
This Plot Must Be Foiled:

Conspiracy to Murder Mexican Comrades Now Imprisoned in This Country by Order of Díaz

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *St. Louis Labor*, vol. 6, whole no. 402 (Oct. 17, 1908), pg. 6.

There is no longer the least doubt, if there ever was any, that the United States government, through its present administration, has entered into a conspiracy with the bloody and barbarous government to foully murder the revolutionary leaders of the Mexican people. The visit of Secretary of State [Elihu] Root to the Mexican capital, the pomp and display with which he was received, and the continuous ovation that was tendered him, are well remembers, as is also the fact, by Socialists at least, that the object of that love feast was to pave the way for the exploitation of this undeveloped country by American and Mexican capitalists. The entente cordiale was established between the House of Roosevelt and the House of Díaz, and since then there has been perfect understanding and harmonious cooperation in carrying out the international program.

When the Mexican revolutionists established their junta at St. Louis and were followed by the bloodhounds of Díaz the latter were reinforced by Furlong's detectives and the junta was finally destroyed by the joint persecution of the minions of the American and Mexican governments.

The Mexican revolutionists, whose only crime was their opposition to Díaz, the bloody butcher of the so-called Mexican Republic, are men of heart and brain and conscience who could not endure witnessing the atrocities perpetrated upon the ignorant masses; they were animated by the same passion for freedom as were the American revolutionists a century and a half ago and with far greater justification for resisting tyranny and oppression.

Gruesome and Revolting.

Driven from their own country by the relentless pursuit of the Díaz bloodhounds they crossed the Rio Grande in the vain hope of finding shelter and security in the great American Republic. But alas! Roosevelt and Díaz are the best of friends, and from the standpoint of real freedom there is but little difference between the “republic” in which labor leaders are kidnapped and deported by the authorities and the “republic” where they are hunted down and shot without trial.

From the moment the Mexican revolutionists, the leaders of labor and friends of the people, crossed the international boundary line, they were hunted and pursued and finally lured into ambush and seized by the joint secret agents and detectives of the United States and Mexico, operating under the sanction and with the backing and support of both governments.



**Mexican Revolutionaries (L-R):
Juan Sarabia, Ricardo Flores Magón,
Librado Rivera, Antonio Villarreal.**

It is here seen that under Roosevelt’s capitalist administration Uncle Sam is willing to act as a bloodhound of Díaz, to hunt down the noble souls who aspire to see their countrymen free, in consideration of favors to be granted to American capitalists.

It is a gruesome and revolting picture!

Buried Alive in Dungeon!

In a recent issue of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* there is an illustrated article covering a full page on the situation in Mexico and the fate of its brave revolutionary leaders. The article is entitled "Buried Alive in a Loathsome Dungeon." It has reference to Juan Sarabia, vice president of the St. Louis Mexican Junta. Sarabia is one of the grandest of men and the most heroic of liberators, but he is rotting alive in a frightful hole as the price of his martyrdom. This brave comrade of ours was lured across the line by a ruse of American and Mexican detectives, seized, and then disappeared. Neither his family nor his friends knew what had become of him until finally it was disclosed that he was in the horrible military prison at San Juan de Ulua, known as "The Purgatory."

Sarabia is in a five-foot cell far below the surface, where water seeps in, where all light is excluded, and where he is literally devoured alive by vermin. The horror of his fate defies description. The very thought of it fires the blood and flushes the cheek with flame. What cowards we are, all of us, to see a noble patriot, a great and tender soul, consigned to such a hellish fate!

Loaded with chains and reduced to a skeleton, this comrade is made to realize what it costs to serve humanity in this 20th Century of Christian civilization. At the top of the foul hole in which he is chained like a leprous beast are seated the Mexican guards with shot-guns in their hands waiting for the last spark of life to flicker out and fearful that even this may escape and light the smoldering fires of revolution.

The account says: "Juan Sarabia is dying in the military prison at San Juan de Ulua. He lies helpless in 'The Purgatory.' More than two or three months he can not live, possibly not more than a few weeks. He is facing a slow death in the most terrible dungeon on the American continent.

Begged Permission to See Son.

The devoted mother of this comrade, his ministering angel, 80 years of age, found her way to "The Purgatory" and begged to be permitted to see but once more her loved and loving boy. She was refused and fell in a faint and was dragged away.

Such unspeakable cruelty is enough to make even the hearts of stones throb with revolution.

I again quote from the account:

“The old woman begged on her bended knees to be allowed to go down to see her son, that he might be brought to the door and mother and son pass greetings even at that distance. She told the keeper that she would never see her boy again; that at her age death was only a little way ahead, that in Juan’s state of health he could not be expected to live long in that dungeon. But the man was obdurate. At last she asked that Juan might be permitted to write her a note, and finally that he be allowed to write his name — nothing more, if they feared a plot. But no. And the old woman fainted at the mouth of the passageway leading down to ‘The Purgatory.’

“‘So much for the mother of a breed of scorpions,’ said the keeper as she was carried away.”

Who can contemplate this inexpressible cruelty and crime without feelings of horror and revolt!

Woe to you, Díaz, you bloody demon, and your mercenary minions at the day of retribution! The storm of wrath is now gathering and every atrocity perpetrated by your bloody regime will be wiped out in the blood of inhuman tyrants and human devils!

A Marked Family.

Quoting again from the Post-Dispatch account we read as follows:

“The Sarabias are a marked family in Mexico. Juan is most hated, but even young Manuel, his cousin, now in jail in Los Angeles — little more than a boy — was thought sufficiently important that Mexican emissaries bribed American officials to allow them to take him from an American jail, hurry him, gagged and blindfolded, into a swift automobile and across the border and turn him over to Mexican *rurales* in uniform — showing the actual connivance of the Mexican government. He was carried away down on the west coast to Hermosillo, in the heart of the Yanqui country, and there thrown into jail until the American press forced the American government to make diplomatic representations to Mexico and secure his return to the soil of the United States.”

Liberty? Protection for political exile? Traditions? The flag of the free? Bah! Such an act committed by Spain on a member of the Cuban junta, by Russians on an expatriated Pole, by England on the famous Irish, Number One of the Phoenix Park affair, who found asylum in this country, would have meant war — nothing less.

A Shame and a Disgrace.

The Mexican comrades, [Ricardo Flores] Magón, [Librado] Villarreal, and [Antonio] Rivera, like Juan Sarabia, are charged with political offenses and are held prisoners in Los Angeles at the behest of the Mexican government and with the connivance of the government of the United States.

It is a burning shame and a disgrace to us all.

These comrades have been engaged in a peaceful agitation in behalf of their wretched and suffering countrymen. Forced into exile by the ruling class, they came to the United States, but they soon found that their dream of security was a delusion and a snare. They were arrested first upon one charge and then another, and since then every effort has been made to extradite them that they may be shot dead by the bloody Díaz for daring to dream of freedom and resolving to achieve it. They should never have been arrested at all, for their is no charge against them that will bear the light an instant.

But the Roosevelt administration has been doing the bidding abjectly of the Díaz government. Attorney General [Charles] Bonaparte has taken personal charge and is bound that our comrades shall be sent back to Mexico and there foully murdered, even as [Charles] Moyer, [Bill] Haywood, and [George] Pettibone were to meet the same fate if the designs of the conspirators had not been thwarted by an aroused working class.

Struggling for Freedom.

Ricardo Flores Magón, Antonio I. Villarreal, Librado Rivera, and L. Gutierrez de Lara are our comrades in the social revolution! They have been doing in Mexico what we are doing in the United States and by practically the same means. If they ought to be shot so ought we. The truth is that they are four reformers in the highest sense of that term, highly educated, cultured, pure in mind, exalted in thought, noble of nature, and lofty of aspiration. They are victims of

a foul conspiracy between two capitalist governments to put them to death. They are traitors to Mexico, even as Franklin, Paine, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry were traitors to Great Britain. They are leaders in a mighty cause and every hour they serve in an American dungeon is an outrage upon justice and a burning disgrace to the government of the United States.

This case has not had a fraction of the attention it deserves. It is true that our comrades in California have done what they could with the means at their command and are entitled to full credit for their fealty to their Mexican comrades, but the case is of more than local interest; it has national and international significance and gravity, and it is time the working class of the United States were aroused to that fact.

The very least we can do is to appeal to the workers of America to go to the rescue of these comrades. The most vital and far-reaching principle is involved. It is nothing less than a dastardly international conspiracy of capitalists to murder labor leaders who can not be silenced in any other way.

Murder Must Not Be Permitted.

Comrades and fellow-workers, this foul and atrocious murder of our comrades must not be permitted. They are the truest of men, the most loyal of comrades, and the most valiant of warriors. They are serving their countrymen under the most desperate conceivable circumstances. But for the fact that they are heroes of the noblest type they would not now be where they are, nor would two capitalists governments be in conspiracy to have them shot to death. They are charged with treason only because they are true to the people and seeking to overthrow their oppressors and despoilers. It is for this that they have risked their lives, it is for this that they have been hunted down as if they had been wild beasts, and it is for this that they have been for two years locked up in dungeons with the certainty of death staring them in the face if the Mexican bandits in control of that government can get them in their clutches.

Arouse ye workingmen and women, everywhere, and shake the nation with your protest against this satanic international conspiracy!

Edited by Tim Davenport

1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR · February 2014 · Non-commercial reproduction permitted.