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XAVIER MINA AND FRAY SERVANDO MIER:
ROMANTIC LIBERALS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WILLIAM FRANCIS LEWIS III

IT WAS FRIDAY, December 21, 1810. The large room was filled with royal officials and prisoners. A ceremonial meeting of the Spanish Inquisition in Valencia, Spain, was about to begin. All was quiet as the first case was announced. The defendant, one who called himself Andres Vomeri,¹ stepped forward to speak. His words were like those he had spoken before under his true name, Servando Mier. The booming voice and eloquent expression of this man captivated all who bore witness on that cold December morning. Mier's theme was "the rights of man," the freedom of all men to think and believe as they wish. His denunciation of tyranny and absolutism was vehement, perhaps too vehement. Within five minutes he was forcibly removed from the podium and returned to his cell. Less than nine hundred miles away in a French prison a young Spaniard, Francisco Xavier Mina, sat silently gazing out his small window. His thoughts too were of freedom.

Hispanic history has produced many dynamic personalities, Fray Servando Mier and Xavier Mina are two of the most colorful. The coming together of Mier, an aged man of letters from Mexico, and Mina, a young rebel Spaniard, is indeed a fascinating story. Together they organized a daring expedition to Mexico to help free the land from Spanish domination.

Fray Servando Noriega y Guerra Teresa de Mier first saw the light of day in the year 1763, twenty-six years before Mina's birth. Mier was born in Monterrey, Mexico, at a time when New Spain

was just beginning to feel the influence of accelerated Bourbon reforms. A brilliant student, he studied philosophy and theology at El Colegio de Coeli, receiving his doctoral degree in theology at the age of twenty-one. Immediately thereafter he was appointed lecturer at the Dominican Convent in Monterrey. While his vibrant personality and imposing candor brought him early popularity, his keen, critical mind and boldness of spirit soon destroyed that popularity, at least among the brothers of his faith.

Mina was five years old on the day Fray Servando delivered his sermon on the deeply loved Virgin of Guadalupe. It was November 1794 and a large audience had gathered to hear this brilliant and controversial young man. As Mier spoke, the crowd was silent. Slowly, logically he destroyed the accepted tradition of the Virgin's origin and attacked the Spanish justification for the conquest. Gasps of disbelief rose from his listeners as he proceeded; soon the audience became a rumbling mass of protest, so violent that Mier was forced to cut short his presentation.²

This event was certainly the pivotal point in his life. Without knowing it he had "purchased" his ticket to Spain. The price was dear to him. He was ousted from the order and stripped of all religious privileges. The Archbishop Alfonso Núñez de Haro y Peralta recommended that the Inquisition sentence him to ten years imprisonment at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Cádiz. In June 1795 Mier boarded the ship *La Nueva España* and set sail for Spain. Says Santiago Roel, "thus began a life of imprisonments, escapes, humiliations, torments, hunger, and miseries which would continue to plague him for the next twenty-seven years."³

Mier remained in confinement a short time in Cádiz and was then transferred to a prison somewhere in southern Spain near Granada, a place called Las Caldas. The Padre escaped twice, the second time journeying to Madrid to appeal for justice—to no avail. In June 1796 Mier fled Spain altogether traveling to France where he spent six years. There he translated *La Atala* by Chateaubriand and wrote a dissertation denouncing those who did not believe in Jesus Christ.

Mier's romantic wanderings took him next to Rome where he arrived without money, title or friends. What he did in Italy is uncertain; he was there but a few months.

By the end of February 1803 he was again back in Spain and by March 15, back in prison. This time he was taken to a dungeon in Sevilla known as Los Toribios. The miseries of his stay knew no limits. Denied the pleasure of reading and exercise, Mier found his confinement unbearable. He escaped once, but was returned to what he called "la más bárbara de las instituciones sarracénicas de España." In a poem entitled *Gritos del Purgatorio* Mier describes an existence which degrades and destroys the dignity of man. The Padre did not long remain in that position.⁴

Napoleon's dramatic surge across the Pyrenees into Spain in 1808 brought Fray Servando to the side of the Spanish underdogs. Having escaped from Toribios, he took full advantage of the chaos produced by the French invasion and journeyed north where he enlisted in the Spanish army as a priest. It was on the field of battle that Mier and Mina first came together, though without knowing it. Both took an active part in the battle of Belchite.

Mier was captured by the French in 1808 and turned over to the Spanish authorities, who sent him to Zaragoza, and from there to Valencia where he remained until his escape and flight to London in 1810.

Meanwhile, the story of young Xavier Mina was unfolding. Born in 1789, the year of the French Revolution, Mina was destined to become one of Spain's greatest guerrilla warriors. While little is known of his early years, it is certain that the boy was restless and volatile. Though he toiled with his father in the fields and dutifully rode the bumpy wagon to Pamplona on market days, Mina never accepted the farmer's lot, but longed instead for something different. Boyhood pranks, like stealing chickens and stampeding neighboring herds, won him the reputation of troublemaker and horsethief.⁵ Severe punishments by his father, however, did little to dampen the fiery temperament of young Xavier. His parents were pleased, therefore, when their son elected to study for the priesthood.

Like Mier, Mina was a good student, but he lacked the intellectual enthusiasm of the Padre. His moments of genuine interest and dedication were sporadic. Inspiration came like a gust of wind and carried him soaring, but only for brief periods. He remained dissatisfied. As a pupil in Pamplona's religious school, Mina did not stand out academically. In 1807 he transferred unexpectedly to Zaragoza to resume his studies and there found himself in an atmosphere that stimulated him. While Mier sat incarcerated in southern Spain, Mina fast became aware of the political corruption and unrest in Madrid and took an active part, along with a score of other students, in political demonstrations.⁶ Meanwhile, Napoleon's armies rolled over Europe like mighty indestructible machines, and after a victory at Jena, turned toward Spain and Portugal.

Mina's transformation from cleric to guerrilla fighter, though sudden, was in keeping with his lusty personality. By the end of May he was fighting in the ranks of a volunteer brigade just outside the Aragonese capital. His days of uncertainty had ended; Napoleon had decided his future.

The war was vicious. All who were physically able fought tenaciously, using pistols, knives, axes, and even stones. French sentries were ambushed in the night and brutally slain. It was a dog-eat-dog war of sabotage, arson, and plunder. Ruthless resistance movements sprang up throughout Spain. Amidst the chaos, those professing loyalty to Ferdinand and a return to orderly government found themselves involved in terrorism in which the French, the *afrancesados*, and even innocent Spaniards became victims. The civilized society of Spain had nearly collapsed as the ravages of war increased.

The month of July 1809 found Mina's enthusiasm undaunted as he organized his own soldiers. The nucleus of this band consisted of twelve men, all of whom gathered in Pamplona to hear his proposal. The colorful group included a number of Mina's boyhood friends, among them Feliz Sarasa, Ramón Elordio and Lucas Gorriz.⁷ Soon the unit received local recognition and became known by the name "Corso Terrestre de Navarra." As its ranks

grew in number so did its heroic deeds, and by the end of the year French generals in the north knew well the name, Xavier Mina.

Physically, Mina was a striking man, solidly built and handsome, with wide-set green eyes, a straight nose and thick black hair; and though he was short of stature as was his enemy Napoleon Bonaparte, his courage inspired confidence and determination.

Success after success crowned the efforts of Mina's brigade, which by October 1809 had swelled to two hundred fifty men. Ambushing supply trains and cutting off enemy lines of communication became sport for the rebel "Corso." Complete familiarity with the rugged terrain facilitated Mina's hit-and-run tactics and frustrated enemy pursuit. In a surprise assault at Tafalla in January 1810 Mina captured five hundred enemy soldiers including twelve officers, and two months later in Pamplona he won a decisive victory over the respected French general, Georges Dufour, commander of the French Legion of Honor.⁸ Within a year the reward for Mina's capture increased three times. In a statement to his men in 1810 General René D'Agoult ordered that Mina be stopped "at all costs."⁹

Mina was captured in March 1810 during a surprise attack on the village of Labiano. Though active little more than a year, he had left his mark. He was the father of guerrilla warfare in the north. He had turned rowdy, undisciplined troops into an effective fighting unit, more effective than Spain's imperial armies. And though his loss was a bitter blow to the rebels, other *guerrilleros* including his uncle, Espoz y Mina, would continue to battle Napoleon.¹⁰

As Mina began a prison term in France that would last four years, Padre Mier, having escaped from a long endured confinement in Valencia, traveled to London. There, under the name José Guerra, he wrote his most important book, *La historia de la revolución de Nueva España*. By the end of the summer of 1813 many copies were shipped to Buenos Aires and Veracruz to be circulated among the rebels. He sought to inspire them with his dedication to liberal principles. En route the ship to Argentina was seized by Spanish vessels and the cargo taken to Spain. Mier's book

was immediately denounced as subversive and José Guerra branded a dangerous radical.¹¹

While Mier was busy in London, young Mina was a prisoner at Fort Vincennes in France. He soon became the close friend of the French general, Victor Fanneau Lahorie, who had been imprisoned for his part in an alleged plot to assassinate Napoleon.¹² Like Mina, Lahorie was a true romantic in an age that produced some of history's finest. Impetuous, passionate, and dedicated to the liberal cause, Lahorie was to have a profound influence on his Spanish friend. He encouraged Mina not only to study military strategy and tactics but also to read the classic liberal writings of the time. Mina adhered to a rigid reading schedule and greatly furthered his education.

Meanwhile the war in Spain raged on. The Cortes which gathered in Cádiz in September 1812 produced the famous Constitution of that year. This document, enunciating the doctrine of popular sovereignty, asserted that the Spanish monarchy was not the prize of any one family but that Ferdinand VII would be recognized only if he swore to uphold a constitution which greatly limited his powers.

The tide of battle gradually turned in favor of the Spanish and English forces. The British army under Wellington soon became the superior fighting force in Spain. And with the aid of Spanish guerrilla fighters led by Espoz y Mina and others, the enemy was on the run by 1813. Early in 1814 the war ended.

Mina was released from prison in April 1814 and allowed to return to Spain.¹³ Unable to stomach the "enlightened" policies of Ferdinand, he, together with his uncle Espoz, attempted an abortive revolt in Pamplona, and when this failed, both fled to France.¹⁴ Shortly thereafter Mina journeyed to London to seek adventure, fortune and a liberal cause for which to fight. The stage was set for his meeting with the venerable Padre Mier.

They met in May 1814; the Padre was then fifty-one years of age, Mina, twenty-four. Though there are no records of their initial encounter it can be assumed that they were mutually impressed. Despite the age gap they were amazingly alike and had

much in common. Both had studied for the priesthood. Both were well educated and quite articulate. Each had rebelled against existing conditions in his own country for personal and ideological reasons, and each had been branded a traitor. Both had fought against the French during the Napoleonic Wars and had experienced the sufferings of imprisonment. Now, the two found themselves together in London at a time when Europe was in the midst of a titanic transformation.

By April 1815 Mina and Mier were organizing an expedition to New Spain. Their plan was to lead an army into the interior, consolidate all existing rebel forces under Mina's command, and to march on Mexico City. Though the revolutionary cause had degenerated badly since the death of José Morelos in December 1813, there was still hope for victory.

Servando undoubtedly persuaded Mina to choose New Spain as a center of operations. Being a native of Mexico and an expert in the causes of insurrection, Mier was deeply involved in the struggle of "his people." Mina had many opportunities to seek his fortune in other areas. Both Simón Bolívar of Venezuela and Miguel Carrera of Chile sought to enlist the services of the dashing Xavier.¹⁵ Not wanting to place himself under the command of another, Mina chose to lead his own expedition.

The determined pair did not delay in contacting influential London merchants who might back their enterprise for commercial gain. Among the most illustrious of these were Lord John Howland, John Cochrane, Lyle Miller, and George MacGregor, all of whom had been active in supplying munitions to the rebellious patriots long before Mina arrived in London. Each assured Mina of financial support.

In August 1815 Lord Howland aided the cause by hosting a dinner for Mina, Mier, and a visiting young general from the United States, Winfield Scott. Scott assured Mina that a warm reception awaited his expedition in the United States should he stop there en route to Mexico. Though Scott left no complete record of his dealings with Mina, he did leave some impressions:

I had a few days since, at the house of Lord Howlland, an interview with General Mina whose objective was to learn of me whether an armed ship he now has ready to take himself and some forty other Spanish officers to America to join the patriots, would be permitted to touch our ports and depart unmolested. I replied that I had no doubt but that in the event of our being at war, he would be able to purchase in our ports the arms which he requires to complete his equipment. It seems that he has already found the means of shipping some of his associates, some of whom are on the continent. His ship is in port and he is not a little apprehensive of discovery and detention.¹⁶

Scott further explained that Lord Howlland was present at the interview and that the whole affair was handled with discretion:

I was invited to meet the General under many precautions of secrecy, for the General is known to be in London. His associates have been named by Ferdinand at different times as liberals of the adherents of Porlier. . . . these gentlemen will constitute an important acquisition to the patriots, particularly General Mina, who has been the author of the guerrilla system in the Peninsular War.¹⁷

During this period, the strain between England and Spain grew more intense. Pressures from powerful commercial interests in London, who supported the independence movement, warred continually with the English government, whose official policy was to uphold Spanish sovereignty. This situation frustrated Spain's ambassador in London, the Conde de Fernán Núñez; he could believe no one in the English government. While Viscount Castlereagh, the English Foreign Secretary assured Núñez that Mina would be apprehended, little effort was made to do so.¹⁸ London was an open city, alive with foreign intrigue and plots of all kinds. Mina and Mier were two of many involved in secret preparations, and partly for that reason they were able to operate with little obstruction.

By April of 1816 the expedition was ready to set sail. A ship, the *Caledonia*, was purchased from a man named Stewart. In all,

there were twelve London stockholders backing the expedition, each with a substantial investment. Nevertheless, additional funds and manpower from the United States were needed. Thus, on May 15, in the dead of night, Mina, Mier, and some two hundred men sailed quietly out of port at Liverpool and headed west to North America.

The expedition arrived at Norfolk in mid-June. Spain's Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States, don Luis de Onís, was warned that an expedition had landed and was deeply concerned. Conflicting reports as to the size of the expedition ranged from one ship and fifty men to fifteen ships and four thousand men.¹⁹ Though he knew that the force which landed at Norfolk was small (200 men) Onís believed there might be other segments of the expedition coming in at ports in the Caribbean. His apprehensions were heightened by the knowledge that Mina and Mier were capable and daring. Onís was well aware that the author José Guerra and Padre Mier were one and the same person and that Mina was a talented guerrilla fighter. And like Núñez in London, Onís was dealing with a government which "unofficially" supported the independence movement.

Immediately following a rendezvous in Norfolk, Mina, Mier, and an American named Anderson began preparations. The *Caledonia* sailed on to Baltimore while Mina made a hasty trip to Washington to confer with influential people there. Though there are no records of these meetings, it is not unlikely that Winfield Scott introduced Xavier to either James Madison or President Monroe.²⁰ Certainly Scott assisted Mina in enlisting the services of some United States military officers, the most illustrious and daring being Colonel Alan Young, a man destined to die a hero while fighting for the independence of New Spain.

In late July Mina won the support of two Baltimore merchants, Dennis and Alexander Smith, who were willing to risk their capital for the cause of independence and profit. The Smith brothers provided sufficient funds for the purchase of the *Calypso* complete with arms and other supplies. In addition, they put up \$110,000

to pay for the outfitting of three other ships. Dennis Smith became one of Mier's close friends and did much to establish contacts for him in Philadelphia and New York.²¹

Despite repeated plots either to destroy or divert the expedition, Mina set sail on September 26, 1816, for Port-au-Prince to seek additional manpower. In the meantime, Mier was sent to New Orleans to gain support of merchants there. The two planned to meet at Galveston in December in order to make final preparations.

Prior to his departure from Baltimore, Mina corresponded with Haiti's president, the controversial mulatto, Alexandre Pétion. Pétion promised Mina a division of men. The Haitian president, however, was under pressure for assistance by Simón Bolívar, a resident of Port-au-Prince, and Pétion found the needs of the Venezuelan greater than he had anticipated. Having lived in the Caribbean for two years, Bolívar was in a much better bargaining position than was Mina.

Bolívar fled New Granada in May 1815 and sailed to Jamaica at the same time Mina was breasting Atlantic waves from London to Norfolk. Bolívar remained in the Caribbean area until the spring of 1816, living a life of dissipation, and after a brief attempt to land at Puerto Cabello, returned to Haiti where he remained until February 1817. Thus, the *Libertador* was there when Mina arrived in October.

Mina's meeting with Bolívar and Pétion must have been disappointing for the young Spaniard who found that Pétion had pledged nearly all of his available forces to Bolívar. It is believed that Mina met with Bolívar in a small home just outside Port-au-Prince owned by an Englishman named Sutherland and that neither man would consent to help the other.²² Mina's disappointment was furthered by the desertion of several of his men.

Mina left Port-au-Prince on October 27, narrowly escaping a French blockade.²³ He had four ships under his command as he headed northward calling on Caribbean winds to carry him to Galveston. Bad luck rode the high seas with Xavier as his vessels battled thick fog and angry waters. Matters worsened when yellow fever broke out on one of the ships claiming fourteen lives before

port was reached. This event, coupled with the desertion which had taken place in Port-au-Prince, left Mina with one hundred eighty men, including officers, when he arrived in Galveston on November 22, 1816.

Mina remained in Galveston through November and December trying to organize what remained of his expedition. Early one morning in December Mier entered Mina's quarters and after a warm embrace from his commander, the Padre related the latest developments from New Orleans. Mier had attended a number of conferences with a group of southern merchants, lawyers, and privateers willing to aid Mina in Mexico provided he first lead an attack against Pensacola.²⁴ Though Mina was anxious to begin the expedition to Mexico, the terms of the proposal were sufficiently attractive to merit a trip to New Orleans for further discussion.

Leaving Mier in charge in Galveston, Mina, accompanied by Colonel Young, journeyed to New Orleans. Seeing that the merchants had no real desire to aid him in Mexico, Mina declined their offer. He remained in New Orleans long enough to purchase three ships, the *Neptune*, the *Cleopatra*, and the *Bergantine Paz*, and then sailed back to Galveston.²⁵ Two months later he was ready to depart for New Spain. On April 7, 1817 the sun rose to shroud the sea with a shimmering coat of light as Mina and Mier sailed away on the most dramatic adventure of their lives.

Howling winds and incessant rains battered Mina's seven vessels as they tossed their way southward along the coast. A motley three hundred fifty men now made up the crew. They were not confident. Ruthless weather, disease, and desertion had deflated the balloon of optimism long before the expedition left Galveston. Nevertheless, most were glad that the waiting was over and none could deny the atmosphere of excitement and adventure as the ships moved through grey waters on the way to war.

The situation which awaited them in New Spain was grim. The death of Morelos and the abolition of the Mexican Congress in 1815 were bitter blows to the patriot cause and led to confusion and dissension among the insurgents. Rebel leaders like Manuel Mier y Terán in the province of Tehuacán, General Guadalupe Victoria

in the province of Veracruz, General Ignacio Rayón in the province of Valladolid, General Manuel Osourno in the province of Mexico, and General José Manuel Torres, the supreme commander of the patriot forces, were almost completely isolated from one another. And when they did communicate, none of the leaders could agree.

Conflict among the insurgent leaders was crippling to the rebel potential. Had these generals "discarded from their breasts the ambition and jealousy which unfortunately had become the ruling passion with each of them, then would the patriot cause have triumphed." For certainly, a "concentration of their forces and a cordial cooperation would have enabled them to contend with any enemy army the royalists could have raised." Mina hoped to accomplish such a consolidation of power under his command and so defeat the armies of Spain decisively.²⁶

On April 18, 1817, a landing was made at Soto la Marina. Little time was wasted in setting up a printing press from which were issued a series of proclamations made by Mina to be distributed throughout the country. Though all went exceedingly well during the first few days, Mina and Mier knew they must act quickly before the royalists had time to overwhelm them.

Mier immediately began enlisting manpower from a number of small nearby villages. One morning in mid-May, the Padre, standing atop a large rock formation, spoke dramatically to a group of farmers gathered below. As they listened to their countryman from Monterrey their faces may well have revealed the strain and anguish brought on by six years of constant struggle. Said Mier:

Americans! Don't delay; now is the time to take up arms and to throw out the Spanish. . . . I have come here accompanied by that celebrated General Xavier Mina, who was one of the most distinguished defenders of his homeland against Napoleon. Under Mina's leadership we shall be able to rid ourselves of Spanish tyranny forever. . . . We are fighting for a just cause, and right will always prevail. All of Britain could not stop three million Americans, all of France could not stop four hundred thousand Negroes in Santo Domingo and for three centuries Spain has not been able to kill completely the spirit

of independence in Mexico. . . . Nothing can stop you if you unite yourselves under the command of a man as able and dedicated as Xavier Mina.²⁷

By the end of May Mier had rallied about three hundred men to Mina's banner. He then returned to Soto la Marina to assist in final preparations. By May 24 the task was completed. Mina rose early that morning and assembled his division. Four hundred men would go with him into the interior. Another two hundred under Major José Sardá would remain to defend the fort, among them, Padre Mier, who insisted he be present to receive and welcome possible reinforcements from Galveston or New Orleans. He would serve as a priest for Sardá and his men, and in time of battle would become a soldier.

Bidding farewell to the Padre, Mina led his men out of the fort. By a series of rapid marches he intended to journey to the best protected rebel strongholds, Peotillos, Jaujilla, Sombrero, and Los Remedios. In each, he hoped to win the support of a large contingent of fighting men who would serve under his command. Then, with an estimated ten thousand men he would launch a decisive battle against the crown's army in Mexico City. Essential to the realization of this plan was the cooperation and assistance of José Torres.

The battle for independence in Mexico during the years 1816-1817 was very much like the Peninsular War in Spain in 1809-1810. In both struggles guerrilla warfare in all its brutality and injustice became the basic mode of combat. Elements from both sides pillaged and looted with little discrimination, and trust became an unused word. It was only after Mina's heroic exploits in northern Spain in 1810 that guerrilla warfare achieved a status and guerrilla fighters gained "respect." Now, seven years later, Mina found himself facing a similar challenge in the midst of Mexico's chaotic conflict; this time, the Spaniard was his enemy.

Mina's march to Sombrero by way of Peotillos and Jaujilla was a tremendous success. Stunning victories at El Valle del Maíz,

Real de Pinos, and Peotillos against overwhelming odds were dramatic proof that Mina was not to be taken lightly by the royalists. Within a month he had captured over seven hundred enemy troops and had moved from Soto la Marina to Sombrero where he was welcomed by the fort's commander Pedro Moreno on June 25.²⁸ Mina's band had covered a distance of two hundred twenty leagues through the heart of enemy territory. Although royalist publications minimized this achievement, their government in Mexico at no time since the beginning of the revolution had been in a situation so critical and embarrassing.²⁹

At Soto la Marina the rebels were not so fortunate. On June 15 General Joaquín Arredondo launched an all-out attack on the small fort. Three days later, on the very same day and nearly the same hour that Mina won his most impressive victory at Peotillos, Mier led a handful of survivors from the mud walls of Soto la Marina. This was a major victory for the royalists. They had captured Servando Mier. Immediately, he was separated from the rest of the captives and conducted under guard to Mexico City where he was incarcerated in a prison of the Inquisition; to the Padre this was a familiar abode.³⁰

Meanwhile, at Sombrero, Mina continued to confound the enemy. Throughout the month of July he led a series of surprise attacks against neighboring royalist outposts. By the end of the month reward notices were posted throughout many of the provinces of New Spain:

1. Anyone who assists the rebel Xavier Mina in any manner will suffer the penalty of death and confiscation of all property.
2. Anyone who captures Mina and delivers him to a royalist military commander or judge will be given 1,500 pesos and will be forever freed from royalist taxation.
3. If this person is a military man he immediately will be raised in rank. If he is a man who is now a rebel, he will receive immediate pardon from his crimes and a reward of 1,500 pesos. If he is a foreign adventurer, he will receive the same amount of money and free passage to his homeland unharmed.

4. For every one of the adventurers in Mina's band who helps us, 100 pesos will be given plus immediate pardon and passage home.³¹

In August a powerful force under the command of royalist General Pascual Liñán led an attack against Sombrero. Though greatly outnumbered the rebels held out bravely for two weeks, while they awaited promised reinforcements from Torres; the reinforcements did not arrive. On August 15, Mina and a handful of followers escaped; three days later the fort fell to Liñán.³²

Mina then carried his operations to the Bajío region near Los Remedios. There, for three months, he baffled the royalists with his patented guerrilla tactics, but with so few men in his command, he could do little more than harass the enemy. Being a Spaniard did little to help Mina. Torres, Moreno, and other insurgent leaders were reluctant to place their trust in him. They too wanted to champion the independence movement and refused to subordinate themselves, particularly to a Spaniard.

In September 1817 a highly trained cavalry unit under Francisco de Orrantia was sent out to destroy Mina. For a month Orrantia unsuccessfully pursued the elusive Xavier and by early October was ready to abandon the mission. It was then that Orrantia was approached by an old peasant woman from the Bajío who, for a price, betrayed Mina's whereabouts. On October 27, 1817, at dawn, Orrantia's men swooped down on the ranch house of El Venadito where Mina was encamped. An hour later Mina became the prisoner of a dragoon named Miguel Cervantes, and was taken to Irapuato.

The news of Mina's capture brought great satisfaction to the royalists. So pleased were the authorities in Spain that they gave Viceroy Apodaca the title Conde de Venadito in honor of the successful capture of Mina. Both Orrantia and Liñán were awarded military crosses, and all the men who served with Orrantia on that fateful morning of October 27 were presented with special coats of arms and an increase in pay. A special seal was presented to

Cervantes, and on the front of this insigne were inscribed these words: "Prendió al traidor Mina."³³ Cervantes was also made a captain and was honored at a number of official military festivals.

On a foggy November morning in 1817 Xavier Mina was marched from the stockade and taken to a small clearing on the green hillside above Los Remedios and there executed by a firing squad; he was twenty-eight years of age.

The death of Mina and the capture of Mier did not mark the end of the revolution. Four years later in July 1821 Mexican independence was achieved by the decisive hand of Agustín de Iturbide. Nevertheless, both Mier and Mina made significant contributions to the winning of the struggle. Mina gave his life and remained a symbol of romantic liberalism for those who followed. Mier, until his death on December 3, 1827, was active in shaping the future of the new Mexican nation. Even during his last years Mier often remembered the gallant Mina and spoke fondly of him, for enduring was their relationship, and amazing the hand of fate that bridged the Atlantic to bring them together.

NOTES

1. Andres Vomeri (same letters as Servando Mier) was one of several fictitious names used by Mier throughout his life. At the time of this speech he was serving as spokesman for a group of prisoners referred to by the prison officials as "Los Locos." *Informe y pedimento sobre a pedimento por Los Locos ante el supremo tribunal de la razón humana*, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid (AHN), Sección de la Inquisición, leg. 4485, no. 35.

2. Mier denounced the whole story of the apparition of the Virgin as a prefabricated hoax used by the Spaniards to win Indians to the true faith. It is suggested that Mier's ideas for this sermon came directly from a Dominican cleric named Nobeas (no other name given) who "le despertó la curiosidad al contarle unos aspectos singulares que una elemologista Bornuda había adivinado en su estudio de la imagen." Mier examined the

work of Bornuda contained in a pamphlet entitled *General de jeroglíficas americanas*, Bernice Maxwell, *Estudio sobre las Apologías de Fray Servando Teresa de Mier* (Monterrey, Mexico, 1948), pp. 21-25.

3. Santiago Roel, *Fray Servando Mier Noriega y Guerra* (Monterrey, Mexico, 1942), pp. 1-15.

4. The full title of Mier's poem is *Gritos del purgatorio, que padecen los ejercitantes de Casa de Corrección de los Toribios de Sevilla*, Maxwell, *Apologías*, p. 8.

5. José María Iribarren, *Documentos inéditos* (Pamplona, 1966), pp. 1000-1150; this is a private collection of materials taken from the personal library of Sr. Iribarren.

6. José María Iribarren, *Espoz y Mina, El guerrillero* (Madrid, 1965), p. 67.

7. Iribarren, *Documentos inéditos*, pp. 1000-1150.

8. Archivo Histórico de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain (AHNP), Sección de Guerra, legs. 19-22.

9. For details of Mina's activities during the Peninsular War see William Francis Lewis III, "Francisco Xavier Mina, Guerrilla Warrior for Romantic Liberalism, 1789-1817" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1967).

10. Following Mina's capture his uncle Espoz y Mina took over the Corso and led them to an ultimate triumph over the French in northern Spain; see Iribarren, *El guerrillero*.

11. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Mexico, 1804-1824* (San Francisco, 1886), pp. 669-90.

12. Iribarren, *Documentos inéditos*, pp. 1090-1095.

13. Mina's release was part of a prisoner exchange agreement arranged by Espoz y Mina. Espoz had captured a French officer named Pierre Antoine who was the brother-in-law of General Suchet's wife, and agreed to release him on condition that Mina was released. Iribarren, *Documentos inéditos*, p. 1095.

14. José Luis Comellas, *Los primeros pronunciamientos en España, 1814-1820* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Escuela de Historia Moderna, 1954), pp. 165-86.

15. Bolívar to Maxwell Hyslop, Port-au-Prince, Oct. 4, 1816, Vicente Lecuna, ed., *Cartas del Libertador* (Caracas, 1929), p. 253.

16. Charles Winslow Elliot, *Winfield Scott, The Soldier and the Man* (New York, 1937), pp. 197-98.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Fernán Núñez to Pedro Cevallos, London, Sept. 21, 1816, AHN, Documentos de Inglaterra, legs. 5467-5468.

19. Letter from Port-au-Prince, Oct. 1816, Archivo General de Indias,

Sevilla (AGI), Papeles de Estado, leg. 4. Mina commanded an "international brigade" with representatives from nearly every central European country, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1898.

20. Luis Onís to Captain General of Cuba, Philadelphia, Aug. 21, 1816, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1898.

21. Onís to Ruiz de Apodaca, Viceroy of Mexico, Philadelphia, July 14, 1816, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1898.

22. Carlos Preval to Eusebio Escudero, Cuba, Nov. 20, 1816, AGI, Papeles de Estado, leg. 12.

23. Escudero to Captain General of Cuba, Oct. 24, 1816, AGI, Papeles de Estado, leg. 12. The ship *Railleur* commanded by René Began headed the blockade.

24. Morphy to José Masot, New Orleans, Dec. 23, 1816, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1874.

25. Felipe Fatio to Captain General of Cuba, Jan. 17, 1817, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, leg. 1900.

26. William Davis Robinson, *Memoirs of the Mexican Revolution, Including a Narrative of the Expedition of General Xavier Mina with Some Observations on the Practicality of Opening a Commerce between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans through the Mexican Isthmus in the Province of Oaxaca and at the Lake of Nicaragua and on the Future Importance of Such Commerce to the Civilized World, and More Especially to the United States* (Philadelphia, 1820), p. 180. The narrative is woven from various materials, the account of Mina being drawn from the *Journal of J. A. Brush*, who accompanied Mina from England and who served for a time as Commissary General for the expedition. The facts are basically sound, though the work is anti-Spanish in attitude.

27. *La proclama de don Servando de Mier, vicario de la división del general Xavier Mina, excitando a los mexicanos para que peleen por su independencia*, AGI, Sección Novena, Papeles de Estado, leg. 42, no. 29.

28. Apodaca to Crown letters, Mexico, Apr.-Aug. 1817, AGI, Papeles de México, leg. 1492.

29. Robinson, *Memoirs*, p. 119.

30. [For his trial by the Inquisition, see R. E. Greenleaf, "The Mexican Inquisition and the Masonic Movement: 1751-1820," in this issue of NMHR, vol. 44, no. 2 (April 1969). EBA.]

31. Dispatch from Apodaca to provinces of New Spain, AGI, Papeles de México, leg. 1492.

32. For complete details of the Mina expedition, see William Francis Lewis III, "Francisco Xavier Mina."

33. Narrative of Francisco de Orrantía, AGI, Papeles de Estado, legs. 4, 31, and 74.