



Solidarity with the 25 of Caxias
on trial in the court of Oeiras, Portugal
accused of mutiny in the
Fortress of Caxias 1994

PRESOS EM LUTA

AGITACÕES NAS PRISÕES

PORTUGUESAS ENTRE 1994 E 1996

PRISONERS IN STRUGGLE

Courts, revolt and Caxias

This description could be much shorter than it will be, but we feel too inspired by the events to summarize them, and we want others to feel inspired too.

Among other events that were keeping our minds and our time busy, there occurred on the 20th of May

one more session of the trial against 25 ex-prisoners in the prison of Caxias, charged with damage, arson and mutiny.

About 15 anarchists gathered outside the Oeiras court where, from the morning, we handed out leaflets against prisons, Law and Justice, and papers (“Presos em Luta”) to passers-by.

In front of the court main entrance there were some spray-painted messages: “SOLIDARIEDADE COM OS 25 DE CAXIAS!” [“solidarity with the 25 of Caxias”], “DESTRUAMOS OS MUROS DA PRISÃO,

PARA LÁ DA AMNISTIA E DO PERDÃO.” [“let’s destroy the prison walls, beyond amnesty and pardon”], and “LIBERDADE PARA TODOS. FOGO ÀS PRISÕES. (A)” [“freedom for all. fire to the prisons. (A)”].

In the surrounding area, other messages had been spray painted in a rich neighbourhood: “FOGO AOS TRIBUNAIS E ÀS PRISÕES. (A)” [“fire to the courts and to the prisons (A)”] and “1000 PRISÕES, 1000 FUGAS” [“1000 imprisonments, 1000 escapes”].

Posters had been put up all over the street of the court (as had already happened in previous sessions), with the following text: “Prisons, revolt and Caxias.

13 years after a wide struggle by the prisoners for the improvement of the conditions to which they were subjected in the prisons, the State decides to put on trial 25 of the then prisoners in the prison of Caxias, charging them with mutiny, damage and arson.

We don’t care if they did it or not.

We care about the love for freedom, that which persists in not letting itself die, in not letting itself be suffocated by the courts, nor by the bars, nor by the guards.

They’re joyful moments, those in which that love expresses itself.

Moments in which we communicate among free hearts.

Moments that no authority can take away from us.

Solidarity with those who struggled.

Solidarity with those who struggle.

Anarchists for the cutting off of the hand that imprisons us, and for the expropriation of the key.

When the accused went out for lunch, we unfolded a banner (“CONTRA O ROUBO DAS NOSSAS VIDAS, NEM TRIBUNAIS NEM PRISÕES” [“against the theft of our lives, neither courts nor prisons”]) in front of the court door and started shouting “A PAIXÃO PELA LIBERDADE É MAIS FORTE QUE AS PRISÕES” [“the passion for freedom is stronger than the prisons”] and “A LIBERDADE ESTÁ NOS NOSSOS CORAÇÕES. ABAIXO OS MUROS DE TODAS AS PRISÕES!” [“freedom is in our hearts. down with the walls of every prison.”] It was a beautiful moment, seeing that the cops didn’t know what to do, when at the same time, without fear, the

shouts of some of the accused joined our own.

There was still time to insult the public prosecutor, who left the courthouse in a hurry.

In the afternoon, from inside the courtroom, we heard the shouts coming from the outside against the trial, prisons, judges, and in solidarity with the accused. At one point, the president-judge complained that she had no power to stop the shouting that was disturbing the hearing.

Some of the accused, sick of the close vigilance and intimidation by the fucking assholes that are known as “prison guards”, stood up and started shouting that they didn’t have to put up with that and demanded that the guards moved away. Shouts from the public joined theirs.

Later, one of the guards approached the public gallery and whispered that he wanted a copy of what one of our comrades was drawing. Immediately we stood up and started shouting that the guards were trying to intimidate us as well as the accused and, also immediately, many of the accused stood up and started shouting against the guards and not only. Amidst the various insults shouted in all directions to the several authorities present in that infamous room, the judge ordered the cops to remove the public from the courtroom. Already outside the court, still shouting, 2 comrades were checked for ID.

Half an hour later, the session ended, with some of the accused telling us that they could hear our shouting in other parts of the court, and that the session had been closed because the lawyers were all talking to each other and the judge wasn’t able to impose order in the room anymore.

Our strength and our joy explode and grow with each attack on authority.

The enemy isn’t only in that court, solidarity doesn’t need to be there.

Solidarity with those who struggled. Solidarity with those who struggle.

Fire to the courts, the prisons and the world that creates them.

A few free hearts

Solidarity from Rotterdam

Today, April the 22nd of 2009, the third session of the so called “25 de Caxias” trial is taking place in the court of Oeiras, near Lisbon.

Thirteen years after the events, the Portuguese state is trying to invert history through its juridical system, denying the “trial” which it was submitted to during the years between 1994 and 1996, and is trying to convict 25 people, using them as scapegoats for the situation created by society in general and the State in particular.

During those years, intense agitations were lived inside the Portuguese prisons, which were a product of a legitimate and wide movement of protest against the miserable and undignified conditions of the prisons, the humiliating and inhuman treatment given by the prison guards, and the general corruption of the penitentiary institution.

In those times, all this was acknowledged by the numerous denunciations, hunger strikes and other protests inside the prisons; the decadent and unsustainable situation of the jails was amplified by the media coverage that was visible from the outside on a daily basis and by social critics, that furthermore openly questioned the existence of the prison system, some of them under these specific conditions, some in its totality.

Then it would have been impossible and unthinkable to put 25 people on trial for a mutiny that was predictable and in which the prisoners could “only” lose all that they already didn’t have; while the people truly responsible the situation had always everything to gain.

Today, apparently anything is possible in a Portugal with a big mouth of thirty five years of democracy, and with a belly full of miseries, including a prison in Monsanto which for unthinkable and intolerable reasons, gets the nickname of “Portuguese Guantanamo”.

Let it also be today then, the day that it is registered in the papers of the national bureaucracy, that a group of old and young Portuguese

emigrants in the Netherlands, don’t accept this trial; for all the reasons given previously and for all of those not exposed. We don’t accept the forgery of history, and we wish to put an end to the role of silent observers, of this and other events in our homeland.

This trial should never have begun, and more than its end we desire that these 25 people will never be associated with the name of that or any other prison again.

The group of people gathered in the

Portuguese Consulate of Rotterdam in the 22nd of April 2009, and all the others who went to work.”

1994:

1994 Agitations began in the Portuguese prisons in the form of struggle and protest. With a simple observation of the first episodes nobody would have thought that the agitation was going to reach levels unknown till then in the Portuguese prison universe.

In January, 18 prisoners in the jail of Coimbra started a hunger strike asking to be transferred to prisons near their places of origin and denouncing the treatment received from the persons in charge of the prison, without any practical results. As a result of this, seven of them were forced to start the strike again, on the 1st of March, with the same revendications. Paralely, some of those implicated in the "FUP-FP25" case (political and legal trial against the radical left wing revolutionary group called FP25, in which most of it's members were accused of terrorist crimes) maintain another hunger strike which had been begun the previous Christmas, until February, demanding the rephrasing of their charges.

In the 20 years passed since the end of the dictatorship – April 25, 1974 – many struggles took place in the Portuguese prisons motivated by the prison conditions. Those which reached major public impact had as protagonists the accused in a political/judicial process– prisoners of the cases PRP and FUP/FP-25 – separate from the rest of the prisoners, and saw their conditions of reclusion substantially improved as a result of the above-mentioned hunger strikes.

Meanwhile, during these years, there were innumerable struggles carried out by prisoners designated as "common criminals". Although less spread – almost always silenced – some of them took as a motive the defence of the interests of the prison population in general, others, personal reasons: transfer to prisons near their places of origin, health problems, protests against the illtreatment received by the the persons in charge of the prisons and mobilizations to press for the approval of amnesties.

Of all these struggles it is the case to emphasize the riot of 1985 in Vale de Judeus, that originated in the systematic beatings inflicted on prisoners by the guards; the riot of the Lisbon prison in 1987, provoked by the spontaneous reaction of the prisoners

after the beating of a prisoner by the prison guards in the "redondo" (central control-tower, in which is based the panoptical prison system) fifteen minutes after the movie Terminator had been shown across the internal television circuit, in an epoch in which it was forbidden to have TV's in the cells; and the conflict that would lead to the removal of the director, vice-director, doctor, all the chiefs and several prison guards of the prison of Linhó, after the death in 1989 of a prisoner in 111 module (special reclusion for "dangerous" prisoners, equivalent to FIES module in Spain); and many other riots.

The sum of these experiences of struggle - in a moment in which the penitentiary overpopulation was reaching breaking point - manifested itself with an innovating form, the fifteenth of March 1994 with a "hunger strike in protest against prison conditions and a fight for the rights granted in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic not respected in the prisons of the country".

The North Stronghold of the Fortress of Caxias was one of the Penitentiary Centres where overpopulation was reaching the highest proportions. Individual cells were holding three prisoners, in cells constructed for six, fourteen were piling up – two of which were sleeping on mattresses on the ground. This excess had consequences in all the other parts of the jail, from administrative services to medical assistance, passing through visits, to the prison exercise yard. The one known as the prison of the political prisoners of the dictatorship, being the stage for the liberation of hundreds of them in the days following the 25th of April (military coup that ended the dictatorship), was on the point of collapse. In this atmosphere, the riot was increasingly taking form.

Meanwhile, when we were preparing the "initial declaration", which would serve to spread the struggle beyond the walls, and when were discussing the "basic principles" with which all the strikers would be guided during the hunger strike, all the prisoners of the starting group were preparing the availability of the remaining ones in the participation in the struggle. The week previous to the explosion of the strike a manifesto promoted by those who carried infectious-contagious illnesses, denouncing the absence of treatment, was signed by almost all the prisoners of this jail. It was tactically decided from the beginning not to involve all the available prisoners to take part in the

strike, to resist the effect that this type of struggle had had till then : a numerous group the first day, half the following day, and at the end of the next week the strike had gone down to two or three of the prisoners who had initiated it. Entries into this hunger strike would be progressive: 30 prisoners first, another 30 two days later, and so on.

Making use of the media dynamic arisen with the appearance of private tv channels for spreading news of the protest, the group of 30 prisoners of the Fortress of Caxias that initiated the hunger strike, rapidly announced to all – especially to the prison population – who were not taking part in the struggle but who were consuming television 24 hours a day – the main lines of the process that was beginning.

It should be pointed out that during this period the news, without exception, opened with the recording of the voice of a prisoner reading extracts of the declaration that explained the motives of the struggle (the cassettes had been delivered hours earlier to the studios of several TV channels and of the principal radio stations).

Two days later, the General Direction of Penitentiary Services admits that the prisoners in struggle exceed one hundred in several penitentiary centres of the country, while actually for this date they were many more. Meanwhile, after the entry into strike of the second group of 30 prisoners of Caxias, the movement reaches significant proportions, giving new impulse to the undecided ones and spreading the struggle to the regional prisons.

It is not known for certainty how many prisoners were involved, but it was confirmed while the struggle was taking place that in the prison of Vale de Judeus, for example, a system of turns was making it possible to maintain a hundred permanently in the number of hunger strikers. It's in this Penitentiary Centre where the only relevant incident happens: on March 17, the strikers prevent the entry of a meal delivery van into one of the wings .

Recovered from the surprise, the persons in charge of the Penitentiary Services decide transfers, isolate the remaining striking prisoners in several centres, make visits difficult and try to turn attention away from the motives of the protest through false public declarations. But they went much further: Carlos Pereira –

better known as Carlos da Malveira – is moved while on hunger strike from Vale de Judeus to the prison of Coimbra on March 18, and the next day he turns out to be dead in a cell in the cellars of this jail (up to today the conclusions of the judicial investigation of the circumstances of this death have not been made known).

At the beginning of the struggle initiated in the Fortress of Caxias the keynote of “ respecting the order and the discipline of the jail ” had been underlined, and not stopping the strike before admission in the prison Hospital: ” the sooner they move us to the hospital, the sooner solutions will be found for the strike ” it was written.

The target was the collapse of the penitentiary Hospital, hoping to force the inevitable later admissions to be carried out in civil hospitals, pressing the opening of negotiations. Eleven days later the first prisoner on hunger strike is moved to the Hospital of Santa Maria due to lack of beds in the prison Hospital. Some hours later the internee escaped.

On the following day the Director of Prison Services, Fernando Duarte – who had arrived 8 years earlier, after his predecessor had been shot to death – much pressed by the political figures in charge, meets in the Fortress of Caxias the strikers of this prison. Not only does he promise them satisfaction of all the demands of the movement and the return of those transferred during the struggle, but also the approbation in parliament of a commemorative amnesty on the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the 25th April which, with the effect of reducing the penalties, would reduce the overpopulation of the prisons to normal levels. The prisoners who met with him made the decision not to end the struggle, but to suspend the hunger strike until April 25. The prisoners believed him, but were being cheated because the director had no power to fulfill the promises made, and they also ignored some of the basic principles of the struggle - those that probably gave more guarantees of success - “In all the negotiations everyone has to be heard, if we are not allowed to meet don't stop or negotiate” and/or “deliberative functions have no representatives and in the decisions we all must be heard and we all have to participate. ” Those who remained on hunger strike in other prisons eventually heard the decision to suspend the strike and the agreed terms via radio and television.

With this suspension prisoners start preparing a second phase in the protests. To refocus public discussion on the topics of the initial declaration of the struggle, for the time being lost in favour of the amnesty, they decide to develop “Avisos(alerts)” that dealt the designated points separately and are a major description of the appalling conditions of detention in Portugal. Never had the prison population proceeded to such a detailed and disturbing study in the form of alerts concerning the conditions of detention in the country: in these are treated separately, overpopulation, unconstitutional themes, health, prison employment and occupation of time, justice and right to love.

The various “Avisos(alerts)” are sent one by one from April 6 to organs of State sovereignty, parliamentary groups, political parties, religious leaders, trade unions and the organs of social communication in general: newspapers, magazines, radios and televisions ... Only one newspaper and a radio reported the first “Aviso(alert)” The remaining notices were completely silenced. Already at the end of the struggle in mid-May, a facsimile edition of the “Avisos(alerts)” was issued by prisoners’ solidarity groups. The last of the alerts, dated April 13, entitled “Synthesis”, consider this stage of the struggle and emphasized “before anything else, the dead silence surrounding them”. A work stoppage, with the rejection of food, was announced on April 18 and the rejection of visits with a silence strike outwards for April 25, “so the need for this debate to be held again within Portuguese society” .

Despite the massive rejection of work in prisons and the refusal to eat, the debate would be virtually buried. Days later an amnesty is approved, leading to the liberation of over 1,500 from prisons, undermining the position of the few who on April 26 had started the hunger strike again, since most of the conditions that led to the struggle had not been modified. On May 13 four strikers at the Caxias Prison Hospital sent a message to the Fortress of Caxias putting an end to the actions of protest and struggle: “The silence of the press is total and in these circumstances it was not fair to prolong the struggle. What has been achieved has been achieved and can’t be said to be little” The General Director of Penitentiary Services is replaced from office days later by a judge, Marques Ferreira.

1995: The prison system goes down

In 1995, more than by prisoners struggles, the Portuguese prison world was marked by deep conflicts inside the institution and by the denunciation of unaccountable irregularities practiced in the prisons, made public by several international institutions.

The coming of a new general-director of the prison system, with no previous known connections with the hidden world of prisons, who pushes the prisoners to denounce “irregular, corrupt and unfair” situations inside the prisons directly to him, promoting at the same time changes in the structures as well as in the prisons’ functioning under the theme “moralizing crusade”. All this provoked a shock wave in the Prison Services lobby propagated to its connections in the State apparatus. The lobby reaction was fast and Marques Ferreira wouldn’t survive in his post due to the “conspiratorial movements” he had provoked.

Contrary to his predecessor - Fernando Duarte had 19 years career as Prison’s Services’ inspector when he took the post in 1986 - Marques Ferreira took the post free from the net of self-addiction of a prison system that had only known one brief break in the lobby’s management in the 70’s, when Carlos Meira was general-director, starting a modernizing process in the prisons that had been suffocated by 48 years of dictatorship. This net would soon make him disappear, bothered by opened policy of prisons of society and other changes started by him. The escape from Vale dos Judeus in 1978 was the pretext to dismiss him.

One fast reading of a graph concerning the evolution of the prison population between May 1994 (when there was an amnesty) forced by the struggle, that had relieved the overcrowded prisons of about 2.000 prisoners, reducing their total to 9.750) and December 1995, shows that prison population had grown to 12.250 prisoners. We shall say that Marques Ferreira took up post in June 94 as general-director, leaving in January 96. In those 19 months the prison population grew by 2.500, 500 more than the 11.750 that were released in May 1994, before the amnesty, when overcrowding had been the main reason for the starting of the biggest prisoner’s struggle in Portuguese jails until then. This exponential rise doesn’t have any link with a rise of criminality in this period (as we can see in the next graphic), but in fact with the heavy-handed police, Public Ministry magistrates and judges, in an undoubted demonstration of the lobby installed in the

State apparatus, that wouldn't make the life of the impetuous general-director easy. Also, for the first time in the Portuguese Republic's history the election of the new president, Jorge Sampaio, wasn't celebrated with the traditional presidential pardon taking one year off each sentence.

Marques Ferreira will not handle the strong resistance made by this prison's lobby for long and unexpectedly abandons his post, not before making a public diagnostic: "the prison system has reach the bottom and needs total renewal".

Some days before leaving, Marques Ferreira says everything he knows in press declarations, where he reveals the death threats he received because, while being the Prison Services' General director, he had publicly denounced the existence of one or more criminal organizations able to make their own laws respected inside prisons, alongside and over the top of the General Direction's commands.

In the last press conference, days before his leaving, 19 months after taking up the post, he would impotently resume: "we reached the point that we realized that we were in a bog". He would be substituted by Celso Manata, his General-sub director, Attorney General before being put in this post. The new General director never related the tasks denounced by Marques Ferreira and strongly assumed the defence of the lobbies and politics that had always been installed in the Portuguese prisons.

1996: From protests to the truth about the riot of Caxias

The continuous increase in the protests we are referring to between 1994 and 1995 will reach its climax in 1996 with an explosion of the contained revolt inside Portuguese prisons. The New Year's wishes exposed old revelations of a penitentiary system that shamelessly attested the assault on human rights in Portugal.

This time, the straw that broke the camel's back was the non attribution to the remaining prison population of an amnesty aimed at the prisoners of FUP/FP25 (a leftist urban guerrilla), alongside the first and historical denial of a presidential amnesty

since the 25th of April 1974.

The year of 1996 was for ever marked by a great movement of peaceful, spontaneous and collective Portuguese prisoners' protest movement; aiming for an amnesty or partial pardon, and for better and more dignified prison conditions, which led to simply claiming what was already consecrated in the Prison Reform. An unstoppable protest, spreading in work strikes and even hunger strikes, accompanied by thousands of signatures in protest collected all over the country.

These protests have two main moments. From January to February we witness a rise in restlessness, primarily pushed by the declarations of Marques Ferreira (at the time director of the prison services) that cracked the stability of the Prison Boards; at the same time that there is a multiplication of petitions directed at several State organs aiming at amnesty or partial pardon. This movement, more than having claims of adhering to the ongoing FUP/FP25 case, results in a critique of the judiciary and penal system, and of the Portuguese prison reality, starting promptly by the simple rhetoric that are "Prisoners' Rights". From then on, just as in 1994, there's an exposure of the overcrowding situation, of the unhealthy food and living conditions, the exploitation of prisoners' work, the health and treatment questions of a prison reality where drug-addiction reigns, and of several aggressions and violence from prison guards and its directors towards prisoners and their families...

Celso Manata, acting president of the D.G.S.P. at the time, reacts with normality. For example, considers "a pure waste of time" a national scandal about health inside the prisons, being that "they already come inside sick" so why treat them as human beings?...

The second moment of protests happens in March. As we will be able to confirm ahead there are numerous work-strikes nation-wide. All prisons go on strike and many of them with growing adhesions to hunger strikes and other refusals; and all these thousands of men and women non-hesitating in signing petitions, giving face to a protest which will rapidly be assumed as a national problem.

And it is then, when protests were reaching an undesired dimension, even for those who used prisoners as political weapons (the right-wing opposition, and

prison-guards' unions), that the arrogant Portuguese state decides not to lose any more time in inverting things. The moment, 23rd of March, turns against the legitimate protest of 180 prisoners of the Northern Sector of the Caxias prison when they claimed the simple fulfilment of law 265/79 forbidding overcrowding, and trying to peacefully expose it on the media. The answer: charge the prisoners with batons, rubber bullets, and tear gas. The operation's chief in-loco: the head-chief of the General Direction of Penitentiary Services (D.G.S.P.) Celso Manata.

A sadist dawn that didn't satisfied them with only one repressive charge, but continued in other many individualized reprisals over the following days. And of course, yelling in a police choir together with the eager journalists of the occasion, the shout of "Riot!!!", soon the law-enforcement agents proclaimed themselves defenders of the "democratic order". The same order that with full "proportionality of means" had been restored; costing some bruising, fractures and dislocations to prisoners that were randomly beaten. Prisoners and protesters were immediately put under security measures, out of sight, far away from the restitution of truth.

The case of the "25 of Caxias" starts here. Immediately the then Justice Minister Vera Jardim, starts talking of "masterminds", a terrorized speech confronting protests and collective movements, that demands the existence of some scapegoats. The trial, brought to court after more than a decade, aims at misrepresenting the struggle of the many who felt and still feel the daily abuses upon themselves and fight for their rights. Yesterday, like today, justice once again reflects those who inside the prison system (guards of all ranks, provocateurs and snitches, claimed representatives of the prisoners) run, tuning their speech with the repressive democratic order. It should be pointed out that this inquisitive trial, opened in November 1997, is resurfacing now after all prisoners denunciations have discreetly been filed, leaving their versions aside; to proceed in transforming the victims in accused, based on the "proportionality" of the D.G.S.P.

25 accused people, supposed mutineers and charged with breaking order and security, that should now find our solidarity so that, concerning the protest, they manage to undo the farce of these accusations, but more important, to undo the bigger farce of the penitentiary system: the prisons' end.

Editorial

On March 23, 1996 a "riot" took place in the Fortress of Caxias (Portugal), provoked by the interests of the State, with the aim of putting an end to the diverse prisoner struggles that were taking place. The riot passed through the prison walls and installed itself in public opinion, generating a debate where some opinions went so far as to question the existence of the prison itself and it's role in society.

Of the 180 arrested, gathered and defenceless - between the left and right sides of the third floor - the big majority suffered savage beatings for several days. The result of these terrifying practises ended with multiple fractures and cerebral contusions, and one prisoner was blinded as a consequence of one of the many rubber bullets shot by the mercenaries of the State during the "riot".

The State doesn't even respect its own laws. It is known that it has always been the master violating the rules that it has itself created, not hesitating to practise any crime in its own interest no matter how horrible it might be.

In the case of the "prisoners behind walls", from 1994 to 1996 a simple glimpse at the press is enough to verify the scandalous systematic violation of "prisoners rights". Hunger strikes, work strikes, letters and bulletins opposing and resisting such a cruel reality... were a part of the everyday-life of the arrested in this times. It is in this environment in which, by superior orders, a provocation was made against the prisoners, who had a spontaneous reaction. Psychotropics were distributed out of the habitual "diet", and the temporary director of the Direction of Penitentiary Services in a "dialogue" with the legitimately indignant prisoners demonstrated his entire scorn for them. This would be the spark that would light the wick.

How is it possible that, with total rudeness, thirteen years later, the State tries to blame the 25 arrested at the time, accusing them in a judicial procedure of riot, fire and damage?! The Public Ministry alleges that the prisoners started organizing themselves with hunger and work strikes, two weeks before March 23. In this way they are trying to silence the context of corruption, impunity and serious violations of human dignity, as well as the struggles of resistance of the two

previous years!...

Against such “whitening” individualities and diverse groups have decided to make this publication, with the intention of remembering the events that happened between 1994 and 1996 in almost all the Portuguese prisons, to show our repudiation of such an absurd trial, dismantling the farse of the prosecution, and denouncing the repressive performance of the State organisms, which had an active role in the increase in the terror lived in the Portuguese prisons in the 90s – and that even today, sadly, continues – with the frightening and sadly true number of deaths, patients without due treatment, prisoners carrying out disguised life imprisonments... etc., supporting this scandalous situation in a camouflaged and invisible limbo.

Government, Federal Prosecutors and the DGSP (General Direction of Penitentiary Services) were and are responsables for what happened and keeps on happening in total silence and hypocrisy inside the prisons. What went out in the mass media is only the tip of the iceberg. Of there being a judgment within the rules of the Constitutional state, it should be the State itself that is sitting down on the defendant’s chair and never those who suffered this premeditated, systematic and immeasurable violence. If people could fully know the reality of the inside of the prisons, even only for one hour, they would certainly get up en masse to repudiate this “new holocaust”, as the dissident criminologist Nils Christie says.

Recently, in Europe, several struggles took place and some of them are still continuing: in August, 2008, about 550 prisoners were on hunger strike in the German prisons claiming “improvements” in the penitentiary system; in November the almost totality of the prison population of Greece was also on hunger strike – information and solidarity actions took place in the whole of Europe; in Italy, where, as in Greece, life imprisonment exists, almost all the prisoners condemned to this maximum penalty are in struggle since December 1st, 2008 (taking up another struggle that they began in June of the same year); several prisoners of Córdoba and other parts of Spain initiated a hunger strike in solidarity with the prisoners of Italy, claiming at the same time a series of improvements in the Spanish penal and judicial system; in the summer of 2008, Amadeu Casellas, prisoner in Catalonia (Spain) was 78 days on hunger strike. In Portugal, in

Monsanto – one of the Guantánamos of the country – several arrested were on hunger strike in October, protesting against the torture of which they are targets and against the entire impunity with which the guards of this prison act.

The struggle for dignity and freedom will never be contained, whether in prison or in the street!

Solidarity and absolution for the 25 of Caxias!

The truth about the riot in Caxias

Little more than a year after the so-called Riot of Caxias, the prosecutor brought charges against 25 suspected rebels. It’s no wonder this haste in demonstrative service. It is accelerated along with the other (but in the opposite direction) to exculpate prison administratives for their crimes. All complaints made by prisoners in the Public Prosecution Service in Oeiras, have been filed, precisely because the accused are prominent prison leaders.

Obviously, when the accused are prisoners, the picture changes: we must bring order in the mob. For this there is the Public Prosecutor, the Holy Office of the State’s rule of law!

The wise Pimentel - the working inquisitor - from the top of his wisdom’s honour, to save work, begins his hilarious piece, accusing in block the 25 subversives: they have done a work strike and, major bandits, they have also done a hunger strike. However, careful observation will allow us to conclude that several of the accused prisoners did not have work. What do we say? Wouldn’t it be better to say that they did a strike against the will to work!

The sapient Pimentel, worshipful and zealous defender of order and democracy, reacts against the fact that the prisoners make a protest. That is, the democracy of Dr. Pimentel seems based on high philosophical thoughts of Colonel Tapioca (remember the adventures of Tim Tim?). These protests were dragging on in 1994, and, he seems to forget, led to the resignation of a Director General (Remember, the Democrat Fernando Duarte?).

In general, prisoners are accused of having refused to enter the cells. The worthy magistrate forgets that the Decree-Law 265/79 prohibits overcrowding, and the legitimate denial of the prisoners to enter the cells.

The Public Prosecutor circumscribes all the accusations in the presumption of absolute truth shouted by the Prison Services Directorate, absolutely not listening to any of the statements that, to this effect, have been made by the accused.

The refusal to enter the cells was tactically wrong (though legitimate), it seems, more than a year away, a perfectly peaceful understanding of the different sectors and trends in the prisoners' movement. That was not the right time, but clear and unambiguous, we must give our full solidarity to the 25 of Caxias. As a matter of fact, The ACED decided to support for free the defence of one of the accused. But curiosity of curiosities, the most terrifying accusations are directed at prisoners who have done nothing of what they pompously call charges of order and security. This persecuting strategy is not naive, many of these companions are defenders of human rights, of an imprisonment with rights. Curious also the fact that some of the witnesses listed by the prosecution are known as provocateurs, and always when the prisoners fight, they scream and try to launch confusion.

A substantial part of the companions now accused were simply intermediaries between the will of prisoners and those responsible (also they were cowardly attacked, by order of the Director General, after they left a meeting with the Director of Caxias...).

The events of Caxias - we have no doubt - were ???agitated and assembled abroad in order to discredit the struggle of the prisoners, isolating them from the public and justifying repression.

...

The Editor of SOS Prisons
SOS Prisons, Nov 97

As an epilogue

The law is the tool of the State/Capital to defend the existing order so that some rule and exploit others in this miserable and rotten world, organized by the ideas of domination. To pretend that the rules and standards

of those who imprison us would be in any way beneficial, is like suicide.

Those who imprison people, moreover in extremely cruel conditions, subjected to swelling the statistics of mortality, cannot expect less than continuous revolts of any kind.

Those moments of protest, with their claims, those moments of resistance, that disobedience to the management of death, which is prison - a centre for extermination, are moments that we consider of great human value!

Revolt is always noble, beautiful and fascinating as the sense of dignity and desire to live is greater than the fear of repression. Therefore, those of us who are in a "prison without walls" and desire a world without visible and invisible shackles, can no longer avoid solidarity with all the riots that occur in prison: a place of extreme bestiality where people are exposed to the judgement of henchmen, where nepotism reigns, personal favoritism, outrageous discrimination, where solidarity is a crime, where they use inquisitorial techniques, cruel cage and wise in the art of punishment, to inflict torture and pain (besides the arsenal of "normal" horrific punishments inside wet and frozen disciplinary cells, the 111 regimen and others); where we see the systematic suffering and premeditated political intent of the physical and psychological annihilation of the personality and individual identity, under the false rhetoric of rehabilitation and resocialization; where one "lives" in isolation, boredom, solitude, uncertainty, anxiety, atrocious agony, in a total state of defenceless, in fear, desperation, in permanent stress, in tachycardia; where one is submitted to the incubation of germs of infectious diseases that lead to extermination, where life is subjected to a calculation of probabilities, to the high risk of mortal infection; where we can feel present the horror of approaching death, the slow and painful death of human beings condemned to the absolute ferocity of indifference and ostracism; where one acquires phobias, psychosis, neurosis, schizophrenia; where one becomes apathetic, depressive; where the individual is constantly induced to suicide!... and a long etc. ..

Prison, as a grossly inhuman institution - repressive element of social control - is the last stronghold of power's domestication mechanism, for the excluded,

for the subversive, for all who in some way are both-ersome for domination and social order. The prison is the indicator of the errors of the system, and trying to humanize it is impossible due to its very nature. We can only say that some reforms may become less cruel. Prison is intrinsically an enemy of life, and its existence shows the the system that built it, and clarifies us about its “humanity”.

We don't claim to mystify prisoners, but to express our deep repudiation of this terrible institution, and criticize the theories—advocated by this hypocritical and civilized society-prison—that states that social life is impossible without the existence of this execrable institution.

We want a world without prisons and it is possible, but for this, obviously, we need to break with domestication, think by ourselves, subvert the rigid minds populated by the germs of domination, and fight against existing order, so that a radical change can take place and goes to the roots of social problems. What we cannot accept is this system with all its wars, ecocide, exploitation of man by man, theft of our lives, social inequalities that create starvation, misery and many other atrocities, prison included.

Struggle for the end of prisons involves fighting for the end of this rotten system in general, that builds the prisons.

We hope that this publication serves as a contribution to reflexion and respective struggle for the reapropriation of our lives and consequently for a world without prisons.

We finish with a elucidatory piece from one kidnapped by the State, a reflexion which is a deep scream of rebellion against prison:

“The jailers want risk subsidies. And we, prisoners and families, shouldn't we receive risk subsidies? Who is found suspiciously hanged in the prisons? The prisoners. Who constantly die in the prisons with AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, leukemia, etc..? The prisoners. Who gets serious diseases in the prisons? The prisoners. Who is beaten and tortured in prisons? The prisoners. Who is constantly driven to suicide? The prisoners. Who is subjected to poor disgusting food, most of the times inedible, causing disease? The prisoners. Who suffers medical negligence? The prisoners. Who is continuously humiliated and suffers un-

speakable attacks against human dignity? The prisoners.

“I don't want any subsidy! I demand only what power has stolen from me: my freedom, inalienable, because I didn't delegate anyone to decide for me! I claim what belongs to me: my freedom!”

“The struggle for amnesty or extended pardon that is being claimed formally is very poor compared with the content of the generality of the revolt. The face of the permanent open revolt - even with the coercive techniques, drugs provided by the State to prisoners, sophisticated pavlovian constraints and draconian reprisals - with remarkable invectives against the prison institution itself, is the beautiful poetry and wealth of rebellion. The requirement not formalized, but deeply felt, is the refusal of prison itself. Unfortunately, the natural feeling of refusal of prison, that deep hatred against prison being constantly expressed with strong invectives against prison and by gestures of direct action - like setting fire to cells, constant self mutilation, hunger strikes, painful screams and other acts - have not yet been discussed enough to be met with the words “the abolition of prison” or “prison abolition!” (like has been happening for a long time in other countries of Europe)!

“April 26, 1996”

one kidnapped by the State