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GERMANY, REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM,
AND THE DOWNFALL OF PRESIDENT FRANCISCO I. MADERO:
THE COVADONGA KILLINGS*

During the night of 12—13 July 1911 in the city of Puebla, the capital of the state of Puebla, Mexico, a bloody clash between ex-dictator Porfirio Díaz' federal forces and Francisco I. Madero's revolutionary troops resulted in the deaths of several dozens of insurgents and their families. Many of the Maderistas were machine-gunned in the city bull ring as they waited to greet Madero who was scheduled to visit the city the following day. In the wake of the infamous battle that lasted until dawn, out-gunned revolutionaries fled to safety in the surrounding countryside. One group, led by the Methodist-minister-turned-rebel, Benigno Zenteno, passed by the Covadonga, textile factory located to the north of the city near the Tlaxcala state line. The Spanish managers of the plant, fearing an attack, fired on the fleeing Maderistas. The factory's defenders, outnumbered and left without government help because of a dispute between the governor and the federal zone commander in Puebla, were soon overwhelmed by the insurgents who were joined by the local citizenry including many of the mill's workers. In the two-day sacking that followed, a Spaniard and four Germans (three male technicians and one of their spouses) employed by the factory were murdered¹.

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¹ Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, 1867—1920, Lateinamerika (German Foreign Ministry Archive), Whaddon Hall, England, Microfilm, *Paul von Hintze to Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg*, 19 July 1911, roll 14: doc. 504 (hereafter cited as AAA); Archivo Particular de Gildardo Magaña, Archivo Histórico, Universidad Autónoma de México, Mexico City, *Eduardo Reyes to Agustín del Pozo*, 15 July 1911, caja 28; expediente 15 doc. 317 (hereafter cited as AGM); AGM, *Rafael Cañete to Francisco León de la Barra*, 15 July 1911, 17: 10: 496; Archivo de Francisco I. Madero,

The death of foreigners in Mexico during the revolution was not an unusual occurrence given the violence of the period and the nationalistic tone of the upheaval. Although foreign governments generally vigorously protested such incidents, seldom were they able to do anything concrete to force Mexico to capture the perpetrators or to recompense the families of victims of any given incident. Given the chaotic situation and the Mexican government's lack of money, other countries usually added the newest statistic to their growing lists and looked forward to the day when an overall settlement, usually in the form of a claims commission, could be worked out with Mexico City².

Ramo de Presidentes, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, *Cañete to Emilio Vázquez Gómez*, 15 July 1911, caja 17: no carpeta number: no folio number (hereafter cited as AGN/AFM); Archivo de Francisco Vázquez Gómez, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, *Hilario G. Márquez to F. Vázquez Gómez*, 18 July 1911, box 14: folder 7: doc. 1521 (hereafter cited as AFIG); Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico City, *M. Castelazo F. — reporte*, 4 Sept. 1911, expediente 242.5(43: 72) legajo 12—9—20 (hereafter cited as SRE); SRE, *Cañete to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 15 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; SRE, *Juan de Velasco to Vicecónsul alemán en Puebla*, 19 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; E. C. y Torres, *Diccionario biográfico de Puebla*, vol. 1—2, Puebla 1973, Pue.: Centro de Estudios Históricos de Puebla, p. 716—717; M. A. Peral, *Los que fueron a la revolución*, Mexico City 1976, (PAC), p. 144; D. G. LaFrance, *A people betrayed: Francisco I. Madero and the Mexican revolution in Puebla*, Ph. D. dissertation, Indiana University-Bloomington 1984, p. 166—168. Covadonga was founded in 1898 by the Spanish industrialist and hacendado, José Díaz Rubin. In 1906 it was taken over by his sons, Angel, León, Enrique, and Francisco who were the owners at the time of the massacre; see R. E. Urroz *Nuevas máquinas, menos hombres: La modernización de una empresa textil en Puebla: La Covadonga*, Puebla 1984, p. 7—10, unpublished ms. Covadonga had been the site of several violent encounters since the beginning of the revolution in November 1910 including the sacking and burning of parts of the factory on two earlier occasions. Reports indicate Covadonga workers had poor relations with their Spanish bosses and that revolutionary bands found the mill hands easy recruits; see Colección porfirio Díaz, Universidad de las Américas, Cholula, Puebla, Microfilm, *Juan de la Fuente Parres to P. Díaz*, 12 Dec. 1910, rollo 367: doc. 6180; Archivo de la Revolución Mexicana, Compilado por el Patronato de la Historia de Sonora, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City, Microfilm, *Relato-suceso de la Covadonga*, 3 Aug. 1911, rollo 35: vol. 60: p. 227; Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Record Group 84, Correspondence with Consular Agencies, American Consulate General, Mexico City, National Archives, Washington, D. C. *William S. Chambers to Arnold Shanklin*, 8 May 1911, vol. 1911; „Mexican Herald” 5 XII 1910; „El País” 8 II 1911.

² Spaniards in Puebla as well as other parts of Mexico and Americans suffered much more loss of life and property damage than did the Germans but were not nearly as aggressive as the Germans in pursuing Mexico for compensation. Both countries left their grievances to be settled by claims commissions in later years. As of August 1982, Spain's claims had still not been settled evidently because of the break in diplomatic relations with Mexico from 1939 to 1977.

The aftermath of the Covadonga killings, however, did not follow this general pattern. The German government refused to file away for future negotiation the deaths of its four citizens, and Berlin's minister Mexico City, Admiral Paul von Hintze, ceaselessly pursued the Mexican authorities from July 1911 to early 1913 in an attempt to gain a satisfactory conclusion to the problem. The German pressure placed the Francisco León de la Barra and then the Madero government in a dilemma with grave consequences for the latter administration. On the one hand, the Mexican government could not ignore the German entreaties given Mexico City's desire to maintain satisfactory relations with Berlin. This policy was deemed necessary as a means to create some independence in its international politics by playing Germany off against Britain, France, and the United States who were already ill-disposed toward Madero and his revolution and too close to the *científicos* to be of help³. Not wanting to antagonize the Germans León de la Barra and then Madero made the politically unpalatable decision to prosecute the rebel perpetrators as Berlin demanded. On the other hand, capturing and punishing the culprits proved nearly impossible as neither president was able to gain the full cooperation of state and local authorities in order to carry out the task. The president's lack of effective control over officials in Puebla and Tlaxcala was exacerbated by the populace's negative reaction to their efforts to punish popular revolutionary leaders—men who had made Madero's rise to power possible, and who had, at least in the public's mind, only justifiably defended themselves against counterrevolutionaries as well as foreigners. The regime's nearly futile efforts to control its followers convinced the Germans and other outsiders of its weakness internally. At the same time, steps to catch and prosecute the guilty alienated key elements within Madero's revolutionary coalition who felt that he was capitulating to the demands of a foreign power. To make matters worse, many people suspected the government of using Covadonga to persecute dissenting revolutionary officers rather than the truly culpable. Unable to extricate himself from this double-edged political dilemma, Madero lost valuable support both internationally and domestically. In the end Covadonga greatly contributed to his downfall as his disillusioned adherents (as well as expedient conser-

³ F. Katz, *Deutschland, Díaz und die mexikanische Revolution: Die deutsche Politik in Mexiko, 1870—1920*, Berlin 1964, Veb Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, p. 207; F. Katz, *The secret war in Mexico: Europe, the United States and the Mexican revolution*, Chicago 1981, University of Chicago, p. 88. The *científicos* were a clique of Díaz supporters and advisors including former cabinet ministers who advocated a positivist economic and social philosophy and who still wielded a great deal of influence and power.

vative opponents taking advantage of the situation) took up arms against him, and the German government cooperated with other foreign nations in pushing for the coup d'état of Victoriano Huerta and Félix Díaz that ousted Madero from power.

THE LEÓN DE LA BARRA GOVERNMENT

The killings, occurring on the day of Madero's scheduled visit to Puebla in celebration of his recent victory over Díaz, were roundly condemned by the Maderista leadership. Mill owners, too, joined in the protest by shutting down their factories and threatening to put their thousands of employees permanently out of work if social peace were not restored. The German minister journeyed to Puebla where he met with both Governor Rafael Cañete and Madero to press his government's claims for compensation and the capture of the killers. In response, Madero's brother, Raúl, and another important Maderista, Eduardo Hay, were instructed to investigate the matter while authorities arrested Zenteno and several other insurgent officers for having initiated the attack. Madero promised the factories security, ordered the rebels around Puebla City to withdraw to the nearby towns of Atlixco and Cholula, and sent one thousand additional troops to Puebla to help ensure peace. León de la Barra, at Hintze's behest, provided a special military guard to accompany the German survivors of Covadonga to the port of Veracruz where they embarked for home⁴.

The German minister was not satisfied to let the Mexican legal system run its course, however, and he therefore constantly applied pressure on the León de la Barra government to solve the case quickly. Covadonga was Hintze's first real test since taking up his post in Mexico City only two months earlier, and he doubtless felt the need to prove himself for several reasons. Hintze, a career naval officer, had

⁴ AFVG, J. Z. Moreno to F. Vázquez Gómez, 15 July 1911, 14: 5: 1441; AGM, Madero to León de la Barra, 13 July 1911, 17: 10: 489; Índice del Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional, Serie XL/481.5, Compilado por Luis Muro, El Colegio de México, Mexico City, Luis Valle to Sec. de Guerra, 15 July 1911, caja A-2 (hereafter cited as ILM); Foreign Office, General Correspondence-Political-Mexico, Series 371, Public Record Office, London, Microfilm, Thomas Beaumont Hohler to Edward Grey Bart, 27 July 1911, file 1150: doc. 26 (hereafter cited as GBFO); SRE, Hintze to B. Carbajal y Rosas, 24 July, 21 Aug. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-20; Fuentes para la historia de la revolución mexicana, ed. M. Ramírez, vols. 5, Mexico City 1954-1957, Fondo de Cultura Económica, vol. 4, p. 250-251; „Mexican Herald” 16, 17 VII 1911; „Diario del Hogar” 29 VIII, 10, 21 IX 1911; „Imparcial” 16, 17 VII 1911.

only been part of the German diplomatic corps since 1908 when, while serving as the Kaiser's aide-de-camp, he was named the German emperor's personal representative to the court of Czar Nicholas II of Russia. His lack of time in the foreign service also meant that he had a limited base of institutional support within the Berlin bureaucracy. Kard Bünz, his predecessor, had left Mexico City in November 1910, leaving the ministry in the hands of subordinates during the critical early months of the Mexican revolution. The kaiser's naming Hintze admiral and appointing him to Mexico demonstrated both the German leader's confidence in Hintze as well as Berlin's concern with events in Mexico. Finally, the German press added to the pressure on Hintze by calling on the government to protect German citizens in Mexico and to see that those responsible for Covadonga were prosecuted. Consequently, the forty-seven-year-old bachelor, whom his diplomatic colleagues described as straightforward and strong, yet cautious and shrewd, faced the greatest challenge of his young diplomatic career⁵.

Covadonga also threatened German policy toward Madero's Mexico. Berlin, believing that only the dynamic middle and upper classes could govern, favored Madero since he came from one of Mexico's wealthiest entrepreneurial families. It was thought that by making a few minor changes in the political system Madero would prove to be better able to govern than even Díaz himself. In return for backing Madero, Berlin hoped to benefit financially by increasing its economic ties with Mexico⁶. Suddenly, however, Covadonga stood in the way such an arrangement. Therefore, Hintze immediately and forcefully demanded that the León de la Barra government clear up the matter. He even offered to pay an award to anyone who provided information leading to the capture of the culprits saying sarcastically „I have been assured that for money even the assassins' relatives would be capable of turning them in"⁷.

⁵ GBFO, *Francis Stronge to Grey Bart*, 10 Apr. 1912, 1397: 68; GBFO, *Hohler to Grey Bart*, 26 May 1911, 1149: 525; SRE, *Francisco A. de Icaza to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 26 Jan. 1911, no expediente number: 11—14—163; SRE, *E. Rhomborg to León de la Barra*, 18 Apr. 1911, III/323(43: 72)1: 42—16—132; SRE, *Icaza to Carbajal*, 21 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; Katz, *The secret...*, p. 75—76; P. Calvert, *The Mexican revolution, 1910—1914: The diplomacy of Anglo-American conflict*, Cambridge 1968, Cambridge University, p. 120—121; P. E. Haley, *Revolution and intervention: The diplomacy of Taft and Wilson with Mexico, 1910—1917*, Cambridge 1970, M. I. T., p. 125; „El Mundo" 31 III 1914.

⁶ Katz *Deutschland*, p. 207; *idem*, *The secret...*, p. 74, 88.

⁷ SRE, *Hintze to Carbajal*, 24 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20.

In response to Hintze's heavy pressure and the desire to conclude with the potentially damaging incident, León de la Barra took several steps to aid and speed up the investigation in Puebla. These measures included setting up a special telegraph line between Mexico City and Puebla, and sending police agents, a judge/investigator, and a prosecutor to assist Governor Cañete⁸. The interim president even promised Hintze the case would be cleared up within two weeks and that ten to fifteen suspects would be executed for the crime „whether guilty or not”⁹.

León de la Barra's actions and attitude helped to substantiate charges that those insurgent officers arrested in the days following the crime were not responsible but in fact scapegoats whom the Maderista leadership wanted removed because of their active opposition to the new government due to the slow progress of revolutionary change. Governor Cañete helped confirm the accusations when he told the president as well as the secretary of exterior relations that the assailants, made up mainly of people living near the factory, could not be identified because of their large number and the fact that the factory's survivors knew none of them. To the secretary of *gobernación* (interior affairs) he openly declared that the killings were not committed by insurgent troops. Even Hintze admitted to Berlin that he doubted the truly guilty would be found since the Germans saw nothing, there existed a state of anarchy in the state, and government officials admitted they were powerless to do anything. Also, Zenteno, one of the arrested officers, was released for lack of evidence only to be rearrested shortly thereafter, evidently on Mexico City's orders. Later, when several of the incarcerated officers wrote a letter to the Mexico City daily, *Diario del Hogar*, protesting their innocence and claiming government collusion against them, the judge, in order to silence them, placed them in solitary confinement¹⁰.

⁸ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 24 July 1911, 14: 482; Archivo de Alfredo Robles Domínguez, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, *Mariano Xicoy to Robles Domínguez*, 1 Aug. 1911, tomo 2: expediente 8: folio 90; AGM, *L. H. Guajardo to León de la Barra*, 28 July 1911, 17: 10: 508; AGM, *León de la Barra to Cañete*, 24 Aug. 1911, 17: 10: 511; SRE, *León de la Barra to Cañete*, 21, 22 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; SRE, *Cañete to León de la Barra*, 21 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; „Nueva Era” 3 VIII 1911.

⁹ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 19 July 1911, 14: 504; AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 12 Nov. 1912, 17: 417—1; —; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 208.

¹⁰ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 19 July 1911, 14: 504; AGN/AFM, *Cañete to Emilio Vázquez Gómez*, 15 July 1911, 77: —: —; SRE, *Jesús Flores Magón to Sec. de Justicia*, 27 Sept. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Hintze to Carbajal*, 24 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; SRE, *Cañete to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 15 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; SRE, *Cañete to León de la Barra*,

By early August, the special federal investigator, L. H. Guajardo, had provided the Puebla judges, he claimed, with enough information, including names and other concrete evidence, to facilitate a rapid conclusion to the case. Nevertheless, the actual capture of the remainder of the suspects and their prosecution ran into a wall of official and unofficial opposition in Puebla and Tlaxcala. Given the instability of his government and the threat of provoking more violence, Governor Cañete was very reluctant to prosecute revolutionary officers (whose alleged crime had been to attack foreigners) without having thoroughly examined the incident and proven beyond a doubt the culpability of the suspects. Sensitive to outside intrusion in state affairs, he only reluctantly accepted León de la Barra's aid and when pressured to modify the law to allow special auxiliary judges to be named to help with the case, he moved slowly to make the change. He also refused to allow investigators to enter the Covadonga factory while a strike was taking place in August and September. Although Cañete knew the whereabouts of many of those who had robbed the mill, he refused to move against them. Puebla judges, reluctant, too, to prosecute the case, took the maximum time under the law and even allowed Zenteno's defending lawyer to make an appeal all the way to the state supreme court. In early November, one of the principal attorneys quit the case, further delaying the process. The undermanned Puebla police force also showed little enthusiasm in pursuing the culprits¹¹.

21 July 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; F. V. Gómez, *Memorias políticas, 1909—1913*, Mexico City 1933, Mundial, p. 347; „Diario del Hogar” 29 VIII, 10, 21 IX 1911, 23 IV 1912; „Nueva Era” 3 VIII 1911. Hintze also told Berlin that he did not respond to Carbajal's admission of powerlessness so that Mexico could not later use it as an excuse for not having done anything about Covadonga.

¹¹ AGM, Guajardo to León de la Barra, 28 July 1911, 17: 10: 508, 4 Aug. 1911, 4: G—3: 311; AGM, Cañete to León de la Barra, 2 Sept. 1911, 15: 5: 313, 19 Sept. 1911, 12: C—2: 330; AGM, Hintze to León de la Barra, 17 Sept. 1911, 3: H—4: 560; Archivo del Congreso del Estado, Libros de los Expedientes, Puebla, *Ernesto Solís et al. to Cañete*, 31 Aug. 1911, vol. 190: expediente 9165; Archivo Judicial del Estado de Puebla, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Centro Regional, Puebla, *Joaquín Ibáñez Jr., to Tribunal Supremo*, 2 Aug. 1911, paquete 1911 (hereafter cited as AJE) INAH; AJE/INAH, *Jesús Z. Moreno to Juez lo de lo Criminal*, 3 Nov. 1911; SRE, *J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Justicia*, 27 Sept. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Hintze to Carbajal*, 24 July, 7, 13 Sept. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; SRE, *Carbajal to Sec. de Justicia*, 13 Sept. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; SRE, *Manuel Calero to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 26 Sept. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—20; Correspondencia Diplomática Hispano Mexicana, 1826—1917, El Colegio de México, Mexico City, Microfilm, *Juan Sánchez Azcona to Sec. de Gobernación*, 26 July 1911, rollo 45: caja 281: legajo 1: número 37; „Nueva Era” 30 VIII 1911.

Cañete, hardly a radical or a champion of the left-wing of the Maderista movement, was clearly acting in such a dilatory manner in the face of pressure from Hintze and León de la Barra both out of political necessity and the fact that he could not control state and local officials no less the general public in his state. Resistance to the prosecution of the Covadonga attackers was widespread prompting Cañete, at Hintze's behest, to double the guard at the city jail and the penitentiary and to put the prisoners in solitary confinement reportedly in order to prevent an escape attempt. Street demonstrations and delegations to Madero (who refused to interfere) protesting the process took place. Government officials, the German consul in Puebla, and potential witnesses regularly received threats. At least one policeman involved in the probe was killed. Authorities in the neighboring state of Tlaxcala, a haven for many of the suspects, also refused to cooperate with the federal government¹².

Hintze, increasingly disturbed over the slow-moving process and what he saw as the Maderista leadership's hollow promises, urged that a state of siege be declared in Puebla, that suspects already held be immediately tried collectively, not one at a time, and that the federal government take direct responsibility for the investigation. After considering the legal and political ramifications of such action, León de la Barra refused to take these steps¹³.

In retaliation, Berlin refused to formally recognize the interim government by not answering the notification of change in administrations following Díaz' fall to Madero's forces in late May 1911. León de la Barra called the bluff by threatening to reveal publicly German non-

¹² AGM, *Guajardo to León de la Barra*, 28 July 1911, 17: 1: 94, 4 Aug. 1911, 4: G-3: 311, 22 Aug. 1911, 4: G-3: 419; AGM, *Hintze to León de la Barra*, 17 Sept. 1911, 3: H-4: 560; SRE, *Hintze to Calero*, 7 Nov. 1911, 242.5(43: 72) 12-9-20; SRE, *Cañete to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 29 Sept., 15 Nov. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-20; SRE, *Hintze to Carbajal*, 24 July, 13, 26 Sept. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-20; SRE, *Anónimo to Claude Voight*, n.d., 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-20; SRE, *J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Justicia*, 27 Sept., 14 Oct. 1911, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6. Another reason for the reluctance of Tlaxcala officials to cooperate with the federal government may have been due to a dispute with Puebla over jurisdiction of the mill. Built in an area where the line between the two states was in question, the federal government in 1899 awarded the land to Puebla thereby depriving Tlaxcala of important tax revenues. The incident remained a sore point between the two states; see *Archivo General de Notarías del Estado de Puebla, Puebla, Protocolización...*, 21 Jan. 1907, notaría Puebla 5: año 1907: vol. 1: doc. 34; V. L. G. Ojeda, *Perfil del empresariado dominante en la industria textil de Puebla, 1906-1929*, M.S.S. thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Puebla 1982, p. 33.

¹³ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 30 Aug. 1911, 14: 566, 14 Oct. 1911, 14: 598; AGM, *Hintze to León de la Barra*, 17 Sept. 1911, 3: H-4: 560; GBFO, *Hohler to Grey Bart*, 16 Oct. 1911, 1150: 125; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 208.

recognition which would have seriously jeopardized the Deutsch-Südamerikanische Bank's privileged position in Mexico. The bank had had a close relationship with the Madero family even providing it with money during the revolution against Díaz. In the autumn of 1911 it planned a large investment in an industrial development project along with the Maderos in northeastern Mexico and the creation of a mortgage bank in Brussels with Swiss and Belgian partners. This latter venture was designed to take advantage of the Mexican government's plan to float bonds worth 100 million pesos for irrigation and other agricultural improvements. Not willing to risk its economic objectives in Mexico over Covadonga, the German foreign office soon after took the step to recognize León de la Barra's government despite Hintze's opposition¹⁴.

THE MADERO GOVERNMENT

Ultimately, the responsibility for resolving the case fell on Madero, who assumed the presidency in early November 1911, and on his new governor in Puebla, Nicolás Maléndez. Maléndez, Madero's favorite, assumed office in late December following a divisive election that weakened the régime's hand in the state and consequently its ability to deal with Covadonga. Hintze warned the Madero government of the need to remove this „fatal" obstacle that threatened amicable relations between the two countries. In turn the president made it immediately clear to Maléndez that he wanted the matter given first priority because the German pressure was an embarrassment to Mexico¹⁵.

In Puebla, however, the judicial process made little progress despite the German consul's almost daily visits to Meléndez. Legal maneuvering involving the right of defendants to reject judges, the right of prosecutors to operate in courts other than the one to which they were assigned, whether the suspects should be tried together or separately, the right of defending lawyers to see prisoners in solitary confinement, and the length of time each of the accused should have to prepare his defense all prolonged the case. Meléndez cautiously attempted to speed

¹⁴ AAA, *León de la Barra to Kaiser Wilhelm II*, 25 May 1911, 14: 588; AAA, *Rhomberg to Bethmann Hollweg*, 12 Apr. 1911, 14: 318; AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 22 July 1911, 14: 514, 16 Sept. 1911, 14: 555, 14 Oct. 1911, 14: 508; 15 Oct. 1911, 14: 591; AAA, *Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter to Kaiser*, 13 Oct. 1911, 14: 587; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 204–205, 208; Katz, *The secret*, p. 74, 85–86.

¹⁵ AGN/AFM, *Madero to Meléndez*, 8 Jan. 1912, 57: 1; 166; SRE, *Hintze to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 2 Jan. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12–9–8; LaFrance, *A people...*, p. 190–193.

things up but advised Madero that the necessary time had to be taken to ensure that the proceedings were legally sound¹⁶.

As the Covadonga matter dragged on into March 1912, Hintze repeatedly warned federal authorities that a break out of the suspects was contemplated and called for tighter security. Nevertheless, on 15 March twenty-one of the accused managed to tunnel to freedom most likely with the aid of penitentiary personnel and outsiders. The escape was a set back to the Maderista government especially since it came in the midst of a serious rebel insurgency in central and northern Mexico. Indeed, in Puebla, the Zapatistas had set up a second state government in the southern town of Petlalcingo and at the time of the escape had Puebla City surrounded and were calling for its surrender. Speculation existed that there was a connection between the Zapatista threat and the prisonbreak especially since Benigno Zenteno and several others who fled the penitentiary joined up with the Zapatista forces¹⁷.

The incident also helped justify recent security measures taken by the already nervous German community in Mexico. Under Hintze's direction it organized itself into defense and selfhelp committees to ward off any attackers and to place pressure on the government to provide more protection. Hintze even persuaded Madero to make an exception to his government's ban on arms imports allowing the German colony to purchase in New York City five hundred carbines and fifty thousand rounds of ammunition to be distributed to German na-

¹⁶ AGN/AFM, *Meléndez to Madero*, 10 Jan. 1912, 3: 77: 2285; AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 19 Jan. [1912], 17: 417—1: —; AGN/AFM, *Federico González Garza to Meléndez*, 12 Mar. 1912, 57: X: 145; AJE/INAH, *Juzgado 2° de lo Criminal, Puebla. Yncidente relativo...*, 12 Jan. 1912; SRE, *Hintze to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 2 Jan. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; SRE, *Memorandum-conversación con Hintze*, 27 Feb. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; SRE, *Meléndez to Calero*, 6 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8.

¹⁷ AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 15 Mar. 1912, 17: 417—1: —; AJE/INAH, *Barrios [sic] Artesanos to Carlos Aldeco*, 16 Mar. 1912; GBFO *Stronge to Grey Bart*, 16 Mar. 1912, 1397: 20; Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910—1929, Record Group 59, National Archives, Washington, D. C., Microfilm, *Frederick A. Lendrum to Claude E. Guyant*, 20 Apr. 1912, roll 17: doc. 1355—56 (hereafter cited as RDS/59); SRE, *Hintze to Calero*, 31 Jan., 24 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Meléndez to Calero*, 6, 15 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Manuel Piña to J. Flores Magón*, 16 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; LaFrance, *A people...*, p. 255—257; „Diario, del Hogar” 16 III 1912; „Nueva Era” 16—17 III 1912.

tionals in Mexico. By doing so, Madero implicitly admitted his government's inability to protect foreigners¹⁸.

The escape was a severe blow to the government's image among the foreign diplomatic community and put Madero in an even more vulnerable position vis-à-vis Hintze. As the suspects scattered in all directions, some to join the Zapatistas, other the rurales, and even others to Tlaxcala where they were out of the immediate reach of the Puebla authorities, Hintze greatly increased his pressure on the president. Concerned about calls in the American and German press for an invasion and succumbing to Hintze's threat to order Germans to leave Mexico for their safety as the British and United States governments had done, Madero not only ordered the firing of the prison officials and several guards but also Meléndez' general secretary who allegedly sympathized with the prisoners, permitted lax security at the penitentiary, and tried to impede their recapture. In addition, Madero placed detectives at Hintze's disposal, sent a special investigator and a fifty-man federal rural force to Puebla, and allowed Hintze personally to review the Puebla penal facility and to recommend changes in security measures. He also ordered Meléndez to establish a reward of up to one thousand pesos for the capture of the escapees. Distrustful of Meléndez and to pacify Hintze, he also sent General Juvencio Robles to Puebla to keep an eye on the governor. Finally, Madero personally promised Hintze that anyone caught would immediately be shot on the spot¹⁹. Madero did, however, stop short of acceding to the German mi-

¹⁸ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 6 Apr. 1912, 15: 011; AGN/AFM, *Madero to Hintze*, 11 Mar. 1912, 57: 1: 435; AGN/AFM, *Baraquiél M. Alatríste to Madero*, 3 Mar. 1912, 6: 140—1: 4124; LaFrance, *A people...*, p. 267; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 213; Katz, *The secret...*, p. 89.

¹⁹ AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 29 Mar. 1912, 17: 417—1: —, 4 Dec. 1912, 70: 6: —; AGN/AFM, *Madero to Hintze*, 19 Mar. 1912, 57: 1: 500, 30 Mar. 1912, 57: 2: 25; AGN/AFM, *Madero to Meléndez*, 27 Mar. 1912, 3: 77; 2229; AGN/AFM, *Luis Grajales—memorandum*, 31 Mar. 1912, 16: 399—1: 12975; Gobernación, Ramo de Gobernación, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, *Julio Barcia to Sec. de Gobernación*, 19 Mar. 1912, expediente 4^a, 911—12(10), 1 (hereafter cited as RG/G); SRE, *Calero to Meléndez*, 16 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43:72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Meléndez to Calero*, 18 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 27, 30 Mar., 16 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Hintze to Pedro Lascaráin*, 9 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; N. Maléndez, *40° informe que el jefe del departamento ejecutivo remite a la legislatura del estado...* [1 July 1912], Puebla 1912 Pue.: Escuela de Artes y Oficios del Estado, p. 11—12; *Memoria de la Secretaría de Gobernación correspondiente al período comprendido el 1° de julio de 1911 y el 20 de febrero de 1913*, México, Secretaría de Gobernación, Mexico City 1913, Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, *J. Flores Magón to Meléndez*, 30 Mar. 1912, p. 262; *Documentos históricos de la revolución mexicana*,

nister's requests that Meléndez be fired, the federal government send Puebla authorities a note from Hintze condemning their handling of the case, the special federal investigator intervene directly in the Puebla courts, and suspects captured in Puebla and surrounding states be transferred to Mexico City for interrogation. Federal officials cited separation of state and federal governmental functions when refusing Hintze these latter demands²⁰.

Still not satisfied with the Mexicans' concessions, Hintze then demanded 500,000 German marks in compensation for the Covadonga killings in order to quiet German public opinion and threats of retaliation from the Reichstag. He also stipulated that talks concerning the money be conducted on a government-to-government basis and not through any arbitration or claims commission. Mexico, in turn, offering little resistance, suggested 300,000 marks, but with the condition that the government would not accept responsibility for the attack. Following a few short weeks of talks, the two governments settled on 400,000 marks, and the sum, in cash, was immediately paid to Berlin making Germany the only country, according to that nation's press, to receive such a compensation from Mexico²¹.

Hintze's diplomatic successes using hard-line tactics were not lost on the other members of the diplomatic corps in Mexico. One British observer commented that Hintze had done more than any other governmental representative to protect its citizens in Mexico; some eighty Americans and forty Spaniards had been killed and neither government had managed to get the Mexicans to punish the guilty or pay an

eds. I. Fabela and J. E. de Fabela, vols. 27, Mexico City 1960-1970, Jus and Fondo de Cultura Económica, vol. 7, *Madero to Hintze*, 30, 31 Mar. 1912, p. 263-265. Other diplomats in the Mexican capital were also privately informed that the government favored the expedient albeit illegal policy of shooting suspects on the spot; see GBFO, *Stronge to Grey Bart*, 16 Mar. 1912, 1397: 20.

²⁰ RG/G, *Alfonso M. Mandonado to Sec. de Gobernación*, 4 May 1912, 4a, 911-12(10), 1.

²¹ GBFO, *Stronge to Grey Bart*, 7 June 1912, 1397: 30; SRE, *Icaza to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 7 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; SRE, *Hintze to Calero*, 1 Apr. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6; SRE, *Hintze to Lascaráin*, Apr. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6; SRE, *Lascaráin to Ministro mexicano en Berlin*, 6 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6; SRE, *Lascaráin to Sec. de Hacienda*, 10 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 211. Madero promised the Chinese government compensation for the killing of Chinese citizens in Torreón, Coahuila, in May 1911, but it is not clear whether the payments were ever made; see AAA, *F. Albert to G. Pagenstecher*, 25 Apr. 1912, 15: 065; AAA, *Hintze to Auswärtige Amt*, 12 May 1912, 15: 045.

indemnization. Indeed, Mexico City ignored Madrid's demands for treatment equal to Berlin's as outlined by international law²².

Madero hoped that the payment would satisfy the Germans and relieve him of a particularly sensitive and increasingly debilitating situation²³. Berlin's dissatisfaction merely accentuated Madero's already poor international standing while his concessions to Hintze's pressure undermined support for him among his nationalistic followers, especially at the local level.

Governor Meléndez, much like his predecessor, Rafael Cañete, expressed his desire to cooperate with federal authorities in the case, but in practice his ability to do so was strictly limited by the widespread pro-rebel sentiment in the state and his sensitivity over the interference of Mexico City in local affairs. Immediately after the March break out, for example, Meléndez vowed to have any recaptured prisoner shot on the spot. When one of the suspects, who had been serving as a sargeant in the *rurales*, was apprehended, Meléndez refused, however, to have him executed as Hintze demanded. The governor took this stand even though the man, Manuel Villegas, had admitted to taking part in the killing of the Germans and may have raped and sexually mutilated the woman. Indeed, the federal government even had to urge Meléndez to transfer Villegas to the state penitentiary from the city jail for safer keeping²⁴.

Meléndez also demonstrated his independence and concern for the local political situation in other ways. When federal authorities informed the governor that they were sending a special investigator, Manuel Sánchez Gavito, to Puebla and asked the governor for his cooperation in the name of „national decorum", Meléndez replied that he would comply „but only as long as the referred to lawyer, in the carrying out of his commission, did not attack the sovereignty of the state"²⁵. In another instance, the secretary of *g o b e r n a c i ó n*, at Hintze's behest,

²² GBFO, W. L. Goschen to Grey Bart, 11 June 1912, 1397: 26; SRE, Bernardo J. Cologan to Lascuráin, 24 Aug. 1912, III/242(46: 72)/44: 12—11—55; V. G. Lescartales, *La colonia española de México durante la revolución maderista, 1911—1913*, „Revista de la Universidad Complutense" 1977, No 26, p. 107, 362. The Spaniards, of example, suffered at least 9 dead and 5 wounded in the state since the spring of 1911.

²³ SRE, Lascuráin to Icaza, 3 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8.

²⁴ AGN/AFM, Hintze to Madero, 15 Mar., 11 May 1912, 17:417—1: —; SRE, J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores, 16 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; Memoria..., Gobernación, García to Sec. de Gobernación, 14 May 1912, p. 264—266. Hintze claimed that Villegas inserted a bottle in the womb of the German woman.

²⁵ Memoria..., Gobernación, J. Flores Magón to Meléndez, 30 Mar. 1912, p. 262. Meléndez to Sec. de Gobernación, 11 Apr. 1912, p. 262—63.

urged Meléndez to travel to Mexico City for an audience with the German minister. The governor refused claiming that to get authorization from the legislature and then leave the state would cause political panic. At another point, Meléndez publicly declared that the investigation had been closed with no results, but he soon after denied having made such a statement²⁶.

While Meléndez assumed a politically cautious stance vis-a-vis Co vadonga, the recapture of the escapees and the investigation of the break out made only limited progress. The special agents and rural force managed to apprehend or shoot a handful of men (some while serving with rural contingents fighting Zapatistas in Morelos), but the majority remained at large. Indeed, press reports claimed that Benigno Zenteno even appeared in Puebla City but was not arrested²⁷.

In Tlaxcala, federal authorities also found little cooperation. Governor Antonio Hidalgo, an ex-factory worker and radical, helped only to the least extent possible. He reportedly refused to assist a reserve police force capture suspects, arrested some police who did not have proper orders, and protected the jefe político of Zacatelco who harbored suspects in his home. One escapee allegedly was even working as a consierge in the Tlaxcala state capital building while another served as the municipal president of San Pablo del Monte²⁸. An indication of the slowness of the investigation can be seen in the fact that the Sánchez Gavito report, which was to have been out in April, still had not appeared by mid-September²⁹.

In May 1912, as some of the escapees were recaptured, the judicial process begun the previous year resumed. Again, however, legal maneuvering by the defendants and their lawyers and the reluctance of

²⁶ AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 29 Mar. 1912, 17: 417—1: —; SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 6 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; SRE, *J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 26 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7.

²⁷ AGN/AFM, *J. Flores Magón to Meléndez*, 4 Sept. 1912, 84: —; —; SRE, *J. Flores Magón to Lascuráin*, 3 Nov. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; „Nueva Era” 1 VII 1912.

²⁸ AGN/AFM, *Grajales -memorandum*, 31 Mar. 1912, 16: 399—1: 12974; RG/G, *García to Sec. de Gobernación*, 19 Mar. 1912, 4^a, 911—12(10), 1; RG/G, *Antonio Hidalgo to Sec. de Gobernación*, 28 Mar. 1912, 4^a, 911—12(10), 1; RG/G, *Manuel Sánchez Gavito to Sec. de Gobernación*, 3 Apr. 1912, 4^a, 911—12(10), 1; SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 26 Apr. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Memorandum anónimo*, 26 Mar. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—6; SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 19 Sept. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; *Memoria...*, Gobernación, *García to Sec. de Gobernación*, 27 Apr. 1912, p. 263—64; R. Th. J. Buve, *El movimiento revolucionario de Tlaxcala, 1910—1914: Sus orígenes y desarrollo ante de la gran crisis de 1914: La rebelión arenista*, „Humanidades Anuario” 1981—1983, No 7, p. 152—153.

²⁹ SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 8 Aug., 11 Sept. 1912, 42.5(43: 72): 12—9—7.

Meléndez and the Puebla courts to prosecute the alleged culprits, especially without incontrovertible evidence, slowed the process to a crawl. Indicative of the situation in Puebla was the courts' first concrete action — the releasing on bail of the director of the penitentiary and several guards accused of aiding in the 15 March break out. This action was taken even though the law proscribed bail for indicted prisoners³⁰.

The drama in the Puebla courts mainly revolved around the second criminal judge for the district of Puebla, Celerino Flores, and the principal defending lawyer, Francisco G. Luque. Flores, in charge of the case, made little effort to see its conclusion. When deprived (for what reason is not clear) of his auxiliary judge, he dismissed Hintze's efforts to make him name another saying the still-at-large suspects the German had named had nothing to do with the case, thereby implying he did not need the help of another judge. At another point, when accused of inhibiting the location and capture of the suspects, Flores responded that the police, not he, were in charge of that end of the process³¹.

Luque and other defending lawyers in turn found the Puebla courts amenable to delays. When the three-day period for examining the evidence against each suspect was about to expire, the lawyers' peremptory challenge to Flores was readily accepted thereby transferring the cases of several men to another judge. In turn this latter judge was also challenged and a third one then became involved in the proceedings. The lawyers then complained that they could not adequately defend their clients if they were tried in the courts of more than one judge. On another occasion, Luque filed an appeal for *amparo* (reprieve) when the hiring of a Mexico City lawyer by several defendants was disallowed by the first criminal judge. In early November, when the investigative period was again about to end, Luque appealed, this time to the state supreme court, claiming his clients had been tortured in jail to confess and that he needed more time to gather and present additional evidence. This step gained him an extra month³².

³⁰ AJE/INAH, *Juzgado 2º de lo Criminal, Puebla, Contra Manuel Ramírez y socios...*, 8 June 1912, SRE, Hintze to Lascuráin, 22 June, 7 Sept. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7.

³¹ SRE, Hintze to Lascuráin, 10, 11 Sept. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; SRE, J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores, 3 Oct. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7.

³² AGN/AFM, Crispín Ramos to J. Flores Magón, 19 Sept. 1912, 31: 863: —; AJE/INAH, Diego M. Martínez to Juez 2º Criminal de Puebla, 28 Sept. 1912; AJE/INAH, Luis Espinosa to Juez 3º Criminal de Puebla, 12 Oct. 1912; AJE/INAH, *Juzgado 1º de lo Criminal, Puebla, Causa 298, Relativo al...*, 26 Oct. 1912; SRE Hintze to Lascuráin, 28 Sept., 19 Nov. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; SRE, J. Flores Magón to Lascuráin, 9 Nov. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; SRE, Meléndez to García, 9 Dec. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7.

When the trial finally began in early December, one of the trial judges reportedly acquitted the suspects under his jurisdiction because of the lack of merits. This action consequently placed in doubt the outcome of the whole process, but before the trial could continue a bitter gubernatorial election dispute in the state and the holiday season postponed the proceedings until the new year³³.

Luque, not merely content to prolong the process, also took his case to the public and may have even plotted to help the prisoners escape. On 17 November, in a well-attended ceremony at Aquiles Serdán's grave to honor the fallen revolutionary hero, Luque denounced the imprisonment of the Covadonga suspects, claimed they were political scapegoats, and praised them as true revolutionaries. Both Meléndez and the jefe político of Puebla were in attendance. Later, Luque was caught inside the penitentiary receiving plans of the prison's layout from the prisoners in what was seen as an escape plot³⁴.

As events dragged on in Puebla, Hintze, who was receiving pressure from both the German community in Mexico and at home to bring the Covadonga case to a satisfactory conclusion, became increasingly impatient with the Mexican government. For his critics, monetary compensation was not enough, he also had to accomplish the culprits' capture and punishment.

In Mexico, Hintze faced the determined opposition of the self-appointed leader of the German colony, G. Pagenstecher. A medical doctor with business interests in Mexico, Pagenstecher was accustomed to a close and even indulgent relationship with the German ministry as he pursued his personal financial and political interests. In the period between the departure of Hintze's predecessor and the minister's arrival in Mexico in 1911, Pagenstecher even took it upon himself unofficially to represent the German community before the Mexican government. Hintze, unlike other German ministers to Mexico, refused to have anything to do with Pagenstecher and even, he claimed, turned down an illegal business offer made to him by the doctor in conjunction with other German businessmen³⁵.

Pagenstecher took offense at his treatment by Hintze and vowed to make the minister pay for his actions. He seized upon Covadonga

³³ LaFrance, *A people...* p. 291–299; „Nueva Era" 2, 4 XII 1912.

³⁴ AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 4 Dec. 1912, 70: 6; —; SRE, *Meléndez to Rafael Hernández*, 17 Dec. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12–9–7; SRE, *Hintze to García*, 4 Jan. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12–9–7; „Nueva Era" 11 XII 1912.

³⁵ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 12 Mar. 1912, 14: 725, 7 July 1912, 15: 180; AAA, *Pagenstecher o Flöckher*, 27 Mar. 1912, 14: 770; GBFO, *Goschen to Grey Bart*, 11 June 1912, 1397: 26; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 209.

and used it to try to get Hintze recalled. If the Covadonga incident in itself was not originally an especially serious concern among the German colony outside Puebla, Pagenstecher made it into one. As early as January 1912, at a ceremony to commemorate Kaiser Wilhelm II's birthday, Pagenstecher called for the use of warships against Mexico and attacked both the government and Hintze for their faint-hearted attitude toward Mexico. Pagenstecher not only carried on his anti-Hintze campaign in Mexico (including traveling outside Mexico City to visit personally Germans in other Mexican cities), but he also wrote articles to the German press and took advantage of his contacts in the government in Berlin to try to undermine Hintze³⁶.

Hintze countered Pagenstecher's charges by threatening to sue him and to take away his title of Sanitätzrat (a title conferred on German medical practitioners) and his Cross of the Red Eagle, Fourth Class, ousting him from the Naval Officers' Society, and publicly branding him an ambitious, unscrupulous, genetically defective half mulatto from Haiti with no support among the German colony. Pagenstecher finally agreed to drop his campaign only after Hintze persuaded Mexican exterior relations secretary Pedro Lascuráin to call the doctor into the ministry for an interrogation concerning his role in attacking Mexico over Covadonga³⁷.

Hintze also received a great deal of pressure from Germany, much of it because of the doctor's efforts. His newspaper articles aroused German public opinion including the influential naval officers' clubs while his contacts in the German government also proved useful. Hintze's immediate predecessor, Karl Bünz, whom Hintze accused of making 100,000 pesos in an alleged illegal business deal with Pagenstecher, now headed the Mexican desk in the foreign ministry. Already ill-disposed toward Hintze because of his non-diplomatic background, Bünz made things difficult for Hintze. Another former minister to Mexico and business partner of Pagenstecher, von Richthofen, now serving in the Reichstag, played a role in persuading that body to pressure the state department and Hintze. In August 1912, for example, the Mexican minister to Berlin, Francisco A. de Icaza, was told by the subsecretary of the German state department, Arthur Zimmermann,

³⁶ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 12 Mar. 1912, 14: 725, 21 May 1912, 15: 090, 1 June 1912, 15: 122; AAA, *Pagenstecher to Flöckher*, 27 Mar. 1912, 14: 770; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 209–210.

³⁷ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 15 Apr. 1912, 15: 021, 21 May 1912, 15: 090, 27 May 1912, 15: 109, 7 July 1912, 15: 180; AAA, *Clipping from „Frankfurter Zeitung“* 25 May 1912, 15: 070; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 211–212.

that the government wanted a solution to the case before the opening of the next session of the Reichstag³⁸.

Hintze, under fire from hard liners at home and within the German community in Mexico, could not be content until all the escapees were recaptured and punished. Throughout the remainder of 1912, as the effort to locate the suspects dragged on with only partial success, he became increasingly frustrated. His correspondence to Mexican officials, now mostly written in the more formal French (rather than German or Spanish), turned more and more sarcastic increasingly implying that Madero and other federal officials and not just state and local authorities were responsible for the delays. In his zeal, he bypassed regular diplomatic channels, ignoring the secretary of exterior relations, and went directly to the secretary of *gubernación* and Madero with his complaints. He tried to invoke the 1882 Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between Mexico and German that forbid extraordinary prolongation of justice. He demonstrated his contempt for Mexican legal norms by claiming that the laws of a „state as small as Puebla“ should not block such an important case as Covadonga and suggesting that the Covadonga suspects be treated like any common criminal who, he claimed, were dispatched everywhere else in Mexico without regard to legal formalities. Not satisfied with Madero's verbal promise to have suspects shot upon capture (which state authorities seldom carried out in practice), Hintze attempted to force the government to sign an *aide-memoire* authorizing the same. This step Madero also promised to take, but it was never carried out due to resistance by the secretary of exterior relations, Pedro Lascuráin³⁹.

³⁸ AAA, *Hintze to Bethmann Hollweg*, 7 July 1912, 15: 180; GBFO, *Goschen to Grey Bart*, 11 June 1912, 1397: 26; SRE, *Icaza to Lascuráin*, 26, 31 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; SRE, *Lascuráin to Icaza*, 3 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 209—210.

³⁹ AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 5 Aug., 12 Nov. 1912, 17: 417—1: —, 4 Dec. 1912, 70: 6: —; RG/G, *García to Sec. de Gobernación*, 14 May 1912, 4^a, 911—12(10), 1; SRE, *Lascuráin to Icaza*, 3 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—8; SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 9, 24 Aug., 19 Nov. 1912, 14, 30 Jan. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7; SRE, *Lascuráin to Hintze*, 16, 31 Jan. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12—9—7. Cultural differences, too, must have played a part in the growing antagonism between Madero and Hintze. For example, in April 1912, Madero wrote to Hintze apologizing for the delay in answering one of Hintze's letters. Madero said that Easter week had interfered, and he added that there was a saying in Spanish that went „*Más vale tarde que nunca*“ [Better late than never]. One must wonder how Hintze, a German with a much different concept of time, received such an excuse; see AGN/AFM, *Madero to Hintze*, 16 Apr. 1912, 57: 2: 76.

In Puebla, Hintze accused Meléndez of masterminding the efforts not only to impede the arrest of the culprits, but also of protracting the legal process in order to allow the suspects to again escape. The German consul in the state capital, Claude Voight, became so close to the special police agent in charge of the investigation, José Hernández, that information concerning the case reached Hintze before the authorities in Mexico City. When Hintze suggested that state officials were acting in flagrant contradiction of Mexico City's desires, the subsecretary of *gubernación*, Julio García, admitted the fact. The government, in defense of its poor record, however, repeatedly claimed it could not intervene in state affairs and that Mexican legal procedures were inherently slow. In reality Madero could not control events in Puebla and Tlaxcala, and his protestations to the contrary increasingly fell on deaf ears⁴⁰.

Desperate to recoup his seriously damaged standing with Germany and perhaps fearful that the new state government which was to take office on 1 February 1913 might, in a bid to boost its public appeal after a highly divisive election, decide to give amnesty to the prisoners, Madero took the initiative. In a move to prepare public opinion in Puebla for direct federal government intervention in the case, he issued a public statement calling the suspects not revolutionaries but criminals. Indeed, to support his view, Madero even went so far as to twist the history of his own movement by saying that following the aborted rebellion of Aquiles Serdán in Puebla in late November 1910, there was no revolutionary movement in the state until May 1911 when the peace treaty negotiations in Ciudad Juárez were already under way. Then, according to Madero, rebel groups formed in the state, not to fight for the cause, but to take advantage of the generous demobilization conditions that Madero had offered his troops. It was, he concluded, one of these illegitimate groups, led by Benigno Zenteno, that attacked Covadonga⁴¹.

Next, Madero sent the federal attorney general, Adolfo Valles, to Puebla to organize and oversee a trial of those suspects already in

⁴⁰ AGN/AFM, *Hintze to Madero*, 11 May, 25 July 1912, 17: 417-1: —; AGN/AFM, *Sánchez Azcona to Meléndez*, 13 Jan. 1913, 56: 24: 412; Archivo de Francisco I. Madero, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City, Microfilm, *Madero to Hintze*, 9 Dec. 1912, rollo 11: doc. 224 (hereafter cited as INAH/AFM); SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 1, 13 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6, 11 Sept., 3 Oct. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; SRE, *García to Hintze*, 17 Sept. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; SRE, *J. Flores Magón to Sec. de Relaciones Exteriores*, 16 May 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-6; SRE, *Icaza to Lascuráin*, 31 Aug. 1912, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-8.

⁴¹ INAH/AFM, *Madero to Hintze*, 9 Dec. 1912, 11: 224; SRE, *Hintze to Lascuráin*, 30 Jan. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; „Nueva Era" 11 XII 1912.

custody. Meanwhile, authorities captured three additional escapees. Taking advantage of the suspension of constitutional guarantees edict in effect in parts of the state (a step Madero had previously refused to take claiming Covadonga occurred before the imposition of martial law), Madero ordered the latter three tried by a military court; they were condemned to death, and the president denied their appeal for clemency. Before the civil trial ended and the executions could take place, however, Madero was overthrown⁴².

The new chief executive, Victoriano Huerta, did not disappoint Berlin. He, too, ignored the condemned men's pleas, and they were shot in early March with the German consul as witness. Hintze, pleased with the turn of events, was finally able to report to his superiors that Mexico had managed to punish at least some of the culprits. Before taking a five-month leave (for health reasons) to Germany, he urged the German community to aid Huerta in bringing peace to Mexico⁴³. In April, four other suspects were tried and condemned to death. In the Puebla courtroom where the trial took place, the German consul and his legal counselor were given seats of honor at the front along with the judge, lawyers and defendants. The condemned were finally executed in September, but the most-wanted suspect and alleged ningleader of the massacre, Benigno Zenteno, remained at large fighting with the Zapatistas⁴⁴.

CONCLUSION

The evidence convincingly demonstrates that the León de la Barra and Madero administrations between July 1911 and February 1913 were able to do little toward solving the Covadonga killings to the satisfaction of the German government, and what efforts they did make only antagonized regime supporters in Puebla and Tlaxcala. The result was an undermining of critical domestic and international bac-

⁴² AAA, *Aufzeichnung über das Strafverfahren in der Covadongaangelegenheit*, 31 Mar. 1913, 15: 601; AGN/AFM, *Sánchez Azcona to Meléndez*, 13 Jan. 1913, 56: 24: 412; AGN/AFM, *Sánchez Azcona to Ramos*, 10 Jan. 1913, 56: 2: 52; ILM, *Meléndez to Madero*, 7 Feb. 1913, A-3; SRE, *Lascuráin to Hintze*, 31 Jan. 1913, 242.5 (43: 72): 12-9-7; „Imparcial” 4 III 1913; „Mexican Herald” 25 I 1913; „Nueva Era” 25 I 1913; „El País” 25 I, 5 III 1913.

⁴³ SRE, *León de la Barra to Hintze*, 5 Mar. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; SRE, *Hintze to León de la Barra*, 6 Mar. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; „El Diario” 14 III 1913.

⁴⁴ SRE, *León de la Barra to Rudolf von Kardorff*, 22 Apr. 1913, 242.5(43: 72): 12-9-7; „El Diario” 20 III 1913; „Imparcial” 9, 14 IV 1913; „Mexican Herald” 12 IX 1913.

king that Madero needed to survive. A final issue or question that must be addressed is to what extent did the Covadonga controversy directly contribute to Madero's downfall?

In regard to the public in Puebla and Tlaxcala the anti-Madero attitude engendered by the federal government's intervention in the Covadonga affair and allegations that revolutionary officers were made scapegoats contributed in part to the formation of anti-government conspiracies and armed movements during 1911 and 1912. Although none of these efforts were directly linked to the coup that overthrew Madero in Mexico City in February 1913, they helped create an atmosphere of discontent and instability and militarily weakened the government making the efforts of Félix Díaz and Victoriano Huerta much more feasible⁴⁵.

As for the German government and its minister in Mexico, Paul von Hintze, there exists strong circumstantial evidence that Covadonga played a key role in persuading Berlin to directly participate in Madero's overthrow. Every account of the „Decena Trágica” (the ten days of fighting, 9–18 February 1913, that brought down the Madero government), for example, whether by participants or historians, clearly and unequivocally link Hintze intimately to the machinations of the United States ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, in his efforts to overthrow Madero⁴⁶. Wilson, in his memoirs, for example, says the following about Hintze:

⁴⁵ LaFrance, *A people...*, chapter 4, p. 6–7.

⁴⁶ GBFO, *Stronge to Grey Bart*, 21 Feb. 1913, 1671: 6; RDS/59; Henry Lane Wilson to Sec. of State, 14 Feb. 1913, 23: 0308; L. L. Blaidsdell, *Henry Lane Wilson and the overthrow of Madero*, „Southwestern Social Science Quarterly” 1962, No 43, p. 2, No. 130, p. 34; C. Blasier, *The United States and Madero*, „Journal of Latin American Studies” 1972, No 4, p. 2, 207–231; P. A. R. Calvert, *Francis Stronge y la Decena Trágica*, „Historia Mexicana” 1965, No 15, p. 1, 47–68; Calvert, *The Mexican...*, p. 131–150; Fabela and Fabela, *Documentos, Cologan — „Por la verdad*”, 2 Aug. 1914, 9: 225–227; I. Fabela, *Historia diplomática de la revolución mexicana*, vols. 2, Mexico City 1958, Fondo de Cultura Económica, vol. 1, p. 43, 86; Haley, *Revolution...*, p. 66; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 218–229; Katz, *The secret...*, p. 92–112; J. P. Harrison, *Henry Lane Wilson: El trágico de la decena*, „Historia Mexicana” 1957, No 6, p. 3, 383–387; M. M. Serling, *Los últimos días del presidente Madero: Mi gestión diplomática en México*, Havana 1917, Siglo XX, p. 413–508; M. C. Meyer, *Huerta: A political portrait*, Lincoln 1972, University of Nebraska, p. 52–54, 76–77; B. Ulloa, *La revolución intervenida: Relaciones diplomáticas entre México y Estados Unidos, 1910–1914*, Mexico City 1971, El Colegio de México, p. 79–84; H. L. Wilson, *Diplomatic episodes in Mexico, Belgium and Chile*, New York 1927, Garden City, Doubleday, Page and Co., p. 254–262; H. L. Wilson, *History of the Mexican revolution*, unpublished ms., 1928, p. 27–28.

I formed a high opinion of Admiral Von [sic] Hintze from the first moment of our acquaintance and this opinion, I had no occasion to modify subsequently. Through all the trying hours of the revolution against Diaz [sic] and Madero, culminating in the bombardment of the City of Mexico, his sympathy and advice were of infinite value. While the bombardment was in progress he was especially active and supported me in every crisis with unswerving courage and absolute disregard of every consideration except the faithful performance of the duties pertaining to his high office⁴⁷.

Indeed, by February 1913, Hintze's dislike for Madero ran so deeply that he even refused asylum for the president's parents when they sought refuge in the German legation during the „Decena Trágica". One report also claimed that the bulletin announcing Madero's 18 February resignation was posted in the German ministry as early as 14 February⁴⁸.

According to Friedrich Katz, Hintze and his superiors, up to mid-1912, had been willing to make an attempt to forbear Madero in order to further German-Mexican economic ties. Indeed, German-Mexican trade did reach an all-time high under Madero, but Berlin's tolerant attitude wilted as conditions in Mexico deteriorated. As 1912 progressed, Hintze began to take a harder line against Mexico. At the same time he cooperated more and more closely with the Americans and British, even planning strategy with Henry Lane Wilson on how to bring pressure on Madero. In the spring of 1912, for example, Hintze threatened to order Germans to leave Mexico for their safety (Washington and London actually ordered their citizens to leave). In October in the wake of the Félix Díaz rebellion in Veracruz, Berlin sent the warship „Victoria Luise" to Mexican waters to join the U.S.S. „Des Moines" as a show of force, and the three powers cooperated in providing safety for each other's citizens. Meanwhile, Hintze was predicting that Madero would be the victim of a military coup in the not too distant future, and he suggested that Victoriano Huerta was the right person to replace the president⁴⁹.

Exactly how much Covadonga had to do with this change in policy toward Madero and Hintze's subsequent direct participation in his downfall is difficult to say, yet circumstantial evidence clearly indicates

⁴⁷ Wilson, *Diplomatic*, p. 183.

⁴⁸ Archivo de Félix Díaz, Centro de Estudios de Historia de México (Condu-mex), Mexico City, *Entry in anonymous diary, 14 Feb. 1913*, carpeta 1: doc. 70; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 219; Katz, *The secret...*, p. 589.

⁴⁹ AAA, Alvey A. Adey to Daniel von Haimhausen, 19 Oct. 1912, 15: 299; AAA, Philander C. Knox to Haimhausen, 28 Oct. 1912, 15: 306; AAA, Stronge to Hintze, 31 Oct. 1912, 15: 319; Katz, *Deutschland*, p. 213–214; Katz, *The secret*, p. 74, 88–92.

a connection. Over the months from July 1911 to February 1913, Hintze spent a significant percentage of his time dealing with Covadonga. He wrote many dozens of letters to and talked with large numbers of Mexican officials, made several trips to Puebla, and oversaw the German consul's tenacious pursuit of the case. He also made clear his disgust over Covadonga not only to his superiors and Mexican authorities, but to other members of the diplomatic corps as well. Henry Lane Wilson, in his campaign to represent Mexico City's diplomatic community before the Madero government, even urged Hintze to allow him to use Covadonga as an argument in his exhortations to the president. Hintze also remained on the defensive over the issue due to bitter attacks on his handling of the affair from personal opponents both at home and in Mexico. Finally, the switch to an increasingly hard-line stance toward Madero and a closer cooperation with United States and British diplomats during 1912 coincided with the frustration over the prison escape and its aftermath as reflected in a more biting and even insulting tone in Hintze's letters to Madero concerning Covadonga. Given these factors, it is almost certain that Covadonga contributed in a significant way to Hintze's decision to collaborate in bringing about Madero's downfall⁵⁰.

The killing of four German citizens at the Covadonga textile factory near Puebla City in July 1911, then, had far-reaching domestic and international repercussions for the Madero regime. German demands that the president solve the case and local resistance to that endeavor placed the León de la Barra and then the Madero government in a no-win situation in which the Maderista movement lost valuable and critical support among its followers in Puebla and Tlaxcala as well as in the foreign diplomatic community. This loss certainly contributed to the atmosphere leading to Madero's downfall in February 1913, and there is little doubt that the furor over Covadonga prompted Hintze to take part in planning and executing the successful coup d'état that brought the German minister's favorite, Victoriano Huerta, to power.

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⁵⁰ GBFO, *Stronge to Grey Bart*, 30 Mar. 1912, 1397: 23, 22 Jan. 1913, 1670: 209, Calvert, *Mexican...*, p. 127.

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NIEMCY, NACJONALIZM REWOLUCYJNY I UPADEK
PREZYDENTA FRANCISCO I. MADERO:
MORDERSTWA W COVADONGA

W nocy z 12 na 13 lipca 1911 r., w mieście Puebla, stolicy stanu Puebla w Meksyku, starły się siły obalonego dyktatora Porfirio Diaza z rewolucyjnymi oddziałami Francisco I. Madero, przywódcy liberałów, który w tymże roku obrany został prezydentem Meksyku. W czasie tych zamieszek żołnierze Diaza skierowali ogień karabinów maszynowych na tłum ludzi zebranych na arenie korridy i oczekujących zapowiedzianego przybycia Francisco I. Madero. Zginęło parę dziesiątków ludzi spośród zwolenników Madero i ich rodzin. Jeden z wycofujących się z miasta oddziałów rewolucyjnych, pod wodzą Benigno Zentano, przechodził koło tekstylnej fabryki Covadonga położonej w północnej dzielnicy. Dyrektor fabryki obawiając się, że oddział ten zaatakuje fabrykę rozkazał straży fabrycznej ostrzelać rewolucjonistów. Wywiązała się walka. Rewolucjoniści wspomagani przez miejscowych zwolenników Madero — w tym i przez część załogi fabryki — zdobyli Covadongę i urządził w niej rzeź, w czasie której zginęli m. in. jeden obywatel hiszpański i czterech obywateli niemieckich.

Zabójstwa obcych obywateli nie należały w tych niespokojnych czasach w Meksyku do rzadkości, jednakże nawet najostrzejsze protesty odpowiednich rządów nie odnosiły większych skutków. Nie udawało się odnaleźć winnych zbrodni, a rząd meksykański nie był skłonny wypłacać odszkodowań rodzinom pomordowanych. Natomiast w przypadku Covadongi rzecz przybrała inny obrót. Gdy wiadomość o zabójstwie czterech obywateli niemieckich dotarła do Niemiec, tamtejsza prasa nadała sprawie duży rozgłos, a rząd niemiecki, mając za sobą poparcie opinii publicznej, zażądał od Meksyku przykładowego ukarania sprawców zabójstwa i wypłacenia odszkodowania rodzinom pomordowanych. Wykonawcą niemieckiego *demarche* stał się minister pełnomocny Rzeszy w Meksyku, admirał Paul von Hintze, człowiek twardego charakteru, którego działanie cechowały bardziej upór i bezwzględność, aniżeli zdolności dyplomatyczne.

Dla rządu meksykańskiego i samego prezydenta Madero sprawa była niełatwa, zważywszy na skomplikowaną sytuację wewnętrzną. Prezydent znajdował się pod naciskiem mocarstwa, na którym Meksykowi zarówno ze względów gospodarczych, jak i politycznych bardzo zależało. Z drugiej strony miał zbyt mało autorytetu w stosunku do władz lokalnych Pueblo, aby wymóc energiczne postępowanie. Sprawę dodatkowo komplikowała okoliczność, że mordercami byli przecież zwolennicy rewolucji, która wyniosła Madero na stanowisko prezydenta.

Sprawa ciągnęła się dwa lata i jej przebieg stanowi przedmiot artykułu, który szczegółowo omawia działania obu stron oraz podaje charakterystykę osoby admirała von Hintze i stosunków niemiecko-meksykańskich. Jej epilogiem było nie tylko ujęcie wreszcie winnych mordu i skazanie ich na śmierć (przy czym główni sprawcy uszli sprawiedliwości). Zdaniem autora *casus Covadonga* przyczynił się do następnego przewrotu „Decena Tragica”, gdy po dziesięciu dniach walk, 9—18 luty 1913, prezydent Madero zrezygnował ze swego stanowiska na rzecz Victoriano Huerta, popieranego, na skutek zaleceń admirała von Hintze przez rząd niemiecki. Autor określa Huerta jako faworyta niemieckiego ministra pełnomocnego. Artykuł zaopatrzony jest w bardzo bogatą dokumentację archiwalną i bibliograficzną.