

Zapata, Emiliano ^[1]

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Type of Speech:

n. ^[2]

Definition:

Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919) is the most famous figure of the Mexican Revolution, its conscience and icon. A horse breaker from a Nahuatl speaking community in Morelos, Zapata did not concern himself with national politics, but with local towns' struggles for land. Under Díaz, many villages had lost their land in unequal contests with large landowners. Zapata and his followers fought every faction that invaded Morelos, irrespective of their "revolutionary" credentials. Zapata and his followers demanded concrete action and taking a stand on the issues affecting the poor. Pictures of Zapata in his sombrero, with his thick mustache and crossed bandoliers are a recurring motif in Mexico. Zapata was assassinated at the behest of Carranza on April 10, 1919 at Chinameca.

It is better to die on one's feet than live on one's knees. ¡Mexicanos! Tierra y Libertad o muerte! (Mexicans! Land and liberty or death!) Liberty is not begged for with hat in hand, but demanded with a rifle in one's fists.

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