

THE “UNDERSIDE” OF THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION: EL PASO, 1912*

THE Mexican Revolution was predominantly a Northern movement. In part this was a logical continuation of what had occurred during the Díaz regime, namely, the rapid development of the northern tier of Mexican states. But in large measure the rise to prominence of leaders such as Francisco Madero, Pascual Orozco, Francisco Villa, Venustiano Carranza, Alvaro Obregón, and Pablo González reflected the advantage they enjoyed over revolutionaries in other parts of Mexico—access to the American border. Arms and ammunition could be imported, loot to pay for these munitions could be exported, United States territory could be used as a base of operations, and the United States provided a sanctuary for the members of defeated factions. Moreover, since the majority of the population along the border were of Mexican extraction, they inevitably became caught up in the factional struggle, as, for that matter, did many of the Anglos, either out of sympathy or because the Revolution became a lucrative business. Yet despite the extent to which the Revolution spilled over into the United States, we still have but a sketchy knowledge of this phenomenon. Precisely how did Mexican juntas function, how were munitions acquired, how was recruiting conducted, and how was revolutionary activity financed? To understand this critical aspect of the Revolution we need much more work along the lines of David N. Johnson’s admirable study of Maderista activities in San Antonio in 1910-1911.¹

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¹“Exiles and Intrigue: Francisco I. Madero and the Mexican Revolutionary Junta in San Antonio, 1910-1911,” (unpublished M.A. thesis, Trinity University, 1975).

There is a wide range of primary materials available in the United States, much of it barely utilized, for investigating the Revolution on the border. By far the most important new source is the archive of the Bureau of Investigation.² Until recently, researchers were limited to using those Bureau reports included in the State Department records of Mexican affairs. But the Bureau's massive files for the decade 1910-1920 have now been declassified, and these 80,000-odd pages of documents are available on twenty-four reels of microfilm. It should be noted, however, that this material is organized in a roughly chronological but haphazard manner. Information on a particular topic is almost always scattered through the reels, and in some cases individual pages of a single report are randomly distributed in several reels.

Second only to the Bureau of Investigation files in terms of documentary evidence are the case files of the United States Commissioners and United States District Courts for the border states of Texas, New Mexico, California and Arizona. There are more than seven hundred cases dealing principally with violations of the neutrality statutes available in three Federal Records Centers: Fort Worth, Texas, Laguna Niguel, California, and Denver, Colorado. These cases comprise tens of thousands of pages of documents with extensive testimony and exhibits and are an indispensable body of material. Because many of the conspiracies interlace the entire border region and because of changes of venue, it is often necessary on a specific subject to obtain case files from all three of the Records Centers.³

Utilizing sources such as these, this article undertakes to illustrate what may be termed the "underside" of the Revolution. The case of El Paso in 1912 was selected because during the Orozco rebellion this most important of United States border cities existed in an atmosphere of intrigue suggestive of West Berlin at the height of the Cold War, with more than its share of agents, double and triple agents, mercenaries, gunrunners, and propagandists. Instead of dealing with the Orozco rebellion itself, which has received scholarly treatment by Michael C.

²In 1908 the Bureau of Investigation was established within the Department of Justice, but it was not until 1935 that it was renamed the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

³The United States District Court records are: (for Texas) El Paso, Del Rio, Laredo, Brownsville, Austin, San Antonio and Galveston; (for Arizona) Phoenix; (for California) Los Angeles; and (for New Mexico) Las Cruces and Santa Fe. United States Commissioner's case files include: (for Texas) Eagle Pass, Del Rio, Laredo, Marfa, El Paso, and San Antonio; (for New Mexico) Las Cruces and Deming; and (for Arizona) Douglas, Nogales and Bisbee. The United States District Court and United States Commissioner records for Texas are found in the Federal Records Center, Fort Worth (hereafter cited as FRC-D); for Arizona and California at the Federal Records Center, Laguna Niguel, California (hereafter cited as FRC-LN).

Meyer,⁴ the focus will be on the secret war raging in El Paso in connection with the rebellion, that is, on the activities of Mexican factions and United States citizens and governmental agencies involved in the munitions traffic, in intelligence, and in recruiting and filibustering.

El Paso had a long history of intrigue, being at various times the headquarters for exiles, secret agents, and gunrunners. In 1865, for instance, the city was a transit point for Juarista spies and gunrunners operating against the French.⁵ Three decades later, when the so-called Tomochi insurrection broke in Chihuahua, El Paso was both a source of munitions and a haven for the revolutionaries.⁶ During the period 1905-1910, Magonista juntas operated in the city, and in 1908 attempted to capture Ciudad Juárez, the plot being thwarted by United States and Mexican secret service agents.⁷ It was, however, during the Madero revolution in 1910-1911 that the city came into its own, with intrigue by Mexican factions remaining a constant for more than a decade.

When the Orozco rebellion erupted in March, 1912, the rebels naively assumed that the United States would permit them to import through El Paso the munitions they needed, this despite the example at hand afforded by the U.S. government having smashed the Reyista conspiracy in Texas during the fall of 1911.⁸ The rebels were disconcerted when on March 14, 1912, President Taft imposed an arms embargo on munitions shipments to Mexico, subsequently modifying it to permit shipments to the Madero regime.⁹

⁴ *Mexican Rebel: Pascual Orozco and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1915* (Lincoln, 1967).

⁵ Robert Ryall Miller, *Arms Across the Border: United States Aid to Juárez During the French Intervention in Mexico* (Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 7, 32, 38.

⁶ Francisco Almada's *La rebelión de Tomochi* (Chihuahua, 1938) is the standard source for the insurrection. Also see the U.S. v. Victor L. Ochoa, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, No. 893 and District Court, El Paso, nos. 4, 8, 7, 6, 5, 1009, 1024, all in FRC-FW. See also Yolanda Guaderrama Alexander, "Las Palomas: Years of Turmoil, 1893-1917" (Graduate Seminar Paper, Department of History, New Mexico State University, 1974), pp. 7-16.

⁷ U.S. v. Leocardio B. Trevino et al., U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 83, and District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, No. 1361. See also U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, FRC-FW, nos. 100, 156, 88, 117, 101. Additional details are available in National Archives, Numerical and Minor Files of the Department of State, Microcopy M-862, roll 429, file nos. 5026 and 5028; and Richard Estrada, "Border Revolution: The Mexican Revolution in the Ciudad Juárez/El Paso Area, 1906-1915," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1975), pp. 38-44.

⁸ Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, "The 1911 Reyes Conspiracy: The Texas Side," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (April, 1980), pp. 325-348.

⁹ For a study of United States arms policy see Harold Eugene Holcombe, "United States Arms Control and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1924," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alabama, 1968), pp. 26-33. The Madero government's use of the British Foreign Office in persuading Taft to ban the exportation of munitions to the Orozquistas can be found in: Lord Cowdry telegram to the British Ambassador in Washington James Bryce, March 12, 1912; Cowdry to Bryce, March 13, 1912; Cowdry to Enrique Creel, March 12, 1912; and Foreign Office minute of March 13, 1912, all in Foreign Office 115/1683, British Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, London. See also Peter Calvert, *The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1914: The Diplomacy of Anglo-American Conflict* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 108-109.

Notwithstanding the enormous disadvantage at which they now operated, the Orozquistas remained confident of their ability to smuggle into Mexico sufficient quantities of munitions to keep the rebellion alive. After all, smuggling was an established profession in El Paso as in other border cities. And certain respectable El Paso businessmen were adjusting to the economic dislocations resulting from the Revolution by developing new markets through the sale of munitions. Lastly, the United States government's ability to enforce the neutrality laws seemed questionable. True, the Army, a few United States marshals, the Customs Service, and the Texas Rangers¹⁰ provided manpower for patrolling the border, but the cutting edge of neutrality enforcement was the Bureau of Investigation, and at the beginning of the rebellion there was exactly one agent in El Paso, L. E. Ross.

The principal factor that caused the Orozquista strategy in El Paso to miscarry was the close cooperation between the Bureau of Investigation and the Mexican Secret Service. There has never been a case in United States history when a foreign intelligence service has been allowed to operate within American territory as blatantly as during the period under study.¹¹ In fact, the operations of these two organizations became so close that at times they were virtually indistinguishable. The pattern was for the Mexican Secret Service to conduct many of the investigations and the United States authorities to make the actual arrests. The manpower that the Mexicans provided was invaluable in supplementing the meager resources of the Bureau of Investigation. As the regional director of the Bureau informed Stanley W. Finch, the head of the agency: "The Mexican secret service agents, both at El Paso and at San Antonio, have aided us materially in the investigation of neutrality matters, and it is only just here to state that if it had not been for them, and their co-work,

¹⁰ Ironically, the Rangers, whose strength had been more than doubled (15-43) in October, 1911 at federal expense to pacify the Texas border had been reduced to their former numbers by late January, 1912, because the border appeared peaceful. Senate Document no. 404, 62nd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1912). During the Orozco rebellion, after first being ordered not to assist Federal officials in the enforcement of the neutrality laws, they generally worked closely with the Bureau of Investigation. See Texas Governor O. B. Colquitt to Adjutant General Henry Hutchings, February 2, 1912, Walter Prescott Webb Papers, vol. 18, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin. Also see Monthly Returns Company A, March, April and June, 1912 and Company B, February, May and June, 1912, Texas Ranger Archive, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas.

¹¹ The key word in the statement is blatant. As is well known, the British Secret Intelligence Service operated on a rather large scale in the United States during both World Wars I and II; however, they were rather more discreet. See for example, H. Montgomery Hyde, *Room 3603: The Story of the British Intelligence Center in New York during World War II* (New York, 1963) and William Stephenson's somewhat sensationalized *A Man Called Intrepid: The Secret War* (New York, 1976).

it would have been next to impossible for us to have accomplished the results thus far obtained.”¹²

The center of Maderista operations in El Paso was the Mexican consulate. The consul, Enrique C. Llorente, demonstrated a flair for intrigue. For example, when Ciudad Juárez fell to the rebels, he managed to steal the firing pins from two machine guns that were about to be shipped across the river.¹³ Llorente thereafter allegedly received from his government more than \$500,000, which he expended in an energetic program designed to cut off the flow of munitions, to recruit Maderista sympathizers for service in Mexico, and to employ mercenaries to interdict rail communications between Juárez and Chihuahua.¹⁴

Working with him in these endeavors were two capable intelligence operatives, Felix A. Sommerfeld and Abraham Molina. Sommerfeld, a native of Posen, Germany, had served in the German army before emigrating to the United States in the 1890's. At the turn of the century he had gone back to Germany, receiving a degree in metallurgy from the University of Berlin. Returning to the United States, he worked as a mining engineer in the Southwest and in Mexico prior to 1910. During the Madero revolution, Sommerfeld became an Associated Press correspondent attached to Madero's forces in Chihuahua. During this time he became a close friend of Madero, who as President employed Sommerfeld as his confidential agent on the border.¹⁵ Molina, a long-time resident of the El Paso area, had ably served the Maderista cause during the struggle against Díaz, and later in 1911 had been Governor Abraham González's secret agent combatting Magonista incursions. He

¹²H. A. Thompson to S. W. Finch, April 21, 1912, National Archives, Federal Bureau of Investigation (hereafter cited as BI), Record Group 65, microcopy, no number, roll 1; See also Edward Tyrrell to Chief, U.S. Secret Service, September 26, 1912, National Archives, Microcopy no. 3.157, Record Group 87, Records of the U.S. Secret Service, Daily Reports of Agents, 1875 through 1936, Daily Reports from San Antonio, vol. 9.

¹³F. H. Lancaster report, March 1, 1912, BI, roll 2.

¹⁴Testimony of James G. McNary, Vice-President, First National Bank of El Paso, who stated that \$500,000 was involved, *Revolutions in Mexico: Hearing Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate*. 62nd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1913), 169; Felix Sommerfeld who should have known gave the figure as being between \$600,000 and \$700,000, *Ibid.*, 437. Two stories, emanating from officials of the Huerta government in 1913, cite Llorente's expenditures as being \$283,943 and another account states that \$150,000 was spent. See *El Paso Morning Times*, June 3 and July 21, 1913.

¹⁵See the Sommerfeld file, Military Intelligence Division (hereafter cited as MID), National Archives, Record Group 165, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, MID, 9140-1754; Sommerfeld's testimony in *Revolutions in Mexico*, pp. 387-447. Also see Michael C. Meyer, "Villa, Sommerfeld, Columbus y los alemanes," *Historia Mexicana* 28 (April-June, 1979), pp. 546-566.

continued as the head of the Mexican Secret Service in El Paso, and plunged into his new duties with enthusiasm.¹⁶ On March 1, for instance, Molina attempted to have dynamite placed in the boilers of the Mexico Northwestern Railroad's locomotives that the rebels had captured in Juárez. A few days later, he paid a watchman \$100 to steal the breech block from a five-inch howitzer that the rebels had sent across to El Paso for repair.¹⁷

Besides their own resources, the Maderista intelligence chiefs in El Paso enjoyed the services of the Thiel Detective Agency, whose employees furnished information on rebel activities not only along the border but within Chihuahua as well. Yet the Thiel Agency's activities illustrate the complexities of the situation at the time and the task confronting historians attempting to disentangle it: the Agency sent copies of its daily reports not only to the Mexican government but also to the Bureau of Investigation, and to the Mexico Northwestern Railroad as well.¹⁸ And H. C. Kramp, the Agency's local manager, insisted on sending the Bureau's copies directly to its San Antonio regional office because he feared leaks in the Bureau's El Paso office and elsewhere along the border.¹⁹

He had good reason to fear the leakage of information, for there was an abundance of double agents, a state of affairs that brings to mind an exchange in 1958 between CIA Director Allen Dulles and Nikita Khrushchev. Both men agreed that they were receiving intelligence from the same people and Khrushchev suggested, "... we should buy our intelligence data together and save money. We'd have to pay the people only once."²⁰ To cite only a few examples for 1912, in Douglas, Arizona,

¹⁶I. J. Bush, *Gringo Doctor* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1939), pp. 183-186, 226; William H. Beezley, *Insurgent Governor: Abraham González and the Mexican Revolution in Chihuahua* (Lincoln, 1973), pp. 33-69.

¹⁷L. E. Ross reports, March 1 and 9, 1912, BI, roll 2.

¹⁸Lancaster reports, March 1 and 9, 1912 roll 2 and March 4, 5, 6, 8, 1912, roll 1; Ross report, March 19, 1912, roll 1; Thompson to Finch, March 3, 1912, roll 1; Thompson, April 19, 1912, BI, roll 1; C. D. Hebert to Finch, April 29, 1912, roll 1; Hebert reports, May 5, 8, 14, 15, 1912, roll 2 all in BI; For example, see the Thiel Agency's reports, entitled "Revolutionary Information," March 4, 5, 6, 8, 16, 22, 23 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, April 2, 4, 8, 10, 22, and 28, BI, roll 1. For the Thiel Agency's reports to the Mexico Northwestern, see "Revolutionary Information," October 22, 1912, John H. McNeely Collection, Box 13, Packet "Misc. 1912-1914," Records of the Mexico Northwestern Railway, Archives, University of Texas at El Paso. For the Thiel Agency's reports to the Mexican government, see Isidro Fabela et al., (eds.) *Documentos históricos de la Revolución Mexicana*, 27 vols. (México, 1964-1973) [hereafter cited as *DHRM*] VII, pp. 371-375, 391-394, 416-418.

¹⁹Lancaster to Finch, "Personal and Confidential," March 23, 1912, BI, roll 1.

²⁰Sanche de Gramont, *The Secret War: The Story of International Espionage Since World War II* (New York, 1962), pp. 149-150.

the Mexican consul, Manuel Cuesta, had suborned Deputy United States Marshal A. A. Hopkins to serve as his agent. But it subsequently developed that the consul was in reality an Orozquista partisan, and whatever information passed through his hands was presumably communicated to the rebels.²¹ Consul Cuesta had access to a wide variety of intelligence; among others he worked with the Thiel Agency's operatives and with H. N. Gray, an agent employed by Alberto Madero, President Madero's uncle, but Gray was reporting not only to Madero, and sometimes to Llorente, he was also an informant of the Bureau of Investigation.²²

In El Paso, Sommerfeld employed a detective named L. L. Hall to smuggle ammunition in order to infiltrate the Orozquistas. Hall subsequently established an effective intelligence network, reporting directly to Sommerfeld, but he was also passing information to the Bureau.²³ And within the Bureau's El Paso office all was not well; the agent in charge, L. E. Ross, who worked intimately with Llorente and other Maderistas, had to resign under a cloud in October, 1912. It seems that while engaged in suppressing the munitions traffic, Ross and Abraham Molina were running a lucrative little business on the side by selling some of the ammunition they had seized. A man of Ross's talents, however, did not lack for employment. Immediately after being fired from the Bureau, he reappeared as a Mexican secret agent, working for Consul Llorente.²⁴ As for Molina, he became a Huertista agent infiltrating the nascent Constitutionalist movement. His superior, the Huertista Inspector of Consulates, Arturo M. Elías, acknowledged Molina's usefulness but had no illusions about his character, describing him as "a man of little education, very shrewd, and in my opinion having little conscience. He has no political allegiance nor does he care about politics, having no other aim than that of serving whoever pays him best, whether as a smuggler, a recruiter, or a secret agent . . ."²⁵

²¹ Thompson report, June 21, 1912, BI, roll 1; E. M. Blanford report, April 7, 1913, roll 3, both in BI; Manuel Cuesta to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, March 9, 1912, *DHRM*, VII, 183; Enrique de la Sierra to same, February 24, 1913, *Ibid.*, XIV, pp. 78-79.

²² Lancaster reports, March 13, 18, 22, 1912; Ross report, April 24, 1912; Hawkins reports, April 17, 18, 24, 1912; Thiel Agency report, March 27, 1912; and Thompson report, April 19, 1912, all in BI, roll 1.

²³ Ross reports, March 19, 20, 23, April 5, 23, 1912, roll 1; Hebert report, May 8, 1912, roll 2, all in BI.

²⁴ M. L. Gresh report, October 22, 1912, roll 2; J. W. Vann report, October 28, 1912, roll 3; C. E. Breniman reports, October 25 and 30, November 3, 4, 24, 1912, roll 3, all in BI. Ross's reports to Llorente, dated October 18 and 19, November 6, 1912, are in the Enrique C. Llorente Papers, Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

²⁵ Inspector of Consulates to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, May 14, 1913, *DHRM*, XIV, pp. 229-230; See also Abraham Molina to José María Maytorena, April 22, 1913, *Ibid.*, XIV, 190; José María Maytorena to Abraham Molina, May 8, 1913, *Ibid.*, XIV, 221.

Much the same judgment could be made about the chief Orozquista agent operating in El Paso, Victor L. Ochoa. He had been involved in the 1893 rebellion in Chihuahua, had fled to El Paso, and had made his home there after serving a sentence in federal prison for violating the neutrality laws.²⁶ In 1912, Ochoa had the unenviable task of putting together an apparatus capable of combatting the combined intelligence resources of the United States and Mexican governments, and not surprisingly he failed. It was not for want of trying, for Ochoa came up with some imaginative schemes, such as offering \$5,000 to have Sommerfeld assassinated, or the same sum to have the Mexican consulate blown up with Sommerfeld and Llorente in it, or organizing a jailbreak to liberate Orozquistas from the El Paso county jail. Unfortunately, his plans were uncovered by a Bureau agent and nothing came of them.²⁷ The one area in which he did enjoy success was the smuggling of ammunition.

The basic reason was because the Bureau of Investigation could not touch the major arms dealers in El Paso. Under the law it was not illegal to sell munitions, only to export them. Firms such as Krakauer, Zork and Moye and Shelton-Payne, accordingly, did a booming business supplying the rebels, as they had supplied the Maderistas during the initial phase of the Revolution.²⁸ As Adolph Krakauer later testified concerning his alleged sales to the Orozquistas: "For all I know, some of these cartridges that were bought may have been for the Madero government. I do not know. I was not supposed to know; but our business is supplying arms and ammunition, it has been for the last 25 years, and I do not propose on account of this revolution to stop it."²⁹

The best the Bureau could do was to prepare a case charging the arms merchants with conspiracy to export munitions; but conspiracy was a most difficult offense to prove in court. In addition, juries in El Paso and throughout the border region proved reluctant to convict prominent businessmen. Nevertheless, as a test case the government indicted the firm of Krakauer in 1912 and on a change of venue removed the case to

²⁶ U.S. v. Victor L. Ochoa, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 893 and Almada, *La rebelión de Tomochi*, pp. 127-128, 133. The best summary of his revolutionary career is found in the *El Paso Times*, September 20, 1921.

²⁷ R. L. Barnes reports, June 21-25, 1912, BI, roll 2.

²⁸ Zork Hardware Company Records, Archives, University of Texas at El Paso. In 1912, the firm's name was Krakauer, Zork and Moye's Sucs., Inc. The company was one of the largest hardware dealers in the Southwest, with assets exceeding \$1,100,000. Although the 1912 account books do not indicate to whom the sales of arms and ammunition were made, they clearly show that a sizeable percentage of the firm's sales for the year were munitions.

²⁹ *Revolutions in Mexico*, 124.

Phoenix where the trial took place the following year. The jury there true to form acquitted all the defendants.³⁰ In 1913, the government failed in its efforts to prosecute not only Krakauer but also the El Paso firm of Shelton-Payne and the Douglas Hardware Company (which had El Paso connections and was a subsidiary of Phelps-Dodge).³¹ Throughout this period the three firms continued to flourish by supplying arms to various Mexican factions.

The El Paso dealers operated on a cash and carry basis. The Orozquistas deposited substantial sums with dealers, who then filled their orders as long as the money lasted. In the case of Krakauer, the Orozquistas utilized a code, whereby someone presenting an order for "a pound of nails" received 1,000 cartridges.³² Freelance smugglers also patronized Krakauer extensively, for they could purchase cartridges at \$30 per thousand and resell them in Juárez for \$50.³³

The problem both for the Orozquistas and the freelances was that of transporting the munitions into Mexico. They employed a variety of techniques, one of the most common being for people, including children, simply to conceal small amounts on their persons and either walk across the bridge or ride the street car over. Several of the smuggling rings even made canvas vests for their runners to wear so they could carry more cartridges per trip. There was no lack of runners, especially among destitute Mexican refugees eager to earn a few cents per cartridge for carrying ammunition and knowing that if caught they would receive only a short sentence in the county jail. But obviously the load an individual

³⁰ U.S. v. Robert Krakauer, Cástulo Herrera, Pascual Arellano, Adolph Krakauer, Victor L. Ochoa, S. Domínguez, G. Gutiérrez, Francisco Navarro, Julius Krakauer, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1626. See also U.S. v. Sabino Guaderrama, Avelino Guaderrama, Longino González, Isabel Larrazola, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1629.

³¹ U.S. v. Shelton-Payne Arms Co., Douglas Hardware Co., W. H. Shelton, John Henry Payne, W. F. Fisher, District Court, Phoenix, FRC-LN, no. c-676; U.S. v. L. D. McCartney, Shelton-Payne Arms Co., W. H. Shelton, John Henry Payne, J. N. González, District Court, Phoenix, FRC-LN, no. C-677; U.S. v. Krakauer, Zork & Moye, Julius Krakauer, L. D. McCartney, District Court, Phoenix, FRC-LN, no. C-679.

³² See cases in footnote 30.

³³ U.S. v. Arnulfo Chávez, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1081, District Court, El Paso, no. 1590, both in FRC-FW. The Guaderrama clan in El Paso exemplified this type of entrepreneur. For information concerning their activity during this period see, U.S. v. Sabino Guaderrama, Isabel Rangel, José Cerros, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1135; U.S. v. Cástulo Herrera, Sabino Guaderrama, Avelino Guaderrama, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1070; U.S. v. Sabino Guaderrama, Avelino Guaderrama, Longino González, Isabel Larrazola, District Court, El Paso, no. 1629, all in FRC-FW. The Guaderramas were still going strong in 1915, being involved, among other things, in the Huerta conspiracy. See U.S. v. Sabino Guaderrama, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1376, and U.S. v. Victoriano Huerta et al., District Court, San Antonio, no. 2185, both in FRC-FW.

could carry was limited; people were arrested with 50, 100, and in some instances 500 rounds on their persons.³⁴ More effective was the practice of bribing the soldiers guarding the border; although sometimes these operations failed, one failure resulting in the seizure of 10,000 rounds, it was not unheard of for soldiers to spend \$100 in the red light district immediately after finishing guard duty.³⁵

But despite the best efforts of the smugglers, and those of the arms dealers to protect their clients, the traffic through El Paso was slowed to a trickle in the late spring of 1912, at times dropping to one or two thousand cartridges a day. This was due primarily to the efforts of the Mexican Secret Service, who saturated the city with upwards of a hundred agents and informants. Besides infiltrating the smuggling rings, they clustered like vultures around the stores of Krakauer and Shelton-Payne, following everyone who purchased ammunition in the hope of catching them in the act of crossing it. Moreover, Abraham Molina had a standing reward of \$25 for anyone furnishing information on the arms traffic, and in this way he received valuable information from many of the runners themselves.³⁶ In addition, Mexican Street Service agents in El Paso were permitted to search passengers on the street cars preparing to cross to Juárez. This practice, however, had to be discontinued because of the public outcry against agents of a foreign power searching United States citizens on American soil.³⁷

Because the munitions traffic had been drastically curtailed in El Paso, the rebels had to go farther afield for armaments. It is possible to reconstruct some of these ventures, one of the more interesting involving one Salvador Rojas Vértiz. At Chihuahua on April 17, Pascual Orozco and his secretary Gonzalo Enrile delivered to Rojas Vértiz a check in his favor for 40,000 pesos. The check was drawn on the First National Bank of El Paso by the Banco Minero at Chihuahua. Rojas Vértiz could not

³⁴ See, for instance, the following cases in U.S. District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW: U.S. v. James McKay, no. 1555; U.S. v. John Thomas, no. 1552; U.S. v. Peter S. Aikin, no. 1553, U.S. v. Francisco M. F. Nájera, no. 1560; U.S. v. Allen L. Rogers, no. 1551; U.S. v. Alfredo Guerrero, no. 1554; U.S. v. Francisca Molina, no. 1575; U.S. v. Petra Ochoa, no. 1593; U.S. v. Josefina Santa Cruz, no. 1602; U.S. v. María Solís, no. 1603.

³⁵ U.S. v. Fred Freepartner, W. E. Mason, Joe de Lauter, Lou Mullady, Enrique Esparza, Agustín Gallo, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, nos. 1066 and 1067, District Court, El Paso, no. 1627, all in FRC-FW.

³⁶ U.S. v. John Dickson, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1097, District Court, El Paso, no. 1598, both in FRC-FW.

³⁷ Testimony of Felix Sommerfeld, *Revolutions in Mexico*, pp. 427-431; *El Paso Herald*, August 22-23, 1912; *El Paso Morning Times*, July 2, 25, 1912.

speaking English, so Orozco provided him with an interpreter in the person of one Manuel M. Miranda, a Mexico City merchant who had been selling shoes, hats, and other items of clothing to Orozco's army. Rojas Vértiz and Miranda traveled to El Paso, where on April 23 the former cashed the check, receiving \$19,700.

The two set out for New Orleans with the money, traveling by rail and registering at the St. Charles Hotel under assumed names. Rojas Vértiz sent Miranda out to make the rounds of the hardware stores, for he hoped to acquire 500,000 rounds of rifle ammunition. The rebel agents succeeded in closing a deal on April 26 with the Stauffer Eshleemann Co. for 600 rifles and 150,000 cartridges, the rifles at \$15 each and the cartridges at \$29.72 per thousand. They paid the bill, \$11,178, in cash. Rojas Vértiz and Miranda had to wait a week in New Orleans for the munitions to arrive; they came in by steamer from New York, and Miranda paid the crew \$100 to unload them at night. In the meantime, arrangements had been completed with a local firm, the Thomas Box Factory, to store the shipment on its premises and to pack it in boxes labeled machinery. Mexican and United States agents, however, had learned of these developments, and Rojas Vértiz had the consignment stored at the Keystone Warehouse while he tried to figure out what to do. As an interim measure, he purchased an additional quantity of ammunition as well as forty trunks, for he planned to ship this consignment to El Paso by railway express. The initial shipment was to consist of seven trunks, each containing 4,000 rounds.

The operation broke down when Miranda, presumably disgruntled because his commission was only \$1,500, returned to El Paso and informed L. L. Hall of the Mexican Secret Service about the whole affair. The upshot was that when the trunks arrived in El Paso on May 21, they were seized by Bureau operatives, who also arrested the Orozquista agent waiting to receive them. Rojas Vértiz managed to avoid arrest, but the munitions still in New Orleans were eventually, and ironically, sold by Miranda and one of his associates to the Mexican consul, who shipped them to El Paso and stored them at Shelton-Payne.³⁸ This failure was particularly galling to the Orozquistas, for they had intended to move the

³⁸ Ross reports, May 18-22, 1912; Thompson reports, May 21-23, October 3, 18, 21, 1912; Hebert report, May 22, 1912; Harris reports, May 25, 28, 29, June 6, 7, 10, 14, October 13, 18, 1912, all in BI, roll 2; Harris reports, October 27 and 30, November 3, 4, 6, 1912; Gresh report, October 31, 1912; Breniman report, November 13, 1912; Blanford report, November 14, 1912; Harris to A. Bruce Bielaski, November 20, 1912, all in BI, roll 3; *U.S. v. Ignacio López, Salvador Rojas Vértiz, Frank Borbón, T. C. Cabney, Pascual Orozco, Jr., Gonzalo C. Enrile, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1089 and District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, nos. 1628, 1633.*

munitions westward from El Paso to the vicinity of Columbus, New Mexico, where they had had some success in crossing war materiél. Rojas Vértiz, in fact, had already dispatched an agent to the border in New Mexico to select suitable crossing points.³⁹

Yet the Orozquistas were nothing if not resourceful. On May 29, Cástulo Herrera, one of Ochoa's arms smugglers, utilizing the alias of George Valencia, bought a total of 49,000 cartridges from the McIntosh and Whitney hardware companies in Albuquerque. The next day he shipped the ammunition by Wells-Fargo Express to Deming, New Mexico, where it was received by Eduardo Ochoa, Victor's brother, who was employing the alias of A. González. Ochoa had a team of men standing by to transport the consignment by wagon from Deming to Columbus, where the cartridges were successfully crossed on June 1. The principals in this affair were subsequently arrested, but what counted was that they had gotten a major shipment across the boundary.⁴⁰

The rebels attempted to repeat this exploit in August. Gen. José Inez Salazar bought 120,000 cartridges from the Shelton-Payne Co. for 14,000 pesos. He left 70,000 of the cartridges with the El Paso firm while he arranged to smuggle the other 50,000. They went by rail on August 2 consigned to one Frank Jenkins in Columbus. From there they were taken by wagon to a point one-half mile from the border, and on August 12, a party of Orozquistas crossed into the United States to receive the consignment. The United States authorities, however, had been monitoring the operation, and a detachment of cavalry was deployed to intercept the delivery. The Orozquistas resisted, and in the ensuing firefight one rebel and a trooper were seriously wounded; the ammunition was seized.⁴¹

³⁹ U.S. v. Ignacio López, Salvador Rojas Vértiz, Frank Borbón, T. C. Cabney, Pascual Orozco, Jr., Gonzalo Enrile, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1628.

⁴⁰ Thompson report, June 7, 1912; Barnes report, June 8, 1912; Ross reports, June 8 and 10, 1912, all in BI, roll 2; U.S. v. Cástulo Herrera, Ignacio Gutiérrez, Eduardo Ochoa, Jesús de la Torre, Ignacio Núñez, U.S. Commissioner, District of New Mexico, Federal Records Center, Denver (hereafter cited as FRC-D), No. 1161, District Court, Santa Fe, FRC-D, no. 85; U.S. v. Ignacio Núñez and Jesús de la Torre, U.S. Commissioner, District of New Mexico, FRC-D, nos. 1204 and 1604, District Court, Santa Fe, FRC-D, no. 1654; U.S. v. Ignacio Gutiérrez, U.S. Commissioner, District of New Mexico, FRC-D, no. 1251.

⁴¹ U.S. v. Lázaro Alanís, [José] Inés Salazar, Roque Gómez, Concepción Tovar, Marcial Andujos, U.S. Commissioner, District of New Mexico, FRC-D, nos. 1158 and 1268, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, FRC-FW, nos. 1158 and 1167, District Court, Santa Fe, FRC-D, no. 84; Thompson reports, August 12 and 14, 1912, BI, roll 2; Ross report, August 14, 1912, BI, roll 2; Barnes report, August 16, 1912, BI roll 2, El Paso *Morning Times*, August 13, 1912.

By then it hardly mattered, for the rebellion was rapidly collapsing. The main reason was that the rebels had nearly run out of ammunition. At the first battle of Rellano, in March, the Orozquista forces had reportedly been issued 5,000,000 rounds. But the majority of these cartridges were what the rebels had acquired when they seized control of the state of Chihuahua. Thereafter, what munitions they managed to smuggle across were insufficient to maintain an adequate resupply. The Orozquistas lost the battles of second Rellano and Bachimba not because they were lacking in courage but because they were so badly outgunned by the federal army. At Rellano, for example, the federals expended 1,500,000 cartridges and 2,500 artillery shells. The Orozquistas were not remotely capable of matching this rate of fire. At the subsequent battle of Bachimba, they were able to fire only an estimated 50,000-100,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and a mere forty to sixty artillery shells.⁴² The federal army continued its victorious drive northward; on August 20, the army occupied Ciudad Juárez.

Throughout the rebellion, both sides had used El Paso as a major recruiting center. Consul Llorente was especially active in recruiting, an endeavor that had the personal approval of President Madero himself.⁴³ The usual practice was for volunteers to present themselves at the Mexican consulate, with Llorente making the arrangements to ship them in small groups either downriver or over to Arizona so they could cross the border to join the federal army.

Llorente's most ambitious venture was that of hiring foreign mercenaries to disrupt rail and telegraph communications between Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. On June 6, he signed a contract at the consulate with E. L. Charpentier, a Frenchman who had fought in the Maderista ranks on previous occasions. By the terms of this agreement, witnessed by Sommerfeld and Alberto Madero, Charpentier and three other mercenaries, D. J. Mahoney, R. H. G. McDonald, and J. H. Noonan, were each to receive a salary of \$500 a month plus expenses to carry out the mission. Charpentier received an advance for equipment and supplies, including arms and ammunition he purchased from Krakauer and Shelton-Payne, and on June 11 the expedition crossed the border west of El Paso. The undertaking proved a failure, for the raiders encountered Orozquista patrols, and the net result was that they cut no

⁴²Testimony of Manuel L. Luján, *Revolutions in Mexico*, pp. 296-297; Despatches from the U.S. Military Attache, Capt. W. A. Burnside, July 24, 1912, MID 5761-532 and July 24, 1912, MID 5384-16.

⁴³Francisco I. Madero to Enrique Llorente, May 30, 1912, *DHRM*, VII, 422.

telegraph wires and destroyed no bridges. Furthermore, upon their return to the United States they were arrested for violating the neutrality laws. Although Charpentier and his associates had agreed to keep Llorente's involvement a secret in the event of their arrest, they now made it public, for they were angry because the consul still owed them their salaries.⁴⁴ The mercenaries and Llorente were indicted for violation of the neutrality laws, and although none of them was convicted, the affair was extremely embarrassing for the consul.⁴⁵ Embarrassment was as far as it went, for the American authorities had deliberately been turning a blind eye on Maderista recruiting activities.⁴⁶

By contrast, the United States had zealously enforced the neutrality laws against Orozquista recruiters during the spring of 1912.⁴⁷ Although severely harassed, the Orozquistas did manage to enlist some recruits, and even a few mercenaries. For example, in March they hired Sam Dreben and Tracy Richardson, two of the best-known mercenaries on the border, as machine gunners. But in June these adventurers abandoned the Orozquista cause and returned to El Paso, Richardson because he had been badly wounded, and Dreben because the

⁴⁴ Charpentier's testimony in *Revolutions in Mexico*, pp. 447-451, 505-528; McDonald's testimony, *Ibid.*, pp. 680-683; Mahoney's testimony, *Ibid.*, pp. 683-686.

⁴⁵ Charpentier, Mahoney, and McDonald were tried and acquitted in 1912. See *U.S. v. E. L. Charpentier, D. J. Mahoney, Robert McDonald, A. Monahan* [sic-J. H. Noonan], District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1607; Llorente's case was continued until April 14, 1916, when it was dismissed. See *U.S. v. Enrique C. Llorente, R. H. G. McDonald, D. J. Mahoney, J. H. Noonan, E. L. Charpentier*, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1650. As an example of the permutations that occurred among border characters, in 1914 Victor L. Ochoa was enlisting men for the Carrancistas, and one of those he enlisted was R. H. G. McDonald. See *U.S. v. Victor L. Ochoa, Fred Mendenhall, R. H. G. McDonald, Agustín Pantoja, Ramón Gutiérrez*, District Court, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1810; *U.S. v. E. L. Holmdahl, Victor L. Ochoa, Tandy Sanford, Fred Mendenhall*, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1363; *U.S. v. Victor L. Ochoa, Tandy Sanford, John Sanford, Fred Mendenhall, Rafael Díaz, R. H. G. McDonald, José Orozco, Francisco Rojas, Vicente Carreón*, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, FRC-FW, no. 1359.

⁴⁶ Ernest Knable, Assistant Attorney General, to Secretary of State, May 15, 1912, National Archives, Record Group 60, Department of Justice (hereafter cited as DJ), file no. 90755-1557; Also see Wickersham to Charles Boynton, May 16, 1912, DJ, 90755-1562 and May 20, 1912, DJ, 90755-1565; Charles Boynton to Wickersham, May 17, 1912, DJ, 90755-1564 and June 8, 1912, DJ, 90755-1590; Not until it was obvious that Orozco had lost did the U.S. government begin putting pressure on Llorente. See Huntington Wilson to Wickersham, June 24, 1912, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, National Archives Microfilm Publication, Microcopy no. 274, file no. 812.00/4246; Wickersham to Boynton, June 27, 1912, DJ, 90755-1605 and J. A. Fowler to Secretary of State, June 28, 1912, DJ, 90755-1605; Thompson reports, November 6, 7, and 30, 1912, BI, roll 3.

⁴⁷ *U.S. v. Luis Díaz de León*, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1036 and District Court, El Paso, no. 1563; *U.S. v. Canuto Leyva*, District Court, El Paso, no. 1617; *U.S. v. Rutilio Rodríguez*, District Court, El Paso, no. 1618; *U.S. v. Victor Ochoa*, District Court, El Paso, no. 1625; *U.S. v. Jesús Quintana et al.*, U.S. Commissioner, El Paso, no. 1037; *U.S. v. J. Saldívar*, District Court, El Paso, no. 1569, all in FRC-FW.

Orozquistas were losing.⁴⁸ Dreben soon secured employment with the Maderistas, being sent to New Orleans to infiltrate the Orozquista munitions traffic in that city.⁴⁹

What may be concluded from the foregoing sketch is that the most important battle the Orozquistas lost was not second Rellano or Bachimba—it was the battle of El Paso. Besides factors such as the lack of cohesion within the ranks of the Orozquistas, it was the cooperation between the United States and Mexican governments in depriving Orozco of munitions that ultimately caused the failure of his rebellion. In so doing, the Madero regime established what was probably the most effective Mexican intelligence network on the border during the Revolution.

In a larger context, the types of activities taking place in El Paso in 1912 occurred along the length of the border for more than a decade. It is this aspect of the Revolution that has been relatively neglected. Heretofore the Revolution has been studied primarily in terms of ideology and personalities. While not deprecating the value of these approaches, it may be suggested that the border constitutes a most fruitful field of future research. The task is obviously monumental, given the thousands of individuals involved, their shifting allegiances and interlocking relationships. In fact, the topic necessitates the use of computers for name retrieval alone. But systematic investigation should eventually add a significant dimension to the history of the Revolution. As Mao Tse-Tung observed, “political power grows out of the end of the barrel of a gun.”

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⁴⁸ El Paso *Morning Times*, June 24, 1912.

⁴⁹ Ross reports, July 6 and September 8, 11, 1912, roll 3; Harris reports, July 29, August 2, 7, October 31, 1912, roll 3; R. L. Barnes report, September 28, 1912, roll 2, all in BI.