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by R. W. Jackson B Cox

REPORT

OF

MESSRS. OWYANG KING AND ARTHUR BASSETT

REPRESENTATIVES OF

HIS EXCELLENCY, MINISTER CHANG YIN TANG

IN

AN INVESTIGATION MADE IN CONJUNCTION WITH

LICENCIADO ANTONIO RAMOS PEDRUEZA,

REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS EXCELLENCY,

FRANCISCO L. DE LA BARRA,

PRESIDENT OF MEXICO, OF

THE FACTS RELATING TO

THE MASSACRE OF CHINESE SUBJECTS

AT TORREON

ON THE 15th OF MAY, 1911.

(ENGLISH & SPANISH)

Sir:

We have the honor to submit to you the following report of our investigation of the facts relating to the massacre of His Imperial Chinese Majesty's subjects at Torreon on the 13th, 14th and 15th of May, 1911.

In compliance with your instructions and pursuant to the agreement between Your Excellency and His Excellency, Señor Licenciado Francisco L. de la Barra, President of the Republic, in company with the President's representative, Señor Licenciado Antonio Ramos Pedrueza, we proceeded to Torreon. Upon our arrival we called upon the local officials, the various consular officers of the nations represented in Torreon and certain private individuals, and exhibited to them the letters which had been given us by the President of the Republic and by the Sub-secretary for Foreign Affairs.

We found, almost without exception, that the residents of the community of Torreon were reluctant to give us information, fearing that by so doing they might prejudice their interests with the party now in power in that city. In many instances it was only after the President's representative, Señor Licenciado Antonio Ramos Pedrueza, had assured the witnesses that he was not acting in a judicial capacity but that he was engaged as the personal representative of the President of the Republic, in conjunction with the representatives of the Chinese Government, in making a private investigation, and after he had further informed them of the President's assurances of protection in the event they made statements in regard to the subject of the investigation, that they manifested a willingness to testify in regard to the massacre.

We had not proceeded far until it became apparent that there was a dispute about only one of the four important points involved in the investigation. It was admitted:

FIRST.—That prior to the massacre the Chinese Colony in Torreon had been a peaceful, law-abiding, thrifty community, which had contributed greatly to the material development of the city of Torreon and its vicinity;

SECOND.—That the Colony was massacred in a barbaric and inhuman manner which no language is adequate to describe; and,

THIRD.—That the responsible authors of the massacre were the soldiers of the revolutionary army.

This left only one point in issue, namely: whether or not the massacre was provoked by an offer of resistance on the part the Chinese.

In view of these facts, our investigation was directed principally to determining whether the Chinese did in fact offer resistance to the Maderista soldiers when they entered the city.

The Military Court which was established in Torreon by the order of Mr. Emilio Madero and which conducted an investigation of the killing of the Chinese on the 15th day of May, established the fact that the Maderista soldiers were the parties responsible for the killing of the Chinese when the city of Torreon was taken. In extenuation of their acts and to mitigate their offense, several of the officers, after admitting that they had given orders to kill the Chinese, stated that resistance had been offered by the Chinese to the Maderista forces when they were attacking the city and when they entered it after it had been evacuated. It was also claimed that General Lojero, who was the commander of the federal forces which defended the city when it was attacked, had supplied arms and ammunition to the Chinese and had advised them to resist the attack of the Maderista forces.

In regard to the question whether or not General Lojero furnished the Chinese arms and ammunition, we were informed by a Mexican citizen, who is the proprietor and editor of a newspaper published in Torreon, called "Diogenes," that he had been authorized by General Lojero to deny positively that he had furnished arms and ammunition to the Chinese in Torreon or advised them to offer resistance to the Maderista forces. No evidence was adduced to prove that General Lojero did furnish the Chinese with arms.

We made inquiries at various stores that deal in firearms and found that no arms of the character used by soldiers in war had been sold to the Chinese.

In the examination before the Military Court, witnesses testified that the Chinese had fired at the Maderista forces from the Railroad Hotel, the Chinese Bank Building, the Oriental Steam Laundry and from the Chinese Vegetable Gardens.

The Military Court, in company with several members of the foreign colony, visited a garden to the east of Torreon which was owned by a Chinaman by the name of Maa Due, searched the well in this garden and found in it several rifles. The inference from this testimony was that resistance had been offered by the Chinese from this garden and that they had thrown into the well the rifles which were found there.

We were informed by persons who were at the plant of the Continental Rubber Company on the 13th, 14th and 15th of May, and who witnessed the fight in the neighborhood where the garden of Maa Due is located, that the volunteers of Nuevo Leon, who were known as the "Yellow-Jackets," on the 13th of May held a position behind the Coahuila & Pacific Railroad track, immediately to the north of the place where it is crossed by the International Railroad; that they were also behind a house near the well in which the arms were found and that from these positions they resisted an attack from a force of Maderistas who had taken a position behind a house in the garden to the east of the said track, which said garden is the property of one Foon Chuck.

These statements prove that the firing which was directed against the Maderistas from the vicinity of this well was the fire of the federal forces, and not of the Chinese, and they also go to establish the fact that on the 13th of May the Maderistas were defending a position in the Chinese gardens.

The statements of Mr. Buford, Station Agent; Mr. Wolff, who lives on the hill overlooking the Railroad Hotel, and Mr. Bailey, who, prior to the night of the 13th, had a room in this hotel, all prove that no resistance was offered by the Chinese from this building. Their statements are corroborated by the fact that there are no evidences on the building of the hotel showing that it was attacked, and the fact that no Chinese were found there by the Maderistas and that none were killed there, although the hotel

was entered and sacked on the morning of the 15th of May and everything of value therein carried away.

We were informed by Mr. Hugo Hahn, who is a bank manager and is at present the German Consul with his place of business on the same street and opposite the Chinese Bank Building, that he is positive that no resistance was offered from this building by Chinese on the 15th of May. This statement is corroborated by Domingo Rodriguez, a Mexican citizen who was the porter of the building and who stated that he knew the Chinese well; that he knew they had no arms, and that he knew on the morning of the 15th of May they offered no resistance. He said that he was in this building when it was attacked and ran out of the building when it was fired upon, and that an unarmed and helpless Chinaman who tried to follow him out of the building was shot down.

Mr. José Cadena and his wife, who have a bed factory in the building adjoining the Oriental Steam Laundry, stated that there was no resistance offered by Chinese from the laundry at any time during the fight and that when the Maderista soldiers entered, searched and sacked the laundry, they were not able to find even a cartridge. The greater number of the Chinese from this laundry escaped by climbing over the wall into the house of Mr. and Mrs. Cadena, who concealed them and protected them from the soldier who were hunting down the Chinamen and killing them.

We were also informed by men who were on the building now occupied by the Presidencia and which overlooks the said laundry that at times during the days of the 13th and 14th of May they were on the said building, and that there was no firing from the laundry.

Several Chinese were called before Lic. Ramos Pedrueza and all of them indignantly denied the charge that the Chinese were armed and offered resistance.

We also encountered many citizens who had seen Chinese driven and dragged through the streets by men on horseback. Many of them had seen Chinese killed and in every case the victim was unarmed, helpless and died without any offer of resistance.

The British Consul, who lives in Gomez Palacio, personally heard a speech which was made by one Jesus C. Flores on the 5th of May at Gomez Palacio, in which he criticized the presence

in the country of so many Chinese and said that one of the reforms to come from the revolution would be to rid the country of them.

The Consul was a member of the Red Cross during the attack on Torreón and stated that a rumor was current among the forces that Chinese and Spaniards were both giving aid to the federal forces.

We also interviewed witnesses who told us about a demonstration which took place on the 16th of September last, when the windows of some of the Chinese places of business were stoned.

We were informed that when the city was taken, that for the purpose of having an excuse to enter and loot buildings the people would inform the soldiers that they were being fired on from such buildings. This statement was made in connection with many foreign stores other than those owned by Chinese, and it was also stated that the Maderistas were fired on from the Bank of London and Mexico. We were informed of this fact by the manager of the said bank, who called our attention to the many bullet scars on the said building, showing that the said bank had been fired on.

It was the general opinion that the statements that Germans, Spaniards, Chinese and others were firing on the Maderista forces, were made for the purpose of giving an excuse for entering buildings to loot them.

Various persons told of the looting of the Chinese places of business; of the robbing of the Chinese of everything they had on their persons, and we were informed that the shoes were removed from the bodies of all Chinese who were killed, because it was believed that the Chinese concealed their money in their shoes.

The testimony heard—with the exception of that of one witness—all went to prove that no resistance was offered by the Chinese and that the killing was unprovoked and carried out in the most brutal and inhuman manner.

The single witness whom we examined who stated that the Chinese had fired, was one Miguel Robledo. He stated that three Chinese—two with revolvers and one with a rifle—had fired on the Maderista forces from the windows of the Wah Yick building immediately over the store known as "El Puerto de Shanghai." The windows of the said room were pierced by bullets and the locations of the bullet holes show that at the time they were made the windows were down. Mr. Robledo having stated that the windows were up at the time the Chinese were firing, he was asked how he

accounted for this fact and in reply stated that when the Maderistas fired on this building, the Chinese pulled the windows down. This statement seemed to be very improbable, since a glass window is no protection from rifle bullets. Mr. Robledo admitted that he had been appointed Acting Municipal President shortly after the town was taken; that he was at present a member of the Municipal Council, and that the revolution was responsible for these appointments. He admitted that he is owner of the building which is at present occupied by the Presidencia, the purchase of which the present government is considering. He stated, however, that he was convinced that from no other place, neither from the gardens, from the Railroad Hotel, from the Chinese Bank Building nor from the Steam Laundry had any firing been directed by the Chinese against the Maderista forces. He could give no reason why the Chinese should have fired from the Wah Yick building since, as he stated, at the time the firing took place the Maderistas were peacefully parading the streets and making no demonstration against the said building or attempting to enter it.

In view of all the circumstances, and especially in view of the fact that the killing of Chinese did not begin at this building, we think the testimony of this witness is of little weight.

The testimony of Mr. George C. Carothers, American Consular Agent in Torreón, on the point in issue is as follows:

“At two different times I made declarations before the Military Court in this city, which declarations appear as a matter of record. From subsequent investigations that I have made it is my positive opinion that there was no resistance whatever offered by the Chinese, but there may have existed the idea among the Maderistas that they had been fired on from the Chinese gardens, thinking that the Chinese were doing the firing but which had been occupied by the Volunteers of Nuevo Leon, commonly known as “Yellow-Jackets” on account of their uniform. It is a well established fact that the eastern outskirts of the city were defended by the “Yellow-Jackets.” It is also my opinion that when they began to loot the stores and kill the Chinese, the mob would incite the Maderista soldiers by telling them that they were being fired upon from the buildings which they

desired to loot. I have been informed by a great many people that before the fight commenced the Chinese had withdrawn deposits of money and had hidden it in their shoes, and that in cases where Chinamen were killed some one would rush up and pull off their shoes, almost invariably finding money. I was also informed that the Chinese who were rescued and taken to the cuartels were robbed of the money in their possession after they reached the cuartels, by the Mederista soldiers."

In the course of our investigation we encountered a statement made by Señor Delfino Ríos, a Mexican citizen, an old resident of Torreón, who was in the city at the time the massacre took place. This statement appeared in a paper published in Torreón, known as "Diogenes," on the 16th of July, 1911. Since this statement emanates from a Mexican citizen and was not made in connection with any investigation, it is believed to be an unbiased account of what actually took place in Torreón on the 13th, 14th and 15th of May, 1911.

The author of this article was visited by the representative of the President in company with ourselves, and reaffirmed the truth of each statement contained therein. In view of these facts we have resolved to embody this account in this report in full. It is as follows:

"The Truth About the Assassination of the Chinese in Torreón.

"The hecatomb which took place in this city on the morning of the 15th of May has been the theme of various articles and a number of commentaries throughout the Republic, without its being known to the nation up to this time what was the real cause of the horrifying and extensive massacre."

"The origin of this startling butchery having been discovered by the various commissions of the same nationality which have visited this place for the purpose of conducting investigations, I may narrate them for the information of the public and in order that the truth of the matter may be known."

"From the beginning of the month of May the towns of Ciudad Lerdo and Gomez Palacio, distant from this place eight and four kilometers, respectively, and having communication by electric road, had been occupied by the Maderista forces under command of Ramirez, Buitron, Jesus Flores and others, because they were undefended by the federals."

"On the 5th of May the revolutionists organized civic parades, circuses, serenades and other diversions to celebrate the victory of our troops over the French forces."

"In the first—that is to say, the civic parades—the troops participated, these being composed mainly of convicts and criminals who had been liberated from the prisons, and of ignorant people of the worst antecedents."

"At different points along the line of march speeches were made by the adherents of the cause or by the leaders themselves, who, as a matter of fact were not to be distinguished by their superior education."

"Among these latter, Jesus Flores, deceased, made a speech. This man was only a stone mason with no social standing and not even a mediocre education. He spoke of the reasons for the celebration and added that all of the foreigners had become wealthy at the expense of the sweat of the Mexican workingman, especially the Chinese, who had taken over even the work of the women, depriving them of their livelihood and that, therefore, it was necessary, and he considered it even a patriotic duty, to *finish with them*."

"These latter words made an impression and remained fixed in the minds of these unthinking, ignorant people and 'patriotism', which was in a state of effervescence, was prepared to break out at the opportune moment."

"In the course of time it became known in this city that in the said towns additional, forces were being gathered to attack Torreon, which was the objective point of their campaign, since there are nine banks and magnificent business houses here. And, in addition to the troops, a call was issued to the mobs from which the troops had been drawn."

"In the meantime, General Lojero, who was at the head of 670 men, including about 50 rurales and some 60 volunteers of the State of Nuevo Leon, who were dressed in yellow

khaki and whose bravery astonished the foreigners, the nationals and even the revolutionists, took charge of the defense of the city and displayed an extraordinary activity and fortified the city in a strategic way in accordance with all the rules of the art of defense.”

“Skirmishing began on Saturday, the 13th, at which time some four thousand revolutionists began the formal attack on the city, which was brilliantly defended by the very small force of federals. The fire lasted forty-two hours, during which time Buitron and Flores, himself, were killed. During this time feats of prowess were performed by the federals which would have excited the admiration of the Spartans themselves. Eight of the ‘Yellow-Jackets’ held back the advance and caused two hundred rebels to retreat. Three hundred men attacked a position held by fifteen federals, who caused them to retreat. The fighting continued all day and all night without the intrepid defenders of Torreón being driven from a single one of their positions.”

“This in spite of the fact that the Maderistas kept up a heavy fire from the house tops, the federals, therefore, being between two fires.”

“On Sunday morning the attacking forces retired to their headquarters and in the meantime the federals remained at their post.”

“Sunday night approached and great was the surprise on Monday morning when it was found that the city had been evacuated. The federals had withdrawn without any one knowing why.”

“It was said that General Lojero had received orders to take such a step, and also, that the ammunition had been exhausted and many attributed this move to the traitorous hostility of the residents toward the troops.”

“Under these circumstances the Maderistas within the city went out to inform their companions of what had happened with regard to the evacuation of the city and the Maderistas at once marched into the city.”

“Everybody expected that in view of the peace which now reigned and the fact that there was now no danger to any one that they would effect a peaceful entry and would commit no untoward acts.”

"However, this unfortunately was not the case. What an uprising of savages! what an outbreak of barbarous Indians! Four thousand men hurled themselves upon the city at the head of six mobs: those of Lerdo, Gomez Palacio, San Pedro, Viesca, Matamoros and Torreon, all of whom were bent on pillage."

"The robbery commenced. Business places and private residences without number were swept entirely clean and it was a sight to witness the lower classes carrying away bureaus, chairs, sewing machines, phonographs, pianos, etc., which they rolled along like bales of cotton. The doors of these houses had been opened by the revolutionists who incited the masses to enter and take possession of the contents. Some of the houses after being robbed were set on fire, which was the fate suffered by the jail, the police headquarters building, the Inferior Court, and Court of Letters and the Municipal Treasury."

"They went to the Chinese stores, some of which were of great value, and after moving even the fixtures, the Madristas fired a rain of bullets upon them and 10 or 12 were killed. When they went to the Chinese Bank, two of the employees who had witnessed the above events, tried to defend themselves and fired their weapons. This was the signal for the house to be surrounded and for carbines to be fired by hundreds. They riddled the two men found there with bullets, as well as all the others, and followed this up in a fury by proceeding to butcher all the Chinese they could find, not even sparing children of five years of age or less. This was the day of judgment. Scenes were enacted which would horrify a Kaffir or a Hottentot."

"These men who wore on their hats the images of the Holy Child of Tongo, our Lady of Guadalupe, The Master of Mercy, and of their patron saints, had no mercy for any one. Their work became an ecstasy. The number of killed reached 303."

"The streets of Torreon at 3 o'clock in the afternoon were strewn with corpses, among which were those of Mexicans who resembled Chinese."

"The residents were terrorized and families wept openly."

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"The massacre ceased, thanks to the arrival of Don Emilio Madero, who immediately ordered the troops to accompany him in charging the mobs with the saber."

"During the entire afternoon the bodies, for the most part naked, were taken to the cemetery in carts and buried in a trench about forty meters long which was dug outside of the cemetery. The corpses were piled one on top of the other without any covering."

"The consternation which reigned in the city was indescribable. There are no words with which to express it."

"Even at this date the streets in which the victims lived and which are in a deplorable condition, present a gloomy aspect, and at night no one wishes to pass through these streets because to do so brings to mind these heartrending scenes."

"It is not true that the Chinese aided in the defense of the city, nor are the statements with regard to the poisonings true, in any form."

"The foregoing statement is the truth which has already been conscientiously investigated by the representatives of that nation as well as ours."

"According to calculations, the value of the goods stolen and destroyed in the lake district during the six months of the revolution amounts to at least 10,000,000 pesos, and the lives lost in the encounters, together with those who were massacred, number more than 1,000."

(Signed) "AN EYE WITNESS."

Conclusion:

We believe it may be fairly stated that our investigation has established the following facts:

FIRST.—That prior to the date of the massacre the Chinese Colony in Torreon was peaceful, thrifty and law-abiding.

SECOND.— That the Chinese had not purchased arms from any one in Torreón prior to the 15th. of May, and that General Lojero did not furnish them with arms and ammunition when he

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evacuated the city—hence they were unarmed when the revolutionary army entered the city.

THIRD.—That 303 of their number were slaughtered by the revolutionary army in the most brutal horrifying manner imaginable.

FOURTH.—That the Chinese were massacred not because they offered resistance, but because it was known that they would not offer resistance.

FIFTH.—That the real cause of the massacre was race prejudice and a desire to loot and to kill.

SIXTH.—That the contention that the Chinese offered resistance is a pure fabrication, invented by the officers of the revolutionary army for the purpose of escaping the punishment which the commission of such a heinous crime would naturally entail upon them.

We transmit herewith fifteen signed statements of witnesses who were interviewed in the presence of the President's representative. The witnesses who testified were representatives of nearly every nationality represented in Torreón.

Very respectfully,

OWYANG KING.

ARTHUR BASSETT.

To His Excellency,
Chang Yin Tang, His Imperial
Chinese Majesty's Envoy Ex-
traordinary and Minister Ple-
nipotentiary to the United Sta-
tes, Mexico, Cuba and Peru.

Mexico, August 28, 1911.