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The Socio-political Role of Women in the Mexican Wars of Independence

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THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE
MEXICAN WARS OF INDEPENDENCE, 1810-1821

by

Janet R. Kentner

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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VITA

The author, Janet R, Kentner, is the youngest child and only daughter of Glen A. Kentner and Bernetta Clara Kentner. She was born November 28, 1939, in Elkhart, Indiana.

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND: THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

The obvious question provoked by the title of this study can be simply stated, that is, did women have a role in the Mexican wars of independence? That women might have played a role is not in keeping with the traditional stereotype of the Latin female who, according to the image held by many, led a passive, sheltered life, the center of which were her children and her religion. Wearing a mantilla and fingering her ever-present rosary beads, she could only smile sadly as her husband dashed off to find new adventures or to pay a visit to the casa chica. This image is incorrect in this instance in that women were involved as can be demonstrated in a quantitative manner, since it has been possible to identify almost two hundred fifty women who were, in one way or another, involved in the independence movement.

The difficulty which is encountered here is dealing with the operative word "identified." For a woman to be considered identified for the purposes of this study, it is necessary that either her name or her nickname be known. A problem arises, however, in that many more women were involved than can be identified. The camp followers and those

who remained with their husbands throughout the battles, tending the wounded, preparing food, making cartridges, are almost impossible to identify. Even though several women were accompanying Father Hidalgo when he was captured on March 19, 1811, none of their names was recorded, although there are long lists of the names of the men captured at the same time.¹ It is not known whether the above mentioned women were camp followers, active members of the insurgent forces, or the wives of the men who were also arrested. Therefore, they do not meet the criteria of being identifiable and thus are not included in the study. This is just one example, but there are many other instances in which it is reported that women were among those taken prisoner by the royalist forces. However, seldom were their names recorded.

It should be noted that it was quite possible for a woman or group of women temporarily to leave their homes and perform services which would aid the insurgent cause and then return to their former way of life almost unnoticed. For example, during the battle for the garrison of Sombrero in June, 1817, the royalist troops managed to cut the insurgents off from their only supply of water, the river. Oppressive heat soon caused great suffering among the insur-

¹"Relación de la ocurrido en la aprehensión del Sr. Hidalgo y demas jefes independientes," J. E. Hernández y Dávalos, ed., Colección de Documentos de la Guerra de Independencia de México de 1808 a 1821 (6 tomos. Kraus Reprint, 1968), II, 417-18. Cited hereinafter as CDGIM.

gents. Although the Royalist fire was extremely heavy, one of the women in the fort dashed towards the river and managed to return with a supply of water for her companions.² While two persons recorded the event, neither of them bothered to include her name. As a result, the nameless "Molly Pitcher" of the Mexican wars of independence is not included among the almost two hundred fifty women who are considered to be identified. The ease with which women were able to emerge to take part in revolutionary activities and then melt back into obscurity will be discussed at greater length in connection with the attack on the barracks at Miahuatlán in November, 1811.

The major problem to be encountered in a study of the role of women in the independence movement is to attempt to determine whether the women who chose to become involved contributed in a significant manner to the eventual success of the revolutionary movement. It is recognized that almost any criteria proposed to determine effective participation would, by definition of the problem, be subjective. While accepting this limitation, it is hoped that it will be possible to demonstrate that many of the women identified as having played an active role were in a position to do things

²William Davis Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution (Philadelphia: Printed for the Author. Lydia R. Bailey, Printer, 1820), p. 173; Carlos María de Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico de la Revolución Mexicana (3 tomos. México: Ediciones de la comisión nacional de la independencia nacional y del cincuentenario de la Revolución Mexicana, 1961), II, 591.

which could not have been done as well, or even at all, by their male counterparts. In this way it is possible to determine whether the contributions of women can be considered "significant." Then, perhaps, at least part of the stereotype of the Latin woman, especially that concerning her supposed passivity, can be laid to rest.

That women had any role in the independence movement is in some ways surprising, especially when one considers the status of women in colonial Mexican society. Legally, they had very little standing. In an examination of Spanish law going back to the Siete Partidas of Alfonso the Wise, it becomes evident that while women had some rights, they were severely restricted. This can readily be seen from a handful of examples. In this fourteenth-century law code, one finds that women could only infrequently be compelled to appear in court, since the law stated that it was unseemly and that it would be better for them to submit to written interrogatives prepared by the lawyers and judges.³ Moreover, women were forbidden to present arguments in court in favor of another person, since that was considered a masculine thing to do, and it was feared that women would lose their modesty in so doing.⁴

³Las Siete Partidas, trans. by Samuel Parsons Scott (Chicago: Published for the Comparative Law Bureau of the American Bar Association by Commerce Clearing House, Inc., 1931), Part III, Tit. VII, Law III.

⁴Ibid., Part III, Tit. VI, Law III.

Marriage laws did provide some forms of protection for women, especially when it could be proven that a husband was a gambler or a spendthrift. In such a case a wife could sue to have her husband forced to turn her dowry over to her or else to post a security bond. The judge could also decide to force the husband to turn the dowry over to an administrator or guardian who would manage the money in such a way as to produce an income for the woman and her husband.⁵ Women could also retain direct ownership of certain properties in a marriage if it was their intent and desire that their husbands not have control of those properties.⁶

More frequently the behavior of women tended to be carefully defined and controlled by the law. For example, if, after the death of her husband, a woman announced that she found herself to be pregnant, she had to relate that fact to her husband's nearest relatives twice a month until such time as they decided to verify the fact for themselves. At that time, they had to appoint five reputable women to examine the widow to determine the truthfulness of her claim. If, in fact, she was pregnant, she was to be placed under close surveillance until such time as she was ready to deliver the child. Great care was taken to ensure that she had

⁵Ibid., Part IV, Tit. XI, Law XXIX.

⁶Ibid., Part IV, Tit. XI, Law XVII.

nothing to do with any other pregnant woman for fear she would take another woman's child and attempt to pass it off as her own. However, if she did have a child and all of the precautions had been taken, the child had the right to inherit its deceased father's estate.⁷ The relatives had a special interest in making certain that the child really was that of the deceased, since they were forbidden to take the inheritance until it could be determined whether the widow was, in fact, pregnant.⁸

Women did have the right to inherit property according to Spanish law. If a man married a woman who did not have a dowry and who would not have any way to support herself honorably after his death, she could inherit as much as one-fourth of his estate, even if he left a will leaving everything to his children and other relatives. But if the woman had brought to the marriage a dowry which would provide adequately for her needs, she could have no claim against the estate of her deceased husband and everything went to the children.⁹

A woman also had the right to be appointed as guardian for her children or grandchildren, but only on condition that she take a vow not to remarry during the minority

⁷Ibid., Part VI, Tit. VI, Law XVII.

⁸Ibid., Part VI, Tit. VI, Law XVI.

⁹Ibid., Part VI, Tit. XIII, Law VII.

of the children. It was presumed that her affection for her new husband would be so great that she would fail to provide adequately for the needs of the minor children.¹⁰ If for any reason she did remarry, the children were to be removed from her guardianship and turned over to their nearest male relative.¹¹

Perhaps the law which most clearly demonstrated the inferior status of women in Spanish society is that dealing with the crime of adultery. The law states that while a woman cannot accuse her husband of committing adultery, a husband has the right to make such accusations about his wife. The reasoning behind this double standard was that while a man could do no harm to his wife by committing this sin, she could do great damage to him by becoming pregnant with another man's child which could then become one of his legal heirs. Since the law held guilt to be unequal in this matter, it was considered to be only fair that the male be given the advantage.¹²

There are two other points which should be treated at this time because they are a part of the law which appeared to be still in effect at the time of the Mexican wars of independence. The first deals with the punishment and imprisonment of women. It was decreed that when a woman was

¹⁰Ibid., Part VI, Tit. XVI, Law IV.

¹¹Ibid., Part VI, Tit. XVI, Law V.

¹²Ibid., Part VII, Tit. XVII, Law X.

charged with having committed a crime, she was to be placed in a convent in the neighborhood, if there was one, so that she could be guarded by good moral women and thus be protected from any evil which might arise from placing male and female prisoners in the same place.¹³ And finally, it was declared that if the crime of a woman was such that she was to suffer the death penalty but it was known that she was pregnant, the execution was to be delayed until after the birth of the expected child, since it could not be held responsible for the crimes of its mother and should not have to suffer her punishment. However, it was stated that if an executioner went ahead with the execution knowing that a woman was pregnant, he would have to face the same penalty for wrongfully killing an innocent human being.¹⁴ A provision similar to this one would later be responsible for the saving of the lives of many insurgents who found themselves to be pregnant after being arrested for their revolutionary activities. While this law does tend to deal more with the status of the unborn child than with that of the mother, at a later time it will become evident that many women were able to survive death sentences as a result of this ancient law.

The compilation of laws affecting the colonial

¹³Ibid., Part VII, Tit. XXIX, Law V.

¹⁴Ibid., Part VII, Tit. XXI, Law XI.

empire, known as the Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias, does little to establish more clearly the legal status of women. This code of laws makes it clear that women continued to have the right to inherit property, both real and personal. Thus, if an encomendero died without a legitimate son, his wife could legally inherit his encomienda. If at a later time she decided to remarry and chose as her spouse another encomendero, the new husband could decide which encomienda he wanted for himself and could give the other to his new wife. But if he did not have one of his own, his wife's encomienda became his.¹⁵ If, however, the second husband died, the encomienda reverted to her possession and could not be taken from her.¹⁶

Although women could inherit, that right did not automatically go to the widow because if there was a daughter of legal age or within a year of being old enough to be married, that daughter could inherit the encomienda, providing she did marry within a year of her father's death. The only requirement was that she promise to provide for the welfare of her mother and any younger sisters in a manner in keeping with their station in life for as long as was

¹⁵Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias, mandadas imprimir y publicar por la magestad católica del Rey Don Carlos II (3 tomos. Madrid: Consejo de la Hispanidad, 1943), II, Lib. VI, Tít. II, Ley I.

¹⁶Ibid., II, Lib. VI, Tít. XI, Ley VIII.

necessary.¹⁷ The last law dealing with inheritances which will be treated here is one which required that an encomendero and his wife live together for at least six months before his death if she was to be eligible to inherit his property. If for any reason whatsoever this provision was not completely complied with, the woman could not inherit the properties and they would revert to the Crown.¹⁸ This provision was included for the protection of the Crown, which wanted to regain control of as much territory as possible so that the revenues would go to the State rather than to individuals. In this compilation one also finds a restatement of a law mentioned earlier, namely, that the colonial officials see to it that any woman who was arrested and jailed for any reason was to be protected from too close association with males during her imprisonment lest her modesty be compromised.¹⁹

The fact that the legal status of women was not clearly defined during the colonial period is not surprising. Thus, while there are proscriptions against certain activities and there are statements concerning the abilities of women to inherit property and to be named legal guardians for minor children, nowhere does it state that women have any rights as citizens. Such definitions are not to be found

¹⁷Ibid., II, Lib. VI, Tít. XI, Ley I.

¹⁸Ibid., II, Lib. VI, Tít. XI, Ley VI.

¹⁹Ibid., II, Lib. VII, Tít. VI, Ley II.

in any of the constitutions written during the struggle for independence. Nor are they to be found in the first several constitutions written for the Republic of Mexico. The task of granting women the full right of citizenship was left undone until December, 1952, when the Mexican legislature, after several unsuccessful attempts which spanned a number of years, finally adopted a constitutional amendment which gave women the right to vote. The amendment was not ratified by all of the states until August, 1953.²⁰ Thus, it was not until more than one hundred forty years after the beginning of the independence movement that women were allowed the rights of full citizens.

Given that the legal status of women improved little, if at all, as a result of the independence movement, the natural question is why did women give their support to a cause which seemed to promise them nothing? There must have been a relatively good reason for their decision, both individually and collectively, but what that reason may have been can at this time only be a matter of speculation. Although some of the women of the upper classes had what can be considered relatively good educations, very few knew how to write, and even fewer seem to have kept journals or diaries. It seems that fathers preferred that

²⁰Ward M. Morton, Woman Suffrage in Mexico (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), p. 76.

their daughters not know how to read or write, otherwise they might secretly correspond with a young man.²¹ It therefore becomes necessary to rely upon the reasons cited by those historians who made note of the fact that women did support and become involved in the struggle for independence.

Included among the observers and historians who have commented on the fact that women did play a role in the independence movement is William Davis Robinson, an adventurer from the United States who took part in the Mina expedition. He claimed that women, whether married to Spaniards or to Creoles, were either secret or open supporters of the insurgency. They cheered the successes and mourned the losses of the insurgents, and threats and punishments had little or no affect on them. He claimed that the women tried to teach their children to love liberty and to hate Spanish despotism. They were so successful in doing this that, according to Robinson, if one asked a five or six year old child if it was a Spaniard, the indignant answer would be, "No soy Gachupín, soy Americano."²² Robinson's choice of language would appear accurate in that Alexander von Humboldt noted the use of that same phrase during his

²¹Luis Pérez Verdia, Historia Particular del Estado de Jalisco Desde los Primeros Tiempos de que hay Noticia hasta Nuestros Días, segunda edición (3 tomos. Guadalajara: 1952), II, 6.

²²Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, p. 271.

his travels in New Spain in 1803-04.²³ According to Robinson, the attitudes of the women were so much of a threat to the Spaniards that after several years it was necessary to station troops in almost every town and on every hacienda within the kingdom.²⁴

The Mexican historian Carlos María de Bustamante reported that when the army of General don Félix María Calleja entered Mexico City, the soldiers were greeted not as saviors, but rather as assassins. He states that on one occasion when a Spaniard asked for the hand of a young woman in marriage, the girl refused him, running from the room crying, "God save me from giving my hand to one who has stained his with the blood of his brothers!"²⁵ Another observer, Anastasio Zerecero, noted briefly in his memoirs that women generally tended to sympathize with the insurgency and willingly sent their sons and husbands off to fight for the cause of independence.²⁶ And finally, Pedro García, who joined Hidalgo in the very early days of the insurrection, noted that the women, endowed with liberal and heroic

²³Alejandro de Humboldt, Ensayo Político Sobre el Reino de la Nueva España, estudio preliminar, revisión del texto, cortejos, notas y anexos de Juan A. Ortega y Medina (México: Editorial Porrúa, S. A., 1966), p. 76.

²⁴Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, p. 271.

²⁵Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 241.

²⁶Anastasio Zerecero, Memorias para la Historia de las Revoluciones en México (2 tomos. México: Imprenta del Gobierno, en Palacio, a cargo de José María Sandoval, 1869), I, 72.

ideas, endured and accepted with apparent good humor the same privations and hardships suffered by the men.²⁷ While this last statement tends to be propagandistic, there is more than a grain of truth in it as will be evident when women such as Rita Pérez de Moreno, wife of the insurgent leader Pedro Moreno, are discussed. Like Rita Pérez, many women accompanied their husbands or lovers throughout the revolution, supposedly preferring to face the dangers of warfare to enduring a lengthy separation.²⁸ Whether this was done in a spirit of good humor as described by Pedro García is debatable; but the fact that it was done is evident.

Genaro García, who collected a series of documents dealing with women during the revolutionary period, states that, in general, women favored and sympathized with the insurgency. According to him, the decision was a fairly easy one for them to make since there were few women who did not have a husband, father, brother, son, or uncle insurgent. He states that there was growing dissension in many homes where Creole women were married to Spanish men, a result of the fact that when the Spaniards spoke disparagingly

²⁷Pedro García, Con el cura Hidalgo en la Guerra de Independencia, Tomo I, El Liberalismo Mexicano en Pensamiento y en acción, colección dirigida por Martín Luis Guzmán (México: Empresas Editoriales, S.A., 1948), 167.

²⁸D. Vicente Riva Palacio, Ed., México a Través de los Siglos, 5 Tomos (México: Editorial Cumbra, S.A., 1970), Tomo III: La Guerra de Independencia por D. Julio Zárate, 578.

of the rebels, the women felt a need to defend their male relatives. The women were, according to García, quite heated in making that defense. Female sympathizers were so numerous that García, citing a letter from the Commandant of Sultépec to the Viceroy, asserts that every woman in that village was an insurgent. While in the early days of the revolt the royalist commanders believed that they should behave in a gallant manner when dealing with these women, they later changed their minds and advocated shooting female rebels. The women were at times so effective in harassing the Royalists that the royalist forces became extremely suspicious of women in general. As will be seen later, this suspicion became so strong that even women who were not playing an active role in the independence movement were persecuted, arrested, and imprisoned.²⁹

Given observations such as these, it is possible to draw a few conclusions concerning the reasons why women chose to support the independence movement. First, the women were not politically naive. Some, as will be noted later, were members of "literary societies" which met on a fairly regular basis to discuss, among other things, political philosophy and current events. While it is probably true that only a few women ever read the works of the

²⁹Genaro García, ed., Documentos Históricos Mexicanos (7 tomos; México: Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, 1910), V, ix-x. Cited hereinafter as DHM.

philosophes, such as Rousseau, Locke, and Montesquieu, or the Declaration of the Rights of Man, it is extremely probable that many heard of the political theories currently under discussion. The women must have realized that their position and that of their husbands and families could only be improved by a change in government. Moreover, the women were not unaware of the fact that their Creole husbands and sons were second-class citizens in their own country simply because of the accident of birth, that is, they were born in the New World rather than in the Old. Their husbands had little chance to achieve the higher governmental offices, and their sons probably could never achieve the positions of influence in the Church hierarchy because those positions were reserved for Gachupines. The ideas of equality espoused by Father Hidalgo and other early revolutionaries were probably enough to convince many women of all social classes that the position of their families could only be improved if Spanish rule was ended. Thus, they willingly sent their husbands and sons off to fight for independence, while they themselves did whatever they could to help the cause.

Did women believe that their own position would be improved and that they would have more rights if Mexico achieved its independence from Spain? This was extremely unlikely. Even though equality was one of the words being bandied about during this period, its meaning was limited.

Without clearly stating it, the Creoles assumed that equality meant that they would be on an equal footing with the Spaniards; it did not mean that Indians would be given equal status, although at first they may have thought this would be true. Nor did it mean that women would be given more rights. In the early nineteenth century, women's rights were non-existent in most countries. If any of the women were thinking in these terms, they were well ahead of their time and would have been laughed at by a majority of the population, both male and female, of most countries.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWING AWARENESS AND RISING EXPECTATIONS OF

THE CREOLES OF NEW SPAIN, 1760-1810

The end of the eighteenth-century was a time of changing attitudes in New Spain in that the Bourbon reforms led the Creoles to believe that their position would be improved socially, politically, and economically. For example, the laws creating the intendant system led the Creoles to believe that finally their superior knowledge of the problems and potentials of the regions of New Spain would pay off for them, since no one was better qualified to be Intendants than themselves. Moreover, the new system would recognize the uniqueness of the varying regions of New Spain in that the Viceroyalty would be divided into twelve intendancies. As a result, each region would have the opportunity to develop its own unique economic potential. But the Creoles soon found that nothing had changed. The new officials were to come from Spain rather than the colonies, and once again their hopes were to be frustrated. But at the same time, the creation of the intendant system brought about a revitalization of the cabildo, the only part of the colonial political system in which the Creoles had a tradi-

tional role. While the hopes for higher political office were not destined to become a reality, the Creoles slowly realized that they had the potential for self-government as a result of their experiences in this local body.

This growing political awareness was partly made possible by a desire of the Bourbon monarchs to encourage the dissemination of what was termed "useful knowledge." They were interested in promoting knowledge, especially in the sciences, in order that more people would become involved in making significant contributions to the material development of the empire. Therefore, partly as a result of the influence of the French philosophes and partly encouraged by the Crown and its enlightened advisors, intellectual societies were created which would aid in the dissemination of the new "useful knowledge." The first of these groups, known as the Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País, was formed in the Basque provinces in 1763 by Manuel Ignacio de Altuna. The stated purpose of the new society was to further the promotion of "useful knowledge," that is, to try to find a way to solve some of the pressing problems of the country. Similar groups soon sprang up in other parts of Spain which organized courses in the physical sciences and published papers on agricultural and industrial problems.¹

¹Richard Herr, The Eighteenth Century Revolution in Spain (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 154-55; Clement G. Motten, Mexican Silver and the Enlightenment (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), pp. 4-7.

Credited with having had an indirect influence in the establishment of these societies was the French philosophe Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom Altuna first met in Venice in 1743. Rousseau awakened in Altuna an interest in science and scientific progress, an interest which remained keen even after Altuna's return to the Basque provinces. Upon returning home, Altuna associated himself with the Marquis de Narro and the Conde de Peñafiorida in a kind of triumverate which later developed into an academy of natural sciences. The sharing of news of general scientific progress stimulated an interest in science among the Basques, who, in turn, began creating societies which were to become well known for their promotion of scientific knowledge.²

Membership in the newly created economic societies was open to all those who had an interest in and capacity for the work to be undertaken. Therefore, it was not very long before some women began applying for membership since the only requirement was that one must have a fair amount of education. The question arose when Madame Lavacher de Valincourt, a Parisian, stated that she would prepare her daughter for her future position as a useful member of society and as a mother by teaching her such things as "botany, drawing,

²Jefferson Rea Spell, Rousseau In the Spanish World Before 1833: A Study in Franco-Spanish Literary Relations (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1938), pp. 15-17; Robert Jones Shafer, The Economic Societies in the Spanish World, 1763-1821 (Syracuse University Press, 1958), pp. 26-27.

history, geography, and home medical remedies."³ While some members of the society believed that women had no place in such groups, the Spanish philosopher, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, argued that women who possessed the necessary knowledge and who had sufficient interest should be admitted as members. Thereafter, doña María Isidra Guzmán y Lacerda, daughter of the Conde de Oñate, was admitted to membership in the Madrid Society in 1766, together with the wife of the Duke of Osuña. Then, in 1787, it was announced that the King believed that women could do much "useful work in promoting the virtue, education, and industry of their sex." This settled the question of admitting women as members of the societies, and by 1794 they had their own auxiliary with its own set of statutes.⁴

Although the societies spread to the colonial empire, women were not as readily accepted as members. While the colonial societies were concerned with the role of women in society and were interested in finding ways of providing work for "idle females,"⁵ the membership was almost exclusively male with the exception of the Lima Society, which had at least three women as "meritorious members."⁶

³Shafer, The Economic Societies, pp. 69-70.

⁴Ibid., pp. 70-71.

⁵Ibid., pp. 152, 282, 284.

⁶Ibid., p. 263n.

The new economic societies had some far-reaching effects in the New World. While many Creoles were not members of the colonial groups, they were corresponding members of the various groups in Spain, especially of the Basque society. Moreover, many of the colonial officials were members of the societies, a fact which must have been at least a small influence in their decision-making process. And in addition, many of the Creoles who traveled to Spain came into contact with some of the Spanish societies. Thus, even though the Spaniards were mostly interested in problems which affected Spain directly, the Creoles were able to interpret the publications of the societies to include the problems of the colonies and hence found a justification for studying the works of a variety of authors and philosophers, including the French philosophes.⁷

The emphasis on the dissemination of "useful knowledge" opened the way for the introduction of the works of the philosophes into New Spain and the other viceroyalties. When the Bourbons gained control of the Spanish throne in 1700, they opened Spain to many of the contemporary philosophical ideas; and once such ideas penetrated Spain, it was only a matter of time before they spread to the New World. Although foreign visitors transmitted some of the ideas of the new philosophy to New Spain, the most important sources

⁷Ibid., pp. 117-19.

of such ideas were the writings of the philosophes, even though such writings were prohibited by the Index.⁸

That some colonists had rather extensive libraries which often included prohibited books is an accepted fact. It is evident in the inventory of books found in the library of José Pérez Becerra, a resident of Guanajuato who served the government in the capacity of administrator of the inland customhouse, a position which may have aided him in collecting some of the 394 titles which were recorded as a part of his estate after his death in 1802.⁹ In comparing this inventory with Índice Último, only fourteen, or 3.6 per cent of the books were prohibited. However, the publication dates of some of the books tend to lead one to believe that a higher percentage could conceivably have been prohibited. Using 1788 as a probable closing date for books to be examined for inclusion in the Index of 1790, it is possible that as many as 102 of the titles included in this library may not have been examined. In addition, there were fifty-four titles which lacked sufficient identification or publication information to make it possible to check them against the Index. Consequently, if these 156 titles are excluded on the basis that they have a publication date of 1789 or later,

⁸Motten, Mexican Silver, pp. 39-40.

⁹Harry Bernstein, "Documents: A Provincial Library In Colonial Mexico, 1802," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXVI (1946), 162-64.

or that they cannot be completely identified, the percentage of prohibited books increases from 3.6 to 5.8 per cent.¹⁰ If a colonial official in an area as remote as Guanajuato could accumulate such an extensive and well-rounded library, it must have been even easier for persons living closer to the capital or to the major ports to build even larger and more diversified collections. That there were booksellers or men interested in dealing in prohibited books is evident from the records of the Inquisition for the years 1764-1770 in that names of sixty such persons appeared. However, over a period of forty years, there were only three denunciations against booksellers for the crime of having in their possession proscribed books.¹¹ Therefore, the ideas of the Enlightenment were available to the residents of New Spain if they wanted to pursue them.

Although a few women were reading some of the modern works, including some listed in the Index, as will be demonstrated shortly, the majority of women had an insufficient education to be able to understand such works. This, however, was not a situation unique to New Spain or to the

¹⁰Ibid., 166-83, passim; Índice último de los libros prohibidos y mandados expugar: para todos los reynos y senorios del Católico Rey de las Españas, el Señor Don Carlos IV (Madrid, 1790).

¹¹Monelisa Lina Pérez-Marchand, Dos Etapas Ideológicas del Siglo XVIII en México á través de los papeles de la Inquisición (México: El Colegio de México, 1945), p. 99.

Spanish colonial empire; rather, it was an accepted state of affairs in the entire Western world. As was noted earlier, men preferred that their daughters not be taught how to read or write because they were afraid that they might engage in correspondence with some young man who would not be considered satisfactory or acceptable. This simply reflected society's attitude toward marriage, which was considered to be a parent-dominated institution. However, attitudes were changing. In Europe, it was becoming old-fashioned to insist that one's daughter marry the man chosen for her by her parents rather than the man whom she preferred. And as far as the family was concerned, it became a more free and open institution because there was increased humanity within marriages. While marriages had previously been regarded as sacred and legal devices for the control of inheritances, they were beginning to be regarded as an honorable, but secular, institution. As this gradually happened, women and children gained new rights and new respect.¹²

"Marriage," said David Hume, an eighteenth-century British philosopher-historian who had close ties to the French philosophes, "is an engagement entered into by mutual consent, and has for its end the propagation of the species...." He stressed the equality of men and women within

¹²Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, Vol. II: The Science of Freedom (2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 32-33.

a marriage, saying that the "sovereignty of the male is a real usurpation, and destroys the nearness of rank, not to say of equality, which nature has established between the sexes." He indicated that women should have some say in the choosing of a spouse, pointing out that "...courtship, the most agreeable scene in life, can no longer have place, where women have not the free disposal of themselves, but are bought and sold, like the meanest animal."¹³

Since some of Hume's works were translated into Spanish and made available to the public under the title of Discursos políticos del Señor David Hume, caballero escosés (Madrid, 1789),¹⁴ it is probable that some of his essays dealing with matters other than political economy were also read. The philosophes and some of the other educated segments of society were beginning to accept the educated female as a human being rather than as some kind of perverse joke, and the Encyclopédie made note of the fact that the "inferiority" of women was the result of male dominance rather than the lack of intelligence and ability.¹⁵ Changing attitudes such as these must have registered in the subconsciousness of the educated Creoles and Gachupines of the New World, but like societies everywhere, real change was slow

¹³David Hume, "Of Polygamy and Divorces," in Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects (4 vols. London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1770), I, 225, 229-30.

¹⁴Herr, The Eighteenth Century Revolution, p. 53n.

¹⁵Gay, The Enlightenment, II, 34.

coming.

As has been noted, very few women possessed the ability to read and write. Education was considered the almost exclusive province of males in the Western world, and popular education for women was almost unheard of in any country. Although Mexico City was said to have a female population of about 56,932 in 1790, of which 8,753 were believed to be between the ages of 8 and 16,¹⁶ there were only six schools, or colegios, established for the purpose of educating poor women in the city. These schools were: the Cole-

¹⁶Genaro García, Leona Vicario, Heroína Insurgente (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1945), p. 10. Just where García got these figures or how he arrived at this determination is not known. According to the figures cited by von Humboldt, who relied on the census of 1794, Mexico City had a population of about 112,926. If half of the inhabitants were women, the female population of the capital would have been 56,463, or 469 less than that cited by García. This is the closest that it has been possible to come to his figures. The census taken by Conde de Revilla Gigedo in 1790 indicated that the population of the capital was between 120,000 and 140,000. The apparent reduction in population from the figures of the Viceroy to those of von Humboldt could be explained by a series of epidemics which occurred in Mexico between the late 1780's and the early 1790's. However, to further complicate matters, the census of Revilla Gigedo was believed to be questionable by José Antonio de Alzate y Ramírez, who did not accept the reliability of the methodology employed and who questioned it as early as 1788. (Gaceta de Lituatura, 24 abril de 1788, no. 6, 44-53.) Alzate wrote to Revilla Gigedo in 1791 indicating that he believed the total population of the capital was in excess of 200,000. (Letter from Alzate to Revilla Gigedo II, 10 marzo de 1791, Archivo General de la Nación, Ramos de Historia, Tomo 74, Expediente 1, 4-13.) Alzate's estimate, however, is not completely acceptable since he was interested in inflating the figures to help prove that Mexico City was a true metropolis and that it was larger than Madrid. A debt of gratitude is owed Mr. Steven Fitzpatrick for sharing his research on Alzate and the census of 1790.

gio Real de San Ignacio de Loyola, which was sometimes referred to as the Colegio de las Vizcainas, having 266 students; the Colegio de Belen with 235 students; the Colegio de Guadalupe de Indias with 125 students; the Colegio de la Enseñanza with 60 girls; the Colegio de Jesús María which had 40 students; and the Colegio de la Niñas which had 33 girls. Therefore, there were a total of 759 women being educated in Mexico City as of 1790. Of these six schools, the Colegio Real de San Ignacio was considered the best organized.¹⁷

As early as 1732 a group of Spaniards decided to build a new colegio for girls in Mexico City, but their project ran into obstacles almost immediately. They organized a confraternity, drew up plans, and began petitioning the Crown for a charter, but permission to go ahead with the project was not forthcoming.¹⁸ Philip V seemed agreeable to the project, but the Board of Directors was unable to convince him that he should grant them a charter. Thus, after the death of Philip in 1746, they were forced to deal with Ferdinand VI who decided that before he would give his consent to the project it would be necessary for the Board to submit documentation demonstrating the need for the school

¹⁷García, Leona Vicario, p. 19.

¹⁸Conzáló Obregón, Jr., El Real Colegio de San Ignacio de México (Las Vizcainas) (México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1949), p. 46.

and of its potential social usefulness. The Board, however, soon discovered that the biggest obstacle was the Archbishop of Mexico City, who had determined that the new colegio should be placed under his own jurisdiction rather than be granted independence as the Board of Directors requested.¹⁹ As a result, no decision was reached by the time of Ferdinand's death in 1759.

Soon after the succession of Charles III to the throne, the Board of Directors decided that once again they would petition the Crown for a charter. They were soon surprised to learn that a new atmosphere abounded in Spain. Within a short time, they received a message from one of the ministers of the new monarch informing them that the proposed colegio, together with the kind of social work which it represented and the intentions of its founders were in accord with the philanthropic and regalistic tendencies of the Ministers of Charles III. Shortly thereafter, the Crown declared that the petition "conformed to the Royal Will...." Then on July 17, 1766, Charles III signed a royal cédula at San Lorenzo del Escorial granting the long-sought charter and taking the Colegio de San Ignacio under his royal protection.²⁰

The Colegio Real de San Ignacio was therefore established to care for the widows and maidens of Spanish de-

¹⁹Ibid., p. 59.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 72-74.

scent who lacked the means and skills to live a proper life without some kind of assistance.²¹ Only those women who were of good background and customs would be accepted, and then only at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Under no condition would married women be allowed to enter, nor would judges, courts, or prelates be allowed to remand women to the custody of the Colegio. A girl had to be at least seven years old to enter unless she went with her widowed mother at an earlier age. Moreover, the colegialas, or students, had to be Spaniards of legitimate birth; women having unmarried parents, or having Indian, Negro, or mixed blood and ancestry would not be accepted. The women favored for admission were the direct descendants of any of the founders of the Colegio living in the New World or the widows and daughters of Basques.²² A woman would not be permitted to enter until the Board of Directors and its Secretary gave her written permission. Nor could she leave without first obtaining the same permission, because failure to observe the rules, and especially this one, was sufficient reason for immediate expulsion from the Colegio. Hence, if a girl went out without permission, the portress was to deny her entrance upon her return.²³

²¹Ibid., Constitución VI, p. 169.

²²Ibid., Constitución VII, pp. 169-70.

²³Ibid., Constitución XXII, p. 178.

The kind of education offered by the Colegio was in keeping with the contemporary ideas concerning the role of women in society, that is, that the woman's place was in the home. Consequently the girls were educated for the home. They were taught how to do needlework, embroidery, knitting, lacemaking, cooking, etc. Religious instruction was fundamental, based on the Ripalda catechism, on sacred histories, and on the lives of the saints, with special emphasis on miracles and apparitions.²⁴ The Ripalda catechism was prepared by Father Jerónimo de Ripalda, S.J., in the late sixteenth century and first printed in Burgos in 1591. Constructed in much the same manner as the question-answer format of the Baltimore catechism, the Ripalda catechism had gone through many editions and, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, was translated into various Indian dialects for the instruction of the Indios. Consequently, it was the most popular and readily available for use in instructing the girls of the Colegio in the Christian way of life. What this would imply is that rote memorization of Christian doctrine and ideals was required rather than any independent thinking on the part of the student.²⁵

²⁴Ibid., p. 86.

²⁵Gerónimo de Ripalda, S.J., Catecismo Mexicano, translated into Náhuatl by Ignacio de Paredes, S.J. (Mexico, 1758); Gabino Márquez, S.J., Explicación Literal del Nuevo Catechismo de Ripalda, quinta edición (Madrid: Editorial "Razon y Fe," S.A., 1940).

The regimen was strict and unvarying in the Colegio. The girls were awakened at 5:30 A.M., heard Mass at 6:00, and then spent the rest of the morning working on their apprenticeships, which usually meant learning how to sew and embroider although a few were taught how to read and to write. While the younger girls were engaged in their manual labors, the older ones read to them from religious works. After lunch, which was eaten in total silence, the girls took a siesta and then returned to their tasks of the morning. Later in the afternoon after another short rest period, they went to the chapel for prayers and devotions which on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday included "spiritual discipline" conducted in the darkened chapel behind closed doors. On the other days, the girls recited their rosaries, made novenas, and said their devotions until 6:30 P.M. in the winter and until 8:00 P.M. in the summer. Dinner was served at 9:00 P.M., and the girls retired immediately thereafter. Little or no time was allotted for such things as talking to friends or for other forms of recreation.²⁶

Considering the fact that this particular Colegio was considered the best and that this was the only kind of formal education available to women in New Spain at the time, it is really not too surprising to find that wealthy families who wanted to educate their daughters either taught them

²⁶Barcía, Leona Vicario, p. 10.

themselves or else hired private tutors.

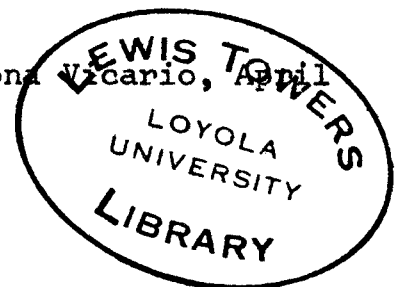
Probably the best example of the well-educated Creole woman in 1810 would be doña María Leona Vicario, the only child of don Gaspar Vicario and doña Camila Fernández de San Salvador y Monteil.²⁷ Since she was an only child, her parents were determined that she should have the best possible education. Although it is not known whether don Gaspar and doña Camila taught Leona themselves or whether they hired a tutor, it is evident that their efforts were successful.²⁸ After her arrest in 1813, doña Leona admitted having read at one time or another the Adventuras de Telémaco, hijo de Ullses by Archbishop François Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, and part of Fray Benito Gerónimo Feijóo's Teatro Crítico,²⁹ both of which were listed in the Index of 1790.³⁰ In addition to this, doña Leona's cousin and companion, doña Francisca Fernández, testified to the colonial authorities who were investigating Leona's activities that she knew her cousin had been reading such things as Clara Harlowe by Samuel Richardson, La Huerfanita Inglesa by Pierre-Antoine de la Place, Idea del Universo by Lorenzo Her-

²⁷Ibid., pp. 8-9.

²⁸Ibid., p. 11.

²⁹Declaration of doña María Leona Vicario, April 22, 1813, García, DHM, V, 46.

³⁰Indice Último..., passim.



vás y Panduro, S.J., Nuevo Robinson by Joachim-Henrich Campe, and Historia Natural, General y Particular by Georges Louis Leclerc Buffon, Conde de Buffon.³¹

Fénelon's book, The Adventures of Telemachus, was translated into several languages and had great influence, especially in the eighteenth century. Since it was considered a favorite of both young and old,³² it is really not surprising to discover that Leona was reading it. Telemachus, the son of Ulysses, was engaged in a search for his father, accompanied by Mentor, who helped him learn from his experiences and mistakes. Under the guidance of Mentor, Telemachus learned the principles of good government and the difference between good and bad rulers, including some ideas which would not be favorably received by most monarchs.³³ In Book II, Mentor tells Telemachus how to be a good and benevolent ruler, saying,

Happy are the people...who are governed by so wise a king!....Love thy subjects as thy children; and learn, from their love of thee, to derive the happiness of a parent;....The tyrants who are only solicitous to be feared, and teach their subjects humility by oppression,

³¹Declaration of doña Francisca Fernández, March 15, 1813, García, DHM, V, 13.

³²George R. Havens, The Age of Ideas: From Reaction to Revolution in Eighteenth Century France (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 59.

³³Kingsley Martin, French Liberal Thought in the Eighteenth Century: A Study of Political Ideas from Bayle to Condorcet, ed. by J. P. Martin (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), p. 55.

are the scourges of mankind; they are, indeed, objects of terror; but as they are also objects of hatred and detestation, they have more to fear from their subjects, than their subjects can have to fear from them.³⁴

On the subject of sovereign authority, Mentor advised him that

The authority of the king over the subject is absolute; but the authority of the law is absolute over him; his power to do good is unlimited, but he is restrained from doing evil. The laws have put the people into his hands as the most valuable deposit, upon condition that he shall treat them as his children; for it is the intent of the law, that the wisdom and equity of one man shall be the happiness of many, and not that the wretchedness and slavery of many, should gratify the pride and luxury of one.³⁵

As was noted above, Fénelon's book was on the Index. From these excerpts it is possible to understand why in that the Spanish monarchs liked to think of themselves as benevolent despots. But at the same time, they did not want to be compared to anyone's concept of the ideal constitutional ruler. After all, what would happen to the monarch who did not behave in a way that showed him subject to the law since Spain was not a constitutional monarchy?

Doña Leona was reading other works which expressed questionable attitudes and opinions. Some ideas expressed in Samuel Richardson's Clara Harlowe, or Clarissa Harlowe, as it is commonly known, were not quite in keeping with the at-

³⁴ François Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, The Adventures of Telemachus, the Son of Ulysses, trans. by John Haekesworth, L.L.D. (2 vols. London: Printed for R. Bladon and T. Lawes, 1773), I, Bk. II, 31.

³⁵ Ibid., I, Bk. V, 125.

titudes and mores of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This book, subtitled History of a Young Lady Comprehending the Most Important Concerns of Private Life, is a moralistic novel about the continuing struggle between good, as represented by Clarissa, and evil, as represented by Lovelace. Rather early in the story Clarissa becomes infatuated with the villain, Lovelace. Her family disliked him and tried to introduce another suitor who just happened to own the adjoining property and would be a most desirable husband for Clarissa. In a letter to her friend, Clarissa described the way in which her sister pursued the matter with her and concluded that "...if Mr. Solmes had such merit in every-body's eyes, in hers particularly, why might he not be a Brother to me, rather than a Husband?"³⁶ She stated that she was willing to give up Lovelace, but only on condition that "Mr. Solmes, nor any other, were urged to me with the force of a command."³⁷

Eventually Clarissa was tricked into running away with Lovelace, who took advantage of the situation and drugged and raped her. At that point, the family decided that the only way to save Clarissa's "honor" was for her to marry the scoundrel, but she preferred not to do so. Her

³⁶Samuel Richardson, Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady, Comprehending the Most Important Concerns of Private Life (8 vols.: Stratford-Upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1930), I, Letter 42, 313.

³⁷Ibid., I, Letter 42, 315.

family pressured her to the point that she gave up the will to live and eventually died, and Lovelace was slain in a duel to avenge her death.³⁸ Richardson was presenting a picture of a woman who refused to marry for the traditional reasons and who refused to be pressured into any marriage by her parents and relatives. Interestingly enough, Leona was later to demonstrate some of these same traits, for she chose to run away with the man whom she selected rather than marry the one whom her family apparently chose for her.

The last of Leona's readings to be discussed here are the works of Conde de Buffon and of Father Hervás y Panduro. Buffon's ideas concerning the creation of the earth and its age were in conflict with the teachings of the Church.³⁹ And finally, Hervás y Panduro had at least part of another book censored on the grounds that it contained errors and false propositions. Therefore, it was apt to create errors in intelligent thought concerning the legislative rights of sovereigns and governments, matters which

³⁸Ibid.; a summary of the major story line of Vols. I-VIII.

³⁹Herr, The Eighteenth Century Revolution, p. 46. According to Herr, Conde de Buffon ran into difficulties because his version of the creation of the earth contradicted the account found in the Bible.

could cause damage to the spiritual well-being of the faithful, according to the Inquisition.⁴⁰ Thus, two more of the authors whose works Leona read contained questionable propositions.

While this is only a sampling of the literature read by doña Leona Vicario, it is possible to draw some conclusions and make some suppositions about their influence on her. First, Richardson's book probably was an influence in that it portrayed a virtuous heroine who was able to withstand familial pressures in order to lead the life of her own choosing, even though it did not result in the proverbial happy ending. Leona would not accept her uncle's prohibition to marry don Andrés Quintana Roo; therefore, she ran off to marry him, even though she was betrothed to another man. Secondly, in Fénelon's Telemachus there is a discussion of an ideal kingdom, supposedly located in the southern part of Spain, but there were few similarities between the ideal ruler and either Charles IV or Ferdinand VII. The discussion of the duties of the benevolent and constitutional monarch were not especially popular with the Spanish Crown. Since doña Leona was reading materials which tended to question the status quo, that is, constituted authority which seemed to lack limitations, one might conclude that she, too,

⁴⁰ José Toribio Medina, Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México, segunda edición, ampliado por Julio Jiménez Rueda (México, D.F.: Ediciones Fuente Cultural, 1952), p. 334.

began to question established authority, both governmental and familial. And since the revolutionary movement appeared at about the time that she was reading such things, it can be concluded that she developed an intense interest in and was willing to dedicate her entire being to helping that movement achieve success. This, however, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII.

Another source of learning and enlightenment for the female population of New Spain, as well as for the other Spanish colonies, were the tertulias, or literary societies which met on a regular basis in the homes of some of the wealthy and well-educated Creoles. Tertulias, which were the counter-part of the Parisian salon, were gatherings of people on a regular basis for the purpose of conversations and discussions on various topics, such as items of interest in the daily newspaper, or for the purpose of amusements, such as singing, dancing, and parlor games.⁴¹

Tertulias first became popular in Madrid and then spread to all parts of the colonial empire. During his brief term of office, Viceroy don Manuel Antonio Flóres (1787-1789) began holding both literary and scientific tertulias in the viceregal palace in Mexico City which were attended by such notables as José Antonio de Alzate and Fausto

⁴¹Charles E. Kany, Life and Manners in Madrid, 1750-1800 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), p. 282.

Elhuyer.⁴² Very soon thereafter there were many others held in various cities for a variety of reasons. Probably the best known were the tertulias held at the home of the Corregidor of Querétaro, don Miguel Domínguez. They were attended by a cross-section of the populace of the region, including Creoles, Spaniards, and other Europeans. Eventually it became politically expedient for don Miguel to suspend the gatherings at his home,⁴³ but others continued them, and it evolved into the revolution-oriented group known as the Querétaro Society.⁴⁴ They would be responsible for touching off the Hidalgo Revolt in September, 1810, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Another of the famous tertulias attended by the partisans of the independence movement in the early nineteenth century was that which met in the home of don Miguel Lazarín and doña Mariana Rodríguez del Toro de Lazarín in Mexico City. As a partner in the silver mine known as La Valenciana in Guanajuato, don Miguel had risen both socially and politically about as far as was possible, considering the fact that he was a Creole. He therefore had good reason to follow with

⁴²José Antonio Calderon Quijano, ed., Los Virreyes de Nueva España en el Reinado de Carlos IV (2 tomos; Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Seville, 1971), I, 19.

⁴³Armando de María y Campos, Allende: Primer Soldado de la Nación (México: Editorial Jus, 1964), p. 297.

⁴⁴John Anthony Caruso, The Liberators of Mexico (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1967), pp. 32-33.

interest the progress of the independence movement. During the first months of the revolution, this group did not play an active role, choosing instead to carry on long discussions in an attempt to determine what their course of action should be. But when the news of the capture of Father Hidalgo reached the capital, they knew that it was time for direct action. At first the news stunned them, but doña Mariana spurred them to action, saying, "Are there no other men in America than the generals who have fallen prisoner?....What are we able to do?--Free the prisoners.--And how?--Very simply; catch the Viceroy and exchange him for them." From this outburst grew the conspiracy of 1811 which planned to kidnap the Viceroy and to carry out an exchange of prisoners. As will be noted in Chapter V, there were several women who played active roles in the group in addition to doña Mariana, who is credited with being the instigator.

Father Hidalgo was also noted for the tertulias which he held in his rectory at Dolores in the pre-revolutionary period. Much of the information concerning the activities of Hidalgo and his friends was revealed during the investigation conducted by the Inquisition in 1800 and 1801. Much of the testimony given by several of the friends and acquaintances of Hidalgo would point to the fact that he was the champion party-giver of Dolores and environs. Most peo-

⁴⁵Zerecero, Memorias, I, 358-59.

ple who gave testimony mentioned the frequent dances and entertainments held at the Hidalgo house. Doña Josefa López Portilla, who was questioned by the Inquisitors in April, 1801, testified that Hidalgo's house was, in reality, a "francia chiquita" (little France) in that although people from all social classes attended the social functions, all were treated with a degree of equality previously unknown.⁴⁶ Doña Claudia Bustamante agreed with doña Josefa completely and also used the term "la francia chiquita" in referring to Hidalgo's house. While she admitted that she had attended many of the dances given by Hidalgo, she claimed that she had not heard any of the other priests who were in attendance complain about any of the activities which they may have observed.⁴⁷

It is possible that neither of these women were paying much attention to the conversations which were going on around them if the other witnesses are to be believed. Don Diego Bear testified that when he had attended some of the dances, he had heard Hidalgo make unorthodox statements and discuss dangerous topics, like which was the better form

⁴⁶"Relación de la causa que se sigue en este Santo Oficio contra D. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla Cura de la Congregación de los Dolores en el Obispado de Michoacan, natural de Pénjamo," Testimony of doña Josefa López Portilla, April 5 and 7, 1801, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, I, 82.

⁴⁷Testimony of doña Claudia Bustamante, n.d., Ibid., I, 82.

of government, a monarchy or a republic.⁴⁸ Father Manuel Estrada was even more critical of statements which he attributed to Hidalgo at various gatherings. He stated that Hidalgo denied that fornication was a sin and that, together with Father Martín García, he was critical of the monarchy and expressed a desire to see the French form of liberty spread to America.⁴⁹

The Inquisition continued to collect information about Hidalgo, but it took no action as a result of this investigation. Then in 1809 the Holy Office received another denunciation accusing Hidalgo of having in his possession prohibited books which he did not hold license to read.⁵⁰ Even that, however, was not enough to prompt the Inquisitors to take any action, so Father Hidalgo was still holding tertulias at the time of the beginning of the revolution in 1810.

It is manifest that women had an opportunity to become involved in the talking stages of the pre-revolutionary period if they wished to do so. There were social gatherings or tertulias at which they could learn about the new political philosophies if they wanted to listen to the

⁴⁸Testimony of don Diego Bear, January 13, 1801, Ibid., I, 81.

⁴⁹Testimony of Fr. Manuel Estrada, August 20 and 24, 1800, Ibid., I, 79-80.

⁵⁰Denunciation of Fr. Diego Manuel Bringas, March 15, 1809, Ibid., I, 84.

discussions. Obviously some women, like doña Claudia Bustamante and doña Josefa López Portilla, preferred to socialize, although they both realized that there was something just a little bit different about the gatherings at Hidalgo's house, as is evident in their terminology for the place. But just as clearly, other women did take advantage of these gatherings to sharpen their political acumen. The wife of the Corregidor of Querétaro, doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, and doña Mariana Rodríguez del Toro de Lazarín listened, learned, and were then able to make significant contributions and suggestions to their respective groups, as will be discussed later. Moreover, they were not alone in their efforts.

CHAPTER III

DOÑA MARÍA JOSEFA ORTIZ DE DOMÍNGUEZ

When various groups in New Spain began meeting informally to discuss the effects of the forced abdication of Ferdinand VII upon the kingdom, many remained loyal to the Spanish Crown, reminding themselves that they had an obligation to maintain their allegiance to their rightful monarch. Others, however, began thinking in terms of a possible political separation from the Spanish Crown which had for so many years dominated them. From these informal groups sprang the plots and conspiracies which would touch off the revolution and eventually culminate in total independence.

It is really not surprising to find that women were involved in the conspiracies from the beginning. This was especially true of the group which met in Querétaro in 1810 and which could boast of having among its co-conspirators such notables as Ignacio de Allende, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, and Juan Aldama. That this conspiracy was able to succeed was due in part to the determined efforts of one of the conspirators, doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez.

Born in Morelia on September 5, 1768,¹ the daughter of Jeron José Ortiz and Manuela Girón, María Josefa was orphaned at an early age. Some years later, together with her older sister, María Josefa entered the Colegio de San Ignacio in Mexico City on May 20, 1789 and remained there until March 31, 1791.² While there are several possible explanations for her entrance into the Colegio at the age of twenty-one, the more lurid ones can be ruled out. As was noted earlier, there were rigid requirements to be met before anyone could be admitted to the Colegio Real de San Ignacio. The School was designed to care for those widows and maidens of Spanish descent who lacked either the means or skills to enable them to live proper and respectable lives without some kind of assistance. Moreover, the women had to have a good background, morals, and customs. They had to be of legitimate birth and of pure Spanish blood. And finally, they could not be mandated to the Colegio by any court or prelate, since it was not a home for wayward women. Considering all of this, it is unlikely that María Josefa was either in trouble with the law or a woman of bad morals, since the Board of Directors of the Colegio would never have accepted her with that kind of background. It is therefore

¹María y Campos, Allende, p. 57.

²José María Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes (México: Editorial Porruá, S.A., 1969), p. 440. This work is a part of the series known as Diccionario Porruá and is the result of twenty years of research by the author.

probable that she and her sister lived with relatives after the death of their parents. However, unless those relatives were at least moderately wealthy, they would face financial hardship when it came time to produce a dowry for both girls so that suitable husbands could be found for them. Consequently, it appears that the girls were sent to the Colegio until such time as they decided to marry, to enter the convent, or to spend the rest of their lives at the school. But considering the curriculum and the restrictions of the institution, it is somewhat of a surprise that a woman as bright and vivacious as María Josefa remained there for almost two years.

While the reasons for her leaving the Colegio are not really known, it is possible that don Miguel Domínguez was involved in that decision in some way. He was a young lawyer serving Viceroy Revilla Gigedo (1789-1794) as Oficial Mayor of one of the governmental offices which was responsible for the prompt dispatch of messages to the Viceroy. In addition, he served as Secretary to the Junta Superior de Real Hacienda, an executive commission which attended to the fiscal machinery of the colony.³ It is possible that the latter position may have required don Miguel to visit occasionally the Colegio and that he had the opportunity to

³D. A. Brading, "Noticias sobre la economía de Querétaro y de su Corregidor Don Miguel Domínguez, 1802-1811," México. Archivo General de la Nación, Boletín, XI (July-December, 1970), 275-76.

meet María Josefa. As a result, he was probably an important factor in helping her to decide to leave the Colegio, since it is apparent that she developed an intimate relationship with him almost immediately after leaving. On January 28, 1792, or less than ten months after leaving the Colegio, María Josefa gave birth to a daughter, María Ignacia Policarpa. Then on January 24, 1793, she was married to don Miguel, and a month later, on February 23, gave birth to her first son, José María Florencio. The marriage legitimized the birth of María Ignacia Policarpa, so it can only be assumed that the infant was the daughter of don Miguel.⁴ The Domínguez family remained in Mexico City until late in 1800 when the new Viceroy, don Félix Berenguer de la Marquina (1800-1803), appointed don Miguel to the office of Corregidor de Letras for Querétaro, a position which he assumed on February 7, 1801, and which he was still holding in September, 1810, when the Hidalgo revolt began.⁵

It is readily apparent that María Josefa was rather busy as a wife and mother during the first several years of her marriage, since in the fifteen years between January, 1792 and October, 1807, she gave birth to twelve children

⁴J. Ignacio Rubio Mañe, "Los Hijos de la Corregidora de Querétaro doña Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez," México. Archivo General de la Nación. Boletín, XI (July-December, 1970), 323.

⁵Brading, "Noticias de la Economía...", 276.

who lived long enough to be baptized.⁶ While it is probable that she had little time to devote to political matters during these years, she was hailed as a woman of wide talents and of resolute and courageous spirit who was able to help her husband resolve delicate matters on occasion.⁷ María Josefa's interest in political affairs was slowly developing during these years as a result of her contacts with her husband's employment.

Doña María Josefa's political education was aided by the fact that her husband's home was the site of a series of popular tertulias which were attended by a broad spectrum of the populace of Querétaro and the surrounding villages, including several officers of the provincial army stationed in both Querétaro and San Miguel el Grande. Among those who were in frequent attendance were don Ignacio de Allende, don Mariano Abasolo, and don Juan Aldama, all of whom were fer-

⁶Rubio Mañe, "Los Hijos de la Corregidora...", 321-22. In addition to the two children previously mentioned, the others and their dates of birth are: Mariano José Mateo Luis, September 21, 1794; María Dolores Micaela Luisa Gonzaga Florencia Juana Nepomucena, February 23, 1796; Miguel María José, September 26, 1797; María Juana Buenaventura, July 10, 1799; María Micaela Fermina Claudia, July 7, 1800; Miguel María Remigio, October 1, 1801; María Dolores Teresa Francisca de Paula, April 16, 1803; María Manuela Josefa Justa Rufina, July 18, 1804; María Ana Joaquina Prudenciana, May 19, 1806; and José María Hilarión Luis Gonzaga, October 21, 1807.

⁷Alejandro Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías de los Heroes y Caudillos de la Independencia (2 Tomos; México: Editorial Jus, 1962), I, 30.

vent partisans of independence of New Spain. Although don Miguel was also suspected of being a partisan of independence, he was kept so busy trying to maintain peaceful relations between the Spaniards and the more extremist of the Creoles that he had little opportunity to make his own views known. And when Allende lost his temper and slapped the face of one of the Spaniards in attendance one evening, don Miguel decided that it would be politically expedient to suspend any future gatherings indefinitely.⁸

Even though there were no longer any tertulias, Allende continued to visit the Domínguez home on a fairly regular basis. He and María Josefa had found that they had many similar interests, and supposedly he became enamoured with one of the young daughters, fifteen year old María Dolores Micaela Luisa. Allende's informal visits became so frequent that he aroused suspicion among the Domínguez neighbors and don Miguel was forced to ask him to call only when others were also present so there could be no basis for the idle speculations by the neighborhood gossips. Although some of the rumors insinuated that there was something between Allende and María Josefa, Allende's biographer insists that don Ignacio was attempting to get permission to marry María Dolores Micaela Luisa, who was born in 1796 and would have

⁸María y Campos, Allende, p. 297.

been twelve years old in 1809.⁹ One must wonder if this was really the daughter that Allende was interested in since his biographer states that the girl was fifteen. The only fifteen year old in the Domínguez household at the time was one of the sons, Mariano José Mateo Luis. It would therefore seem likely that María Ignacia Policarpa, the seventeen year old born the year before her parents' marriage, would be the most logical choice for Allende. Others, however, completely discredit this possibility, citing the fact that Allende was already thirty-five years old and a widower. Instead, historians now believe that the big attraction in the Domínguez home was the possibility of finding a cohort who would conspire in the overthrow of the viceregal government.¹⁰

Allende, resentful perhaps at being a second-class citizen in his own country because he was a Creole, or maybe motivated by a deep sense of patriotism, was instrumental in the creation of the Querétaro Literary Society.¹¹ Meeting at the home of either don José María Sánchez, the lawyer Parra, or the mother of the pharmacist Estrada, the Society included among its members the lawyers Laso and Altamirano, Captain Juan Aldama from San Miguel, Captain Joaquín Arias of the Regiment of Celaya, the brothers Epigmenio and Emete-

⁹Ibid., pp. 297-98.

¹⁰Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, I, 31.

¹¹Caruso, The Liberators of Mexico, pp. 32-33.

rio González,¹² and the Corregidor de Letras don Miguel Domínguez, together with his wife, doña María Josefa. While don Miguel did not attend the meetings of the Society on a regular basis, it is probable that he was kept well-informed by either his wife or Allende. Neither was Father Miguel Hidalgo an active member of the group, since he lived in Dolores and was unable to attend regularly. But once again, Allende managed to keep him informed of the thoughts and plans of the group.¹³

While it is evident that the members of the Literary Society were from diverse social and economic backgrounds, they found that the ideas of revolution and independence were enough to provide them with a basis of mutual understanding. Allende, the most active member of the group in the earliest days, had various contacts with people who were familiar with conditions in Europe and who understood the repercussions of European events on the viceroyalty. He reported back to the group on the things he was able to learn from his contacts, providing them with added incentive for action. Eventually they decided that it was time for a

¹²Don Lucas Alamán, Historia de Méjico Desde los Primeros Movimientos que Prepararon su Independencia en el Año de 1805 hasta la Epoca Presente (5 tomos; México: Editorial Jus, 1942), I, 325-26.

¹³Francisco de Paula de Arrangoiz, México Desde 1808 Hasta 1867, Prólogo de Martín Quirarte, segunda edición (México: Editorial Porrúa, S.A., 1968), p. 46.

"Sicilian Vespers" against the Europeans of New Spain.¹⁴

But it would be doña María Josefa who would prove to be one of the most valuable members of the Society, partly as a consequence of her husband's official position which enabled her to obtain information about what the viceregal authorities were planning and doing.¹⁵

While María Josefa kept her co-conspirators informed, her messages were a little unusual. She knew how to read, but not how to write, a not uncommon phenomenon considering the emphasis placed on reading rather than writing by the Colegio Real de San Ignacio. As was noted earlier, the older students at the Colegio read religious works to the younger girls as they went about their daily tasks. As a result, while it is possible that María Josefa was quite adept at reading, her writing skills may have been sadly deficient. Given this situation, it was necessary for her to devise a way to send the latest information to her cohorts. It was fairly easy for her to find the correct words in old papers belonging to her husband and which she saved for that purpose. All she had to do then was cut out the appropriate words, paste them on a porcelain plate, and give it to the woman whose responsibility it was to deliver the

¹⁴María y Campos, Allende, p. 69.

¹⁵Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 440.

messages to the next link in the conspiratorial chain.¹⁶

Because of her perseverance and dedication to the revolutionary cause, she has since been credited with being the soul of the conspiracy.¹⁷

Gradually the plans for the proposed revolution took shape and a tentative date was chosen for its launching. The annual fair at San Juan de los Lagos was scheduled for December 8, 1810, and since there was usually a large crowd in attendance, it was decided that that would be the most advantageous time and place to announce the plans.¹⁸ But at times even the best laid plans go astray, as did those of the conspirators of Querétaro.

As early as August 11, 1810, the viceregal authorities began to receive information about the activities and plans of the Querétaro group. On that day José Mariano Galbán, an official of the postal service, was invited to attend a meeting called by Lieutenant of the Dragoons of San Miguel, don Francisco Lanzagorta. After being sworn to secrecy and told that violation of the oath could result in assassination, Galbán was told that similar meetings were

¹⁶Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, I, 31.

¹⁷Gustavo Baz, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla: Essayo Histórico-Biográfico (México: Imp., Lit. y Encuadernación de I. Paz, 1887), p. 49.

¹⁸William Forrest Sprague, Vicente Guerrero, Mexican Liberator: A Study in Patriotism (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly & Sons Company, 1939), pp. 13-14.

being held in Mexico City, Valladolid (Morelia), San Miguel, and Guanajuato, and that others had been held in Querétaro and Potosí, all at the insistence of Allende. At this meeting, Galbán obtained much information about the group. He discovered that the conspirators were using messengers rather than the postal service for their communications, since they feared that their plans would be discovered. He further learned that Lanzagorta was the source of both money and orders for the other conspirators, that there were as many as four hundred people involved in the plot, that they had access to a great deal of money, that the principal chiefs included Señor Marqués de Xaral, Captain Allende, and Father Miguel Hidalgo, and that the Corregidora of Querétaro, doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, was the person who relayed the orders to Lanzagorta.¹⁹ By August 21, the authorities knew that the conspiracy had existed for some time, that a secret Academy had been created in Querétaro, and that don José Ignacio Villaseñor and the Corregidora were among the principal agents of the group.²⁰

Galban, however, was not the only one who was suspicious of María Josefa and her friends. On September 11, 1810, the Alcalde, don Juan Ochoa, sent a letter to

¹⁹"Extracto de los avisos dados desde ciudad de Querétaro sobre un Proyecto de sublevación en Dolores," Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, II, 68-69.

²⁰"Extracto de los avisos....," Ibid., II, 69.

Viceroy don Javier de Venegas (1810-1813), in which he denounced those persons whom he believed were responsible for the plotting against the authority of the Spanish Crown. He accused don Miguel Domínguez of making "seductive proclamations" and doña María Josefa of having been and continuing to be extremely eloquent in her denunciations of the Spanish nation and of some of the Spanish ministers. Ochoa, therefore, suggested the apprehension of Allende, the Corregidor, and María Josefa for careful questioning to forestall their putting into effect their evil plans.²¹

On September 13 yet another denunciation of the conspiracy was made, this one by a Spaniard, don Francisco Bueras, who made a statement to Padre don Rafael Gil de León in which he asserted that the conspirators were planning to kill all of the Spaniards in the area. In addition, he stated that there was a cache of arms in the house of Epigmenio González and that the Corregidor knew all about it but was doing nothing to forestall the plot, since he himself was one of the conspirators. Padre Gil had known nothing about the plot, but since he was a friend of don Miguel, he decided that he should talk to him and warn him that the plans had been denounced. As Bueras had already given the same information to the Commandant of Arms, Ignacio García

²¹Letter from Juan Ochoa to Viceroy don Francisco Javier de Venegas, September 11, 1810, in Zerecero, Memorias, I, 53-54.

Rebello, Padre Gil believed that don Miguel would either have to assist in beginning proceedings against the other conspirators or else be arrested with them.²²

Another Spaniard, don Francisco Bustamante, heard of the plot and wrote to the Intendant of Guanajuato, don Juan Antonio Riaño, telling him what was happening in Querétaro and the surrounding area and naming the conspirators so that the Intendant, in his capacity as chief of the province, could order their arrest. He stated that María Josefa really had few ideas concerning independence; her only real interest seemed to be in killing all of the Spaniards. But by the time that Riaño got the message and sent out an order for the arrest of the ringleaders, it was already too late.²³

The next denunciation of the plot came from one of the co-conspirators, Dr. Iturriaga. He became gravely ill while visiting in Querétaro and soon came to the realization that it was time for him to make preparations for his forthcoming death. He asked for a priest and, in making his final confession, told of the plans for the revolution. This story was soon repeated to the colonial authorities, but it

²²Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 339-40.

²³José María Luis Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, ed. por Agustín Yañez (3 tomos; México: Editorial Porrúa, S. A., 1950), III, 28.

was told too late to help forestall the incipient insurrection.²⁴

At this point, don Miguel decided that it would be politically expedient to arrest and begin proceedings against some of the lesser conspirators, since he feared that if he did not, he too might be arrested. Therefore, together with Commandant García Rebello and several soldiers, he prepared to go to the house of Epigmenio González to begin his investigation.²⁵ Before he started, he confided to María Josefa what was happening, even though he knew that she was an important part of the conspiracy. Then, out of a real fear that she might commit some imprudent act by telling some of her revolutionary-minded friends that their plans had been discovered, he locked her in her room, intending to hold her incommunicado until after the preliminary investigation was completed and the necessary arrests were made.²⁶

María Josefa, however, was a most resourceful woman. She had been involved in the planning for a long time and had no desire to see the revolution fail or fall apart at the last minute. As soon as her husband left her locked

²⁴Ibid., III, 28-29; Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 31. Although Mora was a liberal and anti-clerical, Bustamante seems to agree in that he insinuates that it was a cleric who reported the plot.

²⁵Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 31.

²⁶Ernesto de la Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupes" y la Independencia con sus selección de documentos inéditos (México: Editorial Jus, 1966), p. xvii.

in her room, she began stamping her foot on the floor in an effort to attract the attention of don Ignacio Pérez, Alcaide de Cárcel, or warden of the jail, who occupied the room directly below hers. Pérez was one of the co-conspirators and had arranged with her that in case of trouble, all she had to do was stamp on the floor three times. Pérez went to her room as soon as he heard the signal, but he found that don Miguel had carefully locked her in and there was no way for her to escape. So through the locked door María Josefa told him all that she knew, including the denunciations, the orders for her husband to begin making arrests, and his departure for the González house with some other officials. Then she asked Pérez to send someone he could trust to San Miguel as soon as possible to warn Allende of the events of the evening so that he could warn the others. Pérez, however, was afraid to entrust such an important and delicate mission to anyone else, so he left almost immediately for San Miguel. On arrival there at dawn on September 15, he found that Allende had already left. Rather than go on to Dolores himself in search of Allende, he gave the message to don Juan Aldama and asked him to relay it to Allende and Father Hidalgo.²⁷

Meanwhile, back in Querétaro doña María Josefa was uncertain about what to do next. Finally she decided to

²⁷Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 342-43.

send her daughter and Father José María Sánchez to talk to Captain Arias of the Regiment of Celaya, another of the conspirators. Arias had the responsibility for beginning revolutionary activities around Querétaro but feared that if the plot was discovered, he would be arrested and imprisoned. Therefore, he decided that the best way to avoid that would be to denounce the proceedings.²⁸ This explains why he received the envoys from María Josefa so coldly that morning. And when they told him that everything was falling apart and that he should begin his activities in the area immediately, he refused, saying that they were not credible authorities to give him orders, and furthermore, he had already done his part.²⁹ Little did María Josefa know that Arias was busily giving even more information to both Ochoa and García Rebello, telling them that don Miguel was stalling and that more arrests should be made.³⁰ But in reality, it made very little difference. The message had gotten through to Allende and Hidalgo, and the revolution was set in motion before the royalist authorities could do anything about it. In that respect, María Josefa had been completely successful.

²⁸Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 440.

²⁹Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 343.

³⁰México, La Oficina de Publicidad y Propaganda de la Secretaría de Educación, Biblioteca Enciclopedica Popular, Tomo 72: Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla: Padre de la independencia Mexicana, por Jesús Romero Flores (México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1945), p. 79. Cited hereinafter as Romero Flores, Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla.

Neither Hidalgo nor Allende had known about the events in Querétaro. They had heard some rather vague rumors that there might be trouble but did not know that the viceregal authorities were aware of their plans. Pérez had given the message to Aldama, and he, in turn, had warned Hidalgo and Allende. Hence, the conspirators were able to move forward the starting date for rebellion and to put their plans into action. The web of conspiracy was so vast that the viceregal authorities were unable to crush it, even after it was discovered.³¹

In an attempt to regain control and restore peace and tranquility, the colonial officials ordered that the conspirators be arrested and carefully investigated. As was noted earlier, don Miguel, after locking María Josefa in her room, went to question Epigmenio González about the alleged conspiracy. One of the officials who went with him that evening was the escribano, or scribe, don Juan Fernando Domínguez, a staunch supporter of the Spanish Crown who was determined that all those who were involved should be ferreted out.³² The search of the González home was thorough and, as far as the Royalists were concerned, quite profitable in that they found a cache of cartridges, two shotguns, two

³¹Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, pp. 100-01.

³²Ibid., p. 97.

swords, a lance, and seven arrobas³³ of purified saltpeter for use in making gun powder. The evidence was so overwhelming that don Miguel was forced to order the arrest of the González brothers.³⁴

The Spaniards, however, were disturbed by the attitude of don Miguel towards his duties in this matter. He proceeded so slowly that some of the Royalists decided that the rumors about his being a part of the conspiracy must be true.³⁵ Moreover, Captain Arias, the informer who decided to tell what he knew about the conspiracy rather than risk an arrest, was busily denouncing the Corregidor and his wife to Alcalde Ochoa. Don Miguel, he charged, was responsible for what had happened in that he had been hiding and helping the conspirators from the beginning. And doña María Josefa had continuously talked about the plans and was a decided partisan of the revolutionary party. Faced with this additional information, Ochoa knew that he had to do something about don Miguel and María Josefa. After requesting the help of the Commandant of the Celaya Brigade, García Rebello, and the Spaniards of Querétaro, Ochoa set out to arrest his superior, the Corregidor.³⁶ Thus, don Miguel and María Josefa were

³³A Spanish weight equivalent to twenty-five pounds.

³⁴Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 31.

³⁵Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, 98.

³⁶Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 342-43.

placed under arrest during the night of September 15-16.³⁷

Don Miguel was first taken to the convent of San Francisco, but the Friars there refused to open the doors in the middle of the night, claiming that they were not prepared to act as jailers for prisoners. The Royalists then took him to the Colegio de la Cruz, where the Friars agreed to hold him incommunicado. Actually, the Royalists were well satisfied with their second choice since the Friars of the convent were all Spaniards and consequently were more "trustworthy." Meanwhile, María Josefa was taken to the house of Alcalde Ochoa for questioning for a few days and was then imprisoned in the Convent of Santa Clara.³⁸ Although some of the major conspirators were now in custody, the Royalists realized that their problems were just beginning. As Joaquín Quintana, the postal administrator of Querétaro, reported, the Corregidor and his wife had been arrested, but Allende and Hidalgo had already been able to recruit somewhat more than a thousand men.³⁹

However, María Josefa was destined to spend very little time in prison this first time. Since the Corregidor had been imprisoned, the officials in Mexico City had to

³⁷Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 32.

³⁸Ibid., I, 32.

³⁹Letter from Joaquín Quintana to Viceroy don Francisco Javier de Venegas, September 16, 1810, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, II, 74.

send someone to conduct an investigation of the matter and to make recommendations for its disposal. The person who was chosen to undertake this task was don Juan Collado, Alcalde of the Court.⁴⁰ Soon after his arrival in Querétaro, Collado became convinced that Hidalgo and his rebel force were about to attack that city. He therefore decided to return to Mexico City but was apprehended while enroute by the rebel forces of Julián Villagrán. Collado had little choice other than to accept the bargain offered by the rebel chieftain. He could have his life and his freedom if he would promise to return to Querétaro and release all of the conspirators. He agreed, and soon after his return to the city, María Josefa and the others were released from custody and don Miguel was restored to his position as Corregidor de Letras.⁴¹

Collado later attempted to justify his actions by saying that there was really little evidence against the Corregidor. He reported that some of the people and many of the Indios of the area were insisting that the real reason for don Miguel's arrest was the fact that he was an American, or Creole, rather than a Spaniard. And, he said, even if the Viceroy decided to remove Domínguez from Querétaro, he would

⁴⁰Elias Amador, Noticias Biografias de Insurgentes Apodades (México, D.F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1946), p. 34. Cited hereinafter as Amador, Noticias.

⁴¹Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 440; Arrangoiz, México Desde 1808 Hasta 1867, p. 54.

have to send someone else to take over who would not be familiar with conditions in the area and who would not have the love and respect of the people.⁴²

María Josefa did not let her brush with the law and her short imprisonment interfere with her revolutionary activities. She continued to maintain communications with the rebels, informing them of what was happening in Querétaro. Since the city was a center for Royalist activities in addition to being a center of revolutionary intrigues, it was only a matter of time before María Josefa's continued activities came to the attention of the royalist officials. On January 22, 1811, the Commandant of the Battalion, Urbano Romero Martínez, wrote to the Viceroy to tell him of María Josefa's activities and to implicate the Corregidor. The Junta de Seguridad made an investigation but found that the available evidence was so conflicting that they could not reach a decision. The Viceroy settled the matter temporarily by sending don Miguel a warning to keep close watch over his wife's activities or she would be punished. Don Miguel sent a reply to the Viceroy on March 2, 1811, in which he promised to try to control his wife's behavior. But at the same time, he tried to explain away the accusations against both himself and his wife, saying that the whole matter was

⁴²Don Collado, Minister of the Audiencia of Mexico and Regent-Elect of the Audiencia of Caracas, to Viceroy don Francisco Javier de Venegas, January 21, 1811, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, II, 910-11.

simply the result of the malevolence of his enemies.⁴³

While it is possible that the Junta de Seguridad was willing to let the matter drop because of conflicting testimony, it was probable that they were not interested in pursuing the charges at that particular time, since once again María Josefa was pregnant.⁴⁴

María Josefa was busy with her family and the new baby for the next several months, since there were few complaints concerning her behavior. Moreover, María Josefa found herself to be pregnant yet another time, and on July 15, 1812, gave birth to her fourteenth child, a daughter who was given the name María del Carmen Camila de Jesús.⁴⁵

However, she still found a little time to continue some of her revolutionary activities. In a letter dated August 24, 1812, from the Insurgent Colonels Francisco Loxero and Ignacio Navamuel to José María de Liceaga, a leading figure in the Morelos-Rayón phase of the revolution, it is evident that María Josefa was still in active communication with the rebels. They said that when information was sent to Querétaro, a copy went to both Dr. Cos and to La Cor-

⁴³Alamán, Historia de México, II, 380-81; María y Campos, Allende, p. 58.

⁴⁴Rubio Mañe, "Los Hijos de la Corregidora...", 323. The thirteenth child in the Domínguez family was María Magdalena Longines, born March 14, 1811.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 323.

regidora, María Josefa.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, don Agustín de Iturbide was able to intercept some letters intended for Liceaga and he sent them on to the Viceroy. He included a message in which he expressed his indignation that Domínguez and his wife were allowed to "retain the primary position in Querétaro," since it was obvious that María Josefa was a rebel.⁴⁷ The intercepted letters were again called to the attention of the Viceroy in December, 1812, by Francisco Guizarnotogui,⁴⁸ but no immediate action was taken.

The Viceroy, however, was beginning to take note of the many references being made to María Josefa. On January 5, 1813, he sent the report submitted by Guizarnotogui to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden so they could draw up a dossier on her. When he had not received either the dossier or a recommendation by the first part of March, he wrote to them again, reminding them that he had to take some kind of action and that he needed their report.⁴⁹ As a result of his urgings, the report was sent to him on March 17,

⁴⁶"Copia ala letra de los oficios dirigidos por los Coroneles Insurgentes Francisco Loxero e Ignacio Nava-muel comandantes de la Villa de San Miguel el Grande al Exmo. Sor. Liceaga," Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, IV, 922.

⁴⁷Don Agustín de Iturbide to Viceroy don Francisco Xavier de Venegas, September 20, 1817, Ibid., IV, 924.

⁴⁸Francisco Guizarnotogui to Viceroy don Francisco Xavier de Venegas, December 8, 1812, Ibid., IV, 923.

⁴⁹Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to the Real Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, March 13, 1813, Ibid., IV, 924.

1813.⁵⁰

Viceroy don Félix María Calleja (1813-1816), who succeeded Venegas in February, 1813, showed more interest in gathering information concerning the activities of María Josefa than his predecessor had. In July, Father Manuel Toral submitted a report in which he called the Corregidora a "revolutionary woman." He accused her of perpetrating injurious demonstrations against a couple of Europeans which almost resulted in their assassinations. Then he asserted that in the constitutional elections which were held in Querétaro that year, she was the principal evil influence and was in constant opposition to both Europeans and "faithful" Americans. Moreover, when the Royalists prepared an expedition to track down a band of rebels which had been terrorizing the area, María Josefa managed to warn them, thus enabling them to escape. Therefore, Father Toral recommended that María Josefa be forcibly removed from the city so her influence would be lessened.⁵¹

Viceroy Calleja decided that it was time to make an official investigation of the situation in Querétaro. Therefore, in cooperation with the Archbishop, Dr. don Francisco Javier de Lizana y Beaumont, he named Dr. don José

⁵⁰ Dons Miguel Bataller, Felipe Martínez, and Antonio Torres Rorija to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, March 17, 1813, Ibid., IV, 924-25.

⁵¹ Father Manuel Toral to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, July 16, 1813, in Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupes" y la Independencia, pp. 47-48.

Mariano Beristáin to the position of ecclesiastical visitador of Querétaro, and sent a message to the Corregidor stating that he should give his full cooperation to Beristáin as the investigation proceeded.⁵²

Beristáin was able to draw some conclusions after being in Querétaro for just a short while and wasted little time in communicating them to Viceroy Calleja. In his first message, dated December 14, 1813, he asserted that there was in Querétaro "an effective, bold, audacious, and incorregible agent who loses no occasion nor moment for inspiring hatred for the King, for Spain, and for the cause." That agent, he charged, was the wife of the Corregidor, doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, a woman who was a "true Ana Bolena" and who was so fearless that she even tried to convince him that he should become a partisan of the independence movement.⁵³ Viceroy Calleja sent Beristáin a reply on December 23 saying that he was only trying to devise an acceptable and unobtrusive way in which to remove María Josefa from Querétaro, since it was apparent that she was becoming such a nuisance.⁵⁴ That same day, December 23, Beristáin sent yet

⁵²Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Miguel Domínguez, Corregidor de Letras de Querétaro, October 23, 1813, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 367.

⁵³Visitador Eclesiástico don José Mariano Beristáin to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, December 14, 1813, Ibid., V, 367-68.

⁵⁴Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don José Mariano Beristáin, December 23, 1813, Ibid., V, 369.

another message to the Viceroy in which he reiterated that María Josefa was, in truth, an "Ana Bolena." He added that Gil (Padre José Rafael Gil de León), who had told don Miguel that the conspiracy had been reported to the authorities back in September, 1810, was her "Wolseo."⁵⁵

The reports that Beristáin sent to the Viceroy seem to have been the last straw in that Calleja decided that the time had come for him to take some positive action against La Corregidora. Consequently, on December 29, 1813, he sent a set of secret instructions to the Royalist Brigadier, don Christobal Ordóñez, ordering him to arrest María Josefa when he was ready to leave Querétaro for Mexico City. According to his orders, María Josefa was to be permitted to make no excuses or to ask for any delay; instead, she would, with all speed and decency, be conducted to the capital. She was not to be permitted to communicate with anyone other than the one servant who would be allowed to accompany her. When he carried out the order for the arrest, don Ordóñez was to deliver the letter to don Miguel which was enclosed with the other instructions.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Visitador Eclesiástico don José Mariano Beristáin to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, December 23, 1813, Ibid., V, 369.

⁵⁶Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to Brigadier don Christobal Ordóñez, December 29, 1813, in Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupes" y la Independencia, p. 81.

In the separate letter, Viceroy Calleja set forth his reasons for ordering the arrest of María Josefa, explaining to don Miguel that her scandalous behavior had been observed from the very beginning of the insurrection. He asserted that the authorities were aware of her propagandizing which she had carried on in a manner which could only be described as being subversive to the public good. Moreover, he knew all about her attempts to seduce good Royalists to the insurgent cause. These reasons, he said, were sufficient to have ordered her arrest at a much earlier time. Instead, it had been hoped that the warning sent to the Corregidor on February 26, 1811, to curtail the activities of his wife would take care of the situation. But since the warning had had no effect and María Josefa had failed to improve her behavior, it was now necessary to order her arrest and imprisonment. Therefore, don Miguel was ordered to cooperate with the officers who were charged with carrying out the arrest.⁵⁷

Don Miguel had no other choice than to surrender his wife peacefully to don Ordóñez when he appeared with the Viceroy's orders on January 6, 1814. But as soon as María Josefa had been taken away by the soldiers, don Miguel wrote a letter to Viceroy Calleja in which he requested permission

⁵⁷Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Miguel Domínguez, December 29, 1813, Ibid., 82.

to resign his public office so he could go to Mexico City to defend his wife. Reminding the Viceroy that he had served the State loyally for almost twenty-two years, don Miguel asserted that he had given the best and most vigorous years of his life to public service. Now, he said, at a time when he was losing his health and his sight, he was dealt the bitterly harsh blow of having his wife taken from him by order of that same State which he had served so faithfully. In an attempt to appeal to the sympathies of the Viceroy, he spoke of the tears and grief of his twelve children⁵⁸ at losing their mother. Towards the end of the letter he included a touching statement of loyalty to his wife, saying:

I would be unworthy of the holy religion which I profess, of the Spanish name which I have, and of the education which I received from my honorable parents if, in such anguished circumstances, I abandoned my unfortunate escort; I remain interested in her honor, in mine, and [that] of the...family.⁵⁹

Since by profession he was a lawyer, don Miguel believed that it would only be proper for him to defend his wife in any legal action. But to prevent any possible charges of conflict of interest and also to prevent any embarrassment to the

⁵⁸As has been noted previously, María Josefa gave birth to fourteen children. Since there were two sons by the name Miguel, one born in 1797 and the other in 1801, it is possible that the first son of that name died. It is also possible that don Miguel did not count the daughter who accompanied María Josefa to Mexico City at the time of her arrest.

⁵⁹Don Miguel Domínguez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, January 6, 1814, García, DHM, V, 357-58.

government, he renounced his position and asked that a replacement be named as soon as possible.⁶⁰

When by February 1 he had not yet received a reply from Calleja, he sent a second petition to the capital, noting that other messages had reached Querétaro from Mexico City since his first representation to the Viceroy. Meanwhile, he said, doña María Josefa remained a prisoner and was almost abandoned because he could not help her. Furthermore, he claimed that his health was deteriorating and that his blindness, the result of cataracts, had so affected his sight that he was unable to see clearly even on the brightest days. Saying that he was really of no further use to the State, he again requested permission to renounce his position as Corregidor de Letras of Querétaro and to go to Mexico City to defend his wife.⁶¹ Finally on February 25, 1814, Viceroy Calleja agreed that don Miguel could resign from his office.⁶²

Meanwhile, María Josefa was taken to the capital and placed in the Convent of Santa Teresa la Antigua, where the Prioress had agreed that she could be held.⁶³ Within a

⁶⁰Ibid., V, 358-59.

⁶¹Don Miguel Domínguez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, February 1, 1814, Ibid., V, 359-60.

⁶²Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Miguel Domínguez, February 25, 1814, Ibid., V, 360.

⁶³Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Pedro Monsalve, January 13, 1814, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 372.

short time, María Josefa began a correspondence of her own with the Viceroy. Although she signed her own letters, there is no indication of whether she was writing them herself or whether she had someone write them for her. In the first of these, dated February 4, 1814, she noted that she had already been held prisoner for almost a month. As a result, she had forcibly been prevented from being at the side of her loyal and faithful husband who had given such long service to the State, sacrificing his health and his own personal interests to fulfill his obligations.⁶⁴

In an effort to arouse sympathy for herself on the part of the Viceroy, she noted that she had been plucked from the "bosom of an honorable and numerous family," one which included fourteen children, the eldest being twenty-four years old⁶⁵ and a member of the Regiment of Querétaro. This son had already shown his valor in battle and had won the praise of his superior officers. Moreover, the fact that she had been forced to spend a night in a barracks with the soldiers and had been forced to use her own money to buy

⁶⁴ Doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, February 4, 1814, García, DHM, V, 361.

⁶⁵ María Josefa was mistaken about the age of her eldest son, Mariano José Mateo Luis, who was born on February 23, 1793. At the time when she wrote the letter, he would have been a few days short of his twenty-first birthday, not his twenty-fourth.

food.⁶⁶

Finally, she claimed that she had been held in the Convent of Santa Teresa la Antigua for twenty-two days, but she still had not been informed of the charges against her. Therefore, she requested that Viceroy Calleja grant her an audience so that she could be apprised of the charges against her, prove her innocence, and be placed at liberty.⁶⁷

It was not until February 24 that María Josefa received a response from the Viceroy in which he referred to her two petitions, dated February 4 and February 18. He said that if she did not know in her soul what her crimes were, she would just have to wait with resignation until such time as they decided to tell her.⁶⁸

Obviously, María Josefa did not immediately receive the message from the Viceroy, as on February 25 she wrote another letter to him.⁶⁹ In this she repeated her request that she be informed of the charges against her. Then she

⁶⁶Doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, February 4, 1814, Ibid., V, 361-62.

⁶⁷Ibid., V, 362.

⁶⁸Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, February 24, 1814, Ibid., V, 362.

⁶⁹The dates cited here tend to cause some confusion. In his letter of February 24, Calleja mentioned a second petition dated February 18; however, in this letter of February 25, María Josefa makes the statement that "My sad condition obliges me to take the pen a second time...." Whether this letter is really the second petition with the wrong date, or really the third is therefore unclear.

revealed that in a letter written to her servant, don Miguel had told of asking for permission to come to Mexico City so that he could aid in her defense but said that he had received no reply. Don Miguel's lack of information was causing him to act like a "crazy man," she said. Therefore, she begged that either she be informed of the charges against her so that she could respond to them and thus make known to everyone her innocence.⁷⁰

At this point, it would seem that María Josefa was becoming impatient, or that she had not received the Viceroy's answer, because only three days later she sent still another message to Calleja. Protesting her innocence, she once again requested an audience and asked to be told of the charges. In pleading for her release she again referred to her fourteen children and to her husband's poor health, saying that he was "in the last days of his life." The unique feature of this petition was the fact that finally she either remembered some Spanish law or else she was given some legal advice as she reminded the Viceroy that according to the law, both ancient and modern, the accused was to be informed of the charges against him within twenty-four hours so that the process could be concluded and the person either be punished

⁷⁰Doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, February 25, 1814, Ibid., V, 362-63.

or placed at liberty.⁷¹

Considering the fact that Calleja had given don Miguel permission to leave his position in Querétaro on February 25, it is remotely possible that he had finally been able to help María Josefa prepare some kind of defense. But for this to have been true, it would have been necessary for the Viceroy's letter to have reached him by the 27th. It is, therefore, more likely that don Miguel arranged for someone else in the capital to help look after the rights and interests of his wife.

María Josefa did manage to gain her release within a short time, but it would seem that it was not so much the effect of her numerous petitions as it was of her announcement that once again she was pregnant.⁷² Interestingly enough, there does not seem to be any record of a fifteenth child being born to her in 1814, although it is possible that she had a miscarriage. It is also possible, considering the fact that at this time she was forty-six years old, that she simply thought she was pregnant because she entered menopause, or could have been having a false pregnancy. The physiological reason is really not important; what is important is that she managed to regain her freedom.

⁷¹Doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, February 28, 1814, Ibid., V, facsimile of manuscript letter bound between pp. 362-63.

⁷²Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, I, 33.

Before all of this occurred, Viceroy Calleja decided that he was going to discover the complete extent of María Josefa's involvement in the revolutionary movement. At the same time that he ordered the arrest of María Josefa, he named don Agustín de Lopetedi as interim Corregidor de Letras of Querétaro, although don Miguel continued as the actual Corregidor. This change was made because it seemed that don Miguel was not using his full energies to attempt to restore complete order in the city. Hence Lopetedi was told to begin gathering information about María Josefa's activities and to do whatever he could to help re-establish unquestioned Royalist control over the city.⁷³

Lopetedi's orders were reiterated and expanded on February 24, 1814, the day before don Miguel was given permission to proceed to Mexico City. At that time, Viceroy Calleja ordered that Lopetedi proceed in a fair and even-handed manner to "discover, pursue, and punish those who are addicted to the party of the insurrection or are suspected of disloyalty." Lopetedi was to give special attention to María Josefa in order that a final disposition of the charges against her could be made.⁷⁴ Lopetedi immediately began

⁷³Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Agustín de Lopetedi, December 29, 1813, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 369-70.

⁷⁴Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Agustín de Lopetedi, February 24, 1814, Ibid., V, 372.

taking statements from a number of people, including some who accused María Josefa of having been in communication with Rayón and of having warned the insurgents of the plans of the Royalists.⁷⁵

By April 15, 1814, Lopetedi was able to make his report to the Viceroy. In a rather lengthy statement, he first traced the beginnings of the insurgent movement. Then in referring to María Josefa, he said that "the conduct of La Corregidora is notoriously scandalous, seductive, and pernicious." As a result of don Miguel's failure to stop her illegal activities, he, too, should share the guilt, because as her husband, he had a responsibility to see that she behaved herself, and as a magistrate, he had the responsibility to report illegal activities and to put an end to them.⁷⁶

Upon receiving this report, Viceroy Calleja sent it on to the Judge Advocate, don Melchor de Foncecerra, who was charged with the responsibility of evaluating the information and making recommendations for the disposition of the case. On May 20, 1814, he reported to the Viceroy that he could find no basis for charging don Miguel with any crimes. Furthermore, he said that he believed María Josefa was not

⁷⁵Alamán, Historia de Méjico, III, 399.

⁷⁶Report of don Agustín de Lopetedi to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, April 15, 1814, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 374.

really responsible for her own behavior since he thought she was mentally deranged, as was evidenced by the extravagance of her deeds and by the fact that she continued to act irresponsibly even after repeated warnings and being imprisoned more than once. Saying that he would have recommended that she be placed in seclusion if she had not already been released by order of the Viceroy, he suggested that the matter be held in abeyance until some future time.⁷⁷

After the death of Foncerrada, don Miguel Bataller, the new Judge Advocate, reopened the case when various citizens of Querétaro, mostly Europeans, sent a message to the Viceroy requesting that don Miguel not be allowed to return to Querétaro as Corregidor. This would automatically happen as a result of the cédula issued by Ferdinand VII in July, 1814, which provided that the corregidores be restored to their positions and the corregimientos be restored to the state in which they were in 1808. Bataller reopened the case against María Josefa and ordered her reimprisoned. Then on November 16, 1816, she was sentenced to suffer four years of seclusion in the Convent of Santa Catalina de Sena.⁷⁸

Don Miguel almost immediately set about trying to win his wife's release. He sent a petition to the new Viceroy, don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca (1816-1821), in which he

⁷⁷Alamán, Historia de Méjico, III, 399-400.

⁷⁸Ibid., IV, 646-47; Arrangoiz, México Desde 1808 Hasta 1867, p. 196.

claimed that he could not stand to have his wife taken from him because he was now almost blind, poor, and responsible for the welfare of his fourteen children. The Viceroy consulted with two of the Oidores of the Audiencia, don Osés and don Collado, and then decided that don Miguel's petition would be granted. As a result, doña María Josefa was ordered released on June 17, 1817. Thereafter, don Miguel was not restored to his former position as Corregidor de Letras of Querétaro, but he continued to receive his salary of four thousand pesos a year because of his long years of service to the State.⁷⁹

When Mexican independence was finally achieved and don Agustín de Iturbide became Emperor of Mexico, he wanted to honor María Josefa for her many services to the revolution. He therefore gave her the title of Lady of Honor to the Empress, doña Ana. However, María Josefa declined the honor, saying that she was not able to serve as a lady-in-waiting to the Empress when she had such a full life in her own home.⁸⁰

Don Miguel was destined to receive most of the honors in that he was named to be the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of independent Mexico and later was appointed to be the Mexican deputy to the American Congress

⁷⁹ Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 647-48.

⁸⁰ Rafael Heliodoro Valle, Iturbide, Varón de Dios (México: Ediciones Xochitl, 1944), 101.

which was held in Panama in 1825 in response to the call of Simon Bolívar.⁸¹

María Josefa's honors came after her death on March 2, 1829. She was first interred under the altar of the Virgin of Dolores in the chapel of the Convent of Santa Catalina in Mexico City, where she earlier had been imprisoned.⁸² Several years later, the people and government of Mexico decided that María Josefa should be memorialized in a more appropriate manner. On December 10, 1878, the Congress of Querétaro declared her to be a National Heroine and decreed that her name be inscribed in gold letters in the Salón de Sesiones.⁸³ Then on October 21, 1894, her remains were exhumed and solemnly moved to Querétaro, where she was re-interred in the Panteón de la Cruz. And finally, in 1900, a statue was erected in memory of her in the Plaza de Santo Domingo in Mexico City.⁸⁴

Doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez tends to be forgotten by a majority of those writing about the independence period in Mexico. Those few who do mention her seem to believe that she merits no more than a line or two. One

⁸¹Gustavo Baz, "La Corregidora de Querétaro," in Hombres Ilustres Mexicanos, ed. por E. Gallo (4 tomos; México: Imprenta de I. Cumplido, 1873), III, 235-36.

⁸²Amador, Noticias, p. 35.

⁸³Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, I, 34.

⁸⁴Amador, Noticias, pp. 35-36.

usually reads that Father Hidalgo was warned that the conspiracy had been discovered and so he moved forward the starting date of the planned revolution, but seldom does one read that it was a woman, María Josefa, who sent him that warning. If she had not gotten the message through, it is possible that Hidalgo and Allende would have suffered the fate of many of the other conspirators. But she did succeed and Hidalgo was able to give his Grito de Dolores, touching off the first phase of the Mexican Wars of Independence.

However, María Josefa's influence and importance extended beyond the initial stages of the independence movement. She was a correspondent of various insurgent groups and kept them informed of what was going on in Querétaro and of what the Royalists were doing and planning. As a result, she was able to warn them of proposed Royalist forays against them, enabling them to escape possible capture. In addition, she used her considerable influence in the area to win new partisans for the movement. As was discussed earlier, the Viceroy was advised that it would be unwise to remove don Miguel from office because he had the love and respect of the Indios, Mestizos, and Creoles of the area. Surely some of this respect must have been extended to La Corregidora, his wife. She was also accused of being an evil influence in the municipal elections of 1812. And finally, she allegedly tried to convince the Ecclesiastical Visitador, don José Mariano Beristáin, that he, too, should become a parti-

san of the independence movement. It thus becomes obvious that she played an active role in the struggle for independence for several years, continuing her activities fearlessly in spite of the fact that she was occasionally imprisoned because of her actions. She refused to be intimidated or to change her political sentiments, even after independence was achieved and Iturbide offered her imperial honors. It is with justice, then, that María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez is considered to be one of the two Mexican national heroines.

CHAPTER IV

ROYALIST WOMEN IN THE INDEPENDENCE PERIOD,

1810-1821

Although this study concentrates on the women who played active or contributing roles in the independence movement, that is, those who were sympathetic to the insurgents, some attention should be given to the women involved with the Royalist response to the insurgency. They strongly believed in the right of the Spanish Crown to rule the Kingdom of New Spain, and what they were interested in seeing accomplished in this time of turmoil was the return of their legitimate monarch to the throne in Spain and the re-establishment of peace and tranquility in the New World. While some may have agreed that there should be reforms within the governmental system, they were not willing to support a rebellion which had as its goal the political separation of the colonies from the Spanish Crown.

When the insurgent forces adopted as the protectress and patroness of their movement the Virgin of Guadalupe, naming her a general in the Insurgent army, the Royalists realized that they, too, needed a patroness. Therefore, they turned to the Virgin of Los Remedios who, since the time

of Cortés, had been regarded as the symbol of Spanish power in Mexico. When Father Miguel Hidalgo and his hordes of Indians appeared near Mexico City late in October, 1810, and there seemed to be a very real danger that the rebels were about to attack the capital, Viceroy Venegas made use of the religious devotion of the people of all classes within the city. Organizing a procession to go to the Shrine of the Virgin of Los Remedios to remove the image of the patroness and carry it reverently back to the capital, he had it solemnly installed in the Cathedral. The viceregal authorities then placed a baton symbolizing command at her feet and girded the image with ribbons in the Royalist colors, naming her a general of their troops.¹ As a result of this action, each side had its patroness--it was to be the Virgin of Guadalupe against the Virgin of Los Remedios.

The devotion to the Virgin of Los Remedios increased steadily among the Royalists. As batallions began to be raised to defend the Kingdom against the insurgent hordes, doña Ana Iraeta, the widow of an Oidor of the Audiencia, decided that women should also dedicate themselves to the preservation of the country. Consequently, she organized a group of women known as the "Patriotas Marianas," which assumed the responsibility of taking turns guarding the sacred image in the Cathedral. In addition, these women

¹Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, p. 144.

helped maintain the enthusiasm of the royalist soldiers, not by giving personal service, but by helping to raise money to pay them. They also helped the wives of some of the poor soldiers by paying them to take someone's turn in standing guard over the sacred image in the Cathedral. The example set by doña Iraeta was soon copied by women in other towns and provinces where the image of the favorite saint would be given a baton of command and declared a general in the army of the King of Spain.²

Thereafter, some of the more religious Royalists attributed almost every victory to the intercession of the Virgin of Los Remedios. In a sermon dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, Father Luis Carrasco traced the course of the revolution. While the soldiers were fighting valiantly in battle, he said, the Patriotas Marianas were besieging heaven with prayers to Our Lady, asking that God grant His mercy to the King and the people of New Spain.³ He seemed to intimate that with God and the Virgin of Los Remedios on the side of the Royalists, they could not lose.

Some of the women who favored the royalist cause decided that they wanted to do more than stand guard in the Cathedrals. In November, 1810, a group of twenty-nine women

²Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 449.

³"Noticias para la historia de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios desde el año 1808, hasta el corriente de 1812. Por Dr. Fr. Luis Carrasco, 27 de julio de 1812," Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, III, 621.

from the province of Izucar, led by María Inés Martínez Maesola, received permission from the commanding general of the area, don Mateo Musitu, to insert an official notice in the Gazeta del Gobierno. In it the women condemned the insurgents, whom they called "traitors to God, to the King, and to the country." They said that while they could not help in the actual defense of the country because of the natural weakness of their sex, a fact which caused them much shame, they said, they gave their wholehearted support to those who were opposing the vile rebels. Moreover, they proposed that they be allowed to cook for the soldiers and make bandages for them.⁴

In addition to those women who gave moral and material support to the royalist cause, there were also a group of women who actively opposed the Insurgents, doing many of the same things as those who took an active part on the side of the insurgency. In a report made by General don Félix María Calleja to the Viceroy on November 23, 1811, he alluded to the actions of one of the royalist women, saying that doña Juana, a woman who sold fruit in San Miguel el Grande, and Maximo Cahgoya, managed to catch one of the rebel leaders from Huacal. Without abusing or mistreating him, they tied him up and carried him to the prison.⁵

⁴Gazeta del Gobierno de México, November 16, 1810, I, 954-55.

⁵"Detall de la gloriosa repulsa de los rebeldes en San Miguel el Grande...por...D. Félix María Calleja, 23 de noviembre de 1811," Ibid., December 17, 1811, II, 1187.

While the Royalists were to complain about the actions of the women who favored the insurgency and who gave warning to the rebels of royalist troop movements, enabling the rebels to escape, there were women who seemingly performed the same service for the Royalists. One of them, doña Ana Prieto, had the misfortune to run into the rebels before the Royalists arrived and was robbed of three hundred pesos. But when the royalist army of Brigadier don Santiago de Irissarri neared the city, doña Ana managed to go warn them that there were some five hundred rebels in the plaza waiting for them and that most of the residents of the village had joined the movement against the soldiers of the King.⁶

The Royalists complained about the actions of the women who were spies and couriers for the Insurgents, but they also utilized the same kind of services. In December, 1813, a woman called Guadalupe Pastrana and her two daughters, seventeen year old Luisa Pardiñas and fifteen year old Paula Pardiñas, arrived in the camp of the insurgent leader José Francisco Osorno, saying that they had been persecuted by the Royalists in Puebla. However, Osorno was suspicious and ordered that they be carefully watched. Thereafter he became infatuated with Luisa and began seeing her frequently. After a while she admitted to him that, in reality, they had

⁶Sr. Brigadier don Santiago de Irissarri to Viceroy don Francisco Xavier de Venegas, March 13, 1812, Ibid., March 21, 1812, III, 297.

been sent from Zacatlán to poison him and that Guadalupe had the poison. Osorno ordered that Guadalupe be imprisoned at once. Later he returned to question Luisa further and she told him that Guadalupe was not really her mother. Neither was the younger girl related to either Guadalupe or herself because her real name was Paula Fernández. Luisa said that both of them had been offered money to go with Guadalupe to help carry out the plans. When questioned, Guadalupe admitted that the girls were not her daughters, saying that Luisa was from Puebla while Paula was from Mexico City. Then on January 6, 1814, Guadalupe was executed by the Insurgents. Thereafter, Luisa remained with Osorno, becoming his mistress, while Paula formed an alliance with Rafael Pozos and bore him several children.⁷

The Insurgents had women who followed along with them caring for the wounded and tending the sick, as did the Royalists. In a report, don Manuel González said that he especially wanted to call doña Josefa Bauza de Landero to the attention of the Viceroy. From the beginning, he said, doña Josefa had tried to help the sick and wounded of his division. She set up a pavillion for the sick and convalescing soldiers and did whatever she could to be useful to

⁷Antonio Carrión, Historia de la Ciudad de Puebla de los Ángeles (3 tomos; Puebla, México: Editorial José M. Cajica Jr., S.A., 1970), II, 172-74.

them.⁸

While the Royalists suspected those women who remained in the cities and villages abandoned by the Insurgents of being sympathetic to that cause, some women proved themselves to be loyal Royalists. Captain José María Luvian noted the actions of one such woman in his report to Lieutenant Colonel don Francisco de las Piedras. He reported that María Cordero, an Indian maiden who lived on a small ranch not far from Huehuetla, had brought him the head of a rebel and told him where he would find the body together with the corpses of some other rebels who had been killed.⁹

María, together with Vicenta Castro and Ana Cuevas, had been working near their houses when the Insurgents launched the attack. The women were determined to defend their homes and property against these "criminals," so they armed themselves with machetes, killed six of the rebels, and cut off the head of one of them to take to Captain Luvian.¹⁰ When Lieutenant Colonel Piedras made his report to the Viceroy, he suggested that María Cordero be given a medal because of her singular dedication to the Spanish sover-

⁸"Parte de Manuel González de la Vega to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, 15 de mayo de 1814," Gazeta del Gobierno de México, August 27, 1814, V, 965.

⁹"Parte de José María Luvian to Lieutenant Colonel don Francisco de la Piedras, 8 de junio de 1816," Ibid., July 18, 1816, VIII, 694.

¹⁰Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 380-81.

eign.¹¹

As will be seen shortly, the Insurgents counted among their number a group of women whose responsibility it was to seduce the royalist troops. These women would try to convince the soldiers that they should desert from their military units and either join the insurgency or become neutrals. The Royalists also had seductresses. María Guadalupe Sandoval was arrested by the Insurgents in 1817. She lived in Irapuato and had on various occasions gone to the insurgent encampment. Early in April, she delivered a letter from Colonel Cristobal Ordóñez addressed to Lieutenant Colonel José María Esquivel in which an effort was made to convince him to change sides in the struggle. He reported this to his superior, General don José Antonio Torres, saying that María Guadalupe was attempting to seduce insurgent officers. Soon the woman was arrested, convicted, and condemned to be shot by a firing squad. The execution was carried out on April 14, 1817. Interestingly enough, the Insurgents were as upset by the thought of a woman trying to seduce their troops as were the Royalists when it happened to them.¹² About a month later, two of María Guadalupe's cohorts were also

¹¹"Parte de Francisco de las Piedras al Virrey don Félix María Calleja, 15 de junio de 1816," Gazeta del Gobierno de México, July 18, 1816, VII, 693.

¹²"Execuciones," Gaceta del Gobierno Provisional Mexicano de las Provincias del Poniente, April 30, 1817, I, 20.

caught and shot. At that time the Insurgents said that these people were attempting to disturb the peace with their scandalous words against the American government, armies, and worthy generals and chiefs.¹³

A few days later on May 24, 1817, yet another seductress was caught. This woman, known as María la Fina, was accused of actually being a prostitute and the cause of innumerable evils. As a result, she was dealt with in the same manner as María Guadalupe.¹⁴

It is evident that there were a few women taking active part in the revolution on behalf of the Royalists. However, it would seem that the Royalists relied more on regularly constituted and disciplined armies than did the Insurgents, so there was less need for women to take active roles, such as riding off into battle brandishing sabers in their hands. One reason for this is that many of the Royalist soldiers did not have their wives in New Spain with them. Also, given the nature of the military establishment in New Spain as a result of the Bourbon reforms of the eighteenth century, even if the soldiers were native-born Americans, they were not necessarily fighting in the area where their homes were located. As a result, it would be difficult at times for their wives and families to accompany them or to

¹³"Execuciones," Ibid., May 20, 1817, I, 27-28.

¹⁴"Execuciones," Ibid., May 24, 1817, I, 32.

offer them aid and comfort. Moreover, as has been discussed, many women whose husbands were Royalists tended to favor independence, in spite of, rather than because of, their husbands' political sympathies. Hence, the Royalists had a smaller pool of women from which to draw support, and not even the wives of all royalist officials were willing to support the Crown and the Viceroy.

CHAPTER V

THE HIDALGO PHASE, 1810-1811

The roles of individual women in the independence movement varied greatly. Some buckled on sabers and epaulets and rode off into battle, while others acted as spies, couriers, seductresses of the royalist troops, or in whatever capacity they could, contributing whatever energies and talents they had to the insurgent movement. Their actions were limited only by their own imaginations and physical strength. Those who rode off into battle or who followed along with their husbands, doing the cooking and tending the wounded, endured all of the hardships and privations which were a part of warfare in the same manner as did the insurgent soldiers.

At times, some of the women were captured and their names became a part of the courts-martial records or of the records of the Inquisition. But some were able to take part in the movement and escape without being caught, while others were killed during battles or skirmishes. As a result, documentary records of the actions of all the women, or even a majority, do not exist. Instead, the only record that some of these women took part in the movement is at times a short

reference to a certain incident in which one or more were involved.

While there is no definitive proof that some of these women ever existed since their names do not appear in the official records and they may only be referred to by a nickname in other sources, one has to wonder if the fact that at times heroic deeds are ascribed to them has any basis, or if that is simply a part of the revolutionary legend. But since there is usually at least a grain of truth even in legends, it would seem worthwhile to include references to such women in this study since it is very probable that if the woman herself did not exist, three or four other women did whose actions might have gone into the creation of such a legend. It should be noted that any women who fall into this category will be so identified, and the reader can draw his own conclusions as to whether those particular women were real or legendary.

After receiving the warning sent by doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, Father Miguel Hidalgo and Captain Ignacio de Allende decided that they must move quickly. As a result, on the morning of September 16, 1810, Hidalgo rang the bell of his church in the village of Dolores, raised the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and gave the Grito de Dolores, proclaiming the independence of New Spain and launching a revolution which would eventually end Spanish domination. At first, the forces of Hidalgo and Allende were numerically

small and ill-equipped; but as they began to march towards the south, more partisans joined the movement, swelling the ranks to such an extent that soon the insurgent forces numbered in the thousands. An army was created, led by a cavalry of lance-carrying cowboys and followed by an infantry of armed Indians. Last in the line of march was a rag-tag crowd of women and children,¹ some of whom would take active part in the battles in which the insurgent army would soon be engaged.

The insurgent army began its march to the south almost immediately, passing through and taking control of San Miguel and Celaya before approaching Guanajuato. The Intendant of that city, don Juan Antonio Riaño, had been warned of the approach of the rebellious masses and had decided to take refuge in the public granary, the Alhóndiga de Granaditas, believing that he and the other Spaniards and Europeans would be able to withstand the forthcoming attack until such time as reinforcements could arrive and put down the rebellion.²

When his army neared the city, Hidalgo, in his capacity as Captain General of America, sent two messages to

¹Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Mexico, Vol. IV: 1804-1824 (6 Vols.; San Francisco: The History Company, Publishers, 1886), 119.

²Hugh M. Hamill, The Hidalgo Revolt: Prelude to Mexican Independence (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), pp. 122-23.

Riaño. The first was an official statement calling for the capitulation of the Europeans who had fortified themselves in the granary and containing a promise that all prisoners would be treated humanely if they surrendered without a fight. Failure to surrender would necessitate the use of force by the insurgent forces, Hidalgo warned.³ The second was a personal note to Riaño in which Hidalgo expressed his admiration for the Intendant and promised that the Señora Intendenta would be given protection and asylum in whatever place she decided to establish her residence if the Royalists would surrender.⁴

Riaño responded with two notes of his own, the first an official answer to Hidalgo in which he stated that there was absolutely no other authority in the city than his own and that there was no other Captain General of New Spain than the Viceroy, don Francisco Javier de Venegas. Hence he completely refused to recognize Hidalgo as having any official standing or authority in New Spain other than as a priest.⁵ The second was a personal message to Hidalgo in which he expressed his gratitude for the rebel leader's concern for his

³Don Miguel Hidalgo to Intendant don Juan Antonio Riaño, September 28, 1810, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, II, 116-17.

⁴Don Miguel Hidalgo to Intendant don Juan Antonio Riaño, September 28, 1810, Ibid., II, 117.

⁵Intendant don Juan Antonio Riaño to don Miguel Hidalgo, September 28, 1810, Ibid., II, 117.

wife and family, even though he could not accept the offer of safety for them.⁶ Faced with Riaño's refusal to surrender, the Insurgents began their attack on the fortress-like Granaditas, beginning one of the bloodiest episodes in the Mexican wars of independence.

The story of the attack and slaughter which occurred that day in Guanajuato is too well known to go into in this study. Suffice it to say that Hidalgo's forces easily captured the city, which Riaño and the Spaniards decided was undefendable, and then concentrated their attack on the Alhondiga de Granaditas where the Europeans had sought shelter. Within a short time, the insurgents were able to effect an entrance by burning the massive wooden door. The rape, pillage, and slaughter which ensued were destined to frighten and anger many who might otherwise have been partisans of the independence movement, since this was an incident which would not soon be forgotten by the Europeans in Mexico, or even by the Creoles, many of whom developed a deep and abiding fear and hatred of the Indian hordes led by Hidalgo and Allende. This whole episode very neatly fit into the broader fear of Indian rebellion in general, a common concern among nineteenth century Creoles in Spanish America.

Within a short time the Royalists recaptured Guanajuato under the leadership of don Félix María Calleja del

⁶Intendant don Juan Antonio Riaño to don Miguel Hidalgo, September 28, 1810, Ibid., II, 117.

Rey, a Spaniard who from his earliest days was taught to be a soldier. He arrived in Mexico with don Félix Berenguer de Marquina, and when the rebellion broke out, he was appointed Supreme Chief of the Royal Armies in Mexico, a position he earned as a result of his reputation of being a valiant and skillful soldier during various campaigns in Africa and Europe. However, it should be noted that he also had a reputation for being outrageously pretentious, much given to exaggeration, violent, prideful, and arrogant.⁷ Bustamante described Calleja as a man much given to military airs, saying that he was arrogant, suspicious, and vain.⁸ However, Alamán, a conservative Creole, really could see nothing wrong with Calleja or the manner in which he conducted himself. He believed that considering the fierce intensity of the warfare, Calleja acted and reacted in an entirely acceptable way and was not excessively cruel or inhumane.⁹ But even this statement indicates that some of Calleja's actions probably could have been, and were, considered to be cruel.

The violent streak in his personality was to be

⁷Fernando Osorno Castro, El Insurgente Albino García: Episodos de la vida, campañas del genial guerrillero (México: Editorial "México Nuevo," 1964), p. 50.

⁸Carlos María de Bustamante, Campañas del General D. Félix María Calleja, Comandante en Jefe del Ejército Real de Operaciones, llamado del Centro (México: Imprenta del Aquila, dirigida por José Ximeno, 1828), p. 17.

⁹Alamán, Historia de Méjico, II, 507-08.

evident within a short time after he entered Guanajuato on November 24, 1810. On passing by the Alhóndiga de Granaditas he ordered the Captain of the Dragoons of Puebla, don Francisco Guizarnotogui, to go inside and make an investigation. Soon Guizarnotogui returned with seven prisoners, men whom he found inside the structure. Calleja decided that they had had a hand in the slaughter of the Spaniards and therefore ordered that they be executed immediately.¹⁰ He commanded that gallows be built in every plaza of the city so that an example could be made of those who took part in the atrocities. Soon the city was filled with the sound of the prayers of the priests for the victims and the cries of the victims themselves for mercy. It was, said Alamán, a night of horror which created such a deep impression that it could be clearly remembered years later.¹¹

Just before Calleja reached Guanajuato, some insurgent sympathizers slaughtered almost two hundred prisoners held in the Alhóndiga de Granaditas. Calleja was determined to exact a full measure of revenge for the atrocities. He issued a proclamation on November 28, 1810, in which he decreed that anyone failing to turn in their arms by the following morning would be executed. Everyone was ordered to denounce anyone known to be an insurgent partisan. A curfew

¹⁰Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, p. 158.

¹¹Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 61. This seems to contradict his other statement.

was announced, all gatherings were forbidden, and it was decreed that, without exception, any person conspiring about rebellion or independence would immediately suffer the death penalty.¹² The executions in Guanajuato continued until at least December 5, 1810, when five persons suspected of being insurgent sympathizers fell prisoner to Calleja's forces. Although they were guilty of other crimes, the Royalists believed that they had taken part in the slaughters and atrocities. As a result, they were sentenced to be executed, bringing to fifty-six the number of persons who were given the death penalty in Guanajuato.¹³

Even though he had already had a large number of persons executed, Calleja was still not satisfied that full revenge had been exacted. On December 12, 1810, he issued another proclamation against the Insurgents. In it he made an effort to arouse the populace against the rebels by pointedly making reference to the Creoles killed in the Alhóndiga de Granaditas. He then declared that henceforth, four villagers would be executed without any distinction as to class and without any kind of formality for every soldier of the King or respectable and honorable citizen, European

¹²Bando decreed by Brigadier don Félix María Calleja, Suplemento a la Gazeta Extraordinaria del Gobierno de México, November 28, 1810, in Gazeta del Gobierno de México, II, 997-98.

¹³Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 61.

or Creole, killed by the Insurgents.¹⁴

Obviously, not all of the persons who took part in the attack on the granary were captured immediately, and some were never caught. Among the attackers was a group of women who were later accused of having been as cruel and bloody in their actions as the men, although the evidence against them seems scant. One of the women captured later by the Royalists was Juana Bautista Márquez, who, together with her son, José María, was accused of taking part in the atrocities of September. Juana was apprehended when Hidalgo's army was defeated at Punto de Calderón on January 17, 1811. After being held in Belen until May 12, she was taken to Guanajuato where she was executed alongside her son.¹⁵

There is some question as to whether Juana Bautista was also known as La Gabina, since a woman known by both names and her son, José María, were held prisoners while an investigation was made, that is, until September, 1811. At the time, there was some confusion about whether she was really guilty or whether she was being confused with another woman who had taken part in the massacre. But Calleja did not want to

¹⁴Bando promulgated by Brigadier don Félix María Calleja, December 12, 1810, in Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, p. 161.

¹⁵Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 358. This work was the result of twenty years of research by Miguel i Verges, who examined the records in the National Archives, the Archivo General de las Indias, government documents, courts-martial and Inquisition records, collections of documents, diaries, correspondence, and histories.

be bothered with such details, so Juana Bautista, or La Gabina, and her son were hanged, even though both of them protested their innocence to the very end and were so effective that the priest ministering to them later said that he was convinced of their innocence.¹⁶ A third source agrees that both La Gabina, a woman whose surname was unknown, and her son died protesting their innocence, but sets the date of the execution at August 12, 1811.¹⁷ Therefore, it is not entirely clear whether there were really two different women with similar names executed on two different days or whether all of the references are to the same woman. However, since the woman or women are mentioned by three different sources, it is probable that the incident did occur.

Some of the other women accused of the same crime were more fortunate. Brígida Álvarez and her daughter, Rafaela, were both captured by the Royalists in 1811 and were accused of having taken part in the massacre. Obviously, the Royalists believed their crimes were less serious than those of Juana Bautista since Brígida was given a relatively light sentence of two years in jail. Her daughter was even

¹⁶Amador, Noticias, p. 47. Amador (1848-1917) was a journalist, historian, and publisher. Although his work is not well documented compared to the studies of Miguel i Verges or Genaro García, he is, nonetheless, reliable, as his other publications prove.

¹⁷José María de Liceaga, Adiciones y Rectificaciones a la Historia de México por D. Lucas Alamán (Londres, México, D.F.: Editorial Layac, 1944), pp. 197-98.

more fortunate, receiving a sentence of only six months.¹⁸ María Refugio Martínez was also among the lucky ones in that she, too, was sentenced to serve only a term of two years for her part in the attack.¹⁹

A woman from Guanajuato known only as Dorotea was fortunate in that apparently she was able to get away with her crimes completely unscathed. She was involved in the action at Guanajuato and then followed Hidalgo's army until it reached Saltillo, where reportedly she joined her husband. Then one day Dorotea, who was noted for bragging about her part in the atrocities at the Alhóndiga, announced that she was going to return to Guanajuato. Later she was seen riding in a coach and had in her possession sixty mules of questionable ownership. On her way back to Guanajuato she was captured by José María Ximénez but was rescued and freed by the Administrator of the Hacienda del Jaral, don Francisco Martínez. His actions were dismissed for the time being with the statement that, as various intercepted letters proved, he probably freed Dorotea because he himself was addicted to the insurgent cause.²⁰ Thereafter no further references are made to Dorotea, so it can be assumed that she

¹⁸Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, pp. 25, 26.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 365.

²⁰"Informe sobre lo que resulte en las causas de los Jefes insurrectos," Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, I, 74-75.

made good her escape and either continued her revolutionary activities or else blended back into her pre-revolutionary life style.

Another woman known as La Barragana joined Hidalgo when his army was still in Guanajuato. At the time, the insurgents were getting nervous because of the rumored approach of Calleja and his army. La Barragana, the owner of large haciendas in Río Verde, was able to raise a large force of Indians armed with bows and arrows and set off to join Hidalgo. Although Alamán said that her arrival was never verified, he claimed that just the story of her coming was enough to serve to distract the people of the city and to make them forget about Calleja.²¹ While not too much is known about her activities, it is evident that she was still actively commanding her force of Indians in the area around Zinapécuaro in 1812. At that time, Father Antonio del Espiritu Santo reported to the Royalist General don José de la Cruz that La Barragana had been seen in the village telling the people that they had nothing to fear from her since her only intention was to defeat General de la Cruz's army.²²

There were other women who were active in the Hidalgo phase of the revolution from the beginning, including

²¹Alamán, Historia de Méjico, I, 415.

²²Amador, Noticias, pp. 15-16.

one of Hidalgo's daughters. Agustina decided that she would follow her father in his campaigns, so she put on the uniform of an insurgent officer, concealed her identity, and went with him.²³

However, Agustina was not the famous Fernandita who accompanied Hidalgo during one part of his campaign and who was believed to be the young King Ferdinand VII, even though some historians have thus identified her, as can be seen from the following. According to Alamán, Hidalgo was accompanied by "a youth of good countenance, disguised as a man with the uniform and devices of a captain." It was rumored among the people that, in reality, the youth was Ferdinand VII, who had managed to escape from Napoleon and who had made his way to New Spain to place himself under the protection of Hidalgo. According to Alamán, Hidalgo was not responsible for such rumors and probably did not know anything about them. Although Alamán did not know who the girl was, he assumed that she was either his god-daughter or his daughter. La Fernandita arrived in Guadalajara in a closed coach and accompanied by an escort of lancers four days after Hidalgo. The coach drew up in front of the Colegio de San Juan, and the mysterious youth quickly went inside. A crowd gathered outside to see the mysterious visitor, and the rumor rose that it was none other than Fernandito, or rather, Ferdinand VII. But

²³Caruso, The Liberators of Mexico, p. 12.

sometime during the night, the youth changed from the military attire into the dress of a female and was secretly carried off to the Beaterio of Santa Clara.²⁴ Interestingly enough, no one speculated that the youth who left the Colegio de San Juan dressed as a young woman might be a man wearing a disguise.

Dr. José María de la Fuente, one of Hidalgo's biographers, decided that the girl was Agustina, the daughter of Hidalgo and Manuela Ramos Pichardo, the housekeeper in the rectory at San Felipe. Since there was no reference to the girl in the list of prisoners taken at the time when Hidalgo was captured at Beján, he concluded that Señora de Abasolo was correct when she wrote in a letter to her husband that the girl was in the Recogidas in San Luis Potosí.²⁵

Yet another biographer, Jesús Romero Flores, asserted that indeed La Fernandita was Agustina and offered some information about her subsequent life. He stated that a few years later she married the famous insurgent Encarnación Ortiz, known as El Panchón, who died in Aztecapotyalco a few days after the Army of the Three Guarantees entered Mexico City in 1821. Thereafter, he said, she lived with

²⁴Alamán, Historia de Méjico, II, 47-48.

²⁵Dr. José María de la Fuente, Hidalgo Íntimo: Apuntes y Documentos para una biografía del benemérito Cura de Dolores D. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (México: Tipografía Económica, 1910), pp. 310-11.

her brother, Mariano, and in December, 1826, acted as godmother for his child.²⁶ However, Romero Flores offered no proof that Agustina was, in reality, La Fernandita.

As was noted above, doña Manuela Rojas Taboada, wife of Mariano Abasolo, mentioned La Fernandita in one of her letters to her husband when she was a prisoner in the Recogidas in San Luis Potosí, saying that "the capitana who dressed as a man...is today in the Recogidas...."²⁷ Beginning with this statement, it is possible to determine who La Fernandita really was.

In a statement made during the course of an investigation conducted while a prisoner in the Recogidas in Guadalajara, María Ana Gamba said that her legitimate father, don Luis Gamba, had been taken prisoner by Hidalgo in Valladolid (Morelia) because he was a European. She went to Hidalgo to beg for her father's release, but Hidalgo refused to let him go immediately, saying that it would set a bad example. However, he promised that if María and her mother, doña María Pérez Sudaire, would accompany him to the next town, he would release don Luis. María's mother was too ill to travel, so María decided that she would go by herself. Hidalgo told her that since he did not want any scandal, it would be a good idea for her to dress like a man. María

²⁶ Romero Flores, Don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, p. 56.

²⁷ Doña Manuela Rojas Taboada to don Mariano Abasolo, n.d., Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, II, 407.

agreed, but when she arrived in Guadalajara, her father was not there and Hidalgo had her confined to a monastery. Sometime later she was transferred to the Recogidas, where she had been held prisoner until the time of the investigation.²⁸

Then on January 20, 1811, María wrote to the President of the Junta de Seguridad to volunteer the names of some friends and neighbors of the family who would be able to vouch for her good character. In addition, she requested that she be transferred to the Convent of the Sisters of Santa Isabel de México so she could be with her aunt.²⁹

Considering María Ana Gamba's own statement, it is apparent that she was the youth who, dressed like a man, travelled from Valladolid (Morelia) to Guadalajara following Hidalgo and then entered the Colegio de San Juan. Therefore, she must be the person who was thought to be the rightful King of Spain, Ferdinand VII. It is also evident that she was not the daughter of Hidalgo, nor was she his goddaughter. Instead, she was the legitimate daughter of don Luis Gamba, one of Hidalgo's prisoners, and doña María Pérez Sudaire. Apparently her only crime was her willingness to cooperate with Hidalgo to obtain the release of her father.

²⁸"Declaration of María Ana Gamba, January, 1811," in Manuel Puga y Acal, "¿Quién era la Fernandita?" Anales del Museo de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, IV (Enero-Feb., 1922), 42.

²⁹María Ana Gamba to Sor. Presidente de la Junta de Seguridad, January 20, 1811, Ibid., 43.

In so doing, she disguised herself as an officer and went to Guadalajara. The question of who was La Fernandita thus has been answered. But at the same time it raises others, namely, did Hidalgo know that the people believed the youth was Fernandito and did he try to use the story to win sympathy and support, or was he, as Alamán said, completely unaware of the reaction of the people? And why did he insist that she dress in the uniform of one of his officers? Did he really worry about creating scandals, or did he think that she would be mistaken for Fernandito? These, however, lay outside the scope of this study.

As was noted earlier, doña Manuela Josefa Tobaada de Abasolo was the person who first claimed that the girl who dressed like a man and travelled with Hidalgo was in royalist custody. Doña Manuela was the wife of don José Mariano Abasolo, one of the original Querétaro conspirators and a high ranking officer in Hidalgo's army. Don Mariano was the only one of the original leaders who, after being captured by the Royalists, was not executed for his crimes. Instead, he was ordered deported to Spain, where he was to spend the rest of his life in prison. Moreover, all of his goods and wealth were to be confiscated.³⁰

When the revolution began, don Mariano, accompanied by doña Manuela, was in the forefront of the action.

³⁰Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 136.

However, within a short time, both of them became discouraged as a result of the bloody excesses of some of Hidalgo's followers. Don Mariano was not surprised when the superior discipline and military organization of the royalist army began to be felt by the insurgents, who were forced to begin a retreat toward the north.³¹

Somehow doña Manuela discovered that the Royalists, under the command of a former Insurgent turned Royalist, Lieutenant Colonel don Ignacio Elizondo, were about to cut off Hidalgo's retreat. She managed to tell Hidalgo that a trap was being laid for him, but he ignored her warning and continued the march.³² Hidalgo resented the complaints that doña Manuela had made about the atrocities committed by some of his followers, and his pride prevented him from listening to the advice of a person as young as doña Manuela.³³ As a result, he marched on toward the north, straight into the trap set for him by Elizondo and was captured by the Royal-

³¹Lic. Carlos Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México (San Antonio, Texas: Casa Editorial Lozano, 1918), p. 110. Having analyzed many books dealing with the revolutionary period, it is apparent that this author used documentary evidence for his basic material. He is not, however, particularly careful about citing those sources and once he has established the basic facts of an incident, he sometimes has a tendency to romanticize or embellish them. An attempt has been made to make a distinction between fact and legend in the use of this source.

³²Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 133-34.

³³Ibid., III, 137.

ists on May 21, 1811.³⁴

Don Mariano was among those taken prisoner that day and together with the others was taken to Chihuahua where the Military Commander of the Internal Provinces, General don Nemesio Salcedo y Salcedo, ordered an investigation and that he be tried for his crimes of rebellion. The investigation was conducted by the Second Lieutenant of the Spanish Guard, don Angel Avella, and as a result, don Mariano was sentenced to be executed.³⁵

Dofia Manuela refused to accept this sentence without protest and immediately sought ways to save her husband's life. She first went to General Salcedo y Salcedo and asked that her husband be granted aid and protection. At first the General tried to ignore her, but she was so persistent that he finally agreed to ask Avella to submit a report on his findings. The report stated that don Mariano had openly embraced the revolutionary cause but admitted that he had never had effective command of any insurgent troops. Moreover, when he was in Guadalajara with Hidalgo's forces, he had been responsible for saving the lives of more than a hundred Spaniards who had been condemned to death by Hidalgo by going into the prison where they were being held and taking them out with him. Since he was known to be of high rank and

³⁴Hamill, The Hidalgo Revolt, pp. 209-10.

³⁵Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, pp. 110-

close to Hidalgo, the insurgent guards never thought of questioning his right to remove the prisoners. As a result, don Mariano was able to take the prisoners outside and release them.³⁶ And finally, Avella reported that the evidence showed that don Mariano had sent a letter to Calleja from Guadalajara in which he asked for a pardon for his revolutionary activities. After reading the report, General Salcedo y Salcedo ordered that don Mariano's execution be postponed.³⁷

Doña Manuela asked for a copy of the report and then set off for Guadalajara in search of General Calleja, believing that if she could talk to him, he would be able to give her more information which might be helpful in influencing the Viceroy to be merciful to her husband. Ignoring the dangers which might be encountered on a journey of more than two hundred leagues across a country in the throes of revolution, she set off for Guadalajara, travelling on foot, on horseback, on burros, and in carts.³⁸

When she reached the city, Calleja received her coldly, but her determination and dedication eventually convinced him that he should listen to her. He gave her a

³⁶Ibid., p. 111; Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 137.

³⁷Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 111.

³⁸Ibid., p. 111; Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 137-38.

statement in which he agreed that don Mariano had been responsible for saving the lives of several Spaniards who had fallen prisoners to the notorious Insurgent, Agustín Marroquín, a former highway man whom Hidalgo had freed from prison and had given the rank of Colonel. Moreover, he stated that Abasolo had asked for a royal pardon in accordance with the terms set forth by the Viceroy.³⁹

Armed with this information, doña Manuela continued her journey to Mexico City so that she could present her husband's case to the Viceroy, don Francisco Javier de Venegas, who was not noted for being generous to Insurgent prisoners. Again doña Manuela's persistence and determination gained her a hearing, and she managed to win the sympathy of the Viceroy. He agreed that her husband's life should be spared, but he decreed that don Mariano would be exiled from his native New Spain and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. All of his property and wealth were confiscated by the State, and he and all of his descendants henceforth would be known as infamous traitors to the King.⁴⁰

Doña Manuela decided that she would accompany her husband in his exile, but first she wanted to wind up his affairs in the village of Dolores which had been their home. Thus she was in that village on September 10, 1811, when the

³⁹Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, pp. 111-12.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 112; Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 138.

insurgent leader Albino García arrived, filled with anger at having been prevented from attacking the village of León by the arrival of some troops sent by Calleja. He captured and executed the Subdelegado, don Ramón Montesmayor, and took several prisoners. But some of the Royalist sympathizers were able to escape the fury and vengeance of García as a result of the aid of doña Manuela, who hid some of them and then helped to get them out of town undiscovered by the Insurgents. One of the escapees, Captain of Patriots don José Mariano Ferrer, was so grateful that he gave doña Manuela two thousand pesos, while many of the others gave her lesser amounts in appreciation for her help.⁴¹ She was still interested in trying to save lives and to prevent bloodshed but she was also willing to accept compensation for such acts, especially since all of the family's wealth had been confiscated.

She joined don Mariano in Veracruz, where he was turned over to the custody of the Captain of the frigate Prueba, don Javier Ulloa, for the voyage to Spain. Doña Manuela offered to pay for her passage, but Captain Ulloa was sympathetic and refused payment. Eventually doña Manuela and don Mariano were taken to Spain where she intended to continue the fight for her husband's freedom. However,

⁴¹Osorno Castro, El Insurgente Albino García, p. 49.

they did not leave Veracruz until 1814. When they reached Spain, the Cortés had been dissolved and Ferdinand was governing without recourse to the law. Don Mariano was taken from the ship to the public jail, and later he and his wife were transferred to the Fortress of Santa Catarina in Cádiz, where they remained until the time of his death in 1819. Only then did doña Manuela return to her native New Spain.⁴²

While it is probable that in the beginning doña Manuela was dedicated to the principles of independence, she and her husband became disillusioned by the senseless killings of innocent people by many of the followers of Hidalgo. After the capture of her husband by the Royalists, she was dedicated to a search for justice for him, a search which continued until the time of his death.

Although there were women who were active in the independence movement in a degree far exceeding that of their husbands or families, it can be said that doña Manuela Josefa Toboada de Abasolo was representative of those whose interests tended to revolve around their husbands. But there are lesser known women who were dedicated to the idea of independence for New Spain. Some were activists in deed, other were activists in word, but most who took part in the insurgent movement during this early phase seemed to have

⁴²Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 138.

a sense of dedication to the man whom they saw as their liberator, Father Miguel Hidalgo.

María del Rosario Díaz, a native of the village of Dolores, was the wife of Ignacio Arevado and the mother of two sons, Cenobio and Lorenzo. On the morning of September 16, 1810, the family was awakened by the sound of drums and a commotion in the village. Ignacio went to investigate and returned saying that Hidalgo was undertaking a holy cause which he and the oldest son were going to join. María, whose "soul was filled to overflowing by the sacred fire of patriotism," did not protest or complain about the fact that they would be travelling in a group which would include women of unsavory reputation.⁴³ Instead, she insisted that the youngest son, Lorenzo, was old enough and big enough to help defend the country. Ignacio considered that possibility for a few minutes and then refused, saying that since there was a chance that he and Cenobio would not return, Lorenzo should remain at home to help care for the family business and his mother. Consequently, Ignacio and Cenobio left with Hidalgo, and María and Lorenzo returned to the business of weaving. Fortunately, both men were able to go through the early campaigns unscathed, and after the capture of Hidalgo, they both returned to Dolores and resumed their

⁴³Laureana Wright de Kleinhans, Mujeres Notables Mexicanas (México: Tipografía Económica, 1910), pp. 242-43.

former way of life.⁴⁴ While she herself did not actively participate in the revolutionary movement, it is obvious that María was willing to have her husband and sons go off to fight for the cause of independence. Thus she, like many others, shared the principles of her husband and was willing to make personal sacrifices to see those principles made into realities.

One of the activists, doña Teodosea Rodríguez, who was known by the insurgents as La Generala, was in some ways similar to La Barragaña in that she, too, led an army of Indian bowmen. In November, 1810, José Mariano Anaya sent a message to the leading citizens of the village of Ismiquilpán requesting that they provide at least four thousand arrows for the army within as short a time as possible so that the combined armies of Allende, don Narciso Canales, don Juan María Boragán, and La Generala could continue the fight against the Gachupines in Querétaro and later in Mexico City.⁴⁵ This was probably effective propaganda, for Ismiquilpán was an Indian village where the thought of killing Gachupines was probably attractive.

La Guanajuateña was one of the persons who accompanied don Ignacio López Rayón in the retreat from Saltillo after the capture of Hidalgo and the other chiefs of the

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 243.

⁴⁵José Mariano Anaya a los indios de Ismiquilpán, November 23, 1810, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, II, 235-36.

revolution. Rayón planned to retreat as far as Zacatecas, but was attacked by Colonel don José María Ochoa when he reached Puerto de Piñones. During the course of the ensuing battle, the insurgents ran out of water. This could have been disastrous because water was needed by the artillerymen to cool the cannons so they could continue to be fired. La Guanajuatenseña, like everyone else in the camp, soon heard about the problem. Fearing that a defeat would cut off the retreat to Zacatecas, she suggested that she might know of a way to help the artillery. If they would take the covers off the cannons and make them into urinals for the women, they would have plenty of water to cool the cannons. The rebels followed her suggestion, and within a short time the tide of battle turned in favor of the insurgents.⁴⁶ Later during the course of the retreat, she was placed at the head of a batallion of women because the insurgents were short of manpower. Supposedly La Guanajuatenseña played an influential role in the taking of the Hacienda de San Eustaquio but was killed during the course of the battle.⁴⁷

Ana Villegas had the misfortune of being denounced to the Royalist authorities on July 30, 1811, by her son, José Espinosa. In a statement made to don José Gutiérrez,

⁴⁶Amador, Noticias, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁷Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 147.

he claimed that on the preceding day, May 30, when an uprising occurred in the village of Chicontepec, his brother, Lorenzo Espinosa, went to the village with papers and orders from the insurgent leader Cisneros which were intended to abet and encourage the insurrection. He stated that earlier he had seen his mother, Ana Villegas, as she left for Chicontepec to encourage the Indians in their insurrection by assuring them that Lorenzo would soon arrive with Cisneros' orders. He claimed that he was working in his fields the next day, June 1, when a strange Indian appeared and told him that his mother, his brother, and Vicente Ortega had been arrested. José said that he decided to go to Teanguistengo to ask Cisneros for some kind of letter which would prove his mother's and brother's innocence so they would be released from jail. But after he saw the governor of the Indians of Chicontepec, he was arrested by a Royalist patrol. Soon thereafter, they encountered don Francisco del Valle, who ordered that he be jailed, even though he swore that he did not have any dealings with the rebels.⁴⁸

José's statement would seem to have hurt rather than helped his mother's cause since on that same day, July 30, 1811, Ana Villegas was executed by the Royalists for her revolutionary activities after receiving the last sacraments from the parish priest of Santa María de la Asunción Tux-

⁴⁸Declaration of José Espinosa, July 30, 1811, García, DHM, V, 308-09.

pan.⁴⁹

Gertrudis Vargas, also known as La Perla del Lago, lived in the village of Puerta de Andarácus in the state of Guanajuato when Hidalgo gave his Grito de Dolores. She was supposedly known for her charitable and philanthropic activities, as well as for her dedication to the ideals of freedom and independence. When Hidalgo's forces arrived in the state of Michoacán, doña Gertrudis appeared with her son, José María Magaña, and begged that Hidalgo accept him as a member of his army.⁵⁰ José, born in 1789,⁵¹ soon proved himself to be so fearless in battle that he was promoted to the rank of Captain.⁵² Doña Gertrudis, however, was not satisfied with just having given her son to the service of the country. Thereafter, she herself became involved in the movement to the extent that she made trips to the south of Mexico to collect donations of both money and provisions for the insurgent forces.⁵³ It is not known, however, just how successful she was as a fund-raiser.

Finally, Josefa Álvarez Prendis de Royo, the wife of the Secretary of Government of Durango, don José Ramón

⁴⁹Death certificate of Ana Villegas, signed by José Miguel Domínguez, July 30, 1811, Ibid., V, 310.

⁵⁰Amador, Noticias, p. 79.

⁵¹Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 351.

⁵²Amador, Noticias, p. 79.

⁵³Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 588.

de Iberri, was an Insurgent sympathizer who had previously been involved only in a minor way. She found a chance to become more deeply involved in 1811 when don Ignacio Hidalgo, seemingly no relation to don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, and some other Insurgents were captured and taken to jail in Durango. Doña Josefa began to conspire almost immediately with the jailer, don Onofre Hernández, to arrange an escape for Hidalgo. On the evening of September 23, 1811, don Ignacio wrapped himself up in the cover of his mattress. Then Hernández, with the aid of one of doña Josefa's servants, carried him past the guards and into doña Josefa's house. Unfortunately, don Angel de Pinilla Pérez, the Judge Advocate of the Province of Nueva Vizcaya, was visiting the Royo home that night. Soon thereafter, one of doña Josefa's young daughters passed the hallway where the men were waiting and saw don Ignacio, still wrapped in the mattress cover. The girl screamed, believing that she had seen a ghost. Doña Josefa managed to hide the truth from Señor Pinilla Pérez while the servants hid don Ignacio.⁵⁴

At about this time Pinilla Pérez learned that Hidalgo had escaped. Remembering that doña Josefa was allegedly an Insurgent sympathizer, and having been present when the daughter claimed to have seen a ghost, he decided that the two matters were probably related. He ordered that doña

⁵⁴Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 106.

Josefa be held incommunicado while an intensive but futile search of the house was conducted. During her detention, doña Josefa sent one of her daughters to don Ignacio, who was unhappy about the commotion and fearful that he would be discovered and returned to jail. He indicated that he wanted to leave the house as soon as possible, so doña Josefa, who was unable to convince him that he was safe, gave him money and a diamond ring which would identify him to some of her cohorts. Then she told two of her servants to take him to her husband's Hacienda de la Sanmartina. She told him that if he would show the ring to the Administrator of the Hacienda, he would be provided with everything he would need to be able to make good his escape.⁵⁵

Hidalgo left Durango on the night of September 25, but almost immediately ran into a Spanish patrol and had to detour. Believing that the servants were overly-cautious, he abandoned them and went on alone. Later he encountered some peons and tried to buy a horse from them, but they were suspicious and took him to their overseer, a man known only as Morga. Again don Ignacio tried to buy a horse, but Morga had heard about the escape and suspected that this was Hidalgo. He told don Ignacio to rest while he caught a fresh horse for him, but instead, he went into town and denounced him. As a result, don Ignacio was recaptured by the Royal-

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 106-07.

ists later that afternoon. Morga was well rewarded for his loyalty to the Crown in that he was allowed to keep the money found in Hidalgo's possession. However, don Ignacio had time to hide the diamond ring, and he later told a confidant where it was so that it could be returned to doña Josefa.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the report of Ignacio Hidalgo's escape does not say what happened to doña Josefa. Since Hidalgo was not found in her home, the Royalists could not prove that she was involved. It is therefore probable that she was not charged with having helped him escape from jail. On the other hand, it is possible that her brush with the law was enough to convince her that she should give up such dangerous pursuits for at least a while.

Shortly after the wars of independence began, the Royalists came to the realization that women were able to be of great service to the Insurgents. One of the things that they found women to be most successful in doing was seducing the royalist troops. Although the word "seduction" connotes a physical act, it must be noted that in this case it implies a mental and ideological process whereby the woman accused of being a seductress attempted to entice royalist troops and officers to abandon the forces of the King and join those of the Insurgents, or else to just desert from their units and remain neutral. Although the women accused

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 107.

of this crime were usually dealt with severely, their actions, plus the fact that the insurgent movement did not diminish in its intensity, eventually angered the viceregal authorities to the point that they decided to make reprisals against those women who had the misfortune to be related to Insurgents, as will be discussed in Chapter VIII.

That women could and did attempt to seduce royalist soldiers and officers was an accepted fact among the colonial officials, but finding conclusive proof was sometimes difficult. Consider the case of Carmen Camacho, who was arrested on December 3, 1811, and was charged with having committed the crime of seduction. That Spanish justice could be swift if the authorities thought that the matter was serious enough is readily evidenced by the fact that within four days after she was arrested, Carmen Camacho had already been tried and sentenced.⁵⁷

The first witness to be examined during her trial was José María García, a Dragoon of the Company of don Fernando Antonel of the Regiment of Dragoons of Mexico and the soldier whom Carmen allegedly tried to seduce. García testified that on the afternoon of December 3, 1811, he and Dragoon Manuel Castro accidentally met Carmen and her companion, a woman called Juana, on the street in Acámbaro. After talking for a few minutes, all of them went to the wineshop for

⁵⁷"Extraco de la Causa instruída contra Carmen Camacho....," García, DHM, V, 341.

some aguardiente. After a few drinks, Carmen allegedly told him that she had previously been with the Insurgents and asked if he would like to go to Citáquaro with her. García replied that he would like to go because Acámbaro bored him. Then, he said, she tried to convince him that he should take some arms from the royalist barracks with him when he decided that he was ready to leave, telling him that it was easy to do and that she already had some guns and pistols in her house which had been provided by other soldiers who had deserted.⁵⁸

García alleged that Carmen promised that, if he deserted, she would go with him to Tarandáquaro where there were people who would be willing to help him. From there they would go on horseback to Citáquaro where he would either join the Insurgents or else be given a piece of land, the same choice as had been given to other soldiers who had decided to desert from the forces of the King. Then she warned him that if he decided to back out of the agreement because he was afraid, she would be rescued. However, he would have condemned himself with his own words because in reporting her, he would have to admit that he had considered deserting.⁵⁹

García said that he later walked Carmen home and

⁵⁸ Declaration of José María García, December 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 342-43.

⁵⁹ Ibid., V, 343.

promised that he would return the next day, bringing with him six more Dragoons who he was certain would also like to desert. The next morning, December 3, he saw her again to make arrangements for the desertion. He claimed that she agreed to have available that evening two men who would lead them to the rebel outpost and he, in turn, had promised that all of the Dragoons would bring their weapons with them. However, instead of continuing with the plan, he decided to tell the Ayudante Mayor of his regiment about Carmen's attempted seduction.⁶⁰

Later that same evening, García and the other Dragoons went to Carmen's house as planned but instead of going off to join the Insurgents, the soldiers arrested her and all of the other occupants of the house. Asked if he knew of any other soldiers whom Carmen may have influenced to desert and whether he had ever seen any weapons in her house, García said that he knew of three soldiers who had deserted but admitted that he had never seen any weapons in Carmen's possession.⁶¹

The next to be examined was Carmen Camacho, who identified herself as being a native of San Luis Potosí and the wife of Juan Alvino de Herrera. She said that she had accompanied the First Division of the Army, commanded by

⁶⁰Ibid., V, 343-44.

⁶¹Ibid., V, 344-45.

Lieutenant Colonel don Joaquín del Castillo, to Valladolid (Morelia), and then tried to return to her home. However, she was captured by a band of Insurgents led by Colonel don Juan Rivera and was held prisoner for a week before finally being released. She admitted knowing García, saying that they, together with Manuel Castro and Juana Chrisóstome Durán, had had a few drinks together on the afternoon of December 3. Although Castro left the wineshop after a short while, she said that the others remained there talking. During the course of the conversation, García allegedly told her that he wanted to desert from the army and join the Insurgents. The next day, he and some other Dragoons came to her house to tell her that they wanted to desert and to ask her to show them the way to the rebel encampment. Then suddenly and without any warning, they placed her under arrest.⁶²

Carmen denied having any knowledge about any soldiers who might have deserted other than for a Dragoon named Leal, whom she saw in Tarandáquaro. Informed that García claimed that she had told him about a group of twenty soldiers who had delivered arms to an outpost near Maravotía and who were given money, she swore that she had only told him about seeing twenty men from the Battalion of Señor Rul in a saloon in Tarandáquaro. Those soldiers had deserted and were given money by the Insurgents, but she claimed that

⁶²Declaration of Carmen Camacho, December 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 345-47.

she had nothing to do with their decision to join the rebels. Asked if she knew if there were any Insurgents in or around Acámbaro, Carmen said that the Insurgents came to the village to get money, that she had heard the shopkeepers speak badly of the royalist army, and that her butler was employed by the Insurgents. Finally, when told that García claimed she had weapons in her house, although he admitted that he had never seen them, she denied it, saying that she had never had any weapons.⁶³

Next to be called was Juana Chrisóstome Durán, who was with Carmen and García in the wineshop. She said that she really did not know where Carmen was from or why she was in Acámbaro. Then she said that she did not know what Carmen and García had talked about because she herself talked to the shopkeeper after the other Dragoon left. The following day, García had appeared in the morning to continue talking to Carmen, but again she could not hear what they were saying because they spoke very quietly. Then at about 9:00 P.M., the same Dragoon reappeared, bringing several others with him, and announced that they were ready for Carmen to lead them. Juana said that her uncle, Alberto Lasciano, told Carmen that he was sick and could not go with them. Then suddenly, the soldiers arrested all of them.⁶⁴

⁶³Ibid., V, 348-49.

⁶⁴Declaration of Juana Chrisóstome Durán, December 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 351-52.

When asked if she knew whether Carmen had ever gone to visit any of the Patriots of San Luis Potosí, Juana said that at times she had seen Carmen talking to various soldiers whom she herself did not know, but that the only soldiers who ever came to the house was García and his group. She then added that there was a muleteer of the Patriots of San Luis Potosí who came to see Carmen occasionally and concluded by saying that she did not know if the accused was an Insurgent because she had never heard her talk about the rebels.⁶⁵

The other members of the household could add very little. Alberto Lasciano claimed that he knew nothing about the accusation of Carmen being a seductress, saying that he had never heard her talk about the Insurgents. Instead, she had talked about the royalist soldiers whom she had known in San Luis Potosí. He added that he did not know who employed her or why she had come to Acámbaro. Asked why he had been arrested, Alberto said that the soldiers told him he was accused of having dealings with the rebels, an accusation which frightened him so much that he had not been able to reply or to deny it. The most damaging part of his testimony against Carmen was the allegation that she had, on the afternoon of December 3, asked him if he would like to go away with her and some soldiers. However, she did not tell

⁶⁵Ibid., V, 352.

him where they would be going, and he had said that he would not be able to go with her.⁶⁶

Alberto's story was corroborated by his sister-in-law, Dionisia Antonia, who said that she had never heard Carmen talk about the Insurgents. She had, however, seen Carmen talking to a Dragoon on the morning of December 3, but she could not hear what they were saying. She claimed that she had been told that Carmen wanted to leave with the soldiers, but other than this, she knew very little except that Carmen seldom would do anything to help around the house and that she was frequently intoxicated.⁶⁷

At this point it was decided that Carmen should be recalled. The investigators asked her about the soldiers García accused her of seducing, and Carmen admitted knowing them. However, she said that she had only spoken casually with them and that she had not told García about them. Although other witnesses testified that she had met García on the morning of December 3, she staunchly denied that such a meeting ever took place. She also denied having told García that she would provide someone to lead him to the rebels and she said that she had only asked Alberto if there was a rebel outpost in the neighborhood because she had seen so

⁶⁶ Declaration of Alberto Lasciano, December 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 349-50.

⁶⁷ Declaration of Dionisia Antonia, December 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 353.

many soldiers leaving the village.⁶⁸

By December 6, 1811, the military authorities had decided that Carmen's explanations of her behavior were inadequate and that she was most certainly guilty of the crime of trying to seduce the royalist soldiers. In a letter to Brigadier don Félix María Calleja, Licenciado José Francisco Nava reported that:

Nothing can be more prejudicial to the troops than the women who dedicate themselves to seducing...individuals and to deceiving them by telling them fabulous lies... so that, abandoning their flag, they augment the number of the foolish traitors. It is thus suitable to impose the deserved punishment on [her]....

Carmen Camacho stands convicted of all this by the declaration of three witnesses, that is, of having not only seduced the Dragoon José María García so that he would desert and go with the Insurgents, but exacting from him a pledge that others would accompany him, bringing with them their arms. In return, she promised to arrange for them to be led to the insurgents. Thus, although she denies having said these things, her guilt remains proven in terms which leave no doubt since even those with whom she lived are convinced that the Dragoon García was in her house on the morning of the third, talking with her, although she continuously denies it...; Therefore, in accordance with the laws which repute her to be a traitor to the King and to the Country, she should suffer the penalty of final supplication....⁶⁹

That same day, December 6, Calleja reviewed the case and decreed that the sentence should be death. The order was given to Colonel don Manuel Satariva to carry out the execu-

⁶⁸Second declaration of Carmen Camacho, December 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 353-55.

⁶⁹Lic. José Francisco Nava to Brigadier don Félix María Calleja, December 6, 1811, Ibid., V, 355-56.

tion,⁷⁰ and on December 7, 1811, Carmen Camacho faced a firing squad in the village of Acámbaro.⁷¹

Thus Carmen Camacho was executed, accused and convicted of the crime of seduction. That she was a camp follower appears evident from her own testimony in which she stated that she had followed the First Division from San Luis Potosí to Valladolid (Morelia). That she was from the lower strata of society is evident from reports that she was frequently intoxicated. That she was a seductress, using her feminine wiles to convince unhappy royalist soldiers to join the insurgency, is fairly certain. She knew that she might be caught, but that did not stop her from taking the risk. It would seem possible that having seen the twenty soldiers desert in Tarandaquaro, and having spent some time with the rebel band of Colonel Rivera as a prisoner, she decided that she could contribute to the revolution in a positive manner by influencing soldiers to desert. Having made that choice and having possibly seduced at least three soldiers, she was caught, tried, and executed. More will be said about the seductresses later in the study.

There were other women whose revolutionary activities consisted solely of believing that Father Miguel Hidal-

⁷⁰Memo signed by José M. Torres, December 6, 1811, Ibid., V, 356.

⁷¹Memo from Antonio Padilla, Puebla de Acámbaro, December 7, 1811, Ibid., V, 357.

go was a true patriot. Often they were careless about whom they expressed their feelings to or about who might overhear them. Hence they were denounced and punished for making seditious statements. Doña Clara Gómez Castañeda was denounced to the Inquisition on December 7, 1810, by María Nicolasa de la Purísima Concepción y Barrios for having said that she doubted that Ignacio Allende was a heretic.⁷² Doña Clara's behavior was already suspect because her husband, a former Lieutenant Colonel in the Provincial Regiment of Celaya, had joined the insurgents. When Viceroy Venegas heard about her allegedly seditious words, he ordered that she be arrested and placed in a convent until such time as a full investigation could be made.⁷³

María del Rosario Balderrama and her sister, Mariana, both considered themselves to be staunch sympathizers of the independence movement. However, María began to suffer some guilt pangs and denounced herself to the Inquisition on October 31, 1810. She admitted that she had not believed the edicts of the Holy Office and that she did not believe Hidalgo had committed any crimes. She said that her sisters, Mariana and Julia, refused to believe that Allende had ever intended to harm any of the Creoles. Instead, he only

⁷²María Nicolasa de la Purísima Concepción y Barrios to Sr. Dr. don José Antonio Aguerrezabal, December 10, 1810, Ibid., V, 443-44.

⁷³Viceroy don Francisco Javier de Venegas to Sr. don García Dabila, January 22, 1811, Ibid., V, 444.

wanted to take all of the wealth away from the Gachupines. Moreover, Allende was pursuing a holy and Christian cause. She said that all that happened was the fault of the Viceroy and not of Allende or Hidalgo.⁷⁴ Whether or not the Holy Office decided to pursue this matter is not known.

A woman known only as Gertrudis de Ojos was denounced on February 17, 1811, by Fray Cristobal Rodríguez who reported that she claimed the decree of excommunication promulgated against Father Hidalgo and the other insurgents was totally invalid since it was made by a Gachupine who had not even been consecrated, that is, Bishop-Elect Abad y Quiapo.⁷⁵ Iñes de Azevedo was also denounced to the Holy Office for being an insurgent sympathizer and for having said that "Hidalgo did nothing more than that which God commanded."⁷⁶

Four women were denounced by Father Bellogín to the Inquisition in February, 1811. María Dolores Basurto

⁷⁴"Denuncia que doña María del Rosario Balderrama hace al Tribunal de la Inquisición, de las simpatías que ella y otras personas tenían por los insurgentes y del desprecio con que veían los edictos de ese Tribunal," October 31, 1810, Ibid., V, 304-05.

⁷⁵Fr. Cristobal Rodríguez to the Inquisition of México, February 17, 1811, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, I, 114.

⁷⁶"Informe, expresando muy por extenso la opinión general de las falsedades que contiene, nulidad y desprecio con que ha sido visto por los sacerdotes y el público el edicto de la Inquisición," por Fray Simon de Mora, February 22, 1811, Ibid., I, 104.

was denounced because she said that the decree of excommunication was invalid, even though it was sanctioned by the Inquisitors, because everything they said about Hidalgo was false. Instead, María Dolores believed he was a saint. Her daughter, Margarita, was denounced at the same time for saying that she refused to make her confession to the Carmelite Fathers in Celaya, since they disturbed her conscience. This comment was interpreted to mean that she was an insurgent.⁷⁷ Terésa Bara was denounced for saying that she believed the decree of excommunication of Hidalgo was a fake because she did not believe Hidalgo had been condemned by the Inquisition.⁷⁸ The last woman to be denounced by Father Bellogín was Nicanora Cabrera, who allegedly said that "the Gachupines are not fighting for any faith, but for their own interests and honors."⁷⁹ The importance of these women lies not in whether they were punished for what they said; instead, what is important is what they were saying and thinking, since they would have an influence on other members of their families.

Another of the insurgents of words was Bárbara Rosas, also known as La Griega, who was a servant in the household of Captain don José Ximiño Vareba in Oaxaca in 1811.

⁷⁷Ibid., I, 104.

⁷⁸Ibid., I, 104.

⁷⁹Ibid., I, 104.

It is assumed that she was a partisan of the insurgents, since she told a neighbor, Francisca Enríquez, that she was certain that Hidalgo would not harm anyone unless they happened to be Gachupines. Francisca was disturbed by this statement, so she went to the Dean of the Cathedral, Dr. don Antonio Ibañez de Corvera, and denounced Bárbara as an insurgent. Ibañez relayed the information to the Intendant Corregidor of Oaxaca, who ordered that Bárbara be arrested and an investigation be conducted. This was done, and she was sentenced to serve one year in the Casa de Recogidas, or House of Correction.⁸⁰

A series of denunciations was made by don José Angel de Illescas to General Calleja in 1811. María Sánchez was denounced for being an insurgent sympathizer. Calleja decided that she was guilty, but her sentence was a little different from that of Bárbara Rosas in that she was sentenced to serve for a period of one year in the house of the man who denounced her.⁸¹

Also denounced was María la Cohetera, the daughter of Jacinto Sánchez, and her mother Manuela Niño. This family was known as Las Coheteras in the neighborhood, that is,

⁸⁰Amador, Noticias, p. 49.

⁸¹Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 533; Don José Angel María de Illescas to General don Félix María Calleja, September 1, 1811, García, DHM, V, 445-47.

the Rockets, because they were involved in the manufacture of rockets.⁸² Illescas stated that he had received a letter from his father on April 28, 1811, which said that the insurgents from San Juan de Dios were meeting on an ongoing basis in the house of Las Coheteras. It was charged that they were responsible for all of the evils which had occurred and were occurring in the city, and that they helped find and supply "rogues" to fight for the insurgents. Interestingly enough, he does not offer a full explanation as to why he did not pass on the information immediately rather than holding it for five months until September 1. In the same letter he denounced Agustina la Robledo, the wife of Matias Fuente, a soldier of the Regiment of San Luis. He said that three years earlier she had abandoned her husband, choosing to leave town with her evil mother and brother. Illescas claimed that they were insurgents who spent all of their time plotting insurrections. Consequently, he suggested that they be arrested immediately because they were dangerous criminals.⁸³

Finally, María Trinidad Uribe, the wife of the insurgent Antonio Chávez, was denounced by the Subdelegado of

⁸²Manuel Muro, "La Independencia en San Luis Potosí," in Ernesto de la Torre Villar, Lecturas Históricas Mexicanas (5 Tomos; México: Impresa Editoriales, 1969), II, 508.

⁸³Don José Angel María Illescas to General don Félix María Calleja, September 1, 1811, García, DHM, V, 445-47.

Huichapan, don Juan Cortés y Olarte, on December 14, 1810, for the alleged crime of having amorous relations with the insurgent leader José María Villagrán. As will be discussed later, Villagrán's wife and family were arrested and imprisoned because of his insurgent activities. It is therefore probable that María Trinidad was acting as a substitute wife, giving aid, comfort, and protection, which would be considered a crime. Viceroy Venegas ordered that an investigation be made and that he be informed of the findings. While this was done on May 30, 1811, Venegas' decision and hence, the final disposition of the case, is not known. Unfortunately, Miguel i Verges did not include those results because the manuscript which he consulted is in private hands and may not be complete.⁸⁴ From the foregoing it becomes evident that the Royalists were making charges against and arresting women for a variety of reasons. It is evident that they were interested not only in those women who were taking an active role in the insurrection, but also in those who might in any way be considered to be sympathizers of the revolution.

The final group of women to be considered a part of the Hidalgo phase are those who were involved in the conspiracy in Mexico City to obtain Hidalgo's release by kidnapping the Viceroy so there could be an exchange of political

⁸⁴Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 580.

prisoners. As was noted earlier, the home of don Manuel Lazarín and his wife, doña Mariana Rodríguez del Toro de Lazarín, was known for the tertulias held there. These gatherings were attended by a group of people who were sympathetic to the ideas of independence. One evening as one of the members arrived a little late at the Lazarín home, he noticed people in the streets celebrating and so he stopped to ask what had happened. He was told that Hidalgo, along with several of the other revolutionary leaders, had been captured. The man went on to the tertulia and told the others what he had just heard. A feeling of doom and depression settled over the group, and at first no one said a word. Then suddenly doña Mariana arose and exclaimed, "What is this, Señores? Are there no other men in America than the Generals who have fallen prisoner?....What are we able to do? --Free the prisoners.--And how?--Very simply; catch the Viceroy and exchange him for them!"⁸⁵ The conspiracy to kidnap Viceroy Venegas was born of this outburst that same night.

According to Anastasio Zerecero, whose father was involved in the group, doña Mariana began going for a ride in her carriage almost every afternoon thereafter, sometimes by herself, sometimes accompanied by a trusted servant. She always went to the same place, the Paseo Nuevo where Venegas

⁸⁵Zerecero, Memorias, I, 358-59.

had some troops permanently stationed to protect against any Insurgent attacks on the city. It was the most likely spot in which to carry out the plan since Venegas went there almost every afternoon to review the troops and hand out military awards and honors. Doña Mariana was trying to get the troops accustomed to seeing her so that she would not arouse their suspicions when it came time to put the plan into action. Gradually she became acquainted with some of the officers, including Captain don Francisco Omaña and Captain don Tomás Castillo, who were both married to sisters of her trustworthy servant and eventually she took them into her confidence.⁸⁶

All of the other members of the group aided in the plans and prepared for the time when the actual kidnapping would be carried out. Included in the group were a number of clerics, both seculars and regulars, who were able to move about rather freely both in and out of the city to carry out their religious duties. However, their sermons were such that they would not have been pleasing to the viceregal authorities, since they were preaching against the Spaniards and even telling the people that the Spaniards should be slaughtered.⁸⁷ They believed that Calleja had started the unnecessary bloodshed with the slaughter of innocent people,

⁸⁶Ibid., I, 359-60.

⁸⁷Ibid., I, 360.

and so they did not feel that it was wrong for them to preach retaliation and vengeance. They promised that when the Royalists were defeated, they would be shot without any thought of pity.⁸⁸ In this way they hoped to stir up support for the continuation of the revolution among the lower classes, since the ideas of killing Spaniards was an attractive one to many Indians and Mestizos. As has been noted, these clerics were preaching both in Mexico City and outside of it.

By the first of August, 1811, the plans were finalized and everyone was ready for the big day. The conspirators believed that Venegas could easily be kidnapped because when he went to the encampment on the Paseo Nuevo in the afternoon, he took only a small escort with him, one which could easily be overpowered. After that, they would try to kidnap the members of the Audiencia, other principal authorities in the city, and as many distinguished citizens as possible. In addition, they would be able to capture all of the arms in the city and could take control of the Viceregal Palace.⁸⁹

Everything went well until the evening before the plans were to be put into action. At that time, don José María Gallardo, one of the conspirators, went to the house of Anastasio Zerecero and told don Anastasio's father what was

⁸⁸Ibid., I, 360-61.

⁸⁹Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, p. 255.

going to happen. He also expressed a fear that he might be killed in the action the next day and said that he would have to make the proper preparations so he could die as a Christian. Thereafter he sought out Father Camargo to make what might prove to be his last Confession, during the course of which he revealed his reasons for so doing. Immediately afterwards, Father Camargo rushed to the Viceregal Palace to warn the Viceroy about the conspiracy.⁹⁰

Venegas ordered that Gallado be brought to him, and upon seeing him he shouted, "Insurgent! Schemer! Prepare yourself to die within two hours!"⁹¹ Gallardo, trembling from head to foot, begged Venegas to listen to him. Venegas consented and Gallardo began telling him all that he knew about the conspiracy, including the fact that don Manuel Lazarín and doña Mariana, his wife, were the principle leaders of the group. In addition to this, he gave the names of everyone whom he knew to be involved in any way.⁹²

Venegas ordered don Miguel Bataller summoned immediately. Bataller, an Oidor of the Audiencia and President of the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, was ordered to make an immediate investigation and to arrest and imprison don Manuel and doña Mariana. Consequently, the Lazaríns were

⁹⁰Zerecero, Memorias, I, 363.

⁹¹Carrion, Historia de la Ciudad de Puebla de los Angeles, II, 77.

⁹²Ibid., II, 77.

arrested and taken to the viceregal jail where they were placed in separate cells and held incommunicado.⁹³ Bataller decided that he would make an example of doña Mariana, so he and his aides tried to obtain a confession from her, using everything from threats of death to flattery. However, doña Mariana steadfastly refused to tell them anything. A short time later she began to exhibit all of the signs of pregnancy so her inquisitors were forced to treat her more gently.⁹⁴ However, the information given to the viceregal authorities by some of her co-conspirators was more than enough to prove that doña Mariana was indeed guilty of plotting to kidnap the Viceroy. But those who confessed and implicated her soon found that their giving in did not win them any mercy. On the morning of August 29, 1811, both don Antonio Ferréd and don Ignacio Castañas were garroted by order of the Viceroy for their part in the conspiracy.⁹⁵

On August 6, 1811, Venegas announced the conspiracy to the people of Mexico City, saying that the night before he had learned about the plot. The information was then given to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, he said, and within a short time that body was able to discover the truth about the perfidious project. He announced that he himself had been the major target of the group and that the

⁹³Ibid., II, 77-78.

⁹⁴Zerecero, Memorias, I, 363.

⁹⁵Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 118.

whole purpose was to create confusion and discontent within the government, as well as to disturb the tranquility of the capital. He stated that those who were responsible had either already been or soon would be taken into custody, and they would, within a very short time, suffer the punishment which their crimes merited. Hence, peace would soon be restored to the city since all precautions had already been taken.⁹⁶

As Venegas said, the conspirators were gradually caught and punished for their crimes. Corporal Ignacio Cataña was accused of having been a part of one of the branches of the conspiracy. He was allegedly a friend of the ringleaders and had tried to influence his friend, Corporal Mariano Ayala, to become involved in the group. He also managed to obtain three hundred cartridges which he entrusted to María Susana Rusete, the wife of Vicente Sánchez.⁹⁷ However, there is not indication that María Susana was ever accused of having been a part of the conspiracy.

Corporal Josef Mariano Ayala was also investigated and was found to have joined the conspirators. He was accused of having helped carry the three hundred cartridges to the Sánchez house. While he continuously denied that he was

⁹⁶"Aviso al Público de Virrey don Francisco Javier de Venegas," Gazeta del Gobierno de México, August 6, 1811, IV, 693.

⁹⁷Ibid., August 31, 1811, IV, 781.

involved in any way, the authorities said that they had proof that he had told his mistress, Gertrudis Lara, that it was necessary for her to make up a big supply of frijoles so there would be no lack of food during the coming revolution. He also allegedly told María Rita Tabor that he was on his way to get the people of the barrios stirred up.⁹⁸

María Josefa Arellano was implicated in the conspiracy and was sentenced to work for six months in the Royal Hospital in addition to the time which she had already served in jail. She was accused of having tried to deceive the authorities when they attempted to arrest Pedro Campos and José Alquisira by denying that she knew them and refusing to recognize as Ministers of Justice the officials who were conducting the search.⁹⁹

María Ponsiana Lima, the wife of Pedro Campos, was arrested at the same time and on the same charges. However, the investigation showed that her husband had probably not told her about the conspiracy. Moreover, the authorities believed her when she said that she had not asked María Josefa Arellano to help her hide her husband, so they declared that the imprisonment already suffered would be sufficient punishment.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Ibid., August 31, 1811, IV, 782.

⁹⁹Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 44.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 329.

A woman known only as La Chepita was said to be a conspirator and was also accused of being the mistress of the rebel Rafael Mendoza, known as Brazo Fuerte. However, she and Brazo Fuerte were able to escape and seemingly were never punished for their part in the conspiracy.¹⁰¹ María Guadalupe González was less fortunate. While she denied having anything to do with the conspiracy, she admitted that she was involved in an illicit relationship with José Alquira and thus was sentenced to serve one year in the Department of Women at the Presidio of Santiago.¹⁰² Doña Mariana Rodríguez del Toro de Lazarín was the most unfortunate of all of the women who were involved in the conspiracy. Both she and her husband remained in prison until December, 1820, at which time Anastasio Zerecero was able to obtain their release.¹⁰³

It has been possible to identify more than forty women who were active in one way or another during the earliest phase of the revolution, that is, during the Hidalgo phase of the movement. If doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez is included, it can be seen that two of the women were wives of government officials; a few were identified as being the legitimate daughter of someone, thus indicating that

¹⁰¹Ibid., pp. 163-64.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 244.

¹⁰³Zerecero, Memorias, I, 363.

they were probably of the middle classes; the majority were apparently from the lower classes. The activities of these women were as varied as their backgrounds, ranging from leading Indian warriors into battle to saying that Hidalgo was a saint. But as will be seen during the course of this study, these women differed little in either activities or in attitudes from those who became active at a later time. Like the men who became involved in this phase, these women believed in the ideas of independence being talked about by the revolutionary leaders, and many believed deeply in Hidalgo. While the ideas and actions of some of the women centered around those of their husbands, others obviously were acting as free agents and without regard for the ideas of others around them. But as has become evident, they were not especially unusual or strange; they believed in a cause and did what they could to make it a reality.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIAHUATLÁN RIOT, 1811

As has been indicated several times previously, not all of the women who became involved in the independence movement did so at the behest of their husbands or families. Instead, some of the women demonstrated that they had within their personalities a streak of bravery which could not be denied, undertaking the most dangerous tasks, seemingly without fear or trepidation. Although some women were, and for that matter still are in some circles, considered to be the "weaker sex," a brave band of women in the village of Miahuatlán, located in the state of Oaxaca, seemed determined to challenge this belief by undertaking an action which probably would have made at least some of their male counterparts hesitate. Armed only with machetes, knives, sticks, stones, and their femininity, which perhaps was their best defense, they attacked and captured the royalist fortress located in that village on the night of October 2, 1811. The poor besieged soldiers were forced to flee before the fury of the women, since they could not bring themselves to fire upon their most recent objects of affection. The importance of this event is not so much the fact that a

military objective was attacked and captures; rather, it lies in the fact that a group of women were able to rout a force of heavily armed soldiers, thus giving heart to others who also opposed the Spanish forces.

The reasons why the women of the village of Miahuatlán may have been upset enough to attack the royalist garrison are partially evident if one examines the military situation in Oaxaca at the time. The state of Oaxaca was relatively quiet in the earliest phases of the revolution because the insurgents were most active in the regions to the north. But in 1811 the Insurgent, don Antonio Valdés, raised the cry of the revolution in the area around Pinotepa del Rey and began a movement which, said Bustamante, was noted for its ferocity. At the beginning of November, 1811, a part of the Batallion of Castilla, together with the troops of the provincial batallion, was activated to give chase to Valdés.¹ It can be assumed that the troops at the royalist garrison in Miahuatlán, which was located about a hundred miles east of where Valdés was creating problems, were placed on alert so they would be ready if Valdés attempted to move eastward, and it is probable that they had been on alert for some time. Therefore, it is very probable that the woman of the village were upset over the fact that their husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, and lovers had not been home for a long while

¹Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 286.

and that they blamed the royalist officers at the garrison for that situation, so they attacked the garrison. While it is not certain that any of these women were truly imbued with any kind of revolutionary philosophy, they proved to be one more problem for the royalist officials.

The attack began at about 12:30 A.M. when a group of about one hundred women appeared outside the gates of the garrison. According to the eye-witness testimony of don José del Pino, a member of the Company of Patriots of the Department of Exutla, he and his sergeant, Manuel Torres, had been working in the arsenal and went out on the balcony to take a break. From that vantage point they were able to see that some of the women were carrying garrotes, and it seemed obvious that there was going to be trouble, so Sergeant Torres ran to inform the Lieutenant, don Rafael de la Lonza.²

The women began their attack and almost immediately succeeded in breaking through the gate. Del Pino said that he ordered several soldiers who were sleeping nearby in the hallway to take up arms in defense of the fort and of the guards, who needed reinforcement. In the meantime, Sergeant Torres returned and began handing out arms and lances. Finally, the Lieutenant arrived and gave orders for the soldiers to arm themselves and to kill the women if that were necessary

²Declaration of don José del Pino, November 4, 1811, García, DHM, V, 331-32.

for the defense of the fort.³ The soldiers, however, refused to obey his orders and did not move. It is entirely possible that, having been raised in a society which honored women as delicate creatures who needed protection, the soldiers could not bring themselves to kill or injure them. The Lieutenant, stunned by the refusal of his soldiers to follow his orders, decided to appeal to the Governor for help in quelling the riot and asked del Pino to go find him. Since the women were blocking the front entrance and the gate, it was necessary for him to make his exit by jumping over the rear wall.⁴

Once outside, Del Pino went around to the front to try to talk to the women and to convince them to surrender to their husbands. However, the women were not interested in listening to him and, though he said that his intentions were peaceable, he was forced to draw his saber to defend himself against the sticks and other objects being hurled at him. But in the course of brandishing the saber about, the women managed to break it into three pieces. At this point, he said, he decided that a strategic retreat was in order, so he hurriedly left for the Governor's home.⁵

Since no one was in at the Governor's house, he went on to the home of Sergeant Vicente Rojas to tell him

³Ibid., V, 332.

⁴Ibid., V, 332.

⁵Ibid., V, 332.

what was happening and to ask if he had an extra saber to replace the one broken by the women. Then the two men decided that they should return to the fort and try to restore order. On the way they met Padre don Marcela García, who had been looking for them. Together they went back to the fort, but found that the women had not yet completed venting their anger. Consequently, del Pino decided that his life might be in danger and so he left to spend the night in the fields. In concluding his testimony, del Pino said that he really had not realized until the next day that the women had gotten as far as they did in their attack and then added that he did not recognize any of the women taking part in the riot.⁶

Sergeant Torres verified del Pino's story and was able to add some more details. He testified that he had stepped out on the balcony for a few minutes to get some fresh air and to enjoy the moon for a few minutes before retiring for the night when he suddenly saw a large group of women approaching the gatehouse. At first he thought they were probably friends of the guards on duty at the gate, but then he noticed that some of them were armed with long sticks. He immediately went to inform the Lieutenant and then returned to the arsenal to distribute arms for the defense of

⁶Ibid., V, 333.

the garrison.⁷

When he saw that the women had successfully broken in through the gate, he locked the arsenal to protect it from the intruders and then went out to help the others try to contain the women. While making the futile attempt to stop the women, Corporal Esmerijildo told him that the Lieutenant had already fled because the women wanted to kill him. At this point, Sergeant Torres, fearing that his own life might be in danger, began retreating toward the Room of the Tribunal where he thought he would be safe. But while trying to get inside, he was struck on the hip by a stone. After remaining in hiding there for a while, he slipped out by way of the patio and jumped over the wall, intending to carry the news of the disturbance to the representative of the Ministry of Justice. While trying to get away, he saw a large group of women approaching and thought that they were preparing to enter the nearby houses. Just then he found Rojas and the Lieutenant, and the three of them went over another wall and kept going until they found a hiding place about a league's distance from the garrison.⁸

The next morning at dawn when the drum sounded for reveille, he and Rojas returned to the fort expecting to find that the women had broken into the arsenal and the Tri-

⁷ Declaration of Sergeant Manuel de Torres, November 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 333.

⁸ Ibid., V, 333-34.

bunal in order to carry off the weapons and the records. But when they arrived at the front gate, they found all of the lances neatly stacked. Asked if he could identify any of the women who had taken part in the riot, Sergeant Torres said that he recognized only one, a woman named Mónica who was the wife of one of the soldiers of the Company. He said that he was able to remember her quite clearly because she was the one who had thrown stones at him.⁹

Don Gaspar Antonio de Elorza was able to shed more light on the events of the evening since he had been on guard duty. He stated that at about 12:30 A.M. he was talking to some other soldiers on the patio of the Casa Real, which served as a barracks for the Royalists, when heavy blows were heard at the gate. He ran to tell the Lieutenant and to ask what to do. The Lieutenant told him not to open the gate until the people who were knocking identified themselves and stated their reasons for demanding entry. By the time he returned to his post, the women outside were giving such hard blows to the gate that he decided to lift the crossbar to keep it from being broken. This was, to say the very least, a most imprudent act. The women poured into the fort demanding to know the whereabouts of the Captain and the Lieutenant. Although the guards tried hard to restrain them, they were unable to hold back the surging mass of women who

⁹Ibid., V, 334.

were armed with poles, knives, machetes, and garrotes. Then suddenly, he heard the Lieutenant give the order for the swordsmen to kill the women, an order which the men completely ignored.¹⁰

When the priest of the doctrina¹¹ entered the fort in an attempt to persuade the women to withdraw, things became somewhat calmer; but as soon as he left, the rampage resumed with renewed fury as the women succeeded in forcing open the door of the arsenal and removed all of the lances. A little later, Elorza said, he saw the women on the streets with those same lances. Seeing that he could do nothing to calm the situation, he went with three corporals to look after the horses which the women and some of the soldiers had brought out of the stables saddled and ready to go. Then he went in search of the Lieutenant, whom he said he found in the barracks planning what measures to take to repel the attack.¹²

When the noise quieted down, he went back to the barracks and found the lances stacked neatly at the gate. Elorza said that he had heard that Padre don Matheo Bano, Vicar of Riudo, happened to be in the village that evening

¹⁰Declaration of don Gaspar Antonio de Elorza, November 6, 1811, Ibid., V, 335.

¹¹Although the term doctrina, meaning a parish composed of Indians and originally created as a means of Christianizing them, was no longer in general use, it was the term used by Elorza.

¹²García, DHM, V, 335-36.

and that he was responsible for having convinced the women to leave the arms behind. He said that after finding the lances, he went to the arsenal and found that the door had been forced open, as had the window of the Hall of the Tribunal. After daybreak, he said, it was possible to see on the front door of the arsenal the marks made by the machetes wielded by the women. Finally, he was asked if he had been able to identify any of the women, but he claimed that he did not know any of them.¹³

Don José Joaquín de Ortiz, a soldier who had been in bed when the rioting began, testified that the women poured into the fort asking for their husbands and demanding to see the Captain. Ortiz joined the others in unsuccessfully trying to contain the women, but he was struck by a rock or a pole and decided to retreat. As he was trying to escape, he was struck twice more, once in the chest and once on the right arm. He said that it was not until the priest entered and temporarily quieted the women that he was able to make good his escape. For a while he saw women in the streets carrying lances, but when he later returned to the barracks, he saw those same lances abandoned in a doorway to the street. Ortiz helped restack them and then, since the din had ended, he spent the rest of the night in the barracks. At dawn when the drum sounded re-

¹³Ibid., V, 336.

veille, the other soldiers returned. Asked if he was able to recognize any of the women who had taken part in the riot, he said that he knew few people in the town, since he was from a distant village, but that he had seen one person whom he knew, namely, Rosa la Patiña, the wife of Huero Joaquín.¹⁴

The information offered by Corporal José Theodoro Roxas differed little from that given by others. He said that the crossbar and the bolt on the gate were broken by the force of the women as they shoved their way inside the garrison. He stated that forty or fifty women pushed their way in and that there were many others behind them who were creating an uproar and shouting insolences. When the women forced the soldiers to fall back, one of them, a woman named Pasquala who was a native of the Hacienda de Monjas and the mother of one of the soldiers, slapped him hard in the face. He stated that he returned this blow with one of his own, using his sword to give it more emphasis.¹⁵

Hearing the women shout that they were going to kill the Representative of Justice, Roxas decided that he had better find a way through the crowd so he could warn him. On arriving at the home of that official, he said that he met Sergeant Torres, but the women, yelling and crying, were

¹⁴Declaration of don José Joaquín de Ortiz, November 6, 1811, Ibid., V, 336-37.

¹⁵Declaration of José Theodoro Roxas, November 6, 1811, Ibid., V, 338.

not far behind. Frightened by the approach of the angry mob, the Representative of Justice decided to forget his dignity and made good his escape by running across the nearby backyards and hiding himself near the river until dawn. Asked if he recognized any of the women, Roxas said that he knew several of them. When the women began the attack, he was able to recognize Cecilia Bustamante, her sister Pioquinto Bustamante, and Micaela and Ramona Bustamante, daughters of Cecilia. In addition, he had already identified Pasquela as being the mother of one of the soldiers. Finally, he added that Padre don Mateo Baño and his brother, Sergeant Vicente Roxas, had been responsible for persuading the women to return the lances taken from the arsenal and the papers taken from the Tribunal.¹⁶

The last to testify was don Santos de Vera, Clerk of the Tribunal, who had been talking to some soldiers and was preparing to go home when the disturbance began. He tried to close the door of the Room of the Tribunal to prevent the intruders from reaching the papers and records contained therein and had received a stone on the chest and a cut on the leg for his trouble. Since he was afraid that the women were going to kill him, he said, he fled to his home and remained there until the next day. When he came to see the damage the next day, he found that the window of the

¹⁶Ibid., V, 338-39.

Tribunal had been forced open and that some of the papers were missing. These were later returned due to the efforts of the priest, Padre don Mateo Baño. De Vera stated that in the melee he had been able to recognize Monica de la San Ildefonso, Pioquinta Bustamante, and Ramona Jarquín, mother of the soldier, Carlos Silva.¹⁷

Just when it seemed that the investigation was becoming fruitful in that the names of eight of the women were known, Licenciado Manuel M. Miriaga, who was conducting the hearings, wrote to the Commander of the Brigade to announce that he was suspending the proceedings. In a note dated November 7, 1811, he said that although he had made every effort to comply with the executive order calling for an investigation, he did not have time to continue the case at the present time and that he was therefore suspending the hearings indefinitely.¹⁸

The decision to suspend the investigation would seem surprising considering what the women had done. About a hundred of them had attacked a garrison occupied by the soldiers of the Spanish Crown and drove them off, wounding some in the fray and even breaking one soldier's saber in the process. They broke into the arsenal and took what wea-

¹⁷Declaration of don Santón de Vera, November 6, 1811, Ibid., V, 339-40.

¹⁸Lic. Manuel M. Miriaga to the Commandant of the Brigade, November 7, 1811, Ibid., V, 340-41.

pons they could find and effected an illegal entry into the Tribunal and made off with some of the papers and records. It is not likely that the return of the stolen weapons and papers would be enough to convince the officials to drop the matter. If it had been, they would never have started taking statements from the soldiers. Moreover, the original order to Licenciado Miriaga said that he was to discover the principal guilty parties, whether they were male or female, arrest them, and take them into Oaxaca to be punished.¹⁹

There are several probable explanations for this decision. First, it is possible that insurgent activities in the region increased to such a degree that the authorities came to the conclusion that their time could best be spent trying to catch Valdéz and his rebel band. As was noted earlier, Valdéz first brought the revolution to Oaxaca in 1811. As a result, around the first of November, the troops of the provincial batallion were activated, so the garrison at Miahuatlán must have had more duties to perform and perhaps more patrols to go on than they had previously. Hence, the province of Oaxaca, which had been relatively quiet and revolution-free until mid-1811, suddenly was faced with increased military activities, especially since the Royalists wanted to capture Valdéz before he could join forces

¹⁹Opening statement of don Manuel M. Miriaga in the investigation of the Miahuatlán riot, November 2, 1811, Ibid., V, 330-31.

with Morelos.²⁰

Given this and the fact that don Gaspar Antonio de Elorza testified that the Casa Real was serving as a barracks for the royalist forces, one can assume that the detachment of troops in Miahuatlán was greater than those who normally would be stationed there. The women of the village would be responsible for providing food not only for their own men who were in the army but for the Regulars among the increased force. Some of the soldiers identified themselves as being Spaniards, and other said that they came from distant villages, so they did not know the women who took part in the riot. It is therefore probable that the women were forced to provide extra services to take care of the additional men. While it is possible that the women had no great revolutionary sentiments, they were acutely aware of the presence of the royalist troops. This physical presence, together with the fact that they were forced to do more work and provide more food, may have inspired them to revolt.

It is also possible that the royalist officials decided that they should forget about the riot, or that they should try to ignore it, passing it off as the work of a few women who were upset that their husbands were away from home so much, probably as a result of the increased revolutionary activity in the area.

²⁰Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 286.

Finally, it is possible that the investigation was beginning to reveal too much information, since within a relatively short time the names of eight of the women who were involved in the disorder were discovered. Perhaps the investigators were afraid that the wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of too many soldiers would be involved if they continued their work. Moreover, it could have caused a serious morale problem at a time when the soldiers were being asked to heighten their efforts against the Insurgents. It is also possible that the investigation could have reached the point where it found that the wives of higher ranking officers were involved, thus putting the entire Company in an unfavorable position with the colonial officials. It would seem logical that since the women entered the garrison demanding to see their husbands, they had to be from the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the names of many of the women should have been known to many of the soldiers who witnessed the disturbance.

Perhaps the most lasting contribution made by this daring group of women and "delicate creatures" was to instill in the colonial officials a healthy respect, if not an actual fear, of what women were capable of doing, given the proper circumstances. It is interesting to note that not long after this, the royalist officials began to take more stringent measures to keep women in line, as will be discussed at length in relation to the actions of Colonel don Agustín

de Iturbide. The Royalists learned that the women of New Spain were capable of and willing to take active roles in the revolutionary process if they had to do so.

CHAPTER VII

DOÑA LEONA VICARIO AND "LOS GUADALUPES"

Of the many women who took part in the independence movement from 1810 to 1821, only two are remembered as Mexican national heroines. Of these, María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez has already been considered. That leaves doña María Leona Vicario, a most unusual woman who understood what the leaders of the revolution were trying to accomplish and was willing to sacrifice her entire personal fortune to try to help achieve that goal. As will be seen, doña Leona was involved in many things which would aid the revolutionary effort. She was at various times a spy, a procurer of information, a correspondent of the Insurgents, an Insurgent source of material goods and money, a recruiter of manpower, and eventually, a fugitive from royalist justice against whom the additional charge of jail breaking could have been lodged.

Doña Leona's father, don Gaspar Martín Vicario, was a Spaniard who came to New Spain to seek adventure. Within a few years after arriving, he became engaged in commerce and was able to amass a fortune said to be in excess of 170,000 pesos. After assuring himself of financial security,

don Gaspar turned to public service and was eventually given various honors and positions by the colonial officials, including that of familiar, or agent, of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, honorary alderman of Mexico City, member of the Council of the Tribunal of Merchants, and Assistant Judge of Appeals of the Tribunal of Mining.¹

Doña Camila Fernández de San Salvador y Monteil, Leona's mother, was a Creole born in Toluca of a respectable and influential family. Doña Camila's brother, don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, eventually was appointed to some very influential positions in both the Royal Audiencia and in the Royal and Pontifical University in Mexico City. Possibly as the result of an introduction arranged through the good offices of don Agustín Pomposo, don Gaspar and doña Camila were married in 1778.²

Doña Leona was born eleven years later on April 10, 1789. At her baptism five days later the infant was given the name María de la Soledad Leona Camila, while her uncle, don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, served as godfather.³ Since Leona proved to be the only child of this marriage, don Gaspar and doña Camila decided that their daughter should have a proper Christian education. However,

¹García, Leona Vicario, p. 7.

²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

³Ibid., p. 8.

considering the quality of education available for girls in Mexico City at the time, as has been discussed, it is not surprising to find that they did not decide to send her to one of the Colegios. They believed that the only efficient and effective way to develop virtues, to correct vices, and to compensate for any individual deficiencies was to have a good education. Thus, don Gaspar and doña Camila dedicated themselves to educating their only daughter.

Although the exact methods used for her education are not known, it is probable that the catechism of Padre Gerónimo Ripalda was used to teach her Christian doctrine since that was the most popular at the time and was available in several editions, as was noted previously. In addition, they tried to teach her that she had a responsibility to help alleviate the misfortunes of the oppressed, the sick, and the poor. Finally, they tried to be sure that Leona would never suffer the evils which are the result of ignorance and error but rather would be filled with a natural love for life.⁴

Physically, Leona was a striking woman, handsome but not beautiful. She was of medium height, slightly robust, and had a full face with a high, broad brow, thin eyebrows, large luminous eyes, a fine straight nose, and a small mouth which was usually turned up at the corners in a

⁴Ibid., pp. 11-12.

smile.⁵ From the beginning, then, Leona had certain assets which were later to serve her well--she was good-looking, well educated, and the daughter of a financially secure family having a respectable social standing within the colony.

Don Gaspar died while Leona was still a child, and in 1807 she was completely orphaned when her mother died. As was arranged in doña Camila's will, Leona went to live with her uncle and godfather, don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador. However, as she got older, Leona began to want more freedom than what she had living with her uncle, so don Agustín Pomposo agreed to rent a house in Calle de Don Juan Manuel in Mexico City where they could live together but yet have their own privacy, probably a kind of duplex arrangement.⁶

Before her mother's death, in 1807, Leona met and fell in love with don Octavio Obregón, the son of one of the wealthiest families in Guanajuato. Both doña Camila and don Agustín Pomposo consented to their eventual marriage. But it would seem that doña Camila was not satisfied with the fact that don Octavio was wealthy. Believing that wealth imposed certain responsibilities, she imposed as a condition for marriage that he arrange to have himself appointed to some position of importance in the colonial government. Thus

⁵Ibid., p. 18. Perhaps one might say that this is an appropriate description of a "founding mother."

⁶Ibid., p. 13.

don Octavio went to Spain to try to get an appointment, and since he was there when Napoleon usurped the Spanish throne for his brother, Joseph, the Province of Guanajuato decided to elect him as their delegate to the Cortés of 1810. Don Octavio served capably in that body and eventually became one of the signers of the Spanish Constitution of 1812.⁷ Although he returned to Mexico some years later, he and Leona were never married because she had met someone else during his long absence.

In 1808, don Andrés Quintana Roo arrived in Mexico City to study at the Royal and Pontifical University. On January 11, 1809, he was granted the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and a few days later he was granted the degree of Bachelor of Canon Law by the Rector of the University, Dr. don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador. In those days, students who wanted to become lawyers were required to work for two years in the law offices of a practicing attorney. Quintana Roo applied to and was accepted by one of the most renowned practitioners of jurisprudence in all of New Spain, don Agustín Pomposo.⁸

It was only natural that don Andrés and Leona would meet and become well acquainted since he was working for her uncle. Eventually they fell in love and decided that they

⁷Ibid., pp. 18-24, passim.

⁸Ibid., pp. 25-26.

wanted to be married, but don Agustín Pomposo refused to give his consent, citing the fact that he had already promised Leona to don Octavio, and even more important, he suspected that don Andrés was a partisan of the Insurgents.⁹

Don Agustín Pomposo was himself such a staunch supporter of the Crown that never did he even utter the name of the Spanish monarch without making a slight bow. Don Andrés had not yet taken part in any revolutionary activity although his belief in the righteousness of the insurgent cause was increasing steadily. The continuing execution of alleged Insurgents by the viceregal government after the death of Hidalgo revolted him. After having been refused permission to marry Leona, he decided to join the insurgent forces of Father José María Morelos y Pavón, Hidalgo's successor.¹⁰ He did, however, manage to exact a measure of revenge for not being allowed to marry Leona in that when he left to join the Insurgents in 1812, he took don Agustín Pomposo's son, Manuel Fernández de San Salvador, with him to the camp of the Insurgent leader don Ignacio López Rayón in Tlalpajahua.¹¹

⁹Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 28. García has speculated that don Agustín Pomposo's refusal to agree to the proposed marriage was the last straw in don Andrés' decision to join the Insurgents.

¹¹Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, pp. 476-77.

Upon first joining the Insurgents, don Andrés became involved in the publication of the revolutionary newspaper, the Ilustrador Americano. Using his rather extensive literary talents, he helped to improve the quality of the newspaper and was instrumental in increasing its circulation. Soon it was widely read, circulating from hand to hand in many cities and villages and provoking discussion on the merits of the revolutionary cause. In addition, it was credited with having stimulated a continuous flow of youths to the insurgent camp as more and more people became convinced that it was time to end the evils which resulted from Spanish domination.¹² Sometime later, don Andrés was given his own paper to edit, the Semanario Patriótico Americano. He continued in much the same vein as before, publishing the works of writers who were inspired by an intense and radical patriotism and determination to see their fatherland freed from all outside control.¹³ These insurgent newspapers will be discussed in greater detail both later in this chapter and in relation to the Morelos phase of the independence movement.

It is not clear whether Leona came to be a partisan of the Insurgents as a result of her contact with don Andrés or whether she did so originally out of her own convictions.

¹²Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, p. 262.

¹³García, Leona Vicario, p. 29.

The important factor is that she developed a deep sense of patriotism and was said to have declared that her only objective was to see her country "free from its ancient yoke." Her house became a gathering place for other young revolutionaries, and her feelings were alleged to be so strong that at times she had an irresistible urge to rush out onto her balcony and shout to the people below, "Vivan mis hermanos los Insurgentes!" Her patriotic ardor was so great that at times it was necessary for some of her friends to restrain her and to remind her that caution was both necessary and desirable. She reportedly said daily prayers for the success of the revolution, and continuously regretted the fact that she had not been born a male so that she, too, could join the fray.¹⁴

Leona soon discovered that there were ways in which she could help the Insurgents even more than if she had been born a man and had served in the front lines of the battles. She became one of the chief correspondents of the Insurgents chiefs, writing them fiery letters in which she urged them to continue their revolutionary efforts. Thus she served as one of the major links between the Insurgents on the field of battle and the sympathizers who were in Mexico City. Although she wrote to don Andrés on a regular basis, she also wrote to don Ignacio López Rayón. Her communica-

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 31-32.

tions with the Junta at Zitacuaro were so regular and informative that when that body ordered that money be coined which would have on its face the national seal of independent Mexico, the Junta gave tangible proof of its esteem for her by giving her the first coins minted. She was, it was said, the most patriotic woman in America.¹⁵

When Rayón was eventually captured by the Royalists in 1818, he admitted that he had carried on a correspondence with Leona Vicario, whom he identified as being the woman who managed to obtain some arms from the officials of the arsenal and who then sent them to Tlalpujahuá.¹⁶ Bustamante claimed that when Rayón had been harassed for a while by the troops of Brigadier General don Joaquín del Castillo y Bustamante, Rayón insisted that it would be necessary to fortify the Insurgent positions to prevent further incursions by the Royalists. Leona secretly managed to get arms from the arsenal in Mexico City and sent them to the rebels so they would be able to hold their positions. He claimed that she paid for the weapons with money from her inheritance but without the knowledge of her guardian, don Agustín Pomposo.¹⁷

Since her parents had left her a rather sizeable fortune, Leona was able to use her money to obtain informa-

¹⁵Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 127.

¹⁶Declaration of Lic. don Ignacio Rayón, February 5, 1818, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM., IV, 985.

¹⁷Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 481-82.

tion within Mexico City which she then sent on to the rebels for their use. In short, one might say that Leona established herself as a kind of clearing house for information and communication for the Insurgents, using a network of couriers to carry messages between the Insurgents and the capital. Although it was customary for those partisans receiving messages from the Insurgents to burn or otherwise destroy the communications after carefully reading them, Leona saved those which she received. However, in an effort to prevent the names of the writers and the persons mentioned therein from being discovered if the letters fell into the wrong hands, she carefully encoded all sensitive papers and used pseudonyms, choosing the names from the books which she had read. Thus, the Insurgents are referred to as Telemachus, Robinson, Lavoisier, Mayo, and others.¹⁸ In addition to these activities, she actively recruited young people to go and fight for the insurgent cause, providing them with arms and munitions at her own expense.¹⁹ Fearlessly she carried on her revolutionary activities, daily running the risk of being denounced to the viceregal authorities but taking little special care to conceal her work.

While the point at which she initiated her revolutionary activities is not precisely known, the time at which

¹⁸García, Leona Vicario, p. 33. See also the reproduction of codes used by Leona in García, DHM, V, 32.

¹⁹García, Leona Vicario, pp. 32-33.

those actions came to the attention of the authorities is clear. Leona had been suspected of being a partisan of the Insurgents for some time,²⁰ but the Royalists had been unable to find any concrete proof against her until late in February of 1813 when they apprehended an Indian carrying a packet of letter from her and other sympathizers. At that time, Mariano Salazar, a muleteer, was captured while transporting a load of arms and a packet of papers to Tlalpujahuá for the Insurgents.²¹ Salazar was carefully questioned by the Royalists and, in trying to extricate himself, he implicated Leona. He swore that he was on his way to Cuernavaca with a load of aguardiente when a band of rebels robbed him and took his mules. He said that when he told his friend, José María Rivera, about his misfortunes, Rivera offered to take him to Tlalpujahuá to see Dr. Ramón Rayón about getting his mules back. He said that he did go see Rayón who gave him some money. Then Miguel Gallardo gave him a thick packet of papers and asked him to deliver them to doña Leona Vicario in Calle de Don Juan Manuel in Mexico City. When he agreed to deliver them, don Gallardo also gave him a sack of clothing and two clocks to be delivered to the same place. He said that when he saw doña Leona, she gave him a packet

²⁰Alamán, Historia de México, III, 386.

²¹Captain Anastasio Bustamante to Viceroy don Francisco Xavier de Venegas, February 27, 1813, García, DHM, V, 1.

of letters to be delivered to the Insurgents in Tlalpujahuá. These, he said, were the ones which he had in his possession when he was arrested. He said that he did not know what was in them, nor did he know to whom they were addressed. He claimed that he had only agreed to deliver them since doing so would enable him to recover his mules.²²

The next day the authorities questioned Salazar again and asked him how many trips he had made carrying letters for the Insurgents. He swore that he had only made two trips, the one when he was arrested and a previous one when he delivered the letters into the hands of Señorita Vicario.²³ Cristino González was captured at the same time since he was accompanying Salazar to Tlalpujahuá. He was accused of having carried messages from doña Leona Vicario and together with Salazar and José María Rivera, who had first taken Salazar to the rebels, he was tried by the Royalists.²⁴

The Royalists now had some concrete proof that Leona was involved in illegal activities and was carrying on a correspondence with the Insurgents. But before they had time to act, they heard a rumor that she and her servants had dis-

²²Declaration of Mariano Salazar, February 28, 1813, Ibid., V, 2-3.

²³Second declaration of Mariano Salazar, February 28, 1813, Ibid., V, 4.

²⁴Carlos María de Bustamante, Martirologio de Algunos de los Primeros Insurgentes por la Libertad e Independencia de la Americana Mexicana (México: Impreso por J.H. Lara, 1841), pp. 27-28.

appeared and that they had probably left the city. On the evening of March 1, 1813, some of the members of the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden went to her house to check on the rumor and found that it was true that she had fled. Thus, the Ministry of Justice ordered an investigation begun that very night.²⁵

The next day, March 2, Leona's uncle, don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, sent a letter to the President of the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, don Miguel Battaller, saying that his niece and her servants had gone to a charity fair in San Cosme on Sunday, February 28. The doors to her rooms had been closed, so he had not noticed that she was absent until the next day. Now, he said, he was worried because she had been out all night without his permission. While at first he had believed that she would return home on Monday full of shame at having behaved in such a manner, she did not appear. As a result, he was afraid that, since there were such bad feelings between himself and don Andrés Quintana Roo because of his refusal to agree to the proposed marriage between his niece and don Andrés, his "cruel enemy" had invented an "infernal intrigue" against him. After all, Quintana Roo had inveigled his son, don Manuel, to go with him to join the insurgents

²⁵Certificación de haberse suspendido la diligencia acordada con doña Leona Vicario, March 1, 1813, García, DHM, V, 6-7.

at Tlalpujahuá. Thus while some people might believe that Leona had fled the city to avoid questioning, he himself believed that it was possible that she was being held prisoner somewhere against her will by the Insurgents and don Andrés.²⁶

Shortly thereafter, don Agustín Pomposo must have had some second thoughts about what he said in his letter to Señor Bataller, fearing that he might have overstepped the bounds of propriety. He therefore wrote a second letter in which he blamed the earlier one on the anguish which he was suffering as a result of the absence of his son, Manuel. This time he demonstrated a good deal of caution, asking that consideration be given to the memory of Leona's deceased parents because he was certain that his niece's conduct and behavior could be corrected. He asked that the Junta de Seguridad be prudent in its investigation, considering all possible reasons for Leona's absence from the city.²⁷

On March 8, Julián Roldán, Receptor de Penas of the Real Sala del Crimen, informed the Junta de Seguridad that in an earlier proceeding, the former rebel, don Agustín Benacur, had testified that once he had carried a letter to

²⁶Don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador to don Miguel Bataller, President of the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, March 2, 1813, Ibid., V, 7-8.

²⁷Don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador to don Miguel Bataller, President of the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, n.d., Ibid., V, 8.

doña Leona Vicario from don Andrés Quintana Roo. He testified that doña Leona told him that it dealt with matters of love, but he understood from her later conversation that what it contained was bad because she said that she saved all of them carefully.²⁸ Thus at this point the Royalists had two statements linking Leona to the revolutionaries, but they could do nothing while the search for her continued.

Then on March 13, 1813, don Fernando Fernández de San Salvador, the brother of don Agustín Pomposo, wrote a letter to don Bataller and the Junta de Seguridad telling them that his niece, doña Leona, could now be found in the Colegio de Belen.²⁹

The process, or collection of evidence and testimony, against Leona began on March 15, 1813, when doña Francisca Fernández, her cousin and companion, was summoned to give her statement. Doña Francisca first recounted the events of Sunday, February 28, saying that she and her sister, doña Mariana Fernández, had gone to Mass with Leona. Thereafter they had gone to the Alameda, where she saw and spoke to several of her friends and acquaintances. Then when they were getting ready to leave, they met doña Francisca's mother who went with them in a carriage to San Juanico. However, just before they left, a strange woman came up to

²⁸Don Julián Roldan to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, March 8, 1813, Ibid., V, 9.

²⁹Don Fernando Fernández de San Salvador to don Miguel Bataller, President of the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, March 13, 1813, Ibid., V, 10.

Leona and gave her a letter which, judging from her change of color, appeared to disturb her greatly. She had asked Leona about the letter, but Leona refused to tell her what was in it or who had written it. She testified that after arriving in San Juanico, they remained for ten days, staying in the hovels of the Indians. When they prepared to leave, she said, they warned the Indians to tell neither the Insurgents nor the Gachupines they had been there. She remembered that Leona confessed to her mother while they were in the carriage that Sunday that she had lied about going to look for a house in which to stay while attending the charity fair, admitting that in reality she was a fugitive because the authorities wanted to arrest her.³⁰

At this point the officials conducting the investigation asked doña Francisca if Leona had told her why she thought anyone would want to arrest her, to which she replied that Leona said that she had heard that a courier of the Insurgents had been captured and that he had in his possession some letters which were attributed to her. Leona had said that the accusation was completely false, and doña Francisca maintained that her cousin had only run away because she was afraid that she would be put in jail. Doña Francisca also claimed that Leona had written to don Agustín Pomposo on Monday and again on Wednesday because she did not want

³⁰ Declaration of doña Francisca Fernández, March 15, 1813, Ibid., V, 11-12.

him to worry about her. Thus she had told him where she was and had sent letters to him by an Indian courier.³¹

Don Agustín Pomposo, however, claimed that he never received those communications from his niece. But that would not seem to square with the testimony given by doña Francisca since she claimed that on the first Friday of Lent they had met three men in a nearby village and that one of them gave Leona two letters, one from don Agustín Pomposo and the other from Padre Sartario.³² The message in both letters was similar in that they begged her to return home and not to go off to join the Insurgents. Thus Leona decided that she would go home on the following Monday. The investigators then showed doña Francisca some letters and asked if she could recognize the handwriting, but she said that they could not have been written by Leona since she never used the kind of paper on which they were written. Asked if Leona was fond of reading, she said yes and proceeded to name several books which she knew her cousin had read. Finally, they showed her another set of letters and asked if she could identify the handwriting in any of them. Doña Francisca looked them over and said that she could only identify the writing of her uncle, don Agustín Pomposo. At this point the investigators seemed to feel that they had reached

³¹Ibid., V, 12.

³²Ibid., V, 13.

the point of diminishing returns, so doña Francisca was allowed to leave.³³

The next witness to be summoned was doña Mariana Fernández, sister of doña Francisca and companion of Leona. She corroborated most of the story told by her sister, saying that they had remained in San Juanico for eight days when a letter arrived for Leona telling her to go to the house of don Joaquín Gavilán in San Juanico. She said that the only reason that Leona had decided to run away was that she was afraid that the authorities would put her in jail while they conducted their investigation. When asked if she knew any acquaintances of Leona's named Nemoso, Lavoisier, or Mayo, she replied that she had never met or heard of them. She said that although she did live with Leona, she did not know who her friends were and was unable to remember who her visitors might have been.³⁴

The next to testify was Rita Reyna, Leona's cook, who said that at about 1:00 P.M. on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the housekeeper came into the kitchen to tell her that doña Leona and her companions were going to a charity fair and that she should prepare food for them. After doing so, she and the housekeeper got into the carriage which was waiting for them at the front door, and they drove to San

³³Ibid., V, 13-14.

³⁴Declaration of doña Mariana Fernández, March 15, 1813, Ibid., V, 14-17.

Juanico, where they met doña Leona. She said that she had asked where the fair was being held, but doña Leona told her that she did not care about such things and that the only reason she had gone there was because the authorities wanted to arrest her. Señorita Reyna said that she really knew very little about doña Leona, but added that she believed that probably doña Francisca and doña Mariana could give the investigators the information they wanted.³⁵

Doña Gertrudis Angula, mother of the Fernández sisters, testified that she had met doña Leona and her daughter on Sunday, February 28, and that she had been told that they were going to a charity fair. But when she went with them, Leona admitted to her that the real reason she was leaving the city was that the authorities were going to try to arrest her. After driving for a distance outside of the city, they stopped and dismissed the carriage and driver, and then continued walking to another village whose name she did not know, where they remained for the next week. Later, they returned to San Juanico in company with don Juan, Leona's uncle. Doña Gertrudis said that she really knew very little about the activities of Leona since she only saw her when she visited her daughters who lived with Leona.³⁶

³⁵ Declaration of Rita Reyno, March 16, 1813, Ibid., V, 18-19,

³⁶ Declaration of doña Gertrudis Angula, n.d., Ibid., V, 19-20.

While the examination of the witnesses continued, a search of Leona's rooms was ordered and carried out by don Julián Roldán on March 18. After being shown the search warrant, don Agustín Pomposo agreed to cooperate fully with the authorities and showed the investigators to her rooms where they carefully examined every chest, drawer, and box. Several notebooks and papers were found and confiscated, but the bundle of clothing and the clocks which Salazar claimed to have delivered to her could not be found.³⁷

Meanwhile, the questioning of witnesses continued as María de Soto Mayor, Leona's housekeeper, was summoned to give her statement. She reported that a strange woman came to the house on Sunday, February 28, at about 1:00 P.M. to tell her that doña Leona had gone to San Juanico and that she was waiting for her near San Joaquín. The woman said that doña Leona would have been arrested if she had not left immediately. Señora Soto Mayor said that she then went to the kitchen to tell the cook to prepare some food and then the two of them drove out to meet doña Leona. From that point forward, her account was the same as that of the cook. Asked if she had any knowledge of doña Leona receiving any letters from outside of the city, she said that she had only seen letters from Spain and that most of them were from don Octa-

³⁷Certification of search, signed by don Julián Roldán, March 16, 1813, Ibid., V, 20-21.

vio Obregón.³⁸

Since the investigators were extremely interested in questioning Leona, they decided that they would go to the Colegio de San Miguel at Belen where she had gone upon returning to the city. Thus on March 17, Leona made her first statement to the investigators about her alleged revolutionary activities. Her recollection of the events of Sunday, February 23, agreed entirely with the statements made by those questioned previously. She said that when she and the Fernández sisters were walking along Calle de San Francisco, a strange woman came up to her and told her that she was about to be arrested. Asked who the woman was, she said that she did not know her and she became very vague about what the woman looked like. She admitted that she had written two or three letters to her cousin, Manuelito, who did not live in the city. However, she said that he had never spoken against the government and so she did not think that he was a rebel. Asked if she had written any other letters which were then sent out of the city, she said that she had written to her cousin but denied ever having written to or heard from don Andrés Quintana Roo.³⁹

Leona was then shown several folios of letters and

³⁸Declaration of María de Soto Mayor, March 16, 1813, Ibid., V, 21.

³⁹Declaration of doña Leona Vicario, March 17, 1813, Ibid., V, 23-24.

was asked if she recognized any of them or if she had written any of them, but she claimed to know nothing about them. In addition, she denied having had anything to do with the decision of her cousin to join the insurgents. She was asked about the pseudonyms used in some of the letters found in her room and was able to identify Robinson as being her cousin, Manuelito Fernández, and Mayo as being Andrés Quintana Roo, but she said that she had no idea about who the others might be. She continually denied having received letters from or having sent letters to the insurgents, although she admitted knowing who don Ramón and don José María were, correctly identifying them as the Rayón brothers who had been mentioned in some of her cousin's letters.⁴⁰

Asked about the bundle of clothing and the clocks which Salazar claimed to have delivered to her, she said that the clothing was delivered to her guardian and that she had given the clocks to someone to be repaired, but that she was really unable to say who that person was. Doña Leona was then asked about the identities of and her relations with several people, including doña Barbara Guadalupe and doña Jacoba, but she denied knowing who they were. Finally, she said that if she had wanted to join the insurgents, she could have done so because there were many of them in the village in which she stayed when she left the

⁴⁰Ibid., V, 24-26.

capital. But instead of going off with the insurgents when she had a chance to do so, she remained in contact with her uncle, who offered to help her obtain the grace of a pardon, an action which she believed to be completely unnecessary.⁴¹

The authorities decided that doña Leona should be kept in custody while the investigation continued, so they made arrangements for her to remain as a formal prisoner at the Colegio in Belen, where she was to be held in total seclusion and was not to be allowed to communicate with anyone.⁴² The investigation then continued as the authorities tried to draw together what information they already had while at the same time they made an effort to discover more evidence so they could make a strong case against her.

On March 24, don Julián Roldán noted in a memo that he had received information about a letter which came from Tlalnepantla and which contained information about doña Leona Vicario.⁴³ In another memo he suggested that he would like to be able to establish who Leona's connections were outside of the city.⁴⁴ It was impossible to determine any-

⁴¹Ibid., V, 27-28.

⁴²Julián Roldán to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, March 20, 1813, Ibid., V, 29.

⁴³Memo, signed by don Julián Roldán, March 24, 1813, Ibid., V, 29.

⁴⁴Memo, signed by don Julián Roldán, March 24, 1813, Ibid., V, 29.

thing of that nature from the letter since all of the names were in code, except for that of Leona Vicario and some colonial officials, including Bataller and Venegas. In the letter itself, reference was made to such people as Don Numero Dos and to Numero Tres. The writer revealed that he knew why Leona had run away at first, and even where she had gone. He stated that at the present time Leona's uncle, don Agustín Pomposo, was trying to get her a pardon with the help of Viceroy Venegas and Señor Bataller.⁴⁵ More will be said of the person responsible for writing this letter later in this chapter.

The rebels, meanwhile, developed a deep respect for the strength and courage shown by Leona while in custody as is evident from one of their letters, dated April 9, 1813. In this it was reported that doña Leona was being held under such close supervision and observation at the Colegio at Belen that four women were assigned to watch and report on her every movement and that they were even aware of her every blink. In spite of the fact that she was a woman, doña Leona had such fortitude that she had not yet condemned anyone, even though she suffered bad treatment and was continually threatened.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Extract from copy of letter, author unknown, prepared by don Julián Roldán, March, 1813, Ibid., V, 32-33.

⁴⁶Letter from the Guadalupe to don José María Morelos, April 9, 1813, cited in Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupe" y la Independencia, xxix-xxx.

The questioning of various witnesses continued, and doña Francisca Fernández was one of those recalled for further questioning by Julián Roldan, Receptor de Penas of the Real Sala del Crimen de México, who seemed to take charge of the case. On March 30, Viceroy Calleja asked that the Junta de Seguridad check on the relationship between doña Leona Vicario and Lic. don Carlos María Bustamante,⁴⁷ so Roldan broached the matter with doña Francisca. He urged her to try to remember whatever she could about the money that Leona allegedly gave Bustamante, but Francisca said that she knew nothing about it. She claimed that don Carlos had visited don Agustín Pomposo but that she had never seen him in doña Leona's rooms.⁴⁸ Thus, while it would seem that the authorities suspected that Leona was involved with providing Bustamante money, probably for the insurgents, they were unable to prove it at this time.

Meanwhile, Roldan began to wonder if doña Leona was being held in a secure enough place. He was getting enough evidence to prove that she was indeed an Insurgent and he suspected that she had been helping the revolutionary cause for quite some time. Thus, he wanted to make certain that

⁴⁷Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, March 30, 1813, García, DHM, V, 34.

⁴⁸Second declaration of doña Francisca Fernández, March 30, 1813, Ibid, V, 35.

she would have no chance to escape from her justly deserved punishment. He therefore suggested to his superiors that it might be wise to move her to a more secure place since there were too many doors in the Colegio and it was too vulnerable to attack by the Insurgents since it was located in a field.⁴⁹ The following day, he suggested that Leona be moved, with her uncle's consent, to the viceregal jail.⁵⁰ However, don Fernando Fernández de San Salvador was extremely unhappy about the prospect of his niece being placed in a common jail and so he protested, saying that since Leona had done nothing wrong since being placed in the Colegio, it would be scandalous and prejudicial to remove her from that place.⁵¹

Since the Junta was unable to convince Leona's uncle that she should be held in the jail of the viceregal court, it would be necessary for them to go to Belen to continue their questioning. During their second session with Leona on April 22, they told her that she was being charged with the grave crime of maintaining correspondence with the Insurgents, to which she replied that the only letters which she had ever received or sent had dealt with indifferent

⁴⁹ Don Julián Roldán to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, April 2, 1813, Ibid., V, 36.

⁵⁰ Don Julián Roldán to Sr, don Fernando Fernández de San Salvador, April 3, 1813, Ibid., V, 36.

⁵¹ Don Fernando Fernández de San Salvador to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, April 7, 1813, Ibid., V, 39.

matters. Thus, she said, she had not committed any crime.⁵²

They then accused Leona of having committed terrible and traitorous crimes against the King, the country, and her own holy religion by asking Telemacho for a pair of pistols, but she said that in her opinion, a pair of pistols could not be prejudicial, nor could they benefit the rebels. Moreover, she denied knowing who Telemacho might be. She continued to deny that she had done anything wrong which could in any way be considered dangerous or harmful to the State and claimed that her letters could not possibly be the cause of anyone deciding to join the insurgent cause.⁵³

Seemingly the investigators were mostly interested in the letters which she allegedly had written or received since their next accusation was that some of her letters were so perverse and seductive that they were responsible for inciting some persons to rebel against the legitimate government. Supposedly she had inflamed some rebels by attributing false and detestable procedures to the viceregal government, even though the conduct of the government was "notoriously just." During this examination one of the more interesting accusations was that Leona had written a letter in which she tried to discredit the heroic deeds of Hernán Cortés in his conquest of the kingdom and the ways in which

⁵²Second declaration of doña Leona Vicario, April 22, 1813, Ibid., V, 41-42.

⁵³Ibid., V, 43-44.

the Spaniards tried from that day forward to establish and propagate the holy religion and to remove all traces of idolatry.⁵⁴ However, it should be noted that during the revolution the insurgent propagandists often attempted to demean the actions of the Spaniards in carrying out the conquest of New Spain and their subsequent colonization efforts, so it is entirely possible that Leona did write such a letter. However, she claimed that such a charge only served to demonstrate the bad nature of the entire cause against her.⁵⁵

Finally, asked if the chiefs of the revolution had arranged for her flight from the capital at the end of February, she again said that she never thought of going over to the Insurgents. She once again reminded her questioners that she could have done so when she was in San Juanico because there were rebels in the area, but she had chosen to return to the capital rather than join the Insurgents.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, it appeared that the Insurgents had heard about the proposal to move Leona to a more secure jail. Although it is not clear whether they were worried that the authorities might eventually be able to exert enough pressure on Leona to force her to talk or whether they were simply

⁵⁴Ibid., V, 44-46.

⁵⁵Ibid., V, 46.

⁵⁶Ibid., V, 46-47.

concerned about her personal welfare and believed that she had already suffered enough, it is quite evident that they were determined that the time had come to rescue her from the Royalists. On April 23, 1813, a message arrived in Mexico City from the Colegio de San Miguel at Belen stating that doña Leona had escaped. The Provost of the Colegio, Mariana Mendoza, reported that at about 6:45 A.M., three or four men appeared at the Colegio and, pointing guns at the breast of the sister portress, forced their way inside. Without waiting to listen to reason, the men began going from room to room in search of Leona Vicario. The Señorita who was guarding her tried to resist them but was physically overwhelmed and Leona was able to make good her escape.⁵⁷ Although the Royalists did not know it at the time, the leader of Leona's rescuers was don Francisco Arroyaba, one of the electors of the ayuntamiento of Mexico City. He had been given the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the insurgent army and was given the task of effecting the rescue. When he and his men arrived at the Colegio, he left a couple of armed men on guard at the gate while he went inside to find Leona. Once he found her, he carried her outside and put her on a horse which they had brought for her. According to Alamán, she remained hidden in a house nearby for a short while until arrangements could be made for her to be taken to Tlalpujahuá,

⁵⁷Mariana Mendoza to don José Berzazuerta, April 23, 1813, Ibid., V, 48.

where she joined don Andrés Quintana Roo.⁵⁸

The authorities ordered that an investigation be made and that a search for the fugitive begin immediately, but no trace of Leona could be found. Many people who might have knowledge of what happened or who might have been eye-witnesses were questioned, but the authorities were unable to discover any information which would lead to her capture. On May 31, a report was sent to the Viceroy, don Félix María Calleja, attempting to explain what had happened. It was reported that doña Leona Vicario had not wanted her accomplices to be discovered and that she had been most obstinate in her refusal to expose them. Thus, it was not at all strange that some of those accomplices decided to arrange for her escape from the Colegio. It also stated that many people had left the city to pass to the rebel encampment and that many still maintained their former relationships within the city. Thus, the relatives, brothers, and friends of all those who had joined the insurgent cause had to be considered suspect because many carried on correspondence with and gave protection to the rebels.⁵⁹ At this point there was little the Royalists could do except blame the elusive rebels and be angry at themselves for letting such an important prisoner escape.

⁵⁸Alamán, Historia de Méjico, III, 386-87.

⁵⁹Informe of don José Galilea to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, May 31, 1813, in Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupes" y la Independencia, pp. 42-43.

Other than continuing the search and questioning various persons about her possible whereabouts, the authorities could do very little since they did not have Leona in custody. Gradually they began to analyze their reports and to draw some conclusions about the exact extent of her involvement in the revolutionary movement. In a report drawn up by Melchor José de Foncerrada, Oidor of the Audiencia and Judge Advocate, it was stated that the investigation began as a result of the interception of some letters from the rebels. This, in turn, led to the discovery of the fact that Leona Vicario was serving as a kind of post office for the rebels and that she was the general correspondent for the Insurgents. When she was in custody, she proved to be uncooperative in that she refused to identify the persons referred to in the letters and papers found in her room. Thus, the Judge Advocate should see that the proper edicts and proclamations were issued so that the law would follow its natural and legal course.⁶⁰

Calleja took very little time to consider the matter. July 1, 1813, he ordered that Foncerrada's suggestions be accepted and that the legal process continue.⁶¹ Shortly thereafter an edict was promulgated ordering doña Leona Vi-

⁶⁰ Don Melchor José de Foncerrada to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, June 21, 1813, García, DHM, V, 94-98.

⁶¹ Letter signed by Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, July 1, 1813, Ibid., V, 99.

cario to present herself so that she could stand trial and answer the charges against her, namely that she had maintained an illegal correspondence with the rebels and that she had fled from the Colegio in Belén in an attempt to avoid lawful prosecution.⁶²

In accordance with the terms set forth in the edict, dated July 19, 1813, doña Leona Vicario was ordered to present herself to the Viceroy or to surrender to one of the jails in the city no later than July 26, 1813. If she did not appear as ordered, the trial would be held without her and she would not be summoned again until it was time for the sentence to be passed.⁶³ The deadline came and went and Leona did not appear. Viceroy Calleja, wanting to be as fair and even-handed as possible, first extended the deadline to August 6,⁶⁴ and then to August 17.⁶⁵ However, Leona never surrendered as ordered.

No positive action was taken against Leona until April 5, 1815, at which time the Consulado of Veracruz, the agency responsible for taking care of the money and possessions confiscated from known rebels, asked the Viceroy to

⁶²Edict, don Manuel Martínez del Campo for the Viceroy, July 19, 1813, Ibid., V, 101.

⁶³Ibid., V, 101.

⁶⁴Edict, Manuel Martínez del Campo for Viceroy Calleja, July 28, 1813, Ibid., V, 101-02.

⁶⁵Edict, Manuel Martínez del Campo for Viceroy Calleja, August 7, 1813, Ibid., V, 102.

have don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador submit an accounting of his expenditures of doña Leona's money.⁶⁶

This was in keeping with the provisions of the Bando, or proclamation, promulgated by Viceroy Calleja on December 8, 1814, Article I of which stated that all persons who had gone to join the rebels would be considered to be Insurgents and would be subject to confiscation of all of their possessions. It stated that it was not necessary for the accused to have been tried and found guilty; instead, the testimony of two or three witnesses would be deemed sufficient. Article VII provided that those goods which might spoil or which could not easily be stored were to be sold for the highest price possible.⁶⁷

Don Agustín Pomposo complied with the request as quickly as possible and submitted a detailed account of his dispersion of funds from the time of the death of his sister, doña Camila, to the present, April 26, 1815. His accounting showed that he gave Leona approximately two hundred pesos a month, although there would appear to be no record of what she did with that money.⁶⁸ Since don Agustín Pom-

⁶⁶ Don Francisco Antonio de la Sierra to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, April 8, 1815, Ibid., V, 103-04.

⁶⁷ Bando, signed by Viceroy Félix María Calleja, December 9, 1814, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 752-53.

⁶⁸ Accounting of expenditures of Leona Vicario's funds by don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, April 26, 1815, García, DHM, V, 104-47, passim.

poso paid the expenses of the household, including the salaries of the servants, from the money in his custody, it can be assumed that the two hundred pesos given Leona was her allowance. After reporting each expenditure and all incomes accruing to the inheritance which he controlled, don Agustín Pomposo claimed that his total expenditures had been 45,209 pesos 1.8 reales, while the credits totaled 41,404 pesos 2.9 reales, leaving a deficit of 4,168 pesos 6.11 reales which were due him. However, there were large sums of money which had been invested in the Capital and with the Consulado at Veracruz, totaling more than 150,000 pesos, so don Agustín Pomposo requested that the balance of the money due him be provided from those sources.⁶⁹

A few days later, don Agustín Pomposo also submitted an inventory of the things remaining in Leona's rooms in his house. He made careful notation of everything that belonged to her, including the diamond, pearl, gold, and silver jewelry, the books, the pictures, and the spoons and ladles.⁷⁰ Given all of this information, the government could set in motion the confiscation proceedings against the wealth and possessions of Leona Vicario.

Leona, however, was not left penniless by this ac-

⁶⁹ Ibid., V, 104-47, passim.

⁷⁰ Inventory of Leona Vicario's possessions by don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, April 28, 1815, Ibid., V, 147-58, passim.

tion. The Insurgents were well aware of the fact that they owed a great debt of gratitude to her for her help while she lived in Mexico City and for her refusal to cooperate with the Royalists after her activities were discovered and she was in custody. Thus, on December 22, 1813, she was sent a letter by the Secretary of the Supreme National Congress, the center of the Insurgent government headed by don Ignacio Rayón and Generalissimo don José María Morelos, informing her that Rayón and Morelos had declared that the Governor of Oaxaca, Colonel don Benito Rocha, should grant her five hundred pesos outright. In addition, she was thereafter to receive a monthly stipend from the insurgent government. Finally, they declared her to be a national heroine, saying that she had sacrificed her family and her birthright for the sake of her country. Thus, they said, her actions were such that she should serve as a model, not only for other women, but for men as well. They apologized that circumstances were such that they could not call the attention of the entire world to her heroic deeds, but since that was not possible, they expressed the hope that the monthly stipend of five hundred pesos would help to show their deep sense of gratitude.⁷¹

⁷¹Don José Carlos Enríquez del Castillo, Secretario del Supremo Congreso Nacional, to Señora doña Leona Vicario, December 22, 1813, in Ernesto Lemoine Villacaña, ed., Morelos: Su vida, revolucionaria a través de sus escritos y de otros testimonios de la época (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965), pp. 445-46.

But then in August, 1815, doña Leona and her new husband, don Andrés Quintana Roo, presented themselves to the Royalist Commander, Colonel don Manuel de la Concha, to ask for a royal pardon. Colonel de la Concha recommended that the pardon be granted, saying that he was an old friend of Leona's father and that she was unhappy and had suffered much already.⁷²

Interestingly enough, the request for the pardon would seem to coincide with the beginning of the confiscation proceedings against Leona's inheritance and also with the downturn in the fortunes of the revolutionary movement. Although Leona had been granted a stipend by the revolutionary government, it is likely that by this time it was no longer able to honor all of its obligations. Morelos was in retreat, and the Supreme Junta had to keep moving to avoid being captured. Thus, it is doubtful that Leona was still able to collect the promised stipend. And if the Royalist government did confiscate her inheritance, she and don Andrés would be left without a steady source of income. It is therefore probable that the timing of their request for a pardon was no accident.

Colonel de la Concha forwarded their request for a pardon to Viceroy Calleja, who, in turn, sent it to the Ministry of Justice for processing. Within a short time, it

⁷²Colonel don Manuel de la Concha to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, August 20, 1815, García, DHM, V, 181.

was decided that the manner of application for the pardon was incorrect and improper in that doña Leona and don Andrés did not personally appear before the Minister of Justice to make their request. It was therefore suggested that the pardon be denied and that the confiscation of Leona's personal fortune stand since it was in full conformity with the letter of the law.⁷³

The normal procedure was to turn oneself in to a minister of Justice if an Insurgent decided that he wanted to obtain a pardon. Or, if the Viceroy had decreed that for a specified length of time a general pardon was available, as in the case of the return of Ferdinand VII to the throne in 1814, the rebels could present themselves to royalist commanders in the field and ask for the grace of a pardon. During these times, any rebel, even Morelos and Rayón, could have received pardons. However, at the time that Leona and don Andrés went to Colonel de la Concha, they were approximately a year too late to enjoy the benefit of Ferdinand's return to the throne since that offer expired on July 22, 1814.⁷⁴ Hence, to get a pardon, they would have to appear in person before a minister of justice, but to do so would probably have resulted in their arrest since they could not

⁷³Dons Mesía, Bataller, Campo, and Bachiller del Real Acuerdo de México, August 26, 1815, Ibid., V, 182-83.

⁷⁴Bando del Virrey prorogando el indulto por treinta días, con motivo del regreso de Fernando VII al territorio, June 22, 1814, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 548-50.

get a guarantee of safe conduct.

On June 28, 1816, don Miguel Bataller sent a message to Viceroy Calleja in which he stated that considering the notoriety of doña Leona's crimes and the fact that she had not properly applied for the grace of the King's pardon, her personal wealth should be confiscated in accordance with Article 82 of the Instructions of Intendants. Therefore, her legal guardian should be asked to submit an updated accounting of expenses. Moreover, all of her personal belongings should be sold so that her entire estate could be liquidated.⁷⁵

Calleja concurred and issued a decree on July 6, 1816, in which he declared confiscated all of doña Leona Vicario's money and possessions. He declared that all outstanding bills would be paid and all accounts settled, but no new ones would be paid or recognized as being valid.⁷⁶ As a consequence, don Agustín Pomposo submitted an updated accounting of expenditures which showed that the amount due him had increased from 4,168 pesos 6.11 reales to 4,503 pesos 1.11 2/3 reales.⁷⁷ Therefore, Leona lost her inheritance

⁷⁵Auditor de Guerra don Miguel Bataller to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, June 28, 1816, García, DHM, V, 188.

⁷⁶Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, July 6, 1816, Ibid., V, 189.

⁷⁷Accounting of expenditures, submitted by don Agustín Pomposo Fernández de San Salvador, August 5, 1816, Ibid., V, 190-93.

as a result of her revolutionary activities, and it is probable that she was no longer able to collect the stipend granted her by Morelos. She was left with only the admiration of various groups of revolutionaries, including the Guadalupe Society, which wrote to Father Morelos on November 17, 1813, to thank him for the public praise and the "most expressive thanks" which he had seen fit to extend to Señorita Leona Vicario.⁷⁸

The Intendant of the capital, don Ramón Gutiérrez del Mazo, ordered another inventory of the personal possessions of Leona Vicario remaining at Don Agustín Pomposo's house in Calle de Don Juan Manuel and that their value be estimated. Mariano Labra began the task in September and found that he was faced with an immense chore. On September 23 he reported that he had made part of the inventory and that he estimated the furniture to have a value of about 913.5 pesos.⁷⁹ Then he stated that the glasswork, paintings, and other things had an estimated value of 927.7 pesos. He was therefore able to establish the total value of Leona's possessions at \$16,318, 4 reales.⁸⁰ A few days later, the

⁷⁸ Los Guadalupes to Father José María Morelos, November 17, 1813, in Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupes" y la Independencia, p. 59.

⁷⁹ Avaluo que de orden Señor Intendente de esta capital...de los muebles...en la casa número 19 de la calle de Don Juan Manuel, García, DHM, V, 197-204.

⁸⁰ Avaluo de los vidrieras, pinturas y otras cosas de la casa N.º 19 de la calle de don Juan Manuel, September 23, 1816, Ibid., V, 205-10.

sale of the goods at public auction began after being properly publicized.⁸¹

Leona Vicario's contributions to the revolutionary movement have since been recognized by the people of Mexico. On February 23, 1900, it was proposed that her remains be moved to the Rotunda of Illustrious Men in the Pantheon of Dolores. This was done on May 28, 1900, as she and don Andrés Quintana Roo were re-interred in a solemn ceremony. Her new grave was marked by a stone inscribed,

A la memoria de doña Leona Vicario de Quintana Roo, la mujer fuerte que consagró su fortuna y sus servicios personales a la causa de la Independencia, asociándose después a la patriótica tarea de su ilustre esposo.⁸²

Thus doña Leona Vicario became one of the few women Insurgents whose name has not been forgotten nor her deeds obscured by the passage of time.

As was noted earlier, one of the letters which fell into the hands of the Royalists and which referred to doña Leona Vicario also referred to persons known only as don Número Dos and Número Tres. Later, the Guadalupe Society wrote to thank Father Morelos for his generous expression of thanks to doña Leona Vicario. It would seem that Leona was at least known to this group, and it is very probable that

⁸¹Notice of public auction prepared by José Ignacio Cano y Motesuma, escribano del Real Audiencia, October 5, 1816, Ibid., V, 211-12.

⁸²C. A. Echanova Trujillo, Leona Vicario: La Mujer Fuerte de la Independencia (México: Ediciones Xochitl, 1945), pp. 184-85.

she was a member of the group which was originally created in Mexico City toward the end of the Hidalgo phase of the independence movement. There were many partisans of the Insurgents, but there was little or no cooperation and joint effort between them. A few individuals got together and decided that they could accomplish much more if they would work together, so they founded a secret society which was known first as the Eagle, or La Águila, and later as Los Guadalupe. The purposes of the group were: to help mold public opinion; to seduce royalist soldiers so they would go over to the Insurgents, or at least desert from their own units; to buy arms for the insurgent army; and to stay in constant communication and correspondence with the leaders of the revolutionary movement.⁸³

The founding members, a rather small group, included don Juan Bautista Raz y Guzmán, don Nazario Peimbert, don Benito Guerra, don José Matsos, don Félix Fernández who later was to be known as Guadalupe Victoria, don Ignacio Valorde, don Antonio del Río, and the father of Anastasio Zerecero. Slowly the society spread among all of the social classes of the capital, so it became necessary to devise various grades of membership. Gradually the leadership and direction of the group became concentrated in a small circle of persons who considered themselves to be among the intel-

⁸³Zerecero, Memorias, I, 157-58.

lectual elite and who believed that the lower classes were only necessary to execute their orders.⁸⁴

Some of the members soon discovered a way to sow discord within the city and in the viceregal court itself. Calleja returned to the capital as a conquering hero, but Viceroy Venegas was jealous and suspicious of him. Calleja began holding tertulias at the home of his host, the Marques de Moncada, which were soon as well attended as the ones held by the Viceroy at the palace. Some people soon found that it was quite easy to become double agents in that they would report to Venegas everything that went on at Calleja's tertulias, and they would tell Calleja what Venegas was doing. Some of the insurgent partisans even began to hope that the discord between the two men would become so great that eventually Calleja might decide to change sides and lead the revolutionaries to a great victory over the Spaniards.⁸⁵

Other members of the society decided that they could do the greatest service for the revolution by keeping the leaders informed of events in the capital and carrying out any orders they might have. Thus, they were in constant contact with the revolutionary junta at Zitacuaro. They had little difficulty in sending the letters and papers or in receiving them. One of their favorite means of sending mes-

⁸⁴ Ibid., I, 158.

⁸⁵ Alamán, Historia de Méjico, II, 510.

sages was to give them to their wives who would hide them on themselves and then leave the city on the pretext of taking their families out for some recreation.⁸⁶

The letter writing began in 1811 and gradually increased in quantity, reaching a zenith in the years 1812-1814 and tapering off in 1815 and thereafter. Since the members of the group realized that it was important that constant communications be maintained, they signed their letters with pseudonyms so that if any fell into the hands of the authorities, it would be difficult to determine who the author was or to discover who was being referred to. Thus, they used names such as Señor don Número Uno, or Número Dos, or Serafina Rosier, but the most common was Los Guadalupe. The name was a symbol or a watchword, a distinctively nationalistic and patriotic term whose origins were unmistakable. It was a political and religious insignia of the Mexicans since it referred to the Patroness of the insurgent armies.⁸⁷ The society could not have chosen a better name to signify its purposes, and the members could not have chosen a more significant way in which to sign their correspondence.

Because of their need for anonymity, it is difficult to identify the persons who actually were members of the Guadalupe Society, although the identities of some are known. In

⁸⁶Mora, México y sus Revoluciones, III, 175-76.

⁸⁷Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupe" y la Independencia, pp. xxv-xxvi.

Novmeber, 1813, Serafina Guadalupe Bosier was accused of maintaining familiar relations with the Insurgents and with the Guadalupes. One of her letters addressed to the Insurgent commander Miguel Arriaga was discovered in which it was suggested that it might be possible to foment discontent in the capital by preventing any supplies of coal from entering the city.⁸⁸ Since Serafina Bosier seemingly was never arrested, one has to wonder whether there really was a person with this name or if this was one of the letters written by an unknown member of the society who was using this as a pseudonym. The fact that this name is so close to the pseudonym "Serifina Rosier" tends to lead one to believe that there might be some difficulty in identifying the signature on the letter and that it was really one written by the society. This seems even more probable in light of the fact that doña Antonia Peña, who was denounced in 1814 by the former rebel Francisco Lorenzo de Velasco, was known to use this pseudonym. Her husband, Dr. Díaz, was a member of the Guadalupes and was known to have given arms to the Insurgents in addition to carrying on a correspondence with them. After his death, doña Antonia continued his activities.⁸⁹

In his list of members of the society, Torre Villar

⁸⁸Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 84.

⁸⁹Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to don José Antonio Noriega, June 27, 1814, García, DHM, V, 460.

included doña Leona Vicario, doña María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, doña Ignacia Iturriaga, doña Dolores Morelos, doña Gertrudis Castillo, and doña Mariana Rodríguez del Toro de Lazarín.⁹⁰ Ignacia Iturriaga came to the attention of the authorities in 1813 when she was denounced to Father Manuel Toral by María de Jesús Luna for having maintained correspondence with Ignacio Rayón. She used as her courier the son of doña Dolores Morelos, who would take the messages to and bring them from Padre don Pedro Primo, Padre Cabeza de Vaca, don Juan Juaregui, and some Franciscans whose identities were not known. It was also claimed that she had hidden her silver and other jewels so that the Royalists would not be able to find them but so they would be available if Rayón and the other Insurgents would need them.⁹¹

Other women who were also members of the society were doña Gertrudis Rueda de Bravo, the wife of Leonardo Bravo, and the wives of Juan Raz y Guzmán, Antonio del Río, and Vicente Guerrero.⁹² Gertrudis Rueda de Bravo followed her husband, General Leonardo, into battle when he decided to join the insurgency. Together they were exposed to all

⁹⁰Torre Villar, Los "Guadalupes" y la Independencia, pp. lxxv-lxxix.

⁹¹Father Manuel Toral to Viceroy Félix María Calleja, July 16, 1813, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 363-64.

⁹²Wilbert H. Timmons, "Los Guadalupes: A Secret Society in the Mexican Revolution for Independence," HAHR, XXX (November, 1959), 457.

of the sufferings which are a part of warfare. Then, during the battle of Cuautla, they became separated. When the battle ended, General Bravo went to the Hacienda de San Gabriel hoping to find his wife, but instead the Royalists found him. Doña Gertrudis heard what happened and set off for Mexico City.⁹³

She arrived there just in time to see her husband brought to trial, and she quickly discovered that she was powerless to save his life. Thus don Leonardo was executed. Because she had attempted to beg for mercy for her husband, the Viceroy decided that perhaps they should arrest doña Gertrudis and begin investigating her.⁹⁴ She was fortunate, however, in that some members of the Guadalupe Society heard about the impending arrest and ordered one of the members, don Francisco de Arce, to get her out of town as quickly as possible and to take her to Apam.⁹⁵

On May 17, 1812, Father Morelos was informed of what had taken place and was also told that there was a possibility that Calleja either had or was about to offer doña Gertrudis her freedom and fifty thousand pesos if she would get her sons and nephews, who were in the insurgent army, to apprehend Father Morelos. Falcón added that doña Gertrudis

⁹³Wright de Kleinhans, Mujeres Notables Mexicanas, pp. 246-47.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 247.

⁹⁵Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 454.

had already been to several places where she thought that she might find her sons, but so far she was unsuccessful.⁹⁶ Seemingly, it did not occur to Falcón that having lost her husband, doña Gertrudis might be interested in being with her sons rather than trying to establish a home somewhere by herself.

One of the most interesting and important services performed for the revolutionary movement by the Guadalupe was the purchase and removal of a printing press to the Insurgent camp. In 1812, Dr. don José María Cos began to publish a newspaper known as the Ilustrador Americano, but he lacked the proper facilities and was able to get out very few copies to present the ideas and programs of the Insurgents. The newspaper was so difficult to obtain the seldom was a copy available in the capital. Some members of the Guadalupe Society got together to discuss the problem and decided that a printing press was an absolute necessity.⁹⁷

Upon hearing that José Rebelo, an official of the Arizpa printing shop, had an extra press which he might be willing to sell for eight hundred pesos,⁹⁸ they quickly concluded an agreement with him and the Insurgents became the owners of a printing press. They realized, however, that it

⁹⁶Don M. Falcón to Sr. don José María Morelos, May 17, 1812, Lemoine Villacaña, Morelos, pp. 201-02.

⁹⁷Zerecero, Memorias, I, 307.

⁹⁸Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, I, 307.

would be of no use to them in the capital; so in their efforts to get it to Dr. Cos and Rayón, they finally decided that the safest way to transport it would be in a carriage, but with the utmost care because there were many royalist sympathizers around who would be more than happy to report any wrong doing to the government.⁹⁹

To throw off all suspicion, they decided to employ the wives of Raz y Guzmán, Benito Guerra, and Dr. Manuel Díaz. Carrying baskets, they got in a coach saying that they were going to a party in San Angel. Along the way the vehicle was stopped at a sentry box, but it was not carefully searched because the soldiers were afraid to examine the women too closely. Thus they were able to carry the press through the Royalist lines to the camp of the Insurgents, and Dr. Cos was able to publish many more copies of his revolution-oriented newspaper.¹⁰⁰

Soon Dr. Cos' paper had gained such wide circulation that the government was forced to promulgate a decree forbidding its very existence.¹⁰¹ Sometime thereafter, Quintana Roo joined Dr. Cos in his enterprise, and the Insurgents were able to air their views on issues and make their program known to the people through the existence of more

⁹⁹Ibid., I, 307.

¹⁰⁰Alamán, Historia de Méjico, II, 522-23.

¹⁰¹Ibid., II, 523.

than one newspaper. Thus, they counteracted some of the effectiveness of the Royalist propaganda in that they were able to portray themselves in a more favorable light and were able to demonstrate that they were not the vandals the government wanted the people to believe they were.¹⁰²

Margarita Peimbert was considered a member of the Guadalupe Society. The daughter of don Juan Nazario Peimbert, she was a contemporary of and friend of doña Leona Vicario. Like Leona, she was dedicated to the ideas of independence and was one of the people who maintained contacts with don Ignacio López Rayón. Her discovery and arrest came as the result of the capture of a Frenchman known only as Lailson who had joined the Insurgents. He had been an equestrian and had taught riding in Mexico City before the revolution began but decided to aid the Insurgents once the movement started. He was captured at the battle of Monte de la Cruces in 1812, and the Royalists found some letters from the Guadalupe to Rayón in his possession, as well as some of the writings of Dr. Cos and Quintana Roo. As a result of these discoveries, several people were arrested and imprisoned in the capital, including doña Margarita.¹⁰³

The Royalists had little difficulty in proving that Margarita maintained friendly relations with the Insurgents,

¹⁰²Zerecero, Memorias, I, 403-04.

¹⁰³Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 148.

since at the time she was engaged to a rebel, Licenciado Jiménez who later died in battle. Eventually, she married another rebel, José Ignacio Espinosa,¹⁰⁴ who was also accused of disloyalty to the Crown.¹⁰⁵ The entire group was fortunate in that the Royalists were unable to obtain any definite proof of disloyalty, so the worst that happened was that they remained in jail for a few days.¹⁰⁶

María Peña, her sister Mercedes, and her mother, María Ignacia, were also denounced in 1813 as being in contact with the rebels. They, however, were accused of having carried some of the letters written by the Guadalupes. While it is known that they were arrested by Colonel don Manuel de la Concha and that an investigation was begun, the results of the case are not known.¹⁰⁷ Finally, José Antonio Noriega informed Viceroy Calleja in November, 1815, that there was in the capital a group known as the Guadalupes who helped to support and sustain the families of those who went to the aid of the Insurgents. They were, he said, giving monthly stipends to some people, and doña Josefa Montes de Oca was one of those who was receiving at least forty pesos

¹⁰⁴Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 458.

¹⁰⁵Bustamante, Martirologio, p. 22.

¹⁰⁶Alamán, Historia de Méjico, III, 144.

¹⁰⁷Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 467.

a month.¹⁰⁸

It is thus obvious that the Guadalupe Society was responsible for keeping the insurgent leadership well informed of events in the capital and elsewhere in the Royalist controlled areas. But in addition to this, they did whatever they could to aid the cause of independence, whether buying arms, sending messages, buying and delivering printing presses, supporting families, or winning converts to the revolutionary cause.

What also becomes evident is that women were an integral part of the society, although they were not among the founding members. While it is clear that the society could have functioned quite nicely without the aid of the women, it is also apparent that it could not have succeeded in all of its undertakings without them, especially in the delivery of the printing press to Dr. Cos. While it would have been quite natural for the sentries to search the men thoroughly, what soldier could lay a hand on a woman and try to discover what she was hiding beneath her skirts?

Moreover, it would seem that perhaps the group managed to get at least some of its money from Leona Vicario, since there would seem to be no good explanation as to how she managed to spend at least two hundred pesos, the amount

¹⁰⁸Don José Antonio Noriega to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, November 24, 1815, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, VI, 12.

of her allowance, every month; and some months she even managed to get more. Thus, the roles of the men and women within the society complimented each other, and both were necessary elements for the group to be able to accomplish its goals.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MORELOS PHASE, 1812-1815

The death of Father Hidalgo marked the end of the first phase of the Mexican wars of independence, but not the end of the movement. When Hidalgo began his struggle in 1810, he was soon joined by people from all segments of society and of all racial mixtures. However, the bulk of his support came from the lower classes and from the Indians and Mestizos, since the Creoles and Gachupines became frightened by the atrocities committed by some of his Indian and Mestizo followers. While the movement did not have a universal appeal in that the Creoles and Gachupines did not flock to his standard, there were some who became involved in the early phase, as has been discussed. All who did join Hidalgo wanted to do whatever they could to help achieve the goal of independence, even though some of them did not quite understand what the word "independence" meant. One of those who joined the struggle in the early days was a priest from Caracuaro who had heard about the revolution and went in search of Hidalgo so that he could size up both the leader and his movement. After talking to Hidalgo, Father José María Morelos y Pavón decided that he, too, would join in the

struggle.¹

Hidalgo commissioned Father Morelos to try to capture the port of Acapulco, an important objective because it was the point at which it might be possible to import arms and munitions from the United States. In addition, he was to collect arms and munitions, seize and deport Europeans, and confiscate their properties.² Consequently, Morelos went to the south of Mexico to try to carry out his orders. Then in 1811 he heard that Hidalgo and the other revolutionary leaders had been captured, and the leadership of the movement passed for the time being to don Ignacio López Rayón. Seemingly, Morelos never even considered the possibility of giving up the fight. In July, 1811, Rayón wrote to him saying that there was need for more cooperation between the various chiefs of the revolution and suggesting the creation of a Junta to direct the efforts more effectively. Morelos agreed after Rayón explained that the Junta would use the name of Ferdinand VII and the idea of allegiance to the Crown only in an attempt to win greater support among the Creoles and Europeans who might not otherwise cooperate, but he refused to serve as one of the members of the Junta. Morelos then went off to continue the fight for independence, leaving the

¹Wilbert H. Timmons, Morelos of Mexico: Priest, Soldier, Statesman (El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1963), pp. 39-41; Caruso, The Liberators of Mexico, p. 89.

²Timmons, Morelos of Mexico, p. 41.

organization of a revolutionary government to Rayón and the Supreme Junta.³

While the royalist officials may have hoped that the capture and execution of Hidalgo and the other revolutionary chieftains would bring the rebellion to a conclusion, just the opposite happened and the movement continued to grow. When Brigadier don Félix María Calleja turned his army against Zitáquaro in late 1811 and early 1812, he had to report that the rebels seemed to be as determined as ever to resist. He said that two earlier expeditions against the village had been turned back, giving the rebels a feeling of exaltation which was so frantic that even the women and children were joining in the resistance against him.⁴

Calleja was so angered by this stubborn resistance that after he finally captured the town, he issued a Bando providing for the punishment of the defenders and the town. He declared that the lands and other forms of wealth belonging to anyone who had taken part in the fight against the troops of the legitimate government would be confiscated. Even the property of Spaniards would be confiscated if they

³Ibid., pp. 60-63.

⁴"Informe del expedición a Zitáquaro, Brigadier don Félix María Calleja to Viceroy don Francisco Xavier de Venegas, January 2, 1812," Gazeta Extraordinario del Gobierno de México, in Gazeta del Gobierno de México, January 5, 1812, III, 17.

had embraced the party of the insurrection. He set aside eight days in which those who had taken part in the fight could apply for a pardon, but they would be put to work repairing the roads and would not be allowed to recover their confiscated properties. Moreover, he declared that the village was to be "leveled, burned, and destroyed" because three times its inhabitants had put up an obstinate defense against his army. He gave all inhabitants, regardless of age, sex, state of health, or any other consideration, six days in which to prepare to leave the village. Before leaving, everyone had to obtain a certificate stating the name, age, and number of persons within the family and the date of departure from the village. Anyone found not to have such a certificate would be considered a rebel and would be shot. Calleja set three days as the limit for turning in guns and munitions, saying that any found in the possession of an inhabitant of the village after that time would be reason for execution.⁵ As is evident from the foregoing example, the rebellion did not grind to a halt after the capture of Hidalgo but rather gained in intensity, forcing the Royalists to increase their efforts to squelch the movement.

As was indicated earlier in Chapter VII, it was

⁵"Bando publicado en la villa de San Juan Zitáquaro por el Sr. Mariscal de campo D. Félix María Calleja," January 5, 1812, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, February 11, 1812, III, 156-58.

during the Morelos phase of the revolution that the Insurgents were able to get a printing press and begin spreading their ideology on a wider scale. Prior to obtaining the press, the rebels had been forced to rely almost entirely on spreading their gospel of revolution by word of mouth. While that method was effective, there were also problems in that important messages could get twisted as they were repeated time after time. But with the addition of the printing press, the Insurgents were able to print their own newspapers and broadsides, thus giving news of the movement to more people more quickly and accurately.

Also mentioned were the newspapers published by Dr. José María Cos and don Andrés Quintana Roo, the husband of Leona Vicario. In 1812 some of the copies of the paper published by Dr. Cos and don Francisco Velasco fell into the hands of the Royalists and were sent to the Viceroy in Mexico. After reading them, he issued a Bando on April 7, 1812, in which he stated that the papers would be burned immediately in the central plaza of the city and that Cos and Velasco would be executed when they were caught. Venegas said that what was in the papers was not important and that they were burned for other reasons. The point was that Cos and Velasco, at the direction of Rayón and Liceaga, who were guilty of holding "criminal sentiments" like those of Hidalgo, published the papers which opposed the sacrifices being made for the defense of the King and the country. Secondly, the papers

caused an enormous injury by their calumny and their adherence to the perversions and crimes and atrocities of the Insurgents, and they were instrumental in causing others to commit crimes. Thirdly, the papers refused to recognize the supreme authority of the Spanish Crown and talked of separation and independence, negating the obedience due the Spanish sovereign. They were thus full of scandalous propositions which were intended to disturb the peace and tranquility of the kingdom.⁶

Rather than ceasing publication of the newspapers, the Insurgents seemed to increase the number of periodicals in circulation, since there were, during this time, at least four newspapers being printed by them. The first to appear was the Ilustrador Nacional, which seemingly had a rather short life-span, lasting from approximately April 11, 1812 until May 1, 1812. This was followed by the Ilustrador Americano, which was published from approximately May 30, 1812 until April 28, 1813. Beginning on July 26, 1812, the Semanario Patriótico Americano made its appearance, edited by don Andrés Quintana Roo. It continued publication seemingly until January 17, 1813, when it appears to have been succeeded by the Correo Americano del Sur, which began publication

⁶México [Viceroy], Laws, Statutes, etc., Don Francisco de Venegas..., Virrey....Habiendo tenido los rebeldes Cura Don José María Cos y Prebendo Don Francisco Velasco.... 7 de abril de 1812. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

around February 25, 1813 and continued until December 28, 1813.⁷

Considering the number of insurgent publications in circulation, it is not surprising that some of them fell into the hands of the viceregal officials. On June 1, 1812, Viceroy Venegas issued another Bando directed against the Ilustrador Nacional, which seemingly had ceased publication a month earlier. The purpose of this "sedicious newspaper," Venegas said, was to deceive the common people because they were not able to understand all of the false propositions contained therein. Therefore, in cooperation with the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, he ordered that the further circulation of the Ilustrador Nacional be prohibited and that all other "incendiary papers" published by the Insurgents, whether on the instructions of the rebel Junta or any other source, cease publication.⁸ It is obvious that the viceregal officials were concerned about the possible success that such papers might enjoy or else it would not have been necessary

⁷García, DHM, III and IV. García inserted fairly complete sets of several of the insurgent newspapers in his collection, including the above named papers. Most of these were weekly papers, although they did not always appear on schedule.

⁸México [Viceroy], Laws, Statutes, etc., Don Francisco Xavier de Venegas..., Virrey....Habiendo llegado á mis manos un periódico sedicioso intitulado Ilustrador Nacional ...prohibido por el presente la circulación de dicho periódico y todos las demas papeles incenderion....1 de junio de 1812. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

to issue two Bandos prohibiting publication and circulation.

At times the insurgent newspapers made a concerted effort to appeal to the patriot spirit of the women of Mexico. Obviously the newspapers were propagandistic in their presentation of news, letters, and items of general interest, and the editors used whatever means they could to get their message to the people. The Ilustrador Americano published a rather lengthy "letter" in two of its issues in September, 1812, supposedly written by doña M. T. to her friend. Whether it was written by a woman or by the editors or the paper is not known. What was important was that the letter was a clever attempt to convince women that they should support the insurgency. It was a response, in part, to a denunciation of the insurgency entitled El Verdadero Ilustrador Americano which appeared in the capital a short time earlier. According to doña M. T., this Royalist piece of propaganda was a disgrace to the country, and the author of it was a true Judas Iscariot.⁹

The revolution offered land, woodlands, waters, riches, and happiness, but what had the government offered in the last four years, she asked. For four years now the government had promised that the French would be destroyed and that there would be peace. Then there could be land, woodlands, waters, riches and happiness. But how many of those

⁹"Carta de Doña M. T. á su amiga," Ilustrador Americano, September 12, 1812, 72, in García, DHM, III.

promises had the government kept? And, she asked her friend, "Are you happy?" If the situation was not remedied, the Creoles who had suffered under the Gachupines for so long would continue to suffer under them in the future. For two years the dishonest Venegas had promised peace, abundance, the extermination of the guerrilla bands, the protection of a beneficent government, distinguished employment, and tranquility; but how many of his promises had he kept?¹⁰

The plans of the revolutionary Supreme American Junta were candid, just, and rational, said doña M. T. If the congress of patriots would prove to be successful, the Kingdom of New Spain would be both happy and independent, a marked contrast to the despotism of the "universally detested Spanish government." Moreover, there would be a constitution whose basis would be the holy religion and equality.¹¹ Doña M. T. thus tried to show her friend that the only answer to the terrible situation existing in the country was to support the independence movement and to oppose the forces of evil, the Royalists and the troops of Venegas.

In November of 1812, the Semanario Patriótico Americano made a lengthy appeal to women to support the insurgency. In an article entitled "A las damas de México," the author, probably the editor of the paper and possibly don

¹⁰"Concluye la carta del número anterior," Ibid., September 26, 1812, 75-76.

¹¹Ibid., 75.

Andrés Quintana Roo, flattered the women, saying that no women in the world could exceed the women of Mexico for their beauty. Then came the appeal, a request that the women of Mexico support the independence movement. There was, said the author, no more opportune time than the present to support the glorious fight, especially since their very liberty was being disputed in it. Consequently, the women were asked to help in supporting the inviolable rights of the American people, including themselves. It was time to begin to make the decision to "take the arms against the European despot."¹²

Then followed a lengthy denunciation of the tyranny, cruelty, and despotism of Spanish rule and of Viceroy Venegas. A pointed reference was made to the cruel treatment meted out to those hapless persons who were unfortunate enough to become prisoners of the Royalists. The government, said the author, mistreated its prisoners, even though some of them had no more guilt than their judges. Some were jailed because of perjured statements made against them or possibly because they did not have the correct stamp on a piece of paper.¹³

Now, said the author, it was time for the women to

¹²"A la damas de México," Semanario Patriótico Americano, November 22, 1812, 165-67, in García, DHM, III.

¹³Ibid., 169-70.

show those men who doubted, as well as the rest of the nations, that the Mexican women had a spirit, valor, and gallantry, and that they could work with all energy for the liberty of their nation. Women had had a great part in the conquest of the country, as well as in the colonization, in that they had rendered the services of interpreting, and had had immense concern for the "over-rated Spanish hero," satisfying their passions and bearing their sons out of fear of their barbarity. Hence, said the author, the women had contributed to the establishment of the European domination. They had helped to forge the "chains of our slavery," and the women had, for three centuries, helped to maintain those chains. As a result, there were almost no Americans who were able to rise to positions of prominence, because such positions were reserved for the Gachupines. The women were reminded that their children were disenfranchised because of their place of birth; they could not fully enjoy the inheritances of their fathers because they were maintained in a constant state of tutelage. Thus, said the author, the women of America had an obligation of restoring justice to the Americans, or at least of helping them to recover that which had been denied them for so long.¹⁴

Thereafter, the author appealed to the women of Mexico to imitate their counterparts who, forgetting the

¹⁴Ibid., 170-71.

weakness of their sex, scorning the danger to their own lives, and following the natural impulse of their souls, "have fought gloriously and obtained immortal triumphs for their country." There were, he said, women who had already done great and glorious things for the country, but until the day when they managed to achieve their liberty, it would not be possible to reveal their names nor to discuss their heroic deeds.¹⁵

It is thus apparent that the independence movement did not die with Hidalgo. Instead, it seemed to gain strength and momentum as the next phase began. The Insurgents were able to get a printing press and by use of it, to spread their message further than ever before. By using the press effectively, they could spread their appeal to hundreds of villages and towns within a very short time simply by printing up broadsides and newspapers which could deliver the messages accurately and quickly.

The appeals were not aimed at any one class or segment of society but rather were broad so that they would attract and interest a wide audience. Some of the propaganda was aimed directly at the women in that they were reminded that even though their husbands might be Spanish, their children would be second-class citizens because they were

¹⁵"Concluye el papel á las damas mexicanas," Se-
manario Patriótico Americano, November 29, 1812, 173-74, in
García, DHM, III.

born in the wrong hemisphere. Hence the children would always be regarded as inferior to the Gachupines, who would always have the superior positions. Given this, the women had a duty to help achieve the independence of the nation, since it was their children that the struggle was trying to help.

That the appeals made in the newspapers frightened and disturbed the viceregal government is evident from the fact that such publications were prohibited by decrees of the Viceroy and by the fact that Venegas ordered those papers which had fallen into his hands be burned in the central plaza.¹⁶ The propaganda contained therein had at least the potential for being extremely effective for the Viceroy to have gotten that upset about it. Although it is almost impossible to quantify the effectiveness of something as nebulous as propaganda, at least some women who became active in the independence movement during the Morelos phase were influenced by it.

Many of the women who joined the insurgency during the Hidalgo phase continued their activities after his capture and execution; hence their activities did not come to the attention of the Royalist authorities until a later time, if at all. Other women, like Leona Vicario, seem to have

¹⁶These Bandos were discussed earlier (see supra, 223-24 and n.6, 225 and n.8).

joined the movement during the Morelos years, but again, not all of them have been identified, nor are they ever likely to be. Moreover, it is again necessary to make reference to some of the women who seemingly are a part of the revolutionary legend, that is, to those women whose names are not to be found in the official documents of the revolution, either Royalist or Insurgent, but rather who appear in later histories. Sometimes their complete names are not known, at other times they are known by only a nickname. But they, too, are a part of the revolutionary movement in that even though it is possible that these women never really existed, it is probable that the actions and deeds ascribed to them were, in truth, done by one or more women whose names are unknown. They therefore merit inclusion in this study.

Three of these legendary women referred to by various writers are doña Antonia Nava, wife of General Catalán, her sister, doña Dolores Nava, and doña Catalina González, the wife of a sergeant in the insurgent army of General don Nicolás Bravo. One author was able to find a record of their deeds in the Diario Oficial of the State of Guerrero, giving a grain of credibility to the legend surrounding the three women.¹⁷

During the course of a battle at Santo Domingo in

¹⁷Wright de Kleinhans, Mujeres Notables Mexicanas, p. 309.

the State of Guerrero, the insurgent forces of General Bravo began to run very short of provisions, and it appeared that Bravo would be forced to surrender because his soldiers were almost unable to continue fighting because of lack of food. Antonia Nava, known as La Generala, heard of the difficulty and, after considering it for a while, devised a possible solution.¹⁸ Then together with Dolores Nava and Catalina González, she went to her husband and General Bravo to tell them of her proposal. The women, she said, were not able to be of much help in the battle, since they were not manning the guns. Moreover, the soldiers were needed, not only for that battle, but for the ones which would follow. She therefore proposed that some of the women, including herself, be killed and eaten by the soldiers so that they would have the stamina to continue the fight and would not have to surrender. Her husband, General Catalán, agreed sadly, and Antonia Nava drew a dagger and stabbed herself.¹⁹

There is a disagreement between the various authorities as to how this legend ends in that one maintained that when Antonia drew her dagger, someone grabbed her arm and stopped her. At that point, the other women who were standing around decided that if Antonia could offer to make that

¹⁸Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 143; Wright de Kleinhans, Mujeres Notables Mexicanas, p. 310.

¹⁹Wright de Kleinhans, Mujeres Notables Mexicanas, pp. 310-11.

kind of a sacrifice, they, too, should be willing to help. They hurriedly found sticks, poles, and rocks and joined in the fray, eventually carrying the fight into the Royalist trenches.²⁰ Whether there is any truth to this legend is not known. But if the story was in circulation in 1812, it represented a good object lesson to show the women of Mexico what total dedication to a cause could be and to point out that they, too, should aid the cause. However, the impact that this legend may have had is not really known.

One of the women whose existence and actions are factually documented is Guadalupe Rangel, wife of the insurgent leader, Albino García. She was taken prisoner by Colonel don Manuel del Rio in the village of Mazamitla early in January, 1812, and was sent to Guadalajara to be interrogated and tried.²¹ According to the statement of don Lucás Muñoz de Nava, Guadalupe and her husband were both known Insurgents. He said that Guadalupe frequently showed her political convictions in her conversations and that she was an Insurgent.²²

²⁰Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, pp. 143-44. The legend was also included in Amador's Noticias, pp. 48-49. Miguel i Verges, whose Diccionario de Insurgentes is an extremely good source for finding references to various Insurgents, although he does not list all of them, has a listing for General Catalán and makes a passing reference to his wife, but he does not include her in a separate listing.

²¹Pérez Verdia, Historia Particular del Estado de Jalisco, II, 138-39.

²²Statement of don Lucás Muñoz de Nava, January 12, 1812, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, IV, 121.

Doña María Rosafía Figueroa, the wife of Muñoz de Nava, agreed with what her husband said, adding only that she thought that Guadalupe often argued with her husband and the parish priest about the revolution.²³ Doña Leonor Barredo, another of the residents of the village of Mazamitla, said that she, too, believed that Guadalupe was an Insurgent. She said that Father Munguría, who was in Guadalajara, was known to write to her and had told her that when the Americans took that town, he would come to see her. Moreover, she added, Guadalupe followed the customs and habits of a prostitute.²⁴

On January 12, Colonel del Río ordered Captain don Juan de la Peña y del Río to try to discover whether Guadalupe was addicted the independence movement, who she maintained communications with, and if she had tried to seduce any good patriots to joining the insurgent cause.²⁵

On January 14, Guadalupe Rangel was questioned by de la Peña. She admitted that she had been an Insurgent, as had her husband, but she said that both had applied for and been granted a pardon. Neither of them, she claimed, had returned to the insurgent movement thereafter. She said that she understood that there was only one God and one King and

²³Statement of doña María Rosalía Figueroa, January 12, 1812, Ibid., IV, 121.

²⁴Statement of doña Leonor Barredo, January 12, 1812, Ibid., IV, 121.

²⁵Colonel don Manuel del Río to Captain don Juan de la Peña y del Río, January 12, 1812, Ibid., IV, 120.

that she was so devoted to the just cause that at times she even made devotions to some of the saints so there could be tranquility in the country. Her husband, she said, was in the village of Los Reyes, but she did not correspond with him even though she had not seen him for six months. She also denied that she was in correspondence with Father Munguría. Asked how she could be certain that her husband had not returned to the Insurgents if she had not seen him for six months, she said that she just knew that he was not one of the rebels, even though he had formerly been a captain.²⁶

On February 6, the report on the investigation was sent to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden in Guadalajara. The Fiscal, who signed his name only as Riestra, reported that the information was too sketchy to make any real determination.²⁷ But since they were not able to find any additional evidence against her, don José de la Cruz, Intendant of Nueva Galicia, suggested that she be released from imprisonment.²⁸ Since it was evident that Guadalupe was cooperative, Fiscal Riestra also recommended that she be released.²⁹

²⁶Statement of Guadalupe Rangel, January 14, 1812, Ibid., IV, 121-22.

²⁷Fiscal Sr. Riestra to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, February 6, 1812, Ibid., IV, 122-23.

²⁸Intendant don José de la Cruz to the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden, February 6, 1812, Ibid., IV, 123.

²⁹Fiscal Sr. Riestra to the Junta de Seguridad, February 20, 1812, Ibid., IV, 124.

When the Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden of Guadalajara gave its consent,³⁰ Guadalupe was released on March 22.³¹

There seems to be some confusion about who Guadalupe Rangel and her husband really were. According to the biographer of Albino García, Guadalupe was not the wife of the famous insurgent leader. Her husband possibly was a man with the same name who operated in the area around Mazamitla and Xiquipan.³² Several other historians have made references to Guadalupe, saying that she was the wife of Albino García and that she was imprisoned in Guadalajara in 1812. They almost unanimously say that she rode a horse into battle beside her husband, carrying a saber in her hand to urge her companions forward and setting an example for the insurgent soldiers.³³ Whether this was the same woman or two different women is not clear since the investigation in Guadalajara made no reference to any participation in battles. However, it is possible that this was the reason that she had earlier been forced to ask for a pardon.

³⁰Decree of the Junta de Seguridad, March 21, 1812, Ibid., IV, 124.

³¹Notation, signed by Intendant don José de la Cruz, March 22, 1812, Ibid., IV, 124.

³²Osorno Castro, Albino García, p. 85.

³³Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, II, 22-23; Amador, Noticias, p. 63; Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, 218; and D. José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, "Noticias Biográficas de Insurgentes Mexicanas," in García, DHM, V, 478.

Another woman who went into battle was La Capitana, an Indian from Tasco baptized María Manuela Molina. She was granted the title La Capitana by the Supreme Junta and in April, 1812, arrived in Morelos' camp to tell him about her victories in battle. According to the official account, she had been inspired by a great love for her country and wanted to help the revolution, so she raised a company of men and led them into seven battles. After seeing Morelos, she was reported to have said that now she could die happy. The official journal of Morelos' expedition from Oaxaca to Acapulco then recorded what would seem to be the sentiment of the scribe, namely, that if only a tenth of the Americans had those same sentiments, the whole project would be much easier.³⁴

Zerecero recorded that he found references to La Capitana in the Diario de Operaciones in Morelos' archives. However, the name of the woman was slightly different, being recorded as Manuela Medina and the place of birth was changed to Texcoco. The other information was the same as that for Manuela Molina, so it has to be the same woman. Zerecero added that this woman had often been able to put royalist soldiers to flight. He claimed that she died in March, 1822, in the city of her birth and that some said her death was the

³⁴"Diario de la Expedición del Sr. Morelos de Oaxaca á Acapulco. Del 9 de Febrero al 18 de Abril," notation for April 8, 1812, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 29.

result of two lance wounds received years earlier in one of the battles.³⁵

Among those women who can be considered activists during the Morelos period are Ana María Ortega, Trinidad Ortega, and their mother Casimira Camargo. They were taken prisoner on June 27, 1815, when the troops of Brigadier don Pedro Saturnino, an Insurgent who had earned a reputation for valor in battle. The women were found to be carrying guns, a situation which automatically qualified them for the death penalty. In addition, they lied to the royalist soldiers so they would not be able to capture their rebel objective, Saturnino, and they tried to hide their real identities. Hence, it was not until much later that Negrete discovered that he had in custody the mother and two sisters of Saturnino. For these reasons, Intendant don José de la Cruz recommended that the women be confined to jail and be at the disposal of the Audiencia until the insurrection was suppressed.³⁶

A little over a year later, the three women began writing petitions protesting their innocence and asking that they be released from prison. They claimed that they were being mistreated, that they were ill-clothed and ill-fed, and that while it was only just that the guilty be punished, they

³⁵Zerecero, Memorias, I, 509-10.

³⁶Intendant don José de la Cruz to Sr. don Antonio de Urrutía, July 1, 1815, García, DHM, V, 364-65.

were innocent and should be released.³⁷ The Fiscal, Vicente Alonso Andrade, informed the Audiencia of Guadalajara that since the women were found with guns in their possession at the time of their arrest, and since they had hidden their true identities so that it would not be known that they were related to Saturnino, they were not deserving of any clemency.³⁸

The women sent additional petitions in March and August of 1817. Each time they protested that they were innocent and that they should be released from prison.³⁹ But again the Fiscal reviewed the record of the case and repeated his recommendation. He said that during all of the time they were in jail or in the Casa de Recogidas, where they were later sent, they had not changed their views on the revolution. Therefore, he thought that it would be best if the women remained in seclusion, and incommunicado if possible, until such time as the insurrection came to an end. It would be a mistake, he said, to give them a pardon.⁴⁰

Sometime after July 9, 1817, the women again sent

³⁷Petition of Ana María Ortega, Trinidad Ortega, and Casimira Camargo, n.d., Ibid., V, 365-66.

³⁸Fiscal don Vicente Alonso Andrade to the Audiencia of Guadalajara, December 11, 1816, Ibid., V, 366.

³⁹Petitions of Ana María Ortega, Trinidad Ortega, and Casimira Camargo, March 24, 1817 and August, 1817, Ibid., V, 366-67.

⁴⁰Fiscal don Vicente Alonso Andrade to the Audiencia of Guadalajara, August 6, 1817, Ibid., V, 368-69.

a message to the Audiencia asking to be released. This time they made reference to the publication of a bando proclaiming a Royal Pardon for those prisoners captured prior to the posting of the bando. The women said that, since they were apprehended long before that date, they must surely be eligible for a pardon.⁴¹ On October 22, 1817, the Judge Advocate of the Audiencia of Guadalajara, don E. González, sent that body a message in which he agreed that if the Audiencia wanted to do so, it could apply the Royal Pardon to these women. Therefore, he said, the matter should be submitted to the Viceroy for his decision.⁴²

The Audiencia decided to refer the matter and eventually it came to the attention of the Viceroy, don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, who ruled on January 23, 1818, that the women could be pardoned but that they would have to establish their residence outside of Puebla and Mexico City, since pardoned rebels were not allowed to live in either of those cities.⁴³

Consequently, Ana María and Trinidad Ortega, and their mother, Casimira Camargo, were fortunate that they were not shot at the time of their apprehension in 1815. According to several bandos proclaimed by Viceroy's and by

⁴¹Petition of Ana María Ortega, Trinidad Ortega, and Casimira Camargo, August, 1817, [?], Ibid., V, 369.

⁴²Fiscal don E. González to the Audiencia of Guadalajara, October 22, 1817, Ibid., V, 370-71.

⁴³Decree of Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, January 23, 1818, Ibid., V, 371.

royalist generals in the field, the fact that they had guns in their hands and were actively resisting the royalist troops was sufficient cause for a summary courts-martial and immediate execution. The bando of Viceroy Venegas dated June 25, 1812, provided that all rebels in whatever quantity should face a firing squad after being given only enough time to prepare for a Christian death. Moreover, all persons who had, or would in future, make resistance to the troops of the legitimate government were considered to be guilty and subject to the jurisdiction and authority of the military. Providing for summary treatment of Insurgents, this bando decreed that it was not even necessary for time to be allowed for rebel priests to be defrocked before being executed.⁴⁴ Thus, the mother and sisters of the rebel Saturnino were fortunate to have escaped with their lives since the officer who captured them could have executed them if he had wanted to do so.

Less is known about some of the other women activists during this period. One of the women who was forced to suffer the full penalty of the law was Manuela Paz, who took part in the defense of Huichapan in May, 1813. When

⁴⁴México [Viceroy], Laws, Statutes, etc., Don Francisco Xavier de Venegas..., Virrey....Estrechado de la sensible necesidad en que se vé este superior gobernoi [sic] de estar dictando providencias para contener y escarmentar por medio de la fuerza y el rigor á los cabecillas que formentan la escandalosa é injusta sublevación del reyno....25 de junio de 1812. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

the defenders of the village were forced to surrender, Manuela was taken prisoner. Because she had actively opposed the royalist troops, she was executed on May 3, 1813.⁴⁵ Rosa Jacinta de la Paz, an Indian from Valle de Maiz, was arrested in January, 1813, by the royalist officer don Antonio Elosur. It seems that Rosa observed the approach of a Royalist force which was chasing a gang of Insurgents. She managed to warn the Insurgents, allowing them to make good their escape.⁴⁶ Finally, Francisca Altimira was arrested in 1813 and was charged with being a spy for the Insurgents. However, the Royalists were unable to obtain sufficient proof of her guilt, so Viceroy Calleja ordered that she be released from prison in November of the same year.⁴⁷

Another of the women who rode off into battle wearing epaulets and brandishing a saber was Prisca Marquina de Ocampo, who was denounced by her husband, Antonio Pineda. When Pineda was captured by the Royalists, he gave a statement just before being executed in which he implicated his wife, saying that she had accompanied him on all of his raids. She was so full of vanity, he said, that at times she even threatened some of the people of the village of Tasco. After her husband was executed, Prisca Marquina presented

⁴⁵Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 455.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 455.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 24.

herself to ask for a pardon, but instead, she was arrested and sent to the capital.⁴⁸

The women who acted as couriers for the Insurgents formed another important group within the revolution. They moved about freely in their own and neighboring towns and villages, gathering information on the disposition and movements of royalist troops and delivering messages for the Insurgents. Whereas men, usually muleteers, took care of the long-distance transmission of the messages, women were often involved in the actual delivery of them to the final destination, since it might have looked suspicious for the muleteers to make unnecessary stops in strange villages. However, no one would think there was anything unusual for a woman to do the same thing, even in an area where she was not well known. Consequently, these women were a nuisance to the Royalists and when found were usually dealt with harshly.

Doña Josefa Huerta Escalante and doña Josefa de Navarette were arrested and charged with having delivered a letter to a royalist officer sent by the Insurgents. Their names first appeared in the investigation being conducted of José Villaseñor, an accused rebel, when he claimed that on August 2, 1811, the two women met him to get a letter addressed to a Lieutenant Monroy. The women delivered it, but he

⁴⁸Don Eugenio de Villasana to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, March 12, 1814, García, DHM, V, 363-64.

did not willingly admit it because he was in love with Josefa de Navarette and wanted to protect her.⁴⁹

After her arrest, Josefa Huerta admitted that it was true that she and Josefa de Navarette had delivered the letter to the Lieutenant in the cemetery of the cathedral, where they found him after first going to the house of the Intendent. She said that her husband, the rebel Manuel Villalongín, had asked her to deliver it, so she did. Although she had offered to carry back an answer for Lieutenant Monroy, he had told her that he would write later.⁵⁰

Josefa de Navarette admitted that she had accompanied Josefa Huerta on the evening of August 2 when she took the letter to Lieutenant Monroy. Asked if she knew what was in the letter, she said that it was a letter of seduction to Lieutenant Monroy asking him to join the Insurgents. She denied having read it, however, and said that she had helped to deliver it only because she had been asked to do so. She did not know, she said, what the outcome would be, nor had she known that she would get into trouble for delivering a letter.⁵¹

⁴⁹Declaration of José Villaseñor, August 28, 1811, Ibid., V, 317.

⁵⁰Declaration of Josefa Huerta Escalante, September 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 320.

⁵¹Declaration of Josefa de Navarette, September 4, 1811, Ibid., V, 321-22.

When the Vocales, or Directors, of the Executive Council of War met on September 16, 1811, to consider the charges and the testimony, the proof of guilt was rather clear and undeniable. Other evidence showed that as a result of the correspondence between Josefa Huerta and her husband, the Insurgents were kept informed of the number of troops in the city and their disposition, together with other news on governmental matters. Josefa de Navarette, they decided, had accompanied Josefa Huerta out of friendship, even though she was aware that to do so was a criminal act against "God, the King, and the Patria." And although she denied it, she was aware of the arrival of other messages from the Insurgents asking about the state of the city, its defenses, and other important matters. Therefore, it was decided that these two women should serve as an example to others who might engage in the same activities.⁵²

That same day, the Fiscal, don Manuel de la Concha, prepared a sentence which stated that Josefa Huerta would be executed while Josefa de Navarette would be confined for a term of eight years in the Casa de Recogidas, or House of Seclusion, in Puebla.⁵³

The father of Josefa Huerta, Gerónimo Huerta Es-

⁵²"Cargos á los Reos," signed by Fiscal don Manuel de la Concha, September 16, 1811, Ibid., V, 322-26.

⁵³Decree of sentence, signed by Fiscal don Manuel de la Concha, September 16, 1811, Ibid., V, 327.

calante, wrote an impassioned plea for mercy to the Viceroy, begging him to spare his daughter's life. She was, he said, a model of the major Christian and political virtues who remained faithful to the King and to the country even though her husband, Manuel Villalongín, forgot his birth and obligations, choosing to ride at the side of the infamous and bloodthirsty Muñoz. In spite of his own efforts to prevent it, Villalongín had influenced Josefa and managed to get her to help him, bringing down upon herself the same evils which Villalongín had brought upon himself. Admitting the guilt of his daughter and pleading for mercy, he asked that the penalty be reduced.⁵⁴ The plea had the desired effect because on November 21, 1811, Viceroy Venegas decreed that the sentence of Josefa Huerta was to be reduced from the death penalty to a term of eight years of seclusion in the Magdalena of Puebla.⁵⁵

There were several other women during this phase of the revolution who were accused of being spies and couriers. Some were caught and imprisoned, others managed to escape. But those who were caught were, for the most part, more fortunate than Josefa Huerta in that they received shorter punishments than she for their crimes. In May, 1812,

⁵⁴Petition of Gerónimo Huerte Escalante, October 17, 1811, Ibid., V, 327-28.

⁵⁵Petition of Gerónimo Huerte Escalante, October 17, 1811, Ibid., V, 327-28.

the Royalist troops of Colonel don Josef de Tovar, Comman-
dant of San Luis Potosí, discovered that one of the courier-
spies around San Felipe was a woman by the name of Rosa
Arroyo. Tovar's forces had been chasing a band of rebels
but were unable to capture them. However, Tovar's men did
manage to catch one straggler, a rebel named Pedro Paz, who
admitted that Rosa Arroyo had sent three letters warning of
the approach of the Royalists. Pedro was executed by a fir-
ing squad, but there is no evidence that Rosa was even caught.⁵⁶
Therefore, she must be considered one of the lucky ones.

Another of the fortunate ones would seem to be
the wife of Ignacio Oyarzábal, Secretary of the Junta of
Zitáquaro, who was denounced in 1813 by Father Manuel Toral
to the Archbishop-Elect of Mexico. Señora Oyarzábal was ac-
cused of delivering the correspondence of Morelos to various
persons in Mexico City. Therefore, the Viceroy's office or-
dered don José Berasueta, Oidor of the Royal Audiencia, to
prepare a trap to catch the woman and some of the correspon-
dence and then to submit a full report to the Viceroy on the
matter.⁵⁷ There is no evidence that Señora Oyarzábal was
ever captured. All that is known is that her husband con-

⁵⁶"Parte del Coronel don Josef de Tovar, Comandan-
te de San Luis Potosí, May 21, 1812," Gazeta del Gobierno de
México, September 5, 1812, III, 942-43.

⁵⁷Office of Viceroy Calleja to don José Ignacio Be-
rasueta, December 24, 1813, García, DHM, V, 456.

tinued to work for the Supreme Junta until 1816, at which time he applied for and was granted a royal pardon.⁵⁸

One of the least fortunate of the courier-spies was María Francisca Aburto, who in 1814 was arrested, tried, and sentenced to spend the remainder of the time that the rebellion lasted in the Casa de Recogidas. According to a letter written to Viceroy Calleja by Governor don José Quevado of Veracruz, Francisca was one of the people who was responsible for keeping the Insurgents informed of what was going on in that city.⁵⁹

María Francisca Dolores del Valle was arrested in 1813 in Mexico City and was found to be carrying letters from the Insurgents addressed to various persons in the capital.⁶⁰ Arrested with her were don Mariano Ávila and his wife, doña Manuela Valentina, but they both later were released. María Francisca was found guilty after she admitted that she had delivered letters for her brother, an Insurgent. In addition, she was accused of being a loose woman. However, it would seem that the latter charge did not make a very great impression on her judges, since she was sentenced to serve a term of only six months in the Casa de Recog-

⁵⁸Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 446.

⁵⁹Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, II, 341.

⁶⁰Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 585.

idas.⁶¹

One of the women arrested during this period only later became a courier for the Insurgents. María Andrea Martínez, nicknamed La Campañera, was arrested on October 15, 1814, together with her husband, Domingo Domínguez, and four other Insurgents, by Captain don José Antonio Dávila. Although no reference was made in the report of the arrest by don Manuel Raíz y Casado to the Military Commandant of Tlaxcala, don Agustín González del Campillo, as to why La Campañera was taken prisoner, it can be assumed that she was actively engaged in the insurrection, since she was sentenced to be shot. However, she discovered that she was pregnant and her execution had to be postponed.⁶² Eventually, she must have received a pardon because after the promulgation of the Plan of Iguala, she became a courier for don Agustín de Iturbide.⁶³

Finally, María Guadalupe, known as La Rompedora, an Indian from the village of San Vicente near Chalco, was a widow who delivered insurgent communications to Texcoco and other villages. Eventually, the colonial authorities

⁶¹Brief extract of a cause instituted against doña María Francisca Dolores del Valle, February 18, 1814, García, DHM, V, 457.

⁶²Amador, Noticias, p. 25.

⁶³Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 365.

heard about her activities and ordered that she be arrested and tried for her crimes, including that of being in secret communication with the Insurgents. However, the information gathered by the Royalists proved to be insufficient, and even though the Subdelegado of Chalco, Lic. don Manuel Neyra, maintained that it would be a mistake to release her and that the village would be disgraced, don Miguel Bataller, Judge Advocate of the Audiencia of Mexico, ordered that she be released on March 21, 1815.⁶⁴

Another of the important groups of women in the revolutionary process were the seductresses, the women who attempted to influence the royalist soldiers to either join the insurgency or to become non-combatants. During the Morelos phase, several women chose this way in which to make their contribution to the success of the cause. Among them were Juana Barrera, María Josefa Anaya, and Luisa Vega, who were brought to the attention of the Viceroy in October, 1813, when Colonel Cristobal Ordóñez sent a message to Viceroy Calleja in which he claimed that the three women had tried to seduce some of his soldiers, namely Corporal Ignacio Inarra, who had remained loyal and had ordered his men to arrest the treacherous females. Colonel Ordóñez urged that the women be investigated and tried quickly so that they could be made public examples, since they had tried to "use

⁶⁴Amador, Noticias, pp. 85-86.

their bodies to advance the success of their ideas."⁶⁵ By October 14, the women had been tried, found guilty of the crime of seduction, and condemned to die as soon as possible.⁶⁶

However, the sentence was not carried out as quickly as Colonel Ordóñez had suggested or would have liked. María Josefa, the wife of an Insurgent referred to only as Anaya, discovered that she was pregnant. Since Spanish law forbade the execution of women who were pregnant because it was believed that the unborn child should not be punished for the crimes of the mother, María Josefa was granted a stay of execution, and eventually she was able to obtain a pardon in 1816.⁶⁷ Juana Barrera also discovered that she was pregnant and, like María Josefa, received a stay of execution and a pardon in 1816.⁶⁸ Of the three, only Luisa Vega was not expecting a child, so it may be assumed that she faced a firing squad.⁶⁹

Ana Victoriana Lara was also arrested and imprisoned in 1813 on the charge of being a seductress as is evident

⁶⁵Colonel Cristobal Ordóñez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, October 8, 1813, García, DHM, V, 452-53.

⁶⁶Colonel don Cristobal Ordóñez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, October 14, 1813, Ibid., V, 453.

⁶⁷Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 36.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 69.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 591.

in some correspondence referring to her. Towards the end of 1813, she sent a letter to the Viceroy in which she set forth the circumstances surrounding her arrest and imprisonment, and asked that she be informed of the charges against her so that she could give proof of her innocence. Identifying herself as a native of the area around Mextitlán, she claimed that she was in the house of Fray Ángel Casado when the commandant of the area came by and arrested her. Although she did not know for certain why she was being arrested, she was placed in a chain gang and conducted to the capital where she was placed in the jail of the Acordada. She claimed that the only crime which she could possibly be guilty of was that of having a son, Antonio Salcedo, who had decided to run off and join the rebels without telling her.⁷⁰

Viceroy Calleja asked for a report on the arrest and on April 1, 1814, he received a letter from Alejandro Álvarez de Guitián in which Ana Victoriana Lara was accused of being a seductress. Álvarez de Guitián admitted that part of his reason for taking her into custody was the fact that her son was an Insurgent. Moreover, Lieutenant Muñoz recognized her as being the seductress of the village and identified her as such to him. Therefore, he arrested her and sent her to the capital so that she would confess her part in bringing

⁷⁰ Ana Victoriana Lara to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, 1813, Ibid., p. 320.

about the uprising in the village of Xihuico.⁷¹ Seemingly, no other information was forthcoming and Calleja could not find sufficient reason to order her continued imprisonment, so on April 24, 1814, he ordered that she be released.⁷²

Another of the accused seductresses, Gertrudis Boccanegra, had joined the insurgency together with her husband, Lazo de la Vega, and their ten year old son immediately after the Grito de Dolores. After both her husband and son were killed in battle, Gertrudis joined her son-in-law, a rebel known only as Gaona. For a while she acted as a courier for the insurgent forces, but eventually Gaona commissioned her to go to Pátzcuaro in a dual role, that of spy and seductress of the royalist forces. Later Gertrudis and her daughter, probably Gaona's wife, were captured by the Royalists and imprisoned in Pátzcuaro. Then on October 10, 1817, Gertrudis was executed in the Plaza de San Agustín.⁷³ However, there is no record of her daughter's name or of what the Royalists finally decided to do with her.

María Bernarda Espinosa was also accused of being a seductress, although that charge did not appear in the record until the Fiscal, or District Attorney, rendered his opinion in the case. According to María Josefa Samano, Ber-

⁷¹Alejandro Álvarez de Guitián to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, April 1, 1814, Ibid., p. 320.

⁷²Ibid., p. 320.

⁷³Ibid., p. 81.

narda left Valladolid (Morelia) on Saturday, September 17, 1815, and did not return until the following Monday, September 19. She presumed that Bernarda had gone off to conduct some business with the Insurgents, since on Saturday there had been a skirmish just outside of the town between rebel and royalist forces. She claimed that when Bernarda discovered that the rebels had won the battle, she was extremely happy and said that that was what she had wanted.⁷⁴ Dolores Delgado corroborated María Josefa's story and added that during the battle, Bernarda had clapped her hands and cheered the rebels.⁷⁵

When Bernarda was called to testify in her own defense, she denied all of the charges against her, saying that they were all false. When asked why she had left immediately after the Insurgents withdrew from the area if she did not have any dealings with them, she said that she did not consider her actions to be suspicious, since other people were leaving town at the same time.⁷⁶

Although no evidence of seduction appeared in the investigation to this point, that was the one thing that the Fiscal tended to dwell on at length in his written opinion

⁷⁴ Declaration of María Josefa Samano, September 18, 1815, García, DHM, V, 375-76.

⁷⁵ Declaration of Dolores Delgado, September 16, 1815, Ibid., V, 376.

⁷⁶ Declaration of María Bernarda Espinosa, September 18, 1815, Ibid., V, 377-78.

because it seems that Bernarda attempted to seduce both the Sister Superior of the jail and another prisoner while she was being held for investigation. The Fiscal declared that:

One of the greatest evils which we have had from the beginning of this war...are the women who, on account of their sex, have been the instrument of seducing all classes of persons....The chance presents itself to us today to be able to make a public example of Bernarda Espinosa, although she does not admit that she had seduced any directly. But she has spewed forth propositions in favor of those who, forgetting the sacred oath which they made to the best of monarchs, take arms, violating the rights and the peace and tranquility which we enjoy.⁷⁷

He therefore recommended that Bernarda Espinosa be sentenced to spend the remainder of her life in seclusion.⁷⁸

When the time came for the judges to determine what her sentence should be, two voted in favor of having her serve a term of eight years in seclusion, while the third voted in favor of having her shot in the back for her treacherous behavior. Captain Francisco Canseca, who voted for seclusion, said that she was guilty of having seduced the Sister Superior of the jail, as well as another prisoner, Guadalupe Valería, since she had told them that the rebel Olivo would come to rescue her even though she was being held incommunicado.⁷⁹ Captain José Punám did not completely believe

⁷⁷Fiscal don Juan María de Azcarate to Colonel don José Antonio Andrade, September 25, 1815, Ibid., V, 378-79.

⁷⁸Ibid., V, 379.

⁷⁹Voto 1, Captain Francisco Canseca, Ibid., V, 380.

the charges and suggested that a more thorough investigation be made of Bernarda's past. Consequently, he voted for seclusion rather than the death penalty.⁸⁰ Finally, Captain Miguel Ignacio de Beistegui voted for the death penalty for two reasons, he said. First, because of her behavior when the royalist forces were defeated, which proved her to be a rebel, and second, because of her behavior in jail in attempting to seduce the Sister Superior and the other prisoner.⁸¹ Since the votes for seclusion were in the majority, María Bernarda was sentenced to serve eight years in the Casa de Recogidas in Valladolid (Morelia).⁸²

However, it would seem that the suggestion of Captain Punám was given serious consideration because on May 20, 1817, Viceroy don Juan Rufz de Apodaca was informed that further investigation had determined that positive proof of the charges against María Bernarda Espinosa could not be found. It was therefore recommended that she be placed in the custody of her husband and that he be made responsible for her future conduct. The Viceroy agreed, and María Bernarda was released from prison.⁸³

⁸⁰Voto 2, Captain José Punám, Ibid., V, 380.

⁸¹Voto 3, Captain Miguel Ignacio de Beistegui, Ibid., V, 380-81.

⁸²Decree of sentence, December 1, 1815, Ibid., V, 381.

⁸³Don Miguel Bataller and don José Ramón Osés to Viceroy don Juan Rufz de Apodaca, May 20, 1817, Ibid., V, 381-82.

Another group of women played a more passive role in the insurgent movement, but their contributions were important to the eventual success of the cause. One of those who supplied the Insurgents with some information concerning conditions in Mexico City was Condésa de Pérez Gálvez. In August, 1812, the editors of the Ilustrador Americano obtained a copy of a letter which the Condésa had sent to her husband, who was in Querétaro. In it she described the unhappiness of the people of the capital over the actions of Viceroy Venegas, saying that rather than trying to end the insurrection, he was trying to prolong it because that was a way for him to insure his own position. She claimed that the government was oppressing the people of Mexico by forcing them to contribute money for the support of the armies. The government, she said, knew the financial abilities of almost every family and exacted from them such large amounts of money that almost everybody was being reduced to a level of poverty.⁸⁴

Another of the women in this grouping was doña María Teruel de Velasco, who was noted during these years for the aid and comfort which she gave to Insurgents held prisoner by the Royalists. A wealthy woman from a respectable and virtuous family, doña María visited the royalist jails in Puebla and Mexico City, as well as some other towns, so that

⁸⁴Ilustrador Americano, August 8, 1812, 68, in García, DHM, III.

she could see and talk to the Insurgents who were held there. Although she was limited in what she could do, her serenity and tranquility were said to have given comfort to some of the prisoners.⁸⁵

Other women contributed money and clothing to help dress and buy arms and munitions for the insurgent forces. María Antonia Agama was reported to have donated two hundred fifty pesos for that purpose in 1813.⁸⁶ The exact contribution of Catarina Llano y Romero was not recorded, but the editors of the newspaper were impressed that she had given anything since her husband, Sr. don José Micheltoarena, was the Minister Accountant of the Viceregal Treasury.⁸⁷

María Ignacia Rodríguez, also known as La Guerra, first earned her reputation as a result of helping raise money for the insurrection during the Hidalgo phase.⁸⁸ She continued working for the revolution as a fund-raiser because in the investigation of Dr. don Francisco Lorenzo de Velasco, it was revealed that he had given María Ignacia Rodríguez five hundred pesos to be used for buying uniforms and horses

⁸⁵ Carrión, Historia de la Ciudad de Puebla de los Ángeles, II, 155-56; D. José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, "Noticias Biográficas de Insurgentes Mexicanas," in García, DHM, V, 477.

⁸⁶ Correo Americano del Sur, April 22, 1813, in García, DHM, IV.

⁸⁷ Correo Extraordinario del Sur, December 28, 1813, (special edition of Correo Americano del Sur), in García, DHM, IV.

⁸⁸ Amador, Noticias, p. 51.

for the insurgent forces.⁸⁹ It therefore would seem that she was able to avoid being captured from 1810 until 1814, and there is no evidence that she was prosecuted for her activities at any time thereafter.

As in the Hidalgo phase of the revolution, there were, during the middle period, several women who were denounced for making seditious statements and speaking in favor of the insurrection. In November, 1812, doña Dolores Arriola and don Vicente Montenegro were denounced to Sr. Brigadier don Manuel Pastor for allegedly manifesting a favorable attitude towards the insurrection. It was recommended that an investigation be made to determine whether the persons so accused were really guilty.⁹⁰ The following day it was reported that Vicente Montenegro had been placed in jail and that Dolores Arriola had been placed in the home of doña Francisca Camberos, where they were to be held until the investigation was complete.⁹¹

On November 15, 1812, a deposition was taken from doña Ana María de Aguilar, who said that she had heard both of the accused speak against those who were attempting to defend the "just cause," and in favor of the Insurgents. She

⁸⁹Don José Antonio de Noriega to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, July 19, 1814, García, DHM, V, 461-62.

⁹⁰Memo, signed by Manuel del Río, November 14, 1812, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, IV, 691.

⁹¹Memo, unsigned, November 15, 1812, Ibid., IV, 691.

said that when the rebels approached Celaya and the royalist troops prepared to go out to drive them off, Commandant Mora ordered that all of the citizens of the town lock their doors and windows, probably so that if the rebels did manage to get into the town, they would not be able to find any provisions, aid, or comfort. Dolores Arriola, said Ana María, told her that she would not comply with the general order, and she kept her door open throughout the entire battle. While she said that she could not remember all of the things that doña Arriola had said, she did know that most of it was favorable to the rebellion.⁹²

Don Josef Ignacio Alfaro, Lieutenant of the First Company of Riflemen and uncle of Ana María de Aguilar, said that he knew nothing about Dolores' refusal to obey Mora's order to lock the houses because he had left the town to go fight the rebels. However, he said, Vicente Montenegro had asked him if he knew that the rebels had captured Mexico City, to which he had responded that he knew nothing about it. He said that as a result of several conversations which he had with his niece, he believed that both of the accused were partisans of the Insurgents.⁹³

Don Vicente Montenegro denied the charges against

⁹²Declaration of doña Ana María de Aguilar, November 15, 1812, Ibid., IV, 691-92.

⁹³Declaration of don Josef Ignacio Alfaro, November 15, 1812, Ibid., IV, 692-93.

him made by Ana Aguilar. He said that one evening when he was having dinner with Dolores Arriola, Ana María was present and that she was drinking both pulque and mescal. Consequently, she was really in no condition to be able to know what either of them had said, and she was apt to have misinterpreted what actually had been said. Moreover, she must not have been aware of the grave prejudices which she would cause by making such accusations. He thus dismissed or denied every charge while indicating that he had only a casual relationship with doña Dolores Arriola.⁹⁴

Like don Vicente, Dolores Arriola denied all of the accusations, saying that she was not addicted to the insurgent cause and calling the rebels evil men, robbers, and assassins. Señorita Aguilar, she said, must have misinterpreted what she had said because none of the charges were true.⁹⁵

On the same day, November 20, the Subdelegado, don Francisco Ventura y Moreno, decided that the investigation should proceed, but that an attempt should be made to determine the truth and to resolve the conflicts in the testimony.⁹⁶ Therefore, the next day he held a session at which

⁹⁴ Declaration of don Vicente Montenegro, November 19, 1812, Ibid., IV, 694-95.

⁹⁵ Declaration of doña Dolores Arriola, November 20, 1812, Ibid., IV, 695-96.

⁹⁶ Memo, signed by don Francisco Ventura y Moreno, Subdelegado de Celaya, November 20, 1812, Ibid., 697.

don Vicente Montenegro, doña Ana María de Aguilar, and Lieutenant don José Ignacio Alfaro were all present. During the course of the meeting, the same charges were repeated and denied, so it was still impossible to resolve the matter. However, Ana María denied that she had ever had any pulque in the presence of don Vicente, although she admitted having had some before he arrived at doña Dolores' house.⁹⁷ The Subdelegado tried the technique again on November 21, holding a session with both doña Dolores Arriola and doña Ana María de Aguilar, but again no questions were resolved.⁹⁸

The matter was finally resolved on December 16 when it was decided that, even though the charges had not been proven, both of the accused had embraced the insurgency. It was further stated that neither had been completely absolved because some of their statements were open to broad interpretations. Therefore, don Vicente, who had no occupation and lived a life of idleness, was ordered to serve for a term of five years in the Royalist Army under the command of the General of the province. Doña Dolores, who was an orphan, was ordered placed in an honorable home within the village which would meet with the approval of the parish priest.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Report of don Francisco Ventura y Moreno, November 20, 1812, Ibid., IV, 697-98.

⁹⁸Report of don Francisco Ventura y Moreno, November 21, 1812, Ibid., IV, 699.

⁹⁹Decree of sentencing, signed by Manuel Pastor, December 16, 1812, Ibid., IV, 700.

Although denunciations of other women were made during this time, there is insufficient evidence of the final outcomes of the cases, so they are not being included. Suffice it to say that in 1813 in Querétaro, a series of denunciations were lodged against Manuela Osoreo, Teresa Osoreo, Mariana Bustillos, and María Candejas to the effect that they had made various statements in favor of the Insurgents. These denunciations were sent on to the Viceroy by Father Torral in his report on the state of the city of Querétaro from April 30, 1813 to May 16, 1814.¹⁰⁰ But there is no indication of whether the Viceroy decided to take any action in response to this report. Finally, it is known that Antonia Ochoa was arrested and imprisoned for making seditious statements, but what they were, and how long she was forced to remain in prison are not known.¹⁰¹

Other women were imprisoned, but what their crimes may have been is not known. For example, in November, 1811, María Ignacia Moretín, a native of Guanajuato who was either in jail or had just gotten out, sent a petition to the Intendant of Guanajuato, don Fernando Marañón, asking that her daughter, María Josefa Natera, be allowed to serve her year

¹⁰⁰"Denuncias, noticias y otras documentos relativos al estado en que se halla la ciudad de Querétaro--Del 30 de Abril de 1813 al 16 de Mayo de 1814," Ibid., II, 346-51.

¹⁰¹"Lista de Cuatro Mujeres Presas por el Gobierno Virreinal, con expresión del motivo de su prisión y del tiempo que debía ésta--1815," García, DHM, V, 362.

sentence of imprisonment at home, since she was gravely ill with tuberculosis. María Ignacia said that she would be willing to put up a bond for her daughter in the amount of three hundred pesos, since a year in seclusion for her was comparable to a death sentence.¹⁰² On November 8, 1811, the Intendant ruled that María Josefa's sentence should be commuted to a year of seclusion in her home. He decreed that she would be able to leave that seclusion only to go to Mass.¹⁰³ However, no mention was made of the crimes which either of these women had committed to merit a year of imprisonment.

The same thing prevails in the case of doña Francisca Michelena who, in 1814, was serving a term of seclusion in the Colegio de Carmelitas in Valladolid (Morelia) for the crime of disloyalty. Considering the many possible interpretations of the word "disloyalty," there is no way to determine what her exact crime may have been. In February of that year, her mother, doña María Rita Espinosa y Ramírez, wrote a petition to the President of the Consejo de Guerra asking that her daughter be released from her imprisonment, saying that while she did not comprehend the seriousness of Francisca's crimes, she needed her daughter at home. She

¹⁰²María Ignacia Moretín to Intendant don Fernando Marañón, November 8, 1811, Ibid., V, 449-50.

¹⁰³Decree of Intendant don Fernando Marañón, November 8, 1811, Ibid., V, 450-51.

claimed that she was unable to maintain herself since her daughter had previously taken care of her, and moreover, Francisca was now ill and in need of help to recover her health.¹⁰⁴ However, it is not known whether the colonial officials saw fit to respond favorably to this petition, nor are the original crimes of Francisca Michelena known.

María Ricarda Rosales was taken prisoner in October, 1814, in the action at Maguey, but at the time she was taking care of her younger cousin, José Rosales, rather than taking part in the fight. María Ricarda's father, Fulgencio Rosales, was an Insurgent, so that was probably the reason that she was sent to the prison of the Inquisition in Mexico City. It is probable that she did not stay in prison long enough for an investigation to have been completed, since doña Leona Vicario is credited with having helped her to escape.¹⁰⁵ The reason for imprisoning Micaela Apeszechea was quite clear--her father, Fermín Apeszechea, was an Insurgent, so the girl was placed in an asylum for the poor until such time as her father would present himself to claim her.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Doña María Rita Espinosa y Ramírez to the President of the Consejo de Guerra de Valladolid, February 28, 1814, Ibid., V, 458.

¹⁰⁵Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, I, 204; Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 515.

¹⁰⁶"Lista de Cuatro Mujeres Presas por el Gobierno Virreinal, con expresión del motivo de su prisión y del tiempo que debía ésta--1815," García, DHM, V, 382; Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 40.

Another of the women whom the Royalists seemed to have been pleased to have among their prisoners was the wife of the insurgent Sandoval, known as La Emperatriz. She and two other women were taken prisoner following a battle near Valladolid (Morelia) in July, 1811,¹⁰⁷ but what happened to her thereafter is not known. It is probable that she remained in prison until such time as Sandoval was either captured and executed or else asked for a pardon.

During the Morelos phase, there was an effort made by the Royalists to arrest as many of the wives and mistresses of the known Insurgents as possible. Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide issued a Bando in 1814 which provided for such arrests, but the policy was followed somewhat before that time, although never in the broad manner nor with the harshness which would be characteristic of Iturbide's orders, as will be seen in Chapter IX.

The entire family and household of the insurgent leader Julian Villagrán was arrested and imprisoned in 1813, seemingly because of their relationship to him. Included in the arrest were María Anastasia Mejía, his wife; María Dolores, María Micaela, María Antonia, María Rita, María Rafaela, and María Pentaleona, his daughters; María Guadalupe Nieva,

¹⁰⁷"Parte del Sr. Colonel D. Manuel del Río, Comandante en jefe del real cuerpo de Acordada de la Nueva Galicia," July 22, 1813, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, September 7, 1811, III, 1813; Amador, Noticias, p. 46; Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 183.

Guadalupe Rubio, and María Rosa, his daughters-in-law; María Chaves and María Antonia, his servants; and María Ignacia Anella, the wife of Juan José García, and María Dolores Morán, the wife of Manuel Chaves.¹⁰⁸

María Anastasia Mejía sent a message to the Viceroy in which she said that she understood that she and her entire family and household had been arrested because they were accomplices in the crimes of her husband, Julian Villagrán, and that because of this, they were supposed to be taken to the capital as prisoners. The family, she said, did not share the beliefs of her husband, and she claimed that the parish priests of Tecosautla and Zimapan would swear that her conduct, and that of her family, was above reproach. Thus, she asked that they be released, under bond if necessary, so they could continue their own lives.¹⁰⁹

Julian Villagrán, the rebel leader who had captured don Juan Collado, the Oidor who was sent to Querétaro to prosecute the conspirators of 1810, and was forced to release his prisoners, was finally captured on June 13, 1813, and executed eight days later.¹¹⁰ Only then did Viceroy Calleja

¹⁰⁸"Lista de las personas de la familia del jefe Insurgente Villagrán capturadas en Ixmiquilpan," García, DHM, V, 454.

¹⁰⁹Doña María Anastasia Mejía to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, n.d., Ibid., V, 454-55.

¹¹⁰Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 604.

decide that the Villagrán family should be released from custody. Hence they remained in prison until October 14, 1813, when they were finally released.¹¹¹

On June 13, 1814, Colonel don Cristobal Ordóñez reported to Viceroy Calleja that he had captured Gertrudis Jiménez, the wife of the Insurgent Pascacio, María Antonia García, wife of the Insurgent Andrade, and María Guadalupe Bernal, mistress of Atilano García. He asked for instructions on what to do with them--send them to prison until such time as their husbands and lovers surrendered themselves and asked for a pardon, or simply release them.¹¹² The three women were taken to Tula for investigation, but it was decided that they were not responsible for the actions of their husbands, and they were placed at liberty.¹¹³

In July, 1814, José Antonio de Andrade reported that he had captured doña María del Carmen Inojosa, the wife of don José María Bentancourt, doña María Dolores Vallejo, wife of don José Antonio Pérez, and doña María Dolores Pérez, daughter of the latter. He reported that he was sending them to Valladolid (Morelia), where the commander of the

¹¹¹Don Manuel de la Hoz to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, October 24, 1813, García, DHM, V, 455.

¹¹²Colonel don Cristobal Ordóñez to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, June 14, 1814, Ibid., V, 459.

¹¹³Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, pp. 37, 77, 221, 309.

battalion could decide what should be done with them.¹¹⁴ However, it is not known how long these women remained in prison, although it is assumed that they were released after their husbands either surrendered or were captured or killed.

The last woman to be considered here did not actually take part in the revolutionary movement. Instead, she gave five sons to it. Doña Rafaela López Aguado de Rayón, a widow descended from an old and respectable Spanish family, saw to it that her sons received a good education and entered the professions of their choice. Her first son completed a course of professional studies, the second entered commerce, and the third remained at home to look after the family estates with the help of the youngest two sons. When the insurrection began, all of doña Rafaela's sons decided to join. Everything went well until 1815 when the youngest, Francisco, was taken prisoner by the Royalists. The colonial officials decided that they would offer doña Rafaela a deal. They would spare the life of Francisco if she could get her other sons to agree to surrender and ask for pardons. Although this offer was tempting, doña Rafaela realized that she could not make such a decision for her other four sons. Consequently, she had to refuse, and the Royalists carried out the

¹¹⁴"Parte de José Antonio de Andrade a Sr. General del Ejército del Norte Brigadier D. Ciriaco de Llano," July 20, 1814, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, September 8, 1814, V, 1005.

sentence as originally ordered.¹¹⁵

It thus becomes evident that there were many women who were active in the independence movement during the middle, or Morelos, phase. Whether this was in response to the propaganda directed to them or simply the result of a deep and abiding desire to aid with the cause which they believed was just is not known, and there is really no way to make such a determination. Their actions differed little from those of the women who were active during the Hidalgo phase, or, as will be discussed, from those who took part in the final years of the movement. Although there were more women active during this phase than during the time of Hidalgo, this could partly be explained by the fact that the Morelos phase lasted almost five years, while the Hidalgo phase was extremely short. One might also explain it by saying that this period encompasses the years in which the revolutionary movement reached somewhat of a climax in that there was a great deal of activity. But in reality, the important point is that women were involved in greater numbers during this period as evidenced by the fact that more came to the attention of the Royalists and were arrested. Moreover, the women were, during this period, considered dangerous and greater efforts were made by the Royalists to control

¹¹⁵Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, I, 242-44.

them and their possible influence.

CHAPTER IX

ITURBIDE'S PERSECUTION OF WOMEN, 1814-1815

The royalist officials became angered and disgusted by the idea of their troops being seduced by female agents of the Insurgents. The women had the ability to demoralize the soldiers and to convince them that they should forget their allegiance to the Crown and join the insurgent movement. The women who were involved in this kind of activity were probably from the lower classes and were, for the most part, uneducated. Consequently, they were unable to work for the revolution in the same way as those women having more wealth, better educations, or more influential positions in society. But they did the best they could with the resources at hand, and since for some women the only readily available resources were their sex and their feminine wiles, these were the weapons used in the fight against Spanish domination. At least one of these women was able to make a deep impression on a high ranking royalist officer, namely, Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide, Commandant General of the Provinces of Guanajuato. The Royalists realized that women were able to perform important services for the Insurgents and eventually decided that it would be necessary to make some

kind of reprisals against them. In this, Iturbide was to lead the way.

When the independence movement began in 1810, don Agustín de Iturbide was a Lieutenant in the Regiment of the Province of Valladolid. However, he later claimed that Father Hidalgo offered him the rank of Lieutenant General if he would join the Insurgents, but that he refused because he thought the entire movement was ill-conceived and would cause only chaos and disorder.¹ He remained with the royalist forces and gradually rose in rank, until by 1814 he was appointed Commandant General of the Province of Guanajuato.

In 1814, Iturbide's troops established their headquarters in Irapuato and set about the tasks of raising more troops and organizing a defense for the towns and villages in the immediate vicinity. For a while Iturbide was quite successful and soon found that his men were capturing large numbers of prisoners. However, he lacked the facilities to guard them properly, so he commanded that those prisoners who were found bearing arms against the forces of the King be shot, a command which was in accordance with various decrees which had been issued over a period of time. Iturbide refused to make any exceptions to that rule, even for women,

¹Don Agustín de Iturbide, A Statement of Some of the Principal Events in the Public Life of Agustín de Iturbide, Written by Himself (Washington, D.C.: Documentary Publications, 1971), pp. 5-6.

since the decree had made none.²

Because of this, Iturbide had a reputation for harshness, and the arrival of his troops in and around Salamanca was an occasion for terror and fear on the part of many who in the past had either tacitly or actively supported the Insurgents. Some residents became frightened and left their homes to seek refuge elsewhere, while others locked themselves in their houses and hoped that they would be safe and that the Royalists would not bother them.³ There are two accounts of the events which occurred during this period, one a highly romanticized version, the other a documentary account. Since the documents do not indicate what events took place leading up to the arrest of María Tomasa Esteves y Salas, and since there is usually at least a grain of truth in revolutionary legends, both will be used here.

According to the popular account, one day there was a sudden commotion in the streets of Salamanca as two young soldiers went from door to door asking to be admitted. They claimed that they had been forced into service in the Royalist Army and that now they were trying to escape. They

²José María de Liceaga, Adiciones y Rectificaciones, p. 236. Although there are several such bandos, one can cite the proclamation of Brigadier don Félix María Calleja, dated January 26, 1811, which provided for the execution of anyone captured with arms in their hands. This was to apply to all persons, "without distinction of quality or sex...." (Gazeta del Gobierno de México, February 5, 1811, II, 107.)

³Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, pp. 121-22.

came to the house of María Tomasa Esteves y Salas who, after hearing their story, wanted to let them in, although her mother counseled her not to and warned her of the terrible dangers which might befall her. But María Tomasa, who was in sympathy with the ideas of the revolution, said that she did not care if it cost her her life because she wanted to help save the two young men from the Royalists.⁴

Within a short time, the absence of the two soldiers was noticed by Colonel Flon, their commanding officer, who ordered that the town be searched and the men be brought back. It was not difficult for the soldiers to find the deserters, and soon both they and María Tomasa were taken into custody. Because of the standing orders, the Colonel ordered that all three prisoners be shot.⁵ María Tomasa's husband appeared and tried to make a deal with the Colonel, offering his life for that of his wife, but the Colonel rejected the offer.⁶

Three days later the executions were carried out. Supposedly the two soldiers lost consciousness and had to be carried to the plaza where the firing squad was waiting, but María Tomasa walked with a firm step, her face upturned to heaven, to face her death. She allegedly made but one re-

⁴Ibid., p. 122.

⁵Ibid., p. 122.

⁶Ibid., p. 122.

quest, namely, that the soldiers try not to hit her face with their bullets. The soldiers then carried out their orders, their eyes filled with tears.⁷

The documentary account of the arrest and execution of María Tomasa can be found in the diary and correspondence of don Agustín de Iturbide, although he did not mention the circumstances surrounding her capture. On July 31, 1814, Iturbide noted in his journal that he knew there were deserters in the area around the village of Valtierra and that they had joined the Insurgents who lived in that area. They were said to be trying to seduce more of his troops, so he ordered a party to go out to find them and bring back the deserters.⁸

On Friday, August 5, he wrote in his journal that three criminals had been apprehended in Valtierra and that they had been executed by a firing squad. Then he added that as a result of their final statements, there was going to be an investigation of one of the women of the neighborhood who was said to be the principal agent in getting soldiers to desert and whose behavior the previous month was said to have been scandalous. He said that she would be apprehended and

⁷Ibid., pp. 122-23.

⁸Entry for July 31, 1814, in Iturbide's diary. México. Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, Documentos para la Historia de la Guerra de Independencia, 1810-1824, Tomo XI: Correspondencia y Diario Militar de Don Agustín de Iturbide, 1814 (México: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1926), II, 231. Cited hereinafter as Iturbide, 1814, II.

that if the charges were sustained, he would command that she be shot because of the enormity of the crimes which she allegedly had committed. Moreover, it would be possible to make an example of her and to give warning to others of her sex who might want to emulate her actions. The notation for Tuesday, August 9, was very short and to the point--"The woman seductress was shot by the firing squad, and her head has been placed in the public plaza...."⁹

On September 17, Iturbide reported the incident to the Viceroy, saying that María Tomasa had been shot because she had been commissioned, presumably by the Insurgents, to seduce the troops. According to his report, she had "withdrawn many fruits by her beautiful figure since the patriotism of the soldiers was not very refined."¹⁰ As will be seen, Iturbide was not able to forget the beauty of María Tomasa, nor would he lose sight of the fact that the women were able to pose a threat to the Royalist aim of squelching the insurrection.

Viceroy don Félix María Calleja was well aware of the fact that people were still joining the insurgent movement in great numbers. In a sarcastic message to his Mini-

⁹Entries for August 5-9, 1814, in Iturbide's diary, Ibid., II, 231-32.

¹⁰"Parte del Sr. Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide," Gazeta del Gobierno de México, October 1, 1814, V, 1083-84.

ster of War dated August 18, 1814, he complained that there were probably six million inhabitants of New Spain who favored the revolutionary cause, (although this was physically impossible since there were not that many inhabitants in all of New Spain). Each, he said, worked for that cause in his own way and according to his own possibilities. Consequently, the magistrates and their assistants were dismissing the guilty, the ecclesiastics were preaching the justice of the movement in the confessionals and even at times in the pulpits, and the women were seducing the troops of the government with their attractiveness, sometimes going to the extremes of prostituting themselves, in order to convince the soldiers to change sides.¹¹

The anger manifested by Viceroy Calleja soon filtered down to the commanders in the field, and the generals decided that it was time to institute more stringent measures in dealing with the insurgents. Don Agustín de Iturbide seemed to be in complete accord with the Viceroy and within a short time began to take steps which he believed would help identify and isolate those who supported the insurgency. On October 29, 1814, he published a bando setting forth the ways in which he proposed to treat with Insurgents. He de-

¹¹Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to the Minister of War, August 18, 1814, in Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 443. Alamán cited as his source of this letter the supplement to the first edition of Bustamante's Cuadro Histórico.

creed that the loyal and faithful citizens should be protected from those infected with the rebellious spirit; therefore, the rebels and their partisans should be segregated. He then proclaimed that the wives and minor children of those men who had embraced the revolutionary movement were to be subject to the same fate as that of their husband or father. He gave the women three days in which to reunite themselves with their male relatives, saying that anyone who did not do so would be punished with all of the rigor of the law.¹²

A few days later, he issued a series of instructions and orders to his officers concerning the manner in which they were to deal with the Insurgents. He commanded that his bando of October 29, 1814, be posted in every village and town so that the people would have full knowledge of it. Then, after the proscribed time had elapsed, the officers were to be certain that all of the provisions of the proclamation were fully complied with and that the women who did not join their husbands or fathers were to be placed under arrest and taken under guard to the Provincial Headquarters. In addition to this, the officers were to seize any properties and monies that the women might have and then burn their

¹²"Bando del Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide, Hacienda de Villachuato, October 29, 1814," Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 430-31.

houses, including the ones which were inhabited.¹³

In some respects, Iturbide was anticipating Viceroy Calleja in that before Calleja ordered such measures, he decreed the confiscation of the properties of the women who were arrested in accordance with the provisions of his bando. Not until December 9, 1814, did the Viceroy promulgate a decree ordering that the properties and possessions of those persons who passed over to the insurgency be confiscated, even if they had not been formally tried for the crime of disloyalty, because they were automatically to be considered rebels. If any goods were confiscated which could not easily be stored, or which would spoil during a prolonged storage, they were to be sold at as high a price as possible, and the money was to be turned over to the government. Finally, he reiterated his order that any Insurgents who were captured and who had borne arms against the legitimate government were to be shot without any formalities, and that their property was to be confiscated and inventoried.¹⁴ Consequently, Iturbide began carrying out the wishes of the Viceroy more than a month before those wishes were publically expressed.

¹³"Reglamento o instrucción general para la Comandantes de las partidas patrióticas que han de obrar en la conferencia de sus respectivos pueblos, debiendo reservarla para si bajo su palabra de honor," November 1, 1814, Iturbide, 1814, II, 252.

¹⁴"Bando del Virrey don Félix María Calleja sobre confiscación de bienes á los insurgentes, December 9, 1814," Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, V, 752-53.

Meanwhile, Iturbide began carrying out his own orders. In a notation in his diary on November 8, 1814, he recorded the fact that he and some of his troops had marched to the village of Pénjamo and that the proclamation had been publicly displayed as had been ordered. He reiterated the law to himself and again said that any woman found not to be in full compliance with the law would be subjected to the same treatment as that given to a rebel soldier bearing arms.¹⁵ On November 30, he noted that his division had moved on to the Hacienda de Barajas, taking with them all of the prisoners captured in Pénjamo in accordance with the Bando of October 29. He attempted to justify his action by saying that he had been forced to make the decision to arrest the women because experience had taught him there was really no other way to deal with the problem.¹⁶ Then on December 6, he noted that a large band of his soldiers had left for Guanajuato acting as an escort for the women prisoners.¹⁷

When these actions failed to have the desired effect

¹⁵Entry for November 8, 1814 in Iturbide's diary, Iturbide, 1814, II, 283.

¹⁶Entry for November 30, 1814, in Iturbide's diary. México, Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, Documentos para la Historia de la Guerra de Independencia, 1810-1824, Tomo XVI: Correspondencia y Diario Militar de Don Agustín de Iturbide, 1815-1821, Tomo III (México: Talleres Gráficas de la Nación, 1930), 60. Cited hereinafter as Iturbide, 1815-1821, III.

¹⁷Entry for December 6, 1814, Ibid., III, 63.

on the rebels in the area, as was evident from the fact that they continued to burn the houses, fields, and haciendas of persons who remained loyal to the Crown, Iturbide became angry and began devising ways in which he could force the Insurgents to lay down their arms and cease their terror tactics. On December 30, 1814, he published a bando setting forth new instructions which, in reality, changed the status of the women taken prisoners because they had refused to join their insurgent relatives from that of prisoner to hostage. Iturbide declared that if the rebels burned even so much as a hut belonging to a faithful citizen, a tenth of the women held prisoner in Guanajuato and Irapuato would be taken out and shot, and their heads would be cut off and placed on public display in those areas where the Insurgents were most active. If the rebels assassinated any loyal and faithful citizens of New Spain, a third of the women would be executed and their heads would be placed on public display. And if the rebels killed a royalist soldier or courier other than in the course of battle, all of the women remaining in custody would be executed, and no exceptions would be made. Finally, he decreed that if the execution of the women was not enough to force the Insurgents to desist from their acts of terror, the royalist forces would go into those villages which were known to harbor the rebels and completely raze them. He ordered that the bando be displayed in every town and village in the usual public places so that everyone would be familiar

with the new law, and no one could plead ignorance of it.¹⁸

The following day, December 31, he noted in his journal that the insurgent leader, José Antonio Torres, a rebel priest noted for his fierceness, had posted an order in the province of Guanajuato signed by the Revolutionary Junta saying that all of the haciendas and ranches within a five mile radius of the villages of citizens who supported the royalist forces would be burned or destroyed. Therefore, said Iturbide, he had ordered that his proclamation of the previous day be circulated in the province as a warning to the Insurgents.¹⁹

Iturbide's proclamation was not allowed to pass unnoticed. On January 6, 1815, Dr. don Antonio Labarrieta, the Rector of the Cathedral of Guanajuato, sent a letter to the Viceroy protesting the cruel and inhumane provisions contained in Iturbide's proclamation of December 30, 1814, complaining that it was not in keeping with the Spanish character of piety and generosity. The Viceroy replied that he would consult with Iturbide but reminded Labarrieta that it was necessary to use harsh measures against the Insurgents since they behaved in such a barbarous and cruel manner.²⁰

¹⁸"Bando de Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide, Villa de Salamanca, December 30, 1814," Iturbide, 1814, II, 314-15.

¹⁹Entry for December 30, 1814 in Iturbide's diary, Iturbide, 1815-1821, III, 71.

²⁰William Spence Robertson, Iturbide of Mexico (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1952), p. 29.

Since Iturbide went into the village of Pénjamo and arrested all of the women who were not living with their husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, or lovers, it would seem that he believed all of those women were either insurgent sympathizers or that their male relatives were Insurgents. Since it was evident that the rebels were receiving moral support, and probably material support in the form of food, medicine, and bandages from some villages--and the most likely villages to provide such support would be those in which their female relatives lived--Iturbide felt justified in arresting those women. Moreover, since the Insurgents were using guerrilla tactics rather than engaging in long series of battles, the Royalists must have felt a deep sense of frustration because they could not always see their enemy, nor could they always identify the Insurgents. Consequently, by arresting the women, Iturbide believed that he could not only cut off part of the rebels' source of supply but also possibly force them to lay down their arms and ask for a pardon by making that a part of the condition for the release of the women.

Iturbide's ploy had at least part of the desired effect on the Insurgents. They thought that he probably would carry out his threat, namely, that he would execute the women prisoners, because they ceased their tactics of burning and destroying property and killing whatever Royalists or royalist sympathizers they happened to find. On

March 17, 1815, Iturbide informed Calleja that the proclamation was having a good effect in some regions, especially around León, Silao, and Salamanca, where there had been no burnings or killings since the publication of the decree. Hence, he said, it had not been necessary to harm the women because the Insurgents had curbed their excesses. However, he cautioned the Viceroy, if for any reason the Insurgents should decide that he would not or could not carry through with his threats, they would probably return to their policy of terror and destruction, and this would oblige him to enforce the measures set forth in the bando of December 30, 1814.²¹ It would thus seem that not even Iturbide was certain about how to class the women arrested by his troops. At times he seemed to think of them as prisoners, at other times as hostages.

Iturbide did very little to make himself well-liked in the areas that he controlled as Commandant of the Army of the North. After taking command of Guanajuato, he became involved in some commercial dealings which were not quite legal. When he returned to Guanajuato in 1815 after consulting with the Viceroy on the best ways to pacify the region, he took with him a consignment of quicksilver and other materials needed to keep the mining industry running, but he overcharged

²¹Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, March 17, 1815, Iturbide, 1815-1821, III, 71.

for the goods, much to the detriment of the industry.²²

Eventually, Iturbide's behavior became so obnoxious to the people of the regions around Guanajuato that a delegation of citizens sent a representation to the Viceroy asking that Iturbide be removed from his command. Even though he had earned numerous military honors and the praise of both Calleja and his predecessor, the Viceroy had no choice but to suspend him from his command and order him to appear to answer the charges against him. Consequently, Iturbide arrived in the capital on April 21, but Calleja decided not to dismiss him outright but rather to give him a chance to regain his honor. While Calleja continued his investigation, Iturbide was dispatched in command of five hundred men to aid General don Manuel de la Concha. Calleja then decided to send a message to the principal and most influential citizens in the province of Guanajuato asking them to submit a report on the civil, political, military, and Christian conduct of Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide.²³

Dr. don Antonio de Labarriets, the Rector of the Cathedral of Guanajuato, was not satisfied with his previous complaint against Iturbide since it had accomplished nothing. Thus, he was one of those who submitted a highly critical report on him. Supposedly, the Rector had originally been in

²²Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 49.

²³Ibid., IV, 417.

sympathy with the independence movement, but after Hidalgo was captured and executed, he decided that it would be more profitable to be a royalist sympathizer. Consequently, he asked for and received a pardon. However, he was said to be angry with Iturbide for delaying the triumph of the revolutionary movement, since he still wanted to see it succeed.²⁴ He was therefore willing to submit another denunciation of Iturbide in July, 1816.

In it, Labarrieta said that the art of good government consisted partly in keeping the people happy. The goal of the royalist government should be to attract the hearts and minds of more people to the just cause of the King and to confirm them in their adherence to and love of their rightful monarch. But without justice there could be no good government, and Iturbide was unjust. He had arrested a multitude of women in Pénjamo and had taken them from their homes as prisoners, placing them in jail without conducting any kind of an investigation or lodging any charges against them. Although many of the women were innocent, they had been in prison for almost two years. Moreover, he said, Iturbide had forced the women and children whose husbands or fathers were rebels to leave the villages wherein lived the loyal and faithful citizens, telling them that failure to do so would result

²⁴Caruso, The Liberators of Mexico, p. 182; Robertson, Iturbide of Mexico, p. 39.

in the death penalty. Consequently, Iturbide was unjust and had acted in a despotic manner, so he should be removed from his command.²⁵

Iturbide heard about Labarrieta's accusations and sent a response to the Viceroy on August 14, 1816. In it, he denied that he had ever acted despotically and said that he could submit documents to substantiate his claim. Moreover, he said that instead of trying to be excessively cruel to the women whom he had imprisoned, he had simply wanted to force their male relatives to lay down their arms and become peace-loving citizens. Of the one hundred eighty women originally arrested, only eighty remained in prison as of that time. Therefore, the charges against him were false and unfair.²⁶

Both Calleja and the Judge Advocate, don Miguel Battaller, decided that even though Iturbide was clearly guilty of some of the charges made against him, especially that of illegally carrying on commercial relations in Guanajuato, they did not think that he should be stripped of his rank or placed in prison. Consequently, Calleja ordered that a pro-

²⁵"Informe del Dr. don Antonio de Labarrieta, July 8, 1816," México, Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, Documentos para la Historia de la Guerra de Independencia, Tomo XXIII: Correspondencia Privada de don Agustín de Iturbide y Otros Documentos de la Epoca (México: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1933), p. 7. Cited hereinafter as Correspondencia Privada.

²⁶Robertson, Iturbide of Mexico, p. 40.

clamation be published in which he said that there was not enough merit to the accusations to warrant either the arrest or removal of Iturbide from his military positions. However, if the accusers wanted to come forward and formally present their statements, he would set in motion a more formal investigation which would fully comply with the provisions of the law. While it would seem that Viceroy Calleja wanted to avoid any public punishment or disgrace for Iturbide because of his past achievements, he did appoint a new Commandant for the Army of the North and new Commandants for the provinces of Guanajuato and Michoacán. Iturbide was thus temporarily semi-retired.²⁷

As Iturbide noted, only eighty of the one hundred eighty women whom he arrested in 1814 were still in prison in the spring of 1816. Most of the women who managed to obtain their release are unknown. They simply faded away. According to one of Iturbide's biographers, some were rather delicate creatures, some were pregnant, others were ill and suffering from all kinds of infirmities, and some died as a result of their imprisonment.²⁸ But Iturbide made no exceptions. All those who were found not to be living with their male relatives and whose husbands or fathers were believed to be rebels were arrested.

²⁷Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 421-22.

²⁸Heliodoro Valle, Iturbide, Varón de Dios, p. 28.

As early as January 3, 1815, one of the women arrested by Iturbide's men wrote a letter to him petitioning for her freedom. She was not one of the women caught in the general roundup but rather was one of the persons arrested at about the same time as María Tomasa Esteves y Salas in Salamanca. In her petition, María Dolores Barroso said that she was arrested on July 28, 1814, by don Crescencio Rodríguez, who was acting on the orders of don Agustín de Iturbide. For the five months since then, she had been languishing in prison, guilty of nothing more than having a friendship with a priest.²⁹ Iturbide, however, gave no indication of whether he was willing to listen to or consider her plea, but it is doubtful that he would do so since her petition coincided with the time of the issuance of the Bando providing for the execution of the women prisoners if the rebels did not stop their acts of terror.

The women who sent their petitions to the Viceroy at the same time that Labarrieta was making his accusations were more fortunate in gaining the attention of someone who could help them and who was willing to listen to them. A list of women held prisoner in the Casa de Recogidas in Irapuato was drawn up in May, 1816, possibly as a part of the investigation of Iturbide as ordered by Viceroy Calleja. The

²⁹Doña María Dolores Barroso to Señor Commandante General don Agustín de Iturbide, January 3, 1815, Correspondencia Privada, p. 48.

list, however, did not indicate what the charges were against most of the women, although it did note the length of time that most had already served. Included among the prisoners in Irapuato were: doña María Arias, serving eighteen months; doña Antonia González, eighteen months; doña María Josefa Paul, seven months; doña Juana Villaseñor and her daughter, doña María Sixtos, five months; doña María Vicenta Yzarrariás, who was imprisoned in response to the petition of a married woman; María Vicenta Espinosa, nineteen months; María Dominga, wife of a muleteer, nineteen months; María Josefa González, a widow, eighteen months; María Juliana Romero, eighteen months; Ana María Machuca, a widow with three daughters, eighteen months; and Micaela Vedolla, wife of a muleteer, nineteen months.³⁰ There is no evidence that any of these women had committed serious crimes, although it is probably that doña María Vicenta Yzarrariás had been accused of committing adultery. Since it is known that at least some of these women were arrested because they were related to Insurgents, as will be discussed shortly, it is probably that the rest were arrested for the same reason.

On July 8, 1816, two of the women being held prisoner in the Casa de Recogidas in Guanajuato, Francisca Vri-ve [sic] and María Bribiesca, wrote a letter to the Intendant

³⁰"Lista de la presas que hay en la Casa de Recogidas de Irapuato por cuenta de la Comandancia General del Ejército del Norte, May 24, 1816," García, DHM, V, 385-86-

of Guanajuato complaining that they and their fourteen compatriots had been held prisoners for over a year by order of Sr. Commandant General don Agustín de Iturbide. Begging that someone agree to listen to their plea, they said that it would be better if they were tried, found guilty, and sent to Purgatory rather than to continue to exist in the manner in which they presently found themselves. So much suffering was inflicted on them that they had reached the point where they hoped for death as a release from their misery. Their rooms, they said, were austere, the air was fetid, there was insufficient protection from the weather, and they were not fed sufficiently to enable them to maintain any semblance of health. If it was not against all of the laws of the Holy Mother Church, they would seriously consider the possibility of suicide. Thus, they said, it was necessary that someone listen to their plea and give it proper recognition and consideration.³¹

The women referred to the two bandos promulgated by Iturbide, the first of which provided for the arrest of female relatives of Insurgents, and the second which threatened to execute and decapitate a third of the women if the Insurgents committed certain kinds of crimes. They said that three days after the publication of the first decree, Itur-

³¹Petition of Francisca Vrive and María Bribiesca et al., July 8, 1816, Ibid., V, 386-87.

bide arrived in Pénjamo and there discovered many women. He sent them to Irapuato and to Guanajuato, where they were placed in the Casa de Recogidas. The manner in which the arrests were carried out was so harsh and cruel that one of the women who happened to be outside of her house at the time of the arrest was not allowed to go back inside to get her infant from the cradle so she could nurse it. Instead, she was forced to abandon the child. The women were then forced to walk the entire distance from Pénjamo to Guanajuato, suffering insults and mistreatment from the soldiers the entire distance. Then they were locked up in a prison, which was much too small for so many women, and where the air was filthy and there was not enough food. Because of the unsanitary conditions and the spread of smallpox throughout the prison, many women and children died.³²

This, however, was not the worst of the conditions. Even more terrible than the lack of food and the unsanitary conditions was the terrible fear that at any time they might be taken out and executed for the crimes committed by their relatives. If the Insurgents committed a certain class of crime, a tenth of them would be killed; if it was a crime of a more serious nature, a third would be killed; and there was even a provision whereby all of them might be executed for the crimes of their relatives. Never, they said, had they

³²Ibid., V, 387.

been charged with a crime, nor had they been told what they had done wrong. Consequently, Iturbide deprived them of any hope, since he seemed to believe that they were getting a just punishment.³³

The women said that it would do no good to reflect on the relative justice of what had happened to them, on the harshness of the punishment, or on the sorrowful results which it had produced, since that would only make the resentment even greater. They were, they claimed, peasants and rustics. Most had taken no part in the insurrection, but some had spoken favorably about it. However, they said, how was it possible to do otherwise if a woman was living with rebels and to speak otherwise could result in death? Although they had been captured and they had at one time shared some of the ideas of the revolution, there was really nothing they could do to counterbalance the views of their husbands or fathers. And more important, they said, was the fact that Spanish law did not recognize crimes committed by women, considering such crimes to be unimportant. Even the Church looked with indulgence on the heresies of women. Therefore, considering all they had suffered without ever having been sentenced, did the authorities really believe that they deserved more? And if they were just being held

³³Ibid., V, 388.

as hostages, why was the treatment so cruel?³⁴

Therefore, the women appealed to the clemency of the King, to the generosity of the Spanish nation which would not countenance the rigors falling on such helpless women, to the compassion of the Viceroy "who has governed knowingly and equitably this kingdom" and who "had given millions of proofs of kindness and mercy," to justice which should prevail in spite of revolution, and finally to the humanity "which should govern at all times," asking that they be placed at liberty or else that they be released under bond and sent to reputable houses within the city. If that could not be done, they requested that they be told of the charges against them so they could be tried and allowed to serve the sentence meted out justly and in accordance with the merit of their crimes.³⁵

The same day Iturbide sent a letter to the Viceroy in which he attempted to justify his actions and answer the criticism set forth by the women at the Recogidas of Guajuato. He stated that the methods used, that is, the arrest of the women, were extremely successful because it forced the Insurgents to control their actions. Moreover, it brought about almost immediate pacification and cooperation within the

³⁴Ibid., V, 388-89.

³⁵Ibid., V, 389-90.

province of Guanajuato.³⁶

As for the women still held captive, he said that, as the petition of the women showed, there were only sixteen being held in Guanajuato, so all of the rest who were arrested must have been released. Of the women still being held, he continued, perhaps it would not be a good idea to release them or to distribute them around the city in various houses because an insurgent courier whom he caught and shot, Gregorio Rodríguez, admitted before he died that the women held in the Casa de Recogidas were carrying on a correspondence with the people in Pénjamo and that Francisca Vrive and María Bribiesca were the most active in sending messages. Moreover, Francisca was the sister of one of the important ringleaders, Father Vrive [sic], and María was also related to him. Although María's degree of relationship was less than that of Francisca, several soldiers had reported that she was in favor of the revolution. Then possibly remembering the beautiful María Tomasa Esteves y Salas, he said:

This class of women, in my opinion, at times cause great evil since...[they]...unite and want to declare laws in favor of their sex...; one is not able to leave them in liberty for evil workings..., considering the power of the beautiful sex on the heart of men....This [alone] is enough to recognize the good or evil which they are able to produce.³⁷

Moreover, he said, it was very difficult to form

³⁶Don Agustín de Iturbide to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, July 8, 1816, Ibid., V, 390-91.

³⁷Ibid., V, 390.

causes against these women because to get the necessary evidence, one would have to go into rebel-held territory and question some of the Insurgents. Consequently, to attempt to carry through with all of the formalities as required by law might result in the loss of a loyal and faithful subject of the King.³⁸

As for the child which his troops had supposedly forced the mother to abandon, he said that it was really not the fault of the soldiers, since they were simply trying to carry out their orders. The soldiers could not possibly have known that the woman was telling the truth; she might just have been trying to escape. Therefore, they had done their duty and kept her under guard, refusing to let her re-enter her house. That woman, he said, had since then been living in his house and was in the service of his wife.³⁹

On July 17, 1816, Iturbide submitted another response to the petition of the women since he had by that time had a chance to read a report of the charges being made against him by María Bribiesca and Francisca Vrive. He said that after reading the report, he came to the conclusion that the women should continue to be kept at the disposal of the government because they had not changed their minds but rather, were still in favor of the rebels. Moreover, Bribiesca

³⁸Ibid., V, 391.

³⁹Ibid., V, 391-92.

and Vrive were the worst but most interesting of all of the women in the prison. Iturbide pointed out that they had not counted six of the women who were captured at the same time they were. Hence, he assumed that these six women had already been set free. However, he said, if this was really true, it was almost a reprehensible act because the subordinate chiefs had been ignored and were not asked what their reasons were for arresting the women in the first place. He therefore recommended that no change be made in the present status of the women.⁴⁰

Sometime between July 8 and July 17, nine other women submitted a petition asking that they, too, be placed at liberty. María Regina Barrón, Casilda Rico, María Josefa Rico, María Jesús López, Rafaela González, María Mariana Suarto, Petra Areyano, Manuela Gutiérrez, and Luisa Locano said that they had been prisoners for eighteen months and that they had been forced to suffer much harshness during that time. They appealed to the compassion of the Viceroy and to the new Commandant General, Colonel don José de Castro, asking that they be freed or else that they be placed in specified houses within the town so that they could work and maintain themselves with the labor of their hands, which they believed to be in keeping with the spirit of the orders

⁴⁰Don Agustín de Iturbide to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, July 17, 1816, Ibid., V, 394.

of don Agustín de Iturbide.⁴¹

The women maintained that eighteen months was an excessive punishment for most crimes unless they were the result of malice. What was even worse was that their punishment was uncertain and had no definite limits. They had been removed from their homes and the area which they knew simply because some of them were the wives, and others were the mothers, sisters, or daughters of men who had committed the "ugly crime of rebellion." As a result, they had lost their homes, their families, their health, and their liberty. They had been forced to suffer hunger and various afflictions of both the body and the spirit, and even their innocent sons had been killed, an apparent reference to the abandoned child. They had suffered and were continuing to suffer all of the miseries and calamities which were a part of imprisonment. Although they numbered thirty-two in the beginning, now only nine remained. Some of the others had died, some were released to their husbands or guardians. But they, the unfortunate ones, continued to live a life of disgrace, some because they were widows, others not knowing whether their husbands were dead or alive.⁴²

Given all of this, the women said that they be-

⁴¹María Regina Barrón, Casilda Rico, et al., to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja and Sr. Commandante General Colonel don José de Castro, July, 1816, Ibid., V, 392-93.

⁴²Ibid., V, 393.

lieved their fate was such that it deserved the attention of the Viceroy and the Commandant and they implored the clemency and mercy of both men, asking that the justice due them be rendered.⁴³

On November 8, 1816, Francisca Vrive and María Briesca sent another petition to the new Viceroy, don Juan Rufz de Apodaca, who replaced Calleja in August. They named as their co-petitioners María Regina Barrón, Manuela Gutiérrez, Luisa Locano, María Josefa Espinosa, María de Jesús López, Casilda Rico, Rafaela González, Petro Arellano, and Manuela Suarto, and said that on November 29, 1814, they were apprehended outside of their homes and in the streets of Pénjamo by Sr. Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide. From that time forward they had been forced to suffer unspeakable tortures, such as being forced to walk nineteen leagues from Pénjamo to Irapuato, and then fourteen leagues more to the city of Guanajuato in a very short time. Although the journey was long and tiring, they were given food only twice and their children had wept because they were hungry. The soldiers had mistreated them and insulted them continuously. Moreover, they had been forced to walk at the pace set by the infantry, and those women who were unable to keep up were ordered to be given twenty-five lashes. Once they reached Guanajuato, they were placed in a narrow, filthy, and unhealthy jail, the Casa

⁴³Ibid., V, 393-94.

de Recogidas.⁴⁴

Since that time they had undergone many horrors, not the least of which was the uncertainty at not knowing what was going to happen to them. They knew that they could be taken out and shot at any time. As a result, they had become almost cadaverous for lack of food, worry, fear, sleeping on the floor, and other sufferings. Moreover, there was no opportunity for any of them to have any kind of exercise, even though all had been active women.⁴⁵

The Viceroy, they said, might believe that they were guilty of atrocious crimes because of the kind of punishment being inflicted on them. But they claimed that they did not know what those crimes were or what the evidence against them might be. And yet, they had been imprisoned for almost two years. This, they said, was not in keeping with the traditions of the Spanish government which was known for its kindness. Obviously, the women had managed to get some legal advice because they made reference to the Pragmatica of Charles III promulgated April 17, 1774, and to the Real Cédula of Charles IV dated August 31, 1789, which stated that it was proper for the Audiencias to impose checks on the arbitrary behavior of the military commanders in time of civil

⁴⁴Francisca Vrive, María Bribiesca, et al., to Viceroy don Juan Rufz de Apodaca, November 8, 1816, Ibid., V, 394-95.

⁴⁵Ibid., V, 395.

disorder. Iturbide had promulgated his bando and then immediately moved on Pénjamo and the surrounding area, arresting more than three hundred women whom he said had not followed the law as set forth in his decree. In reality, they continued, their only crime was that they had not gone to increase the number of Insurgents who opposed the legitimate government. In other words, they had broken the law as promulgated by Iturbide in that they did not join their husbands, fathers, or brothers who were with the Insurgents. Instead, they remained loyal to the laws of the Crown and the viceregal government which said that it was illegal to aid the insurgency in any way. Therefore, they had been forced to choose which of the conflicting laws they were going to obey. No matter what their choice, they had been forced to break one of the laws because to join the Insurgents was prohibited, but all the same, according to Iturbide's law, it was illegal to remain at home. Therefore, they asked, should they be forced to embrace that which their consciences and the Church rejected as evil? Should they follow the iniquitous party which was prohibited by the laws and proclamations of the government?⁴⁶

The women claimed that the laws of Spain held that a woman or peasant could not commit a crime if they did not know what was right. But they, the innocent, were being

⁴⁶Ibid., V, 396-97.

forced to pay for the crimes of the guilty. Iturbide had usurped the powers and rights of the Magistrates and had exempted himself from the laws and decrees of the monarchs. The law stated that a son could not be punished for the sins of his father, so how could they be punished for the sins and crimes of their relatives? If they had committed a crime in being with and agreeing with their husbands and fathers, it was because of the weakness of their sex. As a result, they had suffered outrage, hunger, cold, infamy, and misery because of those natural weaknesses. Thus they asked, do the laws have no value? Saying that they knew the Viceroy to be a humane, beneficent, upright, and loving individual who guarded the laws and made certain that they were justly applied so as to guard against tyranny and anarchy, they asked that he render an opinion stating that without proof of guilt, nobody should be deprived of their liberty and their reputation, nor would anyone stand condemned without such proof.⁴⁷

They therefore asked that the Viceroy consider their cases carefully and that he summon Iturbide to show what proof of guilt he had against them. They cautioned that Iturbide should not be given too much time or warning since it was possible that he might try to manufacture proof against them. Such evidence should have existed before the

⁴⁷Ibid., V, 397-98.

arrests were made. If he did not have the necessary proof, that would demonstrate that the arrests were simply a reprisal against the Insurgents and not the result of the women having done anything wrong. If the proof did not exist, they said, they should be released without any prejudice to their honor and reputations; but if they were truly guilty, their cases should be heard and the penalty should be abridged because of the misery and suffering already inflicted.⁴⁸

It would seem that Viceroy Apodaca was willing to listen to them and to do as they suggested because on January 10, 1817, he received a message from the Judge Advocate, don Miguel Bataller, recommending that the women be released from prison and allowed to support themselves as servants in selected houses until such time as their husbands appeared and made arrangements for the women to return to their homes.⁴⁹

That Viceroy Apodaca was kinder and more benevolent towards the women is readily apparent. On October 26, 1816, he received a letter stating that Francisca Manuela Delgado, wife of José Guadalupe Romero, María de la Luz Gargollo, wife of José María Romero, and María Josefa Matamoros, wife of Manuel Corona, had been arrested and placed in the prison of the viceregal court. Their only crime, she

⁴⁸Ibid., V, 399.

⁴⁹Don Miguel Bataller to Viceroy don Juan Rufz de Apodaca, January 10, 1817, Ibid., V, 400.

said, was that of being the wives of Insurgents. Moreover, she continued, her husband, José Guadalupe, had not willingly embraced the insurgent cause but rather had been forced to do so. José María, husband of María de la Luz Gargollo, had freely become an Insurgent, but María had disagreed with him and refused to support the insurgent movement. And finally, María Josefa had done nothing.⁵⁰

Viceroy Apodaca asked that an investigation be made and on November 11 he received Bataller's recommendations that the women be freed from prison. However, Bataller suggested that the women not be allowed to leave the capital for any reason without the express consent of the government.⁵¹

It is probable that the word soon spread that Viceroy Apodaca was much more understanding about the sufferings of the women imprisoned by the orders of Iturbide than Viceroy Calleja had been. Soon other petitions came to his attention as still more women asked to be released from their prolonged confinement. On January 8, 1817, a group of women submitted their petitions asking for release from the Casa de Recogidas de Irapuato. The first came from doña María Josefa Paul, widow of Captain don José Antonio de la Sota and currently wife of don José María Sota. She claimed that she

⁵⁰Ignacio Antonio Salamanca for Francisca Delgado *et al.*, October 26, 1816, *Ibid.*, V, 464-65.

⁵¹Don Miguel Bataller to Viceroy don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, November 11, 1816, *Ibid.*, V, 467.

had spent a total of twenty-seven months in prison since being taken violently from her home in Pénjamo by order of Agustín de Iturbide. All that she had been allowed to take with her was the clothes that she was wearing. She claimed that she had been forced to join a group of women of all classes and that she had been treated almost like a common criminal or a common prostitute, not like a woman of status and wealth that she was. Finally, she had been thrown into the Casa de Recogidas in Irapuato like a common criminal. Doña María Josefa maintained that while she believed that it was just to punish the guilty, it was not fair to punish the whole village of Pénjamo for the acts of a few. If she was guilty of any crime, she asked, why had that fact not been made known to her? If she was guilty of a grave crime, why had no charges been made? She therefore requested that she be informed of the charges so that she could have the opportunity to prove her innocence, thus enabling her to purify her honor and to rejoin her family.⁵²

Apodaca asked for information on the case and on January 22, 1817, he received a report from Brigadier Ignacio García Rebollo saying that it was true that no charges had been made and that no investigation had been undertaken. Thus, he said, it was up to the Viceroy to determine what to

⁵²Petition of María Josefa Paul, January 8, 1817, Ibid., V, 400-01.

do with doña María Josefa Paul.⁵³ Apodaca decided to consider the matter for a while longer.

Meanwhile, two more women submitted their petitions. Doña Juana María Villaseñor and her daughter, doña María Josefa Sixtos, said that they were arrested on January 9, 1816, in Huipana by order of Colonel don Agustín de Iturbide. Their only possible crime, they claimed, was that they were the mother and sister of the priest don José María Sixtos, who had gone the day of the arrest to say Mass in Pueblo Nuevo. Since they were not with him at the time the troops arrived, they were arrested and imprisoned. They said that when arrested, they were first taken to the Hacienda de la Zanja, where two women managed to escape from the soldiers, and then on to Irapuato, where they were placed in the Casa de Recogidas. They had been forced to spend the last ten months in a dungeon, suffering all kinds of horrors, without being allowed to communicate with anyone, without knowing who their judge might be, without knowing what they were charged with, and without being able to make a statement in their own defense. They said that when they were arrested, the soldiers also took a young girl, age eleven, and a little boy, age four. Thus, they asked, what crime could such a small child possibly commit? They therefore requested that

⁵³Brigadier don Ignacio García Rebollo to Viceroy don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, January 22, 1817, Ibid., V, 401-02.

they be made aware of the charges and given a chance to answer them so that they could recover their honor, their health, and their interests.⁵⁴

María Josefa Paul renewed her petition on April 9, 1817, again asserting that she had been forced to suffer unjustly for almost three years because of Iturbide. This, she said, caused great embarrassment to her because she had done nothing wrong and women of her class were just not put into a common jail.⁵⁵ María Josefa Sixtos and Juana María Villaseñor followed suit thereafter, but like Señora Paul, they were able to add very little to their original petition. Therefore, they simply renewed their request that they be granted clemency. A pardon would not be correct, they said, because they had committed no form of delinquency which would make a pardon necessary.⁵⁶

Sometime thereafter, the three women banded together to submit joint requests for clemency. They reminded the Viceroy that they had sent two petitions previously and that even though they had committed no crimes, they had already suffered two years of imprisonment. And after

⁵⁴Lic. Ramón Esteban Martínez for María Josefa Sixtos and Juana María Villaseñor, n.d., Ibid., V, 402-03.

⁵⁵Petition of María Josefa Paul, April 9, 1817, Ibid., V, 403-04.

⁵⁶Petition of María Josefa Sixtos and Juana María Villaseñor, n.d., Ibid., V, 404.

all of that time, they still had not been told what the charges were against them, nor had they been allowed to make statements in their own defense. Instead, they had been deprived of all the help of and communication with their families, who did not know where they were and that they had not committed any crimes. Thus, they were completely disgraced. Therefore, they asked that either the authorities proceed with their cause or else they be released from prison so that their miserable mode of existence could end.⁵⁷

On May 7, 1817, Ignacio García Rebollo informed Viceroy Apodaca that he had seen the petitions submitted by María Josefa Paul, Juana Villaseñor, and Josefa Sixtos. The only accusations against them that he was aware of were that María Josefa Paul was supposedly the housekeeper of the rebel priest José Antonio Torres, and that the other two were the mother and sister of the insurgent priest José María Sixtos. However, he said, there was not a single document to support that charge, nor a single reliable witness, nor a single confession to substantiate any charge. Thus, he said, the women were not granted the equality and justice of law. He dismissed Iturbide's earlier statement that it would be dangerous to try to gather the necessary evidence, saying that the judges had the responsibility to consider whatever evi-

⁵⁷ Petition of María Josefa Paul, Juana María Villaseñor, and María Josefa Sixtos, n.d., Ibid., V, 405-06.

dence was available. The denouncers, he said, were only men who were subject to a thousand passions--malevolence, hatred, vengeance. There was therefore really no reason to continue to deprive these women of their freedom, their wealth, and their homes.⁵⁸

In an undated letter the three women sent yet another appeal, this time directly to the Viceroy, in which they said that if Brigadier don Ignacio García Rebollo could not find any reason for their continued imprisonment, since there were no documents, no witnesses, or any other evidence to prove their guilt, it was unthinkable that the Viceroy might fail to agree with the earlier findings. They had been forced to suffer untold humiliation and deprivations as a result of their prolonged imprisonment. Therefore, they begged Viceroy Apodaca to declare them to be completely innocent and undeserving of the punishment which they had received.⁵⁹

On July 1, 1817, Miguel Bataller recommended that Viceroy Apodaca grant the women a Royal Pardon, since it was probable that they had committed the crime of rebellion. He said that the Viceroy had a choice: he could order that the women be sent to Spain or else he could allow them to remain

⁵⁸Brigadier don Ignacio García Rebollo to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, May 7, 1817, Ibid., V, 406-07.

⁵⁹María Josefa Paul, Juana Villaseñor, and María Josefa Sixtos to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, n.d., Ibid., V, 407-08.

in the Kingdom of New Spain.⁶⁰

A short time later, Viceroy Apodaca made his decision and ordered that the women be pardoned and released from prison. However, he said, they were not to establish their residence in either the capital or in Puebla because persons granted a pardon for the crime of disloyalty were not permitted to live in those cities.⁶¹ It would seem that even though the women wanted the Viceroy to grant them clemency, they accepted their pardons and disappeared rather than continue to protest that they had committed no crimes and therefore should be released with their honor untainted.

On September 30, 1818, another three women seized in accordance with the proclamation of October 29, 1814, petitioned for their freedom. They claimed that they had been forced to live among the rebels against their will. However, since the time of their arrests, they had not been able to make any kind of a defense or to explain why they were captured with the Insurgents. They asked that they be given a copy of Iturbide's proclamation so they could prepare a proper defense.⁶²

⁶⁰Don Miguel Bataller to Viceroy don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, July 1, 1817, Ibid., V, 409.

⁶¹Decree of Viceroy don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, n.d., Ibid., V, 409.

⁶²María Dolores Torres, Francisca Torres, and María Ana Vega, Petition, n.d., Ibid., V, 429-30.

The women, doña María Dolores Torres, doña Francisca Torres, and doña Mariana Vega, the aunt of the first two, later sent a lengthier and more formal petition to the Viceroy in which they claimed that they were apprehended in the fort of San Gregorio at the time it was taken by Field Marshal don Pasqual de Lifan. They said that previously they had lived in the village of Cucupao with their father, don Salvador Torres, who despised the insurgency and who tried to carry on his life without paying any attention to it. However, their brother, José Antonio Torres, the rebel priest mentioned earlier, disturbed their tranquility by embracing the revolutionary cause. This, they said, had greatly upset their entire family, since they could foresee the great evils which would befall him. As a result of their brother's decision, their father had become bitter and felt that he had been disgraced. But, they said, if their father, a strong and willful man, could not convince their brother to stay loyal to the Crown, what could they, mere females who by their very nature and sex are weak, do to change his mind. Therefore, they had been carried off and forced to live among the rebels at San Gregorio because they were unable to oppose José Antonio.⁶³

In the course of their petition the women mentioned

⁶³Petition of Dolores Torres, Francisca Torres, and María Ana Vega, n.d., Ibid., V, 431-32.

doña Clara Pesquera and doña Juana Pesquera who were apprehended with them at San Gregorio. These women, they said, had been released to their father, Lieutenant don Manuel Pesquera, Military Commandant of Yuquaro, while they had been forced to endure continued incarceration. They claimed that their political opinions were in opposition to that of the rebels and that they had worked to help the good and faithful citizens who were taken prisoner by the Insurgents. Since they had been forced to go with their brother and had unwillingly remained among the rebels, how then could they be subject to the provisions of Iturbide's proclamation, since they would rather have been at home with their father? As a result, their imprisonment was unjust and they begged the Viceroy for their release.⁶⁴

Although Viceroy Apodaca's response to this petition is not known, it is probable that, in view of his decision to release other women under similar circumstances, he ordered them released also.

There would seem to be a difference in the kind of treatment accorded to some of the women who were captured at the same time as the sisters and aunt of José Antonio Torres. Supposedly, the Royalists decided that some of the women of the lower classes probably did not know any better than to associate with the Insurgents, so they shaved their

⁶⁴Ibid., V, 432-35.

heads and released them.⁶⁵

Considering the punishments meted out to women during the time that Iturbide was in command of the army in some of the northern provinces, it would seem that both he and Viceroy Calleja believed that women presented a great danger to the peace and tranquility of the kingdom and that they should be dealt with rigorously so that they would not be able to render any further services or aid to the insurgent movement. Perhaps as a result of the successes enjoyed by the seductresses in enticing royalist soldiers to desert their units and either join the insurgency or remain neutral, Iturbide decided that the women could be dangerous. At least one of these women, María Tomasa Esteves y Salas, made an impression on him that he could not soon forget. Thereafter, he worried about the effect of women who used their beauty and their sex to win converts for the insurgency. As a result, he instituted a wholesale roundup and arrest of women who were found not to be living with their husbands, fathers, or other male relatives, believing that they must either be rebels or sympathizers and indicating that they probably were giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Moreover, when it seemed politically expedient to do so, he was perfectly willing to use the women prisoners as hostages, threatening to execute them if the rebels did not cease their terror tactics.

⁶⁵Bustamante, Cuadro Histórico, II, 694; Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, p. 284.

It would seem that Viceroy Calleja could find very little wrong with Iturbide's methods. Only when complaints were made by influential citizens did he take the time to consider what Iturbide was doing, and even after an investigation proved that he was violating the law, the Viceroy failed to denounce that behavior publicly. When he had the chance to dismiss and discredit don Agustín de Iturbide, he did not do so, choosing instead to give him a reprimand.

It should not be thought, however, that Viceroy Calleja and Colonel Iturbide were paranoid about the possible threat to the security of the kingdom posed by the women. In 1817, don Francisco Manuel Hidalgo sent a message to Viceroy Apodaca in which he said that he had found evidence that every woman in the village of Sultepec was an Insurgent. In addition, they had been the cause of the disgrace of many soldiers.⁶⁶ Since the complaints were from more than one source concerning the allegation that entire villages were sympathetic to the Insurgents, it is probable that it was true.

It was not until after don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca replaced don Félix María Calleja as Viceroy of New Spain that conditions improved for the women who were imprisoned in accordance with Iturbide's proclamation. Apodaca appeared to be a kind and benevolent man in comparison with Calleja, and

⁶⁶ Don Francisco Manuel Hidalgo to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, November 25, 1817, Ibid., V, 427.

Iturbide's replacement, Brigadier don Ignacio García Rebollo, also appeared to be gentle and understanding in comparison with Iturbide. Thus, the women arrested in 1814 and 1815 on the grounds that they were the relatives of Insurgents remained in prison until 1817 and 1818 because Iturbide believed, and Calleja agreed, that the women posed a threat to the security of the Kingdom of New Spain.

CHAPTER X

THE FINAL PHASES, 1816-1821

The women who took part in the final phases of the independence movement are little different from those who were active in the earlier years. The striking feature in the final phase is that, considering that it lasted about five years, there would seem to be proportionally fewer women involved than in the earlier years. Although the Hidalgo phase lasted less than a year, there were almost half as many women active in that time as in this, the final ones. And while it is recognized that there were two phases during this period of time, one of guerrilla warfare lasting from 1816 to 1820, and one of intense fighting beginning in 1820 and ending in 1821, it still seems that relatively few women were involved in the final phases. As will be seen, the majority of the women active in this period were involved in the movement prior to 1820.

As in the other phases of the revolution, the women in this period tend to fall into a few groups. There were ✓ the activists who rode off into battle, the women who served as spies and couriers, those who acted as nurses to the wounded Insurgents and who, in their spare time, made cartridges for the troops. There were also those who were ar-

rested and held hostage by the Royalists in an effort to force the Insurgents to surrender. These, then, are the approximate same groupings as appeared in each of the other phases.

The reaction of the colonial authorities to the activists who rode off into battle, or who rode with insurgent bands, "scandalizing" the sensibilities of "proper citizens," is evident in the case of María Josefa Martínez, the widow of the insurgent Manuel Monteil. In petitioning for the release of his daughter, María Josefa, don José Nicholas Martínez asked that the Viceroy grant her mercy, claiming that her children had, out of necessity, been placed in an asylum for the poor. In an attempt to provide for her children after the death of her husband, María Josefa had been forced to go to neighboring villages to obtain provisions for them. In one of these necessary journeys, he said, María Josefa had stopped to talk to a former assistant of her husband, the notorious rebel Marroquín. It was then that the royalist troops of Colonel don Manuel de la Concha arrived and arrested her, claimed Señor Martínez.¹

While he admitted that his daughter wore trousers, Martínez maintained that it was simply a matter of convenience, enabling her to mount a horse more easily. After their arrest, Marroquín had been condemned to death, and María Jose-

¹Don José Nicholas Martínez to the Governor of Puebla, November 22, 1816, García, DHM, V, 410-11.

fa was sentenced to spend the rest of her life in the Casa de Recogidas de Santa María Egipciano in Puebla.² Señor Martínez claimed that such punishment was especially disturbing, since María Josefa was in the last months of a pregnancy, and secondly, she had told him that she had never embraced the revolutionary sentiments of her husband. He said that she claimed she was not armed when she was arrested, that the meeting with Marroquín was accidental rather than planned, and that she had no connections with the rebels. For these reasons, said Señor Martínez, he would be willing to post a surety bond in return for his daughter's release and promised that he would carefully watch over her future behavior. In addition, he offered to give a donation of three hundred pesos to the Governor to help defray the expenses of the Royalist Army.³

So that the colonial officials would be able to make a fair decision in the matter, Colonel de la Concha was asked to submit a report on the circumstances surrounding the arrest of María Josefa Martínez. His version of what happened differed greatly from that of María Josefa's father. The Colonel reported that Marroquín and María Josefa had been arrested on November 5, 1816, near San Antonio el Alto, but that the other rebels who were with them at the time were

²Ibid., V, 411.

³Ibid., V, 411.

able to make good their escape. He said that in the Valley of San Andrés Chilchicomila, it was a well-known fact that María Josefa captained a group of twelve rebels who helped her to exact contributions from the people of the area. It was said that one of her duties as an Insurgent was to observe and report on royalist troop movements to the rebel leader, Conto. While he admitted that María Josefa was unarmed when arrested, he said that Marroquín was found to be carrying an excellent shotgun. Moreover, their horses were loaded down with all kinds of provisions. And after she was arrested, the natives of the region expressed their thanks to the royalist troops, saying that she was the most prejudicial of all the rebels, not only in the violence with which she extracted the contributions, but also in her attempts to force others to become partisans of the insurgent movement.⁴

Colonel de la Concha said that María Josefa only wore a dress when she went into the villages of Orizaba, Córdoba, and Puebla to spy on the movements of the Royalists. While her father said that she wore trousers under her petticoats for comfort, it had been observed that during her imprisonment, she had never dressed like a woman. Moreover, Señor Martínez may have been worried about her children, but

⁴Report of Colonel don Manuel de la Concha to the Governor of Puebla, January 15, 1817, Ibid., V, 412-13.

she did not appear to care about them at all, having repeatedly stated that she had no children. Considering all of this, de la Concha concluded that continued seclusion in the Magdalena of Puebla was necessary, at least for such time as the insurrection continued, and especially since her sex had already freed her from the penalty which her excesses really deserved.⁵ De la Concha, however, did not indicate whether she had escaped the death penalty because she was pregnant, as her father said, or if it was the result of his gallantry.

After receiving de la Concha's report, the Judge Advocate, don Miguel Bataller, sent the Governor of Puebla a written opinion in which he stated that he believed it would be dangerous to release a woman like María Josefa Martínez.⁶

Señor Martínez, disturbed by the delay in obtaining his daughter's release, sent another petition to the Governor, calling his attention to Ley 13, Título 24, Libro 8 of the Recopilación, which stated that "the Tribunals are not able to destine to perpetual seclusion." Thinking that this technicality would be sufficient to obtain her release,

⁵ Ibid., V, 413.

⁶ Don Miguel Bataller to the Governor of Puebla, February 25, 1817, Ibid., V, 414.

he conceded that his daughter was "a phenomenon of her sex, arming herself with the dress of a male, captaining the rebels, and causing by their operations great dangers to the country and the Throne...."⁷ He therefore asked that María Josefa's sentence be reduced to the time already served and that she be placed at liberty under the conditions proposed earlier.⁸

This was followed by yet another petition in which Señor Martínez claimed that Colonel de la Concha was so busy that he lacked the time to investigate thoroughly the many denunciations and complaints which he received. He also said that there was no proof of any criminal wrong-doing by María Josefa, so it could not be harmful to set at liberty an unhappy widow who was burdened with children and was very soon to give birth to another, especially when there was no probable guilt. He said that criminals, whose deeds were far worse, were, after a few years, sentenced to four years of exile, which was not really a sentence, since they were able to return to their homes and previous trades thereafter. Why then, he asked, had his daughter, "a woman excusable by a thousand titles been condemned to perpetual seclusion without forming a cause, without being heard or without senten-

⁷Don José Nicholas Martínez to the Governor of Puebla, Ibid., V, 414-15.

⁸Ibid., V, 415.

cing her?"⁹

On February 28, 1817, Señor Martínez submitted yet another petition to the Governor of Puebla on behalf of his daughter. He wrote that María Josefa was unhappy because she was separated from her children and because she was about to give birth to another. He said that she was afraid that she would not have the proper care and help in the Casa de Recogidas when her time came to deliver the child. Once again he begged that his daughter be released to his custody.¹⁰

On March 1, 1817, the Military Commandant of Puebla, Brigadier don Ciriaso de Llano, submitted a report to the Governor of Puebla in which he quoted a letter sent to him by Colonel de la Concha on November 18, 1816. In it de la Concha had told him that María Josefa would have been shot like any other rebel if she had not been a woman. The evidence was sufficient for that penalty, de la Concha had said, but because he took pity on her as a woman, he reported that he was going to send her to the Magdalena of Puebla, or Casa de Recogidas, where she could be kept in perpetual seclusion. Consequently, said General Llano, María Josefa Martínez had

⁹Don José Nicholas Martínez to the Governor of Puebla, n.d., Ibid., V, 416-17.

¹⁰Don José Nicholas Martínez to the Governor of Puebla, February 28, 1817, Ibid., V, 418.

been in the Recogidas of Santa María Epigciano since November 20, 1816.¹¹ But once again, María Josefa's alleged pregnancy was not mentioned.

In June, 1817, the royalist officials began collecting statements against María Josefa, but the records of the cases are incomplete. The testimony of one of her neighbors, Mariano Tarelo, a native of the village of San Chalchicomila, showed that María Josefa was a loyal wife and mother until the death of her husband. Señor Tarelo said that thereafter, she had not returned to the house of her parents because she had planted some crops and did not want to abandon her land. Moreover, he pointed out that she had tried to dissuade her husband from his revolutionary sentiments. Before the death of her husband, she had had nothing to do with the rebels, he said, and he was not aware that she had become involved with them thereafter.¹²

Although the final disposition of this case is not known, considering the fact that Viceroy Apodaca tended to be rather generous in his treatment of insurgent prisoners held by the Royalist forces, it is probable that after serving a year or two of her sentence, María Josefa was released to the custody of her father.

¹¹Brigadier don Ciriaso de Llano to the Governor of Puebla, March 1, 1817, Ibid., V, 419-20.

¹²Declaration of Mariano Tarelo, June 19, 1817, Ibid., V, 421.

Some of the other women who were involved in the insurgency during this period had connections with the expedition led by Francisco Javier Mina, a young Spaniard who had fought for the Spanish Crown in Europe against the forces of Napoleon. But when Ferdinand VII returned to his throne and began pursuing an absolutist policy, Mina decided to go to New Spain to help the Creoles achieve their political independence. He managed to enlist a group of Europeans and North Americans in London and the United States, and then set off to help free Mexico from Spanish domination.¹³

For a while, Mina served as a rallying point for the Insurgents, who had lost their leader with the capture and execution of Father Morelos in 1815. Among those who allied themselves with Mina was the insurgent Pedro Moreno, who was accompanied by his wife, Rita Pérez Moreno, and their children. When, in 1814, Pedro decided that he was going to join in the fight for independence, Rita decided that she preferred to face the dangers of warfare to a prolonged separation from her husband. As a result, she gathered up her children, including the infants, and followed along with her husband.¹⁴

For the next three years Rita accompanied Pedro in all of his campaigns, helping him in any way possible. In

¹³Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 509-11; for more information on the Mina expedition see Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution.

¹⁴Zárate, La Guerra de Independencia, p. 578.

addition, she helped care for the wounded, sick, and dying soldiers.¹⁵ After a while when it became evident that the two year old daughter, Guadalupe, could not stand the rigors of warfare, Rita and Pedro decided to leave her with the family of Ignacio Bravo at the Hacienda Cañada Grande. But when Bravo and his wife were taken prisoner, Guadalupe fell into the hands of the Royalists and was held prisoner for several years. At one time, when Pedro managed to capture some royalist prisoners, one of the royalist officers proposed that Moreno arrange an exchange of prisoners--himself for the daughter, Guadalupe. Moreno refused, and Rita made no argument, even though she must have had some difficulty in handling her feelings about the absence of her child.¹⁶ A short while later, Rita Pérez lost yet another of her children, a fifteen year old son named Luis who died in the battle at La Mesa de los Caballos.¹⁷ By 1817, the insurrection had cost her two of her children.

Then on August 20, 1817, the rebels lost the crucial battle at the fortress known as Sombrero. In reporting the victory to the Viceroy, the royalist commander said that almost all of the foreigners in the Mina expedition, the in-

¹⁵Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, II, 156-57.

¹⁶Ibid., II, 157; Pérez Verdía, Historia Particular del Estado de Jalisco, I, 178-79.

¹⁷Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, II, 158; Pérez Verdía, Historia Particular del Estado de Jalisco, I, 179.

surgent leader Sebastian González and his wife, and the wife of Pedro Moreno had been captured.¹⁸ At the time of her capture, Rita was still trying to take care of four of her children, including two infants, two and a half year old Severiano and one year old Prudenciana. Thus her children were taken to León with her to be placed in prison.¹⁹

Two months later, Rita Pérez wrote to General Pascual de Liñan, the Royalist who had ordered her arrested and incarcerated. She told him that during the time that she had followed her husband, she had committed no delinquencies, but rather had only done those things which would be acceptable for someone of her sex. Her husband, she said, would not have tolerated any other kind of behavior, since it would have been foreign to his character. She claimed that she had not been educated in political matters, so she was not able to judge how much of her husband's political philosophy was correct and how much was wrong. She claimed that because of the natural weakness of her sex, she was unable to do anything wrong other than follow and love her husband and children. She therefore asked that she be released from prison so that she could properly care for her remaining children.²⁰

¹⁸General don Pascual de Liñan to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, August 20, 1817, Gazeta Extraordinario del Gobierno de México, August 27, 1817, VIII, 939.

¹⁹Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, II, 159.

²⁰Rita Pérez Moreno to General don Pascual Liñan, October 13, 1817, García, DHM, V, 425-26.

Less than a week later, General Liñan answered her letter, saying that it was impossible to honor her request, since her husband, Pedro Moreno, had not yet presented himself to ask for the grace of a pardon. Thus, said Liñan, the innocent family would have to suffer for him, since he had managed to escape from the "victorious arms of the King" with his friend, Francisco Javier Mina.²¹ Therefore, Rita Pérez was forced to remain in jail.

Rita, it was reported, had an extremely difficult time in jail. The youngest child, Prudenciana, died shortly after the family was imprisoned, and Rita had a miscarriage two days later. Shortly thereafter, the officials decided that she and the children should be moved to Mexico City so that an investigation could be conducted and sentenced passed, but Rita said that she and the children were much too ill to be moved. The officials sent two doctors to examine the prisoners, but the doctors agreed that they could not be moved. Then two days later Severiano died.²² It was not until after Pedro Moreno died that Rita and her children were released from their imprisonment. Thereafter, she established her home in San Juan de los Lagos, where she lived until the time of her death in 1861.²³

²¹General don Pascual Liñan to Rita Pérez Moreno, October 18, 1817, Ibid., V, 426.

²²Villaseñor y Villaseñor, Biografías, II, 159-60.

²³Ibid., II, 160-61.

Another who became involved with the Mina group was doña Manuela Herrera, a young woman from a wealthy family who, together with her older brother, Mariano, espoused the cause of independence.²⁴ When don Francisco Javier Mina appeared in Mexico, both she and her brother joined him in his attempt to end Spanish rule in New Spain. She offered Mina and his forces the hospitality of her hacienda, the Venadito, and supposedly aided them in their activities.²⁵ According to one account, the Royalists burned her hacienda because of her revolutionary activities, but according to another, she burned it herself to keep the Royalists from getting any revenues from it.²⁶

When Mina was eventually defeated at Venadito, both he and Manuela's brother were taken prisoner. Thereafter, Manuela dedicated herself to working for her brother's release and to saving him from execution. According to William Davis Robinson, a North American who took part in the Mina expedition, Mariano was taken to Irapuato and placed in prison. Within a short time, he was condemned to be executed for his revolutionary activities. Manuela worked unceasingly to get her brother's sentence commuted and eventually was successful. Robinson maintained that even though he had been

²⁴Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 135.

²⁵Ibid., p. 136.

²⁶Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p.

pardoned, Mariano was taken out in front of the firing squad, a blindfold was put on him, and he believed that he would be shot momentarily. Only then did the Royalists tell him that he had been granted a reprieve. It was, however, too late. Mariano's mind had snapped, and thereafter he was mentally deranged. Robinson said that the last time he heard about the Herrera family, that is, in September, 1818, doña Manuela had gotten permission from the Royalists to remove her brother from prison and take care of him at the Hacienda de Burras. However, the Royalists decided that if Mariano ever recovered his senses, he was to be returned to prison.²⁷ Consequently, the last that is heard of Manuela Herrera is that she was caring for her brother who seemed to be incurably insane.

Another who accompanied the Mina expedition was a Frenchwoman known as La Mar, Madam Lamar, and Madam la Marque. From the testimony of Domingo Andreis it is evident that Madam La Marque accompanied Fray Servando Teresa Mier during the time that Mina was fighting for Mexican independence. While the Royalists believed that she had been either Mier's wife or his concubine, Andreis claimed that she was neither. He said that she had previously lived in Cartagena in Colombia, and that she had escaped from General Morillo and had fled from that country. He claimed that he had never been aware of her being involved in any immoral activities

²⁷Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, pp. 257-58n.

during her sojourn with the Mina group; instead, she had attempted to take care of the sick and wounded.²⁸

Alamán said that Madama Lamar joined the Mina expedition after leaving Colombia, and that she was very useful, although he did not indicate in what way.²⁹ Finally, Robinson said that La Mar joined the expedition in Galveston, Texas, after leaving Cartagena, where she had distinguished herself by her "intrepidity and aversion to the Spaniards." During the Mina expedition, she devoted herself to the sick and wounded, and when captured by the Spaniards, she demonstrated great fortitude, remaining cheerful and acting as a source of comfort to the other prisoners. She was sent to Veracruz, where Robinson said that she was forced to work in a hospital performing the most disgusting tasks. Eventually, she managed to escape and joined the guerrilla forces of Vicente Guerrero, but once again she was captured by the Royalists. She was taken this time to Xalapa, where she was forced to work for a private family, once again assigned to performing disgusting tasks. Although Robinson said that she had written numerous petitions to various officials asking that she be permitted to leave the country, all of her requests were denied or ignored. This led him to observe that "The spirit of revenge and cruelty of the immediate agents of

²⁸Declaration of Domingo Andreis, October 15, 1817, Hernández y Dávalos, CDGIM, VI, 699.

²⁹Alamán, Historia de Méjico, IV, 550.

Ferdinand VII, appear to have taken the place of their former gallantry to the sex...."³⁰

Other women who were actively aiding in the movement during this period were performing a variety of services for the cause. In 1815, a group of women known as Las Once Mil Vírgenes came to the attention of the Royalists in Apam. The women were engaged in attempting to seduce royalist soldiers and loyal citizens, convincing them that they should join the Insurgents in the fight for independence. Don José Barradas wanted to catch the women actually committing a crime, so he arranged for some of his soldiers to get in contact with them and offer to desert to the Insurgents. The women never suspected that the Royalists had discovered what they were doing, and they agreed to help the soldiers. Although Antonia Castillo, Feliciana Castillo, María Martina Castillo, María Gertrudis Castillo, Alejandra Gertrudis Vargas, and Felipa Castillo were said to be part of the group, only Felipa Castillo seems to have been punished for the crime. Felipa was sentenced to serve two years in the Reco-gidas, Alejandra Gertrudis was released, and there is no record that the others were ever prosecuted for their role in

³⁰Robinson, Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, pp. 181-82. Although Robinson's description of La Mar would necessarily be considered biased and prejudicial, since he was a part of the Mina expedition himself, part of his statement was corroborated by Alamán and Domingo Andreis, thus giving it more credence.

the group.³¹

In 1816, an Insurgent named Pedro González stated in a declaration presumably made to the royalist authorities in Aguascalientes, that there was an older woman named Marcela who was serving as a courier for the Insurgents. He intimated that she carried letters, messages, and orders from León and Silao to Aguascalientes and Puerto Espino, where her principal sources were located. He claimed that she seemed to be working for Mateo Franco, an aide to the insurgent leader, don Ignacio Rayón. Marcela was said to have gained the admiration of the Insurgents because of her bravery in carrying out such a dangerous task and the services which she was performing for the revolutionary cause. Eventually, they gave her the nickname "Madre de los Desvalidos," or Mother of the Helpless.³²

Another of the couriers was Margarita Santoyo, who was arrested in January, 1813, near Toluca by Captain don José María Careaga. Posing as a merchant or muleteer, she and six others were carrying one hundred forty arrobas, or about thirty-five hundred pounds, of peppers, eight loads of wheat, and some letters from the Insurgents. In addition,

³¹Amador, Noticias, pp. 71-71; Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 131.

³²Amador, Noticias, p. 59.

Margarita had four hundred ninety-eight pesos stamped and signed by Ramón Rayón. Lieutenant-Colonel Gutiérrez said in his report that he would hold Margarita for further investigation and until such time as she could be judged and sentenced in accordance with the law.³³ However, it is not known whether an investigation was even conducted.

Another woman who acted as both a courier and a spy was Luisa Martínez, the wife of the rebel Esteban García Rojas, known as el Jaranero. She lived in the village of Eronguaricuara, which was noted for its royalist sympathies. Luisa kept track of the activities of the Royalists in the village and reported them to the Insurgents. In addition, she maintained a correspondence with them. Then General don Pedro Celestino Negrete captured a rebel named Tomás Pacheco, who was carrying some letters to the Insurgents from Luisa. Within a short while, Negrete ordered her arrested and imprisoned. She offered to give him two thousand pesos and a promise that she would have no more dealings with the Insurgents if he would release her. It would seem that Negrete was interested in bargaining with her, because eventually he said that he would release her if she paid him four thousand pesos.³⁴ This, however, was more

³³Report of Lieutenant-Colonel don Nicholas Gutiérrez to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, January 13, 1817, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, January 18, 1817, VIII, 63-64.

³⁴Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de Méjico, p. 142.

than she could raise, so he ordered that she be shot.³⁵ Consequently, in 1817, Luisa Martínez was executed in the cemetery of the parish church of Eronguaricuara.³⁶

In October, 1817, don Y. Zamaripa denounced Anita Izquierdo to don Juan de Zanorategui, assistant to the pastor of the church in Ixtapan. He said that, while he did not really know Anita, he supposed that she was the daughter of don Nicholas Izquierdo, who was believed to be in communication with the rebels. Anita was allegedly a spy for the rebel Vargas and was said to have given warning to a suspected rebel named Bustos when the Royalists began looking for him. However, the first part of his denunciation was more interesting because he claimed that in the church in Yztape, the rebels had hidden a chest containing two bundles of guns and carbines, with about thirty guns per bundle. He claimed that the chest was under the floor in front of the altar of St. Peter, and that it was fairly easy to see because the chest was bigger than the hiding place and the floor stuck up about the height of two fingers. Although Anita was denounced, no record was discovered which would indicate that

³⁵González Obregón, "Heroínas de la Independencia," in Torre Villar, Lecturas Históricas Mexicanas, III, 79; Hernández, Mujeres Célebres de México, p. 143.

³⁶González Obregón, "Heroínas de la Independencia," in Torre Villar, Lecturas Históricas Mexicanas, III, 79; Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 365.

that she was prosecuted for her actions.³⁷

Among the most innovative of the women Insurgents were two Indian women from the area around Oaxaca who in 1819 decided that they, too, wanted to do what they could for the cause of independence. Being limited in ability and resources these women, known only as Juana and Francisca, decided to do what they knew best, that is, they would make tortillas for the royalist soldiers. But the Royalists decided that the women had to be put out of business because it seemed that Juana and Francisca were poisoning the tortillas. They were caught and executed without any formalities by the Captain of the Batallion of Oaxaca, don José Ramírez Ortega. However, Captain Ortega then found himself in trouble for not having turned the women over to the proper authorities for formal prosecution, so he was court-martialed.³⁸

The largest grouping of women in this period are those who were arrested and imprisoned on the charge of being the wife, mother, sister, daughter, or mistress of Insurgents. In a report from José Gabriel de Armijo to Viceroy Calleja in April, 1815, it was stated that while the troops were on a mission from Xaltianguis to Ayutla, the insurgent band of

³⁷Don Y. Zamaripa to don Juan de Zanorategui, October 22, 1817, García, DHM, V, 471-72.

³⁸Sergeant Major Theodoro Chicery to Viceroy don Juan Rufz de Apodaca, September 6, 1819, Ibid., V, 439-40.

Hurtardo was discovered and defeated. Among the prisoners were eighteen women, including the "women of Hurtardo."³⁹ In July, 1816, Colonel don Manuel de la Concha sent a message to Viceroy Calleja in which he stated that he was going to send María Luisa García Canusca, the wife of the rebel José Proquinto Urtardo [sic] and Juana Dolores Delgadillo, housekeeper "of all those rebels who gather at the village of San Felipe," to the Prison of the Court in Mexico City. He recommended that the women be held as prisoners until such time as the husband of the first and the lover of the second decided to present themselves to ask for a pardon.⁴⁰

The next day, Colonel de la Concha received a response from Viceroy Calleja. In it the Viceroy said that if de la Concha was going to send prisoners to the capital, he should arrange to send information about their lives and customs so that there would be some records on the women. Then in a postscript, Viceroy Calleja asked de la Concha to try to discover the whereabouts of Juana Dolores Delgadillo because it seems that she managed to escape from custody while being transported to the capital.⁴¹ However, there is no

³⁹Report from José Gabriel de Armijo to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, April 4, 1815, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, April 22, 1815, VI, 433.

⁴⁰Colonel don Manuel de la Concha to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, July 11, 1816, García, DHM, V, 409.

⁴¹Viceroy don Félix María Calleja to Colonel don Manuel de la Concha, July 12, 1816, Ibid., V, 410.

evidence to indicate that the Royalists were ever successful in recapturing her.

María Josefa Arauz was arrested near Tlaxco in 1816 on the grounds that she was the mistress of the Insurgent Vicente Gómez. After an investigation was conducted in the villages in which María Josefa was known to have lived, the Royalists decided that it was probable that she had been forced to follow along with Gómez, so she was granted a pardon.⁴² In the report of her arrest, Colonel de la Concha told Viceroy Calleja that both she and the legitimate wife of Gómez had been taken prisoner.⁴³ As a result, the wife of Gómez, whose name is not known, would probably make a better hostage to try to force him to surrender and ask for a pardon than his mistress, so the Royalists kept her.

Three other women were taken prisoner when Captain don Juan José Espejo, Commandant of the Militia of Montebajo, attacked and burned the rebel encampment of Juan Meneses.⁴⁴ In a report from Espejo to Lieutenant Colonel don Joaquín Fuero, Guadalupe Reyes was identified as a member of a family which was strongly addicted to the revolutionary cause.

⁴²Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 43.

⁴³Colonel don Manuel de la Concha to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, August 28, 1816, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, August 29, 1816, VII, 842.

⁴⁴Lieutenant-Colonel don Joaquín Fuero to Viceroy don Félix María Calleja, August 31, 1816, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, September 10, 1816, VII, 878.

Bárbara Correa was said to be the wife of the Insurgent Sergeant Tapia, and María Guadalupe Meneses was said to be a minor child. All of these women, he said, would be sent to the Casa de Recogidas of Mexico for a period of four years.⁴⁵

In 1817, the Royalists managed to capture the wife of the Insurgent Major-General don Salvador Gómez. Ignacio de Mora reported that he had received news that the Insurgent Vargas, who was accompanied by about five hundred men, was in the area around Cerro de la Goleta. But in taking prisoners, the Royalists apprehended the wife, mother, and children of General Gómez. Gómez's wife, Juana González, was reported to have displayed a regular education, which probably meant that she could read and write. He said that she would be held prisoner in the Casa de Justicia of Ixtlahuaca until such time as her husband decided to present himself to ask for a pardon. He then added that he thought it would be a mistake to release the women and children under any other conditions.⁴⁶

In October, 1817, Lieutenant-Colonel don Nicholas Gutiérrez reported that in an encounter with the Insurgents, he had managed to kill eighteen and to take three prisoners

⁴⁵Captain don Juan José Espejo to Lieutenant-Colonel don Joaquín Fuero, August 29, 1816, Ibid., September 10, 1816, VII, 879.

⁴⁶Don Ignacio de Mora to Viceroy don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, July 15, 1817, García, DHM, V, 469-70.

who, after preparing for a Christian death, would be executed by a firing squad. In addition, he said that he captured four women, one of whom admitted being the mistress of González y Roxas. He said that he had left María Bernarda in the custody of the village priest for the night, but that he would send her to Toluca for further investigation,⁴⁷ the result of which is not known.

Finally, María Juana Gutiérrez was arrested in Tecamachalco in 1817 and was accused of being the mistress of Mariano Osorio. For this crime she was sentenced to serve four years in the Casa de Recogidas but later was pardoned.⁴⁸

Cayetana Borja joined the insurgent movement in 1811, together with her father and the rest of her family. The Borja family was involved in the battle at the Fort of San Gregorio, which lasted for four months, or until the Insurgents ran out of food and munitions and were forced to try to escape. However, the women of the Borja family were apprehended by the royalist forces.⁴⁹

In October, 1818, Luisa García, the wife of Miguel Borja, Mariana García, her sister-in-law, and Cayatana Borja, engaged the services of a lawyer to help them obtain their release from Royalist custody. It was claimed that the women had no real guilt; they had only followed the fortunes of

⁴⁷Lieutenant Colonel don Nicholas Gutiérrez to Viceroy don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, October 17, 1817, Gazeta del Gobierno de México, October 23, 1817, VIII, 1157.

⁴⁸Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 261.

their husband, brother, and father, doing as they told them. While don Tiburcio Camiña, the lawyer, admitted that they should not have done this, since it was illegal, they had only given in to the natural weakness of their sex. He also admitted that Cayetana had some guilt because she had tried to help save the lives of three ecclesiastics and six officers who were taken prisoner at the Fort of San Gregorio, but she had not really realized that what she was doing was wrong. He therefore asked that the women be released to his custody, saying that he would assume responsibility for their behavior thereafter.⁵⁰

This time Viceroy Apodaca was not as generous as he had been at other times. He said that the women would have to be judged in accordance with the laws, so he could not order them released.⁵¹

That some of these women were considered to be hostages is evident from the message sent to Viceroy Apodaca by Domingo Suarez in 1818. In this letter Suarez said that María Estanislao Sánchez was being held prisoner in the jail of Querétaro together with her three children. Since she was the wife of the insurgent Sebastian González, he proposed that she and the children be exchanged for the Sub-

⁵⁰Don Tiburcio Camiña to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, October 24, 1818, García, DHM, V, 437-38.

⁵¹Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca to don Tiburcio Camiña, November 10, 1818, Ibid., V, 439.

lieutenant of the Regiment of Infantry of Zamora, don Rafael Ruíz, who had been taken prisoner by the Insurgents. Suarez said that a priest named Casase Viejas and don José Antonio Garfias had been instrumental in getting the Insurgents to agree to such an exchange.⁵²

One of the busiest of the Insurgents must have been Vicente Vargas, who seems to have been involved with at least six women at approximately the same time, unless there were more men with the same name. From the comment made in a letter to the Archbishop-Elect of Mexico in 1816, it would seem that the wife of Vicente Vargas, together with some of the rest of the family, were in Royalist custody. Seemingly, the Insurgents were willing to make some kind of an exchange of prisoners in order to obtain the release of the Vargas family. However, the writer of the letter opposed any such plan, saying that it would only open the way to mass kidnappings of prominent Royalists by the Insurgents as they looked for ways to release still more prisoners.⁵³

It is known that in 1817, Monica Salas, the wife of Vicente Vargas, was tried and sentenced to an indeterminate term in the Casa de Recogidas in Puebla, together with two of her daughters and two nieces.⁵⁴ Then in January, 1818,

⁵²Don Domingo Suarez to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, March 4, 1818, Ibid., V, 426-29.

⁵³Letter (signature a rubrica) to the Archbishop-Elect, April 20, 1816, Ibid., V, 383.

⁵⁴Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, p. 525.

the Commandant of Toluca, don Nicholas Gutiérrez, captured Vargas, who immediately applied for a pardon and asked that his family be released from the Casa de Recogidas. The Commandant recommended that the pardon be granted, saying that he was convinced that Vargas was now aware of the justness of the royalist cause.⁵⁵

However, when Vargas was captured by Colonel Gutiérrez, he was found to be accompanied by a band of women, all of whom he suggested be sent to the Casa de Recogidas in Puebla or elsewhere.⁵⁶ Two days later Gutiérrez received a message telling him that the women were to be sent to the Jail of the Court in the capital. He was also told to send along a document setting forth the crimes of the women and giving evidence of their bad conduct.⁵⁷ Yet another unsigned document stated that Rafaela Morales, María Sánchez, María de Jesús Iturbe, María de Jesús Añvarado, and María Dolores Mercado were sentenced to terms of four years in the Jail of the Court, not to the hardest of labors, but to the common and ordinary.⁵⁸ Thus all five women were sent to jail after

⁵⁵Colonel don Nicholas Gutiérrez to Viceroy don Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, January 22, 1818, García, DHM, V, 383-84.

⁵⁶Colonel don Nicholas Gutiérrez to Viceroy Conde de Venadito, October 6, 1819, Ibid., V, 384.

⁵⁷Executivo (signature a rubrica), October 8, 1819, Ibid., V, 384-85.

⁵⁸Statement of sentence, unsigned, n.d., Ibid., V, 385.

Vargas had already applied for a pardon, all on the same charge, namely, having amorous relations with, or being the mistress of, Vicente Vargas.⁵⁹ At least it should be noted that the Royalists attempted to be tactful; they did not send the five women to the Casa de Recogidas in Puebla, where the wife of Vargas, Monica Salas, and her two daughters and two nieces were being held, although that was the first place suggested by Colonel Gutiérrez.

What has here been termed "The Final Phase" was, in reality, two distinct periods of warfare. The first was one of continuous guerrilla fighting which lasted from 1816 to 1820. The second, under the leadership of Vicente Guerrero and Agustín de Iturbide, was a period of intense warfare lasting throughout most of 1821. Obviously, some of the women who were involved in the earlier stages and who had remained free were still actively engaged in the movement. For example, María Fermina Rivera, a native of the village of Tlaltizapan and the widow of José María Rivera, died while fighting at the side of Vicente Guerrero in 1821. Allegedly, she had been involved in the revolution for several years, first fighting at the side of her husband, and later going on by herself. She suffered all of the privations and hardships as did her comrades in arms, accepting it all like

⁵⁹Miguel i Verges, Diccionario de Insurgentes, pp. 24, 297, 376, 402, 533.

a veteran.⁶⁰

While it is possible to say that the decisive final phase of the revolution, that is, the period of intensive fighting from 1820 to 1821, was approximately the same length as was the first, or Hidalgo phase, there would not seem to be an equal number of women involved. While the reasons for this are not entirely clear, it is possible to speculate about some of them. First, it is possible that some of the women resented the fact that Agustín de Iturbide, who had persecuted women earlier in the movement, emerged as a leader of the insurgency and eventually became the Emperor of Mexico. Although his Plan of Iguala promised that all of the inhabitants of the country were citizens and consequently equal under the law, there was no reference to the fact that women were citizens.⁶¹ However, within the Plan, he did seem to admit that his earlier treatment of women may not have been correct. Article 23 is especially interesting, stating that "No accused person shall be condemned capitally by the military commandants."⁶² However, there is really no evidence proving that the women of Mexico were willing to forgive

⁶⁰D. José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi, "Noticias Biográficas de Insurgentes Mexicanas," in García, DHM, V, 476.

⁶¹Article 11, Plan of Iguala, February 24, 1821, in Iturbide, A Statement of Some of the Principle Events, p. 100.

⁶²Article 23, Plan of Iguala, February 24, 1821, Ibid., p. 102.

and forget.

As was noted in the chapter dealing with María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez, Iturbide wanted to honor María Josefa for her many services to the revolution and for her ability to withstand the hardships and privations of repeated incarcerations as a result of her activities. Consequently, he gave her the title Lady of Honor to the Empress, doña Ana. However, María Josefa declined the honor, reportedly saying that "She who is a queen in her own house is not able to be the lady of an Empress."⁶³ María Josefa's republican tendencies were too strongly rooted to be able to accept the trappings of Empire offered by Iturbide. Moreover, it is entirely possible that María Josefa was involved in the republican plotting against Iturbide and his Empire. According to one of Iturbide's biographers, the center of one of the conspiracies was in the house of the ex-Corregidor of Querétaro, don Miguel Domínguez.⁶⁴ Given what had happened in 1810, it is probable that if there was some kind of a conspiracy being hatched in the Domínguez household, María Josefa would be involved. Part of this plan called for the seizure of Iturbide, but the conspiracy was denounced before it was fully prepared and ready.⁶⁵

⁶³Heliodoro Valle, Iturbide, p. 101.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 83.

It would seem that in some ways this conspiracy resembled others from the earlier days of the insurgency. There were a number of people arrested and accused of having been a part of it, and most had at least one or two women involved in them. This was no different. Doña Antonia Villalba, the wife of don Agustín Gallegos, was charged with being an accomplice in the conspiracy because she had overheard her nephew talking about it and also about republicanism and had not reported it.⁶⁶

In addition, according to Alamán, there was some resentment of Iturbide by those persons who referred to themselves as the "antiguos insurgentes," or the old Insurgents, those people who had taken part in the movement for several years. There was some jealousy on the part of these people, since they tended to believe that because they had fought for independence for such a long time, they had some right to help determine what should come once the goal of independence was achieved.⁶⁷ Instead, Iturbide issued his Plan of Iguala without much consultation with those who had been involved in the movement for much more time than he. Therefore, it is likely that at least some of the women who also

⁶⁶Official Report of the Fiscal Colón el Don Francisco de Paula Álvarez, on the Sumaria, which by order of the Government, he undertook against various individuals, of different classes, taken up on suspicion of being engaged in a conspiracy against the Government and the Emperor," in Iturbide, A Statement of Some of the Principle Events, pp. 132-33.

⁶⁷Alamán, Historia de Méjico, V, 472-73.

had been involved for long periods of time would view Iturbide with a degree of resentment, not only about his actions toward women in 1814 and 1815, but also for his usurpation of the rightful positions of their husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, uncles, and lovers. Both Hidalgo and Morelos had talked about equality, and Iturbide promised equality in his Plan of Iguala. But then he created the Order of Guadalupe and adopted all of the trappings which would usually be associated with the court of an Emperor. Thus equality was not apparent, and it is probable that a majority of the women felt that little, if anything, could be gained by giving their support to him. If they had become involved in the independence movement originally because they wanted to see their husbands and sons given a chance to be first-class rather than second-class citizens in their native country, they would have no reason to support Iturbide because he seemed to deny that possibility. Hence one finds far fewer women involved in the final phase of the independence movement, and especially in the Iturbide phase of it, than there were in the earlier phases of the struggle.

Seemingly, the greatest increase of women in any given category was among those women who were arrested because they were the mother, sister, wife, or daughter of an Insurgent. Since there were fewer formal battles and more guerrilla-type engagements in the period from 1816 to 1820, this proved to be an effective way to get Insurgents to sur-

render themselves and ask for a pardon, since that was the only way to obtain the release of their female relatives. As a result, the woman in this group increased while those in the other groupings appear to have decreased, or else they were fortunate enough not to have been captured by the Royalists.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to demonstrate that women played a significant role in the Mexican wars of independence. Using the criterion that a woman's name, or at least her nickname, be known for her to be included in this study, it has been possible to identify almost two hundred fifty women who could be called Insurgents or insurgent sympathizers and almost fifty women who can be called royalist sympathizers. It is, therefore, evident that they did have a role in the movement on both sides. But as far as a quantitative answer is concerned, the number of women identified does not really prove whether they had a significant role in the insurgent movement. It should be noted that it is not possible to identify all those women who did take part. For example, it was estimated that at least a hundred women attacked the garrison at Miahuatlán on the night of October 3, 1811, but in the course of the testimony of the royalist soldiers who witnessed the attack, only eight were identified by name, leaving at least ninety-two nameless women who helped to sack the arsenal and the Tribunal of Justice and who consequently were a part of the revolutionary movement.

Then, too, it is not possible to identify all of the men who took part in the insurgency. It is, therefore, impossible to determine any kind of a quantitative ratio between male and female Insurgents, or to say that one out of every ten or every twenty rebels was a woman.

The question that remains is, did the women contribute in a significant manner to the success of the independence movement? Admittedly this can only be answered in a subjective manner because there is no way to determine completely objective criteria for framing such an answer. One can say that they were able to do things which could not be done as well, or even at all, by their male counterparts. For example, women could wander through a town observing troop movements, or they could strike up conversations with strange royalist soldiers in an attempt to gain information about planned attacks without arousing too much suspicion. Moreover, they could visit houses in villages where they were not known, creating the opportunity to deliver insurgent correspondence, again without arousing undue suspicion on the part of the royalist officials. A male doing the same might have run into trouble because he would really have no reason to be doing such things. Women, however, could get away with these activities, attributing their actions to "feminine curiosity."

Women could also act as seductresses, trying to seduce or convince the royalist soldiers that they should

desert from their military units and go over to the side of the Insurgents or else to adopt a course of neutrality in the struggle. Obviously, men could not do the same thing without encountering great difficulties. But in this way the Insurgents not only increased their manpower supply, but they also got arms, because the women usually urged the soldiers to take their guns with them.

Women such as María Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez obviously made significant contributions to the success of the insurrection. It is probable that she would have been remembered as a Mexican national heroine if she had done nothing more than take part in the planning stages of the revolution and then had gotten the message through to Hidalgo that the conspiracy had been discovered. But she continued her activities, carrying on correspondence with the rebel leaders, trying to convince others to support the insurgency, and giving timely warnings to rebel bands which were about to be attacked by the royalist forces, even though she was imprisoned more than once. Because she was in the right place at the right time, she was able to make a unique contribution to the eventual success of the cause, one which could not have been made by anyone else. One can only speculate as to what might have happened if she had not been successful in September, 1810.

Leona Vicario was also in a position to be able to make a unique contribution to the insurrection. Because of

the positions held by her father and uncle, she had contacts within the capital which enabled her to gather information, recruit volunteers, and raise money for the Insurgents without arousing too much suspicion. Moreover, she used her personal fortune to help support the revolution financially. And as a result of her revolutionary activities, that fortune was eventually confiscated by the Viceregal authorities.

There were other women who helped to raise the morale of the Insurgents by leading troops into battle, setting examples for others who may not have had quite as much blatant courage. Some led bands of men, seemingly without any adverse reaction on the part of the men whom they led. Others encouraged their husbands and sons to join the struggle for independence, helping to increase the number of insurgent troops who opposed the continuation of Spanish domination. It is conceivable that some of the women encouraged their male relatives to enter the fray when the men might not have done so of their own volition. Thus, the women contributed in these ways to the success of the independence movement.

Are these things significant? Would the revolution have been different in any way if the women had not taken part and supported the movement? While one can only speculate on these matters, it seems safe to say that the Insurgents would have had a difficult time gathering all of the

needed information, delivering all of the necessary messages, even getting a much needed printing press to publicize the goals of the revolution, if it had not been for the services of the women of Mexico. There would probably have been less male Insurgents if the women had strongly opposed their husbands' insurgent sympathies. Instead, they strongly supported the movement and eventually posed such a threat to the Royalists that the colonial officials decided that it would be necessary to arrest entire villages of women. This Agustín de Iturbide did late in 1814. In addition, the Royalists attempted to use the women as hostages, imprisoning them until such time as their husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, or lovers would surrender and apply for pardons and take an oath of loyalty to the Spanish Crown. Moreover, the Royalists could threaten to execute the women if the Insurgents did not cease certain kinds of guerrilla warfare. As a consequence, some royalist soldiers had to be diverted from the task of pursuing the rebels so that they could watch over villages where women who were suspected of having insurgent sympathies and tendencies lived.

Obviously, one cannot make an absolute statement on whether these activities were significant. However, it is my opinion that they were. Women were responsible for giving the initial warning to the leaders that the movement had been discovered. They supported the movement in any way

they could and used whatever resources they had, even their feminine wiles, to aid the cause. Moreover, it is my opinion that they helped shorten what could have been an even longer and bloodier struggle if they had decided not to become involved. Therefore, not only did women have a role, but that role in the Mexican wars of independence was significant.

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APPENDIX A

INSURGENT WOMEN

Patroness--Virgin of Guadalupe

Aburto, María Francisca	Courier, correspondent, 1814.
Agama, María Antonia	Financial supporter, 1813.
Altimirano, Francisca	Spy, 1813.
Alvarado, María de Jesús	Amorous relations with Vicente Vargas, 1819.
Álvarez, Brígida	Sacking of Guanajuato, 1810.
Álvarez, Rafaela	Sacking of Guanajuato, 1810.
Álvarez Prendis de Royo, Josefa	Accused of aiding jail break, 1811.
Ana María ?	Disloyalty, sentenced to six months in seclusion, 1815-1817.
Anaya, María Josefa	Seductress, 1813.
Anaya, Mariana	Seductress, 1814.
Anella, María Ignacia	Wife of Juan José García, friendly with Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Apeszechea, Micaela	Daughter of Insurgent, Royalist hostage, 1816.
Arauz, María Josefa	Relations with Vicente Gómez, 1816.
Arellano, María Josefa	Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811.
Areyano, Petra	Relative of insurgent, 1814.
Arias, María	Widow of insurgent Rosales, 1816.
Arriola, Doña Dolores	Speaking in favor of independence, 1812.
Arroyo, Rosa	Correspondent, spy, 1812.
Avila, Manuela Valentina	Insurgent partisan, 1814.
Azevedo, Inéz de	Insurgent sympathizer, 1811.
Balderrama, Julia	Insurgent sympathizer, 1810.
Balderrama, María del Rosario	Insurgent sympathizer, 1810.
Balderrama, Mariana	Insurgent sympathizer, 1810.
Balero, Juana de	Insurgent sympathizer, ?

- Bara, Teresa
 Barrera, Juana
 Barrón, María Regina
 Barroso, Doña María Dolores
 Basurto, Margarita
 Basurto, María Dolores
 Bernal, Guadalupe

 Bernarda, María

 Bocanegra, Gertrudis
 Borja, Cayetana
 Bosier, Serafina Guadalupe

 Bravo, Señora

 Bribiesca, María
 Bustamante, Cecilia
 Bustamante, Micaela
 Bustamante, Pioquinta
 Bustamante, Ramona
 Bustillos, Doña Mariana

 Cabrera, Nicanora
 Camacho, Carmen
 Camargo, Casimira
 Campañera, La
 Capitana, La
 Cardena, Josefa

 Castillo, Antonia
 Castillo, Feliciano
 Castillo, Felipa
 Castillo, Gertrudis

 Castillo, María Gertrudis
 Castillo, María Martina
 Cendejas, Doña María

 Coheteras, Las

 Correa, Bárbara

 Corregidora, La

 Chaves, María
 "Chepita, La"
- Insurgent partisan, 1811
 Seductress, 1814
 Relative of insurgent, 1814
 Friendly with insurgents, 1815
 Insurgent sympathizer, 1811
 Insurgent sympathizer, 1811
 Relations with Atilano García, 1814.
 Relations with González y Roxas, 1817
 Seductress, 1811-1817
 Insurgent partisan, 1811-1818
 Correspondent of Guadalupe, 1813
 See: Rueda de Bravo, Doña Gertrudis
 Relative of insurgent, 1814
 Miahuatlán riot, 1811
 Miahuatlán riot, 1811
 Miahuatlán riot, 1811
 Miahuatlán riot, 1811
 Denounced for suspected insurgent sympathies, 1813

 Insurgent sympathizer, 1811
 Seductress, 1811
 Insurgent partisan, 1817
 See: Martínez María Andrea
 See: Molina, Manuela
 Insurgent partisan, wealth confiscated, 1818.
 Seductress, partisan, 1815-1818
 Seductress, partisan, 1815-1818
 Seductress, partisan, 1815-1818
 Member of the Guadalupe Society, 1812
 Seductress, partisan, 1815-1818
 Seductress, partisan, 1815-1818
 Denounced for suspected insurgent sympathies, 1813
 See: Niño, Manuela, and Niño, María
 Wife of insurgent, sentenced to five years in seclusion, 1816
 See: Ortiz de Domínguez, María Josefa

 Servant of Julian Villagrán, 1814
 Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811

- Delgadillo, Juana Dolores
Delgado, Francisca Manuela
Relations with insurgents, 1816.
Wife of José Guadalupe Romero,
1816.
- Delgado, Manuela
Domíngua, María
Dorotea ?
Duro, Señora
Wife of insurgent, 1816.
Revolutionary activities, 1816.
Sacking of Guanajuato, 1810.
Wife of rebel Atanasio Duro,
1819.
- Emperatriz, La
Partisan, follower of Sandoval,
1816.
- Espinosa, María Bernarda
Partisan, relations with insurgents,
seduction, 1815.
- Espinosa, María Josefa
Relative of insurgent, 1814.
- Espinosa, María Vicenta
Insurgent sympathizer, 1816.
- Esteves y Salas, María
Tomasa
Seductress, 1814.
- Feliciana ?
Fernández, Paula
Making poisoned tortillas, 1819.
Royalist spy, became insurgent,
1812.
- Fernandita, La
Impersonator of Ferdinand VII,
1811.
- Francisca ?
Partisan, making cartridges,
tending wounded, 1813.
- Gabina, La
See: Márquez, Juana Bautista
- Gamba, Mariana
Real name of La Fernandita, 1811.
- García, Ana María
Wife of insurgent, ?
- García, Lucía
Wife of Miguel Borja, 1818.
- García, Mariana
Insurgent partisan, 1818.
- García Canusco, María Luisa
Wife of José Pioquinto Hurtado,
1816.
- García Villaseñor, Manuela
Wife of Carlos María de Bustamante,
partisan, 1813.
- Generala, La
See: Nava, Antonia
- Gertrudis ?
Partisan of Hidalgo, 1811.
- Godos, Francisca
Making cartridges, tending the
wounded, ?
- Godos, Magdalena
Making cartridges, tending the
wounded, ?
- Gómez, Gertrudis
Wife of Pascasio, 1814.
- Gómez Castañeda, Clara
Partisan of Allende, 1810.
- Gómez de Lerrando, María
Catalina
Partisan of Hidalgo, 1810.
- Las Señoritas González
Partisans of independence,
1810-1814.

- González, Antonia
 González, Catalina
 González, Juana
 González, María Guadalupe
 González, María Jesús
 González, María Josefa
 González, Rafaela
 Griega, La
 Guanajuatena, La
 Gutiérrez, Manuela
 Gutiérrez, María Juana
- Herrera, Manuela
 Hidalgo, Agustina
- Huerta Escalante, María Josefa
- Inojosa, Doña María del Carmen
 Iturbe, María de Jesús
 Iturriaga, Doña Ignacia
 Izaurras, María Vicenta
 Izquierdo, Anita
- Jarquín, Ramona
 Jesús, Desideria de
 Jiménez, Gertrudis
 Jiménez, Juana María
- Juana ?
 Juana Francisca
- "La Barragana"
 La Serrana de Dolores
 Lamar, Madame
- Prisoner in Recogidas, 1816.
 Insurgent partisan, 1812.
 Wife of General Salvador Gómez, hostage, 1817.
 Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811.
 Disloyalty, sentenced to one year, 1817-1820.
 Revolutionary activities, 1816.
 Relative of insurgent, 1814.
 See: Rosas, Bárbara
 Insurgent partisan, soldadero, 1811.
 Relative of insurgent, 1814.
 Partisan, mistress of Mariano Osorio, 1817.
- Mina Expedition, 1817.
 Daughter of Fr. Miguel Hidalgo, followed him in battle, 1810-1811.
 Wife of Villalongín, partisan, 1811.
- Wife of José María Betancourt, 1814.
 Mistress of Vicente Vargas, 1819.
 In correspondence with Rayón, Guadalupe society, 1813.
 Prisoner in Recogidas of Irapuato, 1816.
 Spy, 1817.
- Miahuatlán riot, 1811.
 Aiding rebels, 1819.
 Wife of Pascasio Enseña, 1814.
 Sending cartridges to insurgents, 1814.
 Making poisoned tortillas, 1819.
 Disloyalty, two months in the Recogidas, 1817.
- Sacking of Guanajuato, 1810.
 Rescued Guerrero after battle of Cópore, ?
 Mina expedition--see La Mar, 1817.

- Lara, Ana Victoriana
Lara, Gertrudis
- Lara, Teresa
Lima, María Ponciana
- Locano, Luisa
López, María de Jesús
López Aguado de Rayón,
Doña Rafaela
Luz Gargollo, María de la
Luz Rico, Doña María de la
- Llano y Romero, Catarina
- Machuca, Ana María
Magdalena ?
- Madre de los Desvalidos
"Mar, La"
Marcela ?
María Antonia ?
María Domíngua ?
- María Francisca ?
- María Guadalupe ?
Marque, Madama la
Márquez, Juana Bautista
Marquina ?
Marquina de Ocampo, Prisca
- Martínez, Luisa
Martínez, María Andrea
- Martínez, María Josefa
- Martínez, María Refugio
Matamoros, Josefa
Medina, Manuela
Mejía, María Anastasia
Mendoza, María Josefa
Meneses, María Guadalupe
- Mercado, María Dolores
Michelena, Francisca
Molina, María Manuela
- Montes, Micaela
- Seductress, 1813.
Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811.
Spy, 1817.
Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811.
Relative of insurgent, 1814.
Friendly with insurgents, 1814.
Mother of the Rayóns, patriot, 1810-1817.
Wife of José María Romero, 1816.
Insurgent martyr, burned to death, 1816.
Financial supporter, 1813.
- Revolutionary activities, 1816.
Tending wounded, making cartridges, 1813.
Courier, 1816.
Mina Expedition, 1817.
See: Madre de los Desvalidos
Servant of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Prisoner in Recogidas of Irapuato, 1816.
Disloyalty, undeterminate sentence, 1816.
Courier, 1815.
Mina expedition, See: La Mar
Sacking of Guanajuato, 1810.
Mistress of Ignacio Ayala, 1814.
Wife of Antonio Pineda, activist, 1814.
Spy, 1817.
Wife of Domingo Martínez, courier, 1814.
Wife of Manuel Monteil, activist, 1816-1817.
Sacking of Guanajuato, 1810.
Wife of insurgent, 1816.
See: Molina, Manuela
Wife of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Partisan poet, ?
Relative of insurgent, sentenced to four years seclusion, 1816.
Mistress of Vicente Vargas, 1819.
Insurgent partisan, 1814.
"La Capitana," activist in battle, 1813.
Partisan of Hidalgo, 1810.

- Montes de Oca, Doña Josefa
Member of the Guadalupe Society, 1815.
- Morales, Rafaela
Mistress of Vicente Vargas, 1819.
- Morelos, Dolores
Member of the Guadalupe Society, 1812, ?
- Morán, María Dolores
Wife of Manuel Chávez, friendly with Villagrán, 1813.
- Moreno, Isabel
Insurgent partisan, ?
- Moretin, María Ignacia
Mother of María Josefa Natera, sentenced to one year, fine of 300 pesos, 1811.
- Natera, María Josefa
Sentenced to a year seclusion, fine of 300 pesos, cause unknown, 1811.
- Nava, Antonia
Insurgent partisan, 1812.
- Nava, Doña Dolores
Insurgent partisan, 1812.
- Navarrete, María Josefa
Courier, 1811.
- Nieva, María Guadalupe
Daughter-in-law of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
- Niño, Manuela
Insurgent partisan, 1811.
- Niño y Sánchez, María
Insurgent partisan, 1811.
- Obregón, María Dolores
Relations with insurgents, 1814.
- Ochoa, Antonia
Seditious statements, 1814.
- Once Mil Vírgenes, Las
See: Felipa Castillo et al., seductresses.
- Ortega, Ana María
Activist, sister of Saturnino Ortega, 1815.
- Ortega, Trinidad
Activist, sister of Saturnino Ortega, 1815.
- Ortiz de Domínguez, María Josefa
"Heroína de la independencia," 1810-1821.
- Osores, Doña Manuela
Denounced for suspected insurgent sympathies, 1813.
- Osores, Doña Teresa
Denounced for suspected insurgent sympathies, 1813.
- Oyarzábal, Señora
Wife of Ignacio Oyarzábal, courier, 1813.
- Panes, María Josefa
Insurgent partisan, ?
- Pardiñas, Luisa
Royalist spy, became insurgent and mistress of Osorno, 1813.
- Pardiñas, Paula
Royalist spy, became insurgent and mistress of Rafael Pozos. Real name is Paula Fernández, 1813.
- Pasquala ?
Miahuatlán riot, 1811.

- Patiño, Rosa
Paul, María Josefa
- Paz, Manuela
- Paz, Rosa Jacinta de la
- Peinbert, Margarita
Peña, Antonia
- Peña, María
Peña, Mercedes
María Ignacia (mother of
María Peña)
- Pérez, María Dolores
- Pérez de Moreno, Rita
Pérez Galvez, Condesa de
Perla del Lago, La
Pesquera, Doña Clara
Pesquera, Doña Juana
Piedras de Elias, Carmen
de las
Pimpinela, La
- Rangel, Guadalupe
- Reyes, Guadalupe
- Ricarda, María
- Rivera, María Fermina
- Rosales, María Ricardia
- Raz y Guzmán, Señora
- Rico, Casilda
Rico, María Josefa
Rio, Señora Antonio del
- Robledo, Agustina
Rodríguez, María Ignacia
Rodríguez, Teodosea
- Rodríguez del Toro de
Lazarín, Mariana
- Miahuatlán riot, 1811.
Wife of José María Soto, ar-
rested by Iturbide, 1814.
Activist, defender of Huicha-
pan, 1813.
Insurgent, spy, informant,
1813.
Insurgent correspondent, 1812.
Member of Guadalupe society,
correspondent, 1814.
Insurgent correspondent, 1813.
Insurgent correspondent, 1813.
Correspondent, courier, 1813.
- Daughter of José Antonio Pé-
rez, 1814.
Wife of Pedro Moreno, 1814-1817.
Insurgent sympathizer, 1812.
See: Vargas de Magaña, Gertrudis
Insurgent sympathizer, 1818?
Insurgent sympathizer, 1818?
Giving material support to
Rayón, 1812.
See: Moreno, Isabel
- Activist, rode into battle,
1812.
Mistress of Meneses, sentenced
to four years seclusion,
1816.
Kidnapped by José Gabriel Anto-
nio, became his mistress,
1816.
Activist, wife of José María
Rivera, 1821.
Daughter of Fulgencio Rosales,
1814.
Member of Guadalupe society,
1812.
Relations with insurgents, 1814.
Relations with insurgents, 1814.
Member of Guadalupe society,
1812.
Insurgent sympathizer, 1811.
Insurgent sympathizer, 1814.
Also known as "La Generala,"
activist with Hidalgo, 1810.
Conspiracy of 1811 against Ven-
egas, 1811.

- Romero, Juliana
Denounced for revolutionary activities, 1816.
- Rompedora, La
See: María Guadalupe
- Roasrio Diaz, María del
Patriot, Hidalgo phase, 1810-1811.
- Rosas, Bárbara
Seditious statements, 1811.
- Rubio Guadalupe
Daughter-in-law of Villagrán, 1813.
- Rueda de Bravo, Doña Gertrudis
Member of Guadalupe society, 1812.
- Rusete, María Susana
Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811.
- Salas, Monica
Wife of Vicente Vargas, 1817.
- San Ildefonse, Monica de la
Miahuatlan riot, 1811.
- Sánchez, María
Insurgent sympathizer, 1811.
- Sánchez, María
Amorous relations with Vicente Vargas, 1819.
- Sánchez, María Estanislás
Wife of Sebastian González, 1818.
- Santín, María Ignacia
Relations with Pedro "el Negro," 1818.
- Santoya, Margarita
Courier, 1817.
- Sixtus, María Josefa
Sister of José María Sixtus, arrested by Iturbide, 1814.
- Suarto, María Mariana
Relative of insurgent, 1814.
- Taboada, Doña Manuela
Wife of Abasolo, sympathizer, 1810-1811.
- Teruel de Velasco, Doña María Petra
Tending to wounded prisoners of Royalists, 1812-1813?
- Tobar, María Rita
Conspiracy of 1811 against Venegas, 1811.
- Torres, Francisca
Sister of Father José Antonio Torres, 1818.
- Torres, María Dolores
Sister of Father José Antonio Torres, 1818.
- Uribe, Francisca
See: Vrive, Francisca. Name misspelled by Iturbide, 1814.
- Uribe, María Trinidad
Relations with José María Villagrán, 1811.
- Valle, María Francisca Dolores del
Courier, 1814.
- Vallejo, Doña María Dolores
Wife of José Antonio Pérez, 1814.
- Vargas, Alejandra Gertrudis
Seductress, 1815-1818.

- Vargas de Magaña, Gertrudis
Vedolla, Micaela
- Vega, Luisa
Vega, Mariana
Vicario Fernández, Leona
- Villagrán, María Antonia
Villagrán, María Dolores
Villagrán, María Micaela
Villagrán, María Pentaleona
Villagrán, María Rafaela
Villagrán, María Rita
Villagrán, María Rosa
- Willalba, Antonia
- Villalobos, Jesús
Villegas, Ana
Villaseñor, Juana María
Vrive, Francisca
- Yzarrarás, María Vicenta
- Insurgent fund-raiser, 1811.
Revolutionary activities, sentenced to 1 year, 7 months seclusion, 1816.
Seductress, 1813.
Wife of Miguel Torres, 1818.
"Heroína de la Independencia," 1811?-1821.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Daughter-in-law of Julian Villagrán, 1813.
Conspiracy against Iturbide, 1821-1822.
Friendly with insurgents, 1816.
Seductress, 1811.
Widow of José Sixtos, 1816.
Friendly with insurgents, 1816.
- Encarcerated in Recogidas, 1816.

APPENDIX B

ROYALIST WOMEN

Patroness -- Virgin of Los Remedios

Alduan, Manuela	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Bauza de Landero, Doña Josefa	Royalist nurse, 1814.
Buen-Abad, Doña Guadalupe	Taken prisoner by the insurgents in 1817, released to show good will.
Castro, Vicenta	Killing insurgents, 1816.
Cenoforte, María Josefa	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Cordero, María	Killing insurgents, 1816.
Cuevas, Ana	Killing insurgents, 1816.
De la Luz Nagara, María	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
De los Rios, Guadalupe	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
De los Rios, Mariana	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Delgado, Dolores	Denouncing insurgents, 1815.
Enríquez, Francisca	Denouncing insurgents, 1811.
Fernández, Margarita	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Galvez, Ana	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Garin, Guadalupe	Denouncing insurgents, 1813.
Garin, María Ignacia	Denouncing insurgents, 1813.
Garin, María Josefa	Denouncing insurgents, 1813.
Grespo, Mariana	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Hernández, María Josefa	Denouncing insurgents, 1810.
Homaña, María Francisca	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.

Iraeta, Doña Ana	Founder of the Royalist "Patriotas Marianas," 1810.
Juana ?	Activist, capturing insurgent prisoners, 1811.
La Fina, María	Royalist seductress, 1817.
López de Oquendo, Anastasia	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Joaquina	
Loreto Farfan, María de	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Luna, María de Jesús	Denouncing insurgents, 1813.
Manzanedo, María Josefa	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Martínez Maesola, María Inés	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Mendez, Francisca Xaviera	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Mendizabal, Mariana	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Menzenedo, Mariana	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Nagera, María Josefa	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Pastrana, Guadalupe	Royalist spy, 1813.
Prieto, Ana	Royalist informant, 1812.
Purísima Concepción y Barrios, María Nicholasa de la	Denouncing insurgents, 1810.
Reyes, Ana Gertrudis	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Ríos, Gertrudis	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Ríos María Josefa	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Ruiz, María Vicenta	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Ruiz, Rosalia Antonia	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Ruiz de Gauna, María Micaela	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Salazar y Duarte, María Gertrudis	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Samano, María Josefa	Denouncing insurgents, ?
Sánchez Ortiz, Rosa	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Sandoval, María Guadalupe	Royalist seductress, 1817.
Solis y Gorospe, Manuela María	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.
Zambrano, María Manuela	Royalist sympathizer, 1810.

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

- Aguardiente -- alcoholic beverage, literally "fiery water."
Can be either a rum or a brandy.
- Alcaide de cárcel -- warden of the jail.
- Alcalde mayor -- district magistrate, lesser office than corregidor.
- Alhondiga -- municipal granary.
- Arroba -- Spanish weight of about twenty-five pounds.
- Audiencia -- colonial high court of justice.
- Ayuntamiento -- town council.
- Bando -- a proclamation or decree.
- Casa de Recogidas -- house of correction for women.
- Corregidor de letras -- district magistrate who was a lawyer.
- Corregidora -- wife of a corregidor.
- Creole -- A Spaniard born in the New World.
- Fiscal -- a district attorney.
- Gachupine -- A Spaniard born in Spain, but living in the New World.
- Guadalupe Society -- secret society created in Mexico City to aid insurgency.
- Junta de Seguridad y Buen Orden -- a special judicial body created to investigate & try persons accused of disloyalty; a branch of the Audiencia.
- Magdalena -- alternate term for Casa de Recogidas.
- Mescal -- alcoholic beverage distilled from a variety of the agave plant.
- Oidor -- a judge of the Audiencia.
- Pulque -- alcoholic beverage made from the juice of the maguey plant.
- Receptor de Penas -- collector of judicial fines.
- Seduction -- in terms of the usage herein, the term refers to a mental & emotional process, rather than a physical act.
- Tertulia -- gatherings usually held on a regular basis to discuss current events & to provide various kinds of amusements.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Janet R. Kentner has been read and approved by the following Committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 19, 1975
Date

Joseph A. Gagliano
Director's Signature