Mexico's Plan of Iguala, 1821

[Historical Note: The Mexican independence wars highlighted deep social and ethnic divisions in colonial Latin America. On the one side, white, upper-class Latin Americans (creoles, such as Bolívar) sought to replace foreign rule with governments that would act at their behest. On the other side, emboldened by the possibility of creating an entirely new order, castas (people of indigenous, African, or mixed ancestry) tried to end the status quo that kept them subservient and disenfranchised. Two parish priests, Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos, led the first independence movements in Mexico. They fought alongside their casta allies to end the marginalizing social stratification and discrimination that had characterized Mexican society since the Conquest. Such movements threatened the predominantly white upper classes, which quickly set aside their differences and joined forces. The ensuing counterrevolutions succeeded in suppressing, but not vanquishing, the castas' movement. Mexico remained a divided society. On the eve of declaring independence from Spain, Mexican elites intended the Plan of Iguala to act as a compromise between Mexico's divided classes. The Plan de Iguala was a marriage of convenience between royalist conservatives led by Agustín de Iturbide and liberals led by Vicente Guerrero. Thanks to Professor Richard Slatta for permission to reproduce this translation and introduction from his web site.]

Article 1. The Mexican nation is independent of the Spanish nation, and of every other, even on its own Continent.

Article 2. Its religion shall be the Catholic, which all its inhabitants profess.

Article 3. They shall be all united, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

Article 4. The government shall be a constitutional monarchy.

Article 5. A junta shall be named, consisting of individuals who enjoy the highest reputation in the different parties which have shewn themselves.

Article 6. This junta shall be under the presidency of his Excellency the Count del Venadito, the present Viceroy of Mexico.

Article 7. It shall govern in the name of the nation, according to the laws now in force, and its principal business will be to convvoke, according to such rules as it shall deem expedient, a congress for the formation of a constitution more suitable to the country.

Article 8. His Majesty Ferdinand VII. shall be invited to the throne of the empire, and in case of his refusal, the Infantes Don Carlos and Don Francisco de Paula.

Article 9. Should his Majesty Ferdinand VII. and his august brothers decline the invitation, the nation is at liberty to invite to the imperial throne any member of reigning families whom it may select.

Article 10. The formation of the constitution by the congress, and the oath of the emperor to
observe it, must precede his entry into the country.

Article 11. The distinction of castes is abolished, which was made by the Spanish law, excluding them from the rights of citizenship. All the inhabitants of the country are citizens, and equal, and the door of advancement is open to virtue and merit.

Article 12. An army shall be formed for the support of religion, independence, and union, guaranteeing these three principles, and therefore it shall be called the army of the three guarantees.

Article 13. It shall solemnly swear to defend the fundamental bases of this plan.

Article 14. It shall strictly observe the military ordinances now in force.

Article 15. There shall be no other promotions than those which are due to seniority, or which shall be necessary for the good of the service.

Article 16. This army shall be considered as of the line.

Article 17. The old partisans of independence who shall immediately adhere to this plan, shall be considered as individuals of this army.

Article 18. The patriots and peasants who shall adhere to it hereafter, shall be considered as provincial militiamen.

Article 19. The secular and regular priests shall be continued in the state in which they now are.

Article 20. All the public functionaries, civil, ecclesiastical, political, and military, who adhere to the cause of independence, shall be continued in their offices, without any distinction between Americans and Europeans.

Article 21. Those functionaries, of whatever degree and condition, who dissent from the cause of independence, shall be divested of their offices, and shall quit the territory of the empire, taking with them their families and their effects.

Article 22. The military commandants shall regulate themselves according to the general instructions in conformity with this plan, which shall be transmitted to them.

Article 23. No accused person shall be condemned capitally by the military commandants. Those accused of treason against the nation, which is the next greatest crime after that of treason to the Divine Ruler, shall be conveyed to the fortress of Barrabas, where they shall remain until the congress shall resolve on the punishment which ought to be inflicted on them.

Article 24. It being indispensable to the country that this plan should be carried into effect, in as much as the welfare of that country is its object, every individual of the army shall maintain it, to the shedding (if it be necessary) of the last drop of his blood.