

# A prisoner

Carlos “Chivo” Lòpez

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Greetings, comrades!

I’m writing this letter driven by a strong need to communicate with the comrades outside. I’m convinced of the importance of being updated on all the episodes of struggle against what we normally call ‘the enemy’, that is the State and capital, from their miserable institutions to their fascist methods of control.

Anti-prison struggle is important and it is precisely for this reason that I feel the need to talk about my situation as an anarchist prisoner, while making it clear a priori that I have never tried to pass myself off as a victim because of what I’m going through, because as I have said (or written) in the past: I don’t believe in nor do I accept concepts of guilt or innocence in relation to the crimes I’m accused of, and I consider myself an anarchist with his insurrectional and revolutionary projectuality, an anarchist kidnapped by the State (and not the ‘victim’ of a kidnapping, as I read in a communiqué), and the reason why I want to talk about my condition in prison is only to publicly denounce some aspects of the way this disgusting institution functions. ‘If you don’t see it, it doesn’t exist’, and within my limited possibilities, to make my denunciation under censorship is part of my anti-prison struggle.

About a month ago (mid-March), while I was still detained in a temporary cell, the first foul deed took place. At around 7pm I was with a cellmate, then all of a sudden a shady guy, whom I certainly didn’t know, came over and started provoking me by insulting me and barging into me; a common event in prison is to beat one another up when one’s ‘reputation’ (which I think it’s a curse) is at stake, but due to the harsh words and the stress of imprisonment I fell into the trap.

After an exchange of blows, two guards appeared as if by magic (it is rare that police turn up in the corridor of the cells) and caught us fighting. Normally they

tend to calm tempers with slaps and punches in order to subdue those engaged in a fight, and so they did with me and the massive guy I was fighting with (it's great impotence not being able to defend oneself against these fucking shit cops because one ends up facing another trial for assaulting the bitch authority), and I thought it would end there, but it was not to be.

After humiliating us in front of the other prisoners present, they pushed us up the stairs; all of a sudden I no longer saw my initial aggressor, and I was the only one being taken away. So far I haven't heard anything about him. When we got into an office, they beat me again; I couldn't take any more and started shouting insults at them, ready to pass to physical insult, but they didn't give me the chance because they were hitting me so hard.

I don't remember how we got there, but I was taken into a dark room. Before we got there they stripped me and gave me a bottle of water, then they beat me again (I will never forget them) and left me there.

It was a cold night, they had taken all my clothes away, the floor was wet, I had been badly beaten all over my body and the room was completely dark. You can imagine what a night that was...

I was scared, angry and felt helpless. Allow me to call it physical and psychological torture.

I had never been afraid of the dark till that night; about 10 hours looking (and not seeing) all around and waiting for something to happen, till dawn broke and I was taken out of there. Obviously by other jailers.

I was taken to the cell and warned not to say anything about what had happened, and when I was in the cell I chose not to speak to anyone, not because of their warning but because I was still in shock.

By chance, that very day I was transferred to the extermination centre called Reclusorio Oriente, and during the night I entered the C.O.C. (Centre of Observation and Classification), whose 150 prisoners had been welcomed with the usual 'psychological terror'.

I was expecting some other surprise at the C.O.C. Almost immediately we were called for the well-known 'fajina', which is cleaning the building, or allegedly so, in fact it is a pretext for extortion. In giving us directions, they said 'al chile' (an expression used a lot here). Who is going to go against it and pay \$ 2,500 pesos not to do the fajina? This so that each one would take their responsibilities and pay up; some accepted their request. But some of us decided to face the fajina. I remember them saying: 'you'd better pay, guerriero, you need money, don't do anything stupid, otherwise we'll have them beat you up.'

On that first day I did the fajina, which is an almost inhuman 'exercise' aimed at breaking your body so that you are forced to pay, a gorilla behind you all the time

demanding that you be quick and hitting you if you don't comply. This happens twice a day, about 3 hours of torture.

The next day they said again: 'the best punches are for you'. After half an hour of fajina, while I was doing a sort of 'carritos', keeling down and cleaning the floor with a wet cloth at high speed, I fell then I was pulled up from the back of my trousers.

I have some problems with my back, so I can't move fast. The pain was too much and I remember turning round to see my aggressor (a prisoner sheep who works for those of the fajina) and I wanted to retaliate, but again I couldn't fight back because only two days had passed since the beating in the dark room, and with my back pain that was not the case.

As I had to restrain myself I went to the one in charge of the fajina, who said 'if you can't make it, then pay up'. That's how I fell into this extortion.

I had to call someone who paid in \$ 2,000 pesos for me. While I was speaking with this person I couldn't help crying because of my feeling of impotence and the pain, but I never gave them the pleasure doing it during these disgusting fajina.

I'll stop for a moment to point out that in spite of everything I don't consider myself a victim. Insulted, yes, because they tried to trample on my dignity.

As a 'coincidence', two weeks later my mother was refused a visit, the only visit I got, on the pretext of some identification problems at the C.O.C.

The bastards 'search' you and steal money and phone cards. I didn't have any money but they took my phone card along with my diary with my telephone numbers. I was in isolation for these two weeks, a strange isolation. I could only make one telephone call to ask for money...

I never thought of complaining to the 'authorities' of the institution, given that they are all part of the same gang of snakes in total complicity. Even less did I consider appealing to 'human rights' because their rights are a convenience I don't believe in.

As for the question of extortion, I want to clarify: when I say extortion I mean pressure exercised by someone on someone else in order to obtain results, even against your will, which for a given reason is beyond your control; I don't mean 'extortion' in the sense of someone wanting money from you and you give in out of fear of being beaten.

And a person very dear to me once said: 'cya, don't give them any money', as if I had a choice or it was for a different kind of extortion. That's not what he meant, but I understand some people can get that idea.

As far as concerns extortion in this context, prison and anti-prison struggle, I say that here they make you pay for anything, in reality for everything and this seems strange to me and it worries me that nobody says anything. And I know

that what I'm saying here doesn't change anything, but I don't intend to be one of this flock of sheep.

They make you pay for using the toilet (the cell toilet is not enough for all the prisoners locked up in a small cell), for using tap water, which is much needed in the cells, drafting a request list (believe me, only for getting your list through), going to court, seeing your lawyer, cashing your cheque, and apart from the use of the table, for going downstairs on visiting day, getting out of the cell (they call it *desapando*); in the common cells they seize the locks, to be able to go from the cell to the dormitory, they charge (entrance, kitchen and common cell), for stuff like brooms, soap, bins, cloths and I don't know what else.

This is a business!

And be careful! If you refuse to pay you come up against a heavy hand.

I can't avoid mentioning the lay people, who, like the white lice, bedbugs and cockroaches, are part of the prison! They hit hard.

Another aspect I don't like, actually no one does, is overcrowding. Arrivals and the common cells are very small, at least in my experience when I arrived in a tiny cell about 3 x 2,5 metres, we were about 23 prisoners when I was taken to the temporary cell we were about 23 prisoners, and in the common cell there were 17 of us.

It's very uncomfortable and also dangerous for your health the way you sleep, if you sleep, particularly for the new ones, they sleep on planks placed over the toilet.

Overcrowding in Mexican jails is worrying, at least I can see that at Oriente.

And even if there are so many of us, nothing ever happens. Here the methods of domestication are remarkable, as in the case of religion, it's unbelievable how many people say 'maybe we are here by the will of God, this is a sign and we must respect his will'; they sing and pray and hope to get out soon.

When they know I'm an atheist and I think they seem ignorant and blinded by dogma, they keep away from me or start asking all kinds of questions, but that's another story.

Another way of keeping prisoners passive is drugs. I've always thought that each one is free to choose how to live their own life, to take or not take drugs, and which drugs, but I've also maintained that their use is often a barrier that prevents the individual from carrying on his revolutionary goals, deviating him into a lethargic state of artificial happiness; especially with so-called heavy drugs. This along with everything else.

Prison denigrates the prisoner, humiliates him, tramples him and tries to kill his dignity, turning him into human waste without any will, servile and obedient; assigning the role of 'sheep or snitch' to those who are faithful to the system, crush-

ing, isolating and punishing those who don't follow its idiotic rules and disobey its terrorist practices.

So I declare myself an anarchist prisoner in struggle against prison. We look power in the face from inside and push to preserve our identity as people who feel a love for freedom, our dignity and to defend what we are, it is necessary to liberate our wildest impulses and in the face of such humiliation it becomes necessary to go right to the most destructive of our being.

I consider myself a free person, also inside prison, and so it will be even while they try to destroy my individuality; their methods of control and domination will never succeed in piercing my black heart, as long there is the solidarity of free comrades towards prisoners in the clutches of whatever prison, whatever extermination centre and every institute of subordination.

Prison tactics of terror and fear cannot stop this hurricane of creative passion, constructive passion and destructive passion, this liberatory project; and even if confronting its authority leads to a result of greater repression, here no one falters, no one takes a step back against the hated enemy.

The prison system wants us to believe that its violence against us is something normal, it wants us to get used to it and think this is what prison must be; personally I don't let myself be domesticated, I don't fear retaliations, I'm not one of those who claim they are enemies of the State and at the same time try to make their lives 'normal' and smooth, this doesn't convince me. I'm not one of those who turns the other cheek when they are struck, I am not like those who are waiting for 'conditions to be right to act', no!

On the contrary I think that their violence must be sent back twice over, an eye for an eye, to their violence our antagonistic violence, acting without waiting for the times to be ripe because often this happens too late, responding to a flame with a raging fire.

I haven't finished writing everything, but...

Down with the prison walls! Fire to the prisons! For anarchy!

*Carlos 'Chivo', Oriente prison.*

*ps. While the man strutted and he was a god, an 'idiot came upon him. The techniques were elevated to the supreme rank, and a time is pallate on the throne threw chains on their minds that they had created.' Edgar Allan Poe*

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