East after 1821, while Páez held the western plains, and both manoeuvred to spread their influence over lesser leaders. José Tadeo controlled the eastern plains, and paid lip-service to Mariño, his chief, while also making his fortune and strengthening his local power. Páez easily proved to be the better schemer, and began to rival Bolívar and his plans for a unified Colombia, a task simplified by his president's absence in distant Peru.

Monagas was rising regionally, Páez was rising nationally. Alexander Alexander provided a description of the new ruler of Venezuela while fighting for him in Barinas in late 1818:

'Paez is a stout active-looking little man, with a pleasing and very expressive countenance; he is a good musician and dancer, fearless and brave to excess; but rash to a fault, rushing into battle pell-mell, with no idea but that of overturning all opposed to him by mere animal force. Yet his feelings were very acute; and he grieved much after a great slaughter, even of his enemies, and became subject to severe epileptic fits ... He was no politician, only a plain, fighting man ... quite void of learning, being able neither to read nor write.'

¹ González Vale, Datos Ganadería, p.13.

² C.C. Griffin, 'Economic and Social Aspects', p.5.

³ Alexander Alexander, The Life of Alexander Alexander (Edinburgh, 1830), ii, 78-9.

This ignorant man was now becoming a practised politician as he grew to administer the government at a national level. Other contenders for power were busy at lower levels. José Tadeo was one of these as the new nation attempted to organize itself. •

CHAPTER II

POST-INDEPENDENCE

The period from independence to 1847 was the time of Monagas's consolidation of regional power. José Tadeo remained in his region, started his family, and built up the family's wealth. We can suppose that he did this mainly through the traditional ventures of his region - through cattle herds, contraband, and the acquisition of property. As might be expected, no figures have been found relating to the extent of the family's riches, and few have dared to make estimates. José Tadeo surrounded himself, and filled the provincial government, with relatives, other loyal families, and his faithful followers who had fought under him. The most famous and reputedly brutal followers were the Sotillo family of Aragua de Barcelona. Juan Antonio Sotillo Pérez, a pardo born in 1799 at Santa Ana near Aragua de Barcelona, always called José Tadeo his padrino, god-father. As Sotillo had at least twenty-seven children one can understand the importance of this loyal clan to Monagas. Its members had fought under José Tadeo since 1813 and came with him to Barcelona.¹

José Tadeo's first conflict with Páez and the central government of Venezuela occurred when he refused to accept Páez's 1829 constitution declaring Venezuela's separation from Gran Colombia. José Tadeo claimed his loyalty to Bolívar and to a Gran Colombian nation. Rojas explains that the 'bolivarians', Bolívar's supporters, in 'Aragua, province of Barcelona, proclaimed the integrity of the Republic of Colombia, named [José Tadeo] Jefe civil y militar', and most of Oriente rose up in support.²

¹ J.M. Seijas García, Leyendas Patrias - El General Juan Antonio Sotillo (Caracas, 1902), pp.7,15-16.

² José María de Rojas, Bosquejo Histórico de Venezuela. Primera Parte (Desde 1830 Hasta 1863) (Paris, 1888), p.12.

The Sotillos made up the bulk of the bolivarians in Aragua, along with José Gregorio, Gerardo and Francisco Monagas. José Tadeo's emergence as the leading opponent of Páez undoubtedly increased his national standing and support for him in his own region. Ocando Yamarte has pointed out that the pronouncement of the East had marked similarities with Páez's separatist movement. The structures of the declarations are similar. They refuse to recognize the established political power by using the excuse of following the public will in its quest for freedom. José Tadeo declared that he was dragged along in spite of himself by the people's will, one of Páez's reasons. Páez could interpret clearly the sarcasm hidden between the lines.¹

One of the arguments used to rally support for the revolt in the East was regionalism. A Colombian federation would give the East greater autonomy, thus weakening the influence of Páez's circle which was made up mainly of people from the central part of the country.² One can easily understand why other local leaders would be attracted to Monagas's revolt. Córdova-Bello has written that factionalism is an expression of the political power of many local leaders.³ This factionalism was to be the post-independence symptom of the anarchy and individualism that the colonial era had in many areas been unable to control.

Morales Padrón, a Spaniard who has his own reasons for not approving of the Venezuelan leaders after independence, and particularly dislikes Monagas, has explained that 'caudillism accentuated regional prejudices'.

¹ Gustavo Ocando Yamarte, Historia Político - Eclesiástica de Venezuela, 1830-1847 (Fuentes Para la Historia Republicana de Venezuela, 19,1975), ii.24.

² José Gil Fortoul, Historia Constitucional de Venezuela (5th edn., Caracas, 1964), ii.182-4.

³ Eleazar Córdova-Bello, La Independencia de Haití y Su Influencia en Hispanoamérica (Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 13,1967), p.207.

Each chief supported himself by helping his locals. He describes Monagas and his orientales as the worst example of rural autocracy in Venezuela.¹ They were certainly forceful and brutal, perhaps even the worst, but it is also certain that the people of the East admired and willingly followed José Tadeo, the man who declared his loyalty to Bolívar while confronting Páez.²

Monagas had been appointed governor of Barcelona province again in 1827.³ In May 1830 congress commissioned him to settle the existing unrest in Rio Chico. On 20 June he convinced Parejo and Lorenzo Bustillos to set down their arms in return for a total amnesty with the government covering the costs of the rebellion.⁴ The government agreed to most of the agreement, but a few months later Monagas became the leader of the revolt against the separatist authority. When, in January 1831, he refused to accept the constitution of 1829, the council of state and the congress authorised the government to grant amnesties. The government then appointed a commission to go to Oriente and treat with Monagas. In effect, the government was not demanding absolute obedience as it normally would have done, but sent its representatives as if it were dealing with another state.⁵ Páez ordered Mariño, the secretary of war and technically the chief of the East, to subdue Monagas. Instead, Mariño wanted to meet with him.

¹ Francisco Morales Padrón, Historia de Hispanoamérica (Sevilla, 1972), p.331.

² Caracciolo Parra-Pérez, Mariño y las Guerras Civiles (Madrid, 1958), i.140.

³ M. Acereda La Linde, Historia Aragua de Barcelona, i.604.

⁴ 'Turbaciones en Barlovento', Gaceta de Gobierno Extraordinaria (Caracas), 5 July 1830, p.1.

⁵ G. Ocando Yamarte, Historia, ii.25,381.

With the news of Bolívar's death, which arrived in February 1831,¹ Monagas offered to end the revolt.²

Páez wrote an interesting account of the events of the revolt in his autobiography. With a force of only 700 men and an empty treasury, the new government would have been hard pressed to defeat Monagas. The whole of the East, the provinces of Margarita, Cumaná, and Barcelona, as far west as the Tuy valley supported Monagas.³ Mariño met him on 13 May, but Monagas convinced him to agree to a surprising settlement. They agreed to form an independent state of the East called Colombia. Mariño would be its governor and Monagas his second in command. Only the president of Venezuela would be higher than the eastern governor. Mariño also agreed to full restitution of Monagas's rank, and the government would pay the debts that he had incurred during the rebellion.⁴ Páez was shocked to hear that Mariño had made such a deal, and relieved him of command. Mariño's future with Páez was destroyed, along with his reputation in the East after being so neatly duped by Monagas.

¹ Bolívar died on 17 December 1830, but the news took longer to travel. See Walter Dupouy, ed., Sir Robert Ker Porter's Caracas Diary, 1825-1842, a British Diplomat in a Newborn Nation (Caracas, 1966), p.529 for an account of the arrival of the news in Caracas on 4 February 1831.

² J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo Histórico, p.12.

³ José Antonio Páez, Autobiografía del General José Antonio Páez (New York, 1946), ii.140-52. See also Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, 'Memoria del Secretario de lo Interior y de Justicia, 1831', in his Datos Históricos Sur-Americanos (Bruxelles, 1878), i. 113-24, 125.

⁴ Páez, ibid., ii.150. Parra-Pérez states that Mariño only agreed to mediate between Monagas and the central government regarding Monagas's ideal of a federation of states. This agreement, which Mariño claimed he made to avoid the possibility of bloodshed, when added to a pronouncement by the town of Barcelona on 22 May proclaiming Mariño chief of the federated state of the East, was enough cause for his detractors to convince the government of Mariño's disloyalty. C. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, i.76,88-111.

Páez went to see Monagas at Valle de la Pascua, and he too quickly signed a treaty. Monagas only asked for a general amnesty. This easy peace has confused many who wonder why he did not press for better conditions. Páez explained that Monagas soon realised that he could receive little support from the rest of the country, and thankfully chose to go home without further fighting.¹ Although possibly true, Páez's explanation seems simplistic. Perhaps a more definitive reason for peace is that Monagas had gained as much as possible from the rebellion and could only stand to lose now. He had increased his reputation of 'immaculate patriotism, approved valor, firm and intrepid character, unshakable morality,'² by defending Bolívar. He had made a fool of Mariño with visions of setting up his own State, and in so doing had overcome his most powerful opponent for local hegemony. Páez had received fair warning that Monagas was to control the East, and that he could easily cause problems for the central government. Acevedo believed that Páez and Monagas made a deal between them whereby Páez would govern the country, but Monagas would control the East.³

The new nation stumbled along as the landed aristocracy allied itself with war heroes to control the country. Of an approximate population of 850,000 before the war at least a fifth, 170,000, had died from war and disease. Venezuela had a foreign debt of 34 million pesos fuertes, but the government's 1834 revenue was of 1.5 millions.⁴

¹ Páez, ibid., ii.152.

² Rafael Acevedo, Monagas and Paez: Being a Brief View of the Late Events in Venezuela (New York, 1850), p.52.

³ Ibid., p.53

⁴ Manuel Pérez Vila, 'El Gobierno Deliberativo. Hacendados, Comerciantes y Artesanos Frente a la Crisis, 1830-1848', Política y Economía en Venezuela, 1810-1976 (Fundación John Boulton, Caracas, 1976), pp.36-7, 44-9, 59.

During the same period coffee and cacao shared 55 to 70 per cent of Venezuela's total exports. Hides and indigo were increasing their share of the total throughout the whole period, while cattle's percentage remained constant, and cotton, sugar and tobacco decreased.¹

Venezuela was not a country of large plantations and large slave-owners. The rich were not overly rich. Four-fifths of the total population was illiterate,² but a large proportion of urban pardos (part white, part black) could read. Free trade meant more contact with new merchants from foreign lands. R.S. Illingworth described the commercial system at La Guaira. Three-fourths of the amount of English goods that arrived at La Guaira were imported by foreign commercial houses there. These foreign consigners would sell those goods to a middle class of buyers, generally smaller capitalists who lived up at Caracas.

'To Caracas all the Country Shopkeepers and Dealers resort, as a matter of course, to procure assortments, and to dispose of produce. Caracas is in fact the Commercial Mart of Venezuela ... The La Guayra Houses have not even to collect outstandings in detail - their Cashier's duties being performed for them by confidential Agents residing in Caracas, who make collections and procure them Produce for a moderate Comms.'³

¹ Ibid. For higher percentages of coffee and cacao see Miguel Izard, Series Estadísticas Para la Historia de Venezuela (Mérida, 1970), pp.183,191. However, the margin of error may be great; for 1848/9 his figures imply that the value of coffee and cacao exports totalled 90% of Venezuela's total exports that year, suggesting a greater amount of smuggled exports. See also Ramón Veloz, Economía y Finanzas de Venezuela desde 1830 hasta 1944 (Caracas, 1945), pp.25-6,35-46. Izard and Veloz base their figures primarily on the Memorias de Hacienda. See statistical tables in T.E. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas. See also, John V. Lombardi, The Decline and Abolition of Negro Slavery in Venezuela, 1820-1854 (Westport, Conn., 1971), pp.164-6, and 'The Abolition of Slavery in Venezuela: a Nonevent', Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America, ed. Robert Brent Toplin (Westport, Conn., 1974), p.236.

² M. Pérez Vila, 'Gobierno Deliberativo', p.54.

³ R.S. Illingworth to J.D. Powles, Cartagena, 31 December 1835. Lilly Library, Indiana University, Illingworth mss. 1835-1845, Letter copybook, pp.8-11. K.F. Appun, En los Trópicos, pp.37-9,68-71, described the situation at Puerto Cabello and the importance of coffee and cacao.

This system still existed in 1857-1858 when streams of donkeys, each laden with two 100-pound sacks of coffee, could be seen unloading at the Caracas stores of the La Guaira merchants who had branches in the capital. The loads would be repacked and carted to La Guaira for export.¹ The import-export business at other Venezuelan ports like Maracaibo, Puerto Cabello and Angostura was coordinated by the foreign houses also. At present we should be aware of the effects such a centralised system of trade would have on the business groups of the major cities, but mainly at Caracas.

The traditional conflicts between planters and merchants, and between the white population and the pardos, were brought to a head by the new trade as groups competed for farm goods from the United States and for British manufactured goods. Trade with the former Spanish colony meant only a fraction of Britain's and the United States' global trade, but trade with these two countries meant everything to this new American nation.² It is interesting to note that the balance of trade between Britain and Venezuela always favoured Britain. The balance of trade between the United States and Venezuela always favoured Venezuela: Venezuelan demand for North American goods was smaller.³

¹ Anonymous, 'Caracas', Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XVII (June to November 1858), pp.195-196. A donkey's load usually meant up to two Spanish quintals of 46 kilograms each (or 100 lbs of 460 grams), while a mule's reached three quintals.

² M. Pérez Vila, 'Gobierno Deliberativo', pp.55-6. George Edmund Carl, First Among Equals: Great Britain and Venezuela, 1810-1910 (Dellplain Latin American Studies, 5, 1980), pp.xiii-xiv, 8-11, 28-30, 43-7, 51-5, 61, 84-5, 90-4, 128-45. Tulio Halperin Donghi, Hispanoamérica Después de la Independencia. Consecuencias Sociales y Económicas de la Emancipación (Buenos Aires, 1972), pp.90-1, 95-6, 125. Benjamin A. Frankel, Venezuela y los Estados Unidos, 1810-1888 (Caracas, 1977), pp.68, fn.8, 153-60. Most of the Danish trade he mentions was in British manufactured goods.

³ G.E. Carl, ibid., pp.84-5; appendix I, pp.147-8. T.W. Keeble, Commercial Relations between British Overseas Territories and South America, 1806-1914 (University of London, Institute of Latin American Studies Monographs, 3, 1970), pp.5, 78.

The Venezuelan congress was dominated by the landed aristocracy and the merchants. The 'artisans', lower whites and pardos, were ignored. Some asked for protection from cheaper foreign goods, but were not heard. Those who ran congress, and with whom Páez sought an alliance, had everything to gain by not interfering with low tariffs on manufactured goods. Congress attempted, with varying degrees of success, to pass laws to benefit those in control. The government's monopoly on tobacco ended in 1833 to allow investment from private parties. As it happened, congress gave no guidelines for the transfer of the monopoly to free trade and the tobacco trade did not flourish.¹ The law of freedom of faith was passed in 1834, and with it the first protestant chapel was built by the British community. General approval of this law soon drowned out the Catholic church's protests.² Acceptance of Protestantism went with acceptance of foreign trade and vice versa. The most controversial law was that of the liberty of contracts of 1834. It approved usury, among other things, and debtors (small landowners) began to lose their possessions while the larger landowners remained untouched while prices were high. In essence it was a pro-merchant law that at first did not affect the large landowners.³

The law of 5 May 1841 of espera y quita reformed the debtor's ability to obtain a moratorium. Whereas under previous colonial legislation he needed the agreement of a majority of his creditors, he now needed the consent of all his creditors before he could obtain an espera on the principal and the quita of the interest payments while the moratorium was in effect.

¹ J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.14-16.

² Ibid., p.17. G. Ocando Yamarte, Historia, ii.102-5.

³ M. Pérez Vila, 'Gobierno Deliberativo', pp.72-4, states that at the time even agriculturalists welcomed the law.

The two laws of 1834 and 1841 shifted the relationship of commercial transactions in favour of the creditor, usually a member of the financial sector.¹

The changes caused by the expansion of foreign trade had repercussions on the social structure. The new nation was concerned with the production of resources for the world market, but the social structure was being strained as the gains of the new freedom went increasingly to those who controlled the government. The government, dominated by political intrigue, was unable to create a functional bureaucracy that would administer the new nation. Griffin explains that 'Taxation shifted from the complex system of colonial days, with its multiple excises, monopoly franchises, and sales taxes, toward reliance on customs duties on imports as the all-important source of revenue.'² Eastwick saw the implications of this simple tax structure. He stated that customs revenue was the easiest system with which to defraud the state through smuggling. The only way for the government to finance itself, therefore, was by raising loans and repaying them by mortgaging the poorly controlled customs revenue.³

In the midst of continuing insecurity for the general population, the heroes of the war were busy using their military might to claim their rewards, Páez having the greatest advantage. Apart from his vast land holdings in his region of Apure and Barinas, Páez was acquiring land elsewhere.

¹ Ibid., pp.74-5. Lourdes Fierro Bustillos, 'La Política Económica del Estado Venezolano entre 1830 y 1850: Las Leyes de "Libertad de Contratos" y de "Espera y Quita"' (paper given at Sixth Symposium on Latin American Economic History, Vancouver, Aug.1979), pp.2,16-23,52-5.

² C.C. Griffin, 'Economic and Social Aspects of the Era of Spanish-American Independence', pp.8-9.

³ Edward B. Eastwick, Venezuela: or, Sketches of Life in a South-American Republic; with the History of the Loan of 1864 (London, 1868), pp.60-1.

The ranch of La Trinidad de Tapatapa near Maracay had belonged to the Marquis of Casa León. Páez took it for himself. The ható of San Pablo near Calabozo was also taken by Páez. He took much more land to build up his herds, but it seems that these two hatos were particularly large. It was thought that his various hatos in the llanos together with a sugar refinery in Aragua assured him an income of 40,000 gourdes a year; he was one of Venezuela's wealthiest men.¹

Páez soon had business interests elsewhere. He owned houses in Maracay, Valencia and Caracas. Following his tastes he owned a theatre in Caracas and cock-fighting establishments. Perhaps his greatest profits came from his control of most of the beef sold in Caracas. This near monopoly meant he could distribute and sell his own beef at monopoly profits.² Although few figures can be quoted the extent of his various businesses gives an idea of his wealth in such a poor country.

Monagas's economic success in these two decades, 1830-1850, does not seem to be as spectacular as Páez's. Vila states that there were 10,000 head of cattle in the canton of Maturín alone in 1833.³ We may assume that most of this herd belonged to the two richest families near Maturín, the Fernández de Mirandas and the Monagases.⁴ These herds grew quickly, and may have numbered 100,000 head by 1850 in that canton alone.⁵ We should remember that during this time the population of the canton increased from 7,861 people in 1839 to 12,000 in 1850.⁶ There was still obviously plenty

¹ M. Pérez Vila, 'Gobierno Deliberativo', pp.44-5. Chargé d'Affaires Celeste E. David to the French foreign secretary, Caracas, 20 January 1843. French Foreign Office, Correspondance Politique-Vénézuéla (hereafter C.P.-V.), II (1842-1845), fos.55-6. One gourde = one peso fuerte = 5 French francs. C. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.25.

² Conversations with M. Pérez Vila, Oxford and Caracas, 1975-80.

³ Marco Aurelio Vila, Aspectos Geográficos del Estado Monagas (Caracas, 1962), p.190.

⁴ J. De Armas, Ganadería, p.287.

⁵ M.A. Vila, loc.cit.

⁶ Agustín Codazzi, quoted in M.A. Vila, Monagas, pp.101-3.

of land on which to expand the herds, and few people to interfere with this growth. The Monagas family also owned hatos near El Pao, Aragua de Barcelona, and Barcelona, and property in those towns.¹ After independence Monagas settled on the legendary hato of San Antonio del Tigre, and expanded it from the original eight fundaciones de ganado, cattle breeding stations, to twenty stations. This one hato had more than 35,000 head of cattle in 1802, and was reputed to hold more than 100,000 head by 1858.²

Monagas was of course no unique figure. As another example of local leadership we may cite General Ignacio Pulido of Barinas. He seems to have been so influential in Barinas that he was elected to the first constitutional congress, 1831-1834, chosen by Páez, despite having been loyal to Bolívar in 1826 and 1829 and having been Bolívar's choice for provincial governor then. He retired after his term as representative saying that military men did not make good legislators. He was again named provincial governor from 1840 to 1844.³ He was able to remain a regional leader by controlling his area, while being loyal to Bolívar, then Páez, and later to Monagas. Like Pulido we can suppose there were many other undocumented cases of regional chiefs with an uncanny ability to survive and thrive. Indeed, 80 per cent of the government land (baldíos) used to repay debts to its military men between 1831 and 1835 was in the provinces of Apure and Barinas. The system was so abused,

¹ E. Córdova-Bello, Ganadería, p.43. Also common knowledge of the family's holdings acquired by marriage and purchase.

² Inauguración en la Ciudad de Maturín del Busto en Bronce del Ilustre Prócer de la Independencia, Gral. José Tadeo Monagas. 9 de Diciembre de 1908, p.13,14,37.

³ Lucio Pulido, Recuerdos Históricos (Historia de Barinas) (Serie Histórica, Gobierno del Estado Barinas, 4, 2nd edn., 1958), pp.65-6.

that it had to be stopped in 1835.¹

1834 was a year of turmoil. The national situation was not improving for the majority of the new citizens. The government had few administrative ambitions as it attempted to consolidate itself in power. There was such a lack of cash in the country that the law of 13 December 1834 authorised the executive to import copper coins from the United States. It legalised the use of foreign currencies in all businesses. Among the accepted currencies were the Spanish peso, the Spanish ounce of gold, the United States dollar, the French franc, and also those of England, Portugal, and Brazil.²

At the end of his presidential term of four years, Páez chose two possible candidates to succeed him, his favourite, General Soublette, and Doctor J.M. Vargas. Vargas was elected in an effort by the civilian oligarchy to curb military power, and, indirectly, Páez's influence, as Monagas warned him (Cf. p.27, fn.1). Vargas was considered an honest man, and he seemed willing to act as a faithful caretaker president, heeding Páez's advice on policy matters. Unfortunately, he was not a soldier, and Páez's attitudes and utterances implied that the government was forgetting to reward its past heroes and soldiers. Vargas's election seemed to reinforce those beliefs. The provinces, never happy about control from Caracas, were in a particularly agitated state, and different areas began to rebel. The Maracaibo uprising of June 1835 declared its support

¹ Carmen Gómez, 'Política de Enajenación y Arrendamiento de Tierras Baldías (1830-1858),' in Antonieta Camacho, Carmen Gómez, Orlando González, Materiales Para el Estudio de la Cuestión Agraria en Venezuela (1829-1860), Enajenación y Arrendamiento de Tierras Baldías (Caracas, 1971), pp.XXXIII-XXXIV. By 1841 the total of land paid out in this manner was of more than 118,254 hectares, only 0.35% of the total of privately owned property in Venezuela.

² Carlos A. D'Ascoli, Esquema Histórico-Económico de Venezuela (Del Mito del Dorado a la Economía del Café) (Caracas, 1970), pp.277-8. Manuel Landaeta Rosales, Riqueza Circulante en Venezuela (Caracas, 1903), p.16.

for Mariño, who had been a government outcast since 1831. The Caracas garrison mutinied on 8 July and controlled the city. Led by Mariño and more liberal members of the aristocracy, like Diego Ibarra and Pedro Briceño Méndez, the soldiers exiled Vargas to the Danish island of St. Thomas, but not before he had managed to appoint Páez to restore order.¹ Páez marched from Apure and took Caracas at the end of July, but Puerto Cabello, Barquisimeto, and again Maracaibo had joined the revolt. Monagas issued a proclamation on 15 July at Aragua de Barcelona calling the easterners to arms for the sake of reforms to save the country.²

The Caracas rebels were forced to escape towards the East, and Monagas sent word to them to meet him in Barcelona to discuss the purpose of this revolución de las reformas. Having assumed military control of the government and realising the danger to him if Monagas should join the revolt, Páez named Monagas general commander of the East before the rebels could choose him as their chief.³ This appointment emphasised the importance of Monagas's support for either group. After meeting with the rebels Monagas issued a proclamation, quoted by Páez, that claimed '... to re-establish the Republic of Colombia and organise it into federal states so as to lift the Venezuelans out of the narrow circle of government that the country was considered to be in; to declare that the Roman Catholic Church was the official church; that all government jobs should be in the hands of the founders of liberty and old patriots ...'⁴ The view that the government

¹ J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.28-31. Ibarra and Briceño had been aides-de-camp to Bolívar.

² José Tadeo Monagas, 'Orientales', Aragua, 15 July 1835, (Caracas, 1835), AANH, Archivo Arístides Rojas, Hojas Sueltas de José Tadeo Monagas (hereafter HSAAR), Ar 5/G3/carpeta 1, no.1.

³ Páez, Autobiografía, ii. 253.

⁴ Ibid., p.258. '... reestablecer la República de Colombia y organizarla en estados federales para sacar a los venezolanos del estrecho círculo en que los consideraba; declarar que la religión Católica Apostólica Romana era la de la República; que los empleos públicos de todas clases debían estar en manos de los fundadores de la libertad y antiguos patriotas, etc. ...'

should be controlled by the old heroes, and not by the aristocracy that Páez had allied himself with, was possibly the main reason for joining the revolt. Monagas explained the problem in his letter of 8 August 1835 to Páez:

'... Neither you nor I planned or took part in the movement of the 8th [July]. The fact already existed when it came to our notice, and it not being in our power to stop what had already occurred, patriotism and the wish for the public good were advising us to salvage from this occurrence the good that would be possible for the country, without arguing whether the fact itself was good or bad, because this would not influence except by irritating even more and heightening passions.

'While one of us exists [founders of the nation], that [our existence] will be the object of the rancour and fury of our men of letters and of our conservative oligarchy. They will now use you to see if they can destroy us, and they will later use someone else to destroy you, because our existence is the indictment that condemns them.'¹

Besides, this revolution would again measure the strengths of the different leaders.

The government was authorised to raise an army of 10,000 men with which to subdue the whole country. Caracas lacked guns, supplies, horses, and the comisaría de guerra had only \$5,000 pesos with which to mobilise the army.² It would have been difficult for Páez to defeat Monagas without losing the rest of the country, so he decided to send peace envoys to negotiate with him.³ The decree of El Pirital, 3 November 1835, guaranteed life, property and ranks to all of Monagas's followers if they would lay down their arms.⁴ There was some disagreement within the government about the convenience of offering clemency to rebels revolting for a second time,

¹ Quoted by Páez. Ibid., p.254.

² Francisco González Guinán, Historia Contemporánea de Venezuela (Caracas, 1909), ii.433.

³ J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, p.34

⁴ Páez, op.cit., ii.264.

and Santos Michelena, the treasury and foreign affairs secretary, resigned rather than forgive the recurring offenders.¹ Congress, however, did ratify the main parts of the decree. Monagas had again been pardoned, and he again returned home. Páez said he had to ask for a \$3,000 peso loan from Monagas's wife, Luisa Oriach, to finance the return march of his troops to Caracas since he had exhausted his supplies and funds. This loan may have really been necessary to Páez, and certainly symbolised the new friendly understanding between the two leaders. Parra-Pérez thinks that only \$1,700 pesos were lent on 5 November, two days after the decree, from documents that he reproduces. Páez promised to repay the loan in two months, but only repaid it a year later, 1 November 1836, and without interest.² Monagas moved to El Tigre during the following years. He married his thirteen year old daughter Clara Antonia to the merchant Juan Giuseppi at Maturín in 1836 or 1837.³

Peace with Monagas allowed Páez to concentrate on the rest of the country. Florencio Jiménez had been subdued in Barquisimeto, and Colonel Farías surrendered to General Montilla on 30 December. Soon only Puerto Cabello was left, now commanded by Mariño.⁴ Monagas had tipped the balance. Vargas returned from exile and resumed office while Páez resigned his emergency commission. Under siege, Puerto Cabello surrendered on 1 March 1836.

¹ Un Venezolano, Apuntes Históricos con Algunas Observaciones Sobre el Principio, Progreso y Término de la Sublevación Acaecida en la Capital de la República de Venezuela el 8 de Julio de 1835 (Caracas?, 1836).

² Páez, Autobiografía, ii.266. C.Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, i.495-6.

³ C.A. Monagas de Giuseppi to D. Ramírez, 1908, in Inauguración Busto J.T. Monagas, p.9. José Tadeo's younger brother Pacífico had married Josefa Giuseppi in 1822, suggesting early family and business ties with Juan. D.W. Fernández, 'La Familia Monagas', pp.76, 89.

⁴ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, i.503-5. J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.33-6.

Without this port the reformist navy, commanded by Renato Beluche, became ineffective. The revolt had ended. Mariño, once Bolívar's rival, was only allowed to return to his home in La Victoria ten years later; his regional power base eroded he would have to serve the government to survive. Páez had destroyed the political force of his main rival, Mariño. Both Páez and Monagas had benefited from the revolution. The East belonged to Monagas entirely.¹

Trouble continued after the revolution of the reforms. President Vargas found he was alone. He had lost the confidence of many in congress and in the council of state. Feeling he was unable to govern he resigned on 14 April, just eight months after returning to office. With Vargas's resignation the politics of the nation came to revolve 'firmly and definitely' around Páez. Swedish Count Adlercreutz felt that the administration had fallen because Páez had refused to give it his moral support, and that once fallen Páez had used his influence to reestablish the administration only to proclaim his greatness and to convince the civilian oligarchy of his decisive control.² Excessive measures had to be

¹ Páez, op.cit., ii.268. Jane Lucas de Grummond, Envoy to Caracas (Baton Rouge, 1951), p.52. Parra-Pérez, ibid., i.515, ii.37,50. General Beluche was quoted as saying that the revolution had managed only to enhance Páez's prestige. Beluche, born in New Orleans, probably second cousin of brothers Jean, Pierre and Alex Laffite. Alex, known as Dominique You, and Beluche, expert cannoneers, were instrumental in the defence of New Orleans at Chalmette against the British in 1814-15. They kept a steady, alternate fire of their battery during the artillery duel of 1 Jan.1815. Of 22 British guns, 5 were dismounted and 8 disabled in 40 minutes, most of the damage being done by Beluche and You. With the defeat of their artillery the British never got farther than Chalmette. Beluche had been sailing for the Cartagena navy in 1813. His ship 'Popa' became the flagship 'General Bolívar' for the Les Cayes expedition of March 1816. He fought at the naval battle of Maracaibo 23 July 1823. He then commanded Colombia's Pacific fleet. After the war he settled at Puerto Cabello. Jane Lucas de Grummond, The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans (Baton Rouge, 1961), pp.5-7,11-12,17,23-4,81,104,108,116-17,155-8. Isidro Antonio Beluche, Renato Beluche, El Invicto Almirante (Panama, 1951), p.19.

² Count Adlercreutz to the Swedish government, 6 July 1840, quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., ii.29-30.

introduced in an effort to pacify the countryside. The law of thefts of 23 May 1836 virtually defined all protest as hurto, theft, and vagrancy.¹ The law prescribed the death penalty for banditry and violence, and violence included theft. This one law sought to protect property and punish any revolts by calling for the death penalty. The countryside must have been perceived as being clearly out of control if such repressive measures had to be made law.

Venezuela's economy was also suffering. Not only did the smallpox epidemics of 1841 and 1844 affect the labour force, but the first major world economic crisis to affect Venezuela came in 1837.² Coffee and cacao prices fell on the world market, and this fall caused more hardship to a country that depended on these two crops. Arellano Moreno mentions that the 1841 world crisis began affecting Venezuela in 1843. Coffee prices and its export figures dropped 45 per cent from the 1841 level. Coffee prices had not been too profitable in 1841, and they now fell below production costs.³

¹ Germán Carrera Damas, Boves, Aspectos Socioeconómicos de la Guerra de Independencia (Caracas, 1972), p.159.

² J.L. Salcedo-Bastardo, Historia Fundamental de Venezuela (Caracas, 1972), p.478. Guillermo Iribarren Mora, Pensamientos Sobre Caminos (Caracas, 1960), p.9;10 for the smallpox epidemic of 1841. French acting Chargé d'Affaires Turreil to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 15 Nov.1844, mentions the smallpox epidemic in Caracas. A.M.A.E., Correspondance Politique-Vénézuéla, vol.II, fos.243-4.

³ Antonio Arellano Moreno, Memorias Provinciales 1845 (Caracas, 1973), p.viii. Also D'Ascoli, Esquema, p.311. In 1847, Iribarren explained that Europe and the United States were recovering by 1842 while Venezuela worsened because the oligarchy could not control the country's situation. The price of coffee fell from \$12 pesos per quintal in 1834 to \$7 pesos in 1841. By 1844 agriculture was heavily in debt, there was a lack of cash and the crisis could still be felt in 1847. G. Iribarren, Pensamientos, pp.9-11. R. Veloz, Economía, pp.41-63, shows an increase in coffee production and export value, but a drop of 15-25% in export prices. See also G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, Appendix ii, p.149. J.V. Lombardi, Decline and Abolition, pp.164-5, shows a slight drop in the price of coffee, but almost constant rises in the amount exported and in its export value.

Interest rates had always been high and the law of liberty of contracts of 1834 had not brought them down enough. Toro estimated that coffee exports for the year 1841/2 would equal 4 million pesos, and that producers would receive 2.7 million pesos. This amount would give the producers a profit of 27% annually. Under the existing system, Toro believed that that high profit margin was necessary since interest rates were at least 18% per annum, and the capital used for expansion would not produce returns for the first three years until the new trees could give their first crop.¹ This situation could remain profitable as long as coffee prices on the world market remained high enough to give returns that would compensate for the initially high expenses of coffee expansion. When world prices fell producers found they could not repay their loans easily, and trouble between debtors and their creditors grew. There were smaller drops in the prices of cacao and these affected the ability of cacao producers to repay their debts. The price of cattle (some meat had gone as tasajo to feed slaves in the Caribbean and British troops and sailors in the Antilles) also fell.² The law of 1841 of espera y quita was passed at this time in an effort to protect the creditor from the increasing number of defaulted debtors. The loss to cattle breeders was more than covered by the fact that the price of hides continued steady during these years, and by the natural growth of the herds. The export of hides now became more important.³

¹ Fermín Toro's, Reflexiones Sobre la Ley de 10 de Abril de 1834 y Otras Obras (Caracas, 1941), as discussed by T. Halperin Donghi, Hispanoamérica Después de la Independencia, pp.101,118. M. Pérez Vila argues that interest rates had been higher, but had been lowered by favourable market conditions abroad and the law of 1834; 'Gobierno Deliberativo', pp.74-5.

² Cf.p.30, fn.3.

³ J.V. Lombardi, Decline and Abolition, pp.166-7.

The hardships caused by the crises began to be reflected in the political activity of the country. Leaders of more liberal tendencies, mostly moderate oligarchs, joined in 1840 to found the Liberal Party. Antonio Leocadio Guzmán was appointed editor of the liberal newspaper El Venezolano that began publishing later that year.¹ As editor he would play a vital role in channelling the diverse views of the Liberals into an effective opposition to the ruling party. As the Liberals became organised they came to realise that they could criticise the existing government by criticising the past governments since the same group continued to rule. Soon the Liberals became an effective force that the ruling oligarchy would have to consider. The Liberals pressed for a more representative government, a limit on interest rates, an end to capital punishment, and the abolition of slavery. The nation's economic problems, although caused mainly by world conditions, were blamed on the oligarchy's policies. Pulido believed that political passions were first aroused in 1842, and that Barinas was a centre of the Liberal opposition. He emphasised that the Liberals were intellectuals, not ruffians, and that all activity was non-violent.² The godo (conservative) newspaper El Escalpelo defended the law of 10 April 1834, the law of contracts legalising usury, by stating that 'agriculture's poor state was due to the debtors who were either irresponsible or had never planned to repay their debts.'³ The Liberals called for the law to be repealed.

¹ Luís Troconis Guerrero, La Cuestión Agraria en la Historia Nacional (Biblioteca de Autores Tachirenses, 29, 1962), p.82. Some of its supporters: the old Marqués del Toro, Manuel Felipe Tovar, and Juan Bautista Mijares.

² L. Pulido, Recuerdos, pp.66-67. A. Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.viii.

³ El Escalpelo (Caracas), 2 (26 July 1844), 'A la víctima de Cain ...', pp.1-3, quoted in Robert P. Matthews, 'Cinco Periódicos Olvidados de 1844-46 y las Grandes Cuestiones de Entonces', Boletín Histórico (Caracas), 29 (May 1972), p.287.

General opposition to the government was now heard openly. The Liberal newspaper El Republicano of Blas Bruzual denounced the National Bank established with godo money as an attempt to evade paying taxes. Having been founded as a national bank approved by congress and handling the government's account it was exempted from paying taxes by the laws passed by the godo controlled congress in 1844.¹ It also attacked El Liberal, a godo newspaper despite its name, for stating that Páez could not be criticised without badly affecting the nation since Páez was the nation.² After four years of opposition the Liberals had gathered strength and were organised for the vice-presidential and congressional elections of August 1844 as the Liberal Party. El Republicano endorsed José Gregorio Monagas as a vice-presidential candidate because he had asked for nothing after the war, not even his pension as a general, and because he was the best fighter in battle.³

Under the title of 'Páez expatriating Bolívar!', El Republicano bitterly attacked Páez for forgetting the heroes of the war like Monagas, Ayala, Lara, Ibarra, and even Mariño, and replacing them with his own people like Díaz and Quintero. Páez's cabinet was defined as a government of usupers.⁴ This newspaper is not only representative of other Liberal

¹ El Republicano (Barcelona), 2 (29 May 1844), p.2, 3 (5 June 1844), p.1. The bank will be discussed in Chapter 3.

² Ibid., 3 (5 June 1844), p.4.

³ Ibid., 7 (2 July 1844), p.1. Half of congress was elected every two years for a term of office of four years. The president and vice-president were elected for terms of four years at alternating elections so that the vice-president would assist in the transfer of power between presidents.

⁴ Ibid., 16 (4 Sept.1844), p.2. The Ayalas and Ibarras were wealthy families that had supported and financed the Independence movement from its beginning. Ramón Ayala was governor of Caracas in 1830-1, when Antonio Leocadio Guzmán was interior secretary. Diego Ibarra had been aide-de-camp to Bolívar. Jacinto Lara was a patriotic general who fought in Peru, and later became a regional leader in Barquisimeto. Quintero and Díaz were two of Páez's most trusted men. Angel Quintero was interior and justice secretary, 1839-43. Pedro Pablo Díaz was foreign secretary, 1833-34.

papers, it was also the semi-official voice of José Tadeo Monagas, since it was edited in Barcelona at the time, and Blas Bruzual was a friend of his. The Liberals won the elections in the first week of August, but the provincial electors voted Urbaneja as vice-president over José Gregorio by a surprisingly large margin, 12-3. Congress then voted for Urbaneja 173 votes to Aranda's 88 to José Gregorio's 3. Urbaneja was considered an honest man, but he had been Páez's vice-president. The large margin implied that many Liberals had willingly co-operated with the godos. El Republicano reflected the feeling of malaise by quoting Antonio José de Irizarri:

'... if in other places the best of a people is elected, amongst us the people do not elect, either the best, or the worst, or anything, the people do not elect or name the governor: he has himself elected by those who have been given the right to authorise an intrigue that takes little effort to compose. Our republics are on paper: despotism [is] in the soul of he who governs, with one or another exception; passive obedience [is] in all the people,¹ victims of the miserly interests of half a dozen ambitious men.'

From the beginning the Liberal congress showed that it was still controlled by the Conservatives. The government had not changed with the elections.

The economic year 1846/7 brought a deficit of 1,113,400 pesos fuertes, which was very high for those times. The deficit becomes more serious if we realise that the treasury depended on 1,200,000 - 1,600,000 pesos it received yearly from import taxes. The government suffered deficits for

¹ Ibid., 'El Problema de las Elecciones', 21 (10 Oct. 1844), p.1. Irizarri was a famous Guatemalan polemicist.

'... si en otras partes se elije lo mejor que hai en el pueblo, entre nosotros el pueblo no elije, ni lo mejor, ni lo peor, ni nada, el pueblo no elije ni nombra al mandatario: este se hace nombrar por aquellos á quienes se les ha dado el derecho de autorizar una intriga que cuesta muy poco trabajo llevar al cabo. Nuestras repúblicas están en el papel: el despotismo en el alma del que manda, con una que otra excepción; la obediencia pasiva en todos los pueblos, víctimas de los mesquinos intereses de media docena de ambiciosos.'

Also La Nueva Era (Caracas), 'Política', 1 (6 Sept. 1844), p.1, 'La política no es el arte de fingir y de engañar.'

two more years before it was able to find its way under Monagas's rule.¹ A further problem was that the treasury lost at least 300,000 pesos per annum in contraband.² Other estimates on the loss of tax revenue to contraband range from a third to a half of the total tax revenue. The only assurance is that a lot of contraband took place at this time.

Venezuela's official exports totalled 6,410,208 pesos fuertes in 1846/7, down from \$7,120,294 the previous year. The main export products were:

¹ A. Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.viii. Gives figures in Bolívares, 5,567,000. Divide this by 4 to convert them to pesos sencillos, simple pesos, and by 5 to convert them to pesos fuertes, dollars. The peso sencillo was also known as peso macuquino and equalled 80 centavos fuertes, while the peso fuerte equalled 100. M. Landaeta Rosales, Riqueza Circulante, pp.14,20-3. Figures will be given in pesos fuertes unless specified otherwise. \$6.25 pesos fuertes equalled £1 sterling. Wilson to Palmerston, 11 Mar. 1847, F.O. 80/49, fos. 108 ff.

² A. Arellano Moreno, ibid., p.xiii. Official figures for 1845/6 showed that 45 more foreign ships had left Venezuelan ports than had entered them, while 562 Venezuelan ships had left ports they had never entered. In total, 1,865 ships had left Venezuelan ports, while only 1,258 had entered. Almost one-third of all ships leaving port had never entered it, therefore various taxes and duties were never collected officially, and their cargoes did not pay official import duties either. Wilson to Palmerston, 11 Mar.1847, F.O. 80/49, fos. 108 ff.

Coffee	-	\$2,431,848
Cacao	-	\$1,218,255
Cattle Hides	-	\$ 923,836
Other Animal Hides	-	\$ 151,040
Cattle	-	\$ 130,954
Mules	-	\$ 96,825
Tasajo	-	\$ 86,680 ¹

Cattle, mules and their by-products presented a welcome addition to two crop dependency. We can suppose that the largest ranching families made the most profits. In the 1840s there were four large eastern ranching families: the Fernández de Miranda, the Monagas, the Mier y Terán, and the Figuera.² They probably claimed the greatest part of the \$333,539 of trade in cattle, mules, hides, tasajo, cheese, and tallow at Barcelona and Maturín, plus a substantial amount of the trade done through Angostura.

¹ T.E. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, viii. (IV-B/1847-1853) p.14-A for quantities and values of exports 1846-7, Doc.434, 'Cuadros Estadísticos del Comercio Exterior 1846-1847'. Also p.16-C. Of Venezuela's total exports in 1846/7 Barcelona and Maturín exported almost 17 per cent of the cattle hides worth \$157,052, almost 28 per cent of the cattle worth \$36,274, almost 65 per cent of the mules worth \$62,452, over 83 per cent of the tasajo worth \$72,204, almost 62 per cent of the cheese worth \$5,300, and all of the tallow worth \$257. It is not possible to determine the proportion of Angostura's exports which were supplied by the southern llanos orientales, but it may have been substantial. Angostura exported almost 37 per cent of all cattle hides worth \$337,477, and over 61 per cent of all cattle worth \$80,039. These figures are gotten by combining p.16-C (amounts of produce exported at each port) with p.14-A (quantities and values of total exports). These figures indicate that the average value for a head of cattle was \$8.2 pesos, \$16.9 for a donkey, \$56.3 for a horse, \$78.4 for a mule, \$1.32 for a sheep, and \$1.28 for a goat. On p.14-A the figures for the total amount and value of other animal hides exported are incorrect.

² J. De Armas, Ganadería, p.287.

Both planters and merchants suffered by the economic crises, the latter despite their favourable usury laws. Some initiatives were made, proving that some clear minds attempted to find solutions necessary to protect Venezuela from slump. Aranda, who had lost to Urbaneja in the elections for vice-president and was now the treasury and foreign secretary, resigned his cabinet post and joined Fermín Toro to present a plan for the creation of the Institute of Territorial Credit. The plan was approved by the legislature, but vetoed by President Soublette, now Páez's caretaker president. This credit organisation would have helped stabilise the economy by offering mortgages of up to 20,000 pesos at 10 per cent annual interest, but its leading exponents were divided about possible policy. Some believed that government intervention would strengthen the economy by making credit available to the hard pressed growers. Others believed the government should abstain from any involvement in the temporary economic difficulties. The views of many congressmen changed during the arguments, and when the bill returned to congress for a vote to override the veto it did not receive the support it had had initially.¹

The executive was as confused as congress as it searched for solutions for the economy. Soublette at one point proposed that 8 million pesos be spent on roads rather than the budgeted 160,000 pesos explaining that greater investment would yield bigger benefits sooner. Also, more roads would make the countryside more accessible and so easier to control. This recommendation was lost in doctrinaire discussions about 'liberalism and interventionism', and by the irresponsibility of ignorant leaders who

¹ Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.ix. J. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.253-9. To finance the institute the government would have been allowed to seek a loan of up to 5 million pesos, and repay it at 6 per cent annual interest.

refused to face the problem. Arellano Moreno believes that this confusion at all government levels worsened the economic crisis, and created more social and political agitation.¹

From 1844 the Conservative oligarchy feared loss of power, and rationalised its fear with arguments that its downfall would mean the end of the country's institutions and of order.² Páez had decided not to stand for president when Soublette's term finished in 1847. He chose two war heroes whom he believed would uphold the system and not hesitate to use force to stop the social revolution heralded by the Liberals. The two candidates were Rafael Urdaneta and José Tadeo Monagas. Urdaneta was living in Paris, but had powerful backing from his native Maracaibo and among the military. Unfortunately, he fell ill and died in 1845 before leaving Paris.³ Monagas alone had to wait for the elections, and he chose to serve Soublette and Páez well until he had been elected.

The state of the nation was confused. The interior was plagued by bandits and popular uprisings. Guzmán and his Liberal supporters had decided to run an aggressive campaign for Guzmán's candidacy to the presidency. They called for the fall of the Conservative oligarchy in terms that could be considered violent. More moderate Liberals began to break away and join with moderate Conservatives to support other men,

¹ Ibid., pp.ix-x. For a discussion on the convenience of roads at that time see G. Iribarren, Pensamientos, pp.11,165,167.

² L. Pulido, Recuerdos, p.67.

³ Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.x. Robinson described Urdaneta in 1819 as 'one of the few men in this country, who really deserves independence, for, in the strictest sense of the word, he is a liberal and gentlemanly man.' J.H. Robinson, Journal, p.144. In 1817 Bolívar showed his appreciation for both men by saying, 'De mis Generales, Urdaneta es el más bello, Monagas el más hermoso y gallardo.' Quoted from a letter by Pablo Giuseppi-Monagas to R. Mota, Barcelona, 24 July 1908, published in Inauguración Busto J.T. Monagas, p.12.

generally following their regional preferences. Guzmán had popular support in the centre of the country, while the moderates in Caracas favoured Colonel José Félix Blanco, a hero of independence. Another old warrior was favoured by moderates in Carabobo and part of the West, General Bartolomé Salom. There were major revolts, which some have described as attempted social revolutions, in the provinces of Caracas, Barcelona, and Carabobo and even in Páez's Apure. Soublette appointed Pulido governor of Apure in 1846 hoping that he might pacify the area. Barinas and Apure were now Liberal and Pulido was taken for a Liberal because he did not attempt to repress any political group. The Liberals allied themselves with him, and peace returned to that area.¹ In the East, José Tadeo was seen as Páez's choice, so eastern Liberals chose someone else, their old candidate and his brother, José Gregorio. Military veterans whose services had not been used by the oligarchy were now available against it, and they flocked to support the different candidates.²

From his podium, the Liberal Caracas city council, Guzmán attacked the administration. He blamed it for uncontrolled centralism, for usury policies, for favouritism, for interference in the legislature, and for protecting the National Bank. As a direct challenge to Páez he claimed that Venezuela was no longer the patrimony of one military caudillo.³

¹ L. Pulido, Recuerdos, p.68.

² T. Halperin, op.cit., p.27. Many veterans who had sided with the reformists had been struck off the military rosters and exiled for a few years. After that revolution the army had been reduced and some loyal officers were retired, while the active militia, recruited from members of the upper levels of society, was expanded to become the main police force and government support in the country. Many more soldiers resented this reorganisation.

³ Enrique Bernardo Núñez, La Estatua de 'El Venezolano' (Guzmán, o un Destino Frustrado) (Caracas, 1963), pp.12-13.

His supporters formed a vast network throughout the countryside that was more and more willing to use force to defend itself from the abuses of the oligarchy.¹ After ruling without a sizeable opposition for eighteen years, the oligarchs, born during the colonial period to which they paid the natural tribute of education and interests, were unable to receive new ideas for socio-political evolution, and to give way to a more politicized generation that had become more vocal under Soublette's relatively open-minded and uninvolved administration. The oligarchs decided to close access to power and to fight the Liberal opposition that they felt was flooding them by taking draconian measures to halt the democratic wave.² B.F. Skinner says, 'Even those who stand out as revolutionaries are almost wholly the conventional products of the systems they overthrow.'³ As a result of having access to power closed to them the Liberals could only react more aggressively.

Juan Vicente González, also a Caracas council member, attacked Guzmán by trying to show that he was a scoundrel. In early July, González accused him of conspiracy. González considered him a man without beliefs, a public troublemaker, a public servant without probity, and warned him that the war between them would be one of extermination.⁴ Through his newspaper González accused Guzmán of defrauding city funds. It seems that

¹ Ramón Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, Elipse de Una Ambición de Poder (2nd edn., Madrid, 1952), p.303. The network of agents was initially created to distribute El Venezolano.

² Inauguración Busto J.T. Monagas, p.38.

³ B.F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity (New York, 1972), p.124; for a party's choice of action see p.151.

⁴ Diario de La Tarde (Caracas), 11 (12 June 1846), 'Carta I', in Presidencia de la República, Pensamiento Político Venezolano del Siglo XIX, eds. Ramón J. Velásquez, Pedro Grases, Manuel Pérez Vila (Caracas, 1961), (Juan Vicente González) iii.58-9. The conspiracy González referred to was the 'fusión violenta de razas', the 'violent mixture of the races', interpreted as a race war. Ibid., iii.65-6, 'Carta IV', 20 (23 June 1846).

7,000 pesos were used to cobble city streets, but only about 800 pesos worth of work was done, and despite the questions put to Guzmán, as the councilman in charge of street maintenance, he would not explain the discrepancy.¹ González echoed the wishes of the members of the 'party of order' when he asked what the government was doing to stop the conspiracy. The government answered with a round of political repression that Díaz Sánchez has described as the worst the country had ever known.²

The Interior Secretary Francisco Cobos Fuertes directed the government's measures. He deposed the Liberal members of the Caracas city council accusing them of abusive measures and would do the same in other towns' councils. In some regions Liberals lost their voting rights as they were struck off the electoral rolls. Some Liberals were even jailed, branded as seditious. The Caracas city council, reinstalled as antiguzmancista, annulled the rolls in various parishes, and even Guzmán, a presidential candidate, was annulled as an elector with the excuse that he was a debtor of public funds through taxes payable on the court costs of a case brought against him.³ Cobos declared the opposition press seditious and called for the trials of its editors on 27 August.

¹ Guzmán was a 'charlatán ignorante y vocinglero, para quien el nombre de patria no tiene significación alguna; que es un ciudadano depravado, sin mérito para la extravagante aspiración [the presidency], conspirador y turbulento; que, como municipal, es un defraudador de las rentas públicas.' Ibid., iii.70, 'Carta a los señores Toribio Iribarren y Doctores José Manuel García y Manuel María Echeandía', in 27 (1 July 1846).

² R. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.304-5.

³ Ibid., pp.305,631 (fn. VI, 3). One could not be in debt to be an elector. Felipe Larrazábal's El Patriota protested Cobos Fuertes's measures. L. Troconis, Cuestión Agraria, p.83. J. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.21,272-3.

From late July the government had been calling up its active militia. The council of state authorised the executive to raise 10,000 men and a domestic loan of up to 300,000 pesos.¹

With the Liberals being persecuted it was simply a matter of time before trouble broke out. Guzmán and his supporters realised that any future president would certainly need Páez's support to be elected. An interview between Páez and Guzmán was considered appropriate by some who wished to reconcile political rivals. There are various interpretations of the reasons different sides may have had for attending, and of how an agreement to meet came about. Some have said that in an effort not to be completely repressed the Liberals decided to try a policy of electoral coexistence in the hopes of possibly sharing power or choosing a candidate acceptable to both parties.² Zuloaga believes that in August Guzmán realised that he could not win the elections and so planned to get power by force through a revolt.³ This idea may have crossed Guzmán's mind, but it seems doubtful that he would not have realised how weak his position was with visible evidence that the administration was organising to defeat him.

Mariño was willing to act as intermediary between the two leaders for the sake of peace. Páez agreed to meet Guzmán, but only at his hacienda in Maracay since he claimed to be too ill to travel. Guzmán wanted Páez to meet him at La Victoria where Mariño lived. Guzmán's prestige would increase if Páez came part of the way to see him. Also, the public would interpret Páez's going to La Victoria as a tacit endorsement of Guzmán. The meeting seemed doomed from the moment that

¹ R. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, p.309. L. Troconis, ibid. J. Gil Fortoul, ibid.

² L. Troconis, ibid. E.B. Núñez, Estatua 'El Venezolano', p.23.

³ Nicomedes Zuloaga, Páez-Estudio Histórico-Político (Caracas, 1897), p.76.

Páez insisted on not moving, even to meet Guzmán in some public place in Maracay. In spite of Páez's attitude of a sovereign condescending to meet a subject, Mariño convinced Guzmán to come at least to La Victoria from where communication with Maracay would be simplified. Obviously, both leaders probably hoped the meeting would take place and the country be saved, but both wanted it on their own terms and were not willing to compromise. If Páez was willing to meet it was only because he wanted Guzmán to agree to be a vassal to him. Guzmán wanted Páez to recognise his aspirations. Being realistic both probably felt no meeting would take place, and so were manoeuvring to gain advantage from the situation by having the other appear to be the one who withdrew, thus leaving no hope for the political salvation of the country.

Another possibility is that one or the other or both were marking time while preparing for a decisive confrontation. With elections, Páez expected uprisings. The oligarchs did not want an understanding between the two men. The danger was evident to the ruling groups, and they felt it necessary to portray Guzmán as a social outcast. On the eve of Guzmán's departure from Caracas the President sent General Piñango to fight the Calabozo rebels that were thought to be headed for Cura. The same day that Guzmán left Caracas, 1 September, el indio Rangel rebelled south of Lake Valencia in the name of Guzmán. As Guzmán made his triumphant entrance to La Victoria Páez, recently ill, had recovered sufficiently to take command of the army. It seems Rangel meant to capture the armoury at Maracay, a rather difficult target when one considers that Páez lived there. On the same 1 September the council of state named Páez and Monagas first and second chiefs of the army to re-establish obedience to the regime. With news of the outbreak the Guzmán party at La Victoria realised its fruitless situation there and disbanded. Some men went back to their regions to join uprisings.

Others went into hiding. Guzmán returned to Caracas and stayed out of sight, awaiting the direction events would take. He was arrested on the night of 3 October. Páez was able to pacify Carabobo by capturing the leaders of the revolt, Rangel and Ezequiel Zamora. The first had been a bandit, the second had been a small-town storekeeper.¹

Some authors find it hard to believe that the events of the revolt proved that a Liberal conspiracy existed. There seems little doubt that Guzmán had at least some idea of the possibility of revolts at that time. Páez seems to have been preparing for them. There may have been an organised conspiracy to use violence, but it seems more likely that Guzmán kept control of his more extremist leaders for as long as he could. He certainly would have been a bungling conspirator to be making a hasty retreat to Caracas once he had ordered the revolt. One hypothesis no author has considered is the possibility that the oligarchs would have coordinated Rangel's rebellion to coincide with the proposed meeting. There is no doubt of Rangel's sincerity, indeed, he died for his rebellion,

¹ Many authors have covered these events. I shall only mention the ones I have used to write this description. E.B. Núñez, Estatua, pp.21-6, for uprising pp.28-31, on rebel leaders, p.32 ff. R. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.310-22. J. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.265-76,279. R.A. Rondón-Márquez, Guzmán Blanco, 'El Autócrata Civilizador'. Parábola de los Partidos Políticos Tradicionales en la Historia de Venezuela (Madrid, 1952), i.40-4. N. Zuloaga, Páez, pp.20,57,59,76-7. F. González Guinán, Historia, iv.173-218,235-55. C. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.287-333. A. Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.ix. Laureano Villanueva, Vida del Valiente Ciudadano General Ezequiel Zamora (Caracas, 1898), pp.85-105. Adolfo Rodríguez, Ezequiel Zamora (Caracas, 1977), pp.81-126. British Chargé d'Affaires Belford Hinton Wilson to Viscount Palmerston, Caracas, 19 Sept.1846, P.R.O., Foreign Office Papers, Series 80, vol.40, fos.20-5. (hereafter F.O. 80/40). Also 21 Oct.1846, F.O. 80/40, fos. 153-8; 29 Jan.1847, F.O. 84/686 (Slave Trade Papers), fo.189. French Chargé d'Affaires Chevalier Celeste E. David to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 14 Sept.1846, A.M.A.E., Correspondance Politique-Vénézuéla (hereafter C.P.-V.), vol. III, fos.124-5. Also 30 Sept.1846, C.P.-V., III, fos. 143-7; 5 Oct.1846, ibid., fos.148-9; 20 Oct.1846, ibid., fos.150-3, 5 Jan.1847, ibid., fos.188-9.

but perhaps Páez's agents could have infiltrated Rangel's group and encouraged him to rebel when he did. Perhaps Rangel himself thought of rebelling at that moment and of using the Guzmán slogan to cover criminal intentions. But the question of timing does arise, and although it could all have been an unhappy coincidence, one cannot help but wonder at the speed with which Páez and the government knew of the outbreaks, compared with the apparent isolation of La Victoria where news arrived hours and even days after Páez had reacted. Also, although the armoury was a fair prize, it does seem too convenient that Rangel should have decided to attack exactly where Páez was ready for him, on his own ground at Maracay. It is impossible to prove this, but the Rangel revolt was the perfect excuse for Páez to break the Guzmán meeting. Guzmán had placed himself in a difficult position by antagonising everyone who did not support him, and Páez may have decided to call his bluff by influencing the timing of the 'guzmanist' revolt. Even if he had not, the advantage Páez got from these revolts was enough to discredit Guzmán. Zuloaga mentions that these revolts were of an anarchic and socially destructive character, and that not one hero of the War of Independence was involved. The rebel chiefs were all ignorant men, and the people did not rise up to support them, but waited out the elections.¹

In the East, José Gregorio, the comandante de armas of Barcelona since 1844, looked the other way when the revolts started. Rondón-Márquez says that he lost his commission and was called to Caracas to explain his conduct. If so, nothing came of it because records show he held that post until 1850.²

¹ N. Zuloaga, Páez, p.77,79.

² R.A. Rondón-Márquez, Guzmán Blanco, p.44. Manuel Landaeta Rosales, Hoja de Servicios del General José Gregorio Monagas. Ofrenda de la Sociedad Popular Cooperadora 4 de Mayo de 1895 (Caracas, 1895), p.7. See F. González Guinán, Historia, iv.223-8, for José Tadeo's defence of his brother.

José Tadeo took command in the East. He easily pacified his own region, and marched into the llanos of Caracas. It is not unlikely that the revolts in Barcelona had been staged for the benefit of the Caracas oligarchy. The East, except perhaps the city of Cumaná, supported only Monagas at this time so that any revolts there would be interpreted as revolts against him. Widespread social revolts in the East would have been improbable if he had made allies of other local leaders. If the uprisings were not staged to show off Monagas's military effectiveness they were certainly doomed from the beginning. He quickly pacified the Caracas llanos to the Tuy valley, probably by making deals with the rebel leaders Echeandía and Aguado, and 'proved' his subordination to Páez and the godos.

Back in February, Guzmán had supported José Tadeo's candidacy, perhaps to win him over to the Liberals, and had written that after the war Monagas had been a hard worker, a man who would show his friendship by shaking hands with anyone he met. He did not wish for anything nor did anyone see him wishing, according to Guzmán.¹ This flowery description is highly unlikely of a man who has been described as aloof and aristocratic, and who always spoke to his brother, José Gregorio, in the formal usted form.² Level de Goda described José Tadeo as, 'in private, a serious and circumspect man, honourable and of austere customs, of good judgement and of admirable sense, at the same time as a man of great character.'³ Angel Quintero, Páez's confidant, called el ángel malo by the Liberals, described Monagas as 'a man of the jungles, divorced from society, and a stranger to politics and to the science of government.'⁴ He believed

¹ A.L. Guzmán, in El Republicano (Barcelona), (12 Feb.1846), 'Remitidos Conflicto'.

² Descriptions by Dr Marcos Falcón Briceño in conversation of 15 July 1975.

³ General L. Level de Goda, Refutación del Folleto Titulado Apoteosis del General Páez de Que es Autor El General Antonio Guzmán Blanco (Caracas, 1889), p.12.

⁴ Dr Angel Quintero, Manifiesto del Dr Angel Quintero (Boston, 1862), p.3.

him to be dangerous if he came to power because of his past, and incapable of running the government because he had no principles with which to work, and so Quintero from Carabobo supported Salom.

Páez held the key. After Monagas's good performance maintaining order, Páez had few doubts about his choice. He supposed that Monagas's opposition had arisen chiefly from personal ambition and that peace and order would be assured by satisfying that ambition. The threat of Guzmán's election still seemed real and Monagas offered a reasonable alternative. Páez and Monagas exchanged letters. Although Monagas gave fair warning that he would not govern according to the wishes of a small group, he also promised to govern with the men who had helped have him elected and counting on Páez's long experience and invincible sword.¹ In one last effort to be reassured the government sent a commission to see Monagas when, claiming illness, he had excused himself from attending a meeting with Páez. Monagas played well the role of a sick man with adverse feelings towards Guzmán, and the commissioners returned to Caracas with glowing reports.² Years later Páez acknowledged the importance of his influence in getting Monagas elected. 'Undoubtedly it is true that General José Tadeo Monagas owed

¹ J.A. Páez, Important documents in relation to the Present Situation of Venezuela; and the Attempt of General José Tadeo Monagas to establish a Despotic Government in That Country: with a few introductory remarks (New York, 1848), pp.vi-vii. F. González Guinán, Historia, iv.213,221-30,264. L. Level de Goda, Refutación, p.13. R. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.330-1, for the letters Monagas wrote to Páez. Ramón León León, Hombres y Sucesos de Venezuela (La República desde José Antonio Páez hasta Rómulo Gallegos) (Caracas, 1952), p.102. David to French foreign secretary, 5 Jan.1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.188-9. Letters between Páez and Monagas were published, effectively pressing for Monagas's election. C. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii. 330-2, 365.

² R. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.330-1. J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, p.119. F. González Guinán doubts this charade when compared to Monagas's sincere letter of 3 Nov.1846 to Soublette giving fair warning of his independence, iv. 221-30.

his election as President to the influence of the people of order and that I contributed not a little to his election.'¹ With the Liberals subdued, there is no doubt that Monagas posed the greatest threat of all the candidates should he not be elected. Neither Salom nor Blanco could rally troops like Monagas. Páez felt that Monagas counted on the whole of the East as his base of support. Salom had no such base. Páez is reputed to have said that if Salom were elected he (Páez) would have to leave the country. Apparently Salom and Blanco were the only two chiefs in Venezuela who had refused to acknowledge Páez as supreme ruler of the country. Salom would not have shown the deference to Páez that Monagas had already shown.²

Aldrey charged that at the elections of 20 August the people chose Guzmán, whereas the electors and the congress chose Monagas.³ In Santa Ana Sotillo took charge of the polling station. As the voters approached he would bar their entrance by telling them that the elections were free,

¹ 'Indudablemente es cierto que el Gral. José Tadeo Monagas debió su elección para Presidente al influjo de la gente de orden y que yo contribuí no poco a su elección.' from letter Páez to Gonzalo Peoli, New York City, 24 June 1867, in 'Carta de J.A. Páez a G. Peoli,' in Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia (Caracas), 104 (Oct.-Dec.1943), p.348.

² C. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.330. F. González Guinán, Historia, iv.199-200. R.A. Rondón-Márquez, Guzmán Blanco, p.48, for Páez's statement. Rafael Acevedo, Apuntes para la Historia (Caracas, 1848), p.2, for Salom and Blanco. Rafael Acevedo, El Contendor de 'El Revisor'. Numero 1 (Caracas, 18 May 1849), p.14, for Salom's power and lack of deference.

³ Fausto Teodoro de Aldrey, Rasgos biográficos para la historia de la vida pública del Gnl. Guzmán Blanco (Caracas, 1876), p.14. Aldrey was a strong supporter of Guzmán Blanco and editor of the official newspaper, La Opinión Nacional, during his rule.

but that if they had not come to vote for his 'compae Tadeo' they would have to enter over his dead body. Santa Ana voted for Monagas.¹ Venezuela's population that year was calculated at 1,273,155 people. About one tenth, 128,785, had the right to vote, and less than half voted, 60,022. The number of electors who would form the electoral colleges in each province to choose the president was 8,798, and on 4 October 1846, only 342 voted in the whole country.² Monagas's open subservience to Páez had lost him any Liberal support he might have had. With Salom as an alternative he lost further support. The voting by no means produced a clear winner as some have stated. Arellano called these elections 'second rate, full of governmental impurities'.³ Whether fair or not, the electoral representatives gave Monagas 107 votes, Salom 97 votes, Guzmán 57 votes, and Blanco 46 votes.

Since no candidate had received the required two-thirds to be elected it was up to congress to elect. Soubllette resigned officially on 20 January 1847. The provincial governor of Caracas, Mariano Uztáriz, thanked him for his decisive administration and for suppressing the demagogic conspiracies that would have ruined the country.⁴ Guzmán was

¹ M. Silva-Medina, Sotillo, p.24. Interview with Don Gerardo Monagas Ponte, Caracas, 20 June 1978.

² Memoria del Ministerio del Interior, 1847, document no.20, quoted by J. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.277-8. See also Wilson to Palmerston, 26 Jan.1847, F.O. 80/44, fos. 54 ff. C. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.329. David Bushnell, 'La Evolución del Derecho de Sufragio en Venezuela', Boletín Histórico (Caracas), 29(May 1972), p.202.

³ A. Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.x.

⁴ Mariano Uztáriz to President Soubllette, Caracas, 19 Jan.1847, in Archivo General de la Nación, Interior y Justicia, 1847, CCCXLIV, fo. 34 (hereafter A G N , I y J).

now officially on trial for his 'seditious preachings'.¹ Congress met on 23 January, and Guzmán was excluded from the list of candidates because he had lost his political rights since he was being tried for conspiracy. A citizen lost his rights if, among other things, he was being tried for a crime, and conspiracy was of the worst. A guilty verdict meant the death penalty.²

Monagas was elected Constitutional President of Venezuela for the fifth period, 1847-1851. In the name of the Vice-President, Interior Secretary Acevedo sent news of his election to Monagas overland that same day, also informing him that a ship would be sent to Barcelona to bring him to La Guaira as soon as he were ready.³ Heavy seas delayed the departure of the 'Diana del Orinoco', but this delay was of no consequence since Monagas was not ready to come to Caracas. First, he had to plan how he would govern. Like many others, González wondered, 'what will be General Monagas's policy?' He hoped it would not be anarchy.⁴

¹ A. Arellano Moreno, Memorias, p.ix.

² R. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, p.332. J. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.21-3. N. Zuloaga, Páez, pp.82-3. Guzmán's election as president by that Congress was practically impossible since more than half of its members belonged to the ruling group that opposed him.

³ Acevedo to Monagas, Caracas, 23 Jan.1847, for notification. Bermúdez to Acevedo, Caracas, 26 Jan.1847, for ship's delay. A G N, I y J 1847—CCCXLIV, fos. 120-4.

⁴ '¿Cuál será la política del general Monagas?, preguntaron algunos ...' J.V. González, Editorial, 'Política', La Prensa (Caracas), 33 (16 Feb.1847), quoted in Pensamiento Político, iii.151.

CHAPTER III

MONAGAS'S FIRST YEAR IN POWER

There had been various reasons for José Tadeo Monagas's success in national politics. The first reason was the local importance of the family. During the post-independence period it had built up its wealth and its political might. It progressed from a wealthy regional family to being possibly one of the wealthiest families in the whole of the East, and the most influential politically. The second reason was the realisation of Monagas's potential weight at a national level. His role in the revolts of 1831 and 1835 were public manifestations of his growing importance. His timely favours towards Páez made Páez more indebted to him. After 1835 Monagas gives the appearance of biding his own time.

Another factor in Monagas's national success was, very simply, his survival. By 1846 he had become one of a diminishing number of bolivarian generals who still commanded respect. The ability to survive when others lost power or died, like Mariño or Urdaneta, proved to be a most important factor.

The last reason was Monagas's growing reputation as a protector. He seems to have kept his loyal supporters well rewarded. He had been in a favourable position to help his friends by controlling the province's administration after independence. His enlarged group of followers was composed not only of locally respected families that the Monagases were related to, but also of people who owed everything to the family. Some of these unknown men married into the Monagas family and were favoured with government contracts or appointments. By the time he reached the presidency, Monagas administered a network of loyalties that he could use in the national government.

An example of Monagas's network in action illustrates the manner of its operation and the extent of its influence. On 24 April 1845 the Venezuelan schooner 'Americana' called at Grenada, but the customs comptroller there ordered it to leave at once or be confiscated. The captain apparently misunderstood the charge as not allowing entry to a Venezuelan ship not built in Venezuela.¹ The British-Venezuelan treaty of 29 October 1834 allowed this restriction if one of the nations called for it, but to Venezuela's knowledge Britain had never declared it in effect, always giving entry to foreign built ships that had been nationalized and were flying the Venezuelan flag. The 'Americana's' owner was Clara Antonia Monagas de Giuseppi, José Tadeo's 20 year old daughter married to one of his business partners.² The ship's consignees were Messieurs Peck, Gellineau, & Co., of Maturín. Pedro C. Gellineau was a friend of the Monagases, and may have been related to them by marriage. The consignees sent a representation about the incident to the comptroller of the customs house at Maturín who passed it on to Caracas. The foreign secretary then wrote Wilson on 23 June 1845 asking for details about the incident, and Wilson wrote the lieutenant governor of Grenada, Sir Charles Doyle. On 22 July the acting collector of Grenada's customs house reported that the 'Americana' had been ordered to leave not because of its build, but because of the composition of its crew. The law stipulated that the master and three-quarters of the crew had to be nationals of the same country before a vessel could sail under that country's flag. Of the 'Americana's' crew of eight, five were U.S. citizens who had remained on board since her arrival from Baltimore where she had been built. He also informed that the 'Americana' had

¹ Juan Manuel Manrique to Wilson, 23 June 1845, F.O. 80/32, fos. 235-8.

² Inauguración del Busto de José Tadeo Monagas, p.9.

entered Grenada twice since the incident, on 17 May and on 5 June, and had been found to be duly navigated and had been admitted.¹ If the collector's report is to be believed it is unlikely that the master of the 'Americana' had misunderstood the charge of 24 April since he did return with the correct crew twice before filing his complaint in Maturín.

When Wilson answered the foreign secretary with the results of his enquiries the secretary replied that Venezuela had passed a law on 10 May 1842 reducing the proportion of Venezuelan nationals required in a Venezuelan crew from three-quarters to one-third in extreme cases, due to the lack of Venezuelan sailors. He claimed that the 'Americana' was an extreme case and asked that Grenada allow this new minimum.² In effect the Venezuelan government was using this incident to ask Great Britain to relax its legal definition of a Venezuelan vessel. This relaxation would have given Venezuela even more preferential treatment than it already received at British Caribbean ports like Grenada. Considering that at that time Venezuela was not dealing effectively with its British loan obligations and that the matter seems to have been dropped one might assume that the British government found no reason to agree with the request. One can also suspect that Venezuela's request was meant to bother Wilson with petty matters and to cover-up the embarrassment of an inaccurate representation at Maturín.

Despite the government's desire to trouble Wilson this incident shows that the Monagas name was capable of mobilising the Venezuelan central government at this date in favour of its interests. There is no doubt about the central government's respect for the Monagas name.

¹ Wilson to Sir Charles J. Doyle, 25 June 1845, F.O. 80/32, fos. 239-41. Acting collector of Grenada customs house to J.W. Justyne, Governor's Secretary, Grenada, 22 July 1845, F.O. 80/33, fo. 15.

² Manrique to Wilson, 2 Aug. 1845, F.O. 80/33, fo. 24.

Before we can discuss his government we must understand the state of the nation that Monagas was to govern. The population of Venezuela in 1847 was estimated at 1,273,155. Oriente had only 153,000 of the total, while the province of Caracas by itself had 318,000.¹ Despite its small proportion of the total population the East was economically stronger than most regions because of its varied terrain and easy access to the island trade. The importance of cattle, mules and hides as stable exports meant that the East could enjoy relative prosperity at this time, the late 1840s, while crop prices fluctuated more often.

Contraband was an important element in the economy. Throughout the colonial period it had played a significant role, although the monopoly companies had tried to control it. During 1600-1650 the cacao industry had flourished by the trade with Curazao at a time when metropolitan Spain was not interested.² After independence the new government was so weighed down by its debts that it could not oppose the fraud of contraband by creating a patrol capable of policing the coast effectively. In 1831, Santos Michelena, the treasury secretary, cautioned that a system of control might absorb all the extra revenue it produced. He favoured a more open trade policy that would reduce contraband by lessening the temptations for it. The proposals for lowering customs rates led to a more modern system of taxation - ad valorem rates - but contraband continued.

¹ Memoria Que Presenta a la H. Diputación Provincial de Caracas en 1851, La Junta de Caminos de la Provincia (Caracas, 1851), last page. Arellano M., Memorias ..., p. xiii, rounds off the figure at 1,268,000 for Venezuela. Most population figures were estimates made in provincial governors' annual reports to the provincial legislatures, and should only be valued as estimates. Wilson reported the census of 1846 totalled 1,267,692, but it did not include Guayana, and was considered defective. Wilson to Palmerston, 23 Feb. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fo. 273.

² Ministerio de Hacienda, Datos Sobre el Contrabando en Venezuela (Caracas, 1940), p.6. In 1857 Appun mentioned that Curazao's contraband trade with Venezuela, Colombia and other islands had diminished compared to earlier times, but that being a free port it still handled many ships. K.F. Appun, En los Trópicos, p.291.

Charles Gide was locally quoted as saying that 'public conscience, at least in France, gladly admits that defrauding the state is not fraud.' Enough Venezuelans seem to have agreed with Gide since smuggling continued to be the most serious loss of customs revenue, the main source of the treasury's revenue.¹

The republic transformed the colonial import and export dues and other taxes paid at seaports into import and export duties. Those ports allowed to import and export goods were Angostura, Cumaná, Carúpano, Barcelona, La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, La Vela, and Maracaibo.² Fiscal organisation in general was based on the old Colombian legislation, and for a time it sufficed. Later, poorly planned financial experiments by differing groups in power usually caused more problems than they solved. In spite of its importance and the attention it had received the aduana continued to suffer from transgressions in its administration. Inland revenues were scarcely considered in the national budget because of the effort involved in collecting those relatively small amounts. It is not surprising that the treasury passed through successive crises related to the trade cycle. At these times treasury bonds might be issued to cover budget deficiencies, or vouchers for payment of legitimate liabilities might not be settled, or funds from one branch of the budget might be used to pay for another, although forbidden by the Constitution (Article 210), or other irregular means might be used to satisfy the 'unavoidable needs of the public administration.'³

¹ G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp. 96-8. Ministerio de Hacienda, Datos sobre Contrabando, pp. 9-12. By comparing the duty rates on imported goods according to those set 28 April 1838 and those of 7 May 1841 one can see that duties were reduced or dropped on many items by 1841. See Arancel de Derechos de Importación Vigente en Venezuela en 1852 (Caracas, 1852), p.33.

² Law of 3 June 1846, F.O. 80/39, fo. 94.

³ Ministerio de Hacienda, Historical Sketch of the Fiscal Life of Venezuela. Offering of the Department of Finance in the First Centennial of the Battle of Ayacucho (Caracas, 1925), pp. 9-11.

Venezuela's debts were sizeable. Its original share of the Colombian domestic debt had been \$7,217,915. 12 pesos.¹

By 1 July 1840 the domestic debt of \$7,217,915. 12 had been reduced to \$4,553,854. 99. Annual amortizations of the debt from 1840 to 1847 equalled \$2,763,159. 49. So Venezuela's total domestic debt came to \$1,790,695. 50 on 1 July 1847.² The deuda de Tesorería reached \$322,845. 57. Total foreign debt including capitalized interest was \$20,962,212. 87 pesos, or £3,353,954 at the conversion rate of 6.25 pesos to the pound sterling. The national debt totalled \$23,075,753. 94 on 1 July 1847.³

Total Domestic Debt	- \$ 1,790,695. 50
Treasury Obligations	- \$ 322,845. 57
Total Foreign Debt	- \$20,962,212. 87
Total Debt	<u>\$23,075,753. 94</u> =====

¹ Francisco Pimentel y Roth, Historia del Crédito Público en Venezuela (Caracas, 1974), pp. 28,31. Also benefit of conversations with Carlos M. Lollet on 15 July 1978 and Manuel Pérez Vila on 4 and 11 July 1978 all on 19th Century fiscal policy. Domestic debt consisted of a consolidated debt and a floating debt that might sometimes be converted into consolidated. On the whole, consolidated debt, deuda consolidada, in 19th Century Venezuela referred to debt recognised by the state, that earned interest and was amortized regularly. The state was meant to budget funds to pay the interest of the debt and repay the principal. The debt that could be converted into consolidated debt, deuda consolidable, was that part of the floating debt that was in the process of being recognised by the government. It could either earn interest or not, and no funds had to be budgeted either to repay the principal or to pay any interest it might earn. Floating debt meant the debt that had no specific documentation, but its existence could be proven nevertheless.

² Andrés Eusebio Level to Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, Ciudad Bolívar, 29 Dec. 1848, ADRRC, vol. 23, fo. 291. Wilson to Palmerston, 9 Feb. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fo. 187.

³ Exposición que Dirige a la Convención Nacional de Venezuela en 1858 el Secretario de Hacienda (Valencia, 1858), p.12. Wilson to Aberdeen, 14 Feb. 1846, F.O. 80/38, fo. 55. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, viii. 21-31, Doc. 436, 'Exposición de la Comisión de Crédito Público'.

It seems that Venezuela paid the interest of the consolidated debt punctually every year along with the liquidation of some private claims. For the year 1844/5 it reduced the amount of the domestic debt by some \$145,555, and for the year 1846/7 by \$94,073.⁶³ Wilson reported that the redemption of the domestic debt 'is viewed with great favour, as many influential Persons, both Natives and Foreigners are Holders of ... this Stock.'¹

By contrast payments of the foreign debt might not be made even during the most conscientious of administrations. In the same despatch of 14 February 1846 Wilson reported that congress had not allowed payments of the foreign debt to be made with the revenue in 1844/5. The dividends had been paid, but the principal had not been reduced. He explained that the government deposited its money with the National Bank. The deposits in the bank paid 3 per cent interest yearly. The bank loaned money at 9 per cent a year. Shareholders of the bank had a direct interest in fomenting and keeping up the popular distrust of applying surplus revenue towards the redemption of the foreign debt because that surplus was kept at the bank and formed 'one of its principal sources of gain'.² The shareholders formed part of the monied establishment that was well able to get support from members of congress. Due to congress's attitude Wilson feared that the capital of the Anglo-Venezuelan loans, the largest of Venezuela's loans, would not be redeemed for many years. Anglo-Venezuelan loans still outstanding by February 1846 totalled:

¹ Wilson to Aberdeen, 14 Feb. 1846, F.O. 80/38, fo. 55. For 1846/7 figures see Wilson to Palmerston, 9 Feb. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fo. 187. In his conversions from pesos to pounds sterling Wilson rounded off his figures so that when converted back to pesos they do not tally exactly with official figures.

² Wilson to Aberdeen, 14 Feb. 1846, F.O. 80/38, fo. 55.

Active Debt	-	£1,829,965. 15	=	\$11,437,285. 69
Deferred Debt	-	£1,523,988. 05	=	\$ 9,524,926. 56
		<hr/>		<hr/>
Total Capital with interest Capitalized		£3,353,954. ¹	=	\$20,962,212. 25 (.87 was the true figure)

This total included Venezuela's 28½ per cent share of Anglo-Colombian debt equal to £62,571. 18.2d or \$391,074.43 that had not yet been converted to Venezuelan stock. Wilson mentioned that dividends of the foreign debt had been paid to April 1846, and that Soubllette wanted to pay the dividends up to April 1847 so that the next president would not have to worry with them immediately after taking office.²

The 1846/7 budget had been set as follows:

Interior and Justice Department	-	\$1,073,748. 55
Treasury Department	-	\$1,150,656. 00
Foreign Affairs Department	-	\$ 32,400. 00
War Department	-	\$ 575,359. 29
Navy Department	-	\$ 91,291. 48
		<hr/>
Total	-	\$2,923,455. 32
or		£467,752. 17.6d (sic 16s 8d)

It may be a surprise to note that in days when a balanced budget was considered most desirable the official estimates of the government's income for the same period reached only \$2,076,202. 66, equal to £322,192. 8.7d.³ The surprise diminishes when one realises that congress had consented to this overrun in an election year. Elections too represented 'a Political Crisis that is usually attended with a certain degree of danger to the Internal Peace of a Republic,' as Wilson explained. Even if the elections took place peacefully, Soubllette did not dare expect, but only hoped that the nation's expenditure in 1846/7 would not greatly exceed its income.⁴

¹ Ibid. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, viii.31.

² Wilson, ibid.

³ Wilson to Aberdeen, 20 June 1846, F.O. 80/39, fo. 71.

⁴ Ibid.

The advisability of raising further loans abroad remained a matter of controversy. Some nationalists spoke out against the danger of falling into the trap of paying for one loan with another. Iribarren claimed that foreign loans would not help the economy. He believed they were not needed because Venezuela had sufficient internal resources to finance its economy. He felt Europe was ambitious and aggressive, and would not hesitate to exploit its weaker debtors. A third reason for not seeking loans abroad was that Venezuela's credit was as yet too bad for her to raise any advantageous loan; asking for one would merely lower her credit further.¹ Level agreed that foreign bonds were not esteemed abroad, and so the nation could only lose politically by them. He suggested the same amounts of money could be raised on the floating debt, in effect by raising funds domestically, and thereby saving on the commissions that foreign bonds incurred. The nation could economise by raising loans domestically and classifying them as floating debt that could be converted to consolidated debt. Level added that a further profit could be made when that floating debt was redeemed at a lower rate than foreign bonds, and after it had been converted to consolidated debt thus giving the government more time to pay back the loan.² There was the added advantage that if a local creditor came to need cash he might accept a cash settlement of lesser value than if he waited to be paid in full. These issues would continue to be discussed during Monagas's administration. His government would attempt to follow such policies.

The first bank in Venezuela was the British Colonial Bank, opened in Caracas by the Colonial Bank of London on 29 July 1839. Its capital was \$330,000 and it managed the funds the Venezuelan government deposited with it to send abroad to repay the foreign debt. Mr John Urwin was chairman

¹ Iribarren, Pensamientos, p. 191.

² Andrés E. Level to A.L. Guzmán, 29 Dec. 1848, ADRRC, 23, fos. 290-3.

of the bank and Mr Leander Miranda, a British subject, was the manager of the Caracas branch.¹

The Venezuelans lost no time in noting the advantage a native bank would have over a foreign one in any government business. Four persons asked and received permission from congress on 17 May 1841 to start a 'National Bank of Venezuela'. Its capital was to be \$2,500,000 pesos with the promoters taking 40 per cent of the shares, the government 20 per cent, and the remaining 40 per cent open to the public. On 18 May 1844 congress authorised the bank to open branches at Angostura, Cumaná, Barcelona, Puerto Cabello, Barquisimeto, Barinas and Guanare. Congress also exempted the bank from having to pay any taxes whatsoever. In effect the bank was treated as a government agency although the government only owned one-fifth of it and the bank presumably continued to charge its commissions for handling the government's account, consisting of surplus revenue and any deposits to be sent abroad. The National Bank clearly benefited by these arbitrary measures, which left the Colonial Bank liable for taxes on the only sizeable business left to it: loans and mortgages. The directors of the National Bank were its founders - Juan Nepomuceno Chaves, William Ackers, Juan Elizondo and Adolf Wolff, plus two government appointees: Colonel Guillermo Smith and Doctor Wenceslao Urrutia.²

¹ Landaeta Rosales, Riqueza Circulante, p.142. Wilson to Aberdeen, 26 July 1845, F.O. 80/32, fo. 281.

² Landaeta Rosales, ibid., pp. 133, 142-3. See also pp. 195-8 for a short guide to the first cajas de ahorros which began in 1842. Ackers was a British subject who owned the hacienda of Camurí Grande, canton of Naiguatá, and was the Danish Chargé d'Affaires. Wilson to Palmerston, 29 Feb. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fo. 291. Ackers was reputed to be the richest foreigner in Venezuela. Wolff was a Jewish merchant from Leipzig who had become a British subject. Chaves and Elizondo were rich landowners. Pérez Vila, 'Gobierno Deliberativo', p.75. Smith had fought in the British Legion. Wilson claimed his real name was William Wright, but that he had changed it, and that he took Venezuelan citizenship in 1843. Wilson to Palmerston, 15 Jan. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fos. 9ff. For an interesting discussion of the impact of the bank see Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp. 258-70.

The Colonial Bank was not without protection from the competition. Not only could it count on British prestige and the protection the British government gave to responsible British interests around the world, but also on the local influence of the bank's manager, Mr Miranda. Leander Miranda, born 1803, was the son of Francisco de Miranda. At Caracas he had married Isabel Dalla Costa y Soubllette, daughter of Juan Bautista Dalla Costa who had married one of Soubllette's sisters. Dalla Costa was a Bonapartist and had fought for New Granadan independence since 1816, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Venezuelan army. A Freemason of the 33rd degree, he had become a merchant at Angostura, and one can imagine the influence he had in Guayana having one of General Soubllette's sisters as his wife. Dalla Costa had business agents throughout Venezuela. One can presume that the influential circles of the ruling élite were accessible to the son of General Miranda married to the President's niece and to the daughter of one of the most important merchants in the country.¹ The Colonial Bank survived the challenge of the National Bank, although operating on a smaller scale.

Caracas was a capital city of 34,165 inhabitants in 1847. With the other towns of the valley - Petare, El Valle, and Chacao the area's population reached almost 49,000.² A scant 100 foreigners lived in Caracas then.³ It was still a town in ruins. In many blocks lots filled with rubble and overgrown with weeds stood next to inhabited houses. Caracas had suffered terribly in the earthquake of 1812. Pal Rosti visited the capital in 1857. After 45 years the city remained so ruined that its desolation made him melancholy. As he entered the city the deep silence was only broken by

¹ Carnicelli, Masonería Independencia, ii. 33, 123. Also, conversation with Walter Dupouy on 4 May 1978.

² Memoria Junta de Caminos, last page.

³ Grummond, Envoy to Caracas, p.54.

his horse's tread. He thought he had entered the city of the dead. The few people who walked through the streets did so quietly against the backdrop of the crumbling walls of roofless houses. Despite the sombre atmosphere he found he was attracted by the natural beauty of the place, at the end of a fertile valley nestling against majestic mountains.¹

The city's population had a small proportion of whites, including créoles. The majority of its inhabitants were pardos, more so than in other cities. Appun found that as one moved into the interior of the country away from the coastal towns less whites and blacks were seen. Pardos occupied many positions that foreigners expected the whites to have. Commerce in the interior was handled mostly by pardos, and also by portugueses whom Appun considered an element different from native whites and other foreigners.²

Entertainment was sparse in Caracas. There were no ballrooms or regular theatres. Church-going substituted for the European promenade as the time to meet friends, and to see and be seen by the opposite sex. Also, in the afternoons the ladies sat at their windows while the young men rode by on horseback stopping to chat along the way, usually to the young ladies' mothers as society demanded.³

Cock-fights were very popular, but the Caraqueño's passion was bull-fighting. Wilson called it bull-baiting.⁴ A street would be fenced in for several blocks to be used as the site of the event called toros coleados.

¹ Pal Rosti, Memorias de un Viaje por América (Caracas, 1968), pp.47-53.

² P. Rosti, ibid., p.59. K. Appun, Trópicos, p.226.

³ 'Caracas', Harper's New Monthly Magazine (New York), xvii (June to Nov.1858), 189-92. Compare with P. Rosti, ibid., pp.60-4. Publishing two to three years after the anonymous description appeared Rosti seems to have copied from it, sometimes almost verbatim.

⁴ Wilson to Aberdeen, 7 Aug. 1846, F.O. 80/39, fos. 259-60.

A beast would be let loose down the street to be pursued by horsemen who tried to seize it by the tail and throw it to the ground. As soon as the beast could stand it would charge a horseman while the others followed it and threw it again and again until, 'with broken horns and bleeding nostrils, maimed and helpless, he is lassoed and dragged off the field to be slaughtered for tomorrow's dinner.'¹ The sport took place anywhere in town. It was accompanied by music, flags, and many beasts so that the function would last a few hours. The ladies loved toros coleados. They would sit at the windows in full dress ready to reward a good rider or a beau with a lady's shoulder-knot. Appun described this same scene at Puerto Cabello, but that event included a self-styled matador with cape and sword as the main attraction. After the corrida the day ended with a dance in one of the neighbouring houses. Wilson, Appun, and the American author of the Harper's article agreed that toros coleados was stupid, brutal and demoralising.²

Less than a month before the elections of August 1846 the Brazilian Chargé d'Affaires, Chevalier Miguel María Lisboa, was the centre of a dispute with the Government arising from bull-baiting. Beginning about 15 July the authorities allowed toros coleados on a large scale along with other festivities to set a happy mood among the people for election time. On one occasion Lisboa was 'insulted and outraged' by some of the people occupying the iron gratings of the windows of his house. He had asked them to get down so that his family could watch the bull-baiting that was taking place outside the Brazilian legation. After raising his national flag and

¹ 'Caracas', Harper's, xvii. 194.

² Ibid., pp.194-5. Wilson to Aberdeen, 7 Aug. 1846, F.O. 80/39, fos. 259-60. Appun, Trópicos, p.55.

'attempting to clear his windows ... he was hissed and hooted by the Rabble and stones were thrown at the Legation.'¹ The bull-baiting was moved to another part of town after Lisboa complained to the authorities, but he felt outraged further because it was not stopped altogether. Later Lisboa took offence at a drunk's gestures to him, even though the drunk probably had no idea who Lisboa was.

The Venezuelan government decided to appease Lisboa by agreeing that the sum of the unpleasant incidents could be considered a national insult to the Brazilian legation. A guard was placed to protect Lisboa's house, public apologies were made, and the city's troops formed in front of the legation on 27 July and saluted the raising of the Brazilian flag.²

The whole episode had deeper effect in the country than might have been expected. Wilson explained that the principles of democracy that Venezuela followed more than other parts of Spanish America had made the middle and lower classes rude and offensive, especially in Caracas where they consisted of pardos. They showed no respect to national authorities, and even less to foreign agents, whom they regarded with suspicion. Wilson stated that there was a feeling that the Lisboa affair had not been dealt with from a sense of the government's obligations with other nations, but that it had been blown up out of proportion at election time to discredit the Liberal party (Wilson called it the Popular party) by showing how its supporters might act if it came to power.

¹ Wilson to Aberdeen, ibid.

² Ibid., fos. 260-2. Gaceta de Venezuela (Caracas), 807 (25 July 1846), 67-8.

Any law-abiding citizen would be expected to vote for the government candidates.¹ Not only had the affair alarmed conservative elements about the effect of the Liberals gaining control, but the Liberals and other non-conservatives might have interpreted it as further proof of the government's repressive nature. As a result the Lisboa affair created more tension and hatred between the Liberals and their opponents.

News of Monagas's election went to government officials in Caracas and to provincial governors who then passed it on to each canton. The governors acknowledged receipt of the news with varying degrees of excitement, ranging from a straightforward acknowledgement to flowery passages on Monagas's heroism and worth, the wisdom of congress and the undoubted salvation of the country. Agustín Codazzi, governor of Barinas, congratulated Monagas by praising Soublette, Páez, the active militia and war veterans. The new president would defend the republic from the 'criminal plans of the antisocial Guzmanist party'. Codazzi hoped that the new government would 'run in perfect harmony with the legislative branch'.² Congress was expected to be the solid base on which the new government was to develop. This feeling might be supposed to have been widespread among the ruling group and reflected its apprehensions of a new president whose capabilities were virtually unknown to it. Congress would

¹ Wilson to Aberdeen, 7 Aug. 1846, F.O. 80/39, fos. 262-4. Wilson's comparative view of what Venezuelans were like is an informed one. He had served as aide-de-camp to Bolívar, and had been posted to Lima before coming to Caracas. Throughout his term Wilson felt that foreigners should not participate in Venezuelan politics. He reported that all efforts were made by the paecistas to convince foreigners to identify themselves with that party. In September 1846 several Germans and French had become involved, but only two or three slave-owning Britons and no Americans. He felt the French and Brazilian *Chargés d'Affaires* were 'active Alarmists' among the foreign population. Wilson to Palmerston, 19 Sept. 1846, F.O. 80/40, fos. 24-5.

² Agustín Codazzi to Monagas, Barinas, 22 Feb. 1847, AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLV, fo.95. '... miras criminales del partido antisocial Guzmancista.' '... marche en perfecto acuerdo con el Poder Legislativo ...'. For acknowledgements on receipt of the news of Monagas's election see AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fos. 125-31, 134-42.

ensure a smooth transition with Monagas, and allow him to learn the ways of governing that were established practice. The experienced power brokers would teach the uncouth llanero to rule thus establishing their influence over him.

Monagas gave the appearance of agreeing with the notion that he should govern with the help of those leaders who had trusted him enough to have him elected. In his letter of acceptance to the vice-president he stated that whoever had been elected would have to count on the councilors of state to ensure harmony and progress since they had long experience in government service. Monagas was particularly glad that the vice-president had experience so that he could help the new president with his advice, united to preserve the nation, an effort that had already cost so many lives.¹

Like most people in Caracas, Wilson had never met Monagas. He only knew what he had been told, and his feelings about Monagas thus reflected the general expectations in the capital. In his report to Palmerston, Wilson described Monagas as cruel, brave and one of the wealthiest ranchers of the Barcelona plains. He was also 'respectable, well meaning, uneducated ... and is not remarkable for natural abilities',² which was seen as the main reason for making him president. The oligarchy hoped he would be its 'pliant instrument'. Although Wilson was inclined to agree with these

¹ '... Exmo Sr. Vice-Presidente y los demas Señores Consejeros de Gobierno, con cuyo patriotismo y larga experiencia en los negocios de la Administracion pública, forzosamente cualquiera que hubiese sido el electo pa. Gefe de la Nacion habría debido contar en sus tareas Administrativas, por que solo marchando uniformes y de concierto todos los miembros de un Gobierno es que puede armonisarse la sociedad y darse impulso al progreso del país.' José Tadeo Monagas to the Interior and Justice Secretary, General Headquarters at Aragua (de Barcelona), 1 Feb. 1847, AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fos. 132-3.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb. 1847, F.O. 80/44, fos. 84-6.

expectations he warned that 'as cunning and distrust are the most prominent features of the Venezuelan character and more especially of that of the 'Llaneros'...' it was difficult to predict what Monagas's policy would be ultimately. Since Monagas owed his election to the influence and support of Páez and Soublette 'it is probable that at the outset, his Ministry will be formed in accordance with their wishes and suggestions.' ¹

Wilson's analysis was extremely accurate. Despite the evident signs of loyalty to the group that had elected him, Monagas had been giving faint hints of his own independence even before his election. During the revolts of September 1846 Monagas had asked Soublette to name General Francisco Carabaño as his chief of staff. Soublette felt the request was too important for him to handle alone, and so consulted Páez.² 'Carabaño and Páez had become irreconcilable enemies at the siege of Puerto Cabello during the 'revolution of the reforms' ten years earlier. Páez's feelings regarding Carabaño would have been so strong that such a request might be interpreted not just as one ex-reformist leader helping another, but as an insult to Páez. Páez felt Carabaño should not be given the post. Soublette answered Monagas on 23 October 1846 telling him Carabaño was not a good choice. In the same letter he mentioned for the first time that Monagas might be the next president. As the main candidate Soublette implied that he should act prudently so as not to arouse suspicions among the paecistas. Favouring Carabaño would bring a hostile reaction from them.' ³

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb. 1847, F.O. 80/44, fos. 84-6.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv. 213.

³ González Guinán quotes the letter. Ibid., iv.221-2.

Monagas answered Soublette from his headquarters at Aragua on 3 November by defending his choice of Carabaño. Although he expressed pleasure at the honour of being the next president he wrote that he could see no reason for being president if all his actions would cause reactions from certain groups in the same manner that the proposed appointment of Carabaño would. '... I would never agree to a presidency where I would find myself forced to act to the wish of a small number of people, not attending to the interests of all, which is a ruler's first duty.'¹ This almost rude reply to his ruling chief Soublette shows that Monagas felt equal to him, and would continue to act as he saw fit. González Guinán feels that Monagas was attempting to move above political factionalism by bringing Carabaño into his circle to support the government against the rebels. By so doing Monagas showed he was austere, independent, and would follow his own sense of duty and convictions.² This one sentence would easily go unnoticed among so many letters that were exchanged that professed loyalty and submission to the established order. The question of Carabaño's appointment was strung out for so long that the revolt had been put down, and it seems then that there was no longer any need for the post. Soublette and Páez do not seem to have worried about Monagas's profession of independence. They had continued to work for his election.

In his letter of acceptance of 1 February 1847 Monagas informed Acevedo that he would travel to Caracas via Barcelona and La Guaira as soon as his health had improved. He felt he would not be ready to leave Barcelona until the end of February. Considering this delay he hoped that one of the

¹ Ibid., iv.228. '... yo nunca admitiría una Presidencia en que me viera obligado a proceder al beneplácito de un corto número, desatendiendo los intereses de todos, que es el deber primordial de un magistrado.'

² Ibid., iv.229-30.

navy's ships would get to Barcelona so that the treasury would not have to pay for hiring a private one. Upon the arrival of the 'Diana' he would order the provincial governor to thank its owner, Bermúdez, for him. The governor would also tell Bermúdez he could continue on his way so as not to suffer any losses from the wait he would have to make until Monagas were ready to go to La Guaira.¹

The government was preparing for Monagas's arrival to take charge of the presidency. Páez was coming from Maracay to welcome the president-elect to Caracas in a manoeuvre that could only be interpreted as taking the newcomer under his wing and showing him who really governed Venezuela. Páez would guide Monagas's first steps as president to ensure a smooth beginning to his rule. The interior secretary appointed the members of the commissions that would be sent to greet Monagas at Barcelona and La Guaira in the name of the acting president, Vice-President Urbaneja. Colonel Miguel Arismendi was ordered to lead the commission to Barcelona. Its members were two young ministry officers, Rafael Urdaneta and Modesto Urbaneja, Lieutenant of engineers Carlos Soubllette, and Diego Bautista Barrios. All were young members of the ruling aristocracy. The commission that would receive Monagas at La Guaira was made up of Doctor José María Vargas, Feliciano Palacios, General José María Carreño, Guillermo Espino, and Marcos Santana,² also important members of the ruling group. Páez planned to be at La Guaira also. There would be no opportunity for Monagas to be met by members of the opposition and other non-paecistas.

¹ Monagas to Acevedo, 1 Feb. 1847, AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fos. 132-3.

² Acevedo to Arismendi, Caracas, 27 Jan. 1847, AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fo. 170. 'Resolución de la Secretaría de lo Interior', 16 Feb. 1847, ibid., fo. 172.

Páez left Maracay on 4 February for Caracas. His trip was interrupted by receptions, banquets, and honours in all the towns along the way. At San Mateo a triumphal arch called him the bravest general in America and of the century. Everywhere Páez was welcomed as the nation's saviour in a style reminiscent of Bolívar's arrival in 1827.¹

The French Chargé d'Affaires, Celeste David, described Páez's arrival in Caracas. More than 500 people of Venezuela's first families 'spontaneously' mounted horses and rode to meet him out past the western alcabala. They called him 'el héroe pacificador'. David also rode out. Páez broke ranks and went to shake David's hand when he saw him approach despite being surrounded by other well-wishers. Páez told him that that day was one of the best days of his life because David had come out on the road just to meet him sooner than in the city.² Bells were rung. There were flowers, arches, music, and fireworks. Díaz Sánchez writes that Páez told the crowds at the plaza of San Pablo that it was the happiest day of his life. Páez then went to his house, La Viñeta, with his chief of staff General Judas Tadeo Piñango and with his llaneros. There he received the visits of old friends, generals, doctors, lawyers, priests, and government officials.³ The city continued celebrating for a few days.

¹ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp. 332-3.

² David to French foreign secretary, 9 Feb. 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.241 ff.

³ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.332-3.

M. Landaeta Rosales, Recepciones Notables Hechas en Caracas á Hombres Públicos de Venezuela Desde 1810 Hasta 1906 (Caracas, 1906), p.11.

After making preparations Páez and Angel Quintero went on to La Guaira to await Monagas's arrival. More honours were bestowed on Páez. Poems were written to glorify him. One of them called him ... 'illustrious American warrior, /titular Archangel of Venezuela. /Vigilant and patriotic centinel ...' all in the first stanza.¹ News of Monagas's delay reached him at La Guaira. The welcoming party may have returned to Caracas, but David met with Páez at the port for more than an hour on 22 February. David was leaving to take his vacation in Cuba, and Páez was waiting for Monagas's arrival.²

Monagas's daughter, Clara Antonia Monagas de Giuseppi, gave birth to a boy on 20 January 1847. He must have been gratified to receive a grandson and the presidency during those days. The grandson was baptized at Aragua on 19 February.³ If Monagas attended the service one can imagine the celebrations that must have taken place, not only for Juan Sebastián Giuseppi Monagas, but to send off his grandfather to Caracas to become president.

While Monagas was at Barcelona preparing to come to Caracas, Sotillo read a broadside written earlier by Cecilio Acosta begging Páez to come to Caracas from Maracay at once. Sotillo felt that Acosta wanted Páez to be present to direct Monagas's rule from the beginning. Sotillo knew that Monagas would not allow himself to be forced to rule with only oligarchs *as* Páez wished, and he rushed to Barcelona to come to Caracas with Monagas.⁴

¹ Ermelindo Rivodó, 'Al Ilustre General José A. Páez', La Guaira, 14 February 1847, in Guirnalda Poética de Páez: Ciudadano Esclarecido de Venezuela (Caracas, 1850), pp.34-5.

² Vice-Consul A. de Turreil to French foreign secretary, Caracas, -6 Mar. 1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.247.

³ D.W. Fernández, 'Familia Monagas', p.76.

⁴ M. Silva-Medina, Sotillo, p.17. Castelli, Monagas's friend, had also come to Caracas to become the Sardinian consul. Carlo L. Castelli to David, 10 Dec. 1846, C.P.-V., III, fo.186.

In Barcelona Monagas stayed at the house of Doña Anita Carreyó Luces de Guevara, a family friend and his wife's relative. The Guevara Carreyó descendants have a traditional family story that Monagas wrapped 1,000 ounces of gold, equalling \$20,000 pesos, in a blanket to bring to Caracas.¹

Monagas reached La Guaira on 28 February. The pier where Páez met Monagas was renamed the muelle de la entrevista. The next day, 1 March, Monagas and Páez rode into Caracas together. The inaugural ceremony began at 4 p.m. at the church of the convent of San Francisco. By evening Monagas had been sworn in before the joint session of congress in the church, and had received his new office from the president of the congress.² Páez was still general-in-chief of the army and the militia. In his speech at Monagas's inauguration Páez stated he would be happy to resign his commission and return to private life, but he would always be available to the government for further services.³

A salute of guns and fireworks met the new president. Bells rang again and music followed him to La Viñeta where he was staying as Páez's guest. There were banquets and speeches for a few more days.⁴ Díaz Sánchez suspects that Monagas might have felt humiliated at La Viñeta as important people filed by congratulating him, but acting as though Páez were in charge.

¹ Conversation with Doctor Marcos Falcón Briceño, 3 June 1978. Doña Anita was his great-great-grandmother.

² Turreil to French foreign secretary, 6 Mar. 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos. 247-9. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp. 332-3. Two notes from the secretary of congress to the interior secretary, both of 1 March 1847 advising of time and place set for the ceremony, and of Monagas's having taking office. AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLV, fos. 217-8. Oddly enough Wilson reported that Monagas had been inaugurated 27 February. Perhaps Wilson was out of town. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Mar. 1847, F.O. 80/44, fo. 185.

³ La Prensa (Caracas), 37 (2 Mar. 1847). It published the speeches made at Monagas's inauguration. For the ceremonies see I y J 1847 - CCCLIX, fos. 128 ff.

⁴ Landaeta Rosales, Recepciones, pp. 11-12.

Monagas would have decided not to fill the role of Páez's satellite.¹

At this time, Monagas was suffering from a pain in one foot, probably gout, which kept him away from government house.²

A few days later Monagas took a house suitable for a president by lending Doña Concepción Escurra \$12,000 pesos in gold in exchange for the mortgages on two haciendas payable in four years, and the right to live rent free for as long as he wished at no.36 Plaza de San Pablo.³

A military draft was used to fix the house. Masons were called to active service from the reserve militia and given the task of preparing the house for the presidential residence. By this method we may presume that public funds were saved in the alterations. The house next to no.36 and the one across the street on the same side of the plaza were converted into barracks for the presidential guard. This work was also done by the drafted masons. In this way the western access to the plaza was covered by the barrack across the street while no.36 was protected by being in the corner of the square with the other barrack at its vulnerable side.⁴

Monagas announced his first cabinet on 4 March. Angel Quintero would be the interior and justice secretary. Miguel Herrera would direct finance and foreign affairs. General José María Carreño was charged with war and marine.⁵ The ruling establishment was satisfied.

¹ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.332-3.

² P. de las Casas to W. Ackers, 3 and 5 Mar. 1847, AMREV, Interior, Altos Funcionarios, I, Expediente 5.

³ Manuel Landaeta Rosales, La Casa Histórica de la Plaza de San Pablo (Caracas, 1900), p.8

⁴ 'Caracas', Harper's, xvii. 193-4, including a sketch of the house and plaza.

⁵ Monagas, 'Decree of 4 March 1847', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLV, fos.266-7. Quintero and Carreño took possession on 6 March, ibid., fo.312; Herrera on 20 March, P. de las Casas, Circular to Venezuelan consuls at foreign ports, 20 Mar.1847, AMREV, Interior, Altos Funcionarios, I, 5.

Wilson reported his disappointment. He described the three secretaries as belonging to the 'extreme Oligarchy Party' and as having held previous appointments. 'Doctor Quintero, especially, is of an unscrupulous sanguinary disposition, and the other two are scarcely more moderate in their Political conduct and notions of Government.' Quintero was described as a slaveowner who as interior secretary in 1840 had advised prolonging slavery from the then existing age limit of 18 or 21 years to 25 years. Quintero had also brought Spanish Carlist friars to Venezuela with the excuse of needing missionaries to convert the Indians. With this cabinet Wilson doubted that the government would 'by its acts contribute much to the welfare or happiness of the people.'¹

French Vice-Consul Turreil was more optimistic. For him Quintero was a doctor in law. Carreño was a distinguished veteran who as vice-president of the council of state had been charged with executive powers during the 1835 troubles. Herrera was a man of administrative ability and energy who had been a congressional representative and lately governor of Carabobo. It seems that the choice of Quintero and Carreño had been determined for some time, and that the choice of Herrera seemed to satisfy most of the oligarchy.²

Upon taking office Monagas found he had to deal with four main questions. They were: Guzmán, amnesty for the rebels of 1846, the Colonial Bank, and the recall of the British Chargé d'Affaires.³ He had inherited all four from the former administration, and they were politically dangerous for him. Support for his government would depend on how he resolved them.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Mar.1847, F.O. 80/44, fos.185-8. See J.V.Lombardi, Decline and Abolition, p.81. Also J.V. Lombardi, 'Manumission, Manumisos, and Aprendizaje in Republican Venezuela', HAHR, 49 (Nov.1969), 671-3.

² Turreil to French foreign secretary, 6 Mar.1847, C.P.-V,III, fos.247-9.

³ Rafael Acevedo, El Contendor de 'El Revisor' (Caracas,18 May 1849), p.5

The former government of Soublette and the interim administration had proceeded following what some regarded as extreme oligarchic policy. Guzmán had been jailed on 3 October at the jail of San Jacinto, originally the dominican convent. On 4 and 5 October he was interrogated by interior secretary Cobos Fuertes and by the chief officer of the section of interior, Francisco Conde. Judge Isidro Vicente Osío, who would be hearing Guzmán's case in the first instance, interrogated him on the 7th. It was obvious that the questions were designed to trap Guzmán into admitting that as leader of the Liberal party he had been the autor intelectual of the revolts.¹ If he had encouraged, led, or supported the revolts he could be found guilty of conspiracy and treason and liable to receive the death penalty.

Despite the Conservative wish to be rid of Guzmán not all oligarchs wished for his death. On 20 October David, a staunch paecista, doubted that there was enough proof to condemn Guzmán for conspiracy. He hoped that Guzmán would be exiled as soon as possible to avoid his revenge, more revolts and even a race war. Wilson agreed that not enough proof of guilt had been produced, and suspected Guzmán had been detained only to damage his cause and his reputation. Aldrey claimed the government had jailed Guzmán and had charged him with conspiracy because it could sense its own defeat in the coming elections of the same week. That David should mention the possibility of Guzmán's ineligibility to hold office because of being on trial as early as October might indicate that that effect was one of the motives for his arrest.²

¹ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.326-8. Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, 'Declaración de Guzmán', 4-5 October 1846, in Presidencia de la República de Venezuela, Pensamiento Político Venezolano del Siglo XIX. Textos para su estudio (Caracas, 1961), vi. 31-9.

² David to French foreign secretary, 20 Oct.1846, C.P.-V., III, fos.150-7. Wilson to Palmerston, 21 Oct.1846, F.O. 80/40, fo.158. F. Aldrey, Rasgos biográficos Guzmán Blanco, p.13.

After quelling the revolts the Conservatives continued to implement harsh measures to punish their enemies. The oligarchy had tampered with the laws to take the electoral victory of 1846 away from the Liberals.¹ It then sought to close the opposition press which it considered a menace to national stability. Wilson became more disenchanted with the situation. He felt that, 'Since November of last year [1846] the Liberty of the Press has been practically allowed only to the Oligarchy, of which Party, the Jurors for the trial of Libels are at present almost exclusively composed.'² From this position the oligarchy could stop 'all Constitutional or legitimate discussion, by the force of falsehoods, menaces and Personal defamation.'³ In political trials Wilson found that even the judges followed Conservative wishes in their judgements because their appointments depended on their rulings, or if only to protect themselves from 'insult and outrage.'⁴

There is no doubt that the judicial system was under pressure. Around the country local ruling groups used the power of the courts to suit their own needs, whether for personal gain, petty vengeance, or to protect party interests. In one of his last acts outgoing President Soublette criticized part of the system in an effort to embarrass it since he no longer had the power to reform it. The decree of 18 January 1847 resolved that the courts of the province of Cumaná had tried many cases, but had found few guilty parties. 'Hence it follows, that, in the Province of Cumaná, either citizens are without sufficient ground submitted to trial or else without sufficient ground they are acquitted; and in either case, that justice is very badly administered by the Tribunals.'⁵ Kenneth Mathison, the

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 15 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fo.15.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Mar.1847, F.O. 80/44, fo.186.

³ Ibid., fo.187.

⁴ Ibid., fo.186.

⁵ Decree 18 January 1847 published in the Gaceta de Venezuela (Caracas), p.641, translated by Wilson, F.O. 80/44, fo.173. It is interesting to note that the judge at Carúpano was Pedro C. Gellineau; F.O.80/39, fo.243.

British vice-consul at Ciudad Bolívar, added that judges were irresponsible men who decreed according to bribery and intrigue. He was frightened by the 'frequency of glaring and well known acts of deliberate perjury, all escaping with the most perfect impunity.'¹

The best documented cases of the juicios de imprenta were those of Elías León and Miguel Piar. On 13 March 1847 the court of first instance condemned León to six months in prison with a fine of 300 pesos. The jury was unanimous in finding part of the text of the Diario de Caracas, 127, seditious matter in the first degree. León was held responsible.²

The government was busy trying other cases. The jefe político of El Pao, Carabobo province, lost that post and was ordered to stand trial for negligence. It seems he had not been present when Rangel and 100 men had attacked the town and taken the armoury on 4 February 1847.³

Manuel de Larrazábal, a maestro de capilla and brother of liberal politician Felipe Larrazábal, supposedly had written to the lawyer and rebel leader Manuel María Echeandía in 1846 urging him to continue the resistance in Río Chico. Larrazábal was tried for encouraging the rebellion, but was pardoned by the government since the damning letter was not available for evidence.⁴ It is interesting to note that the case does not seem to have been dismissed for lack of evidence. Instead he was pardoned, thus implying guilt on his part and benevolence on the government's.

¹ Kenneth Mathison to Wilson, Ciudad Bolívar, 8 December 1846, P.R.O.-F.O. 80/45, fos. 43 ff.

² 'Elías León, Juicio de imprenta', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fo.34.
'Miguel Piar, Juicio de imprenta', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVIII, fos.20 ff.

³ 'Miguel Aparicio', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fos. 292-301. The trial lasted until 17 June when Aparicio may have been included in the general amnesty.

⁴ 'Manuel de Larrazábal', I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fos.314-18. Manuel Larrazábal was a member of the cultural élite of Caracas and one of its best musicians. He was a composer, a pianist, and an organist. See Alfredo Boulton, Camille Pissarro en Venezuela (Caracas, 1966), p.89.

According to the ley de partida untrustworthy persons who were usually ineligible to give evidence could be witnesses in trials for treason. The law made this exception because of the seriousness of the crime of treason, and, in many cases, of the difficulty in proving it.¹ This criteria may have been used in Larrazábal's case. He could be convicted on the evidence of someone who claimed to have seen the alleged letter or only to have heard of its existence. Other men were found guilty of conspiracy by the same method. When Larrazábal asked for a church appointment in February-March 1847 the archbishop of Caracas co-operated with the government by consulting it before accepting his application.²

There were questions involving seditious priests. The supreme court was asked to decide whether priests could be tried by judges of first instance like any other citizen charged with conspiracy as dictated by the law of conspirators of 1831. It seemed that the law of church patronage might give priests the privilege of being tried only by superior courts thus placing them above local hatred and rivalries. I have not found any record of the court's decision.³

The rebels were being punished. Rafael Flores, alias Calvareño, had been at La Victoria with Guzmán, Echeandía and Ezequiel Zamora. He had left there with a band of highwaymen and black slaves towards Los Teques. They had sacked some haciendas along the way to the call of 'Viva Guzmán!'. From the moment of his capture the government seems to have wanted to make Calvareño an example to all rebels. He was jailed at San Jacinto and was forced to answer questions out of fear. Despite pleas from the Conservative

¹ Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii. 280. Ley de Partida (ley 8^a, título 16, partida 3).

² 'Manuel de Larrazábal', loc.cit.

³ 'Referente a un acuerdo de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, sobre la ley de conspiradores', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fos.122 ff.

press to save the insignificant rebels like Calvareño and punish only the true leaders of the revolt he was tried quickly. His own plea for mercy to president Soublette was not answered, and he was shot on 23 December. Díaz Sánchez feels that the hundreds of men held at Caracas, La Guaira, Valencia, Maracaibo, and the llanos were influenced by Calvareño's treatment, and answered to interrogation as was expected of them.¹

David reported that a brigand called Cisneros had been accused of treason after Páez had given him a command during the revolts. He reported happily that the man had been shot at Villa de Cura. It seems Cisneros was shot for insubordination by his own party for personal and political reasons.² Other prisoners co-operated with the authorities in an effort to escape death. Even so some received death sentences; others got ten years of hard labour.

Rangel was killed on 14 March. His head was placed in salt and sent to Caracas, some say to Páez, others believe to Monagas. It seems both men were together when the 'present' from General José María Zamora arrived. Monagas is reported to have been visibly shocked by the brutality of the gesture.³

Guzmán's trial had taken longer than Calvareño's. The public prosecutor prepared his case for more than a month before filing charges against him on 14 November.⁴ Prosecutor Miguel Carmona claimed that Guzmán

¹ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.328-9. Landaeta states that Calvareño was shot 15 December; Anales de las Cárceles de Caracas, Desde 1799 Hasta 1905 (Caracas, 1906), p.16.

² David to French foreign secretary, 20 Jan.1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.200 ff. Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Apr.1847, F.O. 80/45, fos. 2 ff. Cisneros, Coronel Dionisio, 'Sentencia de Muerte', I y J 1846, CCCXLIII, fos. 333 ff.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.374. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, p.336. Captain Guillermo Blanco killed Rangel, see David to French foreign secretary, 20 Mar.1847, C.P.-V., III, fos. 250 ff.

⁴ Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii. 279-81.

was the main leader of a social and political revolution against the existing order. Guzmán's inflammatory propaganda had encouraged many to revolt for the redistribution of land and the abolition of slavery. To ensure Guzmán's guilt Carmona claimed that untrustworthy persons could give evidence in treason trials as allowed by the ley de partida. He also claimed that a person could be found guilty not only for committing a crime, but for omisión as well. This concept means that although Guzmán might not have taken active part in the revolts he had failed to use his influence to try to stop them, thus being guilty of treason for not helping to bring peace.¹ The trial went on for four months as the defence sought evidence from distant places that took time to reach Caracas. Some people might have suspected that Guzmán would be released after losing the elections.

At first Monagas's government showed no change of heart regarding Guzmán and the Liberals. Some have thought that his first cabinet moved against the Liberals with more determination than before.² Guzmán must have felt he was lost the day Quintero joined the cabinet. With Quintero's arrival the trial was hurried to its conclusion. Quintero had the godo congress pass a law authorising the executive to appoint judicial prosecutors at the superior court level. Under this new law he then appointed Fernando Antonio Díaz to deal with the case.³ Díaz's salary would be of 2,400 pesos a year. Díaz was one of Guzmán's enemies. Also he was a friend of the National Bank stockholders, a monopoly that Guzmán had wanted to abolish. On 20 March, Quintero ordered Díaz to get a conviction quickly. The next

¹ Ibid.

² Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii. 373.

³ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.334-6. Law of 17 March 1847 empowered the executive to name a fiscal in each judicial district to act as public accuser and prosecutor in cases relating to crime, fisc, and others of public interest; see Wilson to Palmerston, 20 Apr.1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.28 ff. The law was passed on the 17th. Díaz's appointment was ratified by the council of state on the 18th. Díaz was notified of his appointment on 19 March; see 'Decreto Legislativo de 17 Marzo 1847', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fos. 131 ff, 158, 202-4.

day judge Osío found Guzmán guilty and sentenced him to death. Wilson reported that Guzmán had not been allowed to give his defence in open court, but to the judge, in his own cell. Judges were 'violent political partisans' who were pressured by Quintero into giving death sentences.¹ Osío declared he had uncovered the Liberal plot to take power. Guzmán would rule the middle of the country while Napoleón Sebastián Arteaga ran the West, and José Gregorio Monagas controlled the East.²

Ezequiel Zamora was captured on 26 March and jailed at Villa de Cura. With the end of the rebellion conservative extremists led by Quintero made greater demands for revenge. Among his proposals Quintero asked congress to toughen the law of conspirators and the printing code. The juries in libel suits would be made up of men eligible for the senate. This measure closed access to the less distinguished citizens. By toughening the code and by choosing juries from a select few it was hoped that the abuses of the press would stop. He asked for more powers and more funds in an apparent attempt to become more powerful than the President. As Páez's agent he would then be able to dictate policy with some independence from the President. Seeming quietly resigned to Conservative wishes Monagas signed those proposals to congress.³

¹ Díaz Sánchez, ibid. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii. 380. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii. 279-82. Wilson to Palmerston, ibid. Acevedo, Apuntes para la Historia, p.10.

² Ibid. As early as 15 October 1846, Juan Vicente González named Guzmán and Arteaga as the rebel leaders in the West while Blas Bruzual and Estanislao Rendón were the eastern leaders. See 'Despedida del "Diario de la Tarde"', Diario de la Tarde (Caracas), 120 (15 Oct. 1846), quoted in Pensamiento Político, iii. 112-13. Arteaga was leader of the Liberal party in Barinas. Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p.80.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii. 375. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii. 287. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp. 334-6. Acevedo, Apuntes, p.14 on jury qualifications for press code. González Guinán, Historia, iv. 359, 366.

Arteaga was also put on trial. He had been elected to the house of representatives for Barinas, but the House had denied his immunity to be tried. Later, it went so far as to annul his election to congress.¹

When Guzmán was sentenced his wife Carlota went to see the recently arrived Spanish Chargé d'Affaires Don Juan Gregorio Muñoz y Funes. He suggested she go directly to the President. That same day, 22 March, Carlota Blanco de Guzmán and her son Antonio saw Monagas at his San Pablo residence. She got on her knees to plead for Guzmán's life. Monagas lifted her to her feet assuring her that he had not become president to serve as the instrument for anyone's passions.²

Publicly, Monagas seemed to have no will of his own. Wilson felt the Conservatives were to blame, especially Páez through Quintero. By this time rumours began circulating claiming that Monagas 'feels deeply the humiliation of his present position and is anxious to emancipate himself from such a state of tutelage, and especially, that he objects to be used as an instrument in the shedding of blood to gratify the vindictive passions of others.'³

Guzmán's sentence was upheld by the superior court of the second district on 24 April 1847.⁴ Páez and Soublette were believed to want nothing less than Guzmán's death.⁵ After getting the conviction the fiscal, Díaz, wrote that foreign diplomats in Caracas wanted to save Guzmán.⁶ Díaz was

¹ González Guinán, ibid., p.362.

² 'Por Dios, señora; váyase usted persuadida de que yo no he venido a este puesto a servir de instrumento de las pasiones de nadie.' Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.338-9.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 20 Apr.1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.28 ff. Note the similarity of word choice between Wilson's report and Monagas's statement to Mrs Guzmán; an indication that Monagas may have said something similar to her.

⁴ The superior court judges were: Juan José Romero, Ignacio Oropeza and Manuel Cerezo; Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.283.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, 20 Apr.1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.28 ff.

⁶ El Centinela de la Patria (Caracas), 55 (25 Mar.1847), 'Alerta'.

the principal writer of El Centinela de la Patria. As a godo spokesman he reflected the wishes of the extremists. Although diplomats were meant to remain neutral regarding Venezuela's internal affairs some actively agreed with Conservative policy. Others did not believe that Guzmán had to be executed, especially now that the Conservatives were confirmed in power with their candidate Monagas. Díaz did not mention Wilson specifically, but probably the article was meant for him.

Wilson had displeased the Soublette administration. As the government had to be reminded of its obligations to foreign creditors, and since the majority of these creditors were British, it was bound to feel little affection for the man who had to protect British interests. Wilson also had to ensure that British subjects were treated fairly by Venezuela. Since there was constant contact between the East and British Trinidad and Guiana there were many opportunities for abuse of British subjects by Venezuelan authorities. With so many matters to represent to the Venezuelan government it is understandable that Wilson might be made to seem a bully when the government did not wish to co-operate with him.

Problems might also have arisen from Wilson's feelings for Páez. As a loyal bolivarian Wilson disliked Páez and his supporters for their destruction of Bolívar's work. He saw the paecistas as usurpers, as he wrote to Sir Robert Ker Porter in 1832:

'... no human power will ever make me believe that Gl. Bolivar was not the Only man, save Sucre, whom the Whole Spanish American Revolution produced; and Paez the Most Perjured Traitor ... let Paez and his successful accomplices respect the virtues which they neither possessed or could imitate, and admire in the faithful friends of Colombia that loyalty which honoured even their fall... the Rebellion of Paez was a Violation of his Oath to his God and to Colombia, of every principle of Honour, of every Moral, Civil, Political and religious tie - an Ingrate to his Benefactor [Bolívar], a traitor to his country and the Assassin of its Peace ...' ¹

¹ Wilson to Porter, London, 27 Apr. 1832, Lilly Library, Porter Mss. fos. 83-90.

In his official capacity Wilson had to subdue his true feelings in an effort to remain strictly impartial in his dealings with the Venezuelan government, an exercise in which he seems to have usually succeeded.

Wilson's relations with the Venezuelan government had worsened since 1845. Some samples of their business helps to explain the situation. He had objected to the harsh levying of differential pilotage dues at Maracaibo that occasionally prejudiced British vessels. London approved of the objection.¹ One Augustus Hamilton had been arrested at Angostura and the local court had decreed an embargo on his property in an apparent effort to have Hamilton sell out to the jefe político. Wilson not only protested those events, but also demanded the punishment of the judge and the jefe.²

Miss Dent, the owner of the Aroa mines, had to ask for the protection of her agent, Mr Adams, and of her property. It seems some tenants were refusing to pay their rent, and Adams's life had been threatened. The Earl of Aberdeen instructed Wilson to pay attention to the matter before the authorities.³

Mr Tebbutt claimed he had had 29 bonds of the Anglo-Colombian Goldschmidt loan stolen in 1837. He had been attempting to have them replaced since November 1843 in accordance with established practice. Foreign secretary Manrique agreed they should be replaced, but Soubllette's proposal to congress went unheard in 1846. Wilson promised to pursue the claim with the new administration in 1847.⁴

¹ Aberdeen to Wilson, 13 Jan. 1845, F.O. 80/31, fo. 3

² Lord Canning and the Earl of Aberdeen agreed with the steps taken by Wilson. Canning to Wilson, 31 May 1845, ibid., fo. 11. Aberdeen to Wilson, 22 Dec. 1845, ibid., fo. 32.

³ Aberdeen to Wilson, 31 July 1845, ibid., fo. 15.

⁴ Wilson to Aberdeen, 23 June 1846, F.O. 80/39, fos. 99-120.

William Mapy was jailed after killing one of his labourers in alleged self defence. Francois Gireau or Giraud, one of the alcaldes of Guiria, province of Cumaná, arbitrarily delayed the case while Mapy was left in prison for 28 days. He spent the first 16 nights with his legs in stocks.¹ Nine months later, on 21 February 1846, judge Pedro C. Gellineau of Carúpano absolved Mapy of the charge, but could not entirely acquit him because there was doubt as to the question of self defence, in other words, no witnesses.² This finding meant that Mapy could be tried again if further evidence were ever produced. His reputation would always be in doubt, thus destroying his credit and his life as a farmer. There seems little doubt that Gireau used all his influence to punish Mapy. The reasons can never be known. Being of the same national origin as Gireau Gellineau may have co-operated to perpetuate Mapy's predicament at Gireau's recommendation.

Wilson protested the extreme measures taken in a case of this nature, one that normally would not even be tried. Mapy had been cleared of the charge of manslaughter after nine months of imprisonment. When Wilson demanded that the alcaldes of Guiria be punished the interior secretary had replied that one alcalde had since died and that the other, Gireau, was now mad.³ Mapy was in poor health after his long detention. He had few funds to sustain him. His crops had been lost and he was in debt for them. Now he was not allowed to return to Guiria while the superior court reviewed his case.

At Wilson's insistence the central government now ordered the court to reach a verdict without delay. On 5 June 1846, the superior court judges

¹ Wilson to Aberdeen, 10 Jan.1846, F.O. 80/38, fos. 3 ff.

² Wilson to Aberdeen, 9(?) Aug.1846, F.O. 80/39, fo. 243.

³ Wilson to Aberdeen, 20 Apr.1846, F.O. 80/38, fo. 186.

at Cumaná acquitted Mapy completely. Although he had been detained for 13 months before being found innocent Wilson found that the government had no intention of punishing Gireau for abuse of power or making anyone liable for compensation to Mapy.¹ Wilson continued to demand that Gireau be tried for abuse of power. Not until 30 April 1847 could he report that Gireau had been found guilty of abuse, but 'punishment awarded is the very mildest allowed by law in a case of this sort.'²

During the uprisings of 1846 Wilson seems to have been the only diplomat to maintain a strict neutrality both officially and in private. This unswerving attitude could be interpreted as opposition by the government since the other diplomats fraternised openly with members of the 'party of order' at social and political functions.

Wilson's greatest problem was the number of claims he had to represent before the Venezuelan government, far more than any other foreign agent. His constant reminders could easily cause resentment in government circles. The slow degeneration of the Soublette government's power as the elections approached meant less control of minor offices and local officials. Britons were bothered, booed, and illegally taxed more often. The situation in the interior was serious. In Caracas Alexander Dunbar had to pay an excessive patent tax for his business while Venezuelans did not.³ Wilson's demands for redress were ignored or twisted into threats by a government that was unable to attend to them. Wilson reported that, '... the Government has

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 16 Nov. 1846, F.O. 80/40, fo. 160. The judges of the superior court of the first judicial district were José Grau, M. de Briceño and Sulpicio Trías, ibid., fo. 227.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 30 Apr. 1847, F.O. 80/45, fo. 55.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 16 Aug. 1846, F.O. 80/39, fos. 313 ff. See fo. 271 for more problems for Britons in Guiria as a house is burned.

great repugnance to enter upon, and in reality meets with great obstacles, in dealing with Claims arising out of the acts of the Provincial Authorities ...¹

Wilson did co-operate with the government to spare it embarrassment. In mid-1846, Wilson's coach was stopped by a cadet of the military academy posted as sentry. Wilson was insulted with 'threatening and offensive language and behaviour' by the sentry and three other cadets. The sentry, Fermín Toro's younger brother, later was insubordinate and insolent towards President Soublette. The government had to apologise for its cadets, who were expelled from the academy. The measures taken by the government had been the least that would placate any foreign power, and yet many in Caracas reacted by calling them a national humiliation when faced by a more powerful nation. Wilson immediately asked the government to reinstate the cadets if no other obstacles existed since an apology was enough for him and for Great Britain.²

In the last days of Soublette's term a decision was taken to ask for Wilson's recall. Foreign secretary Manrique wrote to Fermín Toro, Venezuela's agent in London, on 18 January 1847 to ask Britain to name a new chargé if it wished to continue to maintain good relations with Venezuela. Wilson's 'strange conduct' was the only reason given. To add weight to its request Venezuela had asked the chargés of France, Brazil and the United States for support. Gladly, these chargés informed their ministers in London of the situation.³ They were not Wilson's friends, and would be happy to see him go. As we shall see, Wilson survived the question of his recall.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 20 Oct. 1846, F.O. 80/40, fo. 136.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 30 Sept. 1846, F.O. 80/40, fos. 28 ff.

³ J.M. Manrique to Fermín Toro, Caracas, 18 Jan. 1847, AANH, Papeles Fermín Toro, No. 189-M19.

With the end of the revolts arose the question of amnesty. Only the extreme oligarchs wanted all the rebels punished. Most wished the government would take a more lenient line and punish only the leaders. The severity of this punishment was a point of heated discussion among the public. The extreme oligarchs appeared to take control at the end of Soublette's period. The lower courts sentenced many rebels to death. But the issue of death sentences was a dangerous one. Now that the rebels were at the mercy of the government it seemed content to keep them jailed for a time having them hope that it only planned to execute the leaders and some personal enemies. The extent of the executions would depend on public opinion and the new president's plans. After other revolts the common practice in such cases had been for the president to commute the death sentences to perpetual exile, and to declare a general amnesty for lower ranking rebels. With time many of the exiles would be allowed to return. This time the influential extremist godos hoped the punishment would be harsher than usual. While Monagas arrived in Caracas and decided what course to take, the rebels would have to continue to fill the jails.

Overcrowded jails were a menace to security and order. Some of the rebels of Rio Chico had been sent to the bóvedas of La Guaira. Juan Bautista Echeandía, who was on trial for conspiracy, was able to escape from there and make his way to Curazao. It is possible that his escape was arranged by friends. Manrique wrote to Toro on 6 February informing him that Wilson had been at La Guaira the morning of Echeandía's escape. Some people felt Wilson might have been involved. Manrique again urged Toro to get Wilson's recall. Toro should not return to Venezuela without achieving this or he would be eaten alive by the many enemies that Wilson had made through his poor diplomacy. Manrique added that Wilson had become protector of Guzmán and his followers.¹

¹ Manrique to Toro, Caracas, 6 Feb. 1847, AANH, Papeles Fermín Toro, No. 191-M21.

Monagas did indeed begin to commute some death sentences soon after taking office. Reasoning that only rebel leaders and those rebels who had committed 'atrozes delitos' should be punished and wishing to show mercy to the deceived multitude the new administration began to save lives in early March. On 13 March Quintero asked the council of state to commute the death sentence of Francisco París to three years of hard labour in Guayana. Quintero also asked that Felipe Silva, alias Guacara, should have his death sentence commuted to ten years of hard labour at Maracaibo.¹ Although one could not expect to survive years of hard labour, at least the immediacy of death was averted. This was the first step towards an eventual full pardon.

In early March the government decided to send those Rio Chico rebels who had already been condemned to die to La Guaira's vaults.² Reports of prisoner abuse led Quintero to ask the provincial governor of Caracas, Mariano Ustáriz, to investigate the situation. Reporting to Ustáriz, the jefe político of La Guaira described some of the prisoners as 'díscolo y turbulento'. They had been confined in one vault to make room for the new rebels that would arrive from Rio Chico, but were not overcrowded.³

General José María Zamora was also having trouble holding so many prisoners at Villa de Cura. Ustáriz reported that the Cura jail had 138 prisoners, but that it was meant to hold only one-third that number. Almost all had been sentenced, and there were new arrivals every day due to the success of operations.⁴ Because of the danger to the town of a

¹ AGN, I y J, 1847 - CCCXLV, fo. 427. for París, fo. 437 for Silva; both requests dated 13 Mar. 1847.

² Announcement of arrival of rebels to La Guaira, 11 Mar. 1847, I y J 1847 - CCCXLV, fos. 444-60.

³ Ustáriz to Quintero, Caracas, 19 Mar. 1847, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fos. 196-7.

⁴ Rangel was killed 14 March. Zamora was captured 26 March.

possible epidemic centred at the jail Zamora asked that all those who had been sentenced be sent on to La Guaira.¹ Eventually, over 100 more men were sent to La Guaira.²

According to Acevedo the fourth problem facing Monagas was the British Colonial Bank. Guzmán had preached an end to the monopoly of the National Bank, but with his defeat that bank was still intent on bankrupting the Colonial Bank. The National Bank would then have a monopoly on all banking. Monagas would have to contend with the question of the power of the National Bank, by no means a simple question of business competition, but one which had taken on political significance, and even ideological overtones. The interests of the National Bank had become a part of those of the conservative élite, especially of its directors, when it tried to influence the new government. We shall consider the problem of the Colonial Bank later on, related to other political events that Monagas had to face.

As Monagas settled in to his new surroundings he was able to pay some attention to his friends in the East. One case shows how effectively the judiciary could operate when prodded by the executive. Governor Ramón Pérez of Cumaná reported that on 20 February four youths had robbed Peck, Gellineau & Co. at Maturín. Three of them had been jailed in Maturín since 21 February, the oldest being the secretary of the cantonal council at the time of the theft. The trial had been 'en estado de pruebas', preparation, for more than a month.³

One month later, Pérez was told that his report had attracted the President's earnest attention. Monagas '... cannot see without sorrow

¹ Ustáriz to Quintero, Caracas, 11 March 1847, I y J 1847- CCCXLVI, fos.1-5,7.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.361. Ustáriz to Quintero, 22 Apr.1847, I y J - CCCXLVI, fos.11-12.

³ Pérez to Interior secretary, Cumaná, 17 Mar.1847, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fo.126.

that the relaxation of morality has reached the degree of affecting individuals who are regularly placed in society and who occupy public posts of honour and confidence.'¹ Pérez was ordered to demand that the judge of first instance hear the case, and to send frequent reports about the state and progress of the trial. Reports should also be sent to the superior court as stipulated by law. Finally, Quintero added, '... I encourage you to pay the utmost attention to this case.'²

The superior court was also expected to act according to the President's encouragement. On 4 May the president of the superior court of the first district answered that it would follow the government's excitación in the case of attempted robbery of the commercial house of Reck (sic), Gellineau & Co. at Maturín.³ In April the judge of first instance began a case against the seven men who had guarded the commercial house on the night of 20 February, among them Pedro Tomás Gellineau, Monagas's acquaintance. The seven protested against the judge's actions directly to the superior court which in turn ordered them to be freed, and suspended the lower court judge until it could hear the case itself. Four days after Grau answered Caracas his court sentenced the three alleged robbers to six years of hard labour. Since this was a stiffer sentence than that passed by the lower court, it would have to be reviewed by the supreme court. The superior court also dropped the trial of the seven guards declaring it without cause.⁴

¹ '... no puede ver sin pena qe. la relajacion de la moral haya llegado al grado de afectar á individuos regularmente situados en la sociedad y ocupados en destinos públicos de honor y confianza.' Quintero to Pérez, 16 April 1847, ibid., fos. 126-7.

² '... le exito a prestar suma atención a esta causa.' Ibid.

³ José Grau to Interior and Justice secretary, Cumaná, 4 May 1847, ibid., fo.128.

⁴ Pérez to Interior secretary, 10 May 1847, ibid., fo.129. Pérez to Interior secretary, 17 May 1847, ibid., fo.130.

The details of the incident are not available for examination. One may never be able to determine whether it was a simple robbery attempt, or what local pressures, passions and circumstances led the judge to order the arrest of both parties. There is no doubt that the special interest shown by Monagas did affect the outcome. The case was resolved only three weeks after Quintero sent Monagas's orders. Considering the time needed for travel from Caracas it would seem that the governor and the court at Cumaná acted on them almost immediately.

Whether Monagas had intended those orders to affect the court's ruling cannot now be determined, but there is little doubt that they did. Gellineau, being Monagas's sometime business partner, was protected by the court. In future he and his business would be less susceptible to harassment. The fact that Monagas had given orders in the case would be interpreted by all as Monagas protecting Gellineau.

The Conservatives had surrounded Monagas from his arrival at La Guaira. Acevedo believed that Páez and Quintero were at the coast to isolate Monagas and keep him away from anyone who did not belong to their circle. As proof of the oligarchy's plan to control Monagas and use him to govern as it wished Acevedo offered details of their efforts. The Conservatives had wanted to identify Monagas with Páez before the elections. When the interviews between the two did not take place, they sent the 'mission' to investigate Monagas's ideas and plans. They ensured that Páez was met at Caracas on 7 February in such a grand manner so as to leave no doubt that Páez was above the government and the president-elect, and was the country's main support. By surrounding Monagas they were able to have him choose his first cabinet according to their wishes. With all these facts Acevedo wondered if anyone could doubt the existence of a conspiracy by a few men who wished to monopolise the president. The president's power would

be concentrated into their few hands to ensure the future stability and prosperity of Venezuela.¹ At the time Acevedo was the chief officer of the department of the interior. Secretary Quintero was his direct superior.² Presumably, he would have had occasion to witness these manoeuvres as an oligarca.

Páez stayed with Monagas for about a month despite the fact that he was general-in-chief of the army and that Rangel and Zamora were still at large.³ These must have been glorious days for the paecistas as the president was apprentice to the ruler. The governor of Coro had been suspended and put on trial for electoral infractions and, possibly, for his role in a scandal at the aduana of La Vela. Páez's son, Manuel Antonio, was named temporary governor. Juan Antonio Izquierdo replaced Herrera as governor of Carabobo. José Santiago Rodríguez replaced Quintero as Auditor General de Guerra. These appointments further pleased the paecistas. When he finally did leave Caracas on 29 March, Páez left the city believing that Monagas would govern with Quintero's council.⁴ The two leaders seemed to be agreed on how to run the country. They separated in what was apparently the greatest friendship. This friendship continued to be expressed in the letters they exchanged.

¹ Acevedo, Apuntes, pp.3-6.

² Acevedo, El Contendor, p.5. He was also related to Tomás Lander, p.4.

³ Acevedo, Apuntes, p.5.

⁴ Quintero to Manuel A. Páez, Caracas, 19 March 1847, I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fo.230. González Guinán, Historia, iv.360-1. The disappearance of funds from La Vela was discovered on 11 February 1847; see letter Félix M. Riojano to A.L. Guzmán, Curazao, 6 Jan.1849, in ADRRC, 27, fo. 557.

On 9 April Monagas wrote to Páez complaining that Páez had not written him as he had promised when he left Caracas. He repeated his plea that Páez should not hesitate to make frank 'indicaciones u observaciones' whenever Páez felt the need.¹ Páez answered Monagas on the 12th with the news that the rebels were destroyed completely. Following Monagas's wishes he was discharging troops to save any additional expense to the treasury. The amount saved would help support the forces which the government would decide to keep in active service. Páez promised to make frank observations when the need arose. He added that the interests of the nation were discussed and decided in Caracas, therefore Monagas should send him some news when possible and write longer letters. Apparently, Monagas had been ill again, because Páez asked after his health and whether Monagas had applied the vejigatorio, vesicant, for whatever was ailing him and with what effect.²

Páez also maintained correspondence with Quintero. During those days Quintero informed him that Monagas had been forced to take to bed due to an 'indisposition'. Later, José María Francia, Páez's son-in-law, reported that Monagas's health was improving, with the help of a purgante, a bleed, and that he would soon be able to leave his house.³

¹ Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 12 April 1847, Antigua Colección Rudolph Dolge, courtesy of Dr Ramón J. Velásquez.

² Monagas seems to have suffered from gout, or osteo-arthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. He would be forced to take to bed with a pain in one foot. Certainly, the llanero's diet with a high content of uric acid from meat, liver, kidneys, and brains, added to the use of Bordeaux wine for medicinal purposes, would have contributed to the condition. For gout various vesicants were used to blister the skin around the affected area. Herbert French, ed., An Index of Differential Diagnosis of Main Symptoms by Various Writers (4th edn., Bristol, 1928), pp.123, 428-9. Auguste Vidal de Cassis, Tratado de Patología Esterna, y de Medicina Operatoria, con Resúmenes de Anatomía de los Tejidos y de las Regiones (Madrid, 1870), i. 184-90.

³ Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 15 April 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. Francia had married Juana de Dios, daughter of Páez by Bárbara Nieves. Carlos Iturriza Guillén, Algunas Familias Caraqueñas, i. 28, quoted by Rafael Ramón Castellanos, Páez, Peregrino y Proscrito (1848-1851) (2nd edn., Caracas, 1975), p.314.

Monagas was busy preparing for his wife's arrival. The circumstances of her arrival are not clear. She had reached Caracas by 25 April.¹ Monagas may have asked congress's permission to leave the capital to meet his family at La Guaira. It is obvious from later events that he had not received the necessary permission. He may not have gone all the way to La Guaira, meeting his family at Uaracarumbo, on the road over the Avila instead,² clearly a compromise between going to the coast and remaining in the city. González Guinán writes that Mrs Monagas with four sons and four daughters, arrived at La Guaira on the afternoon of 22 April on the navy's 'Constitución'. Monagas would have left Caracas on the morning of 23 April to meet his family at the port, and would not return to the capital until the afternoon of the 24th. That same day Monagas commuted the death sentences of four unknown rebels, perhaps reflecting the conciliatory effect of his wife's presence.³

Páez rejoiced at the arrival of Luisa de Monagas in Caracas. He stated that in a new situation like Monagas's in Caracas the lack of 'recreaciones domésticas' was unbearable. Claiming that good wives were very good doctors, Páez was certain that he would soon have news of Monagas's recovery from illness.⁴

Monagas's family was not the only arrival from Oriente. During those days a picket from Aragua de Barcelona entered the city. On 27 April Monagas asked Páez if he could billet these troops at Páez's premises across the street from 'La Viñeta'. Páez replied that it was enough to know that

¹ Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 29 April 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. Páez says he had already offered his services to Monagas's family in his letter of the 26th, therefore Monagas must have notified Páez of his family's arrival on the 25th at the latest.

² Bartolomé Tavera-Acosta, Historia de Carúpano (3rd edn., Min.Educ., Colección Vigilia, 19, 1969), p.290.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.364. The superior court upheld Guzmán's conviction that same 24th.

⁴ Páez to Monagas, 29 April 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

he owned these premises for Monagas to have access to them. He authorised Monagas to make use of any of his properties. Páez ended his reply by informing Monagas that he was sending an order to put those premises at Monagas's disposal.¹ Even if one recognises the intensity of the cultural formality of the latin ofrecimiento, one is impressed by the generosity of Páez's reply. It would be difficult to believe that some degree of trust did not exist between the two men.

Despite signs of Monagas's independence public confidence in the well-being of the nation under the new president continued, mainly due to the supposed friendship between Páez and Monagas. That confidence was reflected in the trading of bonds. At the public auction of 24 April at Caracas, Venezuela's credit and its future were reckoned to be good. The country's recent obligations were bid for at 80 - 90 per cent of their nominal value. The older debt was quoted at 48 - 49 per cent, while the consolidable that had been converted to consolidated debt was exchanged at 70 - 73 per cent.²

It is not surprising that public confidence should have been so high at that time. Although the cost to the nation of the revolts of September 1846 was listed at \$1,103,348. 52 pesos,³ the end of the unrest and the friendship between the two rulers were enough to convince the public. However, public opinion did not reflect the true economic state of Venezuela. Monagas had taken office while the country was still being affected by the economic crisis that had begun in the early 1840s. Any single government would have had a difficult task counteracting such world economic problems.

¹ Ibid.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.365.

³ Ibid., iv.360.

The Venezuelan government was even more powerless to fight against the crises because of its strong dependence on coffee and cacao.¹ The government's problems look even worse when we realise that its resources had diminished further due to the revolts of 1846. Monagas took office at a time when the country's confused economic climate showed little hope for the future.²

As Monagas gained confidence he began to make changes in his administration. By the end of April he had begun to appoint men loyal to him to high offices. One of these was Colonel Francisco Mejía who was now a member of the tribunal de cuentas in Caracas.³ Monagas then decided to replace two customs house controllers - Francisco Aranda at La Guaira and Colonel Zárraga at Ciudad Bolívar. Aranda had been treasury secretary in 1841-4, and had been the principal controller at La Guaira since at least December 1846. Zárraga was related to Soublette and his extensive family at Ciudad Bolívar. He was also related to ex-secretary of state Manrique and to Vice-President Urbaneja by marriage.⁴ Both men clearly had influence in the country and were part of the ruling group of the Soublette government.

The new controllers would be Diego Antonio Caballero at La Guaira and Pedro María Otero at Ciudad Bolívar. Both were Monagas's trusted friends. On 3 May Monagas handed Quintero a piece of paper proposing

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.361, fn.1. As an example see R. Veloz, Economía, coffee prices fell from \$11.9/60 Kg. bag in 1846/7 to \$10.2/60 Kg. bag in 1847/8, see G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, p.149.

² Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.9.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.371.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, for Aranda see his review of trade F.O. 80/41, fo.116; for Zárraga see letter of 20 April 1847, F.O. 80/45, fo.28.

these two friends for these posts. Quintero understood that he was to propose these appointments at the next meeting of the council of state. This idea brought an immediate written response from Quintero. He wrote that as interior and justice secretary he did not have the power to propose any changes of personnel in another branch of the executive. The customs houses were administered by the treasury secretary, Mr Herrera. In his letter Quintero agreed with the idea that all treasury posts be declared vacant to enable the new president, with the council of state's support, to choose the people he felt were most capable to administer the nation's finances. Since the council's agreement was sought, although not absolutely necessary, to make any new appointment, and since Quintero and the paecistas were in a majority on the council a general order declaring all appointed posts vacant was not as progressive as might have appeared at first. Certainly, the order would not necessarily bring about any sweeping changes of policy or personnel. It would enable changes to be made where some had fallen out of favour or where there was cause to reward loyalty and good performance. The order would also serve to remind all political appointees where their loyalty should lie.

Quintero also agreed with Monagas about the 'inconveniencia' of keeping Aranda at La Guaira. It is worth remembering that although they belonged to the same ruling group Quintero and Aranda differed greatly on economic policy. Aranda had resigned his cabinet post in 1844 to join Rafael Agostini and promote the Institute of Territorial Credit that would have given aid to agriculture. Quintero and other paecistas had taken a stronger line with the landowners who had become debtors. Presumably Aranda and Quintero continued to disagree on matters of economic policy, and Quintero would take the opportunity to replace Aranda with an able administrator from his own circle. Since the customs house

at La Guaira represented the government's largest source of revenue, one can imagine Quintero's willingness to find a controller more to his liking.

Quintero did not agree with Monagas's choice of Caballero. In his letter, he told Monagas that he could not support Caballero with his vote in the council because he had neither the experience nor the reputation for the job. Quintero ended his letter with a veiled threat to resign if Monagas did not reconsider this appointment.¹

Secretary Herrera had resigned that day as soon as he heard of the proposed appointments in his branch. He had not been consulted about them. Monagas accepted his resignation the next day and named chief officer Pedro de las Casas acting secretary.² Some felt Monagas had wanted to be rid of Herrera because he considered him incapable of managing the recovery of the government's difficult financial situation.³ Monagas did not accept Quintero's resignation.

Herrera's resignation had alarmed the ruling circle. Congress changed its schedule to discuss the 'disagreeable occurrence'. Apparently, Quintero was persuaded to remain in the cabinet so as not to cause further alarm. Also, he could then attempt to influence the choice of Herrera's successor. Ex-president Vargas, now a member of the council of state,

¹ Quintero to Monagas, Caracas, 3 May 1847, AANH, Papeles Fermín Toro, 260, Q2. It is worth emphasising that the job at La Guaira was considered as important as a cabinet post, and usually more lucrative. Caballero had been the provincial treasurer of Barcelona in 1822. See AGN, Intendencia de Venezuela, Gran Colombia 1822, XCVIII, fo.78.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.372.

³ Turreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-3.

⁴ Quintero to Monagas, 3 May 1847, loc.cit.

was one of the oligarchy's choices to become the new secretary.

Another was Fermín Toro, recently returned from his mission to Europe where, among other matters, he had failed to have Wilson recalled.¹

Another candidate was Guillermo Smith, one of the National Bank directors. It seems he was offered the post on the same 4 May or the very next day.² Smith accepted the offer on condition that he could follow godo policy. In essence, Smith and the ruling oligarchy wanted to impose their conditions on the president. By this time Monagas may well have decided to break with the godos on economic policies, and Smith's conditions would only make him more determined to do so. He had decided to assert a certain degree of independence regarding the appointment of officials. Wilson reported that Monagas was determined to break with the godos.³ Although Smith had accepted the offer he was not appointed. Instead, on 7 May, Monagas called Colonel José Félix Blanco to take charge of the treasury.

Quintero protested against the choice of Blanco and complained that he had not been consulted about the choice beforehand.⁴ He insisted on resigning his cabinet post, and went directly to Maracay to see Páez. Monagas named chief officer Acevedo acting secretary. One can imagine the shock and anxiety of the ruling oligarchy following these developments. Blanco had stood as the moderate Liberal candidate in the last elections.

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.372.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 27 July 1847, F.O. 80/46, fo.104.

³ Ibid.

⁴ It is worth noting that the president was not obliged to consult with anyone concerning the appointment of cabinet members.

His group was now trying to save Guzmán, and Blanco happened to be one of Quintero's political enemies.¹ The godos felt it was bad enough that Monagas should consider Blanco for the post, but it must have been outraged that Monagas had pleaded with him to accept in an effort to help save the country from ruin with the understanding that Blanco would be the leading member of the cabinet.² Quintero had been driven from his post.

The reaction to Blanco's appointment was immediate. Congress was not happy. The representatives, especially, made unfavourable speeches about Blanco. By coincidence congress had been considering a petition by Blanco to let him delay reimbursing the government for 6,000 pesos he had been given in 1840 to help build a road in Mérida province and which he could not begin. Tourreil reported that in his petition Blanco posed as completely bankrupt. Tourreil added that a debtor was hardly the sort of person suitable to administer a national treasury in trouble.³ Wilson felt differently about Blanco. He described him as 'possessed of ability and firmness and his integrity is unimpeachable.'⁴

The reasons for choosing Blanco may never be known. Perhaps Monagas did want to break with the ruling oligarchy, or at least with the

¹ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-3. See Antonio Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa de la Causa Liberal (Paris, 1894), pp.30-3, for a different reason for Quintero's departure, presumably over the electoral reform law limiting the right to vote to those who could read and write, about one-third of the existing voters. Monagas did not agree with Quintero over this law.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 20 May 1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.156-7.

³ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-8. For the road in Mérida see 'Privilegio para Apertura y Tránsito del Camino de Lobatera al Puerto de las Guamas, Mérida', I y J 1840, CCV, fos.27 ff.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 20 May 1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.156-7.

Soublette-Páez-Quintero group that had surrounded him since his arrival in Caracas. Perhaps more than wanting to make the break Monagas had felt he was forced to choose Blanco because of the uncompromising attitude of the godos. If he had wanted to maintain his integrity as a ruler he may have felt he had no choice but to appoint Blanco to ensure some freedom of decision for himself. A third possibility may have been a genuine desire on Monagas's part to create a more representative government in an effort to unite the country, to heal the wounds of 1846, and lead the nation back to prosperity.

The most likely reason for choosing Blanco was probably a combination of the three interpretations. Monagas hinted as much in the explanatory letter he wrote Páez on 8 May to counteract any unpleasant news that Quintero would be bringing to Maracay. Monagas asked for Páez's support in the name of friendship and patriotism. He claimed that he wanted to lead the country towards true equality and justice, and end the anarchy and discontent caused by the 'vices and tolerance of the preceeding administration'.¹ He reminded Páez that he had said he would not be president unless he could rule according to the best interests of the republic. He equated those interests with following his own conscience even if against the wishes of a reactionary few. To be able to rule he said he needed a cabinet that was energetic and prudent. He went on to describe the events of the past days.

He told Páez that he had been surprised by the reaction to his wish to change controllers since it was within his constitutional power to do so. When Blanco was chosen to replace Herrera a new 'conspiracy' had broken out in the government. More serious than the first it had led Monagas to

¹ Monagas to Páez, 8 May 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. Díaz Sánchez also makes reference to this letter in Guzmán, p.347.

consider resigning the presidency, but since the nation's interest was most dear to him he had decided to stand firm through any difficulties. Both Quintero and Carreño had threatened to resign if he appointed Blanco. His dignity as head of the government did not allow him to back down for fear of worse consequences due to any show of weakness on his part. He felt he was forced into a situation that brought his reputation into question. Therefore, he had accepted Quintero's resignation and promised to accept Carreño's if he submitted his.

Monagas ended his letter with a general warning that he did not doubt there would be some people who would try to disfigure the events to have Páez believe the worst of him, 'but in this case I shall say that whoever it should be does not know me, nor does he also know to what degree I am determined to prove my true political faith.'¹ He promised Páez to work for everything that did not oppose the constitution or the law, and that public convenience demanded. Finally, Monagas hoped Páez was persuaded of the correctness with which Monagas had acted.

There can be no doubt that Monagas was taking a more independent line than the oligarchy had expected. By the overreaction of its members Monagas could show that he had tried to be conciliatory, but that he had been forced into a sharper break than he had wanted or had planned. Certainly, it could be no surprise that a new ruler would want to place some of his friends in the government either because he trusted them or to favour them. By remaining calm the oligarchy would not necessarily have lost its influence over the government. It might have tried to incorporate these new arrivals.

¹ '... pero en este caso diré, que quién quiera que sea no me conoce, ni conoce tampoco hasta que grado estoy decidido a probar mi verdadera fé política.' Ibid.

Blanco's appointment did not point to any radical shifts in policy, at least at that early stage when Blanco had accepted joining the cabinet, but was delaying taking office under what Tourreil thought was the pretext of an 'indisposition'.¹ By 20 May Blanco still had not taken charge of his office, possibly awaiting the effects caused by the appointment. The ruling circle still controlled most of the public offices. It controlled congress, the judiciary including the jurors, and the council of state.² Its situation was not hopeless and the appointment of Blanco, although pointing to a change in presidential policy, certainly did not deserve the overreaction it received.

Whatever Monagas's reasons there is no doubt about the country's excited reaction to Blanco's appointment. The oligarchy was against it. Sensing the unease among the godos the Liberals rejoiced, and took to the streets of Caracas to sing and chant slogans.³

Congress met for thirty extra days, the maximum limit of its extraordinary sessions, and ended 19 May. Tourreil reported that it would have passed many important laws but for the executive's peculiar behaviour. It had felt it would be more prudent to wait for Monagas's position to become clearer before passing laws giving him more power.⁴

¹ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-8.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 15 Sept.1847, F.O. 80/46, fo.261. The members of the council were the vice-president of the country, one supreme court judge, the three cabinet members, and four councillors elected by congress. Apart from the three cabinet members all the councillors had been appointed during Soublette's government, among them ex-president Vargas and his vice-president Narvarte. Título XVII of the constitution of 1830.

³ Rondón-Márquez quotes J.V. González on the Liberals' reaction in Caracas, Guzmán Blanco, p.55. González Guinán, Historia, iv.372. Tourreil described the mood as anxiety. Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-8.

⁴ Tourreil, ibid.

The law reorganising the militia had been ready, but congress had hesitated to pass it at the last minute, and it had been shelved.¹ A larger militia would have given the executive more power since it could make appointments and make use of the force without the consent of congress, as was needed for the regular army.²

The new election law would have given the executive more power to interfere in the elections by enabling it to declare that most organised opposition to the government was seditious. Only at the last minute did congress realise the danger of such a law should the executive decide to break with the oligarchy. It too was shelved until the next session.³

Most oligarchs seemed to regret passing the law controlling abuses of the freedom of the press. Using its authority the executive could declare that any criticism of the government was the same as criticism of the country, and was seditious and unpatriotic. If Venezuela's political situation were to change this law could be used to hinder the godo press.⁴

Congress had created the office of district public prosecutor, the fiscal, to give the executive the power of action to bring criminals to trial. Although the interests of justice were claimed to be served by the new office, it had come about for political reasons when two Liberal municipal councillors had ignored orders to crack down on the Liberal rebel press during the last disturbances. Now Turreil reported that this weapon too could be turned on the godos.⁵

¹ Ibid.

² The regular army was limited by congress to 2,500 men for 1847-48. 'Decreto de Fuerza Permanente de 1 de Mayo, 1847', in Archivo del Congreso, Actos Legislativos-Cámara de Representantes, vol.202, fos.298,309-10.

³ Turreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-8.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Congress had dealt with other matters. Due to the interest taken by Santos Michelena and José María de Rojas Tebbutt's claim was finally settled. 28½ per cent of the £10,500 loan bonds would be replaced by bonds of the foreign debt of the republic.¹

The house of representatives passed a law prohibiting altogether the importation of slaves into Venezuela. The proposal had been guided by Michelena, Rojas, and Fernando Olavarría. Wilson reported that Juan Vicente González had opposed the proposal the most, despite being '... the son of a woman of colour, and whose maternal grand mother or at least whose Maternal Great Grand Mother must have been an African importation.'²

With regard to the law prohibiting the importation of slaves, Wilson described the role British subjects in Venezuela played in slavery. Many Britons owned or hired large numbers of slaves in Venezuela. They had direct or indirect interests as owners, joint owners, or through mortgages, in several of the principal haciendas that had slave labour. Of particular interest was the case of the British vice-consul at Puerto Cabello, McWhirter, who imported free blacks from Curazao to work his estate. These workers were indebted to the estate for advances, technically free, but debtors always.³

Vespasian Ellis was given exclusive rights for steam navigation on the Orinoco and Apure rivers for eighteen years. He was also given the right to use steam on the tributaries of the two main rivers although

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 14 May 1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.139 ff.
Decree of 8 May 1847.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 3 May 1847, Slave Trade Papers, F.O. 84/686, fo.208.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 16 June 1847, F.O. 80/686, fos.239 ff.

without exclusivity. To encourage the beginning of the enterprise Ellis's steam company was exempted from paying all municipal taxes, all port charges, and any national taxes due for the importation of steam vessels.¹

William Gray explains that in 1846 the provincial assemblies of Guayana and Apure gave ex-charge' and paecista Ellis the monopoly for steam on the Apure river. Gray says the company was allowed the free use of national forests for lumber and fuel, and was exempted from all import duties. Disputes would be settled by Venezuelan law and without recourse to international reclamation.²

Congress authorised Monagas's first budget. Its amounts differed from previous years only by being larger. It totalled \$3,116,880. 78 pesos.³ It is surprising that the budget should have been so optimistic, since it was evident that there was not enough revenue to cover it. Customs revenue for 1846/7 totalled only \$1,773,312 pesos, the second largest yearly total in seventeen years.⁴ At the end of the year Level

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 28 May 1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.169f. Ellis had been the United States charge' in Venezuela in 1844-45.

² William H. Gray, 'Steamboat Transportation on the Orinoco', The Hispanic American Historical Review, XXV (November 1945), p.459. Gray quotes the conditions of the contract from the Gaceta de Venezuela, 14 February 1847.

³ Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, viii.55.
 Wilson to Palmerston, 31 May 1847, F.O. 80/45, fos.179 ff.

Interior and Justice Department	- \$1,032,876. 23
Finance Department	- \$1,256,509. 67
Foreign Affairs	- \$ 32,400. 00
War Department	- \$ 704,363. 80
Navy Department	- \$ 90,731. 08
Total	- \$3,116,880. 78

⁴ Level to A.L. Guzmán, 29 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 23, fo.297. Carrillo Batalla, ibid., viii.15, official figures equal \$1,750,967. 40.

doubted the 1847/8 total would reach half of that, due to the existing uncertainty in the country.

With regard to religion congress's most important decision was the creation of the dioceses of Barquisimeto and Calabozo. These regions were considered too populated and too important not to have their own religious authority.¹ However, Venezuela lacked priests for its three existing dioceses, Caracas, Mérida and Guayana. Of their 481 parishes, 208 were vacant. There were only 440 priests in all Venezuela at that time.²

Tourreil expected Monagas to make some important appointments. The most immediate one would be that of Interior and Justice Secretary. Since congress was recessed until January 1848 its oligarchic members would not be able to make speeches against government policy.³ Monagas was freer to act as he saw fit.

Acevedo was allowed to continue as interior secretary. Wilson described him as a clever and not over-scrupulous politician who, having been an oligarch, had pledged to follow Monagas's personal policy whatever it was.⁴ Tourreil described Acevedo as a hard worker with 'many means', but with little 'personal representation'.⁵

Carreño was the only original cabinet member still at his post. His departure was due to the question of a pardon for Guzmán. The district

¹ F. de P. Vázquez, Apuntaciones para la Historia del Estado Lara, 1527 a 1930 (Barquisimeto, 1940), p.26. Decree of 7 May 1847. These dioceses were not erected by the church until March 1863. Mons. Nicolás E. Navarro, Disquisición Sobre el Patronato Eclesiástico en Venezuela (Caracas, 1931), p.108.

² Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 8 May 1847, Correspondance Commerciale- Caracas, V, fo.73.

³ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.261-8.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 5 June 1847, F.O.80/45, fos.205 ff.

⁵ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 19 June 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.269-71.

superior court had upheld the death sentence on him. With the supreme court about to give its opinion on its review of the sentence, Monagas called the cabinet on 1 June to discuss the action to be taken should Guzmán be sentenced to death. All were in favour of commuting the death sentence except Carreño. Monagas wanted the cabinet's unanimous support, so Carreño resigned on the spot. It seems he had written his resignation beforehand. Carreño was immediately replaced by Colonel Francisco Mejía, a personal friend of Monagas with liberal leanings who must have also been advised in advance. Monagas was now rid of the cabinet prepared for him by Páez, Soubllette, and the godos.¹

The cabinet now supported Monagas's decision to save Guzmán's life at all costs. Wilson believed this resolve '...produced its corresponding effect even upon the judges of the Supreme Court, notwithstanding their Party engagements.'² The next day, 2 June, the supreme court confirmed the death sentence pronounced by the two inferior courts, but recommended that the executive commute it.³ Just three hours were needed after the sentence reached the government for the council of state to agree to follow the court's recommendation, and to publish its decision to banish Guzmán from Venezuela in perpetuity.⁴

One can imagine the emotional state of both parties when Guzmán was spared. The godo extremists would be outraged. The moderates might be relieved to see the question resolved. Tourreil wrote that the Conservatives

¹ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, ibid. Wilson to Palmerston, 5 June 1847, F.O. 80/45, fos. 205 ff. Wilson said the first cabinet had been forced on Monagas.

² Wilson to Palmerston, ibid.

³ Ibid. This recommendation was customary since the executive had the final decision in any death sentence.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, ibid. Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 19 June 1847, C.P.-V.,III, fos.267-71. Also A.L. Guzmán, 'Conmutación de la pena de muerte', AGN, I y J 1847-CCCXLIX, fos.280 ff.

were disgusted by the 'Coup d'Etat'. He added that the Liberals were emboldened and thought they could proclaim Monagas as their chief. It was now obvious to everyone that Monagas had decided Guzmán's fate long before.¹

Acevedo told Turreil confidentially that one of the reasons for the commutation had been a letter sent to Monagas by President Mosquera of New Granada warning him about the danger of executing Guzmán. Although Monagas showed this letter to no one, he supposedly told Acevedo of its contents after the commutation had been decreed. Acevedo, who had Monagas's confidence, then told his old friend Turreil.²

Turreil quoted the letter as saying, "'Guard yourself well against letting this illustrious victim (this is how he calls Guzman) be sacrificed in the dark corner of a square; if he is dangerous to your country, get rid of him, chase him away, but do not make him die ...'"³ Apparently, the letter convinced Monagas that he had been right all along, and that he was only being used by a party as an instrument for vengeance.⁴

No copy of this confidential letter seems to exist. Monagas did receive a short reply from Mosquera to his own official letter of 27 March announcing his election. Mosquera's reply of 24 May thanked Monagas for

¹ Turreil to French foreign secretary, ibid. Some men of standing had spoken out for Guzmán to be spared or for the end of the death penalty, among them: Mariño, Mariano Montilla, Valentín Espinal, Domingo Briceño y Briceño, Tomás Lander, Blas Bruzual, and Felipe Larrazábal. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.383. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.287.

² Turreil to French foreign secretary, 3 July 1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.275.

³ "'Gardez-vous bien de laisser sacrifier cette victime illustre (c'est ainsi qu'il appelle Guzman) dans le coin obscure d'une place; s'il est dangereux pour votre pays, débarrassez-vous en, chassez-le, mais ne le faites pas mourir ...'" Turreil to French foreign secretary, 19 June 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.269-71.

⁴ Ibid.

the announcement and wished him the best for the future.¹ The official reply could have arrived in those difficult days of early June when the thought of claiming the support of an 'enlightened conservative' president like Mosquera might have influenced some of the moderate Conservatives in Venezuela to side with Monagas on the question of Guzmán's life. A confidential letter may have been sent, but it is unlikely that Mosquera should have felt free to advise Monagas on a domestic problem, and one of which only scant reports reached Bogotá.

Level de Goda believes that by this time the oligarchy did not necessarily want Guzmán executed. He supports this belief by arguing that the members of the supreme court were all oligarchs, and yet they recommended that the executive commute the sentence if it saw fit to do so. He adds that the oligarchy could have gotten Guzmán sentenced and executed much sooner if it had wanted to do so, during Soublette's term, rather than drag the case out.²

Level de Goda fails to recognise that although the members of the supreme court were oligarchs they were also eminent justices who may have maintained their independence from other powers.³ Yet another important point is that the constitution gave the president the power to commute death sentences in the name of humanity.⁴ The supreme court had found Guzmán guilty, but noted that he had stopped short of committing any excesses himself.

¹ Monagas to Mosquera, Caracas, 27 March 1847, AMREV, 'Altos Funcionarios', I, was sent to presidents of New Granada, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Buenos Aires, and 'Megico'. Mosquera to Monagas, Bogotá, 24 May 1847, AMREV, 'Altos Funcionarios', I; see also AGN, I y J 1847-CCCXLIX, fo.141.

² L. Level de Goda, Refutación, p.14.

³ Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.283. Those judges were Andrés Narvarte, Juan Martínez, Juan Bautista Carreño, and Joaquín Botón.

⁴ Clause 21 of Article 117.

In fairness to the impartiality of the court its only possible course of action was its recommendation to the president.

With regard to the length of time it took to sentence Guzmán one can agree that the oligarchy could have shortened the process of law. However, there seems to have been little cause to hurry Guzmán's case through the courts as was done with Calvareño's. We have discussed how in late 1846 there was some doubt as to the possibility of trying Guzmán successfully, or even of a concerted godo desire to execute him rather than simply to keep him out of the elections. After all, no one of his political stature had been executed in Venezuela since 1830. Besides, at that time Monagas seems to have convinced all parties that he hated Guzmán as much as anyone. Considering Monagas's attitude at that time, godo extremists would have had no reason to hurry the trial to its conclusion. It can be argued that, strategically, it was better to wait until the new government was firmly installed before proceeding to execute Guzmán for conspiracy and tackling the massive revolts that were certain to follow. It is worth remembering that the revolt continued throughout this period, and that its leaders were not captured until March. Guzmán's ill-timed 'martyrdom' might have caused a civil war. Having considered these points it is probably true to say that some extremists certainly did want to be rid of Guzmán for ever, while more moderate oligarchs might not have agreed with so final a punishment.

Monagas seems to have proceeded according to the law in commuting Guzmán's sentence. He followed the court's recommendation. He ably managed to obtain the consent of the majority of the council as required. There seems to be no record of the voting, but one can assume that of the nine votes at least his three cabinet members agreed with him. We also

know that Monseñor Talavera y Garcés voted to commute the sentence.¹

As supreme court justice Narvarte had urged for the commutation. As councillor he may have voted for his own recommendation. Vice-President Urbaneja, a moderate, may have voted for the commutation as well. Seeing that the majority supported the commutation the council may have voted unanimously.

As a further step in his effort to win approval for his decision to save Guzmán, Monagas worded his decree differently from the court's decision. Gil Fortoul notes that one of the court's reasons for recommending that Guzmán's life be spared was that he stopped short of committing any excesses himself. In his decree Monagas added that by his having drawn back one could infer that the crimes and excesses that took place were independent of Guzmán's intentions and his will.² Since most people would read the decree rather than the court's decision Guzmán's guilt would be presented in a softer light, thus adding strength to the justness of the president's decision.

After signing the decree, Monagas spoke this often-cited phrase to his wife, 'I have lifted Mr Guzmán from the hangman's noose to place myself in it.' She is supposed to have answered that she preferred that to seeing his conscience troubled and his hands stained by innocent blood.³

Guzmán remained in jail until the night of 12 June when Secretary Acevedo and Governor Ustáriz placed him in Colonel Juan A. Sotillo's care

¹ Mariano de Talavera y Garcés, Apuntes de Historia Eclesiástica de Venezuela (Caracas, 1929), p.39.

² Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.287-8.

³ '... he levantado del cadalso al señor Guzmán, para colocarme yo. - Prefiero eso ... antes que ver su conciencia inquieta y sus manos manchadas con sangre inocente.' González Guinán, Historia, iv.396; only two men had been executed, Calvareño and Campos, p.426 quoting from El Espectador (Valencia). L. Level de Goda, Refutación, p.16.

to be shipped out of La Guaira. Guzmán, his son Antonio, and eight friends were escorted to the coast that same night, arriving in Maiquetía, a Liberal stronghold, for breakfast. News of his arrival soon spread, and Sotillo ordered the use of eighty men to contain any demonstrations.¹ At about noon on 13 June Guzmán went on board the balandra 'Resolución' to begin his exile in Curazao. The decree commuting his sentence ordered that if he ever returned to Venezuela he would be executed without trial. Among those present at the dock to see him off were Carabaño, Sotillo, Diego Caballero, and possibly Mariño.²

The oligarchic press now became a press in opposition. Angel Quintero founded El Espectador in Valencia and attacked Monagas in its first issue.³ The Liberal press enthusiastically supported Monagas. It continued to press for a general amnesty now with the hope that Guzmán might be included in it.

During these days Páez continued pacifying the hills near El Pao. He only wrote of the local events; how the town had signed an 'acta de concordia' to mark its return to the law, but how the rebels had begun making trouble in the hills with the support of 'esta maldita gente de la Sierra ...',⁴ especially the women. Monagas had asked him to recommend that

¹ J.V. González described the coast as '... esa Guaira, ese Maiquetía, especie de 'cumbe' guzmancista que, con las garras abiertas, vive amenazando a la capital y a los ricos propietarios de aquel puerto. Allí iba el tribuno [Guzmán] a recibir el aroma de un populacho salvaje e infame.' In 'Política', La Prensa (Caracas), 33 (16 February 1847), in Pensamiento Político, iii.150. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.340-1.

² A balandra was a small schooner. González Guinán, Historia, iv.406-7. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.384. Rondón-Márquez, Refutación, p.56. 'Guzmán', I y J 1847 - CCCLII, fo.332, on his arrival in Curazao.

³ Rondón-Márquez, ibid., pp.56-7. González Guinán, ibid., iv.423-6.

⁴ Páez to Monagas, Pao, 30 May 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

the local authorities proceed with calm, prudence, tolerance, and love to convince all parties of the government's benevolent attitude. Páez replied that he had anticipated Monagas's wish by already using these methods for his policy of pacification, and that it was successful.¹

Monagas decided to send Ezequiel Zamora to Maracay for trial. The choice of Maracay may have been made to balance the news of Guzmán's commutation. Páez did not comment on Guzmán, but he did write Monagas that Maracay was a good choice.²

On 8 June Monagas made his famous plea for clemency to the nation. That plea served as explanation for the general amnesty of the same day that excluded rebel leaders and those who had committed atrocities. In it, he stated that all parties were to blame in some degree for the latest troubles. He felt that the systematic opposition to the last government had grown because of the lack of legislative reform. Among the evils he mentioned was money lent at usurious rates. That opposition had degenerated into turbulent demagoguery. The press had become a conspiratorial machine. Now that the rebels had been beaten the time for clemency had arrived. He called for a national mood of unity and conciliation. He emphasised that any new outbreaks would be dealt with harshly by the law and the army, led by Páez. Finally, Monagas described himself as being independent of any party. He hoped his conduct convinced everyone that he wanted to govern with all the people. Calm,

¹ Páez to Monagas, Pao, 4 June 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

² Ibid.

patience, and trust in the government would bring the desired peace.¹

Tourreil reported that the Liberals were disappointed because Guzmán was not included in the amnesty. He added that Monagas's message had helped to reassure society. He felt that Monagas's plan to fuse both parties into his government could only be achieved with time and 'the changing spirit of Venezuelans, so quick to forget everything.'²

During these days there were rumours that Páez's operations of pacification on the government's behalf were, in reality, a preparation for revolt against it. General Francisco Alcántara found great difficulty in carrying out his part of the operation near Turmero because of local fears that it was directed by Páez against Monagas.³ Alcántara explained to Páez that he could not get the co-operation of the local authorities to supply new recruits. Presumably, some paecistas were too scared to co-operate for fear of reprisals in that Liberal stronghold.

Local officers refused to call up their batallions to join Alcántara's operation because they and their soldiers were convinced it

¹ Monagas's bid for national unity and a fusion of parties under him. 'No mas escándalos, no mas tumultos, no mas insurrecciones: olvidad os ruego para siempre esas odiosas palabras que en hora aciaga se inventaron para servir de señal de bandería, apellidándoos oligarcas ó liberales, y que en la hora del combate se convirtieron en las de amigos ó enemigos del Gobierno; despues que la sangre venezolana ha corrido en su nombre ya no pueden pronunciarse con inocencia. ... el espíritu de partido ... os engañaban para extraviaros y conduciros á siniestros fines. La fiel observancia de la Constitucion y las leyes es la divisa del Gobierno: vedle hoy clara y patentemente rodeado de la inmensa mayoría de buenos venezolanos que quieren paz y seguridad y que tienen derecho para pedir las y obtenerlas ...' 'José Tadeo Monagas, Presidente de la República, A Los Venezolanos.' Caracas, 8 June 1847, AANH, HSAAR, Ar5/G3/Car.1, no.60. Also quoted in González Guinán, Historia, iv.401; 405 for indulto.

² '... l'esprit changeant des vénézuéliens, si prompt à tout oublier'. Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 19 June 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.269-71.

³ Francisco Alcántara to Páez, Santa Cruz, 11 June 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. Although he professed great friendship in this letter it is well known that Alcántara and Páez disliked and distrusted each other. Conversation with José Giacomini Zárraga, Alcántara's great-great-grandson, Caracas, 28 Mar.1978. Páez hated him for being a bolivarian; González Guinán, Historia, iv.506.

was directed by Páez and Quintero to bring down the government. The rumours seemed to emanate from Turmero, and had spread to such a degree that reports were coming in from all parts of his area that he was acting against the government.

On the other hand, Alcántara found that his officers, loyal paecistas, were refusing to serve in the pacification since Monagas had pardoned Guzmán. He suspected that the real reason for their desire to be discharged was fear. Other oligarchs, loyal friends of Páez and of himself, were also convinced that these troop movements were against the government rather than for it.

Despite Monagas's plea for unification, Alcántara's report illustrates how divided the countryside continued to be. One wonders how innocent were Páez's wanderings through those regions. He was restoring peace there, but he may have been striking bargains with local leaders also, and improving his popularity with them, should he ever need their support against Monagas.

Páez reached Valencia on 22 June after stopping in San Carlos and Tinaco. He reported to Monagas that those cities supported the government and public order. He expected that the hill rebels would soon be pacified thanks to the amnesty. With the revolt at an end he thought the treasury would suffer a little less, thus relieving Monagas of some of his fiscal problems. Páez ended by saying that he had been thinking of going to Caracas to talk to him about the pacification operation in greater detail.¹

¹ '... se me está metiendo en la cabeza la idea de dar un brinco a esa capital para tener el gusto de ser con U. a la vez mas explicito y minucioso de lo que se puede por escrito ...' Páez to Monagas, Valencia, 25 June 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

Monagas replied on 30 June by inviting Páez to be his guest at San Pablo should he come to Caracas.¹ It is clear both men continued to treat each other with extreme courtesy while waiting to see how the tense situation developed.

Despite Monagas's plea the political atmosphere worsened. The Conservative press now openly opposed him.² On 26 June a party in La Guaira became a brawl between Conservatives and Liberals who attacked each other with sticks and machetes. The troops quartered at El Vigia had to be used to break up the fighting.³ González criticised Monagas's secretaries and his policies by insisting on clemency for those who had been deceived, but harsh punishment for the astute deceivers.⁴

There were constant rumours about changes in the cabinet. Acevedo told Tourreil that Blanco would be replaced by Toro since he insisted on defending Wilson during a discussion about his recall. Supposedly, Wilson was Blanco's intimate friend.⁵

Following instructions Wilson had continued to press for satisfaction of his claims. The British government, disregarding Venezuelan law, but not without justice, was now demanding that Mapy receive £500 compensation for the treatment he had suffered. This action may have irritated some cabinet members, mainly Acevedo, who then took up the old issue of his recall.⁶

¹ Páez to Monagas, Valencia, 16 July 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

² See J.V. González, 'Doctrinas', La Prensa (Caracas), 55 (26 June 1847), in Pensamiento Político, iii.151-6.

³ Aníbal Laydera Villalobos, 'Junio en la Historia de Venezuela', El Universal (Caracas), 2 June 1978.

⁴ J.V. González, 'Venezuela Desde 1836 Hasta 1847', La Prensa (Caracas), 56 (5 July 1847), and 'Ministerio', La Prensa (Caracas), 57 (12 July 1847), in Pensamiento Político, iii.156-71.

⁵ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 3 July 1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.275.

⁶ See Wilson to Palmerston 20 July 1847, F.O. 80/46, fos.49-52, for a clear explanation of the difficulty of pressing foreign claims, and of the support he received from Blanco versus Acevedo.

The next week Acevedo was forced to resign from the cabinet. Just returned from his vacation, David explained that Acevedo had been defending Venezuela's honour against the intrigues of Wilson and his group, the Liberals, to diminish French influence there.¹ David believed that as Wilson and the Liberals exerted influence over Monagas the Conservatives and France lost ground. I have found no proof in the Public Records Office of any manoeuvre by Wilson designed to diminish French influence. He seems to have been interested, principally, in being on good terms with Monagas and his government.

The godo press claimed the government was discredited, and warned of more trouble if it did not return to its proper course. David hoped Páez would come to Caracas soon to settle the confusion. At the same time David liked the choice of Doctor Tomás José Sanabria who replaced Acevedo on 21 July.² Monagas had chosen another moderate Liberal.

The most interesting aspect of David's letter is that he mentions rumours about congress controlling the executive by constitutional means.³ It is surprising to find such an early report of the possibility of impeachment proceedings against the president. That such extreme measures should be considered this early on suggests the existence of an extreme state of tension more serious than has been supposed.⁴

¹ David to French foreign secretary, 27 July 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.282-5.

² Ibid. Sanabria had been in touch with the Eastern rebels in 1831. See General Agustín Armario, I y J 1831, XX, fo.107. He had always supported the agriculture lobby. The newspaper El Venezolano was founded at his house 20 August 1840. Un Amigo, Resumen Biográfico del Señor Doctor Tomás José Sanabria, 1796 á 1896 (Caracas, 1896), pp.3-4.

³ David to French foreign secretary, 27 July 1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.282-5.

⁴ See La Prensa (Caracas), 59 (26 July 1847), pp.1-4.

Wilson described the cabinet change differently. He reported that Acevedo had been forced to resign after supporting the National Bank's pretensions to close the British Colonial Bank and all competition. Acevedo retired in 'consequence of insulting language used by him in the discussion of this question towards his colleague the Finance Minister,' (Col. Blanco),¹ Colonel Smith, the president of the National Bank, was also forced to resign that post. Smith was replaced by José Rafael Revenga, a man of moral integrity.² Wilson described Sanabria as a Liberal party leader who wanted domestic slavery even for manumitted children. Congress had elected him public prosecutor to the supreme court in May.³

Acevedo wrote that by July the government had no choice but to consider the oligarchs as 'facciosos'.⁴ He explained that he had joined the cabinet resolved to respect some godo wishes in an effort to keep the peace. Of the four matters he mentioned he felt he could support two, the commutation of Guzmán's sentence and the general amnesty, and placate the godos by voting against the Colonial Bank and Wilson. When he saw he could not succeed he claimed it was his duty to resign. Later, he felt Monagas had been correct in refusing to follow godo wishes on any of the questions since the oligarchs were not interested in co-operating, but in dominating the new president.⁵

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 27 July 1847, F.O. 80/46, fo.83 ff.

² Ibid.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 31 July 1847, F.O. 80/46, fo.127.

⁴ Acevedo, El Contendor, p.6.

⁵ Ibid.

Before Acevedo's resignation Páez had written to Monagas to thank him for inviting him to stay at San Pablo. He had decided there was no longer any need to go to Caracas since the pacification was completed, and all was running smoothly. Instead he had chosen to visit Puerto Cabello.¹ Why did Páez decide not to go to Caracas? Was there no longer any need to go because they had finally separated? Did Páez want to leave Monagas alone in the hope that Monagas would discredit himself by his actions? Was it a coincidence that Acevedo was forced to resign days after Páez announced he would not be coming?

Páez and Monagas continued to correspond in the friendliest manner. Monagas described his administrative problems, and Páez gave advice. On 21 July Páez assured him that any decision taken by the government about the future of the army would be followed immediately. He repeated that since 20 January he had promised to follow orders, and he left it to Monagas to disband the army as soon as it was felt convenient. Páez ended his letter pleased with the reception he had been given at the port, his first visit there since the siege of 1836.² He returned to Valencia on the 28th and continued to Maracay on the 31st.³

The treasury was depleted. To make matters worse more than 48,000 pesos were found to be missing from the customs house at La Guaira. The cashier was reported to have escaped to Curazao. Francisco Aranda, ex-administrator, was jailed along with other officials. The oligarchs claimed it was a Liberal scandal even though it had been committed in December-January, emphasising that more corruption could be expected.

¹ Páez to Monagas, Valencia, 16 July 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. He left for Puerto Cabello on 17 July.

² Páez to Monagas, Puerto Cabello, 21 July 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

³ Páez to Monagas, Valencia, 29 July 1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge.

Blanco invited merchants and planters to finance a loan to help the treasury, but none accepted the invitation.¹

It is possible that the oligarchs were accumulating funds to oppose the government. Bárbara Nieves rented a house in Valencia to Colonel Domingo Hernández because he paid four years' rent in advance. She had received higher offers for her house, but without so much advanced in cash.² Páez seems to have borrowed 3,000 pesos to be repaid by 1 July 1848.³

The decree of 5 August on military organisation discharged more than half of the regular army and relieved Páez of his command since 'happiness and tranquillity are assured forever'.⁴ Páez thanked the government for its approval and appreciation of his services.⁵

The government took La Prensa to trial for libel because of its attacks. The jurors were oligarchs, so the newspaper was acquitted unanimously despite the violence of its attacks.⁶

Wilson continued his diplomatic recovery. He asked the government for a certificate of good conduct, in fact, a retraction of its demand for his recall. Blanco supported him. Various members of the council of state

¹ David to French foreign secretary, 5 Aug.1847, op.cit., fos.286-9. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.292. J.V. González, 'Segunda Epístola', La Prensa (Caracas), 61 (7 Aug.1847), in Pensamiento Político, iii.185. All the suspects were eventually set free.

² Receipt for four years' rent at 25 pesos per month, 300 pesos per annum. Bárbara Nieves to Col.D. Hernández, Maracay, 4 Aug.1847, ADRRC, 5, fo.535.

³ Anonymous, 'Pagarés', lists Nieves's and Páez's pagarés during 1846-8, ADRRC, 5, fo.573.

⁴ David to French foreign secretary, 20 Aug.1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.290.

⁵ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.390.

⁶ David uses the word 'violence'. David to French foreign secretary, 20 Aug.1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.290. Parra-Pérez, ibid.

protested against what they felt was an act of weakness that dishonoured Venezuela. Wilson received his letter.¹

During September there were rumours that Blanco would be replaced by Acevedo.² Blanco continued to search for funds for the government. J.J. Pardo, a La Guaira merchant, wrote to Blanco to suggest a way of raising a loan. He proposed that the government emit vales totalling one-quarter of the probable revenue of the customs houses. These vales should be accepted without restrictions in payment of one-quarter of the duties owed by merchants for their imports. In this way each merchant would contribute according to the amount he imported, in other words, according to what he could afford. Pardo admitted that commerce lacked funds at that time, but he felt that if all merchants contributed in the manner he suggested there would be ample funds to cover the government's present needs.³

Blanco thanked Pardo for his 'noble' suggestion, and described his attempts to raise funds. Since July he had invited the merchants of Caracas and La Guaira to propose a loan to the government. He had held meetings and had made offers, all in vain. He had looked for a loan at 1 per cent interest. Presumably, this was the monthly rate. He had offered a choice in the manner the money would be repaid. He explained that all his efforts had failed because of the obstacles placed by the government's enemies who even put pressure on those who would have helped.

¹ David to French foreign secretary, ibid. See also F.O.80/46, fo.261.

² David to French foreign secretary, 6 Sept.1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.291. The fiscal in Guzmán's case, Díaz, was replaced by a man loyal to Monagas, Manuel Quintero, on 4 September. 'Fiscales', I y J 1847 - CCCXLVI, fos.210-11.

³ J.J. Pardo to Col. J.F. Blanco, La Guaira, 13 Sept.1847, AGN, Archivo Blanco y Azpurúa, I, fos.74 ff.

Blanco liked Pardo's idea, but asked him to get a group of merchants to propose it since he doubted its success if it was seen as yet another proposal made by the government.¹ No documents tell us what became of Pardo's proposal.

On 25 September Juan Vicente González announced that he had been attacked by Mariño's son, Eusebio, that afternoon. He accused Monagas of convincing the young lieutenant to the attack. The youth had taken refuge in the president's house. It seems Mariño had wanted to punish González for the continued attacks of his father by La Prensa.² Instead he gave the editor another reason to continue his abuses.

The National Bank, at the urging of its private directors, continued to trouble the Colonial Bank. It collected Colonial Bank notes worth \$200,000 pesos and cheques worth \$40,000 pesos, and presented them to be cashed in an effort to create a run on the Colonial Bank.³ The attempt to create a run was seen as an oligarchic tactic to end all competition and make finance minister Blanco and the government completely dependent on the National Bank for the discount of customs bonds. Since these bonds formed the main part of the government's revenue the oligarchs hoped thereby to control the executive. The crisis was averted by 'friends' who helped the Colonial Bank get enough specie to ward off the blow to its credit and stability.⁴

¹ Blanco to J.J. Pardo, Caracas, 15 Sept.1847, AGN, Archivo Blanco y Azpurúa, I, fos.19 ff.

² Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.391-2.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 21 Oct.1847, F.O. 80/47, fos.50 ff.

⁴ Ibid. G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp.73-5.

Venezuela sent the funds to pay the October dividend of the Anglo-Venezuelan loan to its London agents, Reid, Irving & Co. That house failed on 17 September, and £11,500 (\$71,875 pesos) belonging to Venezuela were lost. Venezuela was now a creditor of its former agent. Wilson wrote that some locals felt that Venezuela's creditors should not receive British diplomatic support should they complain about non-payment since Venezuela was not at fault for the loss of this dividend.¹ The loss of this dividend so soon after the scandal of La Guaira aggravated the situation of the government's lack of funds. The National Bank's actions must have seemed much more ominous in the light of the government's frustration.

The army was further reduced to 500 men. Even so the troops had to be paid with customs bonds drawn on duties to be collected that year 1847-8. Wilson doubted that the foreign debt would be repaid in the near future.²

It was evident that Monagas was calling on his old associates to assert his power. He was accused of bringing the beaten rebels of 1835 and 1846 into the government. Retiring military officers were replaced by men who had conspired against the government years before. By 23 October Carabaño had been sent to Cumaná to replace General F. Esteban Gómez.

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.495; officially, nearly \$120,000 were lost. G.E. Carl, 'Orígenes del Conflicto de Límites Entre Venezuela y la Guayana Británica (1840-1850)', Boletín Histórico (Caracas), 12 (Sept.1966), p.261, says the loss equalled £18,000. Wilson to Palmerston, 6 Nov.1847, F.O. 80/47, fos.93-5. Sir John Rae Reid was a senior director of the Bank of England at the time of his house's failure caused mainly by the loss of its heavy investment in Mauritius sugar production. For more on the crisis of 1847-8 due to overextended railroad credits and the fall of crop prices that had formed the security of many commercial houses, see D. Morier Evans, The Commercial Crisis, 1847-1848 (London, 1849; reprinted Newton Abbot, Devon, 1969); for Reid, Irving & Co., see pp.71-2, appendix pp.xxi-xxv. Reid later reported that Venezuela had lost £13,827. 8s. with it. Another £9,500 were withdrawn from Britain by Venezuela. Riddel to Palmerston, 3 Nov. 1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.156-9. G.R. Robinson (Bondholders) to Wilson, 15 June 1848, copy in Shields to Buchanan, 69, 21 Sept.1848, USNA, Desps. U.S. Mins.Venezuela, 6 (Film 79, 7).

² Wilson to Palmerston, 6 Nov.1847, F.O. 80/47, fos.93-5.

Páez may have felt insulted when he heard of Carabaño's appointment. Mariño replaced General José María Zamora as provincial military commander of Caracas. General José Laurencio Silva went to Carabobo. Colonel Avendaño was appointed to the city of Caracas. By 6 November David was reporting that as soon as congress met it would vote to move to Valencia for safety and impeach the president. He asked for the protection of a French warship in January.¹

Monagas was having trouble getting his orders followed. By 5 November he had agreed with Wilson that the case of Williams at Ciudad Bolívar should be settled, and he promised it his attention.² On 18 November Wilson reported he had again seen the president about the Mapy, Williams, and now Mathews (jailed in Carúpano) cases. Monagas told Wilson he had ordered Sanabria to proceed more rapidly with those cases, but since that order had not had any effect he would order them dealt with at once. Monagas added that he would not consent to further delay or evasion in the matter. Wilson still believed in Monagas's desire to settle those cases.³

Monagas was also busy pardoning rebels and their leaders. On 2 November the council of state was evenly split on voting to commute Ezequiel Zamora's death sentence to eight years hard labour. Monagas broke the tie and decreed commutation on 5 November. On the 22nd, Zamora

¹ David to French foreign secretary, 6 Nov. 1847. C.P.-V., III, fo. 304. Parra-Pérez, *Guerras Civiles*, ii. 395-7, 399-400. 'Carabaño, Comandante de Armas de Cumaná', I y J 1847-CCCL, fo. 365.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 5 Nov. 1847, F.O. 80/47, fo. 85.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 18 Nov. 1847, F.O. 80/47, fos. 100 ff.

escaped mysteriously from Maracay jail, and went into hiding near Caracas in El Hatillo.¹

Blanco resigned in mid-November. Acevedo became the new secretary of the treasury and of foreign affairs. David was very pleased, but J.V. González attacked the new secretary.² Shields believed that Acevedo was a 'yes' man. He explained that Vice-President Urbaneja was a friend and tool of Wilson who paid him \$120 monthly rent for a house worth only half that amount. Acevedo would, therefore, have to submit to British domination to please Urbaneja if he wished to keep his cabinet post.³

Monagas commuted the death sentence of twenty-eight other Liberals including Captain Pedro V. Aguado and Manuel M. Echeandía.⁴ These pardons led one diplomat in Caracas to report that 'the oriental chieftain has begun to govern with blacks and delinquents'.⁵

Páez had left Maracay during late November. He found Doctor Carlos Arvelo waiting for him on his return in the first week of December. Arvelo was sent by Monagas and Acevedo to notify Páez of the president's willingness to send him on a diplomatic mission to Europe.⁶ Acevedo had already written

¹ Inauguración Busto J.T. Monagas, p.38, he had commuted about 300 death sentences and stopped another 300 trials. Rondón-Márquez, Refutación, p.57. For his trial see Zamora, AANH, XVI, Boxes 26, 28. For his escape, I y J 1847- CCCLVIII, fos.341 ff. A. Rodríguez, Zamora, pp.139-42. L. Villanueva, Vida Zamora, pp.226-34.

² David to French foreign secretary, 20 Nov.1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.306. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.399.

³ William H. Gray, 'The Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Venezuela, 1830-1864' (Univ. Chicago Ph.D. thesis 1937), p.84, fn.2.

⁴ Aguado, I y J 1847- CCCXLIV, fos.83 ff. Echeandía, I y J 1847- CCCLI, fo.219. Landaeta Rosales, Casa Histórica, p.8. Also Azpurúa, Biografías, iii.71.

⁵ Arellano Moreno, Mensajes ..., p.xxviii. '... que el caudillo oriental ha empezado a gobernar con negros y delincuentes.' Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 48, 5 Jan.1848, AMAEE, Sección de Política-Venezuela (hereafter S.P.-V.) Legajo 2711 (Film 1818), fos.131 ff, con 'ignorantes y oscuros', and with criminal records.

⁶ Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 8 Dec.1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.82.

to Páez offering him a post abroad, so he had time to consider the proposal. On 8 December Páez thanked Monagas for the honour of the kind offer, but felt he had to decline it because his present circumstances did not permit him to accept.

Arvelo had also described how Monagas rejected the bad reports he was receiving about Páez. To this Páez replied that Monagas should rest assured that he was proceeding in the same manner that Páez was with regard to him.¹

Bárbara Nieves's illness had forced him to postpone the trip he had planned to make to Apure. He ended his letter assuring Monagas that he would be in Maracay for a long time, and always willing to add his small services to the government and to him, his 'amigo y compañero'.²

Wilson reported that both sides were at the highest pitch of excitement. The godos began preparing the way for impeachment proceedings during the next session of congress. On 10 December the provincial assembly of Caracas voted 9 to 6 in favour of presenting an accusation before congress against the government's abuse of power, thus insinuating criminal actions by Monagas. Wilson felt the infractions that formed the basis of the accusation were frivolous; among them that he had left Caracas without congressional permission to meet his family. Others were more serious. He was accused of replacing governors and military officers illegally, and of protecting the rebels of 1831 and 1835. It was rumoured that if congress failed to depose the president the godos would 'break out into open insurrection'.³

¹ Páez, ibid., '... puede U. estar cierto que procede U. de la misma manera que yo respecto de U. ...'

² Ibid.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 18 Dec. 1847, F.O. 80/47, fos. 129 ff. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii. 408-9.

Monagas responded to the accusation on 14 December by decreeing a rise in the permanent force to 2,500 men.¹ Presumably, army ranks would be filled by men from the reserve militia that was being armed by the government.

Judicial and civil authorities were hampering Monagas's administration.² He was having trouble getting a new governor appointed for Carabobo. The list of three candidates sent by the godo provincial assembly for his selection contained the very man he had just fired from that post and ordered tried. He got the list legally annulled, and appointed a temporary governor loyal to him while a new list was submitted. By this action Monagas was warning that he would not allow further obstruction of his policies.³

On 17 December the district fiscal accused the governor of Caracas, Mariano Uztáriz, of not invoking the law to stop abuses of the press. Monagas ordered Uztáriz tried, and named Marcelino de la Plaza, a Liberal, to replace him as temporary governor. De La Plaza took charge at 2 p.m. that afternoon.⁴ J.V. González now openly accused Monagas of treason.⁵

Bárbara Nieves finally died about 20 December. It is popularly believed that Páez met Monagas soon after her death, and since Monagas would not mention her Páez asked Monagas if he did not plan to express his condolences for Páez's loss. Monagas is supposed to have answered Páez by

¹ E.B. Núñez, El 24 de Enero (Caracas, 1963), p.50. 'Decreto Que fija la Fuerza Armada Permanente', I y J 1847 - CCCXLVIII, fo.290.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 18 Dec.1847, F.O. 80/47, fos.129 ff.

³ Ibid. A governor could only be removed if he was placed on trial. While on trial that person was ineligible to stand for office. Since the assembly knew he was ineligible, but had included him on the list, Monagas seized the opportunity to choose an ally.

⁴ Uztáriz, I y J 1847 - CCCLIX, fo.189; 1848 - CCCLXIV, fos.307 ff. Plaza, I y J 1847 - CCCLIX, fos.229-33.

⁵ La Prensa (Caracas), 18 Dec.1847, quoted by David in David to French foreign secretary, 21 Dec.1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.320.

acting surprised and asking if Doña Dominga, his real wife, had died. This story is unlikely since it is quite certain that the two men did not meet during that time. Besides, Monagas had enquired about her health in his letters to Páez and through Arvelo.¹ Nevertheless, this folk tale does illustrate how divided the two had become, and the state of tension that certainly existed then.

Into the tense setting of December came General Juan José Flores. He had arrived at La Guaira by 8 December.² Initially, there was some doubt as to how he should be received. Both parties thought he might be won over to support the other's cause. Out of respect for his talents, services, and character, according to Wilson, he was well received by all parties in Caracas. It was thought that the oligarchs may have wanted Flores to lead the coming armed struggle, but that he had rejected such suggestions.³

Flores offered to mediate between the parties. In an effort to bring about a reconciliation he went to Maracay to see Páez. Oligarchs were insisting that Páez go to Caracas to restore order, since they believed he was the only person who could save the country. The Liberals replied quoting what Monagas had said when Páez had led Venezuela out of Gran Colombia, that in Venezuela no man was necessary to save the institutions, since the pueblo itself would be sure to save them.⁴ The Spanish chargé

¹ Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 8 Dec.1847, Antigua Colección R. Dolge. For her death see David to Páez, 22 Dec.1847, C.P.-V., IV, fo.3. Also Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.410.

² David to French foreign secretary, 8 Dec.1847, C.P.-V., III, fo.310. Flores came from England where his planned expedition to retake Ecuador had been stopped from sailing by Palmerston. Parra-Pérez, op.cit., ii.423-7.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 18 Dec.1847, F.O.80/47, fos.132 ff. David to French foreign secretary, 20 Dec.1847, C.P.-V., III, fos.315 ff. Both noted that Flores spoke highly of Palmerston. David wondered why he should after his expedition was halted.

⁴ Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 27 Dec.1847, AANH, Papeles Fermín Toro, No.241-P6. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.11.

d'affaires, Muñoz, described how both parties went to Flores to express their grievances, and to ask him to use his influence to end the crisis.¹ Flores got both men to agree to meet at Las Cocuizas, half-way between Maracay and Caracas.

On 25 December, J.V. González warned the President that he was about to be impeached by congress for plotting the nation's ruin. General Valero was now commanding in Coro. José Gregorio was accused of oppressing Barcelona while Colonel Sotillo insulted Caracas. The active militia, controlled by 'good citizens' was being disarmed. The reserve militia, made up of the lower classes of people for recruiting purposes, was being armed.²

On 22 December David begged Páez not to leave Venezuela, as it was rumoured he was going to, since that would be a 'calamity' for the nation.³ Páez answered by agreeing that the nation's state was lamentable; he saw that society was agitated, and felt that congress was Venezuela's only hope. If congress did not dominate the situation all would be lost, '... todo es perdido, y perdido para siempre!'⁴ Páez promised to follow the line of legality.

The Caracas oligarchs met on 26 December and sent an address to Páez in alarmist tones that insulted the executive and begged him not to go abroad, but to lead the way to their salvation.⁵ Some British merchants

¹ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, Caracas, 48, 5 Jan.1848, AMAEE, S.P.-V., Legajo 2711 (Film 1818), fos.131 ff.

² La Prensa, 81 (25 Dec.1847), in Pensamiento Político, iii.192-8.

³ David to Páez, 22 Dec.1847, C.P.-V., IV, f.3.

⁴ Páez to David, Hacienda de la Trinidad, 24 Dec.1847, C.P.-V., IV, fos.4-5.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.1-8.

were brazen enough to sign the address. Wilson then notified the vice-consuls to warn British subjects not to be identified with any political parties. If they were they would forfeit all claims to protection from their government from possible reprisals.¹

Páez wrote again to Monagas on the 27th. Although his tone was friendly he was clearly warning Monagas to come to some agreement with him, to follow his advice or suffer the consequences. Páez was glad that Monagas would be attending the 'obsequio' that Flores was preparing for them for the 30th. He offered to give Monagas his opinion then about Venezuela's situation. He added that he owed the country this service, perhaps his last, and to prove to Monagas that he had done all in his power for the good name of his government.²

Páez said he was willing to come to Caracas as long as his coming was believed useful to the nation. He suggested they discuss this point at their meeting.³

While waiting for the meeting Páez made preparations for the trouble that could be expected. The next day he sent José María Francia's brother Ramón, to speak to David.⁴ David notified Páez of their meeting and added cryptically, 'Nous sommes parfaitement d'accord.' (David's underline).⁵

¹ Ibid.

² 'Debola [sic] este servicio, que tal vez será el ultimo, y á U. una prueba mas de consideración y de amistad. Cuando me preparo para alejarme á tan larga distancia, doy gracias á la Providencia que me proporciona una ocasión para despedirme ... y demostrarle que he hecho cuanto ha estado á mi alcance por el lustre de su Admon.' Páez to Monagas, Maracay, 27 Dec.1847, AANH, Papeles Fermín Toro, No.241-P.6.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Páez to David, 28 Dec.1847, C.P.-V.,IV, fo.8.

⁵ David to Páez, 31 Dec.1847, C.P.-V.,IV, fo.9.

As events of the next few days showed Páez had asked David to protect his family in the likely event of a revolt. Parra-Pérez feels that Páez had decided the break with Monagas was inevitable, and that this step, as well as his decision to go to the llanos of Calaboño, was taken because he probably intended to take up arms.¹

Wilson reported that neither group wanted its leader to attend the meeting. The Liberals claimed that it was undignified for the president to attend. The oligarchs feared their interests would suffer from any understanding that might be reached.² Muñoz reported that those around Monagas worked to convince him not to attend up until the very day he was due to leave for the meeting.³

Páez set out for Las Cocuizas on the 29th with Angel Quintero and 100-150 armed men.⁴ While at Tovar's hacienda at El Consejo he received a letter from Monagas notifying him that he was too ill to attend, and asking him to meet him in Caracas. Páez decided he would return to Maracay.⁵ It seems Flores sent Páez a message to try to convince him to go to Caracas, but that Páez answered that Flores and he had done all that was possible to save Venezuela, and that Monagas alone was responsible for the result.⁶

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.413.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.1-8.

³ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 48, 5 Jan.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.131 ff.

⁴ Páez, Autobiografía, ii.452. Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.1-8.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 48, 5 Jan.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.131 ff.

Although there is no question about Monagas's illness there does seem to be some doubt about its seriousness. Wilson claimed it was serious enough not to allow him to travel, and that Monagas's enemies had misrepresented it as an excuse for not attending.¹ Muñoz said that a slight indisposition was used by Monagas as an excuse for not attending.²

David mentioned that Mariano, Bishop of Guayana, had also failed to bring the two together, and that a bloody revolution was at hand.³ Wilson observed that neither Páez nor Monagas, nor the oligarchs nor the Liberals had agreed to the meeting in good faith. No one seemed sorry that it had not taken place. The most disappointed person must have been Flores, who sailed on 7 January for St. Thomas and Jamaica to await events in Ecuador.⁴

The oligarchs were offended that Páez had been left waiting.⁵ They criticised Monagas for leading the country to revolution because he had not submitted to their wishes. The Liberals blamed the coming troubles on Páez for refusing to come to Caracas. They were amazed that Páez should have allowed Quintero to accompany him, a man who had been directing a newspaper that viciously attacked Monagas. It would have been unthinkable for the President to appear before such an insulting gathering, made more dangerous by the number of armed men Páez had brought.⁶

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Jan. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fos. 1-8.

² Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 48, 5 Jan. 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos. 131 ff. Could there have been a touch of sarcasm in Monagas's illness referring to Páez's during the abortive meeting with Guzmán in 1846?

³ David to French foreign secretary, 6 Jan. 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 1-2.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Jan. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fos. 1-8. Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 5 Jan. 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos. 131 ff.

⁵ Muñoz, ibid.

⁶ Wilson to Palmerston, 3 Jan. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fos. 1-8.

Páez wrote to David on 2 January telling him he was going to the llanos the next day to deal with some important matters.¹ Páez sent his ex-chief of staff, General Judas Tadeo Piñango, with this message:

'My family will transfer itself to that capital immediately, and I trust you will see to them with attention. More clearly: I place them under your protection, and I leave with that consolation.' ²

David guaranteed the safety of Páez's daughters to him on 8 January. Páez sent him a final letter on the 13th from his ható of San Pablo near Calabozo thanking him and his wife, and promising eternal gratitude towards them and France.³ There is no doubt that after Las Cocuizas Páez was convinced of the coming rebellion and was busy preparing for it.

The government was also preparing for the sitting of congress. Guzmán Blanco later listed the prominent Liberals who formed a secret society that met at General Diego Ibarra's house. This society got the President to decree the formation of a battalion of militia to patrol Caracas. The officers, however, were not all chosen from its group, so it promoted the idea of a second battalion controlled by it.⁴

¹ Páez to David, Maracay, 2 Jan.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fo.8.

² 'Mi familia se trasladará inmediatamente á esa Capital, y confio en que V. la verá con atencion. Mas claro: yo la pongo bajo la proteccion de V. y me voy con este consuelo.' Páez to David, Maracay, 2 Jan.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fo.16.

³ Páez to David, Hato de San Pablo, 13 Jan.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.20-1.

⁴ Some of these Liberals were: Mariño, Ramón Yépez, Blas Bruzual, N.S. Arteaga, Andrés E. Level, Manuel and Juan Echeandía, Felipe and Manuel Larrazábal, Rafael Arvelo, Esteban Herrera and Juan de Dios Morales. A. Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa de la Causa Liberal, pp.60-1. 'Organización completa de la milicia en toda la ciudad de Caracas', I y J 1847-8, CCCLX, fos.280 ff. E.B. Núñez says Monagas must have known of this 'secret' society, El 24 de Enero, p.50.

On 2 January Mariño mustered all of the reserve militia of the canton of La Victoria without notifying the jefe político. The troops were given a harangue by Mariño, Colonel Valentín García, alias Valentín Valiente, and Jesús González, 'El Agachado'. They were then sent home to cries of 'Viva la patria' and 'Viva el Jeneral Monagas.'¹

La Prensa of 8 January, published Páez's reply to the oligarchy's plea to save the country. In it Páez saw Venezuela in trouble, and declared he only wanted to be useful to his country.²

The Liberals held a meeting in Caracas on 9 January. They denounced the oligarchs' address to Páez as humiliating and derogatory to Venezuela. They petitioned congress to ignore the accusation sent by the provincial assembly. They held a vote of confidence for Monagas, and sent him an address approving of his actions.³

The Liberal societies of Santa Inés and Altagracia in Cumaná declared their support of Monagas. They claimed the charges were not sufficient for impeachment. Calling the Caracas provincial assembly 'Magnates de la Oligarquía', they pointed out that that assembly's commission of infractions had not found Monagas guilty of any crime. They agreed with the Cumaná provincial assembly declaration of 12 December 1847 supporting Monagas. They promised that those who had fought the Spaniards would now fight the enemies of order until they were beaten.⁴

¹ La Prensa quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.13-14.

² Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.415-16. E.B. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.51.

³ E.B. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, pp.50-1. Wilson to Palmerston, 15 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.9-10.

⁴ 'Acta de las Sociedades Liberales de las Parroquias de Sta. Inés y Altagracia de Cumaná', 10 January 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G 1/Car.12, No.4.

The next day Monagas declared he could not choose a governor from the list sent by the provincial assembly of Caracas because Uztáriz was on it. Uztáriz was not eligible because he was still on trial. Therefore, the list was not valid. Monagas chose De la Plaza to remain as governor while a new, valid list was submitted.¹

With five days to the opening of congress, Wilson gave a clear description of the situation. He explained that the oligarchy had a majority in congress.² It openly claimed its intention to impeach Monagas for infractions of the constitution. If he were found guilty by the senate the oligarchs would take over. They would then perpetuate their power by passing three laws. They had planned to adopt those laws the year before until Monagas's liberal behaviour had made them consider how the laws could be used against them.

The first law would regulate the militia, to establish martial law in the country. It would give the real power in the state to the commander-in-chief of the army, to be appointed by congress and not removable by the executive. The commander-in-chief would be Páez without a doubt.³ David's report supports the assertion that the oligarchs planned to take power in this manner. He wrote that Páez was in the llanos with his people ready to save Venezuela if congress appointed him commander-in-chief of the army.⁴ There is no doubt that Páez planned nothing less than to take power himself. Perhaps this was seen as the only way to destroy the opposition forever.

¹ 'Resolución del 11 de Enero de 1848', I y J 1847-CCCLIX, fo.235.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 15 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.10-13.

³ Ibid.

⁴ David to French foreign secretary, 21 Jan.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.18-19.

The second law to be passed would allow all revolutionary offences to be tried by court martial, a powerful deterrent to rebellion of any kind. The third law would restrict the right of suffrage to 'honourable citizens'.

Wilson saw little hope of peace. Since the impeachment was based on technicalities, it was possible that moderate oligarchs would not support it. If Monagas were not impeached Páez was expected to rebel. If he were impeached Monagas and the Liberals that had flocked to him since Guzmán's commutation would resist even by force. The Liberal party would not give up the power it had won after so many years in opposition without a fight. He predicted that if the Liberals remained in power now they would probably win a majority in congress in the elections of 1848.¹

With so much at stake because of the unwillingness of both sides to compromise one can imagine the state of anxiety existing across the country. Caracas would be the most afflicted place as both sides prepared for the session of congress to open on 20 January. The oligarchic press continued to threaten Monagas while the populace supported him. The government began mobilising and arming the militia from the surrounding towns and positioned them near the capital.² Notices insulting Páez appeared in the streets, as well as skulls and crossbones painted on walls.³ There were rumours that the opening of congress would be bloody.⁴ At Maracay, Representative Santos Michelena said, 'I shall go to Caracas to witness that 18 Brumaire.'⁵

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 15 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.10-13.

² Valentín Espinal to Manuel Ancízar, Curazao, 16 Feb.1848, Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación (Caracas), XXXIV (Mar.-Apr.1946), 45-6. Quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.14-15.

³ E.B. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.51. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.18-19.

⁴ J.V. González, 'Alerta a los Ciudadanos', La Prensa (Caracas), 86 (22 Jan.1848), in Pensamiento Político, iii.208.

⁵ 'Iré a Caracas para ver ese 18 Brumario', quoted by E.B. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.51. Páez, Autobiografía, ii.453.

CHAPTER IV

24 JANUARY 1848

Congress did not have a quorum on 20 January. Not until the 23rd was it able to open its yearly sessions. In the meantime, thirty representatives met and took a secret oath to vote for transferring the sessions to Puerto Cabello. They also agreed to find that there was reasonable cause to impeach Monagas. It seems the whole city got wind of this meeting.¹

Simón Camacho wrote that the quorum was not reached on the 22nd because representatives supporting the government had stayed away claiming to be ill. He believed that the government had needed more time to prepare for the coming clash, specifying that 800 rifles ordered from the armoury at Maracay had not yet arrived in Caracas.²

Congress held a preparatory session on the morning of the 23rd. The necessary quorum was reached by 2 p.m., when congress opened officially. Acevedo claimed that 44 representatives were present, but that 19 others stayed away, most of them because they supported the government or were neutral on the question of impeachment, therefore refusing to participate with the majority.³ There is no doubt that some did not attend because

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.457-8. The meeting was held on the 19th. González's account is particularly interesting because it is based on his father's experience as representative Francisco González. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.292-3. The meeting was held in the same building where congress met, also known as the Colegio de la Independencia or the old convent of San Francisco.

² Simón Camacho, Asesinatos Cometidos en el Congreso, a description of the events by the secretary of the house of representatives, and given by him to David. C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41.

³ Acevedo, Apuntes para la Historia (Caracas, 1848), p.43. He added that the oligarchs wanted the opposition to stay away so that the House could deal with its business quickly with as little discussion as possible.

they refused to be caught up in the approaching and perhaps violent crisis.

One of the first decisions taken by the house of representatives was to declare itself in secret session. The public gallery was cleared, and the House began discussing the transfer to Puerto Cabello. Although the main reason for the transfer was supposed to be to ensure the safety of congress, something many of its members felt was not possible in Caracas given the aroused and excited state of its inhabitants, it was understood by all parties that the transfer meant the president's impeachment.¹ The House voted 32 to 12 to move to Puerto Cabello within ten days. Some members felt that the president should be accused at Caracas, rather than that they should move to the port before confronting him.²

As soon as the senate received notification from the House of its decision to move, and its invitation to do the same, it declared itself in secret session also. The senate could not consider the House's proposal, however, because the Liberal senator Estanislao Rendón had the floor, and held it throughout that day's session. Some have said Rendón was leading a Liberal plan to obstruct discussion of the transfer by the senate.³ This filibuster would have kept the senate from deciding to move, thus forcing the impatient House to begin proceedings against the president in

¹ Anonymous, Asesinato del Congreso venezolano el 24 de Enero de 1848, y los preparativos para el crimen; sent to Paris by David, C.P.-V., IV, fos.29-33.

² Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.43. Santos Michelena, Fermín Toro, José Antonio Salas, and Pedro Juan Arrellano voted against moving although they favoured the impeachment. Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41. Acevedo claimed that Michelena opposed the oligarchy's plans. Acevedo, Apuntes, p.43.

³ Lisandro Alvarado, Los Delitos Políticos en la Historia de Venezuela (Caracas, 1954), p.83.

Caracas where the population supported Monagas.¹ Ramón Goiticoa reported that the senate would have supported the transfer by a vote of 13 to 7.²

The House decided to make use of its right to police its locale to ensure 'the free exercise of its functions' as allowed by article 75 of the constitution.³ Gil Fortoul feels that the House chose to police its own site because of the existing rumour that the armed masses would invade it, and dissolve it violently if it declared the accusation against the president to be well-founded.⁴ The president of the House, Dr Miguel Palacio, appointed Colonel Guillermo Smith and Captain Bernardo Zamora to organise the guard. Smith was to ask for the necessary weapons from the secretary of war, and to show his appointment to the provincial governor and the cantonal jefe político. The senate was notified of the House's decision, and, it being near 5 p.m., the day's session was adjourned.

The measures taken by the House caused further popular excitement. Both parties saw in them the determination of the majority of the representatives to impeach Monagas and stop the Liberal rise to power by force if necessary. Wilson wrote that these extreme measures were hostile to the executive, but 'not absolutely at variance with the letter of the Constitution.'⁵ He added that it was suspected that the godos planned to

¹ Acevedo, El Contendor de 'El Revisor', pp.7, 43. Acevedo, Apuntes, p.44.

² Ramón Goiticoa to Antonio Leocadio Guzmán, La Guayra, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12.

³ 'Las Cámaras en la casa de sus sesiones gozarán del derecho exclusivo de policía, y fuera de ella, en todo lo que conduzca al libre ejercicio de sus funciones.' Article 75 of the constitution of 1830.

⁴ Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.295. For the decision of the House see AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXIV, fos.330 ff.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

impeach Vice-President Urbaneja also, so that the vice-president of the council of state could assume power as next in line. The vice-president of the council, Dr José María Vargas, was a member of the ruling oligarchy. Acevedo agreed that Urbaneja would be impeached if he did not accept the godo plan to give effective power to Páez.¹

Some 200 citizens called on Smith to join his guard. Smith did not bother to ask the government for weapons with which to arm the guard because he believed that they had been given to the lower classes.² Most of those to come to Smith were young men belonging to the conservative oligarchy. They brought their own weapons. Sentries were placed at the street entrance. By early evening over two hundred armed citizens had assembled at the chamber of the house of representatives.³

News of the gathering of armed private citizens caused immediate alarm. Armed bands of men began roaming the city, some stationing themselves around the convent. Feeling that the presence of armed men both inside and outside the convent could lead to trouble, Governor De la Plaza appears to have called the reserve militia. Perhaps a thousand men mustered at different points that night as the government prepared to maintain order.⁴

At General Ibarra's house, the Liberals met until late that night trying to decide their next steps. Pulido wrote that nothing was decided there that night.⁵

¹ Acevedo, Apuntes, p.42.

² G. Smith in J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo Histórico, pp.154-5.

³ Wilson said 200-300 of the 'most violent' oligarchs occupied the convent throughout the night. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53. Guzmán Blanco later claimed there had been 400 men; En Defensa de la Causa Liberal, p.63.

⁴ Acevedo, Apuntes, p.45. González Guinán says 2,000 men mustered; Historia, iv.460.

⁵ L. Pulido, Recuerdos Históricos con Motivo de la Colocación en el Panteón Nacional de los Restos del Ilustre Prócer de la Independencia Sur-Americana General José Ignacio Pulido (Caracas, Nov.1880), p.94.

One can imagine the state of mind of those men inside the convent. They must have felt besieged, expecting a possible attack that evening. Colonel Smith ordered the street entrance closed at 9 p.m. Espinal described Caracas as a city under siege. It was as though preparations were being made for a great battle. Undisciplined militiamen were in the streets. Some, apparently led by supporters of Monagas, made attempts to attack the convent. It was commonly believed that Mariño and De la Plaza stopped these attempts in an effort to keep order.¹

At midnight Governor De la Plaza called at the convent to ask how many people and weapons were within. A little later the secretary of war, Colonel Mejía, sent a note declaring that the meeting of the guard was illegal. He added that the president of the House had exceeded his powers because article 75 only authorised him to guard the hall.² Mejía was probably referring to the right to raise a guard of a reasonable or limited number rather than to allow hundreds to congregate. Palacio answered denying the executive any right to interfere in the matter. He also denied it the right to interpret the constitution, arguing that the legislative branch alone had that right.

At 2.30 a.m. the governor sent to congress a note he had received from the interior secretary declaring the large assembly 'tumultuaria', and ordering that the governor dissolve it. The secretary also ordered that the

¹ Espinal to Ancízar, Curazao, 16 Feb. 1848, BAGN, XXXIV (Mar.-Apr. 1946), p. 47. Smith described the men in the streets as not being part of the government's forces or the city's regular patrols. Smith in J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, pp. 156-7.

² Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 36-41. Camacho, who received the note, quoted it as saying that article 75 '... no lo autorizaba sinó para la custodia del local ...'. Parra-Pérez changed the message to 'sólo lo autorizaba para custodiar el interior del local'. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii. 25. It is unlikely that Mejía's interpretation referred to the inside since article 75 clearly covers the outside of the hall as well. Mejía was probably distinguishing between a policing guard and a larger armed force. Muñoz reported a similar interpretation. Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 52, 5 Feb. 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos. 123-31.

guard be reduced to the number considered necessary by the president of the House. The governor sent a lieutenant to receive any weapons belonging to the government. Although Palacio replied that the House would have to decide the question of the number of the guard some people did return home then. Others left the convent at daybreak until only about twenty youths guarded it.

It seems the cabinet spent the night with Monagas at San Pablo.¹ The notes sent to the convent were probably written after joint discussions. Orders for different troop movements came from there. Four detachments of 100 men each were posted around the convent that night.² The city was surrounded by militia as well, supposedly as a precautionary measure. The Petare and Guarenas militias slept between Chacao and La Candelaria. Those from Los Teques picketed at Las Adjuntas, west of the city. The southwestern approach was held by militias from El Valle, San Antonio, and San Diego. To the north the La Guaira and Maiquetía militias were between the city and the coast.³

Wilson agreed with the executive. He reported that the government had objected to an indefinite number of armed citizens under the command of an officer not responsible to government authority, and known to be hostile to it, occupying the convent with the pretext of protecting the hall in which the House met. The government argued that the House might establish a force 'superior to that at the command of the Executive'.⁴

¹ Camacho, Asesinatos, *ibid.*

² Ibid.

³ A. Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, pp.62-3. José Aquilino Peres to A.L.Guzmán, n.p., 14 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 46, fo.521, was called up for duty in the militia on the night of the 23rd.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O.80/54, fos.143-53. Muñoz said the executive claimed that the legislature had no power to form a sizeable corps that could do more than just mere policing of the locale. Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 52, 5 Feb.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos. 123-31.

The constitution specified that congress was responsible for establishing the armed forces, but that the executive commanded them.¹ If one accepted the government's premise that those citizens were numerous enough to be considered an armed force one could agree that the House should have called on the executive to supply not just the weapons, but the troops; and that the executive was bound to satisfy the House with the desired guard.²

Gil Fortoul criticizes this interpretation. He believes that this type of guard could never have been strong enough to resist the army. It could never have become a threat to the executive's authority. He argues that it could not have been formed by army troops or militiamen, who would be led by officers who could obey orders only from the secretary of war and the president.³

Although Gil's interpretation may be constitutionally correct, certain opinions expressed at the time indicate that the situation was less clear. When Palacio notified the executive of the manner in which he had formed the guard as directed by the House he felt it necessary to explain why he had not called on the executive to supply regular troops for the guard. His explanation implies that troops or militiamen could have been used, and that they normally would have been. He asserted that he 'had not wanted to use the force that the executive power had in barracks, because it would be harmful to divide it, and also so that the

¹ Article 87 for congress, article 117 for the executive.

² See Juan Antonio Barbosa, Un Juicio sobre el Acontecimiento Político que tuvo lugar en Caracas el 24 de Enero de 1848 (Caracas, 1851), pp.5-7, for a similar interpretation.

³ Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.297-8.

congressional guard would not have an air of militarism that would contrast with its peaceful functions. Colonel G. Smith had been called upon, so that, along with armed citizens that would not cause expense to the state, the guard would be formed.¹

Gil himself mentions the opening session of congress in 1830 when a guard led by the provincial military commander appeared at the door to uphold the authority of congress.² There is no doubt that regular troops could be used to form the congressional guard. This implied the co-operation of the two branches of government.

The executive's demand that the guard be reduced to a necessary number seems to have been reasonable. It had not denied the House's right to form a guard, nor had it set its own limit as to its size. Throughout the night people returned home. This compliance might reflect some agreement with the executive. Espinal felt that the presence of a guard during the night was unjustified even if technically legal, since it had nothing to guard at that hour. Believing that the guard should only meet while the House sat he emphasised that the large gathering of that night only caused more alarm in the city.³

¹ '... no había querido ocupar la fuerza que el P.E. tiene en cuarteles, ya por que seria perjudicial desmembrarla, ya porque no tenga la guardia del Congreso un aire de militarismo que ciertamente desdice de sus pacíficas funciones se habia llamado al Sr. Coronel G. Smith para que con ciudadanos armados que no causas en gasto al Estado, se hiciese la guardia.' Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41.

² Considering that public opinion was its best guarantee, and that that opinion was in its favour, congress sent the guard away because it felt its protection was unnecessary. Gil quotes the session's records. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.295.

³ Espinal to Ancízar, 16 Feb.1848, BAGN, XXXIV (Mar.-Apr.1946), p.46.

One must consider the state of belligerency already existing between the two groups. Monagas was seeing the formation of an armed force of opposition under the guise of legality, and led by one of his outspoken opponents, a man who had already caused trouble to the government. According to Muñoz, members of the House were alarmed when the council of state refused to recognise their claims, so they decided to debate the impeachment question the next day.¹ The armed groups in the streets and the troop movements into the city could only alarm the congressmen further. This alarm would have hardened their resolve to impeach Monagas 'for the death of Alexander the Great' if for no other reason as Acevedo was told by one godo.² Although both sides were willing to go to war it would seem that each could not believe the other would dare to go so far; each must have felt that the other might be intimidated into submission by a show of force and purpose.

On the morning of the 24th Palacio called for an extraordinary meeting of the House. It met at 8.15 a.m. Once informed of the events of the preceeding night it agreed to José María Rojas's and José Antonio Salas's proposal that it approve all the measures taken by Palacio regarding the custody of the locale, and that it ask the cabinet members

¹ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 52, 5 Feb. 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos. 123-31. Anonymous, Asesinato, agrees that the House decided to discuss the accusations on the 24th because it felt itself in danger after choosing to move to Puerto Cabello and the executive had denied it the weapons it requested. C.P.-V., IV, fos. 29-33.

² Acevedo, Apuntes, p. 40, and El Contendor, p. 55. José Hermenegildo García was reputed to have said that Monagas should be impeached even if it were for the death of Caesar, meaning for whatever reason that could be found. A. Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, p. 58.

to inform it in writing at its session of 11 a.m. about the security measures taken by the executive to protect congress.¹ Representatives José Vicente Quintero, a priest, and General Manuel Vicente Maneiro had reported that as they had passed the armoury the officer of the guard had called to them, 'Scoundrels! From here to tomorrow all of your heads will be rolling on the ground.'² The session ended and the guard seems to have been reduced further.³

By 10 a.m. more than one thousand people had congregated outside the convent. By noon, the time set for the next session, the guard had twenty men plus another twenty in reserve.⁴ Espinal added that the gallery was crowded with spectators, almost all of them notable citizens, and some of them carrying concealed weapons to defend the House.⁵ Almost all the representatives carried pistols and/or daggers.⁶ If Espinal's account can be believed, and some descriptions of the events following seem

¹ Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41. The next session was set for noon, Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.86. Article 137 of the constitution specified that cabinet members had to inform verbally or in writing whenever asked to do so by either chamber of congress.

² 'Vagabundos! De aquí a mañana las cabezas de todos ustedes andarán rodando por el suelo.' Alvarado, ibid., p.85. General Maneiro had been a councillor of state in 1837, AGN, I y J 1837 - CLVI, fo.114. Rojas, Bosquejo, p.147.

³ Alvarado says the guard was reduced to 8 men, Delitos Políticos, p.85. Espinal reported 15 men, to Ancízar, 16 Feb.1848, BAGN, XXXIV.47. Gil Fortoul says 30, Historia, ii.298. Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.159, said 8.

⁴ Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.86. He believes Smith reported 30 men by mistake. Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.159, said 30 guards and 30 in reserve.

⁵ Espinal to Ancízar, 16 Feb.1848, BAGN, XXXIV, 47. Acevedo, Apuntes, p.47, claimed that all the notables were armed. He added that those outside supporting the government were mostly armed with their own weapons or armed themselves by joining the militia, and that those who were not armed spoke of rushing the armoury. He felt that by 11 a.m. everyone was spoiling for a battle.

⁶ González Guinán, Historia, iv.466.

to bear it out, the situation within the convent had not changed from the night before. The only difference was that the official guard numbered about sixty men leaving the other people in attendance to be considered spectators. The session may have been open to the public, but as the gallery was already filled by 'notables' Smith and his guard stood at the street door preventing the entry of the crowd, presumably because there was no room inside. Although Smith would later claim that the public had free access to the session, evidence suggests the contrary.¹ Since the opening sessions of congress had always been public, especially at the reading of the president's annual address as was to have been the case that noon, it is not surprising that many might suspect those inside of some sort of conspiracy.

Liberal representative Gerónimo Pompa handed out yellow bands to all who would wear the Liberal Party's colour. Representative Francisco González told him that he was a Liberal, but that he was foremost a congressman and would stand by the House rather than divide it by factions.²

Monagas arrived at the Palacio de Gobierno at noon accompanied by his guard led by Colonel Sotillo.³ The session of the House began at 1 p.m. It received Secretary Mejía's assurance that the troops that had entered the city during the night had not been ordered to do so, and that he would order them out at once.⁴ Secretary Sanabria assured the House that the people respected the authorities so there was nothing to worry about.

¹ Un Amigo, Resumen Biográfico del Señor Doctor Tomás José Sanabria, 1796 á 1896 (Caracas, 1 Jan.1896), p.4, describes the events of that day and claims that the guard announced that the session was closed. Smith said it was open; Rojas, Bosquejo, p.159.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.466.

³ Sixteen lancers and sixteen infantrymen, Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.86.

⁴ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.26.

Again he protested against the presence of armed citizens in the convent and demanded that the House take action to prevent any possible trouble.¹ The representatives passed these communications to a committee to draft a reply.² The House then began to consider the accusation made against the government by the Caracas provincial assembly. The accusation had just been read when Secretary Sanabria arrived to present the president's address.³

Before Sanabria set out to deliver the address there had been an excited discussion about how he should go to congress. Many felt that he should not go without an escort. Among those present Mariño, Sotillo, and Commander Manuel Baca of the presidential guard held that opinion. Monagas felt there should be no military escort, but that Sanabria should attend in the customary manner.⁴ Acevedo felt he had done all in his power to avoid the clash that was now inevitable, so he prepared his resignation.⁵

Sanabria left the Palacio de Gobierno at 2.30 p.m. accompanied by only four or five people, led by the porter Manuel Godoy in ceremonial attire.⁶

¹ Ibid. See also 'Comunicaciones entre el Congreso y el Poder Ejecutivo', AGN, I y J 1848- CCCLXIV, fos.317 ff.

² The committee members were Representatives Salas, Pedro José Rojas, and Francisco Díaz. Camacho quoted Mejía's note as saying that the executive would maintain public order as was its duty by acting according to its attributions. '... obrará conforme á sus atribuciones, en el mantenimiento del orden público que le está encomendado.' Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41. See also Rojas, Bosquejo, p.148.

³ Camacho, Asesinatos, ibid.

⁴ Parra-Pérez quotes General Tosta García, Guerras Civiles, iii.27.

⁵ Acevedo, El Contendor, p.8.

⁶ Accounts differ as to Sanabria's companions. One states they were two of his sons, one of Monagas's sons, and one Mr Santana Llamozas; Un Amigo, Sanabria, p.4. Smith described them only as 'a group of suspicious-looking individuals,' and a uniformed officer; Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.160. Núñez says they were José 'Tadeito' Monagas, and a presidential aide-de-camp, plus some Liberals; El 24 de Enero, p.45. González Guinán mentions only Sanabria's two sons and José Tadeo Monagas, Jr.; Historia, iv.466. For more on the porter, Godoy, see Francisco Tosta García, 'El Portero', in Política de Buen Humor (Madrid, 1899), pp.18-24.

Sanabria and his party made their way slowly through the crowded street and plaza in front of the convent. The guard was having difficulty keeping the entrance cleared beyond the radius to which its bayonets reached.¹ Convinced that the guard was insufficient to withstand an attack from such a crowd, Smith had conferred with Palacio. They had decided that in the event of any hostile action Smith would face the aggressors alone and demand with what authority they acted.²

Smith left the hall at 2.45 p.m. and came to the entrance to find Sanabria waiting to be admitted with his party. Smith ordered the guard to allow them to enter the convent.³ As Sanabria entered the chamber only the thirteen Liberal representatives rose to welcome him as was customary. The others remained seated showing their disapproval of the executive.⁴

Sanabria made a short speech explaining that he had come to deliver the president's message.⁵ Most of the group that had accompanied Sanabria left the convent while he was in the hall, and made their way back up the street towards the Palacio de Gobierno.⁶ As Sanabria finished his address, José María Rojas stopped him from leaving the hall, and proposed to the House that Sanabria should remain there while the other cabinet members were summoned to the House. The three secretaries would then report

¹ Un Amigo, Sanabria, p.4.

² Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.160.

³ Un Amigo, Sanabria, p.4. Smith only said he met Sanabria after he left the hall to return to the entrance. Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.160. See Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41, for the time.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.467.

⁵ It would be read once Sanabria left the chamber to deliver it to the senate.

⁶ Smith's uniformed officer was among those who left. Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.160.

on the agitated state of the city, and on the measures taken to maintain public order.¹ Rojas's proposal was quickly approved by the House.² Just as quickly someone in the gallery yelled, 'The Minister has been arrested,' and several spectators left hurriedly to give the news to those outside.³

The crowd outside became 'greatly exasperated' when it heard of Sanabria's detention.⁴ The armoury was opened to the public.⁵ It is presumed that Monagas walked along the corridors of the Palacio quietly awaiting developments.⁶ It is unlikely that his walk was quiet as news was constantly brought to him and discussed by his group of advisers and supporters. News of Sanabria's detention indicated that the clash between the executive and the House was near. The summoning of the other secretaries was interpreted by those in the Palacio as an attempt to hold the whole cabinet in the House while it voted to suspend the president. The president could only issue orders through his secretaries of state. Without his cabinet Monagas would have no legal means for sending orders.⁷

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.467. 'Que no se retire el Sor.Ministro del Interior y que se cite á los otros dos Señores Ministros para que concurren inmediatamente á contestar los cargos que se hacen sobre la alarma de la Ciudad.' Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41.

² It seems Rojas's motion was carried without opposition. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.467. Representative Pompa may have left the hall at that time. Blas Bruzual in El Republicano (Caracas), 28 Jan.1848 quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.57.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

⁵ Versions differ. One is that the armoury was opened to the people. Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.87. Another is that a crowd assaulted the open armoury, and that its guard did not interfere. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.52.

⁶ Alvarado, ibid.

⁷ Acevedo, Apuntes, pp.47-8.

Constitutionally, he would be left defenceless against congress.¹

It is not known what decisions were made nor what orders were given by Monagas and his group at the Palacio when they heard of the summons. Acevedo was preparing his resignation when it arrived. He claimed he then prepared to comply with it.² I have found no evidence that might indicate whether Mejía intended to attend congress. As Comandante de Armas, Mariño went to the San Jacinto garrison of regular troops to await Monagas's orders, and to keep order in that part of the city.³

In the chamber of the House, tension rose as the representatives awaited the arrival of the two secretaries. In the meantime, the House considered the Caracas provincial assembly's accusation that had been read earlier. This move provoked murmurs in the gallery. Before anything could be decided Palacio sent it to the committee on infractions for preliminary study.⁴ It seems that the formal accusation against the executive was

¹ 'Los secretarios son los organos precisos, é indispensables del gobierno, y como tales deben autorizar todos los decretos, reglamentos, ordenes y providencias que expidieren. Las que no estén autorizadas por el respectivo secretario, no deben ser ejecutadas por ningun tribunal, ni persona publica ó privada, aunque aparezcan firmadas por el presidente de la republica.' Article 136 of the constitution of 1830.

² Acevedo, El Contendor, p.8.

³ Blas Bruzual, writing on 28 January, quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.53. Perhaps another reason for Mariño's presence at San Jacinto was to ensure the loyalty of those troops to the executive.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.467. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.52, mentions the reaction of the gallery. If the House did intend to hold the cabinet while it accused Monagas, Palacio may have felt it wiser to postpone any discussion of the accusation until the cabinet were present. This postponement would stop any unpleasant reaction in the gallery or outside, and it would not reveal the House's plans until it had the situation under its control.

ready to be introduced by Julián García, a godo partisan who was in the gallery.¹ Instead, Camacho read the president's address which Sanabria had delivered.²

The Conservatives in the House believed that the Liberals had a plan to dissolve congress. The mob outside would wait for the representatives to come out to fall on them and murder all those who were not wearing the yellow ribbons that had been handed out.³ There is no proof that this plan existed, but one can understand that it could seem quite feasible given the tense atmosphere.

About twenty minutes had passed since Sanabria's detention.⁴ Outside, the mob was becoming increasingly exasperated. Rumours circulated suggesting that the secretary's life was in danger, and that he had been murdered.⁵ Smith recognised the officer who had accompanied Sanabria to congress. The unnamed officer had just returned to the plaza outside the convent with some armed soldiers and civilians. That group seemed to be preparing to attack the convent. Smith went out to speak to them, but they ignored him.⁶

¹ González Guinán, ibid. García had been the first director of the conservative newspaper, El Liberal.

² Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41.

³ Rojas, Bosquejo, p.144. Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.299. The yellow bands could have been used to intimidate the Conservatives by leading them to believe that such a plot existed.

⁴ Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.160. From this point on the sequence of events is not clear. The different versions often conflict because of the partisan spirit in which they were written, or because their authors were too involved to be able to witness all the events, therefore, describing many from hearsay. Nevertheless, I have combined these versions to have a better description of those events.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53. Un Amigo, Sanavria, p.4.

⁶ Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.161. One report said that about twenty-five Liberals carrying their own weapons hurried to the plaza when they heard that Sanabria was detained. Ramón Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12. That group of men may have been the one met by Smith.

Miguel Riverol, a captain in the La Vega militia, argued with the door sentry as he attempted to enter the convent or as he left it (there are both versions) with a group of friends. This group is supposed to have been unarmed.¹ Riverol then went to one of the windows. Some said he was getting his horse which he had tied up there.²

Having been ignored Smith was returning to the convent to close its doors when he saw 'un hombre del pueblo' struggling with the sentry, perhaps the same one who had crossed words with Riverol. Smith hurried to the entrance. A shot was fired. Smith claimed it had been meant for him, but it killed Riverol.³ More shots were fired, and militia sargeant Juan Maldonado fell dead. The maddened crowd surged forward. Smith could not close the outer door. He may have left it to close the inner door. The hombre del pueblo had managed to get the sentry's bayonet. As Smith closed the door the man thrust the bayonet through the opening and wounded Smith in the side. The door was closed.⁴ Pedro Pablo Azpúrua, one of the youths guarding the convent, and described by Wilson as 'a half witted Person, but who deliberately had shot Maldonado,' was killed by the crowd, possibly at this early stage.⁵

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.468. Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, p.64. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.53.

² Núñez says Riverol crossed the plaza to get his horse which was tied up against the Convento de las Concepciones. E.B. Núñez, ibid. Wilson said Riverol was standing at a distance from the crowd. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

³ Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.161-2. González Guinán, Historia, iv.468. Acevedo, Apuntes, p.48. On 5 September 1846 Riverol had returned to Caracas from La Victoria with Guzmán when the revolts had broken out. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.318.

⁴ González Guinán, ibid., and p.469. Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.162. Acevedo, Apuntes, p.48.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53. E.B. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.53. Rojas, Bosquejo, p.151.

Acevedo described the immediate circumstance for the firing of the first shots. He wrote that the struggle with the sentry brought the assistance of other guards who fired when they saw that the sentry had been disarmed and that the crowd was closing in.¹ He specified that the first shot, the one killing Riverol, was fired from a window above the entrance.² With Smith rushing back to close the door, with armed men apparently preparing to attack the convent, and with a hostile crowd that shouted insults and slogans it is not surprising that the nervous youths of the guard should have felt under attack and thus obliged to fire.

Both sides blamed each other for firing the first shot. Smith claimed that the shot came from the crowd, adding that if it had come from the guard he would have been killed for being in the line of fire.³ However, a guard on the upper floor would not necessarily have found Smith in his sights. If the shot did come from the crowd then perhaps the man pursuing him with the bayonet could have been in that line of fire. Considering the conflicting reports about Riverol's position and the confusion that any shooting causes, it is entirely possible that the first shot was accidental, and even that Riverol was killed by a subsequent shot. It is not necessary to discover who was first to pull a trigger. It is sufficient to know that there was a struggle with the sentry, that the guard felt that an attack was beginning, and that the first deaths were among the people in the plaza.

¹ Acevedo, El Contendor, p.43.

² Acevedo, Apuntes, p.48.

³ Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.162. Barbosa, Un Juicio, p.8, claimed the first shots were made by the guard. Goiticoa agreed, but exaggerated the effectiveness of the Liberal mob's reaction to them. Goiticoa to Guzmán, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12. Camacho accused the first company of the reserve militia, led by Lieutenant José Sotillo, of firing the first shot. This officer was Colonel Sotillo's son. Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41. If it had been a Sotillo it is odd that Smith should not have known him.

Once the door had been closed the mob threw stones at the convent and cursed the guard.¹ Few among the mob seem to have had firearms. The first shots hastened the arrival of those who had gone to the armoury and of some companies of militia. As they arrived they fired their weapons indiscriminately at the convent and all who appeared from within.²

After hearing gunfire, Monagas may have left the Palacio accompanied by General Diego Ibarra and aide-de-camp Luis Delpech. They are supposed to have ridden to the armoury. Ibarra sent an artillery piece to San Francisco, and they returned to the Palacio.³ Depending on the attitude of the commentator, the small cannon was intended for restoring order in the plaza or for destroying congress. Acevedo claimed he had been about to go to congress when he heard the shots. He sent Monagas his resignation and went to Wilson's home to await results.⁴

In the house of representatives Camacho was finishing reading the presidential message when the first shots were heard. Representative José Hermenegildo García asked everyone to remain seated.⁵ Rojas drew his

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53. González Guinán, Historia, iv.468. Núñez says the crowd threw stones before any shooting had occurred because the guard would not allow it to enter the hall. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.53.

² González Guinán, ibid. Wilson reported that a crowd only rushed to the armoury after the first shots were fired. Wilson to Palmerston, ibid. Núñez mentions two companies of militia led by Pedro Ramos and Juan José Conde, Núñez, ibid. Goiticoa mentioned one Colmenares leading an armed group. Goiticoa to Guzmán, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12. Guzmán Blanco wrote that the people only rushed the armoury after Riverol and Maldonado had been killed. En Defensa, p.65.

³ Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.89.

⁴ Acevedo, El Contendor, p.8.

⁵ 'Alto, Señores, Alto! no hay que menearse! quietos en sus puestos!' quoted by Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit. An exciting summary of the events that took place in the house of representatives is in Núñez, El 24 de Enero, pp.53-5.

dagger and threatened to kill Sanabria if he did not save the House.¹ Four representatives intervened to protect Sanabria. García told Rojas not to soil the chamber with the blood of a scoundrel.² From the gallery a student demanded that the representatives fulfil their duty. Another student told Palacio to remain in his place. Palacio answered that he was a llanero and was not used to fighting 'enchinquerado', boxed in.³ Cristóbal Mendoza, Soublette's nephew, 'presented two loaded pistols at Doctor Sanabria's breast, whose life was saved from this peril by the interference of ... José H. García.'⁴ Julián García took aim at Sanabria, but Rafael Lossada knocked away the pistol as it was fired.⁵ Miguel Mujica was prevented from running his sword through Sanabria by some bystanders.⁶ In the midst of such confusion, Juan Vicente González read a letter from Páez encouraging the House to remain at its post and die like roman senators.⁷

¹ Camacho, ibid. González Guinán writes that Rojas threatened to kill Sanabria if the attackers got to the chamber. Rojas claimed that he had only threatened Sanabria to make him guarantee the representatives' lives, and that he later embraced him. Rojas, Bosquejo, p.150.

² 'No ensucie usted este salón con la sangre de un canalla.' González Guinán, Historia, iv.468. The four who intervened were Michelena, Pedro José Rojas, José Hermenegildo García, and Francisco de la Madriz. Wilson mentioned Michelena, Madriz and Manuel Alfonso. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53. Wilson apparently repeated Blas Bruzual's report in El Republicano, 28 Jan.1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.41.

³ The second student was Marshal Sucre's nephew, Antonio José Sucre. González Guinán, ibid.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, loc.cit. González Guinán, ibid., includes José María Rojas as one of Sanabria's protectors. Núñez says this is when J.H. García remarked that the chamber should not be soiled. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.54. Both Wilson and Núñez repeat Blas Bruzual's report quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.41.

⁵ González Guinán, ibid. Wilson to Palmerston, ibid. See Parra-Pérez, ibid., for Bruzual's description.

⁶ Wilson to Palmerston, ibid. Mujica had been the jefe político of Caracas recently.

⁷ González Guinán, Historia, iv.470. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.54.

Some representatives practically dragged Sanabria to show himself to the mob outside to prove that he was safe and alive, but Sanabria refused for fear of being shot before he was recognised. Sucre threatened him with a bayonet to force him to go out. Others protected Sanabria, and demanded that he write to Monagas asking him to intervene.¹ The spectators were now mixed with the representatives. Some discussed a last-stand defence while others spoke of escape. Surrounded by so much hostility Sanabria wrote to Monagas telling him that a mob was attacking the chamber, and asking him to take measures to contain the disorder and save the endangered lives of so many Venezuelans.² How the note was carried out of the besieged convent has never been explained.

At least two representatives knelt before their colleague Father Quintero to receive absolution. Another representative cried, it is not known whether out of fear, anger, or sorrow.³

The guard of youths was dissolving.⁴ Feeling it was no longer safe to remain in the chamber the representatives began to do the same. Camacho claimed that the militia was already in the convent climbing the stairs to the chamber when he and some others escaped by climbing onto the roof from a balcony.⁵ Representative Pedro Juan Arellano later admitted that the House had dissolved from fear alone.⁶ González Guinán writes that

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.469.

² Bruzual, El Republicano, 28 Jan.1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez. Guerras Civiles, iii.41. Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.89.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.469. One account said that Francisco Argote was one of those who sought absolution. Anonymous, Asesinato, loc.cit.

⁴ Bruzual, El Republicano, 28 Jan.1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.41-2.

⁵ Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit.

⁶ Barbosa, Un Juicio, p.16, fn.3.

the House was dissolving while the guard kept the outside door closed and continued fighting the crowd and some militiamen.¹ It is clear that at the beginning the door remained closed, and that the crowd remained outside. At some point the door was opened, perhaps by the messenger carrying Sanabria's note, or by representatives attempting to leave by the front.² The closed door had given Sanabria enough time to write his note. It had also given the representatives time to escape.

Everyone left the chamber until only three people and Sanabria remained.³ Julián García rushed out to the plaza and fired his pistols into the crowd, whereupon he was immediately killed. Later Camacho saw that García's body had been mutilated.⁴ Conservative representative Juan García was also killed in the plaza.⁵ A Liberal representative, José Antonio Salas, was killed. He was supposed to have been stabbed by a godo mentioned only as Abrabilis or Atrabilis who then escaped by flinging himself into the sewer that ran under the convent. Salas came out wounded and died after stumbling across the plaza.⁶ By this time some of the mob seems to have penetrated into the courtyard of the convent. Camacho insisted that the invaders were all members of the reserve militia.⁷

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.469.

² Alvarado says it was opened by someone leaving the convent. Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.94.

³ Ibid., p.90.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848. F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53. Camacho, Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41.

⁵ A carpenter by trade, García had made the banquillo, dock, for Antonio L. Guzmán's trial. Goiticoa to Guzmán, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12. Camacho, ibid.

⁶ Goiticoa to Guzmán, ibid. Several Conservatives later claimed that Salas had supported the accusation against Monagas: List of Congressmen published in Caracas, 27 February 1848, reproduced in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii. between pp.196-7, but Goiticoa's letter shows that the Liberals believed Salas was one of theirs.

⁷ Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit.

Having received absolution Conservative representative Francisco Argote came down the stairs. He was met by the invaders who demanded that he give a viva for the president. He answered 'Viva la Constitución', and was stabbed. Camacho said that Argote was later shot once.¹ One Manuel María Alemán was also killed.

Everyone regretted the stabbing of Santos Michelena. One godo described him as a man of great talents, and very respectable for his services to the country.² Wilson called him 'the ablest and most honest statesman in Venezuela'. Wilson reported that Michelena had been 'severely, but not, I trust, dangerously wounded. He sought an asylum in my house where he will continue until he is entirely convalescent.'³

During a lull in the commotion or as the militia re-established some order, Senator Father José María Barroeta came out to ask that the safety of the senate be guaranteed. Monagas ordered that the senate be brought as one body to the Palacio de Gobierno. Wilson reported that Monagas 'at once took effective steps for saving the lives of the other Representatives and of the Senators. He caused the fire of the Militia and Townspeople to be stopped...'⁴ Amid shouts of 'Viva el Senado' the senators were escorted between two rows of troops and armed men numbering perhaps 200.⁵

¹ Anonymous, Asesinato, C.P.-V., IV, fos.29-33. Camacho, ibid.

² Anonymous, ibid.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, ibid.

⁵ The senate also met at the convent, but had its own entrance from the street. Barroeta was a Liberal and a friend of Monagas who had consulted with Lucio Pulido before attending that session. Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p.94. Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, pp.89-90. Senator Gabriel Picón to Juan de Dios Picón, 25 Jan.1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.47. It is not clear whether Barroeta got all the way to the Palacio before Monagas ordered that the senate be escorted, or whether the order had already been given when Barroeta came out asking for protection. Páez said the senate was led to the Palacio by 200 armed men. Páez, Manifiesto del General en Jefe, José Antonio Páez (St.Thomas, 1 August 1848), p.7.

Alvarado writes that the House also tried to leave as one body, and that four of the deaths occurred when a volley of gunfire hit the members as they stepped out; the representatives then fled their separate ways.¹ It is unlikely that the House should have attempted to come out as one body. The other accounts describe too much confusion and fear among the representatives for them to have thought of or attempted it. Besides, it seems that most, if not all, of the victims were not shot, but stabbed. Espinal emphasised that all the deaths had been caused by stabbing.²

At some point Blas Bruzual ordered a drum roll to call the militia to order. Up on the rooftops Camacho interpreted the drums as a call to attack.³ Forming a committee that included the militia commanders and representative Gerónimo Pompa, Bruzual presented himself at the entrance of the convent. Calling himself the people's representative, he wanted to communicate with the House, but it was already disbanding.⁴ Bruzual claimed that his committee of officers covered the door to receive and protect those representatives who were imprudent enough to come out at a time of such danger.⁵

¹ Alvarado, ibid., p.90.

² Espinal to Ancízar, 16 Feb.1848, BAGN, XXXIV, p.48.

³ Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.469.

⁵ Bruzual, El Republicano (Caracas), 166 (28 Jan.1848), and quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.56-7. Some of these officers were Juan Crisóstomo Hurtado, Juan José Conde and Commander Giral. See also Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.55.

Smith was protected by one of the invaders. In the plaza he saw two of the Conservative representatives killed. With two other men he was led through the tight mass of troops and people to the Palacio de Gobierno.¹ Páez claimed that Smith, covered in blood, had been carried to the Palacio in a chair on bearers' shoulders, but that he had received no attention from Monagas.²

Sanabria came out arm in arm with José María Rojas, but they were separated leaving Rojas at the mercy of the crowd. He was saved by Bruzual, Pompa, Hurtado, Conde, and Ramos.³ Rojas claimed he had told them, 'shoot me. Do as you wish', to which they had lowered their weapons.⁴

Wilson had been at the Palacio, and had asked Monagas to go to the convent in person to put an end to the commotion and the killing.⁵ Barbosa claimed that Monagas had wanted to go to stop the outbreak as soon as he heard the first shots, but that he had been convinced against it by his advisers because his life would be in danger.⁶ Barbosa's claim might explain why Monagas rode just one block to the armoury, or that he should have gone there personally instead of sending orders. As he mounted his horse he might have been persuaded of the danger of going to San Francisco by the number of people rushing about in the street. In an effort to

¹ Smith in Rojas, Bosquejo, p.164.

² Páez, Manifiesto, 1 Aug.1848, p.7.

³ Some are mentioned by various sources, some by one only. See Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.90. Núñez quotes Bruzual in El 24 de Enero, p.55. Goiticoa to Guzmán, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12, said Sanabria had saved the 'Rey Pabilo', Rojas' nickname.

⁴ Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.168-9. 'Tiren ustedes. Hagan lo que gusten.'

⁵ Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, p.90. Anonymous, Asesinato, loc.cit., blamed Wilson for planning the whole event.

⁶ Barbosa, Un Juicio, p.9.

restore order he might then have decided to go to the armoury to send a cannon. He might also have sent orders to the militia officers to contain the crowd and, possibly, their own troops.¹ Like so many other suppositions about these events, this one will have to await proof to support it.

Páez claimed that when the senate asked Monagas to go to congress to stop the shooting he had answered coldly, 'They tell me I must not go.'² Even after Wilson's request others felt the situation was still too dangerous for Monagas to appear at the convent, but he chose to go.³ He arrived at the plaza accompanied by Mariño⁴ and Sotillo, and set about rounding up those who were still hiding inside and on the rooftops to protect them from further violence.⁵ Monagas escorted Rojas personally to seek refuge at the British legation.⁶

Various people are credited with saving Juan Vicente González. Bruzual wrote that Mariño arrived just in time to save him.⁷ Sotillo, who

¹ One must remember the respect people held for cannon, totally out of proportion to its effectiveness. The officers acted as though they had been ordered to restore peace, protecting the representatives from the unpredictable and overenthusiastic crowd.

² Páez, Manifiesto, 1 Aug.1848, p.7.

³ Barbosa, Un Juicio p.9. To prove that Monagas had risked his life by going to San Francisco he mentioned that one man had considered shooting a pistol at him, but had refrained from doing so because the death of the president would have left the nation in a terrible state.

⁴ Páez believed that Mariño had been at San Jacinto with 500 men, and that when asked to go to congress had replied that nothing of importance was occurring, 'que no era gran cosa lo que pasaba.' Páez, Manifiesto, 1 Aug.1848, p.7.

⁵ Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit.

⁶ Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

⁷ Bruzual, El Republicano, 28 Jan.1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.53.

called González 'Mascalibro', is supposed to have saved him from being killed by saying, 'Not Bookswallower, because he is the one who teaches my boys.'¹ It seems that some of his sons were González's pupils. When taken before Monagas, González is supposed to have admitted to the existence of a conspiracy of many months that had attempted to intimidate Monagas into resigning, and later to carry out its threats against him. He added that Páez had agreed to lead the conspiracy and had co-operated with all the plans.²

Camacho was 'captured' on the roof at about five o'clock. He was shown the bodies of the dead in the courtyard as soldiers shouted '¡Mueran los Oligarcas!' and '¡Muera el Congreso!' It seems that the dead were not robbed of their possessions. Some people shouted, 'Kill him,' as he came out into the plaza, but to his surprise his guard protected him. He was taken to Monagas who seems to have ordered him escorted to the Palacio where he saw Ibarra and other government supporters. Later he was able to seek asylum at the French legation.³

These tragic events had occurred over a period of two hours. Apart from the eight dead there were various injuries. Michelena was wounded, also Francisco Díaz and Fernando Antonio Díaz, Guzmán's public prosecutor.

¹ 'A Tragalibros no, que ése es el que me enseña los muchachos.' Antonio Mieres, La Historia de Juan Vicente González en sus Fuentes (Caracas, 1977), p.22. Goiticoa only wrote that 'Tragafote', a nickname for González, had been saved by 'el Frique' or 'Trique', possibly a nickname for Sotillo or Arteaga. Goiticoa to Guzmán, 25 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.311-12. González sought refuge at Governor De la Plaza's house. For 'Mascalibro' see J.M. Seijas García, Leyendas Patrias-Sotillo (Caracas, 1902), p.13.

² 'Replica a la "Defensa del General Páez"', New York Daily Tribune, 15 Nov. 1850, in La Unión, 6 (24 Dec.1850), in AANH, Documentos Varios, Correspondencia 1850-58, Escaparate XVI, Caja 29, no.1.

³ Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit. For the undisturbed dead see Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, 25 Jan.1848, loc.cit. 'Los muertos estaban con sus relojes prendas y dinero en el bolsillo.'

Some had broken bones by falling from the rooftops, among them 'one of the Camachitos', Hilarión Nadal, and a son of Francisco Rivas. Rivas was a Liberal and a friend of Monagas.¹ It is surprising that there were not more injuries considering the terror that led the oligarchs to 'throw themselves from balconies, roofs, and amazing heights, from which a considerable number has been left damaged.'²

We may never learn the true intentions behind the actions that shaped the incident. The conflicting partisan descriptions certainly do not clarify it. We can arrive at some conclusions, however, from the facts that do correlate.

From all accounts there do not seem to have been many deaths in the crowd after the first shots. Since the guard had plenty of firearms one can assume that it did not fire into it for long. This might suggest that the guard did not remain at its post for very long.

Most of the dead had been stabbed. The stabbings suggest that the militia had little to do with the killings, since it carried firearms. The deaths took place in a small area. This area of conflict only covered the entrance from the plaza into the courtyard. Only two people seem to have died in the courtyard, the rest in the plaza.³ It is possible that an assassin, or a group of assassins were in the crowd ready to fall on certain godos. It is also possible that a provocateur should have incited part of the crowd into a frenzy to kill. Yet another possibility is that some men

¹ For the injured see Goiticoa to Guzmán, 25 Jan. 1848, loc.cit. He also included 'uno de los Casas' among the dead. For Rivas see Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p. 94.

² '... se arrojaron por los Balcones tejados y alturas asombrosas, de lo cual han quedado estropeados un numero considerable.' Goiticoa to Guzmán, loc.cit., quoting a letter he received from Caracas.

³ By Camacho's description they were Argote and Azpúrua. Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit. Salas was stabbed inside, but not by a member of the crowd apparently. See p. 162 above. Smith was stabbed at the door.

near the door, or friends of Riverol should have believed that an all-out struggle had begun when shots were fired.

Pompa's attitude is certainly odd, leaving the convent early and then 'saving' other representatives. The business of the yellow ribbons will have to be explained before one can believe that he was simply caught outside when the shooting broke out or that he was joining the militia to prepare to keep order in the outbreak that he expected at any moment.

The godos believed they had been attacked. Instead, the struggle concentrated on the door and on the guard. The representatives only became involved as they came down to the entrance. The crowd and the militia do not seem to have rushed upstairs to the chamber. Only after order was restored and while the representatives were being rounded up does any outsider seem to enter the chamber. Unfortunately, I have not found a floor plan of the convent at that time to help recreate the setting.

One is struck by the slow pace of an event alleged to have been an 'attack' by a furious mob. The gunfire may have been sporadic. There were lulls in the crisis as the senate asked for protection and later came out. The fact that messages were being relayed between San Francisco and the Palacio two blocks away suggests a slower pace than could have been expected during an attack. The closed door gave Sanabria time to write his note. It may be the reason there were so few deaths.¹ However, that door probably would not have resisted a concerted effort to invade the convent. A while later when the door was opened there was no rush into the courtyard. Indeed, people were able to come out through that door once it was opened.

¹ Acevedo claimed that there had been few deaths because the armed militia had contained the people's irritation and had protected the representatives. Acevedo, El Contendor, p.20.

One gets the impression that the event of the 24th was an aggressive demonstration by the people in the plaza rather than an attack on congress.¹ Only a few men at the door were probably responsible for the killings. These men could have been assassins or simply men who were carried away by the excitement of the mob. The militia, or at least its officers, seems to have had orders to maintain order and protect lives. It is understandable that its members might not always have been willing to risk their own lives to save a hated godo, but they seem to have made some effort. Quoting Gil Fortoul's analysis of mob mentality, Alvarado concludes that it was a collective crime where the idea of murder could have arisen spontaneously in spite of anyone's wishes. The soul of a mob is not the same as the sum of the souls of the individuals who comprise it.²

After considering various versions Parra-Pérez comes to the conclusion that one cannot accuse the executive of planning the event or of inciting the mob to riot through its agents. However, he adds that the executive had the power to avoid the outbreak of any violence, but had chosen not to, and had even taken advantage of it.³ He then qualifies his conclusion by pointing out the difficult problem of legitimacy that confronted Monagas if congress suspended him to be tried. The resulting civil war would find congress and Páez on the right side of the law. It was therefore crucial that he allow the force of the mob to overawe the partisan power of congress.⁴

¹ Alvarado calls it a 'motín'; Delitos Políticos, p.94.

² Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, pp.94-5. For Gil Fortoul's ideas on the 24th and on mob mentality see Gil Fortoul to Alvarado, Bagnères-de-Bigorre, 29 August 1893, in Gil Fortoul, Obras Completas (Caracas, 1957), vii.614-19, particularly pp.618-19.

³ Rondón-Márquez agrees, Guzmán Blanco, p.62.

⁴ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.60.

The Liberals around Monagas played an important role. They were not willing to lose their ticket to power without a fight. They saw Monagas as that ticket. Their struggle to keep him in power was just as desperate as his own, if not more so.¹ It is not inconceivable that some Liberals could have decided to incite to riot and murder without Monagas and other Liberal leaders knowing about it.² Guzmán Blanco wrote that Monagas did not know of the plans made at the secret meetings at General Ibarra's house. He claimed that Monagas first heard of the riot when Bruzual escorted the senate led by Bishop Fortique to the Palacio. The senate then informed him of the outbreak and begged him to go to stop it in person.³ It seems, however, highly unlikely that Monagas should not have been aware of any of the Liberals' plans since Ibarra was at his side that day.

Núñez concludes that there were two conspiracies. He considers the plan to depose and try the president a conspiracy with Páez at the centre of it. The other had Monagas at the centre of a plan to destroy the first one. He feels that if Monagas had sat idly by while congress accused him he would not have been saving the 'institutions', but merely allowing his opposition to take power. Monagas would only have been saving those institutions for Páez and his party. Núñez believes Monagas should have dissolved congress and called for new elections. He writes that

¹ Ibid.

² Luis Jerónimo Alfonzo later claimed that the Liberals had led the reaction, that after the oligarchs they were responsible for the outbreak, and that Monagas was not at all responsible for those events. Quoted by Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.58. Pulido wrote that the Liberals had only decided to support the president and oppose his deposition, but that they would await developments to decide how to do so. Nothing had been decided by the morning of the 24th. Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p.94.

³ Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, p.66.

Monagas's mistake was to use the people against the congressional faction. He concludes that the 24th was not a struggle to save the institutions, but a struggle between paecistas and monaguistas, or between oligarchs and Liberals, that Monagas won due to the blindness of the oligarchs.¹

González Guinán believes that all those involved in the event were responsible for it. He considers them all guilty of the tragedy. Alvarado places most of the blame on the oligarchy for creating the tension that led to the outburst.²

The 24th has been considered everything from the end of the republic to the great victory of the people over its oppressors. One present-day author believes that as it was an act of the people the government had a duty to allow it to develop without interference.³ Some may feel that it was a 'decisive moment in the struggle between civil power and military despotism.'⁴ If one remembers the events surrounding the 'revolution of the reforms' and Vargas's subsequent resignation, one realises that that struggle had been decided long before. What one critic has called the death of the republic and the enthronement of the executive branch⁵ had occurred years earlier. The 24th of January was a reminder that the separation of powers depended more on the tolerance of the executive than on the prestige of the constitution.⁶ The appearance of an autonomous

¹ Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.40.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.471. Alvarado, Delitos Políticos, pp.93, 96.

³ Pedro Ortega Díaz, El 23 de Enero y Otras Notas de Historia (Caracas, 1969), p.85. Years later Guzmán Blanco called it a popular coup against an oligarchic congress, and even against Monagas because he would not liberalise his government; En Defensa, pp.66-7.

⁴ From Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.39.

⁵ Juan Bautista Ascanio Rodríguez, Misérias del Pueblo y sus Causas. 93 Años de Fortiejecutivismo hasta Democesarismo (Caracas, 1941), p.22.

⁶ Gil Fortoul, Historia, iii.4.

legislative branch could only be kept while that branch co-operated with the executive.

The autonomy of the legislature also depended on the composition of its membership. By 1848 that autonomy was only a relative one, because the legislature had been controlled by the godos for seventeen years, thus maintaining a peaceful continuity. On 24 January only that relative autonomy was lost.

Different sides made different actors responsible for the event. Liberals blamed Conservatives, and vice-versa. One anonymous author blamed Monagas, Ibarra, Mariño and Bruzual, who had been Obando's secretary in Bogotá and was supposed to have been called to Caracas to direct the riot: 'all the lost men of the earth; and director in thought, plans and adviser to the task the English Minister Belford H. Wilson, even though his compatriots all defend the cause of order and the good principles of the country.'¹

Monagas does not seem to have been as malicious as he has been made out to be. Certainly he could have avoided any violent clash between the House and the mob. On the other hand, he did stop an attack on congress and did seek to protect its members after it had dissolved. It seems he decided to let the situation develop, allowing it to escalate as each side reacted to the other. Once the break had occurred, and he had achieved his objective of disbanding the House, he stepped in to restore peace and avoid further casualties. Certainly, the oligarchy underestimated Monagas's

¹ '... todos los hombres perdidos de la tierra; y director en pensamiento, planes y consejero en la obra el Ministro Inglés Belford H. Wilson, aunque sus compatriotas todos defienden la causa del orden y los buenos principios en el país.' Anonymous, Asesinato, C.P.-V., IV, fos.29-33. Camacho agreed that Wilson was 'the director of this infamy', and that Ibarra, his intimate friend, was the main executioner. Asesinatos, C.P.-V., IV, fos.36-41.

ability to defend himself and even his general intelligence. Its surprise at finding him a stronger opponent than expected has led to the opinion that he was a treasonable conspirator.

In the late afternoon the city was quiet except for the euphoric noise of armed bands of men that roamed the streets. The inhabitants shut themselves in their homes not knowing whether to expect further killings or a celebration. Pulido had stayed at home all day, not venturing out once the shooting had died down.¹ Councillor of state Talavera could be found at home, but with his door open. When urged to go into hiding he refused explaining that a meeting of the council might be called and that he should be ready and available to attend.²

Many people had sought asylum at the foreign legations. That same afternoon the government advised the foreign representatives that orders had been given to protect them and their legations. Muñoz reported that all civilian and military authorities had acted in the best order, even providing him with a guard for his legation. He added that all foreign citizens were receiving good protection. His legation held 200 people, among them Representatives Ramón Alcántara and Pedro José Rojas.³

Muñoz reported that Secretary Acevedo had written to him on the 24th stating that Acevedo had asked Secretary Mejía and Governor De la Plaza to help maintain the inviolability of the houses, persons, and families of the foreign diplomatic agents, as well as the safety of the dwellings and property of all foreign residents in Venezuela.⁴ Since Acevedo resigned when

¹ Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p.94.

² Talavera y Garcés, Apuntes de Historia Eclesiástica de Venezuela, ed. N.E. Navarro (Caracas, 1929), p.40.

³ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 52, 5 Feb.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.123-31.

⁴ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 54, 21 Feb.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fo.10.

trouble broke out and he remained at the British legation for twenty hours¹(until approximately 11 a.m. of 25 January) he must have made his requests before the outbreak. It is interesting that so much foresight and care should have been taken to protect not only foreign agents but all foreigners.

David was more alarmed. He raised his flag and took in over 300 people. He guarded his front door himself all of the 24th after promising his charges that they would be taken only over his dead body. In the afternoon or early evening the government sent him a guard of 25 or 29 men after he had requested it. He also received the government's communication regarding the protection of foreigners. Nevertheless, he spent most of the night reassuring those who were 'struck with terror' and who claimed to trust only him. His chancelier, Turreil, helped him and then went home to protect 90 people staying there. A French merchant, Auguste Rozier, led families to the legation through streets which, according to David, were overrun by angry mobs. For his bravery David asked that Rozier be given the cross of the Legion of Honour. David added that hours before the outbreak he had met with French merchants to suggest that they take refuge at the legation. Most of the merchants had chosen to remain at their homes and businesses. David explained that they had not wanted to arouse the anger of the eventual mobsters.²

¹ Acevedo, El Contendor, p.8.

² David to French foreign secretary, 26 Jan.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.22-8. Shields asked for a guard at 4 p.m. on the 24th and received one soon after. The American and French legations were next door to each other. Shields to Acevedo, 24 Jan.1848 and Acevedo to Shields, 25 Jan.1848, in Shields to Buchanan, 48, 29 Jan.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 4 (Film M-79, 5).

Wilson gave the government more credit. He wrote that not a single person in Caracas had been injured other than at San Francisco due mainly to Monagas's energetic measures. He reported that the houses of the foreign agents had been given guards by the government for their security. He added that these guards were also at the disposal of the agents for the security, if required, of any of the houses or stores of their countrymen. His residence was filled with Venezuelans and Britons.¹ From all reports it seems that despite the tense atmosphere in the city no further disturbances took place that night.

The question of asylum should be considered further. At that time, as now, countries were not agreed as to the extent that protection could be afforded under diplomatic immunity. Venezuela seems to have allowed a very wide interpretation that included Venezuelan nationals when the privilege might have extended only to the foreign representative, his family, his household, and the site of the legation, but not the nationals inside. Venezuelan governments may have allowed the wider interpretation in their effort to maintain friendly relations with the foreign powers.²

¹ Apart from Acevedo, Michelena, and Rojas he also protected ex-governor Uztáriz and his family.
Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.143-53.

² Perhaps because of the continuous claims that arose from the damage of foreign persons or their property the Spanish American nations seem to have allowed a more general interpretation of diplomatic immunity than was given in Europe and the United States. U.S. Secretary of State Buchanan had warned Shields not to expect too much protection from the acts of the Venezuelan government when claiming immunity. In his opinion of 1846 regarding a similar incident, Buchanan believed that the Venezuelan government was generous in its interpretation. Buchanan to Shields, 14 May 1846, USNA, Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, Venezuela, 1 (Film M-77, no.171), and mentioned by Frankel, Venezuela-Estados Unidos, p.78. Buchanan was pleased that Venezuela had not protested the protection Shields had given on 24 Jan.1848; Buchanan to Shields, 22 Mar.1848, DIDS, Venezuela, 1 (Film M-77, no.171): 69-72. Also mentioned by Frankel, ibid., p.82.

That evening Monagas listened to his supporters as they spoke of marching to the llanos with the army to beat Páez immediately.¹ Some, like Ibarra and Bruzual, are reputed to have encouraged Monagas to declare a dictatorship, but he did not agree.² Urbaneja believed that the congress had to be resealed at all costs to maintain, even if only in appearance, the constitutionality of the system. This was the only way that any hope of peace could be maintained. Urbaneja is quoted as saying, '... it is necessary, indispensable, to take hold of the constitutional artery, like the surgeons do ...'³

It is not clear whether the opinions were aired at a festive dinner that evening or at a meeting at the Palacio.⁴ That any discussion took place at all suggests that no plans had been made concerning the aftermath of the outbreak and the dissolution of congress. This lack of planning might be another indication of the authorities' passive role in the event of the 24th.

One thing is certain. Monagas was busy at the Palacio late into the night. He had decided to follow Urbaneja's advice. Messengers were sent to the provinces with news and instructions from the president to the provincial officials.⁵ At 11 p.m. Pulido was summoned by Monagas.

¹ Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, p.69.

² Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.172-3.

³ '... es preciso, indispensable, coger la arteria constitucional, como hacen los cirujanos ...' Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, p.72.

⁴ Years later Guzmán Blanco described the setting for the discussion of the different opinions as a dinner at San Pablo that began at 9 p.m. and left the table at 1 a.m. and included various jolly toasts with champagne. A 'victory' dinner of this magnitude and open display is unlikely when one considers that some of the victims were friends of those present at San Pablo. Ibid., pp.69-70. Alvarado agrees that this scene is difficult to believe; Delitos Políticos, pp.93-4.

⁵ Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.56.

He found the president in his office at the Palacio writing with Sanabria. Monagas wanted Pulido to go to Barinas to inform his father, Colonel Pulido, of the events and to take him instructions. It seems that since mid-1847 Colonel Pulido had been secretly authorised by Secretary Mejía to take control of Barinas as jefe de operaciones if Pulido ever felt it necessary to keep order in the province.¹ It is possible that his son was now bringing him instructions to assume that control to counteract the actions of Governor Agustín Codazzi, who although considered a fair-minded administrator was a loyal paecista.

Monagas also wrote to Páez to describe the events of the 24th and to ask for his advice and support to save the nation. This letter did not leave until the next day, when there was no doubt that Monagas had the situation in Caracas under control.²

After deciding to reconvene congress Monagas's supporters may have gone about that night locating the congressmen.³ The next day the congressmen were urged to attend San Francisco.⁴ Threats may have been used to get their attendance, but it is more likely that the dangers of not attending were implied rather than stated. The fear that the armed masses would be allowed to attack the homes of the oligarchy with the

¹ Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), pp.94-5 for Pulido's summons, pp.98-9. for the Colonel's authorisation. Pulido's meeting at the Palacio further undermines Guzmán Blanco's account of the 'victory' dinner at San Pablo.

² Monagas to Páez, 24 Jan.1848, AGN, I y J 1848- CCCLXV, fos.248 ff. Reprinted in BANH, 102 (April 1943), pp.153-4. Also in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.65-7.

³ Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, p.72.

⁴ David said that congress had been forced to meet. David to French foreign secretary, 26 Jan.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.22-8. For the executive's efforts see AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXIV, fos.481 ff.

resulting harmful effects to women, children, and property seemed real enough to convince most of the congressmen to return to the session.¹

Maintaining the 'constitutional thread' might ensure not only the country's peace, but also the safety of the congressmen's families.

Even Monagas went about soliciting the attendance of the congressmen. He convinced Representative Antonio Blanco Tovar. At the British legation, José María Rojas refused his requests. Monagas asked the convalescing Michelena to intercede. With tears in his eyes Michelena is reputed to have asked Rojas to go to spare the country any more bloodshed. Rojas then agreed to attend on condition that Monagas himself escort him to the convent and back to the legation, as he feared for his safety. Monagas agreed, and they went to the session. Later Monagas returned to the legation with Rojas.²

Senator Picón returned also hoping that greater evils would be avoided and peace maintained.³ Juan Vicente González was also taken to congress by Monagas. González claimed that an escort of 200 soldiers surrounded him, and that Monagas had made fun of him.⁴ González explained that he had gone hoping that enough representatives would stay away for a quorum not to be reached.⁵

¹ Both Camacho and Anonymous mentioned that the congressmen had been threatened with having their families' throats cut if they refused to attend; loc.cit. González Guinán claims that the congressmen were not threatened, but that the president's request was enough pressure to convince them to comply; Historia, iv.477..

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.476. Guzmán Blanco, En Defensa, pp.73-4.

³ Gabriel Picón to Juan de Dios Picón, 25 Jan.1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.68.

⁴ '... me saludaba con irrisorios vótores.' Juan Vicente González, 'El Señor Estanislao Rendón', El Foro (Caracas), 2 July 1858, in Pensamiento Político, iii.336.

⁵ Ibid.

Some congressmen were in hiding and could not be found,¹ while others refused to attend. The most famous refusal was Fermín Toro's; he answered, 'Tell Monagas that my dead body will be taken, but that Fermín Toro does not prostitute himself.'² He was not bothered. Pedro Juan Arellano sent a formal letter of resignation from La Guaira on the 26th.³ Fermín García, Pedro José Rojas, Hilarión Nadal, and José Hermenegildo García also refused to attend.⁴ A.M. Soteldo, Rafael Losada, and Francisco Antonio Carrera seem to have attended, but were able to get to Curazao where they published notes a month later protesting against the proceedings.⁵

Muñoz described the atmosphere of the 25th. He felt that calm was returning to the city. Edicts proclaimed the maintenance of order and the rights of citizens. The terror that had gripped the caraqueños was subsiding. The government was busy calming the congressmen, and encouraged them to return to the sessions by assuring them of the free exercise of their power.⁶

The senate met at 1 p.m. and read the presidential annual address. The house of representatives did not reach its quorum until 4 p.m.,

¹ Like Senator Doctor Antonio Parra who was listed as absent without leave since the 25th. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.69.

² 'Decidle a Monagas que mi cadáver lo llevarán, pero que Fermín Toro no se prostituye.'

³ In Shields to Buchanan, 56, 3 Apr.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6)

⁴ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.69. Espinal to Ancízar, 16 Feb.1848, BAGN, XXXIV, p.51.

⁵ Parra-Pérez, ibid., 69-70.

⁶ Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 52, 5 Feb.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.123-31.

after Rojas's arrival, and after Nadal had been brought in a hand chair because of his injury of the day before.¹ Few people sat in the gallery of the House. The representatives sat in silence. Apart from appointing a new secretary they had no business to attend to. Monagas waited outside in the corridor. As the representatives left the session he expressed his sorrow at the loss of their colleagues and the hope that congress would help him save the institutions.²

Despite the obvious signs of Monagas's control of the situation, Juan Vicente González refused to accept the outcome. His stubbornness placed his life in jeopardy yet again. After serving as temporary secretary of the house of representatives for the session of the 25th, he was determined to continue to conspire for Páez. After the session he searched out Senator Rendón. Surrounded by Rendón's Liberal supporters, González had the audacity to say that the forced legality of congress was a political error; that the Liberals should call for a dictatorship and a federal system if that was what they really wanted. Rendón replied that they would use the constitution to beat the oligarchs in the same way that it had been used against them. With González's plan uncovered Rendón had to protect him from the menacing Liberals.³ González's suicidal attempt to conspire reflects a blind faith in his own cause and a great disrespect for the intelligence of his opponents.

¹ González Guinán says 4 p.m. Historia, iv.477. Alvarado says 5 p.m. and mentions Nadal's attendance. Delitos Políticos, p.92. Guzmán Blanco also says 5 p.m. En Defensa, p.73. Parra-Pérez states that Nadal had refused to attend, loc.cit.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.478.

³ For González as secretary see Gil Fortoul, Historia, ii.302. For Rendón's reply, 'No nos perderá V. con sus consejos maquiavélicos, con esa misma Constitución con que nos han hecho guerra tantos años; vamos a batirlos ahora. Yo no pienso ya en Federación.', and protection see J.V. González, 'El Señor Estanislao Rendón', El Foro (Caracas), 2 July 1858, Pensamiento Político, iii.336-7.

Secretary Sanabria wrote to the provincial governors on the 25th informing them of the tragic events that took place when citizens tried to enter the House to free him and the guard fired on them. He emphasised that congress had since returned to its normal business and that order had been re-established in the capital. He urged them to keep their provinces at peace.¹

Monagas's letter to Páez described the event of the 24th in the same terms as Sanabria's circular to the governors. Monagas ended it by notifying Páez that he would ask congress to grant him special powers with which to deal with any crisis. Páez was thus warned that Monagas was prepared to use the question of legality to remain in power. After asking Páez for his advice and support Monagas added a postscript reporting that congress had returned to its duties and that peace had been re-established in Caracas.²

Monagas sent a special message to congress on the 25th stating that his government deplored the tragedy that had taken place when crowds that wished to attend the congressional session of the 24th were fired upon ('dos tiros') by the unlawfully created guards, causing two deaths. He went on to say that there had been great agitation during those days, and he was therefore asking congress to give the executive special powers to control and pacify Caracas and the interior before the troubles around the country got out of control. He hoped congress would reach a decision quickly.³ In this letter Monagas tactfully failed to mention that the crowds had wished to attend the session to 'save' Sanabria, as was being reported in the official version to the governors and Páez.

¹ Gil Fortoul, ibid., iii.303-4.

² Monagas to Páez, 24 Jan.1848, BANH, 102 (Apr.1943), pp.153-4. Also Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.65-7.

³ 'Carta de José Tadeo Monagas al Presidente del Congreso', Caracas, 25 January 1848, AANH, Ar.2/G3/18. See also González Guinán, Historia, iv.487.

That evening Monagas's supporters were congratulating each other on the success of reseating congress. The government would now be saved. The legislature would support the executive. In the midst of the conversation Monagas spoke up from his sofa, 'La Constitución sirve para todo.'¹

On the 26th the senate and the House met in joint session. It seems that Monagas sat in the gallery with some troops while congress voted in silence on the proposals made by representatives who supported him.² Congress authorised the executive to raise up to 10,000 troops and a loan of up to 1 million pesos, to place under arrest and to question any person accused of conspiring against the security of the state, and to declare a general amnesty and grant pardons for all political, electoral, and press crimes since 1830. The power to place suspects under arrest was limited to a period of 90 days initially, and was later extended for a further 90 days.³ By asking for these special powers Monagas foresaw the results of the 24th.⁴ In less than two days he and his supporters had formulated a policy for surviving the aftershocks of the event of San Francisco. As we shall see, this policy was surprisingly well thought out, and was only made less effective by mistakes in its execution.

¹ Pulido, Delitos Políticos, p.97. For an interesting comment on famous quotations, including this one see Delfín Aguilera, Memorias de un Prócer de la Federación Boba (Caracas, 1979), pp.17-21.

² Camacho, Asesinatos, loc.cit.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.488. Núñez, El 24 de Enero, pp.56-7. See article 118 of the constitution for special presidential powers. See congress's resolution in AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.3.

⁴ González Guinán, ibid.

Later, Páez would declare that congress had pardoned Monagas for his atrocities of the 24th at the session of the 26th. In his view Venezuela had never been so humiliated as when it lengthened Monagas's immoral power that day.¹

During the event José Manuel Alegría had ordered the doors of his seminary to be shut. On his asking why they had been opened later he was told that the shooting had stopped. He replied, '... those shots have not ceased nor will they cease for a long time: they will resound lugubriously in the ears of many generations.'²

¹ Páez, Manifiesto, St.Thomas, 1 Aug.1848, p.10.

² '... esos disparos no han cesado ni cesarán en largo tiempo: ellos resonarán lugubrementemente en el oído de muchas generaciones.'
José E. Machado, El Día Histórico (Caracas, 1929), pp.192-3.

CHAPTER VCIVIL WAR

The government now took measures to maintain itself in power. It attempted to get the support of its citizens by calming any doubts they may have had regarding its legitimacy. At the same time it moved against its opposition with a series of preventive measures.

The official co-operation of congress remained vital to the defence of the government's claim to legitimacy. To that end congress declared to the nation that the constitutional order had not been altered and that its sessions continued to be held in a peaceful fashion.¹

As a further step in his effort to gain popular support Monagas declared a general amnesty for all acts or crimes relating to politics, elections and the press from 1830 to the day of the decree, as authorised by congress the day before.² At the same time, he sent a message to the nation in which he claimed that congress had saved Venezuela from civil war by its act of reconciliation, meaning the resolution of 26 January 1848 giving him special powers to maintain order. Asking all to act together as friends and brothers, he assured the country that the government was the father of everyone, and that as such it protected them and took them all into consideration. He promised to use all his power to protect

¹ On 27 January, González Guinán, Historia, iv.489. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.81, hints it was on 26 January.

² Decree of 27 January 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.3.

the 'constitutional pact': 'that sacred code is my political faith; intact I shall deliver it into the hands of my successor with the help and co-operation of the people, or I shall bury myself with it under the ruins of the nation.'¹ The pardon and the declarations would rally to him all those who had ever clashed with the oligarchic government. The evident co-operation of the three branches of government would convince most of the nation that it continued to function as legitimately as could be expected.

Monagas took preventive measures against the opposition as soon as possible. There is evidence to suggest that he began issuing special orders even before he turned congress's resolution of the 26th into law on the 27th.² He ordered the port of La Guaira closed on the evening of the 26th to prevent the departure of many people, among them about 100 oligarchs of both sexes who had come from Caracas for that purpose.³ Realising that anyone could be arrested as a suspected conspirator once Monagas had been granted special powers, these oligarchs must have rushed to leave the country before any action could be taken against them by Monagas and the Liberal mobs they so feared.

¹ 'Ese código sagrado es mi fé política: intacto lo entregaré en manos de mi sucesor con la ayuda y cooperacion de los pueblos, ó me sepultaré con él bajo las ruinas de la Patria.' 'José Tadeo Monagas General de División de los Ejércitos de Venezuela y Presidente de la República', 27 January 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.2. Also Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.81-2.

² Congress's resolution in AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.2.

³ Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 26 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.313-14. United States Acting Consul at La Guaira J.T. Golding also reported that the closure of the port and the prohibition to grant passports were ordered on the night of the 26th. Golding to Buchanan, 31, 28 Jan.1848, USNA, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in La Guaira (Film M-84, T-6).

Monagas had good cause to close the port. It prevented the escape of some of Monagas's strongest enemies, men who could be expected to continue to conspire against him from abroad, probably from Curazao. By preventing their escape Monagas was also preventing the flight of considerable wealth which they doubtless carried, and which would be used to finance the struggle against him.

One man who had planned ahead was Juan Pérez, one of the largest stockholders of the National Bank. On 18 January the bank issued him a letter of credit for \$5,250. He cashed half of it, used \$10 to buy two passports, and received a receipt for the remaining half which he left with a La Guaira merchant. He travelled to Curazao where his money followed him later.¹

On 28 January the ban was lifted for foreigners and foreign vessels after David and Shields had protested to the government.² Venezuelans and Venezuelan ships would still be unable to leave.³ Nevertheless, some would manage to escape, among them ex-secretary of war General Francisco Hernaiz.⁴

In Caracas the authorities attempted to re-establish calm. The university was ordered reopened for classes so that studies would not be disrupted.⁵ Congress continued to meet its quorum at its daily sessions.

¹ (T.?)P. Mawdsley to Juan Pérez, La Guayra, 5 May 1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.566. Also Castellanos, Páez, Peregrino, pp.24-5. Castellanos deciphers the merchant's name as B.P. Marodsky.

² Golding to Buchanan, 31, 28 Jan.1848, and 32, 31 Jan.1848, USNA, Desps. U.S. Cons. La Guaira (Film M-84, T-6).

³ 'Prohibida la salida del país a ciudadanos venezolanos sin la autorización previa de la Secretaría de lo Interior,' AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXIII, fo.1.

⁴ 'Hernaiz. Su huída por el puerto de La Guaira', AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVIII, fos.320 ff.

⁵ 'Orden a la Universidad,' AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXV, fo.66.

At some point the senate voted against moving to Puerto Cabello, therefore keeping congress in Caracas definitely.¹

The government prepared for the coming struggle against Páez. On 30 January it called 10,000 militiamen to active service and appointed the army chiefs.² Mariño was named the chief of the army with José Gregorio Monagas as second in command. The secretary of war reported that up to 20,000 men could be armed for infantry duty.³ Orders were given for the arrests of anyone, particularly of General Judas Tadeo Piñango and Colonel José Ignacio Torres, who should enter the country with war matériel for the rebels. These two were reported to be in Curazao buying arms and equipment for Páez.⁴ On 1 February Monagas asked congress for permission to lead the army in person should he feel it necessary. Congress gave its consent on the 2nd.⁵

Páez replied to Monagas's letter on 31 January in clear terms. Páez suggested that Monagas

'... submit to the trial to which public opinion has summoned you, for many of your acts which are regarded as being clearly against the Constitution. I propose that you withdraw all the armed force from the Capital, and that you allow both Houses to change their sittings to another place, as one House had already resolved, in order that they may deliberate dispassionately and freely upon the state of the Republic.

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.504.

² Ibid., iv.490. AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXV, fos.214 ff.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.82.

⁴ It will be remembered that Piñango was Páez's chief of staff and had brought Páez's family to David for safekeeping. This order was given on 1 February 1848. AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXV, fos.298-9.

⁵ Parra-Pérez, loc.cit. González Guinán, Historia, iv.507.

'This is the only measure which I judge capable of inspiring some confidence, and the only one which can place your Excellency on good ground. If your Excellency reject [sic] this advice, who can prevent the war which has already commenced by the assassination of the Representatives of the people?' ¹

For Páez the war had begun, and only Monagas's submission would stop it. Gil Fortoul feels that these absolute terms made any reconciliation impossible.² We may assume that Páez was quite sure of himself and that he now sought open warfare. This attitude is reflected in the tone of the letter. Páez also wrote that he felt his soul was destroyed and his heart oppressed by a strong pain, and that the pain was made worse by the moral responsibility of having been the one who had most dilligently worked for Monagas's election. He asked how he could possibly give advice when Monagas had become his greatest enemy in the eyes of Venezuela. He then accused Monagas of responsibility for the war by claiming that Monagas would now have to answer for it's consequences before God. The letter ended by asking if Páez could be indifferent to the empire of terrorism, and answering that he would die before calmly watching the ignominious death of the republic.³

¹ Páez to Monagas, El Rastro, 31 January 1848, in Páez, Important documents in relation to the Present Situation of Venezuela; and the Attempt of General Jose Tadeo Monagas to establish a Despotic Government in That Country: with a few introductory remarks (New York, 1848), p.4. This was a U.S. publication of Páez's Manifiesto del General en Jefe, José Antonio Páez, referred to earlier. The letter is quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.83-6, and was copied by the diplomatic agents for their governments. It is also found in AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXV, fos.223 ff.

² Gil Fortoul, Historia, iii.5.

³ 'No, mil veces no. Debo perecer antes que presenciar con aparente serenidad la muerte ignominiosa de la Republica.' Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.86. Parra-Pérez points out the threat of responsibility for the war. For an interesting Conservative interpretation of the aftermath of 24 January, in particular of Monagas's efforts against his opposition, see General León de Febres Cordero, Manifiesto en que se Vindica á la División Restauradora que á las Ordenes del Ciudadano Esclarecido abrió la campaña en 1849 (Curazao, 1850), pp.1-8.

Such pompous wording was probably Quintero's. Remembering Páez's conspiracy of 1826 Parra-Pérez believes that coming from Páez those words seem to be a joke. He also reminds us that Rojas reports that Páez's advice was found to be more funny than worrýsome when it was received in Caracas.¹

At this point we must consider Páez's travels since his departure from Maracay on 3 January. The stated reason for his trip was to buy horses in New Granada, but he spent a long time making his way to the llanos. He saw friends along the way, and we have considered the possibility that he was preparing a rebellion against Monagas. Quintero travelled with him and Soublette joined them later. Páez reached Calabozo by 20 January to await the results of congress's first activities. He was still there when the first news of the event arrived on the 26th. He moved to his hato at El Rastro and prepared for war.²

Before writing to Monagas on the 31st, Páez sent messengers and letters around the country to influential men asking for their support in the coming struggle.³ His son, Dr Manuel Antonio Páez, took a letter dated 28 January to Colonel Pulido at Barinas. Pulido turned down Páez's request for help in restoring the 'constitutional' order, pointing out that war would only worsen matters. Pulido asked Páez to reconsider and to not believe the 'passionate men of Caracas'. Pulido allowed Dr Páez

¹ Rojas, Bosquejo, p.173, and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.508. Páez to Monagas, El Rastro, 31 Jan.1848, loc.cit. Páez to Colonel José Ignacio Pulido, El Rastro, 28 Jan.1848, in Pulido, Recuerdos Historicos (1880), pp.100-1.

³ For some idea of the communications see, Castillo, Capitán A., AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fos.157 ff; Pérez, Capitán Francisco M., AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXV, fos.356 ff.

to leave by the route to the cordillera, probably to Trujillo, for his greater safety.¹

The town council of Calabozo declared its support for Páez on 31 January with the town council of Chaguaramas following its lead on 3 February.² General José María Zamora issued his proclamation to take up arms against the government on the same 3rd claiming to represent the wishes of the towns of Chaguaramas and Orituco. In his proclamation Zamora called on all citizens to support Páez adding that at least the valleys of Aragua, the canton of Calabozo, and the Castillo Libertador at Puerto Cabello were known to support his decision. If the date of Zamora's proclamation is correct then there is no doubt that various chiefs had reached a previous agreement to rebel. Indeed, Zamora rebelled the day before Páez proclaimed his own rebellion. Zamora ended his call to arms with what would become the motto of the paecistas, '¡Viva la Constitución, viva el soberano Congreso de la Nación!'³

Páez issued his proclamation on 4 February having given Monagas barely enough time to reply to his letter of four days earlier. This proclama was a long, pompous accusation against Monagas and his government. Páez blamed him for planning the whole affair of the 24th. Calling on divine providence Páez had resolved to save his country: 'once [it is] free, even if I die in the struggle, I shall descend to the grave in peace.'

¹ Pulido to Páez, Barinas, 10 February 1848, in Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p.101.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.517.

³ 'Proclama del General José María Zamora,' Orituco, 3 Feb.1848, copied from David to French foreign secretary, 19 Feb.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fo.66, by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.88-9, who points out the previous agreement to rebel. For an ironic interpretation of the importance of using different 'vivas', including these, see Aguilera, Memorias, p.7.

'I have taken hold of my lance not to let go of it as long as I do not see the enemies of my country humiliated and the constitution of 1830 triumphant.' He wanted to punish the 'pérfido majistrado', as he called Monagas.¹

Monagas received the news of Páez's revolt on 6 February, and informed congress of it the next day adding that '... as for me, the Nation will see me carry out my oath to save the national institutions or bury myself with them.'² He would prove that no individual, no matter how great his services had been, could place himself above the public powers and the will of the people.³ Both houses of congress replied that they would support the executive against Páez. On 8 February, Monagas denounced Páez for his insurrection and called the citizens to arms.⁴

The news of the event of 24 January had travelled quickly around the country. Within days of the tragedy the paecistas were mobilising for the revolt they had been expecting. They counted on the popular support that they felt would surely respond to Páez's call. They had not perceived that Páez's prestige had waned in the countryside. He had spent too many years in Caracas and Maracay, isolated from his original base of power, the western llanos. The paecistas also had not realised how effectively

¹ Páez, Autobiografía, pp.458-63. 'Libre ella, aunque yo muera en la lucha, descenderé con tranquilidad al sepulcro.' 'He tomado mi lanza para no soltarla mientras no vea humillados á los enemigos de mi patria, y triunfante la Constitución de 1830.' 'Proclama del General José Antonio Páez,' Calabozo, 4 Feb.1848, in David to French foreign secretary, 19 Feb.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.67-70. Also AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXV, fos.413 ff; CCCLXVI, fos.10 ff. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.86-8.

² '... En cuanto á mí, la Nación me verá cumplir mi juramento de salvar las instituciones patrias ó sepultarme con ellas.' Quoted by González Guinán, Historia, iv.523.

³ Quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.107.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.526-8. See Monagas's call, Caracas, 8 Feb.1848, in F.O. 80/54, fo.206.

Monagas had been working to establish his influence in other parts of the country other than the East. Veteran 'reformistas' and Liberals had been taking control of local governments across the country until only the leaders in the West, with their independent tradition and too far removed to have been reached yet by Monagas's influence, remained loyal to Páez. When Páez revolted he found the open support of local leaders only in the West.

The first town of importance to receive the news of the event of the 24th was La Guaira. A man arrived on horseback at 5.30 p.m. that day.¹ The juez político was seen hurrying to his home. Then oligarchs and foreigners, visibly shaken, followed up the street. It was rumoured that the oligarchic congressmen had murdered Sanabria. As armed oligarchs began meeting at the corner of the main plaza the Liberals took control of the armoury, and the town held its breath waiting for the evening mail courier from Caracas to bring more news. By 8 p.m. the courier had not arrived, and about 300 Liberals held the armoury. At 9 p.m. the oligarchs left the plaza, and the Liberals began patrolling the streets recommending order and calm. The juez político and some oligarchs went to sleep on board the ships in the harbour ready to set sail at the least sign of trouble. Upon hearing of the developments in La Guaira the Liberals of Maiquetía sent 300 men to co-ordinate action with the port. Not until midnight did positive news of the events in Caracas arrive.² By then, the Liberals were keeping order in the port, although the atmosphere was tense and anxious.

¹ The description of the events at La Guaira is taken mainly from Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 26 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.313-14.

² Ibid.

British Vice-Consul Riddel's report confirms Goiticoa's description of the events of La Guaira. Riddel wrote that the militia and members of the lower classes had been assembled and armed, to the alarm of the wealthy, and had proceeded to patrol the streets at night in groups of fifty. The conduct of the people he described as not just orderly, but impressive. No insults had been uttered, and their conduct had been peaceful. The juez político had indeed spent at least the night of the 24th on board ship. With regard to the situation at the port on 29 January Riddel was pleased to report that passports were being readily granted to all Britons who had applied for them. He added that 'Though the most perfect order is maintained the People are irritated to see so many embarking.'¹ Presumably these many were foreigners. Two weeks later Riddel reported that except for an American and a Prussian, the foreign merchants of La Guaira were 'extremely violent Partisans against the Government', and that they expected a massacre of the country's whites by the government.² To this report Wilson added that he was making every effort to keep British subjects neutral in the affairs of the country.³

American Acting-Consul Golding agreed that the authorities had maintained order, but he emphasised the alarm among the population. The foreign ships in port were crowded with people who had fled to them for safety since there were no foreign warships in port at the time. He asked that a force of at least two or three warships be sent to call at La Guaira and Puerto Cabello. His superior, Shields, had ordered that an American

¹ Riddel to Wilson, La Guayra, 29 Jan.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.160 ff.

² Riddel to Wilson, La Guayra, 14 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.243 f.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, Caracas, 18 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.245 ff.

ship in port be detained to be sent off with messages for Washington at a moment's notice.¹ By 31 January Golding could report that '... we still have tolerable order but we are entirely at the mercy of the rabble Militia ...' He feared for the safety of the better classes of people if Páez's constitutional forces were to approach the port. Rumours had arrived by ship from Puerto Cabello and Valencia that Páez was already marching towards Caracas with a large body of lancers. Golding felt that the outcome of the struggle was doubtful since Caracas was opposed to Páez. As a result of the uncertainty and the alarm existing in the port, 'a great number of foreigners' left for Curazao on the 30th. The juez político had gone into hiding. All commercial transactions had ceased. Again Golding begged that a naval force be sent at once.²

Young Guzmán Blanco, who by this time was employed in the casa de gobierno with a salary of 100 pesos,³ arrived at La Guaira on the night of 28 January. He sailed to Curazao to see his father carrying many messages from friends. No doubt the most important message was from Monagas regarding Guzmán's future with the government. Guzmán's friends expected him to return soon to take charge of the Liberal party and guide it in its relationship with the Monagas government.⁴

¹ Golding to Buchanan, 31, La Guayra, 28 Jan.1848, USNA, Desps. U.S. Cons. La Guaira (Film M-84, T-6).

² Golding to Buchanan, 32, 31 Jan.1848, ibid.

³ Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, 26 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.313-14. Presumably, it was a monthly salary. A secretary of state earned \$10 pesos a day or up to \$300 a month. 'Presupuestos - Sueldos', AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLIV, fos.226-47.

⁴ Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, 29 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.315.

In Valencia Governor Carlos L. Castelli called for calm as a result of the news of the occurrence in Caracas.¹ General Febres claimed that the Liberals were confused and ashamed when the news from Caracas first arrived, not knowing whether to support or oppose Monagas until the 28th when news of the reconvening of congress made them proud and happy to support him.² Páez had many sympathisers there, but Castelli and the Liberals seem to have held enough power to ensure that Valencia remained loyal to the government. General José Laurencio Silva was in Valencia when he was named jefe de operaciones for Carabobo. He left before sunrise on 4 February for El Pao to raise a division.³ In the meantime, Castelli remained at Valencia preparing to take part in the coming operations against Páez.

The British vice-consul at Puerto Cabello, John McWhirter, reported that when the news had reached there on the 29th all had remained quiet and the foreigners safe. 'I fear nothing and wont even allow my family to go to Curacoa, the only thing I fear is a scarcity of Wheaten Bread as there is not a barrel of flour for sale here.'⁴

South of Caracas the reactions to the news of the event were immediate. The government replaced the juez político of Sta. Lucia because he had rebelled with thirty men and joined one Burronegro who was leading rebels in the Tuy river valley. Commander Vaca (Baca of the presidential guard) left

¹ Castelli, Carlos L., 27 Jan.1848, in 'Alocuciones de Gobernadores de Carabobo, 1848-1852,' AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G 1/Carpeta 12, no.79.

² Febres Cordero, Manifiesto, p.3.

³ General José Laurencio Silva, Diario de Operaciones de la División Carabobo (Valencia, 1848), p.1.

⁴ McWhirter to Wilson, Puerto Cabello, 29 Jan.1848, F.O.80/54, fos.165 ff.

⁵ Goiticoa to Guzmán, 26 Jan.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.313-14. Also Aguilera quotes a letter mentioning Burronegro, Memorias, p.38.

Caracas with 100 men by the 28th to put down that rebellion. Vaca could also count on the help of the Tuy Liberals who had taken up arms in support of Monagas. The town council of Turmero refused to recognise Monagas's authority. Mariño is supposed to have left Caracas with 200 men on 27 January to maintain order in Aragua.¹ This early date of departure suggests that Mariño was operating against the rebellion three days before he was appointed chief of the army and four days before Páez sent his ultimatum to Monagas. If these dates are correct, one can assume that Páez knew of Mariño's movements before sending his letter of the 31st to Monagas, and that this knowledge might have influenced the tone of that letter.

Former rebels were incorporated into the government's forces. Ezequiel Zamora had offered Monagas his support after the 24th. The President commissioned him to organise a battalion in Villa de Cura.² A few days later Mariño was concentrating his forces at Cura,³ so presumably Zamora was very busy and very influential in his hometown.

Francisco Pacheco had been a captain under Rangel and Zamora during the revolt of 1846-7. After being sentenced to death in Caracas his sentence had been reduced to 10 years of hard labour at Ciudad Bolívar. He had escaped at Barcelona making his way back to Caracas where he had remained in hiding. After the 24th he took up arms immediately joining the forces under Colonel Sotillo at his old rank of captain.⁴

¹ Goiticoa to Guzmán, ibid. I have found no other reference to the date of Mariño's departure from Caracas.

² L. Villanueva, Vida Ezequiel Zamora, p.235.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.107.

⁴ Francisco Pacheco to A.L. Guzmán, Caracas, 5 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.149. Pacheco's adventures were strikingly similar to Zamora's.

The political outcasts, the lower classes, and the Liberals were encouraged to defend the government. Not only were they being allowed to play a political role for the first time, but they were gaining the military experience they had lacked for so long, and which was necessary in any group's rise to power. Along with the getting of weapons came the confidence to voice and defend one's aspirations. This awareness would make these groups much more difficult to hold down should the oligarchy ever attempt to do so.

General Florencio Jiménez, another reformista, had been governor of Barquisimeto for just a few days when the news of the 24th reached him at 9 p.m. on 28 January. A number of oligarchs are reputed to have met at Jiménez's house to get him to sign a protest against Monagas. He seemed convinced to do so and to rebel against the government when a local Liberal leader, Simón Planas, arrived with '700 Liberals from Cabudare', a neighbouring town. Planas's persuasive and eloquent language, as well as the presence of many Liberals, persuaded Jiménez to support Monagas's government. Planas himself dictated the note of support that Jiménez sent to Sanabria.¹

Accounts differ as to the sequence of events that took place in Barinas upon the arrival of the news of the 24th. It seems that Governor Codazzi made plans to leave the province when the news reached him. One night in early February he went to Colonel Pulido to ask him to take control of the province since he was leaving that night. Pulido had already informed

¹ Eliseo Soteldo quoted by Lino Iribarren-Celis, La Revolución de 1854 (Caracas, 1954), pp.127-8. Also Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.89. The Planas family had held political influence in Barquisimeto for many years. Simón's father, Bernabé, had been juez político in 1822 and governor in 1832/3 and 1841/2. See Todd, Colonel Carlos S., AGN, Intendencia de Venezuela 1822 - CXIX, fos.48-9; I y J, LI, fo.275, CCXLIV, fo.47; and CCLXI, fo.25.

Codazzi of his special powers some time before. Pulido could not convince him to stay. The next day, with Codazzi gone to Trujillo, Pulido took military control and appointed the jefe político, Sr. Berrío, temporary governor. Páez's son arrived with the letter for Pulido at about this time. Pulido's reply was dated 10 February, and with it the son also left for Trujillo. Pulido's son arrived with the orders from Caracas the day after Dr Páez's departure.¹ Although this account may be correct there is no doubt that its timing casts the best possible light on those involved. Codazzi is presented as a loyal, peace loving man who decided to leave to avoid bloodshed and to keep the province in peace. Pulido seems the total gentleman, remaining loyal to the government while honourably allowing its future enemies to leave to the safety of a rebellious province. Lucio Pulido arrived just late enough to keep everyone from knowing the true state of affairs, thus keeping his father from having to comply with any disagreeable orders from Caracas.

Another account claims that Codazzi had resigned as governor on 6 February,² but had remained in Barinas. Caracas accepted his resignation appointing Napoleón Sebastián Arteaga as temporary governor. After swearing in before Monagas, Arteaga went to Barinas taking an order for Codazzi to appear in Caracas for questioning. Codazzi left for Trujillo on 22 February, perhaps upon hearing of his recall to Caracas.³

¹ This account is from Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), pp.99-102. He also says he arrived on one of the first days of February, p.99.

² About the time he would have quit Barinas in Pulido's account.

³ Arteaga, a grandson of the Marqués de las Riberas de Boconó y Masparro, had studied at Cádiz where he had met A.L. Guzmán. He was the leader of the Liberal Party in Barinas, and had been provincial governor in 1843. This account is from Virgilio Tosta, El Gobernador Codazzi y el Político Arteaga (Colección 'Temas Barineses', 1976), pp.8-10, 56. For Codazzi's recall to Caracas see, Codazzi, Coronel Agustín, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fos.77 ff. For yet another account see Herman Albert Shumacher, Biografía del General Agustín Codazzi (San Fernando de Apure, 1916), pp.107-9.

More documentation is needed before the discrepancies surrounding the events at Barinas can be clarified. However, there is no doubt that the province remained calm as Pulido had promised Páez.

In Apure the situation was less clear. Páez had sent one of his illegitimate sons, Encarnación Nabarro, and three of his nephews to bring all the horses he owned in Apure to Calabozo. These men spoke openly against Monagas's government and encouraged people to rebel with them. On 6 February the jefe político of Achaguas ordered Luciano Samuel to arm 10 or 12 men to maintain order. Samuel armed 60 or 70 men at his own expense, and, on the 9th, informed General José Cornelio Muñoz, jefe de operaciones, of his decision to prevent the extraction of men and horses from the province. Muñoz, who was ill at Achaguas, replied the next day recommending calm and meditation so that passion would not lead to mistakes. He added that the horses that Páez had sent to Apure during the last days could not be detained because they belonged to another province, while those that were on the hatos did belong to Apure and could be prevented from leaving. Muñoz informed Samuel that Miguel Mujica had arrived the day before, sent by Páez to speak to him. Mujica had assured Muñoz that Apure would not hesitate to support the declaration of Calabozo. Muñoz replied in a friendly fashion that Apure was only supporting the orders of its governor. Muñoz ended his letter to Samuel by asking him to try to contact Nutrias, or better still Pulido, to find out what Barinas was doing.¹ Samuel later complained of Muñoz's apparent irresolution, accusing him of acting according to circumstances, and of obvious weakness.

¹ José Cornelio Muñoz to Luciano Samuel, Achaguas, 10 Feb. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fo. 105. It will be remembered that Mujica had been prevented from running his sword through Sanabria in the House of Representatives on 24 January. The jefe político of Nutrias warned the local judges not to obey any orders from Páez, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fo. 291. Samuel had been a town councillor in Achaguas in 1846-7, AGN, I y J 1847 - CCCXLV, fo. 51.

Samuel was disheartened by Muñoz's reply. He decided to send express messengers at his own expense to Secretary Mejía at Caracas, General Silva, and Pulido in the name of the provincial authorities of Apure, declaring its support of the government. He claimed that the authorities had failed to declare their support although it was their duty to do so. When Mujica went to see Muñoz the true governor, Commander Miguel Pérez, was under pressure to have San Fernando declare for Páez, but Pérez replied that if a pronouncement was being planned he would assume the governorship, sick as he was, to impede such a move. Samuel believed that only Pérez had been willing to support the government despite the possible dangers to him if that side lost.¹

Muñoz's attitude in the letter to Samuel was certainly suspect. He may have been awaiting developments before he committed himself. It is also possible that there had been a plan to lure Páez to Apure by letting him believe that he might find some support there, or at least little opposition. Samuel hinted at the existence of some sort of plan when he wrote to R.Y. saying that he had left Lomas (?) on 15 December because he had thought that he could be of use to his country in Apure, and because he had believed that all had been agreed with Muñoz and Pérez.² Any plan that may have existed in Apure against the probable rebellion by Páez almost certainly would have been prepared long before as part of Monagas's effort to spread his influence while undermining Páez's.

In Caracas El Patriota published an extra issue purporting to reproduce a report it had received from El Centinela del Apure at San Fernando dated 11 February 1848. This report described how Calabozo had

¹ Luciano Samuel to Sr. R. [amón] Y. [épez], Lomas (?), 10 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fos. 103-4.

² Ibid.

asked Apure to join the revolt, but that Muñoz had received news of the actual events from the government. Knowing that congress supported Monagas and that Páez had been declared 'faccioso', Apure would defend the constitutional government. Muñoz already had 200 men prepared to defend Apure, in spite of his illness, and citizens were taking up arms to defend San Fernando from the Calabozo rebels. The report further claimed that the provincial officials, including Manuel María Betancourt, the jefe político and possibly temporary governor, were energetically preparing to defend Apure.¹

It seems that San Fernando did not have a newspaper until Betancourt brought a press in 1854,² therefore El Centinela possibly did not exist. The date, 11 February, does coincide with the time Samuel would have sent his report to Caracas in the name of the provincial authorities. Considering the psychological importance of Apure's support for the Monagas government El Patriota almost certainly exaggerated Samuel's and any other reports that may have come from there. It may well have been that Samuel pushed Apure into openly supporting the government by his 'official' reports. Even so, subsequent events suggest that at a personal level Páez had some reason to believe that he might expect some support from Muñoz.

A week later, on 19 February, men were called into service at Apurito by Muñoz. Two smithies had to be set up to make weapons for the troops since the town had very few. The forges were worked night and day to get those troops prepared to join Muñoz before Páez arrived.

¹ Alcanze a 'El Patriota' Número 88, 'El Centinela del Apure', San Fernando, 11 February 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.7.

² José López de Sagredo y Bru, Indice de Periódicos y Periodistas del Estado Zulia (1821-1948) (Maracaibo, 1948), p.10.

³ Socorro_moral to A.L. Guzmán, Achaguas, 15 Oct.1848, ADRRC, 11, fo.181. '... los Apureños no estábamos con la opinión de ése ambicioso [Páez] ...'

Except for some towns,¹ the provinces of the llanos and their popular leaders had remained loyal to the Monagas government. Many oligarchs felt that Páez had found such little support because half the nation was tricked by the appearance of legitimacy that the government kept up.² Shields felt that race played an important part in this support. He described Muñoz, Silva, Sotillo, and Jiménez as mulattos. Although white, Monagas was now at the head of the coloured population which Shields felt he controlled through these officers.³ Parra-Pérez feels that the class or racial struggle that existed could have reached the point where these leaders could no longer support Páez because he represented only the isolated oligarchs. Another reason Parra-Pérez mentions for not supporting Páez is the Venezuelan leaders' ability to 'face the sun that shines brightest'.⁴ However, one must remember that some of these leaders had supported Bolívar, while Muñoz had become the undisputed ruler of Apure. Whether out of revenge or to break from Páez's tutelage, ample motives existed for these men to turn against Páez when they saw his power weakened, and when Monagas could offer them so much more.⁵ Their support of Monagas symbolises the rise of military leaders in the government of the country, if not at the national level, at least at the regional.

News of the 24th reached Maracaibo by ship at noon on 31 January. Within an hour the whole city knew that congress had been murdered and

¹ To the West El Baul, Guadarrama, and Camaguan. Silva, Diario, pp.2, 5.

² Guirnalda Poética de Páez (Caracas, 1850), p.13.

³ Shields to Buchanan, Caracas, 56, 3 Apr.1848, USNA, Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Venezuela, 1835-1906, 5 (Film M-79, roll 6). Quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.140. Also Shields to Buchanan, 48, 29 Jan.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 4 (Film 79, 5).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Núñez agrees that the llaneros had old scores to settle with Páez, El 24 de Enero, p.57.

that their own Salas was dead. The crowds in the street yelled, 'muera y abajo el gobierno'. One source claimed that Governor José Aníceto Serrano could not decide what action to take so he called a meeting of the city's prominent men on 6 February, when about 400 citizens together with the authorities chose not to recognise Monagas's authority.¹

Parra-Pérez feels that Serrano, the provincial assembly, and comandante de armas Colonel José Escolástico Andrade were openly against Monagas from the 31st. These men had probably been in direct contact with Páez to combine their actions and timing.² Before learning of Páez's revolt the provincial assembly was calling on citizens to rally round him to save the nation. Far from being undecided Parra-Pérez shows that on 5 February Serrano called for the town meeting in terms that strongly condemned the central government. He explains that it was an open meeting of the town council, cabildo abierto, calling on all the 'padres de familia' to reach a momentous decision. The meeting found that the government had broken the law and that Monagas had revolted while in command, and therefore declared him a tyrant and a traitor. A junta of six men was formed which included Serrano, Andrade, and the commander of the port.³ The province prepared for war by raising troops and arming some ships.⁴

¹ Silvestre Sánchez, Geografía y Breve Historia de la Sección Zulia, Desde su Descubrimiento, 1499, hasta Nuestros Días (Caracas, 1883), pp.159-65. '... no había un maracaibero que no perteneciera á la revolucion oligarca.'

² Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.89-92.

³ Ibid. Also 'Maracaibo, Acta de pronunciamiento en esta ciudad, contra la dictadura impuesta por el General José Tadeo Monagas', 6 February 1848, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fos.61 ff. The procedure described by Parra-Pérez belies a later claim that in Zulia 'no tenemos ningunas costumbres políticas'. José María Rivas, Costumbres Zulianas (Maracaibo, 1883), p.41.

⁴ S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulia, p.160. See also José A. Serrano, Violencia Ejercida Por el Poder Ejecutivo de la República de Venezuela en 1848, Contra la Camara de Representantes. Proceder de Algunas Provincias para salvar las instituciones (Santo Domingo, 1878).

Other maracaiberos were able to deal the Monagas government a significant blow, one that changed the course of the revolt. Venezuela's best warship was the schooner 'Constitución', and its officers were all maracaiberos. It was sailing from Cumaná to La Guaira carrying \$7,500 pesos and 900 new guns when it called at Barcelona. Captain José Celis informed Commander Manuel Figuera, the administrator of the customs house, that he planned to rebel with his ship. Figuera boarded the schooner with the revenues of his customs house, \$14,052. On 14 February they rebelled against the government, signing an acta at sea that placed the ship and its cargo at Páez's service. They reached Maracaibo on 22 February where they were met with bells and music as befitted heroes.¹ The schooner's defection to the rebels would allow them to form a flotilla that would command the sea, thus keeping the revolution alive when it faltered on land.

Mérida rebelled on 18 February at its meeting of 'notables'. Led by Governor José Antonio Troconis and Bishop Juan Hilario Boset they called for a League of the West with Maracaibo and Trujillo to oppose the executive, proclaimed Páez as their chief, and appointed a revolutionary junta. In the Táchira section of the province of Mérida San Cristóbal urged the other cantons to follow Mérida's lead.²

Trujillo followed suit on 27 February, making the same resolutions for action. The next day General Cruz Carrillo took command of Trujillo's forces at Valera, appointing Codazzi commander of a column that had been sent by Maracaibo.³

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.92-3. González Guinán, Historia, iv. 518, 519. Figuera had been appointed governor of Barcelona in 1833. AGN, I y J-LXXVI, fo.149, LXXVII, fo.222, LXXXIII, fo.168, and 1834-XCVIII, fo.250.

² Parra-Pérez, ibid., pp.93-8. He shows that Boset was politically active as a Conservative, a friend of Angel Quintero who had been involved in ensuring that Mérida's congressmen in 1848 would support Páez's cause, pp.95-6. It seems that Colonel Blanco agreed to support the rebellion from La Grita, pp.97-8.

³ Ibid., pp.98-100.

At Coro General Antonio Valero, the comandante de armas, received the news of the 24th from his friends A.L. Guzmán and Doctor Echeandía, as well as from the executive.¹ By 5 February Valero reported that all was quiet and that the citizens supported the government. No one had received messages from the 'emigrants' at Curazao.² The general amnesty for offences since 1830 was proclaimed at a solemn function on 6 February that was attended by the most respectable citizens. The function then moved to Valero's home where enthusiastic toasts were made to Monagas, peace and order, and the fusion of the parties. A commission was formed to propose a base for the union of the parties, and then everyone went home satisfied.³ It seemed that Coro had only the rebels of Maracaibo to fear, and perhaps its own peninsula of Paraguaná.⁴

By 12 February Valero was asking for guns, ammunition, all sorts of supplies, and the necessary authority to take drastic steps for the defence of the province. He also sent commissioners to Caracas to inform on the state of Coro.⁵ There is no doubt that he was discovering that his province was not as safe as he had thought. By the 26th Valero could name those officers in his province whom he could not trust, describing them as flojos. He had arrested one conspirator and sent him to Caracas, and planned to post those officers away from each other to control them.⁶ Unfortunately for him,

¹ Valero to A.L. Guzmán, Coro, 1 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.371, and Castellanos, Páez, p.104.

² Manuel Romero to A.L. Guzmán, Coro, 5 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 49, fo.215.

³ Manuel Romero to A.L. Guzmán, Coro, 7 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 49, fo.217.

⁴ Valero to A.L. Guzmán, La Vela, 26 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.377f., and Castellanos, Páez, pp.105-7.

⁵ Valero to A.L. Guzmán, Coro, 12 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.373, and Castellanos, ibid.

⁶ Valero to A.L. Guzmán, La Vela, 26 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.377f., and Castellanos, ibid. Valero mentioned that Maracaibo was sure to invade Coro.

an expedition of 300 - 400 men led by General Piñango invaded from Maracaibo. On the 29th Valero had the news that Piñango had taken Casigua and was marching on Coro after one of Valero's flojo officers, Colonel Dolores Hernández, had turned traitor by handing the town to Piñango and joining the revolution. All Valero could do was to send 200 men out to oppose the rebels and inform the government.¹

Valero evacuated the city a week later. One source claims he thought that Piñango had over 2,000 troops.² On 8 March Valero informed Guzmán that Dutch subjects at Coro were supporting the rebels by presenting false bills of sale to prove that what had been the property of Venezuelans could not be confiscated because it belonged to them, foreigners who were immune to the exactions of war.³ That same day, Piñango caught up with him at Puerto Cumarebo. Valero retreated to Cumarebo where his troops apparently disintegrated under the rebels' charge. He later claimed that Colonel Alejandro Blanco switched sides in the battle. Valero's troops suffered three dead and many wounded while Piñango's had only four wounded. Valero then fled towards Puerto Cabello.⁴ The city of Coro held its meeting on 12 March. It declared itself for Páez, offering to co-operate with Maracaibo, Mérida, and Trujillo. The junta would be led by its designated governor, Colonel Dolores Hernández. The comandante de armas

¹ Valero to A.L. Guzmán, Coro, 29 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.381, and Castellanos, ibid., p.107. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.147-8. With Piñango were Colonel Torres, Figuera, and ex-secretary of the treasury Manrique.

² S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulia, p.160.

³ Valero to A.L. Guzmán, Cumarebo, 8 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.383, and Castellanos, Páez, p.108.

⁴ Piñango to Serrano, Cumarebo, 8 Mar.1848, in Boletín (Maracaibo), 8 (14 March 1848), quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.147-9. For Valero's accusation of Governor Colonel Blanco's treachery see Valero, 'Proclama', Sabanas Altas, 3 April 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.11.

would be Commander Segundo Primero, another of Valero's flojos, while Piñango would continue as chief of operations.¹

Cumaná received the news of the 24th by early February. Celis and his crew had probably heard it here before setting out to Barcelona and rebellion. On 6 February a broadsheet appeared exposing what had been the oligarchy's plan at Caracas. It claimed to reproduce some handbills that were said to have appeared in Caracas on the night of 21 January proclaiming Páez king of Venezuela, 'Viva José Antonio Primero', 'Rey de los Venezolanos', 'Mueran los Liberales'. The broadsheet ended with, 'God bless the Republic and its President'.² It seems doubtful that the oligarchs would have circulated such blatant handbills during the opening of congress. The Liberals are more likely candidates, if indeed the handbills ever did appear.

Under its comandante de armas, General Carabaño, Cumaná seems to have remained calm except for the Paria peninsula. Commander Joaquín Peña led the rebellion there while maintaining contact with Commander Francisco Antonio Carrera who, as Páez's friend for over 20 years, was openly helping the revolt from Trinidad. It was probably Carabaño who appointed Commander José Nicolás Brito chief of operations for Carúpano, Rio Caribe, and Guiria. Brito left Carúpano to take control of Paria on 20 March.³

During February the executive continued to take measures to consolidate its power. It began filling the posts vacated by fleeing godos with its own supporters.⁴ Among these José Tomás Machado replaced Colonel Pedro Muguerza as governor of Guayana. Machado and fourteen relatives would

¹ 'Pronunciamiento de Coro', Coro, 12 Mar.1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.5. Blanco attended and supported the meeting as one of the citizens.

² A.L. de G., Nuevo Rey, Cumaná, 6 Feb.1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.6.

³ B. Tavera-Acosta, Historia de Carúpano (3rd edn., Min.de Educ., Colección Vigilia, 19, 1969), p.291.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.529.

later be denounced for monopolising the provincial government. Muguerza would eventually join the rebel 'constitutional' forces at Coro.¹ The rebel schooner was declared a pirate, and as such could be captured by any nation.² A law was passed on 11 February dividing the vast province of Caracas into three more manageable provinces. De la Plaza would remain at Caracas while Felipe Bigotte was appointed temporarily for Aragua with the capital at La Victoria. Blas Bruzual would get to Calabozo as soon as possible to govern Guárico province with Manuel María Echeandía empowered to substitute for him.³ Bigotte was at La Victoria by 28 February when he issued a proclamation in which he asked the citizenry to tell him if he every carried out his duties incorrectly.⁴ At Valencia General Justo Briceño replaced Castelli who joined Mariño at Villa de Cura as his chief of staff. Past governor Izquierdo was jailed at San Joaquín.⁵

The Liberals expected Guzmán to return from Curazao to lead the party and join the government. With his influence more Liberals could be expected to fill administrative posts thus further influencing policy. It is

¹ For Machado's appointment see AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fo.85, and CCCLXXXV, fo.371. For Muguerza see AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVIII, fo.301; at Coro see Castellanos, Páez, p.110. For Machado's denouncement see illegible to A.L. Guzmán, Ciudad Bolívar, 10 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 23, fo.361, and annexed list of officials, fo.367.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.529. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.108-9.

³ Law of 11 February 1848, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fo.138. Manuel Landaeta Rosales, Maracay (1697 a 1915) (Caracas, 1916), pp.36-8. Bigotte's appointment, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXII, fo.85. Bruzual's appointment, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fo.495. González Guinán, ibid.

⁴ 'Felipe Bigotte, Gobernador Interino de la Provincia de Aragua. A Sus Habitantes', Victoria, 28 Feb.1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.9.

⁵ 'Justo Briceño General de la República, Gobernador Interino de Carabobo', Valencia, 16 Feb.1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.8. González Guinán, Historia, iv.529.

commonly believed that Guzmán returned soon after the amnesty was published, but I have found no evidence to support this. Instead, his son Antonio sailed to Curazao on 28 or 29 January.¹ I have shown that Guzmán was informing Valero at Coro of the state of the country from about that time. Perhaps his son had brought a message from Monagas requesting that he gather information on the emigrants at Curazao and pass it on to the neighbouring provinces and Caracas. His Liberal friends continued to expect his return, and by mid-February were worried enough to plead with him. In a group letter to him on 15 February they explained the harm he was causing Venezuela and their cause by staying away. Rumours were circulating that he would not return because he feared Páez's strength, that he did not trust Monagas, that he was indifferent to the opportunity for Liberal ascendancy. The oligarchs were interpreting his lateness as a sign of his belief that Páez would defeat Monagas and the Liberals. They were also claiming that he did not approve of the pueblo's acts of the 24th, nor of the validity of the amnesty. The government was said to interpret his refusal to return as hostility towards it that would influence others. Bruzual added that he was ashamed because Guzmán was not brave enough to return now that he had been avenged.²

The group letter also pleaded with Guzmán to forget about the consulate at Curazao. Perhaps he was proposing, or Monagas was offering, that he be appointed Venezuela's consular agent there. During those days Monagas asked a friend of Guzmán's who had just arrived from Curazao, 'Delvalle, where is Guzmán? I need him.'³ Even so Monagas may have

¹ González Guinán, *ibid.*, iv.490.
See p.195, fn.4 this chapter. Antonio was already being called 'Bolivita' because his father was known as 'El Segundo Bolívar'.

² Manuel de Larrazábal to A.L. Guzmán, Caracas, 15 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 48, fo.109.

³ J. Delvalle to A.L. Guzmán, Caracas, 16 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.191.
'Delvalle donde está Guzmán [?] lo necesito.'

wanted to offer Guzmán the consulate to keep him from interfering with the government's main concern, controlling the country militarily. The appointment was made on 15 February.¹

The consulate was a great incentive to stay away from Venezuela. The general business of the post could be profitable: for instance, fees could be charged for the required visit to a Venezuelan vessel - \$6 if it weighed over 100 tons, \$2 pesos if 50 to 100 tons, though nothing if less than 50 tons.² This post would become more lucrative because the supplies needed by the government for its campaigns would be acquired there. The agency would also be in the difficult position of competing with the paecistas for the same supplies, thus forcing up prices, and the larger the amount spent, the larger the commission. By 26 February Guzmán was asking Valero to send \$500 from the La Vela customs house, presumably to finance the government's purchases.³ Guzmán received an interesting letter from a friend reminding him of their discussion on how to run the consulate. Guzmán was to let a merchant friend of his take care of the agency's business while Guzmán himself received its income on the understanding that the merchant would be the acting-consul when Guzmán was away from Curazao. Also, Guzmán was to write to Caracas only reports of consular business.⁴ Presumably, he would have plenty of other business to attend to at Curazao.

¹ A.L. Guzmán to Treasury secretary, Caracas, 15 Dec.1849. Memorandum of his work as Venezuela's agent at Curazao, ADRRC, 5, fo.511, and Castellanos, Páez, pp.215-26.

² 'Decreto Legislativo de 5 de Mayo de 1847', Archivo del Congreso, Actos Legislativos - Cámara de Representantes, 202, fo.313.

³ Valero to Guzmán, La Vela, 26 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.377.

⁴ The merchant was Jacobo Abraham Jesurún, a naturalised Venezuelan who may have been Guzmán's partner in some dealings. The reminder is from a Liberal priest and freemason Manuel Romero to A.L. Guzmán, Aruba, 26 Feb. 1848, ADRRC, 49, fos.223-4.

Guzmán did come to Caracas on 12 April when a friend wrote a note of welcome.¹

Having Guzmán as consul benefited both him and Monagas. If he had had his doubts about risking all by joining Monagas, the post gave Guzmán a lucrative reason to stay away. If he wanted to damage the paecistas' cause he could spy on them and interfere with their business activities. It is even possible that he could have worked against Monagas had he ever chosen to do so. Monagas could claim that Guzmán supported his administration, thus keeping the Liberals with him, but their leader away. Monagas could point to the importance of the post to give an impression of total trust in Guzmán, therefore appearing to maintain Guzmán's prestige. In truth, Monagas probably kept spies on Guzmán and was able to place his own men in key posts while decreasing the influence of the Liberals by keeping their leader away.

The government continued its efforts to maintain its popular support and put down the opposition. Sanabria's annual address to congress called for the reform of the law of 10 April 1834 on the freedom of contracts to give more protection to the debtor. It also stated that the most solid wealth of the State was the private ownership of land, implying that land-owners should be protected.² As congressmen continued to disappear it was difficult to keep a quorum. Those missing were ordered arrested for failure to do their duty.³ President of the House Palacio was arrested attempting

¹ Pedro Moratto to Guzmán, Caracas, 12 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fo. 408.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv. 492.

³ Among these Senator F.A. Correa and Representatives Pedro José Rojas, Fermín García and Pedro J. Arellano. AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXII, fos. 175, 183, and CCCLXVIII, fos. 104, 111.

to leave for La Guaira. It seems that from 18 February the House could not reach a quorum.¹ On 22 February Fermín Toro took refuge at the French legation for fear of being dragged to congress.² The government had to take the university's funds to aid the treasury. A forced loan of \$150,000 was decreed for Caracas and whoever failed to meet his quota was considered a conspirator,³ a powerful means of forcing the unco-operative to comply. The mail service served only the government⁴ so that Caracas only received 'official' news. The Swedish Consul Adlercreutz reported that the masses supported the executive.⁵

The executive needed to reassure the foreign representatives at Caracas if its legitimacy was to continue to be recognised by other countries. We have seen how it took special pains to protect foreigners and their property, allowing a wide interpretation of diplomatic immunity, and how it allowed foreign citizens to leave the country. At a time when Venezuelans were not allowed to emigrate, David was able to obtain passports for Páez's family. On 3 February he escorted them to La Guaira and onto their ship. He was happy to announce that he had been able to keep his promise to Páez.

Sensing partisanship in Muñoz's reports the Spanish government ordered him to express its appreciation to Venezuela for the measures that had been

¹ Shields to Buchanan, 52, 29 Feb.1848, Desps.U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6).

² David to French foreign secretary, 9 Mar.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.95 ff.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.138. David to French foreign secretary, 19 Feb.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fo.64, and 9 Mar.1848, ibid.

⁴ Shields to Buchanan, 52, 29 Feb.1848, Desps.U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6).

⁵ Adlercreutz to Baron of Ihre, Swedish foreign secretary, Caracas, 20 Mar.1848, in C. Parra-Pérez, ed., La Cartera del Coronel Conde de Adlercreutz (Paris, 1928), p.223.

⁶ David to French foreign secretary, 2 and 5 Feb.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.34-5, 44-5.

taken to protect the inviolability of diplomatic agents and their houses. Muñoz was told to observe the most impartial conduct so as not to arouse the least suspicion of having any preference.¹

British interests received more attention from the government. On 18 February Wilson reported that Britons and other foreigners were declared to be exempt from forced loans and other exactions of war including having to turn over to the authorities any firearms they possessed.² On 17 February Monagas ordered the trial of the suspects in Williams's murder at Ciudad Bolívar because he felt that the court of first instance had been deficient in its endeavours to solve the crime as he had ordered before.³ On 29 February Wilson was happy to report that Mapy had been awarded £500 sterling compensation by the Venezuelan treasury, and that Wilson was acting in 'friendly concert with them' (Monagas and Acevedo) to settle the claims.⁴ Months later Riddel would report that Mapy had died at Guiria on 4 February leaving a widow and five children. His death had probably been related to his ill treatment in jail. The heirs received the money from the Colonial Bank in Caracas on 5 August, and it was used to send two of the children to England to be educated.⁵

There is no doubt that Wilson's special relationship with the executive influenced the settlement of British claims, but it was not the only factor involved. By a fortunate circumstance, Palmerston had ordered

¹ Spanish foreign secretary to Muñoz, Madrid, 22 Apr.1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fo.11.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 18 Feb.1848, F.O.80/54, fo.245 ff.

³ Acevedo to Secretary of Interior and Justice, 17 Feb.1848, in F.O.80/54, fos. 267 ff.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 29 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/54, fos.279 ff.

⁵ Riddel to Palmerston, Caracas, 16 Aug.1848, F.O.80/57, fos.178 ff.

some warships to La Guaira in mid-January to help Wilson convince the Venezuelan government in settling the Williams and Mapy cases.¹ In late January Wilson had written directly to Sir Francis Austen, commander-in-chief of the Navy's West India station, to ask that a vessel, preferably a steamer, be sent to La Guaira to support the legation since a civil war seemed imminent.² One British warship had already arrived at La Guaira when Sir Francis reached there on 22 February to make a friendly call with two more warships and two daughters. After he visited Caracas and the claims were settled, he returned to La Guaira on 25 February and set sail.³

H.M.S. 'Trincomalee' was sent to Puerto Cabello while the steamer 'Vesuvius' remained at La Guaira. The Venezuelan government asked that the 'Vesuvius' take a representative to Barcelona with orders to hurry the Williams trial at Ciudad Bolívar, and that the new superior court judge at Cumaná be given passage to that city. Wilson wanted the 'Vesuvius' to go as far as Guiria to reassure that area and deliver Mapy's compensation money. That a British warship should call at foreign ports carrying representatives, judges, and funds that could easily be sent on a Venezuelan ship might have created the impression that Britain supported the Monagas government during the rebellion, thus breaking its policy of neutrality. Sir Francis may have avoided the difficult situation by sending 'Vesuvius' west rather than east for it went to the rescue of the French warship 'Boussole' that was wrecked off Little Curacao on 3 March. After calling at Curazao where Guzmán

¹ Palmerston to Wilson, London, 15 Jan. 1848, F.O. 80/53, fos. 9 ff.

² Wilson to Vice-Admiral Sir Francis Austen, 27 Jan. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fos. 139-40.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 29 Feb. 1848, F.O. 80/54, fos. 291 ff., and 1 Mar. 1848, F.O. 80/55, fos. 1 ff.

attempted without success to get passage for Venezuela on the 'Vesuvius', obviously in an effort to make his return the more eventful, the 'Trincomalee' and the 'Vesuvius' would return to Venezuelan waters until 5 April when they left La Guaira for Antigua.¹

One incident illustrates the disorganised structure of the militia that guarded the road to La Guaira. Wilson had got the government to grant the visiting British naval officers free movement to Caracas by exempting them from carrying the passports necessary for use of the road. While returning to the port, Sir Francis and his daughters were stopped by the guard at Maiquetía, who refused to let them pass despite the assurances of the Venezuelan naval officer escorting Sir Francis. When they were later allowed to go they were followed by two soldiers as if they were considered suspicious. Once at La Guaira Sir Francis was summoned to the office of the jefe político, Juan Manuel Alas, only to find no one there to receive him. It seems that the summons had not been issued by Alas who apologised 'spontaneously' to Sir Francis when he heard of the incident. Wilson called on Monagas who in turn sent his apologies for the disrespect shown and ordered Alas, the port captain, and the commander of the Maiquetía guard to board H.M.S. 'Vindictive' to apologise to the Admiral, which they did. Wilson explained that the incident was due to the ignorance or the over-zeal of lower officers, but that he could not have allowed it to go unnoticed for the bad moral effect that would have resulted.² One can

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, Caracas, 1 Mar.1848, F.O. 80/55, fos. 1 ff.; 20 Mar.1848, F.O. 80/55, fo.79. Wilson to Austen, Caracas, 24 Feb.1848, F.O. 80/55, fos.21 ff. Captain Richard L. Warren to Wilson, H.M.S. 'Trincomalee' at La Guayra, 5 Apr.1848, F.O. 80/56, fo.14. Commander of the 'Vesuvius' to The Venezuelan Consul at Curazao, Curazao, 14 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 14, fos.27-8.

² Ibid.

imagine Monagas's mortification at the disrespect and confusion of an incident that could only discredit the government, especially so soon after having met the Admiral himself.¹ Despite this embarrassing incident Palmerston expressed his satisfaction at the settlement of all small British claims with Venezuela.²

Another incident that shows the executive's attempt to appease the diplomatic representatives occurred after Monagas had left Caracas to lead the army. Because of the constant violations of neutrality by foreigners, including some diplomats, an old law that allowed the examination of mail was revived on 4 or 6 March. On the 8th all letters being sent to certain ports were opened and read, among them one being sent by the United States consul at La Guaira containing a despatch from Shields which was not opened. Six diplomatic agents sent a joint note to the government protesting against this violation of diplomatic immunity, and the regulation was withdrawn.³

While Monagas was establishing firm control over the capital and the government's officials, Mariño was busy at Villa de Cura preparing his campaign against Páez. Mariño is supposed to have had 4,600 men at Cura,

¹ ... el Presidente de la República 'no ha podido menos que sentir suma pena al ver que de una manera tan irregular se estén promoviendo disgustos a la Republica y desacreditando la administración.' Acevedo to Jefe Político de La Guayra, 26 Feb.1848, in F.O. 80/54, fo.302.

² Palmerston to Wilson, London, 27 Apr.1848, F.O. 80/53, fo.35.

³ Shields to Buchanan, 54, 20 Mar.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins.Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6). William Henry Gray, The Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Venezuela, 1830-1864 (University of Chicago Ph.D. thesis 1937), pp.227-8. Frankel, Venezuela - Estados Unidos, pp.81-2. Wilson to Palmerston, 30 Mar.1848, F.O. 80/55, fos. 89 ff. Colombian law of 3 August 1824. A more complete description of the incident follows, p.234.

mostly militia volunteers who were ordered to march against Páez's rumoured forces of 4,000 on 11 February.¹ Silva's division of 1,300 men operated to the West at El Pao. Silva's diary shows that most of his squadrons from different towns were not assembled until late February, and that he spent most of that month trying to find supplies, especially horses, because Páez had already picked the area clean. The few troops he did have were kept busy restoring order at El Baul and Guadarrama, and patrolling the Chirgua river to spy on rebel activity near Calabozo.² On 21 February, after hearing that Páez had evacuated El Rastro, Silva complained to Mariño that if he had had a larger force and the necessary orders to act he could have proceeded down the Portuguesa river to San Fernando de Apure thus cutting off Páez's retreat. Mariño had ordered Silva to Tiznados to meet him at El Rastro or Calabozo, probably wanting to muster all his forces in the event that Páez did have 4,000 men. Mariño had to scold Silva accusing him of disobedience, disrespect, and negligence, and Silva complained directly to Caracas.³

Although the government was combining its operations against the paecistas no one has been able to establish those combinations. José Gregorio Monagas's movements have not been considered. It seems that he moved quickly across the llanos with 2,000 men to face Páez at Calabozo. He was supposed to be

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.528. David to French foreign secretary, 14 Feb.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fo.52.

² Silva, Diario, pp.1-13.

³ Ibid., pp.53-8. See document no.1 for Silva's orders to Tiznados received 15 February and his decision not to comply. See document no.2 for news of Páez's retreat (also p.9) and for Silva's wish to cut him off. See document no.3 for Silva's complaint to Caracas that Mariño 'me acusa de inobediente, falta de respeto y delicadeza, ofreciendo dar parte al Gobierno por la negligencia ó poca cooperacion mia por reunirme al Cuartel Jeneral ...' (see also p.12).

at Valle de la Pascua on 12 February.¹ News of his arrival at El Calvario, between Las Mercedes and Calabozo, reached La Guaira on 21 February.² If Gregorio was able to move this quickly he was able to cut off Zamora, at Orituco with 1,000 men, from Páez. With Cármona's 1,500 men reaching San Rafael de Orituco on 25 February, with Juan Bautista Echeandía covering Barlovento and access to the coast, and with General Parejo's column of 600 marching north to Orituco as Gregorio had ordered, Zamora was surrounded.³ Shields explained that lacking weapons and ammunition and surrounded by two armies, Zamora had then accepted the pardon he was offered.⁴ When he surrendered on 10 March he presented only 500 men.⁵

The situation at Calabozo must have seemed hopeless. After spending fifteen days at El Rastro with 50 men, Páez left it on 15 February with 200 men reaching San Fernando on the 20th.⁶ By the 25th Mariño had advanced to Ortiz where deserters from Páez's troops presented themselves to be pardoned.⁷ It seems Mariño pacified the llanos with the pardon. Soublette evacuated Calabozo on the 23rd with 100 men and waited, perhaps for Zamora, until the 28th at a place just south of the town.⁸ With the approach of Monagas, Mariño, and Silva, Soublette was forced to retreat to San Fernando.

¹ Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 15 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.317-18.

² Diego Antonio Cabellero to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 21 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 11, fo.173. González Guinán writes that Gregorio was only at Chaguaramas on 1 March. Even so he was between Zamora and Páez; Historia, iv.530.

³ González Guinán, ibid., p.528. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.108, 112. Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 15 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.317-18.

⁴ Shields to Buchanan, 56, 3 Apr.1848, Desps.U.S. Mins.Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6), and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.112.

⁵ Parra-Pérez, ibid. González Guinán, Historia, iv.533.

⁶ Páez, Manifiesto, St.Thomas, 1 August 1848, p.8.

⁷ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.110-11.

⁸ Official Report of Chief of Staff Castelli, Calabozo, 1 March 1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.111-12.

Despite rumours of Páez's 4,000 troops Mariño may have known better the true state of the rebel forces. One report calculated that Páez had very few men by counting the number of cattle killed daily to feed the troops. At El Rastro Páez was reported to be killing just two head a day which meant that he had, at most, 200 men there.¹ By Páez's own account, he left El Rastro with 200 men.²

Parra-Pérez gives us a hint of Mariño's intentions towards Páez. The two carried on an exchange of notes earlier than 12 February in which Mariño tried to dissuade Páez from making war. One of Páez's nephews, Rafael Lugo, was a go-between. No one has established which side opened the negotiations, but Páez sent Lugo back to Mariño. Mariño met with Lugo openly which disturbed the Liberals of the expedition, especially Blas Bruzual who reported the affair as though Páez were attempting to win over Mariño.³ Lugo heard Mariño call the politicians around him locos who gave him more work than the enemy.⁴ Lugo then fled during the night because he feared the suspicions of those Liberals.⁵ No more notes were exchanged. Mariño may have wanted to persuade Páez to negotiate a surrender by overwhelming him with numbers of soldiers rather than with a battle and outright defeat. He may well have wanted to avoid bloodshed and save Páez from a disgraceful campaign for which he had raised only 300 or 400 men. Alternatively, Mariño may have planned to sweep Páez into Apure and New Granada, feeling that his expulsion was punishment enough. Either way, Mariño seems to have been eager to reach a settlement by peaceful means.

¹ Goiticoa to A.L. Guzmán, La Guayra, 15 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.317-18.

² Páez, Manifiesto, St.Thomas, 1 Aug.1848, p.8.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.109-10, 117.

⁴ '... que eran unos locos y que le daban más que hacer que la gente de acá.' Miguel Mujica to Páez, San Fernando, 2 Mar.1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.117-18.

⁵ Ibid., iii.119-21.

At the same time, Mariño also had trouble with Bruzual over the question of who held the supreme authority in the province. Governor Bruzual, a civilian, denied Mariño that power claiming that to acknowledge it would strengthen the enemy's accusation that the government meant to establish the rule of militarism. Perhaps as a result of this incident, Bruzual was replaced by Commander Rafael Carabaño on 9 April.¹

Perhaps as a result of Silva's complaint, Bruzual's non-co-operation, and Mariño's slow advance and suspected negotiations, Monagas handed the executive power to Urbaneja on 1 March and went to take personal command of the campaign, reaching Calabozo on 8 March.² Mariño reached Calabozo on 1 March where he met Silva the next day. On the 4th the army was reorganised. Ezequiel Zamora's infantry column was attached to Julián Castro's brigade, belonging to Silva's division. This division would sweep down the Tiznados river and across Barinas to enter Apure at Apurito with the intention of joining Muñoz west of Achaguas. Silva did not reach Apurito until 15 March. Castelli would lead the other division with Sotillo commanding the cavalry and Colonel Juan José Conde the infantry. Castelli would march on San Fernando hoping to take it by 10 March.³ Castelli and Silva left Calabozo on the 4th and 5th. Also, Governor Pérez was expected to be bringing troops from Guayana to Apure. When Monagas reached Mariño they obviously felt that enough troops were after Páez so they concentrated on planning the campaign against Maracaibo and the West.⁴ Monagas discharged some troops

¹ Ibid., iii.113-17.

² 'José Tadeo Monagas, Presidente de la Republica,' Caracas, 1 March 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.4. González Guinán, Historia, iv.530.

³ González Guinán, ibid., iv.529. Silva, Diario, pp.13-21, and pp.58-9 for the general order of 4 March re-organising the expedition. Parra-Pérez. Guerras Civiles, iii.125.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.530. Rafael Acevedo to A.L. Guzmán, Caracas, 16 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 22, fols.333 ff. Some intercepted messages revealing a rebel plan to invade Barquisimeto probably drew attention to the western campaign.

since they were no longer necessary. Mariño left on 13 March via San Carlos to prepare the western campaign. A few days later Monagas left Gregorio at Calabozo in charge of completing the pacification of the llanos and went to join Mariño.¹

In Apure Muñoz evacuated all the fighting men, horses and weapons from San Fernando. Páez arrived there on 20 February where he claimed that the apureños had flocked to him despite Muñoz's brutal efforts to force them to defend the government.² Soublette reached San Fernando on 3 March to find only 71 men there. Páez had taken about 400 men towards Achaguas in search of Muñoz.³

Some of the rumours at San Fernando give an idea of the campaign the paecistas had planned. The rebel officers expected the invasion force at Coro to be joining Codazzi's troops from Barinas at San Carlos to march south, thus catching the government's forces from behind. Piñango was supposed to be at Puerto Cabello. The forces at Orituco would also be marching south. It was even said that some of the government's infantry would be coming over to them with Mariño. Finally, Muñoz was near El Yagual with 600 men, but was supposed to be suffering many desertions because they had been forcibly pressed into service.⁴

¹ González Guinán, ibid., and p.533. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.126.

² Páez, Manifiesto, 1 August 1848, pp.8-9. González Guinán, Historia, iv.529.

³ González Guinán, ibid., and p.522. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.128-9, 130.

⁴ Questioning of Víctor Sosa by Bruzual at Calabozo, 11 March 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., p.128. Also intercepted messages from General Carrillo to Páez mentioned by Rafael Acevedo to A.L. Guzmán, Caracas, 16 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.333ff.

Páez found Muñoz on 10 March near Cambero, south-west of Achaguas, and tried to have a meeting with him. Envoys seem to have gone back and forth between the generals, but in the end Muñoz refused to meet Páez, promising only that if Páez retreated he would not be attacked from behind. It seems Muñoz was giving Páez the option of fighting or retreating to New Granada. After some manoeuvres the forces met at La Mata de los Araguatos where Páez was defeated by around mid-day, losing even his personal files. Muñoz does not seem to have pursued his defeated enemy for as Páez escaped to the border, Muñoz returned to Achaguas.¹

Soublette and 100 men crossed the Arauca river into New Granada at the Paso del Viento, near present-day Elorza, at noon on 16 March. Páez crossed the Arauca four hours later with only twelve men. Muñoz and Silva met on the 18th and joined troops to march to the border and Guasdualito where some rebels were reported. Silva intended to sweep along the border to San Cristóbal to pacify the Andes and to stop Páez from attempting to enter from Cúcuta to get to Maracaibo across the lake. Instead, Monagas ordered Silva to Trujillo and Mérida by way of Barinas. It seems Pulido feared an invasion from the rebels in the Andes. By the time Silva reached Barinas on 2 April other forces had pacified the Andes. Even so, Silva probably would not have been able to enter the Andes because his men lacked the supplies, mules, and clothing for the cold climate.² Silva led his men to Guanare, Araure, San Carlos, and Valencia where he dismissed them on 27 May.³

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.130-1. González Guinán, Historia, iv. 530-2. Páez, Manifiesto, 1 Aug.1848, pp.14-16. In their unwillingness to accept that Páez could have been defeated some oligarchs seem to have believed that he was only beaten by the treachery of some of his men. See Shields to Buchanan, 56, 3 Apr.1848.Desps.U.S.Mins.Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6), and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., pp.132-3. Páez's defeat at Los Araguatos, AGN, I y J 1848-CCCLXIX, fos.296 ff.

² Silva, Diario, pp.22-30.

³ Ibid., pp.37-49, 79-81.

Muñoz finished pacifying Apure. On 27 March Monagas at San Carlos asked the senate to raise Muñoz to divisional general.¹ On 11 April Monagas, now at Carora, wrote Urbaneja and the cabinet to get congress to declare Páez expelled from Venezuela in peripetuity, reasoning that peace would never be achieved if Páez were able to return.² With this decree, Páez would receive the death penalty if he were ever captured in Venezuela. Congress does not seem to have expelled Páez, an action which could be considered unconstitutional. No Venezuelan could suffer punishment without first standing trial before his natural judges, in this case the courts.³

As they moved west, Mariño and Monagas were busy co-ordinating the movements of different armies. Valero was ordered to take Colonel Trinidad Portocarrero's troops and to march on Coro. Piñango, at Taratara, refused to meet with Valero and was caught in an ambush and badly beaten by Valero's overwhelming forces on 6 April.⁴ The rebel navy was able to evacuate some of the rebel troops at La Vela, while Dolores Hernández and about 100 men escaped to Maracaibo by land. Up to 400 men were supposed to have been

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.131. Muñoz's message to congress regarding Páez's defeat, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXI, fos.32 ff. Congress' vote of thanks to Muñoz, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXIII, fos.155 ff. Documents on Muñoz's promotion reproduced in Acevedo, Apuntes, Apéndice, pp.57-64.

² Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.133-4.

³ Consider the following articles of the constitution: 67, 68, 69, 87, 118, 119, 195 and 196. See also the interior secretary's opinion against the proposed expulsion of V. Espinal at this time. The person had to have been convicted by the courts. BAGN, XXXIV (Mar.- Apr.1946), Monagas to interior secretary, 31 May 1848, and secretary's opinion, 28 June 1848, pp.51-4. Reprinted from AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXVI, fos.297 ff.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.535-7. Gil Fortoul, Historia, iii.6. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.150-1, says the battle took place 5 April. Valero, 'Proclama', Sabanas Altas, 3 Apr.1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.11. Félix Vidal to A.L. Guzmán, Curacao, 10 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.193 ff.

killed or drowned. Piñango was wounded and taken prisoner to Coro where he died from a gangrened bullet wound in his left thigh. By the 17th he had been buried at the chapel of San Nicolás in Coro. Páez claimed that his death had been hastened by the barbarous treatment his captors had given him.¹

To the south Jiménez had raised 1,000 men at Quíbor, leaving Planas at Barquisimeto as secretario de gobierno.² On 14 March, Doctor Páez was preparing the rebels of Trujillo to advance into Barquisimeto to meet Piñango who would be marching from Coro.³ Instead, Jiménez moved south and beat Codazzi in Trujillo at the end of March. Pulido occupied Boconó on 25 March while some other towns rose in support of the government. Codazzi fled across the lake to Maracaibo while Jiménez marched on to Mérida and the border with New Granada. 300 men from Barinas led by Commander José de la Encarnación Morales also moved on Mérida and joined Jiménez. The combined forces occupied Mérida on 10 April. Morales was appointed Governor of Mérida to complete its pacification.⁴

¹ Mariño to Monagas, Araguatos, 10 Apr. 1848, quoted by Parra-Pérez, ibid. S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulía, p.161. Páez, Manifiesto, 1 August 1848, p.19. Vidal to Guzmán, 10 Apr. 1848, ibid. F.S.(?) Lucena to Guzmán, Pedregal, 17 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 32, fos.297-8. Gangrene can develop slowly or rapidly. Gas gangrene can kill a wounded man in 3-4 days, and even within 48 hours.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.528. Iribarren-Celis, Rev.1854, p.128.

³ Manuel A. Páez to Capitán José Manuel Niño, Trujillo, 14 Mar. 1848, ADRRC, 45, fos.231-3.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.534, 538. Silva, Diario, pp.29-30. Jiménez decreed pardons along the way, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXII, fo.260; CCCLXXIV, fo.301. His general pardon for Trujillo and Mérida on 20 May 1848 from San Antonio del Táchira in ADRRC, 43, fos.113-14. Morales's appointment, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXI, fo. 275. Dr Agustín Agüero appointed Governor of Trujillo, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXI, fo.306. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.151.

Monagas reached Puertos de Altagracia, opposite Maracaibo, on 25 April, and sent Mariño to Casigua to prepare to invade the Guajira by sea and march south to Maracaibo if need be. As the different government armies arrived at Altagracia to begin the siege of the port, Monagas invited the rebels to propose a settlement for peace. Serrano and the junta sent José de Jesús Villasmil to negotiate with Monagas who agreed to respect the lives and property of the rebels including the officers and crew of the 'Constitución', but excluding about twenty people who could be jailed or exiled as the President saw fit. Villasmil rejected the exception, and Serrano declared the end of negotiations on 8 May.¹ One factor that may have influenced Serrano's decision was the arrival from Cúcuta of about 60 men led by Colonel Antonio Belisario who had followed Páez through New Granada. Although the sequence of events is unclear it seems that these rebels were in Venezuela by 4 May so that even if they had not reached Maracaibo before the 8th, news of their impending arrival would have raised rebel morale at the port considerably.² Páez could be expected to follow soon. It seems that Páez was prepared to make his way to Maracaibo, but he may have been awaiting events. In the meantime, the government of New Granada received Venezuela's request that Páez be interned there and not allowed to enter Venezuela. On 15 May New Granada forbade Páez and his supporters to leave the country, mentioning Páez's plan to do so by embarking at Salado, near Ocaña, to go down the Pilar and Catatumbo rivers to the lake and on to Maracaibo.³ By the time Páez received this

¹ Parra-Pérez, ibid., 152-6. González Guinán, Historia, iv.546-8. S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulia, pp.161-2.

² S. Sánchez, ibid. Justo Arosemena to Acevedo, Bogotá, 27 Nov.1848, in Carlos L. Castelli, Mision del Jeneral Castelli a Bogota. Documentos Referentes a Quejas del Gobierno Venezolano al Gobierno Granadino (Bogotá, 1855), Nota Número III, p.86.

³ Arosemena to Acevedo, ibid.

order he knew that Maracaibo was under siege, and that it was not practical for him to expose himself both to the dangers of the siege and to the displeasure of the New Granadan government.

Before Monagas's arrival at Altagracia the rebels at Maracaibo had decided to ask the United States to intervene in the struggle encouraged by some anti-Monagas articles that had appeared in the New York Herald. On 29 April, Manrique wrote to Shields from Curazao asking for his mediation. On 20 May, Toro also asked Shields for the mediation of the United States. Shields forwarded these requests to Buchanan adding that friendly intervention or mediation by the United States would probably bring peace to the country, therefore saving it from a possible future intervention by Great Britain. It seems that Shields also sent his personal recommendation to Manrique who was on his way to Washington for the rebels.¹ However, Washington chose to follow its policy of neutrality.

With the end of the negotiations the executive declared the blockade of Maracaibo on 11 May. Any merchant ships trying to run the blockade would be captured and tried according to international law, while friendly or neutral warships would be allowed access to the port.² Monagas ordered Mariño to the Guajira. The expedition of roughly 3,500 troops was transported across the Gulf of Venezuela to Tucacas, five miles north of Castilletes in the Guajira, in two halves.³ The first half, which was led by Castelli and

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.161-73. Frankel, Venezuela - Estados Unidos, pp.82-3.

² Urbaneja's decree of 11 May 1848 in Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, 60, 21 May 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.41 f.

³ This description of the campaign taken from Lieutenant Carlos Ferrero's description; Mejía's Memoria, 1849; Castelli to Monagas, Agua Dulce, 28 May 1848; Mariño's report, Maracaibo, 31 May 1848; all quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.206-15. Also S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulía, pp.162-3, and Un Espectador, 'Breve Descripción de la Campaña del Ejército Liberal por la Goajira, i de las Circunstancias mas Notables Ocurridas en ella', Maracaibo, 10 June 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.20.

was accompanied by Mariño and the general staff, embarked at Capana on 9 May and disembarked the next day. The second half landed at Tucacas on the morning of the 11th led by Colonel Estanislao Castañeda. Mariño then marched down the coast of the Guajira to Sinamaica, where he found nothing to feed his army. It seems the Indians had hidden their cattle from the army and salted the wells. On the 17th Bartolo Silva and Commander Guillermo Corser brought 150 head of cattle to Sinamaica to feed the troops, who had not received rations for two days. Silva also acted as go-between to convince the rebel garrison at the crossing of the Limón and Socuy rivers to join the government. That day, Mariño sent Commander Aguado to the Limón river-crossing of Guerrero to draw the attention of the enemy by making it believe that the army intended to cross there. Aguado remained there for three days under fire from the rebel flotilla. On the 18th, Castelli cut to the right through the swamp to the Limón-Socuy crossing which he took, but was isolated for three days by the flood of the rising rivers.¹ Learning that Castelli was at the crossing, the rebels knew that the army had broken through the natural barrier of the floodlands of the Limón and they began to evacuate Maracaibo on the 23rd.² The rebels, led by Serrano, loaded their families and war supplies onto the rebel fleet. Some government guerrilla parties were sent

¹ Castelli knew the area very well. He had been commander of the fort of San Carlos during 1825-7, at least. See letters Urdaneta to Lieutenant Colonel Castelli listed in Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia (Caracas), 111 (July 1945), pp.264-71.

² Soubllette later felt that the evacuation had been a tactical mistake, especially since Mariño's troops had been exhausted and hungry. If Mariño had been held up at the Limón river for a few more days he might have been forced to surrender. Soubllette to Luis A. Baralt, Chocho, 8 July 1848, Latin American mss. - Venezuela 1846-1915, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

from Altagracia on the 24th, and they were able to enter Maracaibo. Mariño had nothing but praise for his men. After regrouping at San Rafael, Mariño and his army entered Maracaibo on 31 May, being met with music and hurrahs. Castelli was appointed governor¹ and chief of operations with Corser as the city's comandante de armas. 1,500 men were left for the city's garrison while the rest of the army crossed over to Altagracia.

The rebels were split up among the islands near San Carlos. The rebel fleet itself had about ten ships and 500 men. Being vastly superior to the government's four ships, it easily defeated them at Capana, and sailed on to the bar of Maracaibo near fort San Carlos. The government would have to concentrate all its efforts on rebuilding its naval forces.² Until it defeated the rebel fleet it would not be able to control its coastline from the incursions of the rebels. Recently returned to Curazao from Altagracia where he had been with Monagas, Guzmán³ made every effort to raise funds to buy ships and armament for the navy. Páez would have to be beaten at sea.

Páez made his way to Santa Marta where he issued a proclama thanking the granádinos for their hospitality and vowing to continue the struggle until Venezuela were free. He then sailed to St. Thomas, reaching it on 13 July.⁴

¹ Castelli's appointment, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXIII, fo.178. Landaeta Rosales claims that Mariño entered Maracaibo on 13 May; Efemérides Venezolanas del Mes de Mayo (Caracas, 1907), p.8.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.553. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.215-17. Rafael Acevedo to A.L. Guzmán, Caracas, 23 June 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.373 ff.

³ Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.153.

⁴ Páez, 'Proclama', Santa Marta, 13 June 1848, and Páez to Shields, St. Thomas, 22 July 1848, in Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.222-6.

With only the fort of San Carlos in rebel hands, Monagas began his triumphal march back to Caracas, arriving at La Vela in mid-June and Puerto Cabello on 12 July.¹ The Liberals of Valencia held a meeting called by the jefe político, Miguel García Mesa, on 5 July. Over 3,000 people attended to listen to speeches and to choose the provincial electors for the coming elections.² Ten days later Valencia welcomed Monagas. The city had been cleaned in his honour, and the atmosphere was festive.³ At Caracas on 21 July Monagas thanked his troops and Urbaneja handed power back to him. In Monagas's farewell to the army the soldiers were said to have proven that they were worthy sons of Bolívar. '... The enemy of Venezuela's prosperity, bobbing in the Ocean, without country or home, with a handful of bandits is preying on the land of the free ...'⁴ The Sociedad Liberal of La Candelaria had compared Monagas to David against the Goliath of America, and called him the Moses who had freed the Venezuelan people.⁵ Monagas replied that the country had

¹ Jose María García, commander of the government's naval fleet, to A.L. Guzmán, Oruba, 15 June 1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.235-7. Cornelio Perozo to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 16 July 1848, ADRRC, 33, fos.1 ff. One report said Monagas was expected to be at Valencia on the 9th and Puerto Cabello on the 11th, but that he actually entered the port at 10 a.m. on the 13th. Juan Crisóstomo Hurtado to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 9 and 13 July 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.368-74.

² Un Observador, 'Funcion Cívica del 5 de Julio', Valencia, 8 July 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.28.

³ Justo, 'Al Excelentísimo Señor Presidente de la República General José Tadeo Monagas', Valencia, 10 July 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.11. Cornelio Perozo to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 16 July 1848, ADRRC, 33, fos. 1 ff.

⁴ '... el enemigo de la prosperidad de Venezuela fluctuando en el Océano, sin patria ni hogar, con un puñado de bandidos asecha el territorio de los libres ...' Monagas, 'José Tadeo Monagas General de Division y Presidente de la República Al Ejercito Nacional', Caracas, 21 July 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.7.

⁴ Sociedad Liberal, 'Excmo. Sr. Presidente de la República General Jose Tadeo Monagas', Caracas, 29 June 1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.6.

been saved by the people's enthusiasm. He promised to follow public opinion, adding that the Liberal party could and should count on him.¹ Parra-Pérez points out that at that stage the party and the president were forced to support each other, but that Monagas was not a Liberal, nor were the Liberals monaguistas.²

¹ Monagas's reply to the Sociedad Liberal, Caracas, 24 July 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.221. Also in González Guinán, Historia, iv. 554-5.

² Parra-Pérez, ibid.

CHAPTER VI

AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD

Upon his return Monagas would find that he held undisputed control of the government. He would also find that his absence of almost five months while on campaign had allowed the different factions within the government to attempt to direct national policy. The intrigues of this competition had caused great tension. Urbaneja had wisely chosen to shelve the main issues for Monagas to deal with upon his return, and to concentrate on his role as caretaker. Before we can discuss the situation Monagas found in July we must consider the events that had taken place in his absence. We will first study the political and legislative events in Caracas before focusing on the importance Curazao attained in the war effort.

Upon taking over power from Monagas on 1 March Urbaneja's most pressing task was to reconvene congress. By using his personal influence and ability he was able to get the attendance of thirty-two representatives from among the original ones and their substitutes.¹ On 12 March the House had reached a quorum.²

Santos Michelena died on 12 March. Doctors José María Vargas and Elías Acosta had cared for him, and two of his sons had stayed at the legation to tend him too. His wound had apparently healed well when he died suddenly.³

¹ Parra-Pérez, Mariño y las Guerras Civiles, iii.139-40.

² Páez, Manifiesto, 1 August 1848, p.10.

³ Núñez, El 24 de Enero, p.55. González Guinán, Historia, iv.504. Wilson to Palmerston, 31 Mar.1848, F.O. 80/55, fo.230. Diego Antonio Caballero to A.L. Guzmán, La Guaira, 13 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.419.

Perhaps his death influenced the return of the congressmen by reminding them of the event of 24 January.

On 6 March Sanabria's ministry ordered that all mail to and from places where rebels were present should be examined by local officials, as permitted by the law of 3 August 1824.¹ The foreign representatives at Caracas were not notified of the order. When Acevedo heard of it on the 8th he countermanded the order to avoid any possible conflict regarding diplomatic immunity, but he was too late. That same day the officials at La Guaira had opened and publicly read all the mail there, including an official letter from the Spanish chargé d'affaires Muñoz to his vice-consul at Puerto Cabello, after which it had been given to the vice-consul at La Guaira. Both Wilson and Shields had also had their mail examined. On 13 March Muñoz demanded that the officials who had opened the mail be deposed and punished, that the government issue its assurance that diplomatic mail would not be intercepted again, and that the government's new orders be published in the Gaceta, all this despite a letter of apology sent to him by the executive on the 10th including a generous new order stating that all mail to and from foreign citizens in Venezuela, whether diplomatic or private, could travel at liberty and could not be opened.²

It is quite clear that the executive wished to avoid any trouble with the diplomatic agents in Caracas. Its reply to Muñoz on 20 March acknowledged the diplomatic immunity and privileges of foreign representatives. It blamed the officials at La Guaira for misinterpreting Sanabria's original orders.

¹ This description of the affair of the opening of diplomatic mail taken mainly from Muñoz to Spanish foreign secretary, Caracas, 56, 6 April 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.80-93. See also p.217 above.

² Resolution of 10 March 1848, in S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fo.94.

The jefe político, Alas, was deposed, and the parish alcalde, Juan Reynoso, was ordered to stand trial before a court of first instance. The executive also sent a circular to its post offices and to local authorities reminding them of the immunity of diplomatic mail. All these orders were published in the Gaceta to satisfy Muñoz.

Muñoz reported that he, Wilson and Shields agreed that Sanabria was at fault for ordering the examination of all mail, thus implying that lower officials were made to take the blame. If Sanabria had originally not intended that diplomatic mail should be examined, then he certainly could have made his order clearer. At the same time it is not unreasonable to suppose that by 'all mail' he had not meant to include diplomatic mail which practice and convention had generally excluded from interference. The council of state argued about whether or not the incident should be published as Muñoz had demanded, Sanabria stating that only the orders and resolutions should appear. Muñoz believed that Sanabria was attempting to avoid the embarrassment of publishing the diplomatic complaints about his role in the affair. Quite clearly, not only Sanabria would be embarrassed by the publication of the affair, but the executive and the nation's honour as well. The council of state decided to publish only the orders and resolutions.

Madrid agreed with the steps taken by Muñoz, but it hastened to add that in countries at war one had to be understanding while still maintaining one's national decorum. In America his first aim was to win friends and end old hatreds. He was encouraged to move gently and to act with other diplomats whenever possible.¹

¹ Spanish foreign secretary to Muñoz, Madrid, 26 May 1848, S.P.-V., 2711 (Film 1818), fos.96 ff.

By early March Wilson was reporting that the country's finances, usually in difficulties, were 'in a deplorable state of embarrassment'. Since large expenses would have to be made to suppress the rebellion he feared that a long time would pass before the country recovered its financial health. To illustrate the situation Wilson explained that the oligarchic National Bank had been forced to suspend its payments because it had lent out half of its capital to Páez and his supporters for indefinite periods of time.¹ Since many of these 'borrowers' were now abroad one can assume that not even the interest was being paid back on their loans.

Because of the expenses caused by Páez's rebellion the legislative resolution of 15 March 1848 increased the amount the executive could raise from \$1 million to \$2 million. To cover this loan treasury bonds bearing an 'equitable' interest rate could be issued. 50 per cent of the customs revenue would be set aside to pay back the loan.²

As a further effort to raise revenue and thwart the rebellion the government was confiscating the property of Páez supporters. Confiscation was being enforced following the examples of the Soublette government in 1844 and 1846, only now the crops belonging to paecistas were being embargoed for the use of the government. Receipts were given to serve as vouchers when claiming repayment. Any Venezuelan who refused to support the government when called to do so for the salvation of the country could be declared a conspirator of the third degree. By mid-March Wilson had received a representation from a British commercial firm stating that some

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 6 Mar. 1848, F.O. 80/55, fos. 50-1.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv. 543. Francisco Pinentel y Roth, Historia del Crédito Público en Venezuela (AGN, 19, 1974), p. 40.

coffee that had been ready to be delivered to it in payment of money that had been advanced had been embargoed as part of Mr Francisco Sosa's property. Wilson was able to get that coffee released to the British firm, but he expected to receive more of these claims.¹ Some paecistas would attempt to protect their property by claiming to have their crops in debt to co-operative foreign merchants, some even presenting backdated loan contracts.

On 20 March the government embargoed two-thirds of the crops of Páez's hacienda 'La Trinidad de Tapatapa'. The other third belonged to the administrative partner, Briton George Gosling, who was allowed to continue at his post and to draw his share.² Another hacienda controlled by Páez, 'Chuao', was embargoed by the government. Wilson suspected that Páez had planned to ask for British protection for his estates because of Páez's 'pecuniary engagements' with British merchants and his administrator.³ Wilson may have been approached to protect Páez's estates from confiscation, but he seems to have refused to be drawn into any schemes to help Páez or his supporters.

In the continuing effort to remedy Venezuela's fiscal problems, Fermín Toro promoted the law of 22 March 1848 which authorised the executive to negotiate the conversion of the active Anglo-Venezuelan debt into new stock bearing a fixed annual rate of interest of 4 per cent. Wilson explained

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 18 Mar.1848, F.O. 80/55, fos.73-4.

² George Gosling to Rafael Acevedo, Caracas, 20 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.449; and published in Castellanos, Páez, pp.67-9. Wilson to Palmerston, 31 Mar.1848, F.O. 80/55, fo.205. 'Chuao' belonged to the University which had rented it to Páez for many years for a pittance, while Páez had mortgaged the crops for over \$100,000 pesos in 1843. Wilson to R. Syers, 16 Feb.1850, F.O. 80/70, fos.253-67.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 31 Mar.1848, ibid.

that the interest on the existing debt was 2 per cent, rising to 2½ per cent on 1 October 1848, and increasing by ¼ per cent a year until it stabilised at 6 per cent in 1862/3. Toro's scheme was meant to tempt the bondholders with an immediate interest rate of 4 per cent rather than having them wait until 1854/5, in exchange for a lower rate in later years. Over time Venezuela would save on the interest. Wilson noted that if Venezuela was not able to pay the existing interest of 2½ per cent it certainly would not be able to pay 4 per cent. It was therefore better for the bondholders to keep the existing agreement and allow the interest rate to rise gradually to 6 per cent.¹

The law of 30 March 1848 sought to bring order into the value of the different foreign currencies that circulated in the country by establishing the French silver franc as the unitary coin of the nation. The other currencies would continue to circulate, but now valued relative to the franc.²

The law of 10 April 1848 reflected the change of policy regarding idle government land that had been taking place since 1832. The law called for more complete information on tierras baldías, especially for their measurement and valuation, and for clearer regulations for the acquisition and rental of these lands by private individuals. The purpose of the law was not only to benefit the treasury and agriculture, but to make available to private persons some of the public lands for farming and livestock breeding.³

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 9 Apr. 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos. 42 ff.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.543. Landaeta Rosales, Riqueza Circulante, p.17. Miguel Herrera, Exposición ... 1858 ... Secretario de Hacienda, p.57. D'Ascoli, Esquema, pp.275-81. Also Carrillo Batalla, Historia, 7, pp.440-3, Doc.389, 'Ley de 30 de Marzo de 1848'.

³ Herrera, ibid., p.47. Carmen Gómez, 'Enajenación y Arrendamiento de Tierras Baldías', Materiales para el Estudio de la Cuestión Agraria en Venezuela (1829-1860) (Caracas, 1971), pp.xl-xli.

The Monagases have been accused of grabbing land and of concentrating its ownership into few hands. However, Carmen Gómez shows that this law had originally been promoted by elements within the oligarchy who had wanted to make baldíos more accessible to the civilian population. With the changed political situation the ruling family and persons connected with the government came to benefit most, especially those with influence in the provincial capitals. During the Monagas period 44 per cent of all baldío concessions were in Barcelona province and 21 per cent in Cumaná.¹ The Monagases bought baldíos which they had been renting from the government, sometimes for many years. During the Monagas period less than 298 square leagues of baldíos were sold, less than 2.8 per cent of the total private property in Venezuela in 1841 - 10,650 square leagues.² Although the Monagas family acquired under 35 square leagues, or 11.6 per cent of the total bought between 1849 and 1858, Gómez points out that General José María Otero Guerra of Cumaná benefited most. He alone bought 48 square leagues or 16.4 per cent of the total. D.A. Caballero and at least five other governors were also favoured.³

Gómez shows that the period of Monagas rule was not necessarily one of consolidation of the latifundista structure in agriculture as Venezuelan historiography has claimed.⁴ This law only gave a reduced number of people connected with government the opportunity to acquire land, some of which was already occupied.

On 17 April Wilson informed Lord Harris, Governor of Trinidad, that Venezuela was willing to agree to a treaty being negotiated with the island

¹ Gómez, ibid., pp. vii, xxxiii, xlix, lii, lix, and l.

² Ibid., pp. xxxiv, lviii.

³ Ibid., pp. lxv - lxviii.

⁴ Ibid., pp. xxxiv, xl.

for the mutual apprehension and surrender of fugitive criminals, to take effect in four months' time on 17 August. Although the treaty did not become effective as early as planned because of a difference of opinion between Lord Harris and Venezuela regarding the definition of 'fugitive criminals', the negotiations did reflect the willingness of the two parties to co-operate in maintaining order. Indeed, Palmerston ordered Lord Harris to prevent any operations against Venezuela by the Venezuelan refugees at Trinidad, as was established practice regarding the granting of asylum to political refugees. Lord Harris seems to have been able to stop the rebels on his island from preparing and sending expeditions against the mainland, and those rebels went to St. Thomas and Curazao to continue their efforts. Monagas would later send his personal thanks for Britain's friendly conduct.¹

Some congressmen proposed to the House on 17 April that a general amnesty be declared for all rebels without exception. The rebels would be allowed to keep their ranks, salaries, pensions, privileges, and decorations, and be allowed to return home. About ten congressmen signed the proposal. Its supporters explained that congress wished to make a serious gesture towards a peaceful solution to the civil war before the end of its annual session.² Its opponents believed that the godos had mistaken the government's clemency on other occasions, such as Zamora's submission and Mariño's

¹ Wilson to Lord Harris, Caracas, 17 Apr.1848, F.O. 80/56, fo.81.
Wilson to Palmerston, London, 9 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.284-93.
Acevedo to Acting Chargé Riddel, Caracas, 16 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/58, fos. 48 ff.

² David to French foreign secretary, 18 Apr.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.106-7.
Shields to Buchanan, 57, 18 Apr.1848, USNA, Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Venezuela, 5 (Film M-79, roll 6); both quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.142-3. See Article 87, paragraph 21 of the constitution for congress's power to declare amnesties.

campaign in Guárico, for weakness and fear, and were now trying to get a 'Decree of Honour' for Páez veiled as a general pardon.¹ Although one would like to believe that the proponents of the bill wished to bring about peace as quickly as possible it is clear that they wished to save the rebels from total destruction and embarrass the executive, which was following a policy of clemency for rebel troops, but not for their highest leaders.

The timing of the proposal must have infuriated the Liberals. The tide had turned against Páez for the first time. He had been defeated in battle, a fact that David failed to report to Paris, stating only that Páez had retreated momentarily to New Granada. The rebels were losing on all fronts. By 10 April Piñango had died and Coro had fallen to Valero. Mérida and Trujillo had been recovered. The rebels were fleeing to Maracaibo. They were losing, but were not yet defeated, and in this state would be able to rise again against the government should they be pardoned unconditionally. The proposal seems more ill-timed when one considers that a week earlier Monagas had written to Acevedo, Sanabria and Urbaneja urging them to have congress expel Páez in perpetuity before the end of its session.² The true compassion of the proposers was called into question when it was pointed out that one of those who now called for Páez's pardon with honours had been the public accuser who had called for Guzmán's death the year before, Fernando Díaz.³

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 21 Apr. 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos. 89 ff.

² Monagas to Acevedo, Carora, 11 Apr. 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.133-4. See also above p.224.

³ Núñez, et.al., 'Al Pueblo', Caracas, 1848, in Shields to Buchanan, 57, 18 Apr. 1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela (Film M-79, 6), quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., pp.143-4.

The proposal passed its first reading on the 17th. Some Liberals printed a call to the people to take to the streets and to attend congress to protest against the project and to support the executive's policy. The call accused the rebels in the House of insulting the government's clemency and the people's kindness.¹ On the morning of the 18th a large crowd stood outside congress. The situation reminded everyone of 24 January. Only two of the proposers attended the session that day. The crowd is supposed to have threatened the congressmen with yells of '¡Viva el Pueblo Soberano! ¡Mueran los Traidores!'² David reported that the crowd declared that it did not want congress to approve the amnesty in question, whereupon the congressmen dispersed. He feared that the mob would now demand the immediate abolition of slavery without compensation to the owners.³ Wilson reported that the proposal had caused popular excitement, therefore a large unarmed crowd had gathered before congress in expectation of the second reading. He added that no outrages had been committed, but that the crowd had caused some alarm, and so had been dispersed by the authorities. Although Wilson reported that the proposal had been dropped, he failed to report that congress had dispersed for fear of the crowd.⁴ One Sr. Pardo reported to Shields that the crowd had been there since 11 a.m. and that it had not dispersed by 2.30 p.m.,⁵ this in spite of the fact that the congressmen had gone home earlier.

¹ Ibid.

² Shields to Buchanan, ibid. He added that the crowd had not been given arms when it ran to the armoury as had occurred on 24 January.

³ David to French foreign secretary, 18 Apr.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.106-7.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 21 Apr.1848, F.O. 80/56, fos. 89 ff.

⁵ Shields to Buchanan, 18 Apr.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins.Venezuela (Film M-79, 6).

The incident of the 18th would convince the godos that mob rule had definitely taken over, while the Liberals would realise that the godos were as dangerous as ever. Monagas would continue to have the full support of the masses and the Liberals in his struggle against Páez.

Returning to a more submissive attitude congress extended the executive's special powers for another period of ninety days on 22 April. Once the congressional sessions were adjourned Monagas would need only the consent of the council of state for any further extensions. The budget for 1848/9 was fixed at \$2,609,531. 58. The law of 28 April to reform manumission required the provincial manumission committees to inform the provincial legislatures of their activities in an effort to gain political control of those activities and of the committees' budgets.¹ Congress even recognised the long-standing claim of Colonel José Alberto Guillmore for military services rendered to Colombia. The executive had agreed to recognise 28½ per cent of the claim on 24 June 1847 and had submitted its decision to congress on 24 February last during the flurry of activity that had accompanied Vice-Admiral Austen's visit, when the executive had sought British recognition and support by settling the outstanding claims. On 21 April congress recognised that \$4,321. 85 were owed to Colonel Guillmore as Venezuela's portion of the claim.²

By far the most important pieces of legislation that appeared while Monagas was on campaign were promoted by a Liberal faction led by Sanabria. In keeping with more radical Liberal policy this faction sought to improve the economic climate of the country by protecting and encouraging that

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.545.

² 'Decreto de 25 de Abril de 1848', in Actos Legislativos del Congreso Constitucional de Venezuela en 1849 (Caracas, 1849), pp.3-4.

most important sector of the economy, agriculture. This faction wanted to improve the state of agriculture by reforming the existing laws to create a new economic structure. To do so it had expanded its ideas from the 'Instituto de Crédito Territorial' project of the Soublette years to a more complete revision of the laws affecting agriculture. As interior secretary, Sanabria was in a strong position to promote the reforms. He had hinted of the coming proposals as early as his report to congress in January when he had emphasised the importance of the private ownership of land and the unlimited depreciation that land had suffered by usury.¹ As the various reforms were proposed during April it became clear that they were part of an organised plan that was based on old liberal and moderate conservative grievances added to those of the agriculturalists.

Sanabria and his group would try to protect and encourage agriculture by giving more guarantees to landowners. These would be able to acquire baldíos. The law of contracts of 10 April 1834 would be repealed to protect the debtor. A 'territorial institute' would be created to help the landowners in debt to meet their obligations.

On 28 April congress repealed the law of 1834. Whereas the National Bank had been lending at 9 per cent annual interest, the British Colonial Bank at 12 per cent, many private individuals at 18 - 24 per cent, and even the government was borrowing at 36 per cent, the new law limited to 9 per cent the interest rate allowed for a civil court action for non-payment.

¹ Sanabria described the law of 10 April 1834 'que rompió los diques á la devoradora usura y sometió á una depreciación ilimitada las propiedades raíces que constituyen la más sólida y permanente riqueza del Estado.' His Memoria of 1848 quoted in González Guinán, Historia, iv.492.

The legal rate of interest was now 5 per cent, and compound interest could not be charged. The old law had authorised the auction of a debtor's goods to pay his debts at the price offered at the time of auction. The new law stipulated that a debtor's goods could be auctioned to pay his debt only if he had previously agreed to this measure. To ensure the value of property those goods sold at auction had to fetch at least one-half of their value as established by two experts, one chosen by each party, and an umpire previously named by the experts for any disagreements that might arise. To protect the value of productive real property its gross product would now be taken into account as representing a capital with an annual return of 9 per cent.¹

Wilson reported that the project had originally proposed to fix the conventional interest rate at 6 per cent, except for the National Bank at 9 per cent. Wilson mentioned to Acevedo that since the Bank was owned by some Venezuelans and foreigners this exception amounted to a privilege for some which was inconsistent with the treaty rights of Britons in Venezuela. Despite Acevedo's efforts the House carried the concession. The senate did amend the discrepancy by raising the maximum limit to 9 per cent for all. Wilson felt that although the new law would hurt British interests, he could not complain about it to the Venezuelan government because it had no retroactivity and did not violate the treaty rights of Britons.²

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.492. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 May 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.137-44; fos. 144-6 for English translation of the law. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, 7, pp.10, 444, Doc.390. Also Lourdes Fierro Bustillos, 'La Política Económica del Estado Venezolano Entre 1830 y 1850: Las Leyes de "Libertad de Contratos" y de "Espera y Quita"', paper given at the Sixth Symposium on Latin American Economic History, Vancouver, 10-17 Aug.1979, pp.43-5.

² Ibid.

At the same time, Sanabria pushed through congress the law 'affording pecuniary relief to Agriculturists' along the lines of the one vetoed by Soubllette in 1846.¹ Its avowed intention was to apply public credit to assist industry by giving guarantees to the owners as well as to the system of repayment to the treasury.² The executive could issue certificates of national debt, vales, totalling five million pesos, which could be exchanged 'for obligations with mortgages of at least double the value', so that debtors could pay with the vales. If a creditor refused to receive vales the debtor was given one year 'to demand from the creditor either a respite, or a reduction in the amount of debt' as established by two arbitrators, one chosen by each party, and an umpire appointed beforehand by the arbitrators whose decision in cases of non-agreement would have no appeal. Vales would pay 6 per cent annual interest, payable twice a year, 'and towards their redemption (amortizacion) shall be applied annually four per cent to be decided by lot, in addition to the amount of interest on the certificates cancelled (vales amortizados).'³ The debtor would pay 4 per cent of his obligation every six months for twenty years to cancel his debt completely. The government could proceed against a debtor in arrears by selling the mortgaged property or by transferring the claim to another party.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 5 May 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.148 ff.

² See English translation, 'Project of Law for a Territorial Institute', in Memorial Addressed by British Merchants and Bankers Resident in Caracas, La Guayra and Puerto Cabello, to Belford Hinton Wilson, Esq. Her British Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires to Venezuela, Respecting the Measure passed in Congress on the 21st April 1848, as it affects their Rights and Property, pp.10-11, F.O. 80/56, fo.162.

³ Ibid.

This law was passed, first in the senate then in the House, under questionable legislative procedure. José Rafael Revenga issued a statement of his dissent that evening in which he protested that the House had passed the law without discussion.¹ When one member had attempted to discuss it he had been so greatly interrupted that not even the president of the House had been able to restore order. The reason for not subjecting the proposal to three readings as required was only hinted at by Revenga, but its proponents may have argued that it needed none since it was similar to a project submitted in 1846, meaning the project for an institute that was passed by congress but vetoed by Soublette. Revenga pointed out that a discussion had been needed since few of the present congressmen had been present in 1846, and because this project was not exactly like the original one.

Among his objections, Revenga emphasised that Venezuela could not take on a debt of five million pesos and distribute five hundred thousand pesos in interest and redemption payments. Besides, the mortgages the government would take over would be worth nothing since the poor economic climate made it impossible to transfer or negotiate them. Since it was unable to meet its present obligations, even to ration its troops, the government could not deal with a further debt of five millions. Before the news of this project Venezuela's credit was so low that the active debt was quoted in London at 16 per cent, the deferred at 4. Clearly, Revenga believed, a new obligation bearing 10 per cent interest which the government could not cover, while expecting debtors who were already in difficulties to be

¹ José Rafael Revenga to the Honourable Chamber of Representatives, Caracas, 21 April 1848, translated in Memorial ..., pp.5-9, F.O. 80/56, fos.159-61.

able to meet their payments of 8 per cent to the government, was unrealistic and would not be received at any price in London.

Apart from the economic reasons for rejecting the proposal, Revenga showed how it would violate Venezuela's foreign treaties. Compelling creditors to receive vales for contracts established under pre-existing laws was seen as an unconstitutional attack on property. The retrospective nature of the proposed law violated treaties which guaranteed to foreigners 'complete freedom to manage their own affairs ... and be exempt from every species of compulsory impost.'¹ Article 218 of the constitution further guaranteed that 'the immunities granted to foreigners by virtue of treaties in force, cannot be invalidated, or varied by law.' Since foreigners were the principal capitalists in Venezuela, Revenga felt that by the protection of treaties they would gain an unfair advantage unacceptable to native Venezuelans and contrary to article 188 of the constitution which established equality before the law. To respect the treaties and equality for all the law had to be dropped.²

British merchants and bankers were most worried about the retrospective nature of the bill that would force them to accept vales at nominal value which they doubted would reach the negotiable value of the domestic debt, then quoted at 40 per cent.³ They felt that a quotation of 8 - 10 per cent for these vales was more realistic. They, too, claimed that the bill violated their treaty rights. The Colonial Bank would be in a delicate situation as it would be obliged to convert its notes and retain specie for which it depended on payment by its debtors. If it were required to accept vales or submit to indefinite terms of payment, it would fail. In calling for

¹ Ibid., pp.7-8.

² Ibid., p.8.

³ Merchants of Caracas and La Guayra to Wilson, Caracas, 25 April 1848, in Memorial ..., pp.1-4, F.O. 80/56, fos.157-9.

Wilson's help they pointed out that every British subject engaged in business in Venezuela was a creditor.

Wilson agreed with the merchants entirely.¹ He protested to Acevedo in the same terms emphasising that forcing a creditor to forego his rights and granting a reduction to the debtor could be interpreted as 'a forced loan if not the sequestration and confiscation even of British property.'² Pointing out that Britons and other foreigners 'are the largest creditors in the Republic', Wilson hoped that the government would reach 'a decision as may be most consistent with Political Integrity and International Good Faith'.³ David also protested the retroactive effect of the law.⁴

Wilson reported to Palmerston that Sanabria and a group of land and slaveowners in debt in the province of Caracas had sought to change the law on debt since 1843.⁵ The three main proponents were Aranda, now on trial for the La Guaira customs scandal, Francisco Ramón Hernández, the Colonial Bank's largest debtor, and Sanabria. Since all the foreign representatives objected to the bill, Sanabria's group was trying to stir up support by claiming that those objections meant foreign interference in a national domestic matter. As a secretary Sanabria was trying to identify the government and the Liberal party with the bill in spite of the fact that the rest of the cabinet, Urbaneja, Acevedo and Mejía, was opposed to it.

¹ Wilson to the British merchants and bankers of Caracas, La Guaira and Puerto Cabello, Caracas, 28 April 1848, in Memorial ..., pp.4-5, F.O. 80/56, fo.159.

² Wilson to Acevedo, 28 Apr.1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.168-73.

³ Ibid.

⁴ David to Acevedo, Caracas, 25 April 1848, AMAE, Correspondance Commerciale, Caracas, V, fo.385.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, Caracas, 5 May 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.148 ff. Also quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.186-8.

Wilson emphasised that, as far as any support was concerned, the bill only had that of the debtors of both political parties, most of them being oligarchs. Liberal leaders were reputed to be resisting being identified with the bill. Sanabria was attempting to force the executive to sanction the bill by creating popular pressure against the vice-president and the representations of foreign agents, but Urbaneja decided to leave the decision for Monagas to deal with on his return. Sanabria was reputed to have started a newspaper, El Nacional, to promote the bill as a patriotic cause and to present its opponents as enemies of Venezuela who had sold out to the British. In early May these efforts were failing.

Wilson saw that the bill would affect the country's prosperity and future credit, as well as its social condition. Therefore, he hoped that as a man of property and good common sense Monagas would take the 'correct view of the subject'. Fearing the pressure that Monagas would have to face from the efforts to present the bill as a national cause the foreigners feared that 'he may not be able to master sufficiently the difficulties besetting him personally as the Head of the Government'.¹ Sanabria felt strongly enough about the issue to go to Valencia in early July to meet Monagas who was returning from his campaign in Maracaibo.² The issue would not be resolved until Monagas's return. Later Riddel would report that Monagas had been 'extremely displeased' when informed of Sanabria's intrigues to be elected vice-president in August.³

With the worsening fortune of the paecistas, their supporters were bound to suffer as well, even among the foreign agents. The sights were

¹ Ibid.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv.555.

³ Riddel to Palmerston, 21 July 1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.103 ff. Quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.188-9.

set on David after paecista reports of the event of 24 January appeared in the Paris press. The fall of Louis-Philippe of France aggravated David's situation. In June Shields reported that supporters of the government were claiming that the revolution in Paris was related to the 'revolution' of 24 January, and that the pro-government press was attacking David because he owed his appointment to a monarchy.¹ The press accused David of publishing the defamatory reports in Paris. David protested about the press's attacks to Acevedo. Acevedo showed great skill in his reply by first declaring that the government regretted that David had felt insulted by the press, but that since Venezuela had no press censureship the government had been unable to stop those publications.² He added that the government would not deny that David had always conducted himself in his direct dealings with it in a manner that would create the closest harmony between the two nations, but that he felt compelled to declare that as soon as the publication of David's report was known in Venezuela it could not but have caused some disagreeable impressions by the unfortunate turn that David had given to certain phrases. David then complained to Paris.³ The French foreign secretary felt that Acevedo's reply was as satisfactory as could be expected, adding that his department had not leaked David's report to the press, and reminding David that agents were recommended to write only to that office about the political situation of the country to which they were posted so as to avoid inconveniences.⁴

¹ Shields to Buchanan, 64, 18 June 1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 5 (Film M-79, 6), and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.179.

² Acevedo to David, Caracas, 13 June 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.132-3, and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., pp.184-5. Also copy in AANH, Papeles Fermín Toro, no.79.

³ David to French foreign secretary, 21 June 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.128-9.

⁴ French foreign secretary to David, Paris, 31 Oct.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.173-4, and quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.185.

Acevedo's reply is the more remarkable when one realises that he had written to Paris a month earlier asking for David's recall. Just as Wilson had suffered from the paecistas so would David from the monaguistas. Acevedo wrote to the new French foreign secretary, Alphonse de Lamartine, as the representative of one revolutionary government to another on 5 May.¹ He explained that David openly expressed his pro-rebel opinions, and that the government believed that he had influenced those congressmen who had taken refuge with him not to carry out their duty to attend the sessions that could have avoided the civil war. Finally, Acevedo hoped that David would be recalled because he represented a monarchy, and was closely linked to an oligarchy that wished to enthrone Páez.

No reply seems to have been sent to Acevedo. David had asked to be transferred after the event of 24 January. He seems to have received permission to go to Havana by July, but chose to stay for the elections.² He would leave Venezuela on 3 November, thus solving a problem for himself and for the two governments involved.³

In contrast to David's problems, Wilson was enjoying great favour with the government. He was reputed to be Acevedo's friend as he had been Colonel Blanco's, and this in spite of Acevedo's insistence on Wilson's recall during August-September 1847 against Blanco's demands of a certificate of good conduct for Wilson.⁴ Urbaneja was also Wilson's friend, supposedly

¹ Acevedo to Lamartine, Caracas, 5 May 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.114-16, and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., pp.182-4. Lamartine was secretary from 25 February until 4 May, being replaced by Jules Bastide on 10 May.

² David to French foreign secretary, 5 Aug.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.144-5.

³ Turreil to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 4 Nov.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.177-8.

⁴ Shields to Buchanan, 68, 7 Sept.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6), and quoted Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.195.

because Wilson rented the house of the legation from him for \$120 monthly, allegedly twice the usual rent.¹ With such influential friends, Wilson could not fail to receive the most glowing letter of appreciation from Acevedo in the name of the government as Wilson prepared to take his six-month leave of absence.² On 23 May Wilson sailed for the United States and Britain, ironically, on the American barque 'Páez'.³

The last of the British claims had been settled. Mathison at Ciudad Bolívar reported in April that the Williams murder trial had been conducted impartially and fairly, but that the evidence had been defective because the crime had occurred long ago.⁴ The suspects were acquitted in first instance. Palmerston commented that 'There could be little doubt that they would be acquitted but it was important that they should be brought to trial.'⁵ Riddel later reported that when the superior court of Cumaná had upheld the acquittal Sanabria had propagated the rumour that there had never been any suspicion of guilt against the suspects, and that by forcing them to stand trial two years later, Acevedo and Monagas had compromised the country's honour by yielding to the unjust demands of the British, something which he had refused to do for patriotic reasons. Sanabria's attack on Acevedo and the British seems to have been strong enough to compel Wilson to send a note restating the reasons for Britain's demands.⁶ Since Riddel and Wilson clearly

¹ Shields to Buchanan, 68, 7 Sept. 1848, ibid., and quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid.

² Acevedo to Wilson, 20 May 1848, F.O. 80/57, fos. 20 ff.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Wilson to Palmerston, 1 May 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos. 124-7.

⁵ Palmerston's note of 14 June in ibid.

⁶ Riddel to Palmerston, 30 Sept. 1848, F.O. 80/57, fos. 354 ff.

favoured Acevedo to Sanabria, especially since the latter had become so aggressively nationalistic, it is difficult to know how much of Riddel's report was exaggerated.

Like David, Shields got into trouble for his indiscretion. Acevedo informed Wilson on 12 April that Shields had told him on various occasions that the government of the United States was convinced that Britain was behind the resistance in Mexico to its just demands, making Britain responsible for the Mexican-American war; that the government of the United States had recently gotten written proof of this, and that it would frustrate any British attempts against the independence of the Spanish-American states. Palmerston sent Wilson's report to Washington demanding clarification, and Washington sent it to Shields with a reprimand.¹ Buchanan wrote to Shields that if he had, in fact, spoken to Acevedo about such matters it had been 'highly impolitic' and incorrect as to the information.

'This government possesses no such documentary or other evidence of the alleged interference on the part of Great Britain. On the contrary, we have reason to believe, whatever may have been our conjectures before the commencement of the war with Mexico, that the British Government exerted itself to bring about a Treaty of Peace. 2

Buchanan had recently received Acevedo's direct note of 6 May denouncing Shields's friendship with the rebels and declaring that his reports to Washington could not be trusted as he was not an impartial observer.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 12 April 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.53-6, and quoted in Parra-Pérez's excellent study of the affair, Guerras Civiles, iii.189-91. See also Gray, 'U.S.-Venezuelan Relations', p.221; and Frankel, Venezuela - Estados Unidos, p.84. Shields was not alone in his beliefs. He received a letter from Curazao stating that Wilson had been active against the Conservatives for some time, and that Britain wanted to create monarchies and destroy republics. Unsigned to Shields, Curazao, 29 March 1848, ADRRC, 5, fo.555.

² Buchanan to Shields, Washington, 7 Aug.1848, USNA, Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, Venezuela, I, fo.74 (Film M-77, no.171).

Acevedo asked that the rebels be prevented from buying guns or launching expeditions from the United States.¹ Buchanan's reply to Acevedo did not acknowledge the charges, but he did warn Shields that an agent had to abstain from interfering in the domestic politics of the country or he would eventually become 'obnoxious' to the executive.²

Shields asked Acevedo to declare whether Wilson's report was faithful on 5 September.³ Acevedo could not remember words spoken five months earlier, but he did confirm the general points of the conversation stating Shields's repeated observations regarding Britain's involvement in leading Mexico into war with the United States, and Britain's possible projects in Venezuela. Acevedo did qualify his reply by stating that he had never understood these remarks to be anything other than Shields's personal opinions, adding that back then he had distrusted Shields, but that he now considered him a personal friend.⁴ Thus Acevedo acknowledged Shields's indiscretions while saving everyone's honour. He even left himself room to play on Shields's fear that Britain might consider interfering in Venezuela to adjust its claims on the enormous debt. He notified Wilson of his reply to Shields. Wilson, in England, reported to Palmerston on 1 November that Acevedo had confirmed Wilson's report as to its general points; those being that in the course of official interviews, Shields had misrepresented Britain's conduct with regard to the war in Mexico and to Venezuela's independence and territorial integrity.⁵ Shields would continue to misrepresent Britain's actions.

¹ Acevedo to Buchanan, 6 May 1848, USNA, Notes from the Venezuelan Legation in the United States to the Department of State, I (Film T-93, 1).

² Buchanan to Shields, 7 Aug. 1848, loc.cit.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.191.

⁴ Acevedo to Shields, 7 Sept. 1848, in Shields to Buchanan, 68, 7 Sept. 1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 5 (Film 79, 6). Copy in F.O. 80/58, fos.132-5.

⁵ Wilson to Palmerston, St. Neots, 1 Nov. 1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.122-5, and quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.200.

The treasury had great difficulty in replenishing its coffers. To give the appearance, at least, of trying to tackle the growing debt the government sent Juan Bautista Calcaño, a 'man of no high standing or character in this country',¹ to England and France to raise a loan of 1½ million pesos.² Wilson was informed by Acevedo that if Calcaño were able to raise the loan he would deposit with the Bank of England the amount necessary to make three dividend payments of the Anglo-Venezuelan loan to cover the payments due in October 1847 and April 1848, and the one for the coming October. Wilson was not enthusiastic about Calcaño's mission.³ Riddel would later note that with the low value of Venezuelan stock in London, where in September the active debt was quoted at 14 - 16 per cent and the deferred at 4 - 5 per cent, he doubted whether the new loan would raise enough money to cover the three dividends which totalled \$400,305,⁴ or almost 27 per cent of the loan.

A letter from Acevedo to Guzmán perhaps shows the true nature of Calcaño's mission. He was to use the money he raised to acquire two steamers, 5,000 guns, 4,000 uniforms, and then deposit the remainder to pay the dividends. Acevedo expected to hear from Calcaño by 15 July so as to know what Venezuela could expect from London,⁵ perhaps implying that Calcaño was attempting to renegotiate the debt as permitted by the law of 22 March, and was testing the water for the larger 'agriculturist' loan that might be sanctioned by Monagas.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 6 May 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.175 ff, and quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.293. Calcaño may have been an officer of the treasury at that time. Calcaño to treasury secretary, 3 Nov.1849, ADRRC, 43, fos.67-80.

² David to French foreign secretary, 5 May 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.117 ff.

³ Wilson to Palmerston, 6 May 1848, F.O. 80/56, fos.175 ff.

⁴ Riddel to Palmerston, 3 Nov.1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.156-61.

⁵ Acevedo to Guzmán, 3 June 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.351-4.

Guzmán complained to Acevedo about Calcaño's appointment because he had been promoting an official loan raising tour for himself beginning in the United States. Acevedo claimed that Guzmán could still go, but a few days later reported that only the three secretaries had supported the proposal in the council of state, and that in consequence he had withdrawn it. At that point Acevedo felt that Guzmán should become a cabinet member to wield more influence, and he promised to help Guzmán with this appointment.¹ As early as April, Sanabria was said to be working to get Guzmán away from Venezuela, preferably to Europe.² If this is so, Sanabria may have wanted Guzmán to be away for the coming elections. Acevedo, clearly supporting Guzmán, may have chosen Calcaño for the mission to keep Sanabria from taking control of the Liberal party and from defeating Guzmán in the elections. The councillors who disliked Guzmán and had refused to support his proposed mission may have unwittingly protected him from Sanabria's intrigues. Guzmán had wind of Sanabria's plans by early June when a friend replied to his letter by saying that he was sorry to hear about the split within the Liberal party regarding the 'ley sobre instituto' and Sanabria's pretensions.³

Curazao became the centre of the government's supply operation for the war. Its geographical position and traditional commercial relationship with the mainland made it the natural choice. Whereas the established paecista merchants had close ties with Curazao, thus ensuring its participation in Páez's efforts, the government had to concentrate its dealings there because it found credit nowhere else. St. Thomas, Santo Domingo, the United

¹ Ibid., and Acevedo to Guzmán, 19 June 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.361-8.

² José Antonio Díaz to Guzmán, Tocome, 13 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.214.

³ R. Blasco to Guzmán, La Vela, 7 June 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.261.

States, Britain, and France all held the government's credit in low esteem.¹ At Curazao, Venezuela found the support of the Jesurún brothers, in particular Jacobo Abraham who had taken Venezuelan citizenship, and this support seems to have given the government enough credit with which to manoeuvre.² With the help of the Jesurúns and some other merchants, Venezuela's agents, principally Guzmán, had busied themselves since February with a confusing number of credit and purchase operations, some of them vague. Despite the uneven book-keeping we can arrive at some idea of the nature and extent of those agents' affairs on the island.

Guzmán was appointed Venezuela's agent at Curazao on 15 February. Two days later, M.A. Jesurún received \$5,000 from Acevedo in Caracas in exchange for a letter of credit, and advised A.J. Senior at Curazao that he would honour any letters he were to receive up to that amount repaying them either in cash or in letters on St. Thomas or England. In fact, he was acting as a bank for Venezuela, guaranteeing any deals with his name and advising his contacts of a good business venture with the government. He asked that his brothers be notified in case they might be interested.³

Luis Cotarro was commissioned by Governor De la Plaza to buy two ships at Curazao.⁴ On 25 February he bought the sloop 'Rudolfina', 101 tons,

¹ Guzmán to treasury secretary, 15 Dec. 1849, Memorandum of his work as Venezuela's agent at Curazao, ADRRC, 5, fos. 511 ff., and Castellanos, Páez, pp. 215-26.

² J.A. Jesurún, 'The Curacoan Rothschild', owned a steamer on the Curazao - St. Thomas route as early as 1845. The Jesurún family paid the highest Jewish communal tax, being valued as the richest Jewish family in Curazao. I.S. and S.A. Emmanuel, History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles (Cincinnati, 1970), i. 324, 363-4, 376, 378, 414, 468, ii. 727.

³ M.A. Jesurún to A.J. Senior, 17 Feb. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo. 593.

⁴ De la Plaza to Guzmán, 18 Feb. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fo. 420.

from the Jesurúns for \$8,000, made up by the \$5,000 given to M.A. Jesurún in Caracas and \$3,000 to be paid at the La Guaira customs house with one-third of its revenue in cash collected from import duties. Another \$500 had been lent to Cotarro to ready the ship for war. This amount would also be repaid at La Guaira. After one month the amount still owed could be claimed in pagarés carrying an interest rate of 2 per cent per month. Acevedo authorised this contract on 4 March,¹ and the Jesurúns had begun a long and profitable relationship with the government.

As Monagas left Caracas to take command of the army in early March, Puerto Cabello was busy organising the navy. General Renato Beluche, commander of the naval base, was preparing six ships for war, while the commander of the port's fort 'Libertador', General Gabriel Guevara was in charge of producing cartridges and repairing armaments for the army as well as the navy.² Supplies and ships bought at Curazao would be sent on to Puerto Cabello. Because of the constant communication with the island through trade it would sometimes be simpler and quicker for supplies and weapons sent from Puerto Cabello to Coro and Maracaibo to be shipped to Curazao to be trans-shipped to their destination rather than to wait to send them directly.³ The agency at Curazao would have to stockpile supplies for Coro and Maracaibo adding more expense to its non-existent funds.

¹ Contract between Cotarro and Jacobo A. and David A. Jesurún, Curazao, 25 Feb.1848, ADRRC, 32, fos. 307 ff. Emmanuel says the ship was worth 8,000 florins, or 4,000 pesos, Jews, ii.727.

² Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 2 Mar.1848, and 7 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.113-14.

³ Ships arrived at Curazao from Puerto Cabello every day. Simón Sardi to Guzmán, Curazao, 24 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 23, fo.279.

Hearing that guns and ships might be available at Santo Domingo, Guzmán got \$200 from the aduaná at La Vela¹ to send fellow Liberal Fidel Ribas y Ribas to investigate. Because of the existing lack of funds, Acevedo took personal responsibility for giving Ribas ample authority to negotiate any deals.² At St. Thomas, Ribas found 1,000 muskets at Coster and Mester, who were described as first grade oligarchs. Mr Coster refused to sell them to Ribas, even though Ribas had acted as though he would pay cash, because he supported Páez's cause, a man he considered greater than 'Wasenthon'. After a meeting of two hours Ribas got him to promise not to sell those guns to the paecistas either, since his debtors, who were all along the coast from Margarita to Maracaibo, would be in danger no matter who got the guns, and Coster did not want his debtors killed. It remains to be shown whether or not Coster kept his word. Ribas reported that all the merchants of St. Thomas supported Páez, including Venezuela's consul.³ Ribas continued to Santo Domingo where he seems to have been unsuccessful, which is not surprising if one remembers that that nation was busy defending itself against Haiti.⁴

In the meantime, Guzmán was asked to vacate his room at his boarding house for failing to pay the rent.⁵ Acevedo ordered that all the funds at

¹ Valero to Guzmán, La Vela, 26 Feb. 1848, ADRRC, 26, fo. 377, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 105-6. Ricardo R. Blasco to Guzmán, La Vela, 26 Feb. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo. 242.

² Acevedo to Guzmán, Caracas, 3 Mar. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 331-2.

³ Coster had told Ribas 'q^e estubiese yo muy cierto de que no me los vendería p.^r ningun dinero.' Ribas to Guzmán, San Tomas, 27 Mar. 1848, ADRRC, 32, fos. 289 ff.

⁴ It too would turn to Jesurún and Van der Meulen at Curazao for ships. RDAGN, Copiadores Guerra y Marina, III, 8 (8 Jan. 1850), 'Instrucciones al General de Brigada Comandante de Armas de la Capital'.

⁵ David Palomino, posadero, to Guzmán, n/p, 2 Mar. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo. 144. Jesurún later paid Palomino. Jesurún to Guzmán, Curazao, 22 Dec. 1848, ADRRC, 6, fos. 195 ff., and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 92-7.

the La Vela de Coro customs house be made available to pay for the sums contracted by Guzmán for uniforms, supplies and making two ships ready at Curazao.¹ In spite of this order the agency had no funds by April when J.A. Jesurún managed to import 2,000 guns and some gunpowder. Páez's unofficial agents at Curazao, his son-in-law José María Francia and Lorenzo Mendoza,² tried to buy the shipment for \$25,000 on instalments, using Venezuelan and foreign merchants there as credit references. The government of Curazao warned Jesurún that to maintain neutrality the shipment would have to leave for rebellious Maracaibo on the same vessel that had brought it and within twenty-four hours of its arrival. For some reason the guns remained at Curazao unavailable for export to the rebels, who were desperate enough to offer to pay almost \$12 per gun, nearly double the normal value.³ The rebels used all their influence to get these muskets. With Guzmán in Caracas a friend and fellow-Liberal Félix Vidal, was helping Ricardo R. Blasco, the acting agent at Curazao. Vidal used all his influence to prevent the sale to the paecistas. With the news of Piñango's defeat at Taratara Vidal doubted if the disheartened paecistas would still be able to buy.⁴

Blasco reported the arrivals of José Hermenegildo García and Dr Manuel A. Páez, who met with Francia, Mendoza and Felix Soubllette. García, ex-governor Izquierdo and Manuel Tello had been able to escape from Puerto Cabello without passports. As a result of this, Carabobo governor Justo

¹ Acevedo to Guzmán, 19 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.337. Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, 23 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.121-3.

² Castellanos, Páez, pp.314, 331.

³ Venezuela had bought some muskets for \$6.55 each in 1842 and others for \$5.01 each as recently as 1847. Acevedo to Guzmán, 15 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.345.

⁴ Pedro Moratto to Guzmán, Caracas, 12 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 11, fo.408. Felix Vidal to Guzmán, 10 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.193 ff.

Briceño asked Guzmán to list all the arrivals to Curazao in April from Puerto Cabello and La Guaira in an attempt to stop the 'desorden'.¹

Guzmán had gone to Caracas to convince the government to open a current account at Curazao to simplify the work of the agency. To support his case he may have used the example of Jesurún's shipment, which the agency was unable to buy for lack of funds or credit. On 14 April Urbaneja authorised Guzmán's and Juan Crisóstomo Hurtado's proposal for a current account of \$50,000 by giving a collateral guarantee of \$75,000. Guzmán would negotiate the opening of the account with \$25,000 worth of pagarés on Coro's salt-mines and customs house. On opening the account, which was simply a loan for \$50,000, Guzmán would notify the government to send the documents for the remaining \$50,000. He was to receive \$2,000 from the lender upon signing the contract to send on to La Vela where they were needed urgently. The treasury would keep the account, not paying out more than \$3,000 every ten days for the pagarés which carried an interest rate of 1 per cent per month. The lenders could give up to \$25,000 in goods, the rest in cash.²

Blasco reported that he had been trying desperately to raise a loan at Curazao until he heard of Guzmán's larger forthcoming negotiations.³ Blasco may have used this explanation as an excuse for his failure to get a loan to buy the guns. The government then authorised Guzmán to buy 2,000 good muskets using all the salt tax vouchers that could be claimed at Cumaná and Barcelona from 1 May until the debt were paid, as well as pagarés on the customs house at Ciudad Bolívar up to \$50,000. Both this authorisation

¹ Blasco to Guzmán, 15 and 16 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.263-4. Briceño to Guzmán, 25 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.229.

² Acevedo to Guzmán, 14 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.341-2.

³ Acevedo to Guzmán, 14 Apr.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.343.

and the one for the \$50,000 current account were authenticated by the Dutch consul general at Caracas, R.F. Van Lansberge.¹ Blasco was ordered to return to his post at La Vela as soon as possible, and to pay a bill of \$502 to H. Van der Meulen & Co.; merchants and shipyard at Curazao, for refitting a brig and a sloop and to retrieve the voucher for import duties worth \$550 payable in thirty days that he had given as collateral.²

The events that followed are not clear. In spite of his friendship with the Liberals, Jesurún sold the weapons and gunpowder to Van der Meulen who then sold them to García and Francia on 19 April. Later reports claimed that Van der Meulen had bought the weapons on behalf of the paecistas. The date of Guzmán's return to Curazao is not clear, but it would be surprising if Jesurún had sold the weapons with Guzmán returned with power to negotiate vast loans. Guzmán perhaps was not on the island when Jesurún sold them, but he was there on the 19th when he protested the sale by Van der Meulen to Governor R.H. Esser, explaining that García was loading the weapons onto his own sloop sailing for St. Thomas, thus complying with the governor's orders on maintaining neutrality on the sale of war matériel, while Izquierdo, Mendoza, and Felipe Baptista had already sailed to Maracaibo to inform the rebel navy of García's sailing. The rebel navy would then intercept García on the high seas and 'capture' the cargo as a fair prize of war. The whole exercise would make a mockery of the governor's policy. Guzmán appealed to him to prevent it.³

¹ Acevedo to Guzmán, 15, 17 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 345-7.

² Acevedo to Guzmán, 14 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 339, 343-4.
9.6 per cent interest per month.

³ Unsigned, Venezuelan Agency to Acevedo, Curazao, 19 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 45, fo. 601. Guzmán to the Governor of the Island, Curazao, 19 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fos. 85 ff.

Doubting that the governor would accept his claim, Guzmán spoke to the five crewmen of García's sloop. With the help of Vidal and Samuel Maduro he offered them \$500 each for surrendering the ship to the government at La Vela or Puerto Cabello. When they agreed Vidal supplied them with pistols while Guzmán gave the first mate a pair of his own.¹ On 6 May, Guzmán reported that the sloop had not reached its true destination, Maracaibo. Perhaps sensing some uneasiness in the crew, he supposed that the captain had chosen not to expose himself, and so had gone to St. Thomas. By 6 May, the governor had still not replied to Guzmán's protest.²

On 10 May, Blasco, still indispensable at Curazao since Guzmán may have gone to join Monagas by then, reported to Monagas that a Danish sloop had arrived carrying the weapons that García had taken. The Danish sloop was headed for Maracaibo with García and his cargo. Blasco hoped that the government's fleet would stop it although rebel ships were still getting through.³ The blockade of Maracaibo was declared on 11 May, probably as a result of the incident of the 2,000 guns as well as the Guajira campaign. Hearing that Monagas's troops lacked supplies, Blasco used the authority he had been given on 19 March to get a loan from Jesurún. Included in the shipment for Monagas's personal use were 2,000 havana cigars, six cases of claret, eight reams of paper, and 200 goose feather quills.⁴

¹ Unsigned (believed to be Guzmán) Venezuelan Agency to Acevedo, Curazao, 19 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fo. 508.

² Guzmán to Acevedo, 6 May 1848, ADRRC, 5, fos. 581-4, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 27-8.

³ It seems García had only taken half of the guns to St. Thomas while his manifest stated he carried 2,000, thus leaving the other half to be shipped out of Curazao without having to declare it. Unsigned, Venezuelan Agency to Acevedo, Curazao, 19 Apr. 1848, ADRRC, 45, fo. 601.

⁴ Blasco to Monagas, 10 May 1848, ADRRC, 35, fos. 249-50. Receipt of debts paid by Guzmán to the Jesurúns, Curazao, 30 May 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos. 3-4.

More than a month after he had been authorised to negotiate the current account, Guzmán received twenty-five \$1,000 bonds of the consolidated debt with their coupons. While Guzmán got to Curazao, Blasco was ordered to negotiate in his name taking care to be just to those who had lent to the government until then. 2 per cent interest was to be added to the amount still owed to the Jesurúns for the first loan back in February. He was to charter ships on a monthly basis rather than buy them, making the government responsible for any damage. Blasco urged Guzmán to return to Curazao at once to negotiate himself.¹ Two days later, on 30 May, Guzmán settled the government's account with the Jesurúns totalling \$14,822. 14 that had been contracted by Cotarro, Blasco and Hurtado. Blasco promised to take good care of the Jesurúns at La Vela because they had done so much for the country.²

The day before Guzmán left Jacobo Jesurún in charge of the agency for another trip to the mainland he contracted to buy 1,000 guns from him at the top price of \$12 each to be paid with half of the salt tax revenue for the province of Coro as well as by exempting the Jesurúns from paying any import or export taxes and port dues at Coro and Maracaibo. On the same day Guzmán also contracted to pay the Jesurúns for \$7,500 worth of supplies by exempting them from the same duties, but excluding the availability of the salt revenue.³ Jesurún accepted his appointment as acting agent the next day.⁴

¹ Blasco to Guzmán, 28 May 1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.251 ff. Blasco's orders were issued on 24 May. Guzmán's whereabouts is unclear, perhaps Caracas or Ports of Altagracia.

² Receipt of debts paid by Guzmán to the Jesurúns, 30 May 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos. 3-4. Guzmán to Treasury secretary, Caracas, 15 Dec.1849, ADRRC, 5, fos.511 ff., and Castellanos, Páez, pp.215-26. Blasco to Guzmán, 7 June 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.261.

³ Two contracts between Guzmán and the Jesurúns, Curazao, 19 June 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.19-23.

⁴ Jesurún to Guzmán, 20 June 1848, ADRRC, 43, fo.29.

As agent Jesurún feared that there was no legal way of preventing a Venezuelan merchant vessel from taking 1,200 rebel guns on the island. He suggested that the government should station a warship at Curazao to be able to follow any Venezuelan merchantman to sea where it could be intercepted legally and taken to a Venezuelan port to be tried. Another vessel at Aruba would serve the same purpose and disrupt rebel communications.¹ On 19 June Acevedo had protested to Governor Esser regarding García's return from St. Thomas when he had called at Aruba for a few days before continuing to Maracaibo, joining in the attack on the government's four ships at Capana. Acevedo informed the governor of the rebels' abuse of their asylum at Curazao and Aruba asking that it be stopped. The governor replied on 6 July denying all the news given to the Venezuelan government with regard to the incident of García and the guns. He did agree to prevent the entrance of armed rebel ships into his ports. Acevedo replied on the 16th declaring that Venezuela had a right to be believed by the governor. He added that the rebels did not represent a nation nor were they a belligerent political party, but a few men blinded by hateful passions. Venezuela failed to understand how he did not distinguish between the true merchants and those who only posed as such but were enemies of Venezuela who were using those islands as the centre of their operations. Acevedo did thank the governor for deciding to refuse the armed rebels entry.² After this exchange Acevedo issued a secret order to Guzmán to keep a ship ready at Curazao as Jesurún had suggested, but it was to follow and capture any merchantman that took those weapons, irregardless of its flag and its destination, and to bring it to a Venezuelan port. Venezuela would answer

¹ Jesurún to Guzmán, 30 June 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.31-3.

² Acevedo to the governor of Curazao, Caracas, 16 July 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.395-401, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.30-3.

to the merchantman's nation. Acevedo encouraged Guzmán to push the governor into being more friendly towards the government. Acevedo also thought that Guzmán should encourage foreign shipping to Maracaibo to show it and the world how the rebels were interfering with the legal trade of foreign citizens.¹

The Jesurúns later lent \$6,006 to pay \$3,000 that Venezuela owed to Van der Meulen's shipyard, plus \$2,000 for 200 one-arroba (25 lbs.) barrels of gunpowder, \$720 worth of other supplies, and a commission charge of 5 per cent to the lenders. As collateral they were given \$12,000 in bonds of the consolidated debt that earned 5 per cent interest. For six months the loan would be repaid in import duties at La Guaira, Puerto Cabello, Coro and Maracaibo, after which the amount still owed would earn 2 per cent interest per month until paid by import duty exemptions. The Jesurúns could auction the bonds they held after the first six months, taking what was still owing to them and returning the remainder to the government.² Five weeks later the Jesurúns lent another \$9,090 for supplies to be repaid in cash, \$5,989 in three months, and \$3,101 three months later (February, 1849), and all earning 1 per cent monthly. The brig 'Orinoco' was given over as collateral.³ Twelve days later, on 27 September, the Jesurúns sold two sloops which they had chartered to Venezuela, one at \$300 per month plus exemption from Venezuelan customs duties. The two were sold for \$12,000, \$2,000 in cash and \$10,000 payable in customs duties and earning 1 per cent

¹ Acevedo to Guzmán, 17 July 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.403 ff., and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.33-6.

² Contract between Guzmán and the Jesurúns, 9 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.43-5.

³ Contract between Guzmán and J.A. Jesurún, 15 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 43, fo.41. The supplies are not described.

monthly for the first six months and 2 per cent on the remainder still owed. \$20,000 in bonds were given as collateral.¹ From October to March 1849 their expenses for the fleet and the army totalled \$14,284. 78. Another \$63 were spent repairing a brig. Finally, the Jesurúns covered various government bills totalling \$8,635. In October 1848, Jesurún also sent receipts for work carried out on various vessels at Van der Meulen's shipyard, as well as \$6,542. 82 given to Guzmán, totalling \$15,299. 67, but it is not clear whether this was covered by the other loans or repaid separately.²

400 guns arrived at Curazao from the United States in August as part of the order for 1,000, but upon inspection at La Guaira they were found to be used and rebuilt, with flintlocks off centre, covered in white mould, and of a smaller calibre than usual. They were refused and returned to Curazao. When Jesurún made his claim to settle all outstanding bills a year later he was charging \$15,000 for 1,380 guns. Guzmán supported these figures, but the treasury pointed out that it had not received notice of the mouldy guns ever being accepted at any military base. However, since

¹ Contract made between Guzmán and J.A. Jesurún to charter a sloop, 8 July 1848, ADRRC, 3, fo.229, 43, fo.39. Contract of sale between Guzmán and Jesurún, 27 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 9, fo.597. The sale is described in Juan Bautista Calcaño, treasurer, to treasury secretary, Caracas, 3 Nov.1849, Report on government business with the Jesurúns, ADRRC, 43, fo.75, but fails to mention the rise in interest rate to 2% after six months. When the 'Eclipse' was inspected it was found to be old, but serviceable in a short campaign. Comtes de la escuadra en comisión especial to Gral. jefe sup^r de las fuerzas de mar y tierra, Puerto Cabello, 3 Oct.1848, ADRRC, 11, fo.109.

² Guzmán to treasury secretary, Caracas, 15 Dec.1849, ADRRC, 5, fos.511 ff., and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.215-26. See also J.B. Calcaño's report as general treasurer to the treasury secretary, 3 Nov.1849, ADRRC, 43, fos. 67-80. Receipts for work at Van der Meulen, ADRRC, 43, fos.53-4.

the claim had been recognised by the government the treasury could only make the observation as that claim was included in the total.¹ The contract had specified only 1,000 guns, and it is exaggerated to have paid \$12 each for inoperable weapons. The extra 380 guns might have been another shipment entirely, but no records of their delivery were ever presented.

There is no doubt that the Jesurúns must have been involved in the agency's further financial matters, but those mentioned here are the only ones of which I have found recorded proof. These amounts of the Jesurúns' loans to Venezuela total:

\$14,822. 14
15,100. 00
7,500. 00
6,006. 00
9,090. 00
12,000. 00
14,284. 78
63. 00
8,635. 00
<hr/>
\$87,500. 92
=====

It is impossible to determine the total Venezuela eventually paid for those loans in cash and bonds with their varying interest rates, and in customs duty exemptions.

There were many other expenses made by the government. Ships were refitted at Barcelona. Acevedo called for more ships to be bought or chartered and sent to Beluche to be inspected and, if acceptable to him, fitted for war.² Fortunato Corvaia, Venezuela's agent at St. Thomas, was

¹ Ibid.
Jesurún to Guzmán, 30 Aug. 1848, ADRRC, 43, fo. 36. Report of gun inspection - Julián Churión to Comd^{te} de la guarnición, La Guaira, 13 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fo. 435. Acevedo to Guzmán, 15 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fo. 427. Quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 63-5.

² Acevedo to Guzmán, 3 and 24 June, 17 July 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 351, 377-80, 403-8.

reputed to have bought a condemned brig called 'El San Thómas' for \$5,000, and sent it to La Guaira with a bill for \$15,000. It was found to be useless for arming for war, and Guzmán was authorised to use it to pay for another ship.¹ This seems to have been the only purchase made at St.Thomas by the government. Along with Corvaia, Guzmán, Calcaño, Hurtado, Caballero and others were said to be filling their empty pockets by way of the contracts made for the state.²

Guzmán bought the sloop 'Fénix', 170 tons, from Simón Sardi for \$10,500, putting \$4,500 down and \$6,000 in pagarés payable at any port.³ Mr John C. Prince leased two ships to the government, but despite orders to pay him at least \$1,200 in vouchers and salt duty exemptions he had not recovered his money by December 1849.⁴ Prince or Isaac Debrot were allowed to import salt into Venezuela duty free to repay \$4,000 still owed Debrot from the sale of his brig 'Napoleon'.⁵ Debrot was paid a further \$2,000 at Caracas that were still owed to him for the sale of another sloop, 'Betsy', 45 tons.⁶ Guzmán chartered another sloop from José and Isaac Kogen

¹ Van Lansberge to Dutch foreign secretary, Caracas, 28 July 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.245-6. Acevedo to Guzmán, 23 and 24 June 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.373-80. Calcaño may have been involved in the purchase of the ship because he left for St.Thomas on 7 May to take the steamer to England. Caballero to Guzmán, La Guaira, 3 June 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.425.

² Van Lansberge, ibid.

³ Contract between Sardi and Guzmán, Curazao, 14 July 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.165.

⁴ Acevedo to Guzmán, 6 June 1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.359. Guzmán's order that Prince be repaid for \$800, Curazao, 19 June 1848, ADRRC, 34, fo.36. Prince to Monagas, Caracas, 16 Dec.1849, 35, fo.523.

⁵ Acevedo to Guzmán, 8 July 1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.402.

⁶ Inventory of the 'Betsy' by Charles B. Debrot, Curazao, 18 July 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.211. Acevedo to Guzmán, 12 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.423, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.43-5. C.B. Debrot received another voucher for \$300 from Guzmán, 17 July 1848, ADRRC, 3, fo.534.

for use as a mail boat for \$150 a month and exempted from paying any duties.¹ Jesurún appeared as guarantor for \$6,000 in another contract that offered to repay \$6,000 at once and another \$5,000 within 90 days, placing a brig as collateral plus Guzmán's word to make up the difference. This contract was made in haste and is now missing part of the text making it impossible to know if it was related to any deal already mentioned, particularly Jesurún's loan of \$6,006 of the same day.² 1,000 muskets arrived and were found to be acceptable on 29 September.³ Although Guzmán was authorised to hire sailors and officers, who would then report to Beluche, as well as ships and supplies⁴ the agency lacked funds to pay for ships, let alone sailors. As an example, Guzmán had to give Sardi an I O U for \$1,500 in part payment of the 'Fénix'. Sardi then went to Caracas where he collected more than \$1,000.⁵

One important arrival to Curazao in early July was the American steamer 'Augusta'. Guzmán contracted to buy it for \$35,000 dollars or pesos fuertes on 13 July before he received Monagas's orders to charter it. Its representative, Mr N.H. Freeman, was to receive a commission of 5 per cent from Guzmán as inducement to postpone his return to the United States long enough to go to Caracas to finalise the sale.⁶ At Puerto Cabello

¹ Contract between Guzmán and the Kogens, Curazao, 19 July 1848, ADRRC, 3, fo.508.

² Contract with Jesurún as guarantor, 9 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 3, fo.596.

³ Julián Churión to Guzmán, Curazao, 29 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.539.

⁴ Secretary Mejía to Guzmán, Caracas, 27 June 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.543.

⁵ Guzmán's IOU to Sardi, Curazao, 18 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 5, fo.239. Sardi collects in Acevedo to Guzmán, 12 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.423.

⁶ Juan Crisóstomo Hurtado to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 13 July 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.371-3. Freeman to Guzmán, Curazao, 20 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 23, fos.325-6. Acevedo to Guzmán, 17 July 1848, ordering what he thought was an Orinoco Company steamer to Puerto Cabello or La Guaira, ADRRC, 22, fos.403-10, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.33-6.

the 'Augusta' was not bought, but chartered to take General Silva and 300 chosen fusiliers to Margarita to protect that island from a possible invasion by the rebel fleet which had left Maracaibo and headed east.¹ Freeman was disappointed that he had only managed to lease the steamer for \$4,000 'macucina [sic] dollars', pesos sencillos, for one trip. He asked to be reimbursed for his time and expenses while in Caracas, and was given \$100 fuertes. Upon his return to Curazao, Freeman asked Guzmán, in justice, to pay him 5 per cent on the \$4,000 since he was receiving no commission from the steamer's captain. Guzmán gave him a voucher for \$100 sencillos to satisfy all claims.² Three weeks later Acevedo informed Guzmán that Freeman had been writing from Curazao to the United States against Venezuela and the government.³ On 24 September, Acevedo accepted an offer of further service of the steamer authorising Guzmán to charter it for two or three months at \$4,000 monthly, but keeping the government free to dissolve the contract if need be.⁴ On 30 September Guzmán chartered the 'Augusta' for one month for \$4,000 payable at the end of the period, and \$80 a day demurrage after the contract's expiration and until the \$4,000 were paid. Venezuela would furnish all fuel and exempt the steamer from all port charges, while Guzmán gave the captain \$40,000 in treasury bonds payable as import duties at any Venezuelan customs house

¹ Acevedo to Guzmán, 7 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.411-16. Silva reached Margarita on 30 July. Quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.38-41.

² Freeman to Guzmán, 20 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 23, fos.325-6. Freeman's receipt to Guzmán, Curazao, 23 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 23, fo.327. Acevedo to Guzmán, 12 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.423-6. Freeman also tried to sell the government some gunpowder at \$30 at La Guaira when Guzmán was paying \$10 at Curazao per arroba barrel. Acevedo to Guzmán, 7 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.414.

³ Acevedo to Guzmán, 12 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.423-6, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.43-5.

⁴ Acevedo to Guzmán, 24 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.441-4, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.70-2.

as collateral security for payment of the steamer in case of loss or damage.¹ Because of rumours that Hermenegildo García had bought a Dominican corvette Blas Bruzual convinced a doubting Beluche of the need to buy the 'Augusta', renamed the 'Libertador', when its contract expired.²

Although Acevedo attempted to get funds to Guzmán the treasury never seemed to have enough to send him.³ Even when Guzmán was due to return to Caracas in early October, Jesurún had to save him from the delicate situation of leaving the island without paying the bills by acting as his guarantor. Blas Bruzual had been at St. Thomas since August and was sent to replace Guzmán.⁴ In September hopes had been raised by reports that Víctor de la Cova was coming from the United States assuring the government of a loan of \$500,000 fuertes,⁵ but those assurances seem to have come to nothing. Despite the difficulties he suffered Guzmán claimed that nine ships had been acquired for the fleet at Curazao as well as supplies, uniforms, weapons, gunpowder, ammunition, and fittings for four other ships. All this had been accomplished against the fierce competition of the 300 to 400 paecistas there, even Páez, and thanks to the good will of the Jesurúns. He stated that the cost had not been great, especially when compared to contracts made elsewhere. He cited the purchase of an 80 ton brig for \$44,000 in bonds, a cost of \$20,000 each to arm the sloops 'Independencia' and 'La Fama' at Puerto Cabello and La Guaira, and the borrowing of \$10,000

¹ Contract between Guzmán and F.C. Gillett, commander of the American steamer 'Augusta', Curazao, 30 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 5, fo. 479.

² Alexandre Boyer, French consul at Maracaibo, to Guzmán, Curazao, 23 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 11, fos. 115 ff.

³ Acevedo to Guzmán, Caracas, 17 Aug. 1848, 12, 15, 19, 24 Sept. and 3 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 421-34, 441-8. Quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 42-5, 64-7, 70-2, 74-6.

⁴ Guzmán to treasury secretary, Caracas, 15 Dec. 1849, ADRRC, 5, fos. 511-26. Caballero to Guzmán, La Guaira, 8 Aug. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo. 427. Acevedo to Guzmán, 24 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 441-4.

⁵ Acevedo to Guzmán, 24 Sept. 1848, ibid. Cova does seem to have brought the brig 'Congreso' and some guns. Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 30 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 48, fos. 175 f.

at 200 per cent. Guzmán did not criticise these and other dealings, but only used them to illustrate the terrible situation in which the government had been.¹

Guzmán had also had to contend with the governor of Curazao who had declared that armed rebel vessels would be refused entry on 6 July. Three days later the government's brig 'Orinoco' was attacked by García's rebel ship just 100 yards from a Curazao beach and within sight of a fortress. The captain had no option but to run aground to save the vessel from being taken by the rebels. Guzmán raised a party and refloated the brig at a cost of \$108. A port official inspected the damage after Guzmán protested to the governor, and is supposed to have been convinced that the 'Orinoco' was unarmed, carrying not even a pistol.² García protested to Esser about giving entry to the 'Orinoco' after it had exchanged shots with him. He claimed equal treatment since as an armed rebel he was not allowed in port, but had to anchor under the fort and supply his ship by launch. He also protested the presence of Guzmán on the island, a man who used dark means and was tribune of the proletarians.³ On 17 August Acevedo informed Guzmán that the government had heard that he was causing trouble among the lower classes on the island. Acevedo did not doubt that these rumours were inventions of his enemies, but he stressed that Guzmán should take care to give the governor no pretext to expel him.

¹ Guzmán to treasury secretary, Caracas, 15 Dec.1849, ADRRC, 5, fos. 511-26, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.215-26.

² Alejo Troconis, commander of the 'Orinoco', to Guzmán, Curazao, 10 July 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.1, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.29-30. Cost of refloating in Guzmán to treasury secretary, 15 Dec.1849, ibid.

³ García to Esser, Curazao, 10 July 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.240-2.

The governor barely tolerated him as agent, and Venezuela would be able to do nothing should he be expelled. Acevedo emphasised that the enemy must not be given a victory of that kind.¹ Although Esser was convinced of Guzmán's spiritual influence over the black population, he lacked proof to expel him.² A month later, after Páez had arrived at Curazao to direct the revolt from there, Van Lansberge offered to write to have the governor change his conduct regarding Páez. After a long meeting, Acevedo claimed that the Dutch consul had had to agree that the governor had not kept the respect he should have for Venezuela and the neutrality he claimed to observe.³ Guzmán was to inform of any change in the governor's attitude towards the Venezuelan government as a result of Van Lansberge's letters. If he remained hostile, Venezuela would move to declare him an enemy or force him to act as one by demanding Páez's expulsion from Curazao.⁴ By October Acevedo was threatening to write directly to the Dutch foreign secretary. In a meeting with Monagas, Van Lansberge stated that Guzmán was causing the friction with Curazao in an effort to embarrass Monagas and make him resign so that once elected vice-president, Guzmán would assume power. After the meeting Monagas put a stop to Acevedo's threats.⁵

¹ Guzmán 'conmueve la gente inferior de esa población ...' Acevedo to Guzmán, 17 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.421-2, and quoted as 'conmueve la parte interior de esa población ...' in Castellanos, Páez, pp.42-3.

² Esser to Dutch colonial secretary, Curazao, 26 Oct.1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.247.

³ The governor 'ha faltado á los respetos que debía guardar á la República de Venezuela y á la neutralidad que dice se precia en observar ...' Acevedo to Guzmán, 19 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.431-4, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.66-7.

⁴ Ibid. Van Lansberge's account of a long meeting in late July states that he defended Esser's policy of neutrality. Van Lansberge to Dutch foreign secretary, 28 July 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.242-6.

⁵ Van Lansberge to Dutch foreign secretary, 21 Oct.1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.249-50.

The rebels too were trying to influence the governor's behaviour. During March or April, near the height of the revolt, Juan Balsamo, chief of the foreign affairs section of the government of Maracaibo, submitted for approval the draft of a letter addressed to the governor of Curazao protesting his unequal conduct towards the belligerents in the struggle for power in Venezuela. Balsamo argued that the rebels constituted a nation at war since they held all the territory west of Boca del Tocuyo, near Puerto Cabello. Using Vattel for support he claimed that the two political factions at war with each other should be considered two different nations. These nations were held responsible to existing treaties with the Low Countries. The governor knew that the rebels, the 'Gobierno Restaurador de la Constitución y Las Leyes', had respected the Dutch flag and its citizens while the Caracas government had harrassed them, their commerce, and their mail. The people taking refuge on the island were proof enough of the illegality of the Caracas government. Those strong capitalists, renowned merchants, legislators, soldiers, clergymen, and doctors felt that the constitutional pact had ended on 24 January when one constituted power had violated the constitution by exceeding the limit of its authority in annihilating another power. Serrano would ask the governor to open his ports to Maracaibo's ships as they were not pirates, and to prohibit the arming of Caracas's ships there because its purpose was to fight against Venezuelans and the Venezuelan coast which were protected by the Treaty of 15 June 1831. To follow true neutrality, both sides should be allowed or prohibited to arm their vessels, and Maracaibo protested any difference as a violation of the treaty. Finally, Serrano would give notice of a blockade of the enemy coast by the constitutional fleet.¹ Perhaps not all

¹ Juan Balsamo, report to Governor Serrano of Maracaibo, n/d, ADRRC, 16, fos. 25 ff.

of the points raised in the draft were addressed to Curazao, but it is probable that a note similar in content was sent.

At the end of March M.M. Martín, at the rebel fort of San Carlos de Maracaibo, urgently asked for help from capitalist Juan Peres by describing the desperate situation there. The fort had armed Coro, Mérida and Trujillo. All the grape-shot had been given to the fleet, so that only the men's fists defended the fort. They needed 1,000 - 2,000 guns, lead and cannon-shot. The men had not been paid since December, and rations were desperately low. Martín blamed the capitalists for this state of affairs for not sending enough money earlier. Páez could not perform miracles on his own. With that precious element, money, the country might have been reconquered by then. Business had to help the war effort to save Venezuela. The most immediate need was ammunition for the cannons. Martín suggested that these could be had from what had been salvaged from the lost French warship, 'Boussole', or even from the armoury at Curazao, if Peres went about it quietly.¹ These recommendations suggest that despite the declared neutrality of the island, the paecistas did have the sympathy and even the support of certain officials there. It is clear that the rebels used Curazao and Aruba as points of supply and communications with easy access to Maracaibo and San Carlos, which served as the co-ordinating centre for operations in the West.

¹ M.M. Martín to Juan Peres, San Carlos de Maracaibo, 30 Mar. 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos. 203-4.

CHAPTER VII
PAEZ DEFEATED
A LIBERAL CONGRESS

Monagas entered Caracas to a hero's welcome on 21 July 1848. Passing under triumphal arches and flags he was met with the salute of guns and fireworks. The whole of the government came out to receive him and accompanied him to the Tedeum mass. Sanabria had ridden with him from Valencia. The public festivities celebrating his return and the salvation of the country went on for days. At his house of San Pablo Monagas received the congratulations of many citizens.¹ A poem was published in his honour; the first stanza of the chorus reads:

Eternal praise to the illustrious Monagas,
 Who today to heroic Caracas returns,
 And the peace she had lost is regained,
 By his firmness, his liberal zeal. 2

By the time of Monagas's return, internal bickering about the vice-presidential candidates and Liberal policy had split the Liberals into their more traditional factions. These resembled the well-known moderate groupings and incorporated many of their members. Monagas attempted to bring all of their representatives into his government. Thus guzmancistas, mariñistas, blanquistas, salomistas and monaguistas³ were kept busy vying for power. At least one Liberal claimed that known oligarchs had become

¹ Landaeta Rosales, Recepciones Notables, p.12. González Guinán, Historia, iv. pp.553-4.

² 'Loor eterno al ilustre Monágas,/Que á la heróica Carácas hoy vuelve,/Y la paz que perdió le devuelve,/Su firmeza, su ardor liberal.' Gerónimo Tirado y Seijas, Canto a la Entrada del Ilustre Gral. de Division José Tadeo Monágas Presidente de la Republica (Caracas, 1848), p.9.

³ L. Villanueva, Discurso del Doctor Laureano Villanueva en el Panteon Nacional el 24 de Marzo de 1897 con motivo de la Inauguración del Monumento del General José Gregorio Monagas Redentor de los Esclavos (Caracas, 1897), p.18.

hypocritical Liberals who would discredit the government in Monagas's absence. This Liberal believed that posts should be given on merit, and not on favour as the oligarchs had done or the country would be lost.¹ This warning suggests that posts were being given to non-Liberals who may have been oligarchs or perhaps Monagas's friends and fellow 'reformists'.

Apart from the relief of Maracaibo the main issue in late July was the August elections. In early July the Liberal societies had met to draw up their lists of candidates for the electoral college. In August the people would choose from the lists those electors who would vote for the people's choice in the October elections. The differences within the party led to intrigues as the factions sought to get as much representation as possible among the lists. A faction would then have a better chance of getting its men elected as electors. Since the Conservatives would abstain from participating in the elections, control of those lists was even more important. As leader of the party, Guzmán was the likely candidate for the vice-presidency. As the main Liberal influence in the government and the force behind the latest Liberal legislative reform, Sanabria had every reason to aspire to the vice-presidency. As a constant Liberal, reformista, and the hero of the Guajira campaign, Mariño was considered by some to be worthy of the office.² His prestige had been bolstered further in May or June when he had been elected 'Serenísimo Gran Maestro del Gran Oriente de Venezuela', the grand master of Venezuela's

¹ Antonio Zozaya to Guzmán, La Guayra, 4 June 1848, ADRRC, 49, fos.305-7.

² Juan Liendo, 'Candidato para la Vicepresidencia de la Republica, el Antiguo Benemérito General Santiago Mariño', Valencia, 18 Aug.1848, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.8.

freemasons for the term 1848-1851.¹ Lawyer and Liberal ideologue Doctor José Manuel García had the support of another group of Liberals in the western-central provinces that included his maternal cousin and brother-in-law, Ezequiel Zamora, as well as Governor Arteaga.²

As early as March some circles had been considering supporting Sanabria, while Guzmán's friends had been asking him for orders for his campaign.³ It was rumoured in early June that Guzmán would not accept the vice-presidency, and that he supported García for the post. Guzmán's supporters begged him to declare himself to end these rumours.⁴ Hurtado was busy at La Guaira and Puerto Cabello promoting Guzmán's candidacy and was happy to report that Mariño supported Guzmán. Some of the officers of the Guajira campaign had led the Liberal Society of Puerto Cabello in supporting Guzmán.⁵ Blas Bruzual presided over the meeting of the Society in Caracas where the candidates were split between guzmancistas and garciistas.⁶ After the August elections García, also called Mechitas, tried to win over guzmancista electors by claiming that Guzmán was ineligible for office because he had not resided in Venezuela for the last three years as was required by article 62 of the constitution.⁷ Felipe Larrazábal

¹ Américo Carnicelli, Masonería Independencia de América (1810-1830), ii.337, fn.42.

² A. Rodríguez, Ezequiel Zamora, pp.22, 24, 26, fn.17, 149.

³ Goiticoa to Guzmán, La Guayra, 27 Mar.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.321-2.

⁴ Pedro González to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 12 June 1848, ADREC, 48, fo.375.

⁵ Juan Crisóstomo Hurtado to Guzmán, La Guaira, 3 June 1848, and Puerto Cabello, 13 and 14 July 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.355-9, 371-4, 397. Cornelio Perozo to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 16 July 1848, ADRRC, 33, fos.1-6; Valencia, Nirgua, and Montalbán all chose guzmancistas as candidates for electors.

⁶ Hurtado to Guzmán, 14 July 1848, ibid. González Guinán, Historia, iv. 550.

⁷ Illegible to Manuel (probably Larrazábal), Caracas, 19 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 8, fos.493-4. Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 16 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.99-100.

and other supporters of Guzmán replied correctly that the residency requirement could be waived for him as permitted by article 52, paragraph 2, because he had been absent in the service and on account of the government.¹ García, with the alleged help of Hurtado, convinced Father Sixto Freites to erase Larrazábal and José Jesús Alvelo from the list of electors by stating that they were oligarchs. Due to the scandal produced by imitating the tactics used by the godos in the elections of 1846, Freites resigned his place in the electoral college leaving it for Larrazábal who would support Guzmán energetically.²

Sanabria's star waned appreciably when Monagas refused to sanction the law of territorial credit on 27 July, returning it instead to congress for further consideration next year.³ The Liberals became more confused when soldiers forcibly entered Captain Chitty's house on 29 July, and arrested Colonel José Félix Blanco for conspiracy. He was 'immediately released and pardoned by order of His Excellency the President.'⁴ With Acevedo and Sanabria openly opposed to each other, the anti-guzmancista Liberals expected Acevedo to be replaced. Hurtado reported that Acevedo's wild ideas for raising funds could only harm the nation. Placards appeared in the streets saying, 'Abajo el ministerio traidor', a cabinet that was alleged to be influenced by 'el partidillo pastelero', a reference to the

¹ Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 6 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.159-61. José de la E. Morales to Guzmán, Mérida, 15 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.117-18. C.P. to Manuel Montenegro, Puerto Cabello, n/d, ADRRC, 33, fos.7-10. Regarding residency - 'No se excluyen por falta de este requisito los ausentes en servicio o por causa de la República.' Article 52, paragraph 2.

² Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 9 July, 19 Aug, 6 and 22 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.133, 147-8, 157-61.

³ Riddel to Palmerston, 2 Aug.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.132 ff.

⁴ Riddel to Palmerston, 14 Aug.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.168-77.

varied ideological background of Acevedo and his group as compared to the purist Sanabria, and to their efforts to concoct a pie of policy that in attempting to please everyone, pleased no one. At least one Liberal warned that the opposition was compact and well organised while the Liberals were busy fighting amongst themselves about policy and for government jobs.¹ Instead, Sanabria was 'resigned' on 31 August leaving ministry officer Ramón Yepes temporarily in charge.²

Guzmán's position was strong enough to withstand García's intrigues. His loyal service at Curazao must have made him Monagas's choice. Although Monagas did not openly support any candidate for fear of being accused of influencing the results he must have remembered that the great majority of the Liberal masses that had supported his struggle against Páez had done so because of his protection of their leader, Guzmán. Thus various provincial military leaders were allowed to maintain order for the elections while letting their choice of Guzmán be known.³ As the frustrated candidate of the Liberals in 1846, Guzmán as vice-president would symbolise more than anyone else the rise to power of the Liberals, and give Monagas even more of their support. As an extra precaution to boost Guzmán's status before

¹ Hurtado to Guzmán, Caracas, 3 and 8 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.375-82. J.J. Ponze to Guzmán, Caracas, 3 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.141-2.

² Riddell to Palmerston, 5 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.281-3. Manuel de Larrazábal to Guzmán, 7 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fo.155.

³ Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, 6 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fo.159. José Requena to Guzmán, Coro, 15 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.75. Valero to Guzmán, Coro, 2 Oct.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.497-9, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.162-3. Gabriel Guevara to Manuel Larrazábal, Castillo Libertador, 24 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 8, fos.495 ff; Guevara warned Portocarrero not to work against the general will that supported Guzmán. Cornelio Perozo to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 5 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 32, fos.149 ff, on the results of Guevara's letter to Portocarrero. Manuel Ponce de León to Guzmán, Mérida, 15 Oct.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.137.

the October elections it was announced that he had been appointed secretary of the interior.¹ On 1 October the electoral colleges met in the fifteen provincial capitals and elected Guzmán the next vice-president. His election would not need to be sanctioned by congress in January because he received more than two-thirds of the vote, 248 of 311 votes cast.²

Guzmán was in a difficult position. As vice-president he hoped to influence Monagas's policy and to bring his Liberal supporters into the government. He hoped also that his office would put him in the best position possible to reach the presidency in two years' time. As long as Monagas needed the Liberals and Guzmán remained their leader, Guzmán would be sure of a certain degree of influence. With the Liberals already divided into factions, Guzmán would have to depend on Monagas's co-operation to show how effective he could be in the government, an effectiveness that would help him maintain his leadership of the divided Liberals. If Monagas were to get enough Liberal support without Guzmán's mediation, or if Monagas no longer were to need Liberal support, Guzmán's hopes of becoming president would be jeopardised. Monagas would maintain the support of the Liberals while giving its leadership a subordinate role. Having more to lose than to gain by joining the Monagas government, Guzmán had placed himself at Monagas's mercy.

Páez had reached St. Thomas on 13 July. He sent agents around the Caribbean and to the United States in search of support for his cause and even asked Shields for letters of recommendation.³ The merchant Antonio

¹ Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, 30 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 48, fos. 175-8.
Valero to Guzmán, Coro, 17 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 26, fo. 501.
Hurtado to Guzmán, La Victoria, 8 Nov. 1848, ADRRC, 43, fos. 389-94.

² Turreil to French foreign secretary, 4 Nov. 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 177-8.

³ Páez to Shields, San Thomas, 22 July 1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Mariño y las Guerras Civiles, iii. 225-30.

Piccioni gave a banquet in Páez's honour with the attendance of the governor of St. Thomas. Although the island was strongly paecista Páez seems to have found little financial support.¹ He issued his manifesto on 1 August promising to bring down Monagas or to die trying. Acevedo undertook to refute the manifesto.² Páez left St. Thomas for Curazao on 2 September to be able to direct the revolt closer to the mainland. At Curazao he was reunited with his family.³

Páez's main concern was to raise enough funds to continue the struggle. He called on loyal paecistas and personal friends. On 13 September he wrote a series of letters to people in New Granada and Venezuela calling for funds. Some were instructed to send their contributions to St. Thomas as letters of credit payable to Vicente Piccioni.⁴ Páez also wrote to Piccioni that day advising him to expect to receive letters of credit drawn on St. Thomas and payable to the merchant. Piccioni was instructed to accept the letters irregardless of their terms, and to convert them into ounces of gold which he should enter as deposits made by Páez into Páez's account with Piccioni.⁵ By the end of November, the paecistas at Curazao had been able to raise \$53,000 pesos of a projected \$80,000 needed to buy and arm a steamer.⁶ One list shows various merchants

¹ Ibid., and E.B. Núñez, article in El Nacional (Caracas), (20 May 1952), quoted in Parra-Pérez, ibid., iii.230.

² Páez, Manifiesto, 1 Aug. 1848, p.20. Acevedo, Una Lijera Contestación al Manifiesto de Páez, Publicado en Santomas (Caracas, 1848), 25 pp.

³ Núñez, loc.cit.

⁴ J.A.P. to 'A mis pudientes amigos en política que hoy residen en Venezuela', Curazao, 13 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 44, fos. 589-90. Unsigned (Páez) to J.A.M., 13 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 44, fos. 591-2. Unsigned (Páez) to Ju.W., 13 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fos. 501-2. Unsigned (Páez) to Joaquín de Mier of Santa Marta (who had sheltered Bolívar at San Pedro Alejandrino), 13 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fos. 503-6. Also Páez to José María Pino of Mompós, same place and date. All of the above are also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 49-62.

⁵ Unsigned (Páez) to Vte. Piccioni, 13 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 44, fo. 593, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, p. 60.

⁶ Núñez, in El Nacional (Caracas), (20 May 1952), quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.230.

of Coro and Curazao as having contributed \$25,000 pesos.¹

Páez's letter to J.A.M. proves without a doubt Shields's involvement in the conspiracy against Monagas and the government. That letter was addressed to Shields, and Páez added a note to him requesting not only that Shields deliver the letter to J.A.M., but that he use his influence to achieve the letter's end on the terms stated in it.² Thus Shields was knowingly involved in Páez's fund-raising efforts.

Other foreign agents were involved in supporting the paecistas. Having come from Maracaibo to La Guaira the Frenchman François Bousquet had been arrested on 22 August as he was leaving for St. Thomas. Seditious letters and despatches had been found in his trunk, as well as a letter from the Danish, American and British vice-consuls at Maracaibo calling on any foreign naval vessels to sail to Maracaibo to put a stop to the atrocities being committed by the government. Bousquet had to admit that no atrocities had taken place. The executive ordered Judge Felipe Larrazábal to hand over to John Hall at La Guaira the letter signed by British Vice-Consul Mackay. Riddel feared the bad publicity that might affect all foreigners, but he felt powerless to suppress the letter because it was also signed by the Danish and American vice-consuls. He ordered that it be returned to Bousquet.³ Mackay may have had other correspondence intercepted.⁴

¹ Mainly Seniors, De Castros, E.H. López and F.T. Domínguez. List quoted by Castellanos, Páez, pp.180-1, attributed to José María Francia, Páez's son-in-law.

² '...lleve su bondad hta. el extremo de urgir pr. el resultado en los terminos q. ella expresa.' Unsigned (Páez) to B.G. Shields, 13 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 44, fo.592, and quoted in Castellanos, Páez, p.61.

³ Riddel to Palmerston, 4 Sept.1848, including Mackay to any naval commanders, 19 July 1848; John Hall, acting British vice-consul at La Guaira, to Riddel, 25 Aug.1848; Riddel to Hall, 26 Aug.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos. 262-71.

⁴ Mackay to Riddel, Maracaibo, 26 Aug.1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.5-8. Castelli to Mackay, Maracaibo, 11 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.353-5.

Because of his proven improper behaviour Palmerston withdrew his commission, losing his post when he received the news on 20 January 1849.¹

Maracaibo had been under siege for almost two months when the rebel fleet weighed anchor at the end of July 1848 to sail to the aid of the rebels in Oriente not knowing that they had been defeated.² It was said later that Páez had wanted the Cumaná rebels to join the fleet and return to Maracaibo where he planned to begin a new campaign.³ Revolts on the Paria peninsula had begun on 7 May, and had been controlled within a month by Commander José Nicolás Brito Cova. The rebels had been forced into the hills from where they carried on sporadically. It is interesting that Soubllette considered these rebel movements insignificant.⁴ The arrival of the rebel fleet worried authorities about the possibility of the rebels shifting the rebellion from Maracaibo to Cumaná. Carúpano called for reinforcements and prepared for a siege. Arriving before the port on 17 August, the rebel fleet commander Celis called for its surrender. 'Carúpano does not surrender to traitors', was the reply he received.⁵ After bombarding the city unsuccessfully for three days the fleet picked up some of the Paria rebels at Puerto Santo and went on to overwhelm Rio Caribe in a surprise attack.

¹ Riddel to Palmerston, 20 Apr. 1849, F.O. 80/62, fos. 287 ff.

² González Guinán, Historia, iv. 553, see also pp. 549-50.

³ David to French foreign secretary, 21 Sept. 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 159-62.

⁴ Soubllette to Luis A. Baralt, Chocho, 8 July 1848, Latin American Mss. - Venezuela, Lilly Library.

⁵ 'Carúpano no se entrega a los traidores.' Tavera-Acosta, Carúpano, p. 294, also p. 295.

In the meantime, the government had sent Silva and the fusiliers to protect Margarita, and provincial comandante de armas, Francisco Carabaño led an auxiliary force from Cumaná to Carúpano where he would take charge of operations. Carabaño was murdered on 19 August as he passed through a wood near Cariaco. The assassin, who was executed on 2 April 1850 after being tried in Cumaná, claimed that a plot had been made at Carúpano to kill José Gregorio Monagas who might be leading the auxiliary force, and that he had confused Carabaño with Monagas.¹

After refitting problems, the government's fleet was finally able to leave Puerto Cabello in pursuit of the rebels' at the end of August. Mejía had had to be sent there to expedite the fleet's departure.² Most of the rebels had joined their fleet at Rio Caribe. With news of the approach of the government's fleet, the rebels set sail on 1 September to return to Maracaibo with about 300 eastern rebels to strengthen the force in the West. The two fleets sighted each other off Margarita on 2 September, but it seems that the rebels were able to escape by rowing their ships through a calm. Rather than give pursuit to Maracaibo, the government's fleet chose to call at the major ports in the East to be sure the coast was clear.³ Perhaps it needed provisions and water, but its neglect in pursuing the enemy left the rebels free to roam the western coast at will, and to reimpose their seige of Maracaibo.

Monagas was very displeased with the performance of the government's fleet.⁴ As news of Carabaño's death was arriving in Caracas, Colonel Juan

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.558-9.

² Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 8, 11 and 22 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.141-6, 153.

³ Bernardo Ferrero, commander of the government's fleet, to Guzmán, Juan Griego, 7 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 11, fos.121-2. Riddel to Palmerston, 21 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.350-2.

⁴ Acevedo to Guzmán, 24 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fo.441, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.70-2.

José Conde died of apoplexy or a colic at La Guaira on 30 August after drinking what was reputed to have been tea.¹ The deaths of two staunch defenders of the government helped to create the impression that the paecistas were as strong and active as ever.² The failure of the navy to pursue them at sea added to the unease. Monagas sent secretary Mejía to Cumaná with orders to retrieve the government's fleet and send it west against the rebels in an attempt to save Maracaibo from another lengthy siege.³ Monagas wanted the rebel fleet destroyed as soon as possible before he proceeded to pacify Maracaibo. Without their mobility the paecistas would be lost. With the government's fleet in the East Monagas felt that the rebels were most likely to attack the coast of Coro, so he ordered reinforcements there immediately to support Valero.⁴

While Mejía chased the fleet in the East, the eastern rebels took part in a landing with the western rebels and fleet as Monagas had predicted. Led by Páez's principal officers, Colonels José Escolástico Andrade, Pedro Muguerza and Agustín Codazzi, about 700-800 rebels landed at Quisiro, on the eastern coast of Maracaibo province, on 17 September, just ten days after Commander Baca and Captain Zamora had been posted there with 350 men.⁵ Zamora split his troops into nine guerrillas, taking position among the houses of the hamlet.⁶ Baca had a cavalry of only 35 men. The

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.560. Valero to Guzmán, Coro, 12 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.483 ff, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.154-6.

² Valero to Guzmán, ibid. Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, 6 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fo.159.

³ Acevedo to Guzmán, 24 Sept.1848 ADRRC, 22, fo.441, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.70-2.

⁴ Acevedo to Guzmán, 7 Aug.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.411 ff, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.38-41.

⁵ Valero to Guzmán, 7 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.475-7, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.151-2.

⁶ Baca to Mejía, Quisiro, Sept.1848, in Gaceta de Venezuela (Caracas), 938 (22 Oct.1848), quoted in Rodríguez, Zamora, p.148. Rojas, Bosquejo, p.184, claimed that the rebels lost half their number.

battle began at 11 a.m., lasting until 7 p.m. when the rebels retreated to the beach having lost 200 men among dead, wounded, and captured. Zamora's troops seem to have been too weak to give chase that evening. The rebels re-embarked at sunrise when Zamora's artillery announced the new day. Zamora would be known as 'Vencedor de Quisiro'. This victory gave an immense boost to morale among the government's supporters. The landing was seen as the last desperate attempt by Páez to keep the revolt alive.¹ Having gathered all the support available into this attempt he had been defeated by a smaller force loyal to Monagas.

It is difficult to determine the reasons for the rebel landing. With Páez newly arrived at Curazao and calling for funds from his supporters in Venezuela, he may have sought to gain control of that coast to prove that he was still worthy of financial support. He may have sought to isolate the Puertos de Altagracia from Coro by severing its supply route, thus further isolating Maracaibo itself. He may even have hoped to intercept a convoy of money and ammunition that Baca was reputed to be escorting as was rumoured in Maracaibo.² In fact, Baca carried only \$3,000 to help Castelli of which Baca used \$500 to feed his men.³ Whatever the reasons for attacking Quisiro the rebels had the misfortune of finding the most determined resistance from troops and officers loyal to Monagas.

¹ Ibid. Zamora to J. Delvalle, Quisiro, Sept.1848, quoted in Delvalle to Guzmán, Maracaibo, 29 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.199f. Valero to Guzmán, 22 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.493 f., also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.160-1.

² British Vice-Consul Robert Mackay to Riddel, 30 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.167-9, quoted in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.p.270.

³ Valero to Guzmán, 12 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.489, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, p.157.

Spirits were high in Maracaibo where the defenders claimed to be as determined as Zamora. The rebels had shot over one thousand cannon-balls into the city since the government had taken it, and yet the shots had only killed an old man of 70, a boy of 12, a horse and a donkey, 'todos oligarcas'. Rebel deserters were coming over to the defenders daily.¹ Castelli claimed that Páez's declarations were nothing but big words, 'palabrotas', and vague promises. Nevertheless, Castelli had been concentrating his men in and around the city for the expected rebel assault. He was very short of funds with which to pay for supplies.² By the end of September, Castelli had been forced to threaten to leave Maracaibo to the rebels and march to the plains of Perijá to feed his troops unless the 'principal' people of the city helped him. Although he got little help he did agree to remain to avoid the disorders that could be expected in an open city. Vice-Consul Mackay claimed that Castelli had gotten into his predicament by miscalculating the stock of cattle available to feed his troops. More precisely, Castelli had been unable to stock up on beef during August while the rebel fleet was away because rebels in the ranching region of Perijá had resisted Estanislao Castañeda's troops effectively.³ Castelli spent his time making trenches, sending cavalry patrols to gather stray cattle, and hoping to withstand the siege until the navy forced the bar and defeated the rebels.

¹ Delvalle to Guzmán, Maracaibo, 29 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fos. 199 f.

² Castelli to Valero, 1, 2 and 10 Sept. 1848, quoted in Valero to Guzmán, 12 and 18 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 26, fos. 487-9, 491-2, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 156-8

³ Mackay to Riddel, 26 Aug., 30 Sept. 1848, F.O. 80/58, fos. 5-17, 167-9.

A Danish brig arrived at Curazao from St. Thomas on 1 October carrying 80 well-armed men belonging to Páez's guard and led by Commander Belisario. After loading provisions the ship continued to San Carlos, the captain agreeing to make the last leg only after being paid \$1,500.¹ The arrival of these men renowned for their bravery must have buoyed paecista spirits. They were sent on immediately to help starve out Castelli.

While Monagas awaited the return of the fleet he decided to centralize the operations that would take place to beat the rebels in the West. By 15 September he had appointed General Justo Briceño to co-ordinate those operations as commander of both sea and land forces. While Briceño led the fleet, Portocarrero would lead the land operation to relieve Maracaibo.² Even before the fleet had reached Puerto Cabello to prepare for the western campaign Briceño was reported to be acting vain, despotic and presumptuous, and was referring to Castelli as 'asesino italiano infame', though for what reason is not clear.³ The fleet reached the port on 28 September as news was arriving of the defence of Quisiro. Morale was high among the crews. The steamer 'Augusta', now 'Libertador', was considered capable of being armed to join the fleet.⁴ Eight vessels left for the bar of San Carlos on 8 October while three others followed on the 10th.⁵

¹ Alejo Troconis to Guzmán, Curazao, 2 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo. 16. Julián Churión to Guzmán, Curazao, 3 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 26, fo. 506, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, p. 76.

² Acevedo to Guzmán, 15 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 22, fos. 427-9, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 64-5.

³ M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 24 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 48, fos. 171-3. Guevara also complained of Briceño's high-handedness. Guevara to Guzmán, 3 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 48, fo. 35.

⁴ M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, 30 Sept. 1848, ADRRC, 48, fo. 175. Inspection report of the steamer 'Augusta' by nine captains of the fleet to Justo Briceño, 3 Oct. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fo. 231.

⁵ Riddell to Palmerston, 21 Oct. 1848, F.O. 80/58, fo. 80.

In another effort to end the conflict as soon as possible, Monagas had thought of sending General Mariano Montilla to Maracaibo on a secret peace mission back in mid-September when the rebels had resumed the siege.¹ Guzmán came to Caracas at the beginning of October and attended the meeting of the council of state to consider Monagas's proposal. Apparently with pressure from Guzmán the proposal was dropped.² There again, Monagas seemed to favour magnanimity and an end to the suffering while his guzmancista supporters demanded the total defeat of the paecistas. Instead of a peace proposal Monagas decreed a pardon on 11 October to all rebels with the ranks of captain and below who would surrender to the authorities, as well as to all others who removed themselves from wherever Páez was residing and would not take part in his plans. All of these men could ask for safe conducts to return to Venezuela.³ Since the rebel leaders were not included in the pardon any more than they had been during the peace negotiations with Serrano one could expect the pardon to have little effect among the rebel soldiers and sailors. For paecista civilians who had followed Páez abroad the opportunity of returning home and having their embargoed property released might be a welcome relief from the months spent in exile. This decree was made to coincide with the appearance of the government's fleet at the bar of San Carlos and the resumption of its blockade of the rebel fleet within the lake besieging Maracaibo. Yet again,

¹ Acevedo to Guzmán, 19 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.431-2, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.66-7.

² Van Lansberge to Dutch foreign secretary, -- Oct.1848, mentioned in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.267.

³ 'Jose Tadeo Monagas Presidente de la Republica de Venezuela', 11 Oct.1848, AANH, HSAAR, AR 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.10.

Monagas gave the rebels the opportunity to reconsider their opposition to him and return home. Feliciano Palacios, Francisco Azpurua and others left Curazao for Puerto Rico on 28 October.¹ Twenty-seven safe-conducts arrived in Curazao on 9 November and many more were expected, including those for Juan Hilario Boset, bishop of Mérida, and José Antonio Troconis, ex-governor of Mérida.²

Monagas had been taking measures against Páez's supporters. On 1 September he ordered the embargo of all crops produced on land belonging to persons considered to be acting in a hostile fashion against the country. Representations were made by various creditors who claimed that embargoed produce belonged to them for money they had advanced to the hostile producers. Some producers who had been declared hostile attempted to convince the government of their innocence.³

An alleged conspiracy to assassinate Monagas was uncovered in Caracas in mid-September. At first it had been thought to have involved ten or twelve men, but when forty arrests had been made within a few days and people with notable names like Mosquera, Casas and Ustáriz went into hiding even though no warrants had been issued for their arrest, the scope of the conspiracy became apparent. At La Guaira mail was confiscated, perhaps as a result of the uncovering of the conspiracy.⁴

¹ Rodolfo Vasallo to Guzmán, Curazao, 26 Oct.1848, ADRRC, 5, fo.543.

² 'Boset, Obispo Juan Hilario', Safeconduct, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXII, fo.356. Manuel Larrazábal to Fernando Olavarriá, Curazao, 10 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.179-80. Bishop Boset asked for his safeconduct on 16 December. Boset to Guzmán, Curazao, 16 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 1, fo.298.

³ See various letters in ADRRC, 22, fos.449-61 (some also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.67-70), in particular Acevedo, 'Resolución sobre Guillermo Espino', 28 Sept.1848, fo.455; José Ventura Santana é hijos to the President, 25 Sept.1848, fos.457-9, regarding Feliciano Palacios. 'Resolución embargo de los productos de bienes', 1 Sept.1848, in Gaceta de Venezuela (Caracas), 932.

⁴ Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, 22 and 24 Sept.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.157-8, 171-3. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.268-9.

Following a report from Governor De la Plaza, Monagas had decreed on 31 August that Jesuits should not be allowed entry into Venezuela.¹ It was argued that as foreigners the Jesuits would bring their ignorance and their passions to Venezuela to the detriment of national peace. Their hatred of Freemasonry, caused in particular by the prominent role it had been playing in the struggle for the unification of Italy, was alien to Venezuela. The main reason for the expulsion of the Jesuits was to protect and uphold the Law of Ecclesiastical Patronage of 1824. In the continuing struggle between the civil authority and the papacy the Jesuits, whose role it was to defend and expand the power of the Pope, were seen as the Pope's loyal army. This loyalty contravened the purpose of the Law.²

The pardon of 11 October was considered a serious enough threat by the paecistas to send one Mendoza from Curazao to the fort of San Carlos to dissuade any rebels from accepting its terms. Mendoza was not able to reach the mainland because of the blockade, and so returned to Curazao.³ Briceño, with his fleet at Capana, sent José 'Pepe' Falcón to Caracas. It was rumoured that Falcón would attempt to have the pardon extended to include the ranks of colonel and below, a move that had the support of those like Valero who wanted to end the struggle at all costs.⁴ Unfortunately, Falcón, Juan Crisóstomo's father, was known to support the garciista Liberals

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.561. Decree of 31 Aug.1848, quoted in Nicomedes Zuloaga, Bibliografía y Otros Asuntos (Caracas, 1925), pp.12-13.

² Zuloaga, ibid., pp.8-15, 20-2, including part of Antonio Leocadio Guzmán's Memoria del Secretario de lo Interior y Justicia, 1849, regarding the Jesuits. Argentina had expelled the Jesuits on 18 May 1848.

³ Manuel Larrazábal to Fernando Olavarría, 10 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.179-80.

⁴ Briceño to Guzmán, on board the brig 'Presidente' at Capana, 25 Oct.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.220. Valero to Guzmán, 7 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.507 ff, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, p.166.

and was suspected of going to Caracas with Briceño's support to get the guzmancista list of electoral college members of Coro annulled. Some felt that Falcón wanted to be appointed governor of Coro, while others feared that he might protest against the manner in which vacancies in the provincial government had been filled. Valero and the provincial legislature had followed orders to replace those employees who had rebelled and had lost their posts even though they might have accepted the pardon later.¹ With Guzmán in Caracas there was little chance of success for Falcón. Valero and the guzmancistas remained in control of Coro to the detriment of garciistas and paecistas. Monagas's birthday, 28 October, was celebrated by the Liberals of Coro with a banquet.²

The paecistas were shocked further when they heard that Palmerston had ordered the British representatives at Copenhagen, The Hague, Bogotá, Haiti and Santo Domingo to point out to those governments the importance, for reasons of humanity and commerce, that Páez's projects against the Venezuelan government should get no support from those governments. Palmerston followed Wilson's suggestion in issuing this order.³ The Liberal press described Great Britain as a great and loyal friend when the news reached Caracas.⁴ The paecistas were reported as being hopping mad, 'endemoniados de furiosos', at Wilson and Palmerston.⁵

¹ [José Tomás] Pereyra (leader of the Liberals in Coro) to Guzmán, 4 Nov. 1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.127 f, for list annulment and bid for governor. José Requena to Guzmán, Coro, 7 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.79-82, for the replacements. Unos Republicanos, 'A la Nación Venezolana', Caracas, 26 Sept.1848, mentions that public servants must account for their conduct, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.33.

² Requena to Guzmán, 7 Nov.1848, ibid.

³ Palmerston to Riddel, 24 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/53, fo.113.

⁴ 'Gran Noticia', El Patriota. Segunda Epoca (Caracas), 126 (4 Nov.1848), p.3.

⁵ Manuel Larrazábal to Fernando Olavarria, Curazao, 10 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 48, fo.179.

In Maracaibo, Castelli was reported to be in great difficulties by late October. Portocarrero had been able to get some meat and ammunition to him from across the lake.¹ Zamora took Cabimas on 30 October.² During the first half of November Portocarrero managed to get some troops across the lake to reinforce Castelli. Some of the rebels attacked the Ports of Altagracia believing them to be weakened by the lack of those troops that reached Maracaibo, but were beaten back by Baca and Zamora.³ With his reinforcements Castelli decided to attack his besiegers. On 13 November Commander Corser attempted to dislodge the rebel Andrade from his headquarters at Los Haticos. Corser had taken two trenches when he was killed by shrapnel. His troops suffered fifty-two casualties while retreating in the ensuing panic.⁴

Later in the month Commander Pedro Vicente Aguado defeated the rebels' best, Páez's guard led by Belisario, 'la Caballeria de los Dragones de Páez', when the guard tried to stop Aguado from reaching Maracaibo with some cattle. Belisario himself was killed in that encounter at Juana de Avila. This victory boosted the defenders' morale greatly. Oddly enough, Aguado had been charged by Castelli earlier with conspiracy and insubordination. Even so, Aguado had attacked the rebels at Los Haticos where he was wounded on the side of the head. Having recovered from the wound he had been given the vital mission of bringing the cattle into the city that led to his victory at Juana de Avila.⁵ Clearly, Aguado was held in high esteem as a warrior even if an undisciplined one.

¹ Valero to Guzmán, 7 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 26, fo.507, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.165-6.

² A. Rodríguez, Zamora, p.149. González Guinán, Historia, iv.568.

³ Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, La Vela, 14 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.181 f.

⁴ González Guinán, Historia, iv.568. S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulía, p.163.

⁵ Estanislao Castañeda to Guzmán, Maracaibo, 1 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.447-50. S. Sánchez, ibid., p.164. It is not clear which of the reputedly fearless Belisarios was killed.

Zamora was able to cross the lake with his column on 29 November, bolstering further the defenders' morale. Portacarrero was sending one skiff a night from the Ports carrying meat to feed Maracaibo.¹ The rebels seem to have been unable to intercept the skiff because, although about 800 rebels were thought to be entrenched around the city, the rebel fleet may have been deployed at the bar to oppose Briceño who since October had been promising to force it at any moment. That he had been unable to do so was the greatest source of anxiety and irritation to the government's supporters.² Even his ship captains were despairing at his indecision. Briceño claimed that continuous strong winds were keeping him from forcing the bar. After about a fortnight the fleet would be forced to Capana or Los Taques to take on water and provisions which were being supplied from Coro, Puerto Cabello and Curazao with great effort and expense.³ The steamer was armed finally, and met the fleet at Los Taques on 17 November despite the efforts of the oligarchs at Puerto Cabello, who were able to land its machinists and sailors. Falcón and one Mr Edward Harrison saved the day by getting others at Curazao.⁴ With the addition of the 'Libertador' morale in the fleet was high. There was great excitement and the expectation of winning at last.⁵

¹ Ibid. A. Rodríguez, Zamora, pp.149-50.

² Castañeda to Guzmán, ibid. Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, La Vela, 29 Nov. 1848, ADRRC, fos.185-6. Valero to Guzmán, 21 and 23 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.513-14, 503-5; 21 Nov. quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.168-9. S. Sardi to José Tadeo Monagas, Curazao, 1 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 23, fos.273-4.

³ J(uan) F(rancisco?) del Castillo to Guzmán, Capana, 29 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.455-6. Briceño to Guzmán, on board 'Presidente' at Los Taques, 18 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.235-6. Larrazábal to Guzmán, 29 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.185-6.

⁴ Alejo Troconis to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 13 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.15. J.F. del Castillo to Guzmán, Taques, 17 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 35, fo.461. N. Martínez to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 5 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.95-6. Nueva Testa or Narvaleda to Guzmán, Curazao, 24 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 11, fos. 157-9.

⁵ J.F. del Castillo to Guzmán, ibid.

Briceño's fleet reached the bar just three days before it captured the U.S. steamer 'Scourge' which Vespasian Ellis, former president of the Orinoco Steamship Company, had sold to Hermenegildo García, Páez's supply officer at large, for \$50,000 pesos on instalments. The deal had been struck at Aruba on 26 November.¹ Ellis seems to have been dismissed from the company by the board of directors on 16 September for attempting to sell a steamer to Páez. The board declared that his dismissal was meant as an act of friendship towards the Venezuelan government and as a warning to all its employees to remain neutral to local politics.² Since the original concession had been granted to Ellis and his associates it is not clear whether the company could exist or, at least, function without him. Also unclear is whether the 'Scourge' belonged to the company or had been acquired by Ellis on his own initiative. The company's steamer 'Venezuela', captained by Edward A. Turpin, was at Curazao at the time, having supplied the sailors taken by Falcón for the 'Libertador'. Turpin was assumed to favour the Monagas government.³

Ex-governor of Mérida, José Antonio Troconis, had been captured on board the 'Scourge'. Guzmán had insisted on giving him a safe-conduct to return to Venezuela.⁴ Instead, Troconis had chosen to take the 'Scourge' to Maracaibo to his brother-in-law Andrade. The confessions of Troconis

¹ González Guinán, *Historia*, iv.567. Valero to Guzmán, 7 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.521-4, also quoted in Castellanos, *Páez*, pp.169-70. Father M. Romero was supposed to have 'corrupted' the crew so that it could be captured by the government. Valero's letter above confirms that its capture took place under irregular circumstances. Van Lansberge to Dutch foreign secretary, 4 Feb.1849, quoted in Parra-Pérez, *Guerras Civiles*, iii.256, also p.273.

² Gray, 'Steamboat Transportation', *HAHR*, xxv (Nov.1945), pp.459-60.

³ Nueva Testa or Narvaleda to Guzmán, 24 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 11, fos.157-9.

⁴ Manuel Larrazábal to Guzmán, 7 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.191-2.

and one Rafael Unceín were considered to bear enough proof to condemn the 'Scourge'.¹ As base commander at Puerto Cabello, Beluche was in charge of trying the 'Scourge'. Guzmán, as interior and justice secretary, went to Puerto Cabello to take statements from the prisoners to prepare the government's case.² Beluche declared the 'Scourge' a fair prize on 12 February 1849,³ and it joined the government's fleet as the second steamer ever to belong to Venezuela, after the 'Libertador'. Troconis felt that the war was finished with the capture of the steamer since it was the last great effort that the paecistas could make. Páez's plans were destroyed.⁴

Ellis was determined to save the 'Scourge'. At Curazao he declared that it was American property and could not be confiscated by Venezuela. He also claimed to have ordered two more steamers from the United States for Páez. Jesurún suggested that Ellis's concession might be revoked and given to Turpin instead, with an added clause that it would become void should one of the partners make war against the government.⁵ Ellis swore to kill Monagas within three years if the 'Scourge' was confiscated.⁶

¹ N. Martínez to Guzmán, 15 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.103-5.

² Valero to Guzmán, 7 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.521-4, and Castellanos, Páez, pp.169-70. Interrogation of José Antonio Troconis by Guzmán, Castillo Libertador, Puerto Cabello, 22/23 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 5, fos.527-34, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.97-101.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.567.

⁴ Troconis told Valero. Valero to Guzmán, 7 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.521-4, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.169-70.

⁵ S. Sardi to Guzmán, Curazao, 1 and 9 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 23, fos.275-8. J.A. Jesurún to Guzmán, 22 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 6, fos.195-201, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.92-7.

⁶ 'que si Monagas le coje su stimer Scorge [sic] no pasan [sic] tres años que lo mata', Sardi's underline, S. Sardi to Guzmán, 20 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 23, fos.283-4.

The legislative decree of 2 May 1849 passed the concession to Turpin and Frederick A. Beelen who helped the same group in New York City organise as the Orinoco Steam Navigation Company. The decree stipulated that any differences would be settled by the authorities and laws of Venezuela, without ever being liable to international litigation. Two steamers began a regular service on the Orinoco that same year.¹

Another smaller steamer, the 'General Jackson' did manage to reach San Carlos with supplies two days after the capture of the 'Scourge' because Briceño seems to have taken the fleet to Los Taques again, the 'Libertador' towing the 'Scourge'.² Briceño left Capana on 6 December taking the fleet back to the bar. After sounding the bar at night he waited for high tide and got the fleet across it in an hour and a half, by 3 p.m. on 8 December. Six rebel ships attempted to block the crossing, but were forced to take cover under San Carlos's guns.³ One account explains that on that day the officers of the rebel fleet had left their vessels to attend the cock-fights at the fort in spite of the proximity of the enemy.⁴ Without its captains and officers, the six rebel ships would have had no choice but to retreat to the fort.

Briceño prepared to take the fort. He landed 200 men west of it to intercept any supplies that might be brought from Sinamaica by rebel cavalry picket. On the 9th he called on the rebels to surrender. They promised to reply in forty-eight hours.⁵ On the morning of the 13th the rebel fleet

¹ 'Decreto de 2 de Mayo de 1849', Actos Legislativos del Congreso Constitucional de Venezuela en 1849 (Caracas, 1849), pp.45-6.
Gray, 'Steamboat Transportation', HAHR, xxv (Nov.1945), p.460.

² S. Sardi to Guzmán, 1 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 23, fos.275-6. M. Larrazábal to Blas Bruzual, 3 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.187-8.

³ González Guinán, Historia, iv.569-70.

⁴ S. Sánchez, Geografía Zulía, p.164.

⁵ Juan F. del Castillo to Guzmán, Curazao (12?) Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.457-8.

came out to fight Briceño's in the battle that both sides had avoided for so long. Briceño was prepared to meet them and within two hours the rebels were beaten. They lost three vessels, among them their flagship, the 'Constitución', which suffered twenty-two dead and nineteen wounded. The navy seems to have outshot the rebels by firing six hundred rounds of cannon-ball and grape-shot, and over three thousand musket rounds.¹

Briceño laid siege to the fort, letting the naval defeat and hunger take their effect. The rebels were down to rations of some maize and half a pound of goat's meat per man per day. Seventeen government officers and soldiers held prisoner at the fort were able to escape. Every day brought more rebel deserters.² The rebels evacuated their trenches around Maracaibo during the night of 23 December leaving behind ten artillery pieces. Some rebels surrendered to Castelli; others fled south to San Carlos del Zulia. The fort was evacuated, and seven rebel vessels headed south carrying Andrade and his remaining troops. Briceño had the fort occupied on the 25th, and he reached Maracaibo on the 'Libertador' on the 26th to a tumultuous ovation from the population. He then gave chase to the rebels headed south. About 1,500 rebels, the figure seems high, took San Carlos del Zulia, and dug themselves in. Briceño attacked them on the night of 31 December, Zamora leading the main thrust by land, and the rebels were defeated totally. Andrade escaped to Mérida and New Granada with about 300 men, but recrossed the border and surrendered a week later on 7 January. Briceño made more than 600 prisoners that night, among them Muguerza and three of Páez's sons.

¹ M. Larrazábal to President Monagas, La Vela, 28 Dec. 1848, ADRRC, 48, fo. 199, from news received from Briceño. González Guinán, Historia, iv. 569-70. S. Sánchez, loc. cit.

² Ibid.

The small steamer 'General Jackson' was captured.¹

The Liberals and other anti-paecistas were delighted. In less than one year Páez had been defeated. Monagas and his government were now expected to follow a policy that would keep the oligarchs out of Venezuela while dividing the spoils among the anti-paecistas.² Even before the final victory there seems to have been a smear campaign in Caracas directed against the military leaders who were actively supporting Monagas. Who was directing the campaign is not clear, but it was probably the non-guzmancista civilista Liberals led by García and Bruzual, as well as any oligarchs in town. Despite his loyalty Portocarrero's reputation was being attacked.³ Valero complained that his enemies were able to hold Monagas's ear.⁴ In Barquisimeto, Jiménez was being called an oligarch by people who had just become Liberals, 'cuatro bochincheros se creen heroes'. Jiménez professed love and respect for Monagas and hatred for Páez and all oligarchs who had killed the bolivarians (reformists) of 1835.⁵

¹ Pedro T. Lander to Comandante de Armas de Coro (Valero), Puertos de Altagracia, 25 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.517-20, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.171-2. González Guinán, Historia, iv.570-1, v.9-10. M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, La Vela, 30 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.209-10. S. Sánchez, loc.cit. A. Rodríguez, Zamora, pp.148-50. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.270-1. Valero to Guzmán, 11 Jan.1849, ADRRC, 31, fos.213-14. Castelli to Lino de Pombo, Bogotá, 21 July 1855, quoted in Misión de Castelli a Bogotá, p.17. José E. Morales to Guzmán, Mérida, 30 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.565-6.

² M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, 30 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.209-10. Castañeda to Guzmán, 8 Jan.1849, ADRRC, 35, fos.451-2.

³ M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, 30 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.207-8.

⁴ Valero to Guzmán, 28 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 26, fos.531-4, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.174-5.

⁵ 'amor y respeto al Gral Monagas a quien debo mucho y por odio a Páez y a sus esbirros ... Páez y todo verbo de oligarcas matadores de los Bolivianos en 35'. Florencio Jiménez to Guzmán, Barquisimeto, 25 Dec. 1848, ADRRC, 2, fos.325-6. Another complaint from José Encarnación Morales to Guzmán, Mérida, 25 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 43, fos.135-6.

A 'Liberal for more than one year' published a poem criticising the bad elements that had infiltrated the Liberal Party.

Si preguntas cómo ha sido
Que triunfando el gran partido,
Los autócratas peores,
Los eternos gozadores
Aun figuran criminales,
¡Dicen que son ¡¡¡Liberales !!! 1

Larrazábal warned that the real war was beginning now; the war against the oligarchy's conspiracy to defeat the Liberals by subterfuge.²

Monagas allowed Guzmán to make changes in government policy and personnel. He was willing to cater to Liberal demands for change, while also favouring personal friends, fellow reformistas, and family relations. Juan Vicente González lost his chair at the university in late October along with four other professors due to Guzmán's vengeance.³ Liberal leader, lawyer and teacher José Manuel García was appointed to a chair in law at the university.⁴ Among his first pupils was José Tadeo Monagas Jr., who was beginning his law studies that year.⁵ Guzmán asked Monagas to remove a supreme court judge, three superior court judges, and all public employees who were not ardent government supporters. Monagas agreed to the changes.⁶ Manuel Larrazábal urged Guzmán to follow a tougher Liberal

¹ Un liberal de mas de un año, 'Los Liberales A la Moda. Letrilla', Taratara, 24 Jan.1849 (Caracas, 1849), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 13, no.8.

² M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, La Vela, 30 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.207-8.

³ Juan V. González, 'Colegio de "El Salvador del Mundo"', El Foro (Caracas), 15 June 1858, in Pensamiento Político, iii.318.

⁴ García, Dr José Manuel, appointed to university chair, AGN, I y J 1848 - CCCLXXXIII, fo.351.

⁵ Monagas, José Tadeo, hijo, fechas de sus exámenes (began reading law on 1 Sept.1848), AANH, Hojas Sueltas, xvii, caja 58, letra M.

⁶ Turreil to French foreign secretary, 6 Dec.1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos.190-5, quoting Gaceta de Venezuela (Caracas), 942 (26 Nov.1848).

policy and to remove those officials of the treasury who had been holding posts since 1830 and who were proven oligarchs despite their smiles.¹

On 23 October, Acevedo was replaced at the treasury by Diego Antonio Caballero, Monagas's friend who had been administering the customs house at La Guaira. Acevedo was entrusted with an 'important commission',² as chargé d'affaires to the United States to try to get a loan.³

Acevedo had done everything in his power to raise money to finance the government and its struggle against Páez. The decree of 24 August had declared the emission of treasury bills that could be used to pay any national tax or duty. These bills would earn nine per cent yearly interest, payable to the holder by the National Bank. Decrees of this nature usually stipulated the percentage of the total duty for which bills could be used, the holder having to pay the rest of the duty in cash. In times of financial difficulty the government needed to receive at least some of its revenue in cash while making the bills more negotiable by admitting them in part payment of duties. As we have seen from the various contracts made at Curazao for ships and services, the government at that time was usually allowing half the duties charged to be paid with bills, bonds, IOUs, or other government paper, and the other half to be paid in cash. Since the decree of 24 August made no such stipulation, it was assumed that all duties charged could be paid in full with these new bills.⁴

¹ M. Larrazábal to Guzmán, 28 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.195-6. Avendaño, Correa, Condesito, O[lavarria], and Aurrecoechea are mentioned.

² Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.450, Doc.393. For Caballero's past see F.T. Adlercreutz to Baron of Stiemeld, 6 Dec.1848, quoted in Parra-Pérez, ed., La Cartera de Adlercreutz (Paris,1928), pp.225-6.

³ Riddel to Palmerston, 3 Nov.1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.156-7.

⁴ Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.448-9, Doc.392, 'Sobre Emisión de Billetes'.

The decrees of 25 August and 1 September declared the embargo of rebel property and the confiscation of produce from rebel properties.¹ These measures would create more revenue for the government. Local authorities would be able to cover their expenses, especially feeding their troops, by confiscating crops or cattle from a local rebel's property without having to burden the rest of the population. Acevedo must have had a difficult job keeping order with so many people empowered to seek loans, to hire ships, to buy guns, and to confiscate produce.

On the diplomatic front, Acevedo supported Guzmán's efforts against Páez before the governor of Curazao. He played on Shields's fears of a British plot to take Venezuelan territory by force in payment of the debt.² The knowledge that some foreign representatives supported Páez and were involved in the godó conspiracy against Monagas complicated Acevedo's job as he attempted to have those representatives recalled while still maintaining friendly relations with their countries. His hand was strengthened by the intercepted letters that proved the involvement of some representatives at Maracaibo. In the case of Curazao, Parra-Pérez has shown that the Dutch government eventually concluded that the island's government had treated Páez rather better than its policy of neutrality demanded.³

It is perhaps surprising that Acevedo should have held his post as long as he did. Venezuela's financial and political difficulties, along with their complications at the international level, had kept him very busy. In September, he had approached Shields insinuating the fear

¹ Turreil to French foreign secretary, 21 Nov. 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 183-9.

² Shields to Buchanan, 69, 21 Sept. 1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 6 (Film 79, 7), also quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii. 197-9.

³ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii. 246-56, 317-32, especially 321-2 and 327-8.

that Great Britain might use the non-payment of the debt as an excuse to annex the province of Guayana. Acevedo wished to know what the American reaction would be to such an event, and whether the United States government might offer Venezuela a loan with which to buy up secretly its debt in London thus saving it from the British lion.¹ Despite Shields's non-committal reply Acevedo pursued the idea of an American loan. Perhaps De la Cova had brought glowing reports from the North. A mission to the United States to secure a loan and to report on paecista activity there gave Acevedo an excellent, and possibly, financially rewarding opportunity to leave the cabinet. Liberal policy was now being directed by Guzmán. As the chief pastelero, Acevedo may have felt that he could do no more in the cabinet, and could take a well-earned rest.

Monagas may have agreed with Acevedo. Monagas took the opportunity to replace Acevedo with one of his own trusted friends. Apart from implementing Monagas's policy, Caballero would support him in the council of state should Guzmán's wishes clash with his own. Monagas needed to have his own men to counterbalance Guzmán's plans to direct policy, and he could trust Caballero far more than Acevedo.

Eight days after Caballero's appointment, the department of foreign affairs was transferred to the department of interior and justice, leaving him free to concentrate on the treasury.² Guzmán now controlled one more

¹ Riddel reported that Shields was spreading the rumour that Great Britain intended to take Guayana to satisfy the claims of the bondholders. Riddel to John F. Crampton, British chargé d'affaires at Washington, D.C., Caracas, 27 Oct.1848. F.O.80/58, fo.162. Shields's reply in Shields to Buchanan, 69, 21 Sept.1848, Desps. U.S. Mins. Venezuela, 6 (Film 79, 7), also quoted by Parra-Pérez, ibid., pp.198-9.

² Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.451, Doc.394, 'Distribución de Funciones'.

department, but was all the busier trying to direct so many offices. Any incompetency on his part would diminish his reputation. Because of his hatred of Páez, Guzmán was possibly the best man to direct a foreign policy which, for both Monagas and Guzmán, had to be concerned mainly with thwarting Páez's efforts abroad.

Caballero found that the treasury lacked specie and took a series of measures to obtain it. The decree of 20 November clarified that the bonds issued by the treasury could only be accepted in half-payment of most duties and other taxes, the other half having to be paid in cash, as stipulated in the congressional resolution of 15 March 1848 which had empowered the executive to make decrees such as the one of 24 August. Those bonds issued since August totalled \$125,000. Some aduanas had accepted them in total payment of duty. The interest rate on any new issues was reduced from nine to five per cent.¹ This clarification distressed business interests.² De la Cova, now consul general of Venezuelan commerce in the United States, apart from promising to ship the horse that Guzmán had asked for, complained bitterly about the November decree. He wondered how anyone would receive obligations from that treasury if what was accepted to be 100 per cent of its value could be declared to be worth only 50 per cent later. '¡Señor! con estas medidas, adios corotos -'.

¹ Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.437-8, Doc.386, 'Resolución del 15 de Marzo de 1848', and pp.452-5, Doc.395, 'Sobre Emisión de Bonos'. Riddel to Palmerston, 21 Sept.1848, F.O. 80/57, fos.350-3, and 6 Dec.1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.252-5. Riddel reported that the August decree limited the total value of its issue to \$30,000, whereas that was the monthly limit. By the time of the November decree, the limit had been exceeded.

² Foreign merchants were accused of not wanting one penny in cash to enter the customs house vault. N. Martínez, customs house officer, to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 15 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.103 ff.

He hoped that the decree would not spoil all his work in the United States or ruin him.¹

Acevedo's report from Washington shows that Venezuela's business was never as rosy as De la Cova had presented it. Acevedo found strong support for the paecistas. He was waiting for news of Calcaño's mission so as not to buy a second, unnecessary steamer; but he might have been hoping for Calcaño's success because of his own difficulties. He could not afford to hire a secretary or an interpreter for lack of funds. Calcaño returned to Venezuela on 17 December without a loan or a steamer. Acevedo would be equally unsuccessful, having to return when his funds had been spent.²

A forced loan on all citizens was decreed on 9 December. Monthly contributions would be made for five months. The amounts contributed would earn five per cent yearly. In each canton the jefe político, the taxman, one town councilman, and two neighbours chosen by the town council would determine the quotas for each agricultural producer, merchant, tradesman, home-owner, tenant, clerk, civil servant, wage-earner above a certain level, cattle breeder, and money lender following the percentages stipulated for each group in the decree.³

¹ Víctor de la Cova to Guzmán, Philadelphia, 2 Jan.1849, ADRRC, 35, fos.336-9.

² Acevedo to Guzmán, Washington D.C., 11 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 22, fos.463-4. Riddel to Palmerston, 21 Dec 1848, F.O. 80/58, fos.290 ff. Guzmán had doubted the success of Acevedo's trip; Riddel to Palmerston, 1 Feb.1849, F.O. 80/62, fos.71 ff.

³ Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.456-9, Doc.396, 'Sobre Un Empréstito de 2,000,000'. Riddel to Palmerston, 21 Dec.1848, ibid. Also in AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.9.

Joaquín Herrera, the new governor of Carabobo, pointed out that his provincial employees were already receiving only one-third of their wages due to earlier reductions in spending to finance the struggle against the paecistas. A reduction of a further one-third would leave them earning nothing. He asked the treasury to allow these employees to receive an increase in pay, not a decrease, or many would quit their jobs. Ten months later they were being paid one-third in cash, one-third in treasury bills that were being traded at less than one-quarter of their value, and the last third was being withheld as a forced loan. Herrera then proposed that the last third be paid.¹

At Barcelona, Governor P.J. Padrón was having difficulty in finding enough goods to embargo. Mr Figuera, who had defected aboard the 'Constitución' with Barcelona's customs revenue, had very little of value, as Monagas himself was supposed to know. Among those who had been embargoed was one Sucre and one Marrero, perhaps related to José Gregorio Monagas's wife. Padrón was making do with the cattle he could take, but just barely. Padrón's report is interesting because it would be very difficult for him to lie about the true state of affairs in Monagas's home province. One might assume that his report reflected the truth more accurately than most.²

In spite of the capture of the 'Scourge' and the eventual defeat of the rebels in Zulía Páez's efforts still posed a threat to Monagas's government. The oligarchs in Carabobo had been opposing the government

¹ Joaquín Herrera to Guzmán, 10 Jan.1849, ADRRC, 48, fos.527-9. Herrera, Exposición que Dirige el Gobernador de Carabobo á la H. Diputación Provincial Sobre Varios Ramos de la Administración Municipal en 1849 (Valencia, 6 Nov.1849), p.5.

² P.J. Padrón to Guzmán, 19 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 11, fos.171-2. Figuera may have belonged to the ranching Figueras, one of the four largest cattle-breeding families in Oriente. See p.36 above.

quite openly and encouraging divisions among the Liberals. Lacking support the pastelero governor, Rafael Arvelo, had allowed, or could not control, the gestures against Monagas. The tone used by the press there was compared with Juan V. González's, having described the government as one of 'gallows, blood and immoralities'.¹ Arvelo's replacement, Herrera, promised to try the press and control it. He also embargoed property. One month later he acknowledged that the oligarchs were not beaten and had not given up, but were just lying low.²

In an effort to save the Zulia campaign, Páez appointed José Hermenegildo García as second chief of the army on 11 December, and ordered him to invade Coro or any other feasible point. In spite of the loss of the 'Scourge' Páez declared that all was prepared in Venezuela for the 'Restauración'. He gave García full powers to act, to get a loan, to take private property as needed, and any horses or mules.³

The next day, Páez wrote a long letter to his friends in the East. His hopes were set on Oriente to kill the snake that had been born there. Declaring that Monagas was worse than any Boves or Antoñanza he called on the eastern 'Patriotas Restauradores' to make that first effort that would spark the national reaction that would topple the tyrant. As soon as the government's fleet was defeated he would send the 500 muskets his friends had asked for. They were to get Margarita and Guayana to

¹ 'Gobierno de patibulos, de sangre y de immoralidades'. N. Martínez to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 2 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 35, fos.99-102. Gabriel Guevara to Guzmán, Puerto Cabello, 15 Nov.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.41-5. Arvelo had married Beluche's daughter Columba. Vicente Dávila, Diccionario Biográfico de Ilustres Próceres de la Independencia Suramericana (Caracas, 1924), i.35.

² J. Herrera to Guzmán, 11 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 48, fos.492-3; 16 Dec.1848, fos.499-502; 23 Dec.1848, fos.511-15; 7 Jan.1849, fos.521-5. León de Febres Cordero, Manifiesto (Curazao, 23 Mar.1850), p.7.

³ Páez to José H. García, Curazao, 11 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 5, fos.591-4, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.90-1.

revolt at the same time.¹ Undoubtedly, Páez was trying to save his Zulia campaign by encouraging other revolts anywhere. His letters gave the impression that the countryside was about to explode, perhaps hoping to draw the government's attention away from Zulia. Briceño had forced the bar four days earlier on the 8th.

According to Tourreil, the paecistas were hoping to win before congress met in January.² Two ships bound for St. Thomas carrying arms left Curazao by 6 January. They were rumoured to be headed for Margarita to aid the rebels. Although I have found no evidence of the ship's arrival at Margarita, the rumour is similar to Páez's plan to hide his revolutionary efforts from the authorities at Curazao by detouring ships to the Venezuelan coast while they sailed between foreign ports.³

Páez's efforts seem to have diminished by February. A balance sheet kept by Ellis shows that Páez finished paying almost \$200 pesos macuquinos for the charter of the 'Helene', and for the support of the crew of the 'Scourge'. He also paid \$500 macuquinos to settle their wages and cover their passages back to the United States.⁴ Páez remained at Curazao, Quintero at his side, stubbornly determined to depose Monagas at all costs. Venezuelan-Dutch relations would suffer by his stay.

¹ Páez to 'Mis queridos amigos y compatriotas', 12 Dec. 1848, ADRRC, 7, fos. 73 ff, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 79-86, but dated incorrectly as 12 Oct. 1848.

² Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 6 Dec. 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 190-5.

³ M. Romero to Guzmán, Curazao, 5 and 6 Jan. 1849, ADRRC, 49, fos. 229-34. For Páez's plans, see Páez to 'Mis queridos ...', 12 Dec. 1848, loc.cit.

⁴ V. Ellis, Balance sheet - 8, 10, 13 Feb. 1849, ADRRC, 5, fos. 547-8, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 181-2.

When news of the capture of San Carlos reached La Guaira on 6 January mobs took to the streets yelling, 'Death to the Oligarchs', and 'Out with the Foreigners; let them go away whilst yet there is time.'¹ Anti-foreign feeling was running high due to continuing proof of the involvement of foreign merchants and agents with the paecista conspiracy. Rumours of Páez's activities, as well as the foreigners' imprudence in openly stating their choices aggravated the situation. The mob threw stones into the house of Mrs Rivas, mother of Miguel Rivas who had lost his post as Swedish vice-consul for helping rebels to escape in February 1848. A mob called at the house of Thomas Mawdsley, the British merchant and agent of the National Bank who had sent money to Juan Pérez. John Thomson, the foreigner at La Guaira most detested by the Liberals, had 'some filth ... thrown into his parlour through the windows.'²

Karl Appun described the arrival at La Guaira of some government schooners returning from their victory at Maracaibo. Lots of happy people were on the beach watching the white ships on 30 January. They were shouting, 'Viva el Presidente Monagas'. Blacks and pardos danced and yelled as trabucos were fired off and the fort saluted with its guns. Páez was acknowledged to be attempting to return to Venezuela with the help of the Dutch. Two of his sons were prisoners on board one of the vessels that was taking them to the fort of San Antonio at Cumaná.³

The new congress of 1849 had various questions to consider. Liberal policies might be implemented at last. Composed of Liberals, civilistas, reformistas, monaguistas, and moderate godos, congress would need little

¹ 'que mueran los oligarcas', 'Fuera los Estrangeros; que se vayan mientras hay tiempo.' British Vice-Consul Hall to Riddel, 10 Jan. 1849, F.O. 80/62, fos. 42-5, and mentioned in Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii. 297-8. G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp. 65-6.

² Ibid.

³ Appun, En los Trópicos, p. 29.

prompting to co-operate with the executive on matters relating to the paecistas and to credit-reform. Thus, congress readily extended the executive's extraordinary powers due to the persistence of some rebels in Guiria who were being dealt with by Mariño, hardly a national emergency, but implying proof of the threat of Páez's continuing presence at Curazao. A letter from the captain-general of Puerto Rico to Páez refusing to help him was published as further proof of Páez's conspiratorial efforts at Curazao. Turning to a Spanish colony for help was nothing less than treasonous.¹ The 24th of January was declared a national holiday, akin to 19 April, 5 July and 28 October, Bolívar's onomastic saint's day, to commemorate the attainment of liberty by the Venezuelans.²

Congress did make gestures of independence towards the executive on less pressing matters. When Doctor Vargas resigned from the council of state on 27 March, Monagas supported Carlos Arvelo to replace him. Instead, congress elected Portocarrero who, although a soldier, was deemed to be more independent than Arvelo. José María Barroeta, the 'independent' liberal candidate, was elected president of the senate over Doctor Pio Ceballos, Monagas's nephew-in-law.³ When Monagas refused to sign a congressional bill into law that reduced the salary of provincial governors to \$1,800 both chambers again approved the bill by majorities of two-thirds and Monagas was forced to sign it.⁴

¹ 'Resolución de 2 de Marzo de 1849', Actos Legislativos-1849, pp.9-10. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.271-3. Riddel to Palmerston, 20 Jan.1849, F.O.80/62, fos.62-3, and 5 Mar.1849, F.O.80/62, fos.109 ff. Juan de la Pezuela, captain-general of Puerto Rico, to Páez, 30 Sept.1848, in El Patriota (Caracas), 141 (17 Feb.1849); also Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.280-1.

² 'Ley de 14 de Marzo de 1849', Actos Legislativos-1849, pp.10-11. It is not clear whether 24 July was recognised as Bolívar's birthday, nor why 28 October was celebrated instead.

³ González Guinán, Historia, v.33. Married to the daughter of José Tadeo's brother, Antonio Gerardo. D.W. Fernández, 'La Familia Monagas', Boletín Histórico (Caracas), 43, (Jan.1977), p.84.

⁴ 'Ley de 21 de Abril de 1849', Actos Legislativos-1849, p.34. See Articles 94-6 of the Constitution.

Congress reformed the law on conspiracy. Treason was no longer punishable by death, but by exile for life. Political crimes no longer carried the death penalty. In an effort to appear conciliatory and tolerant, Monagas ratified the new law.¹ With the revolt at an end, abolishing the death penalty would thwart any vengeful guzmancista plans that might call for blood, while encouraging the rebels to return home as soon as possible. Monagas is quoted as having said, 'No more political crime ... cut off my hand the day I should add my signature to a death sentence for political crime.'²

As further efforts to bring peace quickly Monagas had decreed an amnesty to all deserters of the national militia on 19 December.³ One week after abolishing the death penalty he declared an indulto jeneral to all those who had taken part in Páez's revolt since 26 January 1848, excepting the fourteen leaders who were mentioned by name.⁴ If all these pardons and amnesties gave Monagas the public image of a magnanimous peace-loving ruler, one must read the fine print of the decree of 10 April 1849 to realise how conditional the pardon actually was. All those who would accept it were subject to exile or temporary confinement for as long as the executive deemed necessary. Because the death penalty no longer existed this opportunity might be no better than standing trial with possibly the

¹ 'Ley de 3 de Abril de 1849', Actos Lejislativos-1849, pp.13-16.

² 'No más delito político ... cortadme la mano el día que llegue á estampar mi firma en una sentencia de muerte por delito político.' Inauguración Busto J.T. Monagas, p.41.

³ Riddel to Palmerston, 5 Jan.1849, F.O. 80/62, fos.15-18.

⁴ 'Decree of 10 April 1849', AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.12. Excluding: Páez, Soubllette, Angel Quintero, J.H. García, José Celis, J.A. Serrano, A. Codazzi, M. Ustáriz, J.E. Andrade, T. Castejón, M.M. Martín, D. Hernández, J. Peña, F.A. Carrera.

same result. Those who were pardoned would also lose all ranks, appointments, titles and decorations. However, article 183 of the constitution stated that military officers could not be removed from their appointments without a sentence being pronounced at an appropriate trial. To lose those privileges without a trial would deprive any revolted officers of their constitutional rights, thus casting doubt on the legality of the indulto. Politically, this pardon was designed to leave the government's options open in any negotiation with the rebels.

With the latest defeat of the paecistas, the government's main concern was the economy. The government's official expenses for the war from June to December 1848 was \$2 million pesos. The war debt still outstanding totalled \$3.2 million.¹ Other sources calculated the total debt of the latest war to equal eight million gourdes or pesos fuertes.² The foreign debt had not been serviced. The shortage of specie had worsened with the purchases made by both sides to foreign merchants. The government still had various matters to attend to which demanded a certain amount of cash. It had to begin servicing its internal debt if it was to keep internal peace. It had to continue to buy war matériel as long as Páez remained at Curazao threatening to lead another revolt. It had to continue to favour its supporters, some in cash, to keep their loyalty. Monagas worked closely with Caballero to tackle these problems.

There was a flurry of economic legislation while Caballero was treasury secretary. The business of cabotage, coastal trading, was assigned

¹ D.A. Caballero, Memoria de Hacienda, 1849, in Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.96.

² French Consul Maurice d'Hauterive to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 27 Jan.1849, C.P.-V., IV, fo.242. Also paecista letter, unsigned and not addressed, Curazao, 24 Feb.1849, ADRRC, 6, fos.73-4; claimed the war had cost Monagas 8 to 10 million pesos while costing Páez only \$300,000.

exclusively to national shipping not only to protect nationals from competition, but one can presume, to keep the paecista foreign merchants away from that source of profit as well.¹ Commercial courts were closed and their jurisdiction assigned to the regular courts, perhaps because commercial court judges had not been co-operative enough with the government and Liberals who were debtors.²

There seems to have been a campaign to discredit Caballero by accusing him of having dealings with smugglers while at La Guaira. Customs revenue there had totalled only half of the amount taken the year before even though roughly the same amount of goods had been imported.³ He was able to ride out this storm because of his usefulness to Monagas.

Another past administrator of the La Guaira customs house, Aranda, had been accused of the disappearance of \$48,000 pesos during the Soubllette administration. Aranda had been acquitted in November 1848 while the cashier, Juan Núñez, was sentenced to five years of hard labour and the repayment of the lost sum. Núñez published a declaration of his innocence blaming Aranda for the theft. He included documents purporting to show that Aranda had taken \$4,000 from the treasury in 1843 repaying them only in 1847 with a depreciated customs house pagaré to Boulton, Phelpes (sic) and Company for the same amount. These documents were meant to prove Aranda's unethical manner and cast doubt on his innocence in the fraud trial.⁴

¹ 'Ley de 3 de Abril de 1849', Actos Lejislativos-1849, pp.16-18. Commerce along the Orinoco was generally exempted from this law.

² 'Decreto de 14 de Abril de 1849', Actos Lejislativos-1849, 'p.27.

³ Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 27 Jan.1849, C.P.-V., IV, fo.242. Riddel to Palmerston, 18 Apr.1849, F.O. 80/62, fos.228 ff.

⁴ Fraud at La Guaira during the Soubllette administration could have reached two million pesos, according to Núñez. Juan Núñez, 'Uno de Tantos Incidentes en la Causa de la Aduana de La Guaira', Caracas, 27 Nov.1848; see also Los Liberales del Partido Guzmán, 'Señor Juan de Dios Morales, Juez ...', Caracas, 1848, both in AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 12, no.49 and 68.

Aranda's acquittal was said to be due to his political influence.¹ He was free to seek support for his project for an institute of territorial credit.

The law of espera was passed on 9 April, repealing that of espera y quita of 5 May 1841. Whereas, the debtor had needed the consent of all his creditors before he could be granted a moratorium, and interest could continue to accrue during the period of non-payment unless it were also suspended by consent, he now needed the consent of only the majority of his creditors, either in terms of their number or the proportion of the debt, and no interest would accrue during the moratorium. Further, the judge could grant the espera for no less than six years and no more than nine even if the majority of the creditors were not willing to grant it. In a way, this law of espera obligatoria marked a return to earlier colonial legislation which considered the notion of a majority of creditors, but it gave the debtor even more protection through the judge.²

This law was the extension of two that had been passed the year before, one repealing the law of contracts of 1834, the other providing relief to agriculturalists, 'territorial credit', which Monagas had vetoed. Both these laws had been promoted by the same group led by Sanabria, Aranda and Hernández.³ About this time the senate elected Sanabria president of the supreme court. At the end of 1849 he would be elected rector of the

¹ Tourreil to French foreign secretary, 21 Nov. 1848, C.P.-V., IV, fos. 183-9.

² Law of 5 May 1841 and Colonial Legislation in Congreso Nacional, Cuerpo de Leyes de Venezuela, I. 472, 796, quoted in Fierro Bustillos, 'La Política Económica', pp. 53-5, see also pp. 1-2, 45-7. 'Ley de 9 de Abril de 1849', Actos Legislativos-1849, pp. 19-21.

³ See above, Ch. VI, pp. 244-250. Also Riddel to Palmerston, 18 Apr. 1849, F.O. 80/62, fos. 228 ff.

university for the three-year period beginning on 1 January 1850, the second time he would hold that post.¹ Still the leader of a strong Liberal faction in congress, Sanabria had the same support as in 1848 from debtors of both political parties. Guzmán and his faction seem not to have played an important role in the passing of this law as they were linked to the government and had to follow its policy.²

Monagas and Caballero did have powerful reasons for supporting the law of espera obligatoria. Above all else, their main goal was survival. Although the war had ended, Páez could still cause trouble. Monagas needed legislative allies to give him enough power and funds with which to defend himself. For political reasons he could have chosen to support Aranda and Sanabria's legislation, even if he had not agreed with it entirely, in return for their support against Páez and the godos.³

The general lack of specie within the country had been aggravated by the expense of the war. To keep those scarce funds circulating within the country they would have to be kept away from the creditors since these were mostly foreigners who might export them, thus further aggravating the crisis. The continued involvement of foreigners in the paecista conspiracy had increased anti-foreign sentiment among Liberals, and probably the government, making this legislative solution more palatable to it. Whereas Monagas had attempted to be conciliatory towards the foreigner, surely now he would have seen less reason for not adopting a harsher line.⁴

¹ Un Amigo, Resumen Biográfico del Señor Doctor Tomas José Sanabria, 1796-1896 (Caracas, 1896), p.5.

² Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.364-71.

³ In New Granada in 1844, one cabinet member believed that the foreign debt could only be serviced after internal peace had been secured. Creditors would have to wait for favourable political conditions if the government was to survive. M.D. Deas, 'Los Problemas Fiscales en Colombia Durante el Siglo XIX', Ensayos sobre Historia Económica Colombiana (Fedesarrollo, Bogotá, 1980), p.164, quoting and commenting on treasury secretary Juan Clímaco Ordóñez.

⁴ G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp.66-7.

Monagas sought to promote industry, especially agriculture, and the law of espera was expected to help the producer through the present crisis. With the end of the war economic recovery had to be encouraged.

There was some resistance to the law. Revenga was secretary of the interior when the law was passed. He refused to ratify it¹ for much the same reasons as he had objected to the law of territorial credit the year before, his main objection being its retroactive nature. He resigned and Monagas replaced him with Caballero stating that it was politically expedient for him to pass the law at once. Thus, Caballero held all the ministries to ratify the law. To illustrate the resistance of honest Conservatives, Soubllette refused to ask for espera when his debts came due. Instead, he had his cattle sold fetching only 10 reales a head, paying his debt, but dying a poor man.²

One report explained that Monagas had sanctioned the law to satisfy the landowning congressmen in return for rewarding his military supporters with promotions.³ Those proposed for promotion to the rank of divisional general were Brigadiers José Gregorio Monagas, Diego Ibarra, Justo Briceño, Antonio Valero and Colonel Carlos Luis Castelli, this last being jumped two ranks against military regulations because of his defence of Maracaibo. Among those proposed for brigadier generals were Colonels Portocarrero, Sotillo, Florencio Jiménez and Mejía. Some of those proposed for colonels were Estanislao Castañeda, José Ignacio Pulido, José Francisco and Gerardo

¹ Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 6 and 20 Apr. 1849, C.P.-V., V, fos. 109-15.

² González Guinán, Historia, v. 34. Francisco Cobos Fuertes, Materiales para la Biografía del Gral. Carlos Soubllette (Caracas, 1870), p. v.

³ French Consul F. de Veimars to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 4 Jan. 1850, C.P.-V., V, fos. 218-23.

Monagas, José Tadeo's brothers, and, also against regulations, Commanders Juan A. Muñoz Tébar and Ramón Contasti.¹ Zamora was promoted from militia commander to commander of the army's infantry. Bruzual protested that a citizen should be rewarded with a military appointment. He was legally correct, but outvoted.²

Another piece of legislation underlines the government's economic difficulties. An extraordinary tax was declared on all imports and exports for a period of two years. Imports would carry a 10 or 15 per cent ad valorem surcharge, exports 4 per cent except coffee, cotton, and cane products at 3 per cent. Ranchers and breeders were favoured. Their products were exempted from any export surcharge. Imports of gold and silver were exempted as well, while their export in coin carried 1 and 2 per cent surcharges respectively.³ It is clear that by exempting gold and silver from most of the tax the government was attempting to attract specie from abroad and encourage it to stay in the country.

After less than three months in office, Guzmán realised that he was losing power, and that as vice-president he was unable to reverse the decline. It was impossible for him to oppose openly the man who had saved his life. With Revenga's resignation he no longer had much influence in the council of state. Monagas had reduced his influence among the Liberals by favouring other Liberal leaders like Sanabria, Aranda, Rendón, Blas Bruzual and Doctor García, these last two now councillors of state. Guzmán felt his only option

¹ González Guinán, Historia, v.21. At least José Gregorio was promoted on 22 March. Landaeta Rosales, Hoja de Servicios del General José Gregorio Monagas (Caracas, 1895), p.8. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.339-40.

² Rodríguez, Zamora, pp.155-6.

³ 'Decreto de 2 de Mayo de 1849', Actos Legislativos-1849, pp.46-8.

was to separate himself from Monagas to rebuild his prestige for the presidential elections of 1850. He presented his resignation to congress on 18 April, claiming that he had achieved as much as he possibly could for the public good as vice-president. If he continued he would be useless and inactive. He, therefore, wanted to serve the government in another capacity, as its representative on a foreign mission.¹

Two days later, Monagas presented his own resignation. Now that the storm had passed and the nation had been saved he reminded congress that no man was indispensable to the republican system and he asked that he be allowed to return to his home. Claiming weakness of health and lack of ability to continue as president, he urged congress to replace him with a man of more experience, learning, and 'double political tact'. Some have seen unmerciful irony in these words.²

Congress considered and refused to accept both resignations on 23 April. Hauterive reported that congress felt that to have accepted Monagas's would have led to civil war, but he did not explain whether it would have been between Liberal factions or between Liberals and paecistas.³ Congress refused to accept Monagas's resignation by 60 votes to 5. Monagas had thwarted Guzmán's attempt to break away. When Monagas left Government House a large crowd and sparkling music accompanied him to San Pablo.⁴

Congress ended its sessions on 3 May. It had approved a budget of \$2,076,203. 42 pesos for the year 1849/50.⁵ Monagas took full control

¹ 'Renuncia del Vice-Presidente de la República', Caracas, 18 Apr.1849, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.14.

² 'Renuncias de los Excmos, Ss. Presidente y Vicepresidente de la Republica y su Resultado', Caracas, 1849, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.13. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, p.375.

³ Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 5 May1849, C.P.-V., V, fos.133-4.

⁴ 'Renuncias de los Excmos ...', loc.cit.

⁵ 'Ley de 5 de Mayo de 1849', Actos Legislativos-1849, pp.86-7.

of the government. Caballero returned to the customs house at La Guaira. Doctor Francisco Parejo became interior secretary, while Jacinto Gutiérrez administered the treasury. Gutiérrez had distinguished himself in congress and was reported to be a moderate oligarch.¹ Parra-Pérez writes that Gutiérrez was a reformista and a moderate Liberal independent of Guzmán's faction. He had written in El Venezolano in its early days.²

Monagas had had to deal with the godo clergy. He had allowed Guzmán to take charge of relations with the church in early 1849. Determined to make it co-operate, Guzmán ordered Archbishop Fernández Peña to call at Government House and demanded the replacement of a priest known to be against the government. The archbishop complied, but it seems he did not choose Guzmán's choice as the replacement.³ Another very heated meeting took place after which Fernández Peña fell ill, apparently from a stroke, and then died on 18 January.⁴ Congress proposed Doctor José Antonio Pérez de Velasco, an old patriot like Fernández, as the next archbishop. While Rome sent its reply the executive appointed Doctor Juan Antonio Hernández Monagas to fill the post temporarily.⁵

Rome refused to appointed Pérez de Velasco, mainly because of his political links with the Liberals. There was a great political reaction in Caracas against this refusal which gave the government further excuse to disregard Rome.⁶ Such was the reaction that a short book was published

¹ Hautérive to French foreign secretary, 5 May 1849, C.P.-V., V, fos.133-4.

² Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.330. Cecilia Pimentel, Evocaciones Familiares (Piroco Printing, n.p., n.d.), p.123.

³ Guzmán's choice may have been his friend the priest of Aruba, Romero. M. Romero to Guzmán, Aruba, 15 Dec.1848, ADRRC, 49, fo.227. Romero was appointed to Mérida at the end of April. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.328-9.

⁴ Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.361-2, 634-5.

⁵ Conzález Guinán, Historia, v.41.

⁶ Talavera y Garcés, Apuntes de Historia Eclesiástica, pp.91-2, including footnote 38.

defending Pope Pius IX's plans to reform the church, and with it the world to save it from the chaos of revolution.¹ Pérez soon died of ill health and old age, and Rome refused to agree to other proposed candidates. The problem was only resolved during José Gregorio's presidency when, with congress divided on the Vatican's right of refusal, José Gregorio proposed Doctor Silvestre Guevara y Lira, only thirty-eight years old and from Barcelona, probably related to José Tadeo's wife. Pius IX agreed to Guevara y Lira, and he became archbishop on 9 February 1853.²

Monagas could expect further trouble from Páez who had encouraged Antonio José de Irisarri to publish a newspaper called El Revisor at Curazao with the expressed aim of attacking the Monagas government.³ Acevedo replied to Irisarri's first edition of 15 February on 18 May defending Monagas and accusing Irisarri of being a monarchist.⁴ Páez continued to receive messages from his supporters in various provinces pledging to revolt if he would lead them. The conspirators claimed to be organised to revolt simultaneously.⁵

The revolt began on the night of 21 June when a group of twenty-five horsemen led by two Belisarios attacked Monagas's house at San Pablo. They were easily repelled by the guard who seem to have been warned minutes before.

¹ Presbítero Jaime Balmes, Pío IX (Caracas, 1849), pp.4-5, 10, 20, 57. Presbítero Doctor José Antonio Pérez de Velasco, A Vosotros Cualesquiera que seais. Notables Escritos sobre la Soberanía de Venezuela, la Ley de Patronato y Actitudes del Vaticano (ed. Simón Planas-Suárez, Caracas, 1960), documents regarding candidacy, 1849-52.

² H. Fanger, Biografía del Ilmo ... y Rdm. Señor Doctor Silvestre Guevara y Lira. Dignísimo Arzobispo de Caracas y Venezuela (Caracas, 1893) pp.5-7, 15.

³ González Guinán, Historia, v.50.

⁴ Acevedo, El Contendor de 'El Revisor'. Numero 1 (Caracas, 18 May 1849).

⁵ Febres Cordero, Manifiesto, p.8. Riddel to Palmerston, 21 July 1849, F.O. 80/63B, fo.104.

Sotillo followed them through the Tuy valley into the llanos of Guárico where he killed them in a battle with lances near the Manapire river.

Sotillo cut off the heads of the two Belisarios and sent them to Caracas.

Monagas disapproved of an act reminiscent of Rangel's death in 1847 and ordered that the remains should not reach Caracas. They were buried at

El Consejo.¹ Sotillo's action reflected the exasperation of the monaguistas at the intransigence of the paecistas. The government's supporters were embittered. They decided to react swiftly and effectively.² Riddel reported that both sides had committed atrocities since the outbreak.³

Portocarrero reached Cura on 27 June to put down the revolt in Calabozo.⁴ Nicolás Silva took that capital for the government on 13 July. José Gregorio raised about 2,000 men. Mariño reached Guárico with another 2,000 men. As soon as he had controlled the area he sent his troops west to face Páez who had landed at Coro on 2 July with 70 officers. These had been carried by seven ships flying the Dutch flag, which did not help the strained relations with Curazao. General Silva had about 1,000 men and

¹ M. Silva-Medina, Rasgos Biográficos del General Juan Antonio Sotillo, p.22. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.367, quotes Sotillo's report to Mariño, Santa Catalina, 23 July 1849.

² Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 6 July 1849, C.P.-V., V, fos.151-4.

³ Riddel to Palmerston, 5 July 1849, F.O. 80/63B, fos.17 ff.

⁴ For the accounts of the conspiracy of 21 June, the revolt, and Páez's surrender see: González Guinán, Historia, v.50-81; Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.294-5, 298-302, 331-2, 340-96; Febres Cordero, Manifiesto; A. Rodríguez, Zamora, pp.157-65; Castelli to Pombo, Bogotá, 21 July 1855, in Misión del Jeneral Castelli a Bogotá, pp.17-18; Castellanos, Páez, pp.191-208, 245-62; Monagas address to the army, Caracas, 20 Aug.1849, and to the nation, 1 Sept.1849, AANH, HASSR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.17, 18; 'Boletín Oficial' (Caracas), 90 (9 July 1849), 101 (18 Aug.1849), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 14, no.22; Un Venezolano, 'El 18 de Agosto en Valencia' (Valencia, 1849), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 14, no.27. Riddel to Palmerston, 5 July to 22 Aug.1849 (various reports), F.O. 80/63B, fos.28-108, 294-7.

Mariño sent him 800 more led by N. Silva and Ezequiel Zamora with which to protect Carabobo. Portocarrero moved to Barquisimeto with 1,000 men to reinforce Jiménez.

Monagas was credited with displaying great activity. He called citizens to arms, requisitioned firearms even from foreigners, decreed a forced loan that raised \$15,000 pesos in three days from the merchants of La Guaira, and declared a blockade on the coast of Coro.¹ His commanders were ordered not to discuss terms with the enemy, only to beat it until it surrendered unconditionally, or were destroyed totally. Páez had placed himself within Monagas's grasp by invading Venezuela, and Monagas was determined to beat him decisively.² Guzmán went to Puerto Cabello to coordinate the defence of the coast against Páez. Leaving Castelli as acting-secretary for war, Mejía went to Valencia to ensure the active defence of the centre of the country by the various armies.³

At most Páez raised 750 men. He marched from Coro towards Carabobo, but when he realized that Valencia was secured by the government he cut through Yaracuy to Nirgua to reach the llanos. Much of the terrain was mountainous forest. Having chosen to campaign during the rainy season

¹ 'El Presidente de la República a la Nación', 27 June 1849, and Decree of 9 July 1849, AANH, HSAAR, Ar5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.15, 16. Guzmán, Circular to foreign merchants, Puerto Cabello, 17 July 1849, ADRRC, 1, fo.357. Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 21 July and 6 Aug.1849. C.P.-V., V, fos.157-68.

² Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.362, quoting Mejía to Mariño, 2 July 1849; pp.368-9. Mariño to Miguel Palacios, Calabozo, 22 July 1849, stating he is not authorised to suspend hostilities nor to discuss terms with the rebels; pp.369-70, quoting Mejía's orders to Mariño not to negotiate with any rebel officers.

³ Guzmán was reported to have organised a defence there that would have resisted the attacks of Queen Victoria. Also, he was pestering the military men with his orders. José L. Silva to Castelli, Valencia, 31 July 1849, quoted by Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.385. Guzmán was called back to Caracas on 1 August. Castelli to Guzmán, 1 Aug.1849, ADRRC, 35, fo.358. Mejía to Guzmán and to L. Delpech, Valencia, 1 Aug.1849, ADRRC, 35, fos.583, 587, show the resolve to beat Páez.

movement was slow and difficult. General Silva moved up from the coast to block Páez's route to the llanos. Although Páez was always followed by columns from Silva's army after leaving Nirgua he was only attacked three times, once by Zamora who was beaten so badly that he had to be saved by N. Silva and Julián Castro. Realising that to continue would be futile since he was being surrounded by enemy forces numbering nearly 10,000, Páez offered to surrender to Silva at Macapo-Abajo. Silva replied that he was not empowered to discuss terms, but that as far as he was concerned and it was in his power to do so he would guarantee the lives of all those who would surrender unconditionally.¹ Páez had no choice, but to accept Silva's personal guarantee.

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.385-7.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONSOLIDATION

Páez and his troops surrendered on 15 August after his chief of staff General Febres Cordero had negotiated some terms. Silva had agreed only to respect the rebels according to rank, to treat the sick and the wounded, to allow rebel troops to be discharged, and to allow the officers to keep their weapons. Although Silva would later argue that the agreement was a solemn convention and that as such its terms should be honoured, he stood by as the rebels had their property confiscated, were disarmed, jailed as criminals, and chained once he had handed them over to the authority of Governor Herrera at Valencia.¹ Paecistas would claim that Silva had not kept his word and that the government had broken a convention. Extreme Liberals would accuse Silva of treason for agreeing to any conditions.

Monagas had the council of state consider whether or not Silva's agreement was legally binding on the government since he had not been given power to negotiate. The council declared by a vote of 5 to 4 that the government was not bound to Silva's agreement. It suggested that Monagas make use of his special power to grant pardons and amnesties to expel, jail or confine the rebels as he deemed best for national security without making them stand trial. It argued that this was humanitarian procedure because although capital punishment could no longer be given for conspiracy, it still existed for murder, theft, arson and other violent crimes that had been committed by Páez's expedition. Páez and his men were therefore liable to receive the death sentence if they were to stand trial. It is

¹ Febres Cordero, Manifiesto, pp.21-6.

interesting to note that the representative of the supreme court on the council, Doctor Rufino González, did not agree with the majority, believing that Páez and his officers should stand trial as the legal means of determining their sentences. It is not clear whether the minority dissented from the majority's opinion of the separate responsibility for crimes committed during a political revolt. Bishop Talavera believed the government had an obligation to honour the convention. Bruzual wanted the rebels to be tried to discover their co-conspirators within the country and the government. Gutiérrez agreed with Bishop Talavera, and he resigned his post in 'indignation' after the council had made its report.¹

At the time that Páez was being brought to Caracas, Monagas decreed his exile for life, to take effect as soon as the security and the situation of the country allowed it. As a merciful gesture the other rebels would not be tried, but jailed or exiled as the government saw fit. All would lose their ranks, privileges and decorations.² Some were jailed at San Jacinto, others at the bóvedas of La Guaira. Páez was sent to San Antonio, Cumaná, from where he protested his condition to congress on 5 February 1850. Indignant at the tone of Páez's protest, congress refused to enter it into its records.³ Páez's wife, Dominga Ortiz, then petitioned congress to expel him. Monagas pointed to some rebel war matériel still at Curazao that had

¹ Consejo de Gobierno, Consulta del Consejo de Gobierno en la Cuestion de los Rendidos en el Campo Monagas y Demas Facciosos (Caracas, 30 Aug.1849). Parra-Pérez, Cuerras Civiles, iii.394. N. Zuloaga, Páez-Estudio Histórico-Político (Caracas, 1897), p.15.

² 2 Decrees of 3 Sept.1849, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.18a. A. Quintero, Manifiesto del Doctor Angel Quintero (Boston, 1862), pp.3-4. Parra-Pérez, ibid., p.395.

³ González Guinán, Historia, v.108-9. A presidential wedding took place on 11 Jan.1850 when Monagas's daughter, María Higinia married her cousin Francisco José Oriach at the cathedral. Conversation with Dr Falcón Briceño, 3 June 1978.

not arrived from the United States in time for the revolt to prove that Venezuela was not yet safe.¹ Páez would not be allowed to leave until all rebels submitted to Monagas's authority. The paecistas would continue to oppose him politically, but the option of armed revolt would not be available to them.

Not until 20 March did congress decree Páez's expulsion. Monagas ratified the decree on the 25th. However, the government did not send the 'Libertador' to Cumaná for two months after that. Some believed that the government's delaying tactics had gone too far and made a martyr of Páez, giving him a following again.² Páez finally took the steamer on 24 May 1850, reaching St. Thomas on the 28th. On 13 June, his birthday, Páez made his farewell address to Venezuela, declaring his withdrawal from the political struggle, but hoping that others would lead the country back on to the constitutional path.³ He took ship to Philadelphia on 15 July, and reached Staten Island, New York on the 29th. On the afternoon of the next day, Páez called on Garibaldi who had just arrived at Staten Island to begin his exile in the United States. The city of New York had been preparing to receive the two personalities with various functions to bestow honours upon them. It is interesting to note that while Garibaldi, true to form, refused to accept any honours, or to take part in the civic

¹ Unsigned (probably José María Francia) to J.B. Purroy, Curazao, 18 Jan. 1850, ADRRC, 7, fos. 69-71; Purroy to Francia, New York, 22 Jan. 1850, ADRRC, 43, fos. 487-8; Unsigned (Francia) to J.B.P(urroy), (Curazao) 27 Feb. 1850, ADRRC, 12, fos. 317-18.

² L. Pulido, Recuerdos Históricos (1880), pp. 102-3.

³ González Guinán, Historia, v. 113-15. J.A. Páez, 'A Venezuela', Santómas, 13 June 1850, AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 15, no. 65.

functions, Páez did so eagerly on 2 August not ignoring the propaganda value and prestige accompanying a reception intended for the two exiles.¹ The reception Páez was given in various North American cities as a hero of South American independence and as founder of Venezuela only worsened relations between the United States and Venezuela.² The American government insisted that it had nothing to do with local functions, and that these did not represent the federal government's policy. One reporter would later assure his readers that New York welcomed everyone in such a manner, and that Monagas would have received the same treatment.³ Whatever hopes that prestige had kept alive for Páez were soon dampened by the election of José Gregorio Monagas to succeed his brother. Páez would spend the remaining years of Monagas rule living frugally in New York and on Staten Island.

Monagas had defeated Páez at last. Páez's final, mediocre campaign had lasted only forty-six days. No great battles had been fought, only a few small ones. Driven on by extremists like Quintero he had refused to share or transfer power to Monagas long after his influence had waned.

¹ Jasper Ridley, Garibaldi (New York, 1976), pp.357-9. Hilarion Nadal to J.M. Francia, New York, 10 Aug., 9 Oct.1850, ADRRC, 49, fos.401-4, 381-3, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.268-75. Descriptions of New York welcome: Dos Venezolanos, El Jeneral J.A. Paez en los Estados Unidos (Caracas, 1850). J.A. Páez, Carta del General José Antonio Páez a su Esposa, New York, 6 Aug.1850 (Caracas, 1888).

² The friendly welcome Páez would receive in the U.S. had been evident to the rebels from early on. Unsigned (J.M. Francia) to J.B. Purroy, Curazao, 27 Oct.1849, ADRRC, 7, fo.72, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.211-13. Unsigned (Francia?) to Purroy, 15 May.1850, (Curazao?), ADRRC, 31, fo.505. Hilarion Nadal to J.M. Francia, New York, 24 June, 9 Oct.1850 (on Philadelphia), 7 Mar.1851 (on Washington, D.C.), ADRRC, 49, fos.373-6, 381-3, 407-13, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.263-6, 273-5, 297-303.

³ W.H. Gray, 'U.S.-Venezuelan Relations', pp.100-1. John Mayer, 'El Llanero', The Atlantic Monthly, iii (Feb.1859), 188. B.A. Frankel, Venezuela-Estados Unidos, pp.88-9.

⁴ Purroy to Francia, New York, 1 Dec.1850, ADRRC, 43, fo.489-92. Nadal to Francia, New York, 4 Nov., 21 Dec.1850, 10 Jan., 18 Jan., 7 Mar.1851, ADRRC, 49, fos.385-7, 389-99, 407-13, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.275-7 (incorrectly dated 9 Oct.), 278-80, 282-5, 290-2, 297-303 (incorrectly dated 7 May). One letter suggests that Páez had been prepared to return to Venezuela should the events of the election turn in his favour. Unsigned (possibly J.M. Francia) to Vicente Peccione, Curazao, 15 Feb.1851, ADRRC, 12, fos.331-2.

It had taken a disastrous campaign marching through swamps and forests in the rain with only 600 troops to convince him of the extent of Monagas's control. Monagas had improved his own position with each crisis, coaxing the support of leaders who had been loyal to Páez with a combination of leniency and threats. He had not abused of his victories in the past, allowing rebels to return to their property, and cutting off only one-third of rebel officers' military wages.¹ Because of the latest revolt Monagas had been forced to hand out stiffer punishment to drive home to Páez and his supporters how thoroughly they were defeated. Given the circumstances that punishment had not been unreasonable. In spite of godo fears no one was executed. The main rebels were allowed to leave the country, exiled for periods of up to ten years. Monagas's lenient attitude might be considered surprising if one realises that he had spent three years of his four-year term dealing with a very real military threat.

From the beginning of his term Monagas had begun consolidating his position. With time, and with the experience gained from each crisis, he had moulded his administration to deal with the paecistas. The legitimacy of his government had been maintained with the help of congress. This legitimacy had reinforced public opinion which had already been looking to him to break with Páez and bring the opposition Liberals into the government. With the resources, the law, and the people behind him, Monagas had been able to build an effective system for his defence, its efficacy being shown by the strength and speed with which the army and militia had risen to oppose Páez's invasion. Until the last campaign the numbers of troops involved had been relatively small, with the exception of the Guajira expedition which may have numbered 3,000 men. With experience, and more co-operation from

¹ González Guinán, Historia, iv.571. J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, pp.186-7.

regional authorities, larger, regular numbers of experienced militiamen had served.

Monagas had established loyalties in two ways. By rewarding loyal officers he had encouraged further loyalty. By showing leniency he had pacified some paecista officers. Because of these loyalties, Páez had been unable to gather sufficient forces.

In general, no great fierceness had been shown in the military struggle. There were few dead and wounded, which is surprising if one were to believe the exaggerated reports of the fierce combat that was supposed to have taken place. Instead, the battles were small, more like prolonged skirmishes. Only a few soldiers seem to have borne enough hatred towards their opposing brothers to act fiercely or mercilessly.

The extreme Liberal civilians would show less compassion and moderation than Monagas and the military. Some had demanded Páez's head. With Páez gone they saw the threat to their interests should Monagas be free to rule as he pleased. They now determined to oppose any attempt by Monagas to impose his will without their consent.¹ Their struggle would revolve around two main issues, the credit problem caused by espera and the presidential elections of 1850. Monagas would defend himself by continuing to cause divisions among the Liberal leaders as they vied for influence.

Monagas moved quickly against some extreme Liberals who were causing trouble. In Barinas, Governor Arteaga had declared, 'muera el Gran Bandido [Páez]', and demanded Páez's death. He also criticised Silva publicly, calling the surrender terms a disgrace. Silva complained and Interior Secretary Rafael Agostini suspended Arteaga on 10 October, ordering him to stand trial for publishing seditious pamphlets and for some cases of abuse

¹ Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 1 Oct. 1849, C.P.-V., V, fos. 176-7.

of power, adding that only the government could criticise Silva. Lucio Pulido represented his fellow barinés Arteaga before Monagas who replied that they had only to present clear proof of Arteaga's innocence and Monagas would take care of the rest. Arteaga was later absolved by the supreme court and reinstated as governor, but not until September 1851.¹

In Caracas, Bruzual led the resistance to the threat of militarism. He attacked Governor De la Plaza for negligence, but was in turn accused of wanting the governor's post and of creating an intrigue for the coming elections. On the council of state he voiced Arteaga's demands for Páez's death. Earlier he had attacked Mariño, whom he had called 'Jefe Supremo del Militarismo', and Mejía. His virulent editorials finally led to the closing of his paper El Republicano in late 1849, which may have increased his prestige as the possible opposition candidate in the coming elections.²

¹ González Guinán, Historia, v.83. V. Tosta, Codazzi y Arteaga, pp.60-2. N.S. Arteaga, 'El Gobernador de la Provincia de Barinas á los Valientes Barinésés, Jefes, Oficiales y Tropa al Partir Para la Campaña' (Barinas, 20 July 1849); Los Liberales de Barinas, 'Al Pueblo y Al Gobierno. Numero 2.' (Barinas, 1849); Arteaga, 'Constestación del Gobernador de Barinas Al Parte Dado por el Sr. Comandante General de Carabobo, sobre el rendimiento de Páez con todas sus fuerzas en Vallecito' (Barinas, 18 Aug.1849); 'Barinas a la Nacion. Numero 2' (Barinas, 22 Aug.1849); Arteaga, 'Napoleon Sebastian Arteaga a sus Conciudadanos' (Barinas, 8 Nov.1849), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 14, no.14, 2, 24, 29, 70. Somos Muchos, 'Napoleon Sebastian Arteaga está Alzado en Barinas!!!' (Valencia, 1849), ibid., Carpeta 13, no.6. J.T. Monagas to L. Pulido, Caracas, 1 Dec.1849, Colección del Doctor Antonio Domínguez.

² Juan B. Echeandía, 'Cuestion Gobernador' (Caracas, 26 July 1849), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 14, no.20. Hauterive to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 21 Aug.1849, C.P.-V., V, fos.169-70. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.335-9. M. Sojo to J.M. Francia, La Guaira, 3 Dec.1849, ADRRC, 43, fo.461. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 4 Jan.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.218-23, for further cases. Bruzual's fear was well founded. Over one-third of Monagas's address to congress exalted the virtues of the military, both army and militia. Agriculture and commerce covered only six lines of the address. J.T. Monagas, 'Mensaje del Presidente de la Republica de Venezuela al Congreso de 1850' (20 Jan.1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.19.

The reform of espera became an electoral issue, not only for its ideological and political value, but also for its anti-foreign tinge which was easily exploited. Although sentiment against the foreign creditor had surfaced during the passage of the law it had increased by the representations of the foreign agents protesting the illegality of the law. The diplomatic problem had begun when Riddel protested formally on 27 July by including translated excerpts of Palmerston's orders to him of 9 June. The tone of Riddel's protest was harsh and direct, having translated the '... attempt of the Venezuelan legislature and government to deprive creditors of their just right ...' as atentado rather than pretensión, thus implying doubt as to Venezuela's right to pass its own laws without foreign interference. A commission of the council of state replied that the manner in which the protest had been made represented a direct attack on the nation's sovereignty.¹ Riddel had placed himself in a difficult position with the Venezuelan government by making harsh protests to it while it was busy fighting Páez, and by making direct translations where the sense could be misunderstood, a mistake that even bilingual speakers will make. After this incident he found that his notes went disregarded and that he could not get the government to act. To add to Riddel's problems, Shields was now propagating the rumour that Britain was buying up the Venezuelan bonds of British bondholders to demand parts of Guayana in repayment.²

¹ Riddel to foreign secretary Jacinto Gutiérrez, 19 July 1849, F.O. 80/63B, fos. 193-4. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 21 Jan. 1850, C.P.-V., V, fos. 224-30; Copy of the Council's decision of 21 Dec. 1849, fos. 237-50. Wilson to Palmerston, 4 Feb. 1850, F.O. 80/70, fos. 69 ff. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii. 287-9.

² Riddel to Palmerston, 1 Sept. and 20 Oct. 1849, F.O. 80/64, fos. 1-4, 272 ff.

The new secretary Agostini announced in September that Venezuela should annul its diplomatic treaties because they were not to her advantage. The decree of 4 October gave notice of Venezuela's intention to abrogate its treaties with the Netherlands, the United States and Denmark in twelve months' time, undoubtedly as a direct consequence of the support Páez had received.¹

The new year brought changes in the diplomatic corps. Wilson returned to Venezuela on 1 January 1850 and entered into 'lively discussions' with the government. Isaac Nevett Steele replaced Shields on 2 January, which was seen as a victory by the government. Hauterive had been replaced by Chevalier François de Veimars on 22 December 1849. Finally, the Spaniard Muñoz was to be sent to Brussels.²

Wilson had orders to protest two points regarding espera, its retroactivity and the creditor's lack of any right to seek redress. As the law stood, the creditor had no rights over the debtor. He could not force the debtor to hand over property to an administrator, nor could he administer any active capital. The creditor's disadvantage might be considered a violation of the Anglo-Venezuelan treaty, and of the Venezuelan constitution.³ The French and Dutch representatives had orders to protest only the retroactivity of the law. Wilson reported that the lesser protests by these two

¹ Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, iii.331. Decree of 4 Oct.1849 in Gaceta de Venezuela (Caracas), 967 (7 Oct.1849).

² Wilson to Palmerston, 5 Jan.1850, F.O. 80/69, fos.1-3. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 21 and 4 Jan.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.224-30 and 218-23. Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 10 (29 Jan.1850), p.1.

³ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 21 Jan.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.224-30. See articles 188, 189 and 218 of the constitution on the inalienable rights of property, redress, and foreigners.

countries weakened his position and made the Venezuelan government more determined to resist.¹ Because of his experience and friendships in Venezuela, as well as representing the largest set of foreign claims, Wilson took charge of the diplomatic negotiations with the government. He kept Veimars well informed of events.²

In early February Monagas proposed to congress that it modify espera by giving the creditor guarantees over the debtors property and by allowing the judges more flexibility in granting delays. The first measure helped the creditor, but the second could worsen his position.³ It is clear that Monagas was attempting to steer a middle course that would not arouse the pro and anti-reform groups too much. A few days later Admiral Lord Dundonald arrived at La Guaira with an ultimatum to settle all British claims within a fortnight. Although some would later accuse Wilson of promoting the ultimatum, Veimars believed that Wilson had been greatly annoyed by it since negotiations were already under way.⁴

The ultimatum fuelled the resolve of a Liberal faction to oppose foreign pressure. This faction was already allied with debtor Liberals and Conservatives to stop the repeal or reform of espera. The agriculturalists included many oligarchs in debt. This large group linked its opposition of reform to its patriotic duty to defend the nation's sovereignty.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 5 Feb.1850, F.O. 80/70, fos.153 ff.

² Muñoz had orders from Madrid to co-ordinate efforts with the French and Dutch representatives. Hauterive to French foreign secretary, 7 Oct.1849, C.P.-V., V, fos.179-82.

³ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 6 Feb.1850, C.P.-V., V, fo.283, text of Monagas's proposals, fo.284-5.

⁴ 'Historial del Curso y Desenlace de la Cuestión Inglesa' (hereafter 'Historial'), Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 115 (4 June 1850), p.1. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 22 Feb.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.290-2.

The leaders of the Liberal faction were Sanabria, Aranda, Caballero, Governor De la Plaza, Andrés Eusebio Level, now a treasury officer, Manrique, a cabinet member under Soubllette, and the present interior, justice and foreign secretary Manuel M. Quintero. This Liberal faction was called the 'Ladronera' by its opponents.¹

When the council of state considered the government's reply to Dundonald's ultimatum Guzmán, who was taking a more cautious line than the 'Ladronera', insisted that its wording could lead to war, and the council withdrew it. Quintero then resigned declaring that the council had sold out to the foreigner, and published the ultimatum to fuel the excitement against the British. Wilson reported that Quintero had been fired for supporting the 'Ladronera'. Guzmán's caution is interesting. It may have been genuine, or he may have hoped that his co-operation would bring him Monagas's support for the presidency. Monagas himself was reputed to have been advised on the question of the reply by British subject J. Giuseppi, but it is not clear whether this was his son-in-law Juan or Juan's brother José, now Venezuelan consul at Trinidad.²

Whether Wilson had promoted Dundonald's note or not he certainly made use of it to press his claims. There is no doubt that in its impoverished state the government could ill afford a blockade of its ports with the subsequent loss of revenue, but it had to tread softly on the matter of accommodation for fear of the opposition it might arouse.

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 21 Feb. 1850, F.O. 80/70, fos. 310 ff.

² Ibid. M.M. Quintero, 'Cuestión Británica, y causas por las cuales ha renunciado el Ministro del Interior y Relaciones Exteriores' (Caracas, 1850), in C.P.-V., VI, fos. 1-1a. Riddel to Palmerston, 10 Nov. 1849, F.O. 80/65, fos. 105-6. Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 31 (22 Feb. 1850).

It agreed to pay \$15,000 pesos within six months for various British claims other than for espera. It agreed to negotiate guarantees on espera. Wilson then withdrew the ultimatum and asked Dundonald to stay away until Venezuela did not show good faith.¹

The results of espera were now becoming apparent. On 1 February Miranda had called in the remaining \$9,560 pesos in Colonial Bank notes still in circulation. The bank aimed to close its operations in Venezuela by 30 June because it could not collect on its debtors. On 23 March Monagas signed the law closing the National Bank.² One group in congress now wanted to repeal the law claiming that it had been carried by a combination of godos and 'militarists' when crop prices had been low. Now that coffee prices had risen to \$12.50 - \$15 pesos the quintal this 'Liberal' group believed that producers could repay their creditors. It accused godo landowners of taking advantage of the law to abuse it.³ Although coffee prices in the European markets had risen 10 per cent during November and December, they dropped again in early 1850. During the rise, Venezuelan coffee had rarely fetched more than \$10 - \$12.50 pesos. By May it fetched only around \$9.50 - \$11 pesos due to a market glut. During the same period

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 7 Mar.1850, F.O. 80/71, fos.48 ff. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 22 Feb. and 7 Mar.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.290-2, and VI, first two fos., not numbered. Wilson to Dundonald, 27 Feb.1850, F.O. 80/71, fos.8 ff. G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp.3, 109-10.

² G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp.65-6, 76. Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 80 (23 Apr.1850), p.4, 'Liquidacion del Banco Colonial Britanico', and 49 (15 Mar.1850), p.4. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.483-4, Doc.404, 'Decreto del 23 de Marzo de 1850'. For liquidation of National Bank see Memoria de Hacienda, 1852, 'Banco Nacional', quoted in Carrillo Batalla, ibid., pp.301-5, Doc.371. When the bank closed Juan Pérez and his mother Margarita owned more shares than the government, 2,679 of the total 10,000, and with a nominal value of \$669,750 pesos. Landaeta Rosales, Riqueza Circulante, p.143.

³ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 4 Jan. and 6 Feb.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.218-23, 272-6.

cacao prices remained steady between \$32 a fanega for superior quality and \$28 for inferior.¹

The Liberals were supposed to want to force Monagas into resisting Britain's claims to cause him embarrassment with the foreign powers. In congress they could be expected to cause further embarrassment by delaying approval of any agreement he were to reach with Wilson by declaring it unpatriotic and a sellout to foreign interference. Further, his discrediting on this issue would weaken his plans to have his brother elected president.²

Monagas was determined to reform espera. His annual address to congress had stressed the recovery of crop prices on the world market. Customs revenue had increased in the last months, and there was hope that the country's economic recovery had begun. That year's crops were expected to bring Venezuela about \$2.5 million pesos in foreign revenue.³ He did not want trouble from stronger foreign governments, so he decided to negotiate with Wilson, a slow process that would give him time to manoeuvre in congress. His first step against the pestering opposition was to consult with congress on the question of the foreign claims regarding espera. On 4 March congress declared that the executive was in charge of diplomatic negotiations that would then be submitted to congress for consideration.

¹ Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 4 (22 Jan.1850), p.1, 'Cafe'; 31 (22 Feb.1850), p.4; 77 (19 Apr.1850), p.4; 89 (3 May 1850), p.4; 92 (7 May 1850), p.4; 104 (21 May 1850), p.4; for cacao prices: 31 (22 Feb.1850), p.4; 104 (21 May 1850), p.4; 110 (28 May 1850), p.4, the fanega weighed 110 lbs in Caracas and 100 lbs in Maracaibo because soil stuck to Caracas cacao while Andean cacao was dried cleaner. (Cúcuta cacao fetched about \$22 the fanega in Maracaibo). For exports to Britain see G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, pp.54-5.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, 22 Feb.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.290-2.

³ Ibid. J.T. Monagas, 'Mensaje del Presidente de la República de Venezuela Al Congreso de 1850' (20 Jan.1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/ Carpeta 1, no.19.

Quintero's allies had pushed this decision in the hope that Monagas could later be blamed for any concessions that he had made.¹ Now free of constant Liberal scrutiny Monagas could work towards a settlement with the foreigners. He appointed Revenga and Urbaneja to negotiate with Wilson. Although the 'Ladronera' - indebted godos alliance continued to claim that Monagas was giving in to the British, it could not stop the negotiations and would have to wait for the terms to be announced.²

As the negotiations began in early April, Monagas further disarmed the opposition by having a senate commission introduce his original project of reform for discussion in congress. Before the opposition could criticise the project, interior secretary Francisco Parejo made a speech against both the law and the project of reform calling them 'unjust, immoral, reactionary'.³ The executive had changed its policy leaving everyone to wonder what its new position would be.

From the oral instructions they received, Urbaneja and Revenga assumed that the government was accepting responsibility for compensating the creditor for any losses incurred by the law of espera.⁴ Wilson discussed the terms with Veimars and Steele before accepting them. A project for a convention was signed on 16 April. The government agreed to pay 12 per cent interest on debts existing before 28 April 1848 when espera had been

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 7 and 21 Mar.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos. first two, not numbered, and 3-6. 'Historial' Diario de Avisos (Caracas) 115 (4 June 1850), p.1.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 20 and 21 Mar.1850, F.O. 80/71, fos.182 ff.

³ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 5 Apr.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.20-3. For a clearer picture of the manoeuvring that took place in congress one would have to consult the Diario de Debates del Congreso which unfortunately is and will be unavailable for consultation while the congressional archives are transferred to a new site.

⁴ Report of the commissioners Urbaneja and Revenga to the Venezuelan foreign secretary, 17 Apr.1850, in Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 98 (14 May 1850), p.1.

executed and 9 per cent on debts incurred after that day. It would repay the principal in 36 monthly instalments beginning in a year's time. The principal included original interests due plus court costs. If the espera had not yet been executed then only the losses incurred from non-payment of the debt plus the deterioration of the property could be included in the principal.¹ There were fears that the amounts the government would have to pay would reach \$200,000 or \$300,000 pesos a year. British claims from espera reached \$80,000 pesos in Caracas province alone with another \$300,000 pesos worth being considered in the courts of appeal. Claims of other nationals and in other provinces would raise the total. One attempted claim that Wilson refused to support involved Robert Syers, Páez's agent, and the Chuao hacienda. J.M. Francia, Páez's son-in-law and attorney, proposed to draw up a back-dated contract selling the 1848 crop to Syers to save 'Chuao' from embargo. Wilson was well informed and put a stop to this attempted fraud.² Until 14 March French claims totalled over \$48,500 pesos; by April 1851 they reached almost \$120,000.³ On 27 April some citizens asked the senate that if Britons were indemnified that it grant the same benefit to all creditors regardless of nationality.⁴ The proposed convention was so unfavourable that no one wanted to support it openly before congress. Treasury secretary Fernando Olavarria is then

¹ Ibid. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 21 Apr.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.25-31.

² Commissioners' report, ibid. For Chuao: Wilson to Syers, 16 Feb.1850, F.O.80/70, fos.253-67 (Courtesy of L. Fierro Bustillos); Unsigned (Francia) to Syers, Curazao, 31 Mar.1850; Syers to Francia, La Guaira, 17 Apr.1850; Unsigned (Francia) to Syers, Curazao, 30 Apr.1850; ADRRC, 5, fos.585-6; 43, fos.453-5; and 5, fos.589-90, respectively. Francia to Syers, 31 Mar. and 30 Apr.1850, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp.234-6, incorrectly attributed to H. Nadal.

³ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 21 Mar.1850 and 24 Apr.1851, C.P.-V., VI, fo.9; VII, fos.78-9.

⁴ Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 86 (30 Apr.1850), p.2.

supposed to have gotten a new reform bill introduced proposing a combination of the old Spanish 'Ordenanza de Bilbao' with the substitution of the debtor by the government.¹

The 'ley de partida o de Bilbao' granted espera y quita by the consent of a majority of creditors depending first on their percentage of the debt, and if the percentages were equal then by a majority of the number of creditors. If the creditors were split even both by the percentage of the debt and by their number then the moratorium would be granted for pity's sake. The judge had no say in the granting of espera. Further, the granting of quita was not automatic as before, but had to be sought specifically when appealing for espera. The other part of the proposal allowed the creditor to substitute the state for the debtor in cases where espera had been granted without the creditor's consent. The state would accept the mortgages and repay the creditor with paper bearing an annual interest rate of 2.5 per cent, and it would place \$100,000 pesos as security to amortize the principal every year. The interest rate was modified to 5 per cent in congress. The debtor would have to fulfil his obligations with his new creditor, the state, when his term of espera had expired in a manner to be determined by the executive. Congress agreed that the law of espera had to be replaced. The question of the rights of foreigners to seek indemnity through the state was less politically clear. It decided to consider the two parts as separate proposals.²

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 20 May 1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.47-51.

² Ibid. Pimentel y Roth, Hist.Crédito Pub., p.47. 'Historial', Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 115 (4 June 1850), p.1. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 6 Feb.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.272-6.

The executive made great efforts to pass both proposals. There was little hope of settling the crisis any other way. The repeal of espera meant that any reparations that were made would not have the character of concessions made under British threats. They would be an act of justice by the legislature to Venezuelans as well as foreigners. Congress and the executive would receive the credit for the arrangement, thus satisfying national pride, and it would satisfy British claims without recognising the negotiations with Wilson.¹

Pio Ceballos asked Lucio Pulido, chairman of the reform committee, to speak to Olavarría after Pulido had spoken against the reforms. Olavarría is supposed to have convinced Pulido not to kill the reforms, including the Wilson convention, since it would lead to war with Britain, but to shelve them until the next year if congress could not agree to them now.²

After a last-minute attempt to block passage of the proposals, congress approved the repeal of the law of espera replacing it with the law of partida or Bilbao. On the last day of its sessions it approved the project to satisfy creditors who had had espera declared without their consent by allowing substitution of the state for their debtors.³ The executive had ridden out the crisis by acceding to some of the demands of both creditor and debtor⁴ while effectively opposing the extremist 'Ladronera' faction.

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 20 May.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.47-61. 'Historial', Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 115 (4 June 1850), p.1.

² 'A Quien Creemos?', Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 110 (28 May 1850), p.1; 'Sesion del 26 de Mayo en la Camara de Representantes', 112 (30 May 1850), p.1; 'Historial', 115 (4 June 1850), p.1.

³ Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 110 (28 May 1850), p.4; 'Historial', 115 (4 June 1850), p.1.

⁴ Fierro Bustillos, 'Política Económica, 1830-1850', pp.46-7; laws of 27 and 28 May 1850 quoted pp.64-5.

Although his convention had been shelved until 1851 Wilson seems to have been pleased with the precedent that had been set. He reported that Monagas had kept his word in everything they had discussed.¹

Representations would continue to be made throughout the year protesting the short six-month periods of time set by the government for the presentation of claims for substitution. The sum of \$100,000 pesos for the amortization had not been included in the 1850/51 budget. It did appear in the 1851/52 budget.² The American claims due to espera were thought to total \$40,000 or \$50,000 pesos, but there was little hope of collecting because Shields was appointed special commissioner to settle all American claims, charging large commissions for his effort.³ The British Colonial Bank was thought to have lost about \$200,000 pesos in expected revenues due to espera, while other British losses totalled \$150,000.⁴ The next year, Aranda, Ibarra and others would reintroduce Aranda's proyecto de instituto to substitute the state for all debtors thus forcing creditors to accept settlements on terms set by the treasury. By expanding coverage from the half-measures of 1850 private debt did indeed become public debt.⁵

¹ Wilson to Palmerston, 1 June 1850, F.O. 80/73, fos.1-6.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, 24 Oct.1850 and 24 Apr.1851, C.P.-V., VI, fos.163-6; VII, fos.78-9. See Memoria de Hacienda, 1851, 'Ley de 28 de Mayo de 1850', for matters relating to it, quoted in Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.206-13, Doc.370.

³ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 24 Nov.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.173-8. W.H. Gray, 'U.S.-Venezuelan Relations', pp.88-93. B.A. Frankel, Venezuela-Estados Unidos, pp.89-90, 227, 235-38. Steele also received substantial commissions. He settled claims worth \$90,000 pesos macuquinos in 1853. Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii. 551-2, Doc.433, 'Decreto de 12 de Mayo de 1853'.

⁴ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 20 Jan.1851, C.P.-V., VII, fos.13-17.

⁵ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 20 Mar.1851, C.P.-V., VII, fos.52-4; Executive Decision of 20 May 1851 on Ley de Espera, fos.104-5. G.E. Carl, First Among Equals, p.3.

As a result of the law of 28 May 1850 and the claims it covered, about 2 million pesos were paid out in cash over the years, as well as 5 per cent treasury bonds worth \$152,292. 92.¹ However, it is well to note that the Monagases continued to stall on making the payments. Although efforts were sometimes made to pay the interest at least, the Monagases did so just sufficiently to avoid the blockade of Venezuela's ports. As already mentioned, the Monagases were primarily concerned with survival, and to do so they needed to administer the scarce revenue to their own advantage. Their survival and the recovery of the country's industries, and thus the economy, were seen as more important factors than the repayment of the growing foreign debt. The debt would have to be repaid eventually, but the Monagases' unspoken policy seems to have been to wait for better days of internal security, peace, and prosperity before affording relief to Venezuela's creditors.

Internally, it is understandable that the Monagases should have satisfied those creditors who supported their government while ignoring those who continued to oppose it. They would have to allow sloppy book-keeping at the aduanas to buy loyalty.² One congressman denounced the illegal payments made by the La Guaira aduana during January 1851, José Tadeo's last month in office. Records showed that it had taken in \$331,637 pesos that month, but most of it had been disbursed irregularly. On Monagas's order \$32,013 pesos had been paid out to private individuals without presentation of receipts. Another order had given one person \$12,000 in twelve \$1,000 payments without explanation. Another person had been paid \$32,865

¹ Pimentel y Roth, Hist. Crédito Pub., p.47. For a general discussion of the economy of that period see Carrillo Batalla, Finanzas Públicas, vii.14-15.

² 'Falta de Orden en la Distribucion de los Fondos Asignados al Crédito Público Interior', Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 65 (5 Apr.1850), p.2.

pesos for billetes presented. \$48,703 pesos had been paid out for unspecified business.¹ It is good to remember that congress was to elect the new president later that month.

The government had other 'necessary' expenses during 1850. 20,000 rifles were supposed to have been bought at exorbitant prices that year, perhaps to bolster Monagas's bid to have his brother elected. Keeping in mind the difficulties of obtaining guns in the past in terms of the supplies and the funds available, this figure seems grossly exaggerated. Fortunato Corvaia had been sent to the United States to observe and counteract paecista activity there. He is supposed to have bought one 150-horsepower steamer for \$150,000 pesos. Secretaries Vicente Lecuna and Mejía were ordered to sign the 'scandalous' contract by Monagas.² Before his commission to the United States, Corvaia, nicknamed Cor-beta, had had the contract to print all government publications for which he received \$5,000 pesos every week. This contract was stopped when Andrés E. Level was appointed treasurer, and Corvaia's associates, alias 'la Gran Compañía', were not paid another \$27,000 pesos.³

Among the government's efforts to raise cash in May 1850 to prepare for the elections, or perhaps even to finance Corvaia's mission of July-August, was the sale of two of its steamers at Puerto Cabello, the 'Jackson' and the 'Tritón' (perhaps the old 'Scourge'). It also ordered the sale of the goleta 'Perseverancia' at Maracaibo. Only the steamer 'Libertador' would remain in public service.⁴ From the above examples it is evident that

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 7 May 1851, C.P.-V., VII, fos.85-92.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, 20 Mar.1851, C.P.-V., VII, fos.58-9.

³ 'Revelacion de Un Misterio', El Hablador. Eco del Pueblo (Caracas), 1 (23 June 1850), p.2. Courtesy of M. Pérez Vila.

⁴ Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 89 (3 May 1850), p.4.

Monagas's first priority was to obtain funds with which to sustain his government. The rise in crop prices on the world market and Páez's defeat promised a better economic climate. This optimism must have influenced his decision to substitute the government for the debtor since it was conceivable that the debt could be paid in times of affluence. For the present, political reasons, including the desire for personal gain, would determine expenditure, leaving the less 'urgent' foreign debts to be satisfied when those better times arrived.

The elections of 1850 illustrate the degree to which Monagas had consolidated his power. As soon as Páez had been defeated the country had begun to busy itself with the presidential elections. We have seen how Bruzual's ravings against not only Páez, but also the 'militarist' party led to the closure of his paper in late 1849. Bruzual's strong stance against the 'party' of military godos and Liberals, mostly reformistas, who now supported Monagas, had made him the leader of the strongest Liberal faction in some people's opinion, having surpassed Guzmán.¹ Having been unable to break away from Monagas, Guzmán had had no choice but to co-operate with Monagas in the hope of receiving his endorsement for the presidency. Guzmán must have realised that it would be very difficult to be elected without that support. He may have adopted his more moderate stance to show his statesmanship as well, but it is likely his main reason for having done so was to win Monagas's favour.

There is evidence that Monagas planned to support his brother José Gregorio from an early stage.² Having been a Liberal candidate in the past one might have expected the Liberals to support him now. However, with the

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 4 Jan.1850, C.P.-V., V, fos.218-23.

² Unsigned (Francia) to Purroy, (Curazao), 27 Feb.1850, ADRRC, 12, fos.317-18.

widening split between civilistas and militaristas, José Gregorio's candidacy was now seen as the continuation of military rule. More importantly, it was seen as the perpetuation of José Tadeo's rule, something to be avoided at all costs if the Liberal movement was to survive. Acevedo, now governor of Apure, insisted that the country needed a civilian president, and not a godo one. He considered the succession by a brother treason, and urged Guzmán not to support that plan. Acevedo believed that Guzmán should be the next president.¹

The president of the senate, Estanislao Rendón, representing the more moderate Liberal party of Cumaná, made a bid for the candidacy hoping to capture the support of the moderates of all parties. He had exploited the theme of reconciliation by endorsing in congress Páez's Cumaná protest and demand for immediate exile. Rendón had argued that it was illegal and inhuman for the executive to hold Páez at its whim. He had obtained a more independent position by becoming Páez's main saviour, but it is not clear how his popularity had been affected except with the godos.²

As a military chief, a moderate Liberal, and a reformista, Mariño might have seemed to be the perfect choice to lead the reconciliation of all parties. One would have thought that his magnanimity as commander-in-chief of the army during both of Páez's revolts might have gotten him even some godo support. By all accounts he was old and lacked support. His chances were considered to be nil.³

Another candidate was José Angel Ruiz, a member of congress from Cumaná who represented the large Liberal faction which had broken with

¹ Acevedo to Guzmán, Achaguas, 2 Feb. 1850, ADRRC, 5, fos. 549-52, also quoted in Castellanos, Páez, pp. 232-4, dated 20 Feb. Zamora also supported Guzmán. A. Rodríguez, Zamora, p. 170.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, 4 Apr. and 15 Aug. 1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos. 12-13, 92-6.

³ Ibid. Ex-secretary Agostini did support him against José Gregorio. C. Pimentel, Evocaciones, p. 100.

Monagas insisting on a civilian successor. Bruzual was supposed to be among his supporters.¹ El Republicano endorsed the civilian candidates Rendón, Ruiz and José M. García. El Sol de Oriente (Barcelona) did the same. El Alerta supported Joaquín Herrera in May. Various papers sprung up to endorse José Gregorio, among them La Nación, El Centinela del Lago (Maracaibo), La Nueva Era (Coro), and El Mentor (Cumaná).² There were so many candidates that El Hablador suggested that fifteen presidents be elected with each governing one province, but then admitted that there were even more candidates than provinces.³

With so many possible candidates it is difficult to determine which had been encouraged by Monagas to neutralise any threat to his brother's election. A plethora of candidates would undoubtedly split the civilista vote. Castelli wrote to Sanabria asking him to stand. Monagas, Mejía and Castelli were supposed to have written around the country in support of Sanabria. Supposedly, Monagas felt that his brother's candidacy was not convenient or patriotic; nor was it favourable to the Monagas family, and it would raise suspicions that he wanted the military to rule. Sanabria refused Castelli on 7 May, took to bed ill, and died on 30 May.⁴ Perhaps if he had remained alive the civilistas would have presented a more united front.

¹ Veimars, ibid.

² Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 89 (3 May 1850), p.4.

³ El Hablador (Caracas), 1 (23 June 1850), p.2, 'Já! já! já! ... que risa me dá.'

⁴ Un Amigo, Resumen Biográfico ... Sanabria, p.5. Unos Barquisimetanos, 'Elecciones' (Barquisimeto, 1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.22. J.M. de Rojas, Bosquejo, p.206.

It was rumoured that José Gregorio had written to Caracas refusing to stand for president. A letter from José Tadeo to G. Guevara, still commander of the fort at Puerto Cabello, in which Monagas would not mention any candidate so that the people might choose without interference, was published to prove that Monagas was determined not to rule as Páez had done. Mejía did write to Guevara at the end of July to encourage him to work for Guzmán. On 1 September Castelli became secretary for war replacing Mejía who had been Monagas's most faithful cabinet member. Mejía had opposed José Gregorio's candidacy.¹ By this time it was also rumoured that if José Gregorio did not receive the necessary two-thirds majority Guzmán was willing to concede to him in exchange for a commission to London or Paris.²

The August elections for the electoral college gave no clear majority to any candidate. They were ignored by the oligarchs according to Veimars. In Caracas José Gregorio received 1,144 electors out of the 1,317 who took part. Rendón got 125 and Guzmán 48. Rendón won in Cumaná and Barcelona, Guzmán in Valencia. There was supposed to have been a lot of fraud.³ At Puerto Cabello Guevara was accused of using threats and trickery to win the city for José Gregorio. Voters were even threatened in the hall as they voted. Against the 'totalitarians' the 'true' Liberals claimed to want Guzmán.⁴

¹ Diario de Avisos (Caracas), 92 (7 May 1850), p.3. Unos Barquisimetanos, 'Elecciones', ibid. J.J. La Roche, 'Alcance a la "Traicion"' (Puerto Cabello, 30 July 1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G1/Carpeta 15, no.84. González Guinán, Historia, v.134.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, 15 Aug.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.92-6. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.381-2. Monagas had the personal satisfaction of seeing his son José Tadeo, Jr. pass his last exam on 16 July to become a lawyer. 'Fecha de los exámenes ...', AANH, Hojas Sueltas, xvii, caja 58, Letra M.

³ Ibid.

⁴ José Tomás Martínez and others, 'A Nuestros Conciudadanos' (Puerto Cabello, 13 Aug.1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.25.

As the October elections neared Wilson and Veimars feared more disorders which would affect foreigners as well as nationals, especially since the British threat in Guayana was being exploited again. Wilson reported that only Monagas and Lecuna seemed to grasp the implications of exciting the people against the foreigners. To settle the volatile question of Guayana, Wilson proposed that neither country should occupy the territory in dispute. Venezuela agreed and the political problem was neutralised. Unfortunately, the disputed territory was not specified at the time, and as more atlases appeared with Schomburgk's boundary Britain would seem to have acquired some of the disputed territory by 'universal consent'.¹

Wilson reported that Monagas had used coercion and corruption during the October elections, but no brute violence in what he described as this 'despotic democracy'. He implied that there had been some improvement in the system when he pointed out that votes had not been annulled as in 1844 and 1847. He expected that the corruption of the congressional will would lead to the election of José Gregorio. He believed that that election would best serve Anglo-Venezuelan relations since José Tadeo's experience would guide the newcomer.²

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 9 Oct.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.117-23. Wilson to Palmerston, 9 Sept.1850, F.O. 80/74, fos.119 ff. Wilson to Lecuna, 18 Nov.1850, and Lecuna to Wilson, 20 Dec.1850, both printed in Historia oficial de la Discusión Entre Venezuela y la Gran Bretaña sobre sus Límites en la Guayana (New York, 1896), pp.30-4. George Pariset, Historique Sommaire du Conflit Anglo-Vénézuélien en Guyane Des Origines Au Traité D'Arbitrage, 1493-1897 (Paris, 1898), pp.35-7. G.E. Carl, 'Orígenes del Conflicto de Límites entre Venezuela y la Guayana Británica, 1840-1850', Boletín Histórico (Caracas), 12 (Sept.1966), 253-73. Antonio Guzmán Blanco, Memorandum on the Guayana boundary question, (c.1880-1890s), ADRRC, 24, fos.172-3.

² Wilson to Palmerston, 25 Oct.1850, F.O. 80/74, fos.275 ff.

After the October elections it became clear that José Gregorio might not have received two-thirds of the votes, and that congress might have to make the election. If Monagas were to leave office on 20 January, but for some reason congress had not reached quorum by that time, then the vice-president, Guzmán, would take power until such time as congress had met and elected the new president. Guzmán and his supporters realised that if he were acting-president while congress met he might be able to influence its choice towards himself. Monagas raised doubts about stepping down on the 20th as stipulated in article 111 of the constitution by arguing that article 108 clearly stated that his period of office was to last four years, therefore entitling him to stay on until 1 March, the day he had taken office. There was no doubt that if Monagas remained in power while congress met he would easily control it, getting his brother elected. Apparently even the council of state disagreed with Monagas's interpretation.¹

Monagas's only option was to ensure that congress reached quorum on the 20th so that it could reach its decision before he stepped down that day. He put his whole network to work towards this aim, strongly encouraging all congressmen to be in Caracas by 20 January. As the end of 1850 approached Monagas openly prepared for a struggle. Troops were moved into Caracas. The armouries were stocked. Sotillo, now a brigadier general, arrived as military commander of Caracas on 20 December and met with pardos and blacks 'of the worst reputation'.² Another round of military promotions would be submitted to congress for approval. Pulido would also be a general.³

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 9 and 24 Oct. 1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos. 117-23, 161-2. *Un Liberal*, 'Epistola Primera Al Presidente de la Republica General Jose Tadeo Monagas' (Caracas, 1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no. 23.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, Caracas, 24 Nov., 9 and 25 Dec. 1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos. 173-8, 211-12, 234-6.

³ L. Pulido, Recuerdos (1880), p. 103.

In the meantime, Monagas continued to insist that he would not relinquish power on the 20th. He celebrated 28 October, Bolívar's day and his birthday, with an official banquet, apparently the first he had held during his term. Guzmán and the councillors who had not supported his choice of José Gregorio were not invited. Inexperience led to incorrect seating arrangements placing some ex-secretaries above the foreign representatives. One toast mentioned three centuries of Spain's oppression over America in the presence of the Spanish chargé, who remained silent.¹

Guzmán prepared for the clash by appealing to the militia, a hopeless effort since it was loyal to Monagas. He called on the oligarchs, perhaps offering a full pardon for Páez, but there was too much hatred for them to accept him. Reduced to his own civilistas, Guzmán lacked the resources to oppose Monagas's machinery that was based on the support of military leaders.² One civilista broadsheet criticised the 'sultanic power that oppresses Venezuela'.³ One rumour claimed that Guzmán would be arrested on 18 January if it were clear by then that congress would not have a quorum by the 20th.⁴ This rumour suggests that Guzmán was actively involved in convincing congressmen to stay away.

In spite of the general unease, Monagas seems to have felt confident enough to issue a final address on 11 January in which he summarised the

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 30 Oct.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.170-1.

² Veimars to French foreign secretary, 9 and 25 Dec.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.211-12, 234-6.

³ Muchos del Partido Liberal, 'Eco del Civil' (Puerto Cabello, 22 Dec.1850), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.26.

⁴ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 25 Dec.1850, C.P.-V., VI, fos.234-6. Díaz Sánchez, Guzmán, pp.383-4. Also see Consejero Lisboa, Relación de un Viaje a Venezuela, Nueva Granada y Ecuador (Madrid, 1954), pp.80-1.

struggle of the people and of his government during the last four years to rid the country of its oppressors. Claiming that his mission was accomplished now that no power in Venezuela stood above the constitution and the law he promised to step down on 20 January.¹ His annual message to congress on the 21st stated that nothing exceptional had taken place during the last year, that peace had reigned throughout the country. He encouraged congress to grant further pardons to rebels still being punished. Commerce and agriculture had improved, but they needed further encouragement.²

Congress met at 9.30 a.m. on 20 January with a full gallery of spectators. The results of the fifteen electoral colleges totalled 203 votes for José Gregorio, 64 for Guzmán, 30 for Rendón, 20 for Ruiz, 2 for F. Toro, 1 for Vargas, and 1 for Narvarte. Out of a total 321 votes, José Gregorio had just failed to get two-thirds. Considering the pressure made to bear by the militaristas around the country, and especially Sotillo who had gone about Caracas threatening even congressmen with his sword, it is not surprising that of congress's 80 votes José Gregorio received 65, Guzmán 8 and Rendón 7. As the balloting had reached the 53rd vote for Monagas the silent, expectant crowd of spectators had exploded into vivas and jubilation.³

¹ González Guinán, Historia, v.143-6.

² J.T. Monagas, 'Mensaje de S.E. el Presidente de la Republica' (20 Jan.1851), AANH, HSAAR, Ar 5/G3/Carpeta 1, no.27. 'Fue necesario combatir: fue necesario perdonar'. González Guinán, Historia, v.149-53.

³ González Guinán, Historia, v.147-9. Diario de Debates (Caracas), 1, 1ra Serie (21 Jan.1851), copy in C.P.-V., VII, fo.26. Veimars to French foreign secretary, 23 Jan.1851, C.P.-V., VII, fos.21-2.

Monagas had accomplished what he had set out to do. He had displaced Páez and Guzmán by creating his own party recruited from the ranks of both Liberals and Conservatives. He had spent four difficult years neutralising his opposition. Now his brother would be able to reap the benefits of José Tadeo's hard work. No longer fearing Guzmán, Monagas handed over office to him at noon just after congress's election. José Gregorio would arrive from Barcelona and take office on 5 February. In the meantime, José Tadeo held real control of the government through Sotillo, whom Guzmán did not dare dismiss. On 6 February 1851 Veimars could report that the country was quiet.¹

¹ Veimars to French foreign secretary, 23 Jan. and 6 Feb. 1851, C.P.-V., VII, fos. 21-2, 32-8.

CHAPTER IXCONCLUSION

I have argued that José Tadeo Monagas has been misrepresented by history, and hope that this study will have produced a more realistic picture of the man and his time. He had had to face serious problems during his first term, but he had dealt with them with the skill and ability of a capable ruler. He had brought to himself certain Liberal and Conservative leaders, as well as friends and relatives, while achieving and maintaining popular support by riding the wave of 'liberalism' that had risen during the 1840s. At the same time, he never forgot the importance of his military support, keeping cooperative and loyal soldiers and militiamen well rewarded. With the help of his vast family and connections he held his influence in his native region, and was always able to depend on it for men and funds if the need arose, something Páez had lost after spending years away at the centre of national power.

Venezuela would never be the same after Monagas's consolidation. The Liberals reached power for the first time with Monagas, and having done so, would never allow themselves to be kept down again. The Conservative oligarchy would never be able to hold them down either, after its defeat by the Monagas-Liberal coalition. The influence of the Liberals in national politics during Monagas's term meant a greater involvement of the lower classes in the political process. As their political role grew these lower classes were flattered by their leaders; they became aware of their own importance. Under Monagas the Liberals and the lower class supporters, el pueblo, got military experience fighting against the paecistas, and they got weapons for the first time. Men who learned to fight defending Monagas's government were to become the Federalists of the Federal War.

Guzmán may have awakened their aspirations but they realised the possibility of achieving them only after serving in Monagas's government and defending it in his armies.

The nature of the military was changed during Monagas's rule. The standing army was small, and it was stationed mainly at Caracas. The citizen's militia, led by local leaders, became an effective extension of the army, ready to back it up in times of emergency. Conditions improved not just for officers, but for soldiers and militiamen as well. They received better pay and protection.¹ The military came to have a more Liberal tradition than it had had during the Páez era. The rise of pardo officers, some of them bolivarians and 'reformists' who had been swept aside, and of a new generation that had been exposed to Liberal teachings, gave the army and militia a much more homogeneous composition than they had had since the 'revolution of the reforms'.

The difficult economic situation had not made Monagas's task any easier. The survival of his government was paramount. If we remember that even during the conscientious Soublette administration the foreign debt was the last to be serviced, and then usually only the interest, it is not surprising that Monagas should have avoided its servicing in his bid to channel the scarce resources into the struggle against the paecistas. In their following administrations the Monagases would be accused of corruption. There is no doubt that corruption took place openly later on while the foreign debt went unserviced. With their power secured the first fault may have been unavoidable while the second may be accounted a bad habit that continued long after the emergency period had ended.²

¹ R.E. Castillo, 'The Monagas Family', pp.92-3,96-9,101-3,104-5, for military advancements, promotions, and pensions during the Monagases.

² Ibid., pp.92,94-6,99-101,106-8.

The credit reforms that took place during the first administration hurt the financiers and money men of the old regime, most of whom had supported Páez against Monagas quite openly. Agriculturalists appeared to benefit most by those reforms. Whether most of the indebted agriculturalists were Liberals or Conservatives is not as important as the fact that the reforms had been part of a Liberal platform that had sought to put an end to the alleged excesses of godo usury. Under Monagas the agriculturalists received more protection and encouragement by both the reforms and the improved world market. Remembering his own background Monagas gave cattle breeders the best incentives of all.

After a rocky start relations with the church improved under Monagas. He had no great quarrel with it, and one can suppose that with relatives, however distant, in the clergy enough dialogue could take place to avoid crises.

A clearer view of Monagas's progression should be apparent from this thesis. Over the years he had had to contend with Mariño, Páez and Guzmán. He displaced Mariño for hegemony in the East. He defeated Páez by undermining his traditional sources of support in the llanos. Men who had been taken for granted by Páez would be left alone by Monagas to control their regions as long as they supported him. Guzmán was also defeated by having his influence undermined among his supporters, el pueblo and the Liberal party. This was achieved by Monagas by encouraging the rise of other Liberal leaders, while directing the masses through men like Sotillo. The deciding factor in defeating both Páez and Guzmán was his superior military might.

Monagas was soon in a stronger position to deal with Guzmán than Páez had been. When Guzmán failed in his bid for the presidency in 1851 no revolts could have taken place as they had done in 1846 because Guzmán had lost control of his popular base. In both cases Guzmán had needed the

endorsement of the strongman to be elected, and it is interesting that Monagas threatened him with force, much as Páez had done, when Guzmán showed reluctance to bow to the ruler's will.

Páez, whom the Colombian pamphleteer Vargas Vila rightly designated as the founder of the Conservative dynasty in Venezuela, was shown to be an idol with feet of clay.¹ He and his 'clan' had refused to believe that he had lost his influence in the country until he was jailed and expelled at Monagas's will. A close examination of the years between 1846 and 1851 reveals facets of Páez's character and proceedings that do not accord with the traditional image of his political conduct.

Monagas was not an evil, brutal traitor, but a man who was forced to break with the Conservative oligarchy because of that oligarchy's intransigence.² Its over-reaction to his reasonable demands for some freedom of action as president led, more than any other single factor, to the outbreak of war with its ensuing destruction. He pursued his enemies with less vengeance than Páez and Quintero had done. He returned to the old practice of conceding pardons and amnesties that had been forgotten by the extreme godos. Throughout his term he followed the letter of the law; it should be recognised that the laws had been made by the oligarchy and he did stretch them at times. He did 'encourage' congress to support José Gregorio. Nevertheless, his methods of government were, in general, more scrupulous and legalistic than his 'tropical' reputation would lead one to suppose.

¹ José María Vargas Vila, Los Césares de la Decadencia (Paris, 1913), pp.177-80.

² Once in power Monagas is reputed to have declared that he had offered to rule with those who had helped with his election, not that they would rule him. 'Lo que yo ofrecí fué mandar con los que ayudaran a mi elección, pero no que ellos me mandaran a mí'. Parra-Pérez, Guerras Civiles, ii.332.

Monagas spread his influence from Caracas to other parts of the country not by direct control, but by calling on fellow bolivarians and 'reformists' who were already leaders in their regions. He was able to rule the country by convincing these regional leaders that it was in their interest to support him, and by not interfering too much.¹

José Tadeo Monagas has been called the founder of political personalism in Venezuela.² I have shown that the country's political system had always been personalist, controlled by a ruling group whose members came mainly from the capital and the centre of the country. This group had incorporated some outsiders, above all Páez. Monagas was the first president to bring his own people into the government, partly because of the resistance that he encountered from the established oligarchy. To be independent he was forced to bring outsiders into his government. He reduced the oligarchy's influence in the country by allowing more autonomy in the regions. He even split the province of Caracas into three, thus reducing the hegemony of that oligarchically-controlled province and giving the local leaders in Guárico and Aragua, who would support him, the opportunity to run their own affairs.

I have attempted to study Monagas the man and his first administration without bias and by considering all the material that was available to me. This study's revisionist view emphasises the existing misunderstanding of the man and his actions. Although he attempted to rule with the support of certain elements of the traditional ruling élite, the Conservatives, as well as with the opposition Liberals the old ruling group never forgave him his 'rebellion' against Páez and the established order. Because the

¹ R.E. Castillo, 'The Monagas Family', pp.108-10.

² Ramon León León, Hombres y Sucesos de Venezuela (La República desde José Antonio Páez Hasta Rómulo Gallegos) (Caracas, 1952), pp.48,101,103.

traditional ruling élite never wholly lost influence in Venezuela its unfavourable opinion of Monagas has survived to the present. The period of Monagas's rule has received little impartial attention. Far from being an ignorant military upstart, this study shows that he was a clever and patient political and military leader with a strong regional base of support. He was skilful enough to challenge Mariño, Páez, and Guzmán successfully, to rally to himself all those who had been offended or forgotten by Páez, and to continue to rule through his own chosen men. He was certainly not bloodthirsty. His use of force appears economical, and he was no enemy of political solutions. He presided with some skill over a necessary evolution in Venezuelan politics.

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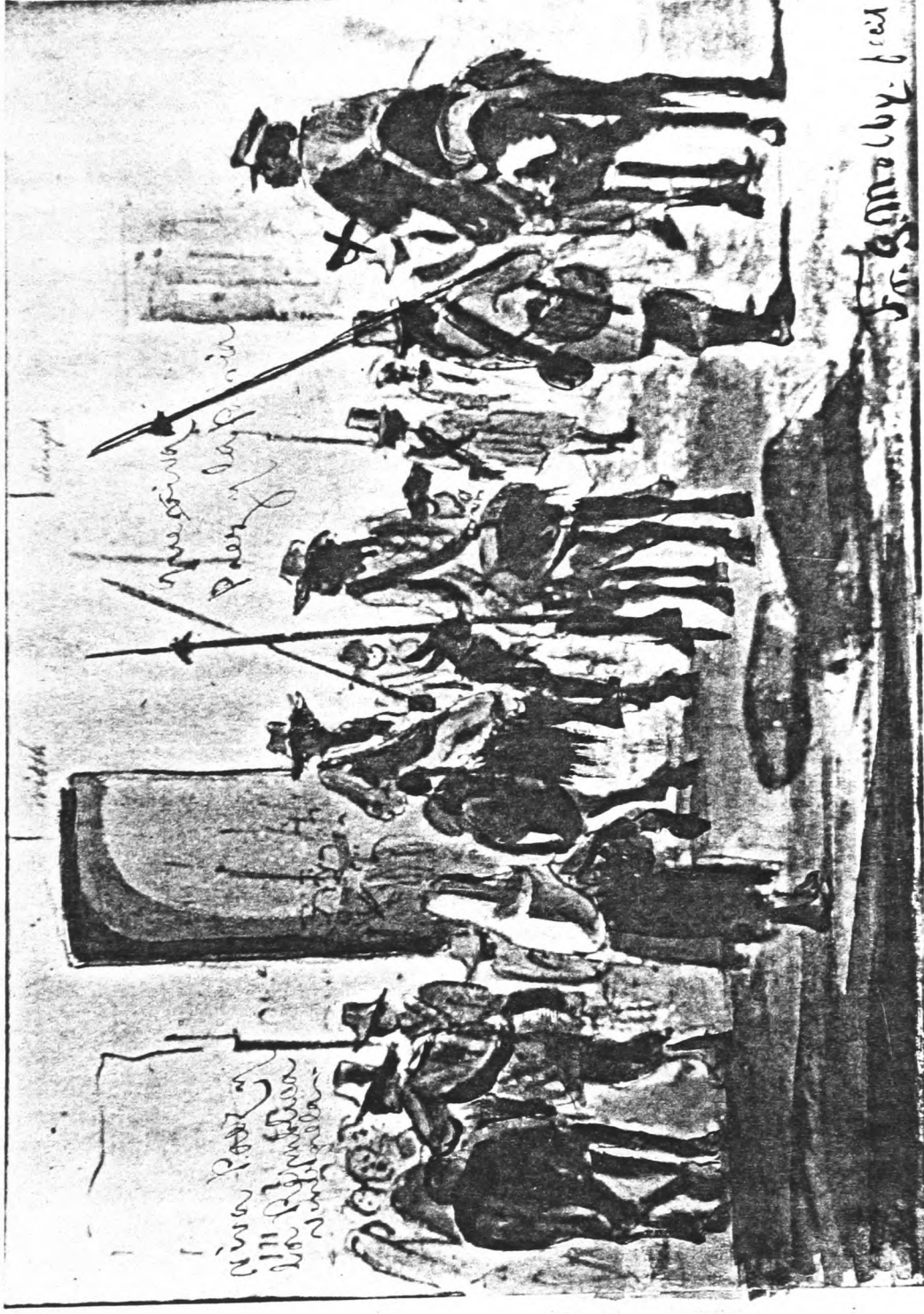
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PRESIDENT JOSE TADEO MONAGAS

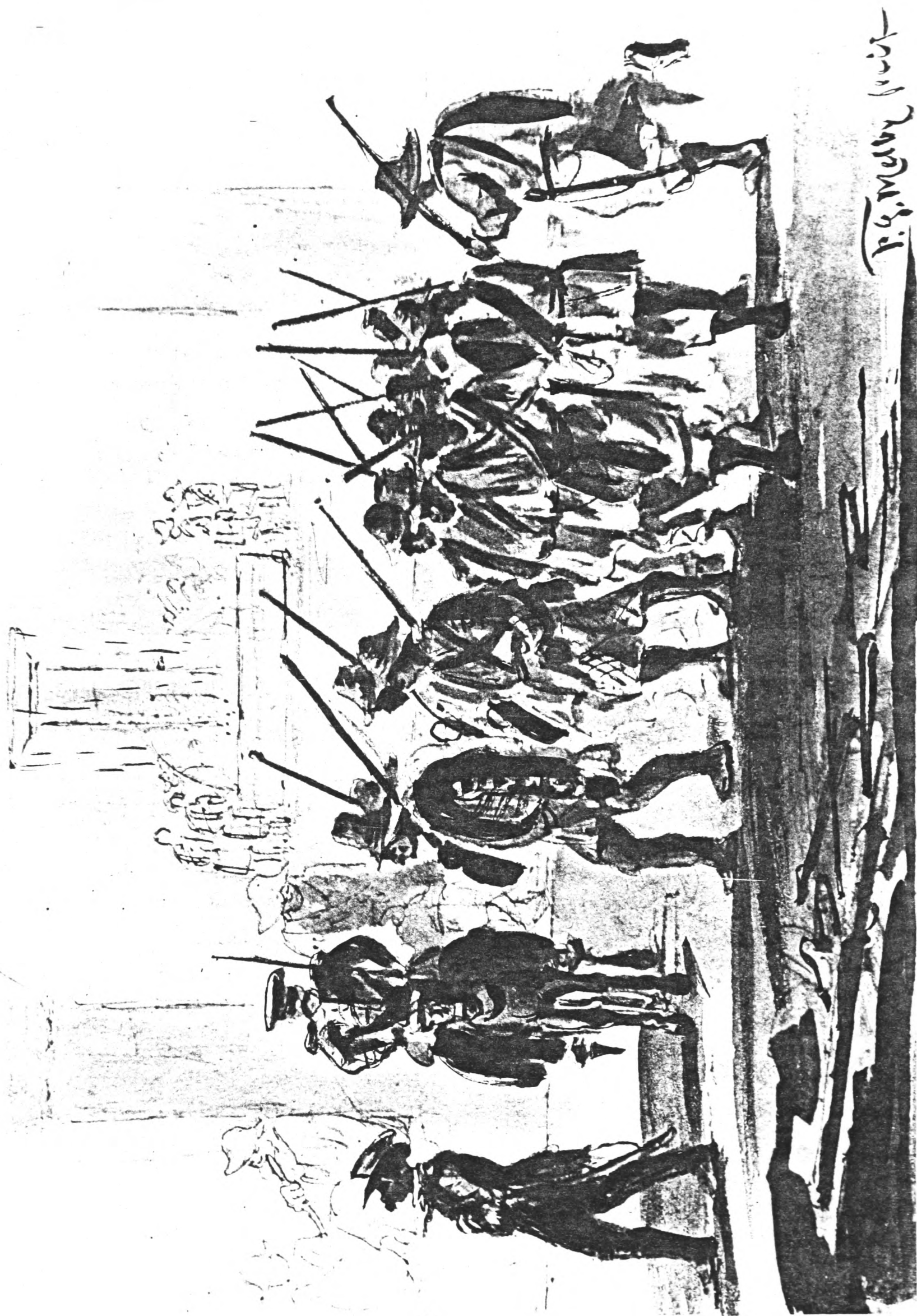
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1850
BODY-GUARD OF GENERAL JOSE TADEO MONAGAS by F.G. MELBY

c. 1850's. Collection of the Banco Central de Venezuela. Print courtesy of Fundación John Boulton.



CARACAS MILITIA PLATOON by F.G. MELBY, c. 1850's.
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