



Jack Danciger
Consul de Mexico en Kansas City

The Mexican Revolution in Kansas City

Jack Danciger Versus the Colonia Elite

by Michael M. Smith

The violence of the Mexican Revolution between 1910 and 1920 forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to seek asylum across the border in the United States. Although the vast majority settled in states adjacent to Mexico, scores of colonias (settlements) arose throughout the Great Plains and Midwest.¹ Reflecting this broad pattern of migration to the American heartland, immigrants to Kansas City created the first sizeable urban settlement of Mexicans outside the borderlands.² Kansas

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1. Works analyzing the causes of Mexican migration during this time include Lawrence A. Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1897-1931: Socio-Economic Patterns* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980); Arthur F. Corwin, ed., *Immigrants—and Immigrants: Perspectives on Mexican Labor Migration to the United States* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978); Manuel Gamio, *Quantitative Estimate, Sources and Distribution of Mexican Immigration to the United States* (México, D.F.: Talleres Gráficos y "Diario Oficial," 1930), *Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Study of Human Adjustment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), and *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931). Studies tracing patterns of settlement throughout the interior of the United States include Paul S. Taylor's monumental, ten-part *Mexican Labor in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928-1934), and Victor S. Clark's pioneering *Mexican Labor in the United States*, *Bulletin of the Department of Labor*, no. 78 (Washington, D.C.: 1908).

2. Unless otherwise noted, "Kansas City" refers to the greater metropolitan area, including both Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri. "Mexican" refers to both Mexican-born and U.S.-born persons of Mexican descent. During the period under discussion, evidence clearly indicates that the overwhelming majority in Kansas City were born in Mexico.

City's remoteness from the areas of strife and its position as a major transportation, commercial, and industrial center provided both security and employment for a Mexican population of approximately ten thousand by 1920.

Mexican migration to Kansas City had begun even before the revolution. As early as 1900, hundreds of Mexican workers found seasonal employment in the area. The great majority of these migrants were transient, unaccompanied males who returned to Mexico or the border area after completing their labor contracts. Those who remained, however, settled in several barrios on either side of the Kansas-Missouri state line that ultimately comprised the Kansas City colonia. The most important concentrations were the Santa Fe railroad camp in the Argentine section of Kansas City, Kansas, and the Westside neighborhood in Kansas City, Missouri.³

Mexicans typically held low-level, poorly remunerated positions in transportation, meatpacking, construction, and municipal and private services. They lived in crude boxcar camps, overcrowded houses and tenements, and run-down boarding establishments. Prevailing cultural biases and racial discrimination commonly restricted their access to

residential areas, business establishments, churches, and recreational facilities. They often suffered personal abuse, police harassment, unequal justice, and crass exploitation. After 1910, revolutionary upheaval drove a more affluent class of Mexicans to Kansas City. Many of these refugees were members of the hacendado class, professionals, merchants, and former bureaucrats who came to constitute the colonia elite. Despite their more comfortable economic circumstances and level of education, this group commonly encountered the same social barriers that plagued working-class Mexicans.⁴

External hostility forced colonia members to satisfy basic needs for community life within their own ethnic institutions. They founded social, patriotic, and mutual aid societies, churches with Spanish-speaking priests or Protestant ministers, Mexican-operated businesses, and several newspapers.⁵ Although many immigrants remained in Kansas City for extended periods of time, they remained loyal to their homeland, seldom learned English, and proudly retained their Mexican citizenship. They thus reinforced their physical and social isolation from the dominant society and, at the same time, forfeited any opportunity to establish a power base, operate within the political system, and exert pressure upon or bargain with local authorities to recognize their rights and redress their grievances.⁶ Such conditions allowed interested or strategically placed Anglos to assume an important role in colonia life.⁷ Clergymen, labor agents, lawyers, mer-

3. Sources available on Mexicans in Kansas and the Kansas City area include Judith Fincher Laird, "Argentine, Kansas: The Evolution of a Mexican-American Community, 1905-1940" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1975); Paul Lin, "Voluntary Kinship and Voluntary Associations in a Mexican-American Community" (M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1963); Larry Rutter, "Mexican-Americans in Kansas: A Survey and Social Mobility Study, 1900-1970" (M.A. thesis, Kansas State University, 1972); J. Neale Carman, *Foreign-Language Units of Kansas, I. Historical Atlas and Statistics* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1962) and his "Foreign Language Units of Kansas," vol. 2, typescript, University of Kansas Library, Lawrence, Kansas; Robert Oppenheimer, "Acculturation or Assimilation: Mexican Immigrants in Kansas, 1900 to World War II," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 16 (October 1985): 429-48; John T. Duncan and Severiano Alonzo, *Guadalupe Center: 50 Years of Service* (Kansas City, Mo.: 1972); Michael M. Smith, "Mexicans in Kansas City: The First Generation, 1900-1920," *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies* 2 (1989): 29-57.

Two valuable collections of primary materials on the subject are the "Guadalupe Center Collection" in the Missouri Valley Room of the Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri (hereafter cited as the Guadalupe Center Collection); and a series of interviews contained in the "Trabajo y Cultura Project (Mexican Labor and Culture)," an oral history project of the Kansas City, Kansas Spanish Speaking Office (1980) housed in the Manuscripts Department of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

In addition to Kansas City's large colonia, numerous Mexican settlements arose across the state of Kansas, principally along the major railroad lines. Topeka, Emporia, Wichita, and Newton, among others, attracted a significant number of Mexican immigrants. By 1920 the state contained the seventh largest Mexican-born population in the United States.

4. *Kansas City Times*, November 6, 1907; *Kansas City Journal Post*, August 26, 1936; Thomas E. Purcell, "Mexican Story," typescript, Guadalupe Center Collection, pt. III, file 11, p. 1; Board of Public Welfare, *Social Prospectus of Kansas City, Missouri* (Kansas City, Mo.: The Research Bureau of the Board of Public Welfare, 1913), 6, 12-13, 36-37, 58, 69, 75; Carman, "Foreign Language Units of Kansas," 213, 893; L. C. Lawton, "Erecting Mexican Laborers' Houses," *Santa Fe Employees Magazine* 5 (September 1911): 75-76; *El Cosmopolita*, March 6, 1915, January 1, 1916.

5. Duncan and Alonzo, *Guadalupe Center*, 28; Lin, "Voluntary Kinship," 29, 31-32, 92-93; Purcell, "Mexican Story," 1-2; *El Cosmopolita*, October 22, November 28, 1914, January 2, March 13, 1915, May 6, 1916; Laird, "Argentine, Kansas," 51-53.

6. Prior to 1920, not a single Mexican became a United States citizen through the federal court in Kansas City, Kansas. Apparently, only about a dozen did so in Kansas City, Missouri. Laird, "Argentine, Kansas," 189-91. See also Manuel A. Urbina et al. to Venustiano Carranza, September 11, 1914, "Expediente personal de Pedro F. Osorio," Expediente 4-20-33, pt. 1, p. 46-47, Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico, D.F. (hereafter cited as AHSRE).

7. "Anglo" is used to identify those people who were neither Mexican nor Negro.

chants, and a variety of employers vied to one degree or another to influence, control, and/or profit from Mexicans in Kansas City.

The Anglo who exerted the greatest influence in the Kansas City colonia during the era of the Mexican Revolution was Jack Danciger, a local entrepreneur whose complex network of personal relationships allowed him to play a central, albeit controversial, role in the Mexican community. Danciger established commercial ties to Mexicans on both sides of the border and subsequently became enmeshed in Mexican factional politics and diplomatic relations with the United States. In 1915, President Venustiano Carranza appointed Danciger honorary consul in Kansas City, a move that angered colonia leaders and intellectuals and sparked a vigorous protest that ultimately contributed to his resignation. This article examines the circumstances and sequence of events that placed Danciger at the center of controversy, and analyzes the imbroglio that ensued. It demonstrates that the colonia elite, driven by national and ethnic pride as well as decidedly political and personal interests, sought to protect their status by stimulating and mobilizing popular opposition to Danciger and force his removal as consul.

The son of Simon Danciger, a merchant of German-Jewish descent, Jack Danciger was born in Taos, New Mexico, in 1879. Shortly before Danciger's birth, his father had moved the family from Nevada, Missouri, to this small, northern New Mexico town, opened a general store, and engaged in ranching. Since few English-speaking residents were in Taos during Danciger's youth, he necessarily acquired fluency in the Spanish language as well as a firsthand acquaintance with the dominant Mexican/Hispanic culture of the region. It is likely that his father's business associates in the Mexican-American communities of the Southwest provided a network of contacts upon which Danciger himself later capitalized to cultivate his own commercial ties in the border area. In 1895, the family returned to Missouri and settled in Kansas City. The elder Danciger established a shoe retailing business in Kansas City, Missouri, and purchased a large ranch outside Osage City, Kansas. After completing high school, Danciger held a variety of jobs with his father, Swift and Company in both Kansas City and Chicago, and a Chicago-based pipe and plumbing supply firm which capitalized upon his facility in Spanish to employ him as a trouble-shooter in Puerto Rico and Cuba.

EL COSMOPOLITA

Boletín de la Sociedad de Literatura, Información y Artes.

Se publica los días 15, 25 y 30 de cada mes.

EL TERROR REINA EN EL SUR DEL ESTADO DE TEXAS

SE SABE QUE VARIAS FUENTES DE MEXICANOS ARMADOS SE ENCUENTRAN SOBRE EL RIO BRAVO ESPERANDO UNA OPORTUNIDAD PARA PASAR A TERRITORIO AMERICANO

EL GOBIERNO TEXANO CULPABLE

El gobierno de Texas, al no haber tomado las debidas precauciones para evitar el paso de los mexicanos armados al territorio americano, es considerado responsable de los sucesos que se están produciendo en el sur del estado.

UN ULTRAJE A LA SOBERANIA DE MEXICO

La presencia de los mexicanos armados en el territorio americano es considerada un ultraje a la soberanía de México.

EL MINISTRO DE GUATEMALA ES EXPULSADO

El ministro de Guatemala, al no haber tomado las debidas precauciones para evitar el paso de los mexicanos armados al territorio americano, es considerado responsable de los sucesos que se están produciendo en el sur del estado.

LA GUERRA CIVIL EN MEXICO

La guerra civil en México ha causado un gran número de víctimas y ha destruido gran parte del país.

ENTERAMENTE FATIGADO

SE ENCUENTRA EN UNA GRAN CONVENCION

Se encuentra en una gran convención en el sur del estado de Texas.

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When his father died in 1901, Danciger returned to Kansas City where he and his brothers built a sizeable inheritance into a lucrative, multifaceted family enterprise. Over the next two decades their commercial holdings grew to include real estate, mineral and petroleum properties, several liquor-related enterprises, a Spanish-language newspaper, a mail order firm, and an oil and refining company. Danciger became an active member of the Pan American Society, participated in a variety of local civic organizations, such as the Kansas City Commercial Club, and forged political ties to Missouri and Kansas Democratic party stalwarts, including Tom Pendergast, William J. Stone, James A. Reed, and William H. Thompson.⁸

While most interested Anglos viewed the flood of Mexican immigrants as little more than a convenient supply of cheap labor, Danciger recognized that they represented an enormous new market for those entrepreneurs with the acumen and the ability to exploit it. His personal background and experience placed him in a position to establish commercial ties to Mexicans in Kansas City, throughout the central and southern plains, and along both sides of the United States-Mexican border. The Spanish-speaking Danciger even posed as a Mexican businessman to cultivate confidence and gain advantage over competitors in his dealings with Mexicans.

The Danciger family's Bernardo López Mercantile Company ("Bernardo López" was an alias that Danciger frequently employed), a general mail order house, geared its sales to a largely Mexican market. In addition to selling the usual clothing, household goods, paper products and toiletries, it offered Mexicans such familiar items as beans, tamales, chiles, corn grinders, tortilla makers, flags, fighting cocks, and playing cards. The Harvest King Distilling Company (listing "Bernardo López" as general manager) imported and bottled Mexican tequila, mescal, and aguardiente and sold them to Mexican customers through representatives of the Danciger Brothers Wholesale Liquor Company. Agents for the Dancigers' Royal Brewing Company sold beer in Kansas City cantinas and countless Mexican settle-

ments and railroad camps. Royal distributors in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona marketed their beverages not only in the border states but also across northern Mexico, where the revolution had disrupted or destroyed Mexican beer production.⁹

In mid-1915, Danciger acquired a Kansas City Spanish-language newspaper, *El Cosmopolita*, advertized at that time as the only Mexican newspaper north of Texas. Established the previous year by Mexican immigrants, the four-page weekly had suffered financial problems from the start. Danciger placed *El Cosmopolita* on a more secure financial footing, greatly increased circulation, and utilized the paper to promote his Mexican-oriented commercial interests in colonias throughout the country.¹⁰

Danciger's beer business apparently provided his initial association with Mexican revolutionary figures. General Francisco "Pancho" Villa became one of his best customers and reportedly offered Danciger the opportunity to manage all the breweries that the military chieftain had seized in Chihuahua. In July 1915, Colonel Sebastin Carranza, Jr., acquired a financial interest in the Royal Brewing Company franchise in Eagle Pass, Texas, and exclusive rights to sell Royal beer from Piedras Negras to Matamoros, Mexico, and throughout the interior. Sebastin Carranza was the nephew of General Venustiano Carranza, first chief of the Constitutionalist Army and head of the dominant military faction in Mexico. When the younger Carranza arrived in Kansas City to arrange the transportation of a large quantity of beer to Mexico, he invited Danciger to accompany the shipment and meet Venustiano Carranza, who at that time made his headquarters in Veracruz. In August, Danciger had several meetings with Carranza, members of his political staff, and the director of the Mexican News Bureau, a propaganda agency that promoted the Constitutionalist movement in the United States.¹¹

9. Advertisements in *El Cosmopolita* clearly indicate the variety of products and areas of distribution of these several enterprises. See also Richkarday, *Jack Danciger*, 125-27, 135.

10. *El Cosmopolita*, August 22, December 26, 1914, February 20, April 24, 1915. For a detailed analysis of the newspaper, see Michael M. Smith, "The Mexican Immigrant Press Beyond the Borderlands: The Case of *El Cosmopolita*, 1914-1919," *Great Plains Quarterly* 10 (Spring 1990): 71-85.

11. Richkarday, *Jack Danciger*, 125-35. For information concerning the structure and functions of the Mexican News Bureau, see Alfredo Breceda to Venustiano Carranza, New York, July 22, 1915, Manuscritos de don Venustiano Carranza, doc. 5009. Fondo XX-1, Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, Fundación Cultural de Conduemex, Mexico, D.F. (hereafter cited as VC).

8. The principal source of available information on Danciger is a panegyrical biography by friend and fellow journalist, Constitutionalist General Ignacio Richkarday, *Jack Danciger: His Life and Work*, trans. Ann Marie Swenson (n.p.: 1963). The AHSRE also has an extensive file entitled "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal (en dos partes)," Expediente 31-17-19 See also *El Cosmopolita*, 1915-1919.

Danciger's arrival in Veracruz coincided with a pivotal stage of the revolution. By August 1915, Carranza clearly held the upper hand in Mexico. His subordinates occupied the national capital, while Villa, his principal adversary, was retreating to the mountain refuge of the north. President Woodrow Wilson, however, refused to recognize the Constitutionalist government. Members of his administration, representatives of United States petroleum, mining, commercial, and financial corporations, and influential newspapers not only opposed recognition of Carranza but also strenuously demanded military intervention to protect their financial interests and property and impose an obedient government upon Mexico.¹²

After his meetings with Carranza, Danciger became a decided supporter of the Constitutionlists, declaring that only Carranza possessed the ability to restore order in Mexico and govern effectively.¹³ While his position may have reflected sincere convictions and an accurate interpretation of Mexican political realities, other factors certainly must have influenced his attitude. With Carranza now clearly supreme, Danciger's newly forged commercial ties to the first chief's family promised infinitely greater opportunities for profit.

It is also possible that Danciger became a paid publicist for the Constitutionlists. At that time the Constitutionalist government was intensifying its efforts to generate support among Mexican immigrants, the North American public, and political officials in the United States. Constitutionalist agents established or subsidized Spanish-language newspapers in the United States and hired American publicists and journalists to enhance Carranza's image.¹⁴ While there is no evidence that

12. A number of excellent studies examine United States-Mexican relations during this period, including Charles C. Cumberland, *The Mexican Revolution: The Constitutionalist Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972); Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Douglas W. Richmond, *Venustiano Carranza's Nationalist Struggle, 1893-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983).

13. Richkarday, *Jack Danciger*, 128-48.

14. See, for example, Alfredo Breceda to Venustiano Carranza, July 22, 1915, VC, doc. 5009; Luis Bossero to Cándido Aguilar, May 1, 1916, VC, doc. 8280; Pedro Ferreiro to Venustiano Carranza, November 15, 1916, VC, doc. 11804; Timothy Turner, "Prospectus for the Organization of an Official Bureau of Information of the Constitutionalist Government of Mexico for the Transmission of Public and Private Information," [July 21, 1915], in "Revolución Mexicana durante los años de 1910 a 1920. Información diversa de la república y de las oficinas de México en el exterior," Expediente L-E-811, p. 15-17, AHSRE.



Danciger was paid to support the Constitutionalists, after August 1915 *El Cosmopolita* uniformly extolled Carranza and denigrated his adversaries, both Mexican and North American. Much of the news about Mexico appearing in the newspaper was furnished directly by Carranza's Mexican News Bureau.¹⁵

Danciger wasted little time in launching his own pro-Constitutionalist campaign. Before leaving Veracruz, he wired his brother Dan to contact old friends Missouri Senator William J. Stone, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Missouri Senator James A. Reed, and Kansas Senator William H. Thompson. His purpose was to encourage them to inform the president and secretary of state that Carranza's enemies in the United States were presenting a distorted impression of conditions in Mexico and spreading false and malicious rumors about the first chief. When he returned to Kansas City in late August, Danciger, after obtaining letters of introduction to Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing, went to Washington and lobbied personally on behalf of the Constitutionalists. On September 4, he argued his case during a lengthy interview with President Wilson.¹⁶ It is impossible to determine the degree to which Danciger influenced Wilson's ultimate decision, but on October 19, 1915, the president extended *de facto* recognition to Carranza's government. Perhaps as a reward for past and future services to the Constitutionalists, on September 23, 1915, Carranza appointed Jack Danciger as honorary consul of Mexico for the Kansas City district, an area which included western Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.¹⁷

Danciger opened the consular office in a complex that also housed the Danciger distillery, brewery, wholesale liquor business, and the mercantile company. Announcing his appointment, *El Cosmopolita* praised Danciger's long service as "counselor" to Mexicans who sought his assistance and noted that he "enjoyed great popularity within the colonia." Danciger assured the Mexican community that he would be the friend and representative of all Mexicans, regardless of their political leanings or religious beliefs.¹⁸

Over the next nine months, Danciger demonstrated remarkable energy in fulfilling his consular obligations. He provided job referrals for the unemployed, secured gratuitous services of a bilingual lawyer for those who faced legal problems, obtained free medical care and clothing for indigent Mexicans, and distributed baskets of toys and food to poor families at Christmas. He persuaded Kansas City, Missouri, municipal authorities to end the practice of placing Mexicans in segregated hospital wards and burying them in Negro cemeteries. Danciger fought for fair treatment of Mexican railroad workers and helped them or their families recover back pay or compensation for injury or death on the job. He secured the release of Mexicans illegally held in jails and prisons and convinced authorities to reexamine the cases of many others. Through vivid accounts in *El Cosmopolita*, Danciger exposed the schemes of unscrupulous lawyers, crooked labor contractors, deceptive insurance agents, and disreputable money exchanges that sought to victimize unsuspecting Mexicans.¹⁹ By any measure, Danciger's accomplishments were laudable, and evidence suggests that in many respects he was a more effective advocate of colonia interests than any of the Mexican consuls who had preceded him. Doubtless, his personal connections with local authorities provided him access and influence that previous Mexican consular officials lacked.

Despite the ultimate successes of Danciger's tenure and the support he enjoyed at the highest level of Mexican officialdom, colonia leaders bitterly denounced his appointment as consul.²⁰ The two most important Mexican patriotic societies—the Unión Mexicana "Benito Juárez" (UMB) and its women's auxiliary group, the Sociedad de Señoras y Señoritas "Hijas de Juárez"—immediately launched a campaign to convince Carranza to rescind the decision and reinstate Pedro F. Osorio, whom Danciger had replaced.²¹

19. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1915, January 1, 22, February 12, 26, July 29, 1916.

20. High Constitutionalist officials that Danciger listed as personal references included President Venustiano Carranza, Secretary of Foreign Relations Jesús Acuña, Ambassador to the United States Eliseo Arredondo, Director General of Consulates Rafael E. Múzquiz, Colonel Sebastián Carranza, Jr., Minister of War General Alfredo Ricaut, and General Cesario Castro. "Datos Para El Escalafón," "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 106, AHSRE.

21. The UMB's weekly meetings often attracted hundreds of participants. Members sang patriotic and popular Mexican songs, presented recitations, plays, and musical performances, and heard lectures on a variety of topics. The group organized festivities commemorating Mexican national holidays and sponsored a number of fundraising functions to aid needy members.

15. *El Cosmopolita*, August 1915–December 1918, *passim*.

16. Richkarday, *Jack Danciger*, 137–39, 152–66.

17. Rafael E. Múzquiz to Eliseo Arredondo, September 24, 1915, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 3, AHSRE.

18. *El Cosmopolita*, September 28, 1915.

Telegrams and petitions directed to Venustiano Carranza reveal the character and degree of dissatisfaction. Some Mexicans indignantly opposed the selection of Danciger as consul because he was a North American. Others protested that the appointment of any foreigner as consul was an affront to national dignity.²² The reaction of the officers of the Sociedad de Señoras y Señoritas "Hijas de Juárez" was typical. They claimed that Danciger did not understand or appreciate Mexicans and declared that they "would get down on [their] knees and beg that the post be given to a brother." The women beseeched Carranza to "save the honor of the fatherland . . . by not surrendering [the Mexican] flag to a foreigner." Furthermore, over 700 colonia residents signed a petition accusing Danciger of being a manipulative, "brazen exploiter" of Mexicans.²³ Despite the outcry, the Mexican government quickly responded that Danciger had the complete support of President Carranza, who was confident that the new consul would execute his duties honorably.²⁴

These soothing words did not placate the Kansas City colonia elite and spurred the officers of the UMBJ to more drastic action. They created a five-member committee to coordinate an anti-Danciger movement throughout the consular district and established a newspaper, *El Mexicano*, to generate popular support for their cause.²⁵ The most visible leaders of the UMBJ's effort included Manuel A. Urbina, Benito G. Sánchez, Gildardo F. Aviles, Nicolás Jaime, Pedro F. Osorio, Sebastián Carrillo, and Lázaro Gandara. All of these men were well acquainted with Danciger, and several had previous business dealings with him.

Manuel A. Urbina, a divinity student at nearby William Jewell College and later pastor of the

22. Vicente Verdusco and José Hinojos to Venustiano Carranza, September 28, 1915; Pedro F. Osorio to Venustiano Carranza, September 28, 1915; Vicente Verdusco, José Hinojos, Lázaro Gandara, Joaquín Mejía, Eleuterio Duarte, Cesareo Loya, Sebastián Carrillo, and Benito G. Sánchez to Venustiano Carranza, September 29, 1915, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 7, 8, 11, AHSRE.

23. Beatriz Acevedo and Refugia Canales to Venustiano Carranza, September 29, 1915; Beatriz Acevedo et al. to Venustiano Carranza, September 29, 1915, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 9-11, AHSRE. Many of those who supported the petition drive were illiterates who signed with an "X."

24. Encargado del Despacho, El Oficial Mayor Interino to Refugia Canales and Beatriz Acevedo, Sociedad de Señoras y Señoritas "Hijas de Juárez," September 30, 1915, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 15, AHSRE.

25. The only known extant copies of *El Mexicano* are included in "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," AHSRE.

Primera Iglesia Bautista in Kansas City, Missouri, was co-founder and president of the UMBJ and secretary of the anti-Danciger committee. He and his brother, Juan M. Urbina, had founded *El Cosmopolita* in August 1914, but they had been forced to sell the unprofitable enterprise. As noted, Danciger acquired the paper in mid-1915. Benito G. Sánchez, secretary of the UMBJ, was a member of the anti-Danciger committee and a financial contributor to *El Mexicano*. Gildardo F. Aviles, a well-known Mexican educator, was president of the anti-Danciger committee and editor-in-chief of *El Mexicano*. Dr. Nicolás Jaime, a Mexican physician residing in Kansas City, Missouri, was the treasurer of the anti-Danciger committee and managing editor of *El Mexicano*.²⁶

Dr. Pedro F. Osorio, the deposed consul, was cofounder and past president of the UMBJ and a financial contributor to *El Mexicano*. Once highly popular among the colonia elite, the physician's standing in the community had declined before his removal as consul. He had the reputation of being a heavy drinker, and recently he had been accused of defrauding Lázaro Gandara, a former business partner. Osorio strenuously resisted surrendering the consulate to Danciger and remained adamantly opposed to him.²⁷ Sebastián "Sam" Carrillo managed the notorious Hotel Paraíso in the Westside barrio. The "Mexican Hotel" was a popular drinking spot and the scene of frequently scandalous activities. Carrillo was a member of the anti-Danciger committee and financial contributor to *El Mexicano*. At one time, apparently, Carrillo, Osorio, and Danciger had formed a partnership and planned to establish a cantina in Westside. There is no evidence, however, that they ever succeeded in doing so, and by September 1915 the three erstwhile associates were clearly estranged.²⁸ Lázaro Gandara, whose Dos Patrias Mexican Store in Kansas City, Kansas, competed directly with Danciger's much larger Bernardo López Mercantile Company, con-

tributed funds to establish *El Mexicano* and was one of its principal advertisers.²⁹

Abandoning the fruitless tactic of petitioning the Mexican government to remove Danciger, his adversaries focused their attention upon arousing public sentiment against him. With *El Mexicano* as their main instrument of attack, colonia leaders endeavored to discredit Danciger and force his resignation or dismissal. Through articles in *El Mexicano*, they assailed Danciger's character and qualifications, denounced his political sectarianism, and impugned his honesty and integrity.³⁰

El Mexicano portrayed Danciger as a deceitful, overbearing scoundrel and pernicious influence on the colonia. The paper characterized him as an "exploitative, base purveyor of beer, whiskey, tequila, fighting cocks, playing cards and other articles of perdition" and a person "unfit to represent Mexico."³¹ Danciger's enemies denounced him for posing as a Mexican businessman—sometimes as "Abelardo Aguilez" but most frequently as "Bernardo López," the purported general manager of the Bernardo López Mercantile Company and the Harvest King distillery. Suggesting anti-Semitic as well as xenophobic motives for their hostility, one writer related that when Mexicans went to those establishments and asked to speak to the manager, they encountered "a Jew who spoke detestable Spanish and said he was a Mexican named Bernardo López." If, however, a North American arrived at the same time and asked to see Jack Danciger, "the same Jew introduced himself." The author stated that this clumsy attempt at deception revealed "an immorality characteristic of Jews."³² Detractors also ridiculed Danciger's reputed facility with the Spanish language and mocked his role as "consul/cheap whiskey salesman." One issue of *El Mexicano* featured a satirical rendering of a speech attributed to Danciger; another reprinted a song lampooning the consul entitled "Don Bernardo" (sung to the tune of "La Cucaracha") which was popular in the colonia.³³

26. *El Cosmopolita*, August 22, October 22, 1914; *El Mexicano*, October 31, 1915.

27. *El Cosmopolita*, October 22, 1914; Manuel A. Urbina et al. to Venustiano Carranza, September 11, 1914, "Expediente personal de Pedro F. Osorio," p. 3-5, 47, 112-118, AHSRE.

28. *El Cosmopolita*, October 22, 1914, April 29, 1916; *El Mexicano*, October 31, 1915; José Ramírez López to José J. Pesquera, February 23, and February 24, 1915, "Expediente personal de Pedro F. Osorio," p. 94, 191, AHSRE.

29. *El Mexicano*, October 31, November 6, 1915; Eliseo Arredondo to Jesús Acuña, August 31, 1915, "Expediente personal de Pedro F. Osorio," p. 3-5, AHSRE.

30. Available documents do not reveal the number of *El Mexicano's* subscribers or the extent of its distribution. Apparently only a few issues were published, and circulation was probably limited to the Kansas City vicinity.

31. *El Mexicano*, October 31, 1915.

32. *Ibid.*, November 6, 1915.

33. *Ibid.*, October 31, November 6, 1915.

"Bernardo López" announced that Mexicans who enclosed applications with an order for Harvest King liquor would receive membership at a reduced rate (twenty-five cents instead of one dollar) and a watch fob adorned with the junta's emblem. The flier encouraged Mexicans to join immediately because "later the membership fee [would] increase to at least five dollars." The founder and namesake of the Junta Patriótica "Bernardo López" proposed to create a social and recreational center in the colonia, foster racial harmony and good will, and furnish members free legal assistance and other benefits. *El Mexicano*, however, condemned the whole promotion as nothing more than a crudely conceived subterfuge to sell liquor and "to swindle Mexicans who are ignorant of the knavery that cheats, thieves, bandits, and misers commonly employ to obtain money that does not belong to them."³⁵

When the controversy in Kansas City came to the attention of Carranza's ambassador to the United States, Eliseo Arredondo, he dispatched Special Agent Luis A. Peredo to investigate the situation. On February 5, 1916, Peredo submitted his report. He related that upon his arrival in Kansas City, he first "went to those places most frequented by Mexicans, such as the billiard halls and cantinas." After interviewing many Mexicans, he found that the colonia was offended by and, to a degree, hostile to Danciger's appointment. He stated, however, that the principal cause of discontent was the fact that Danciger was not a Mexican. He also noted that many Mexicans did not believe that a beer and whiskey salesman was a suitable representative of their country. He added that some had complained that Danciger was responsible for exacerbating Mexican workers' problems. After buying his liquor, they frequently got drunk, were absent from work, and lost their jobs. Peredo reported, however, that prominent Kansas City Anglos assured him that Danciger's reputation was above reproach. He also observed that Danciger's intimate association with local governmental authorities and powerful private citizens enhanced his ability to assist Mexicans in the district. The agent surmised that complaints would cease if Danciger removed the consulate from the offices in which he also conducted his beer and liquor businesses.

35. *El Mexicano*, November 6, 1915.

Peredo closed his report with especially damning information concerning "the most prominent Mexicans in Kansas City . . . Pedro Osorio . . . and Dr. Jaime." He declared that at the time both men were hiding from local authorities. Osorio had apparently engaged in some kind of fraudulent activity in the consulate, and Jaime, through "his ignorance of medicine," had fatally poisoned a female patient. Although Peredo did not reveal the identities of Mexicans he interviewed in Kansas City, he seemingly did not contact those who most strenuously opposed Danciger. While not entirely gratuitous, his negative depiction of two prominent Danciger foes tacitly tainted the credibility of other critics as well. Obviously, the carrancista agent investigating a well-connected carrancista official at the behest of a carrancista ambassador endeavored to minimize the problems in Kansas City and place Danciger in the most favorable light.³⁶ Ambassador Arredondo forwarded the report to the secretary of foreign relations with a recommendation that Danciger remain as consul. Apparently all higher authorities accepted his endorsement.³⁷

The following month, however, an international crisis rekindled the controversy. In March 1916, Pancho Villa raided Columbus, New Mexico, destroyed the town, and killed a number of Americans. Woodrow Wilson dispatched a punitive expedition under the command of Gen. John J. Pershing into Mexico and ordered national guard units to the border. The fact that the United States and Mexico were on the verge of war provoked renewed demands in the colonia for Danciger's dismissal. Telegrams and petitions reiterated previous concerns and levied new charges of misconduct.³⁸

After this new round of complaints, Secretary of Foreign Relations Cándido Aguilar ordered Ambassador Arredondo to reevaluate the situation in Kansas City.³⁹ Arredondo responded that he had heard all the accusations before and had determined that they were baseless. Danciger, in his opinion,

36. Luis A. Peredo, "Memorandum Para el Lic. Eliseo Arredondo," February 5, 1916, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 53-54, AHSRE.

37. Eliseo Arredondo to Jesús Acuña, February 7, 1916, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 55, AHSRE.

38. Guillermo Escobar et al. to Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, May 21, 1916; G. Vizcarra to Herminio Pérez Abreu, May 5, 1916, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 64, 66-68, AHSRE.

39. Cándido Aguilar to Eliseo Arredondo, May 22, 1916, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 72-73, AHSRE.

had done a good job. He noted, however, that in view of the strained relations between the United States and Mexico, it was unwise to allow a North American to remain as consul. He suggested that Aguilar simply close the office. If the secretary chose that course of action, Arredondo recommended that he tell Danciger only that pressing financial and political exigencies dictated the consulate's temporary suspension and thank him for his service to Mexicans in Kansas City. He added that the notification should be couched in terms that would not offend Danciger, who had been a staunch supporter of the Constitutionalist government and could continue to be a valuable friend in the future.⁴⁰

Aguilar concurred with the recommendations, informed Danciger of his decision, and apparently allowed him to exit gracefully. On June 22, 1916, Danciger submitted brief letters of resignation to Carranza and Arredondo. Making no reference to criticism levied against him, Danciger merely lamented that friction between the two governments obliged him to resign. He added that Emile S. Brus, French consul in Kansas City, had agreed to oversee consular affairs until the Mexican government named an official replacement.⁴¹

Given the vibrant nationalism of Mexican immigrants, the volatile climate in a community of expatriates whose homeland was racked by revolution, and the degree of alienation that they experienced in Kansas City, it is understandable that the colonia elite resented the influence and intrusion of an "outsider" into colonia affairs. Clearly, nationalist, ethnic, political, even personal and religious motives played a role in the controversy. The tenor of letters, telegrams, and petitions protesting Danciger's appointment as consul affirm the degree to which the elite's nationalist sentiments and ethnic pride

40. Eliseo Arredondo to Cándido Aguilar, June 4, 1916, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 73-74, AHSRE. It is notable that at no time during Danciger's tenure as consul and his attendant problems did any individual or group from the Kansas City colonia write to support his appointment, commend his service to Mexicans, or defend him from the numerous accusations. His file in the AHSRE contains two supportive telegrams written on September 30, 1915, from Juan T. Burns, Mexican Consul in Galveston, Texas, to Rafael E. Múzquiz. One telegram declared that Danciger was accepted by the great majority of Mexicans in Kansas City; the other conveyed the message from Sebastián Carranza, Jr. stating that he gave Danciger his unqualified support. Danciger's standing with members of the Constitutionalist government obviously outweighed any arguments that the colonia elite could muster against him.

41. Jack Danciger to Venustiano Carranza, June 22, 1916, "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," p. 76, AHSRE.



were offended when the Constitutionalist government did not name one of their own "brothers" to the position. By establishing the consular desk in the midst of his liquor operations, Danciger unwittingly demeaned the office and insulted Mexican's sense of national dignity.

It is more difficult to assess the validity of charges impugning Danciger's character and behavior. Although his posing as a Mexican businessman may be excused as merely a clever ploy to further his commercial interests, one can appreciate that Mexicans found it insulting and duplicitous. Their anti-Semitism, however, is unmistakable. Such religious bigotry revealed a baser quality in Danciger's foes, both Catholic and Protestant, and reflected prevailing attitudes towards Jews in Mexico and the United States. Furthermore, Danciger's commercial interests in the colonia apparently alienated Mexican entrepreneurs, and infelicitous business ventures may have embittered his relationship with several of his most vocal opponents. The charge that Danciger promoted the establishment of the Junta Patriótica "Bernardo López" as a reprehensible swindle, however, remains unproven. No evidence implicates Danciger in any illegal activities, and the special investigator's report made no reference whatsoever to any fraudulent behavior on his part. Peredo either found no evidence of such misconduct, did not interview those who made and could substantiate the allegations, or, for some reason, chose to disregard them.

Political sectarianism and competition for leadership and status in the colonia lay at the heart of the elite's opposition to Danciger. The revolution had unleashed a degree of political activism and rivalry unprecedented in Mexican history, and members of the colonia elite held widely diverging political philosophies and sympathies. In Kansas City they had sought to minimize political differences and promote national pride and ethnic unity by establishing the UMBJ as a non-partisan society. They viewed Danciger's aggressive advocacy of Venustiano Carranza, the unremitting pro-Constitutionalist tone of his newspaper, and the creation of the Junta Patriótica "Bernardo López" as divisive and dangerous.

Equally appalling to the colonia elite was the threat that Danciger posed to their status within the Mexican community. He was a significant economic player in the colonia; he was the publisher and edi-

tor of its major newspaper; and he was the highest ranking local representative of the Mexican government. The elite interpreted the creation of the Junta Patriótica "Bernardo López" as a direct challenge to the UMBJ and, consequently, to their own preeminence as colonia spokesmen. Given their exclusion from the broader community, they properly recognized that the UMBJ was the only vehicle available to offer them an opportunity to establish their position and exercise influence in the colonia. They refused to jeopardize their elite status by surrendering leadership to a rival organization controlled by a North American who could manipulate the society to serve his personal interests and those of the Constitutionalist party. The hundreds of signatures on petitions demanding Danciger's removal attest to the elite's ability to rally working-class support for their cause. It is worthy of note, however, that Mexican officials were markedly unresponsive to colonia manifestations of dissatisfaction. The Constitutionalist regime sought Danciger's resignation only after a crisis in United States-Mexican relations made his continuation in office a potential embarrassment.

Upon his resignation as consul in Kansas City, Danciger maintained his commercial relationship with the Mexican community in Kansas City for the next several years. He retained ownership of *El Cosmopolita*, which continued to reflect his unwavering support of Venustiano Carranza, until 1919. He apparently closed the Bernardo López Mercantile Company in August 1918, while Prohibition soon forced the closing of the brewery, distillery, and liquor-distributing company. In the meantime, the growth and profitability of the Danciger oil interests increasingly monopolized his attention. In 1920, he moved to Fort Worth, Texas, where the Danciger Oil and Refining Company reestablished its base of operations, but he maintained his interest in Mexican affairs. In October 1942, the Mexican government appointed him honorary consul in Fort Worth, a position he would hold for four years. In recognition of his longtime service to Mexico, in May 1945, he was granted the *Aguila Azteca* (Aztec Eagle) award, the highest honor that Mexico bestows upon a foreigner.⁴² [K1]

42. Richkarday, *Jack Danciger*, 239-66; "Jack Danciger, su expediente personal," "Segunda Parte," AHSRE.