

**PACIANO A. RIZAL**  
(1851-1930)

Revolutionary General

Don Paciano Mercado Rizal y Alonso was the only brother of Dr. Jose Rizal. Born in Calamba, Laguna on March 7, 1851, he was the second of the eleven children of Don Francisco Mercado Rizal and Doña Teodora Alonso.

He learned his first letters and prayers from his mother who was a highly educated and cultured woman. Later, he was sent to Biñan, Laguna to study Latin under Maestro Justiniano Cruz. Then he was brought to Manila and studied for some years in the Colegio de San Jose. While in the city, he lived and worked with Fr. Jose A. Burgos, a strong advocate of the secularization movement, which the Spanish friars greatly opposed. The Spanish priests took advantage of the mutiny by workers of the Cavite Arsenal to get rid of Father Burgos. They implicated him to have a hand in the mutiny and as a result, Father Burgos was hanged to death in Bagumbayan in February 1872. The injustice done to Father Burgos could have made the liberal-minded and outspoken Paciano in denouncing the abuses of the friars.

Early on, Paciano, being the elder son, was given responsibilities in the farm and in watching his younger siblings, particularly Jose, who was ten years younger. He acted as Jose's guardian in school. Paciano had a crucial role in Jose's going to Europe to study in 1882. With an uncle, Antonio Rivera, he helped Rizal sail to Europe and took responsibility in telling their parents about Jose's leaving and in sustaining the financial needs of his brother abroad. For five years, he kept sending his brother a monthly pension of 50 pesos later reduced to only 35.

Paciano was in fact the earliest in the family to chafe under the misrule of the Spaniards. As a student at the Colegio de San Jose, he was prevented from taking his final examinations because of his known closeness with Father Burgos and for denouncing the abuses committed against his countrymen. Later on, land troubles in Calamba with the powerful religious corporations caused his exile to Mindoro from September 1890 to about November 1891. During this time, his brother Jose, who was already in Europe, tried to appeal their case in the Spanish Cortes in Madrid to no avail.

What established even more the ire of the friars against Paciano was his firm character. Once, he went to the estate house of the Dominican friars in Canlubang and was made to wait for a long time before they finally attended to him. He did the same thing to the same friars some months later when they went to his residence to buy a reputedly good horse. He made them wait for a long time before he attended to them.

Although far from Europe at the height of the propaganda movement, Paciano, supported it by collecting contributions to finance the movement. He also supported the Katipunan by propagating its ideals and recruiting members in Laguna.

In 1896, Paciano was arrested and tortured because he refused to sign incriminating documents that could implicate his brother to the revolution. He was released shapeless and appeared to be dying from the beatings he received.

After his brother was executed in December 1896, Paciano went to Imus, Cavite and offered his services to General Emilio Aguinaldo. The latter commissioned him as general of the Revolutionary Army and was elected secretary of finance in the Department Government of Central Luzon. Assigned as military commander of the revolutionary forces in Laguna, he fought valiantly against the Spaniards.

Paciano continued to fight for independence even against the Americans. The latter captured him in Laguna in 1900. During the revolution, he had several meetings with Apolinario Mabini. He chose to live a quiet life after the war and busied himself in the farm. It was reported that Governor William Howard Taft once offered him an important position in the government, but he courteously declined. He gracefully turned down offers for him to seek public office by prominent political leaders of Laguna.

Paciano's strong principles was tried and tested again in 1907 when the newly created Philippine Assembly passed a resolution providing for a life pension of P200 a month for his mother for being the mother of Jose Rizal. He opposed the plan, saying that he was duty bound to aid and support his mother till her death. His mother, Teodora Alonso, also politely refused the pension saying: "My family has never been patriots for money. If the government has plenty of funds and it does not know what to do with them it should better reduce the taxes."

On April 13, 1930, Don Paciano died peacefully at his Los Baños home at age of 79. His remains were buried in the North Cemetery in Manila.

References:

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