

Prison Was Created For The Poor focuses on two tireless militants of the Spanish prison struggle, Xose Tarrío Gonzalez and Gabriel Pombo Da Silva, who fought against the brutal F.I.E.S. isolation units. Xose was killed by a life behind bars, and Gabriel now rots in a German prison. The main part of this book though, is written by neither Xose nor Gabriel, instead it is the text of an interview with their mothers, Pastora and Julia. Through this medium, they tell a powerful and emotional story, which not only takes us inside the world of Spanish high security prisons, but reflects on jails throughout the world. **Prison Was Created For The Poor** is a compelling read.

“They can’t tell me that justice exists, because there is no justice for the poor; justice has never existed for the poor. In prison you only see poor people, and prison was created for the poor.”

Pastora, mother of Xose Tarrío Gonzalez



PRISON WAS CREATED FOR THE POOR

**Mothers &
Sons: From
FIES To
Aachen**

**Pastora & Xose Tarrío Gonzalez
Julia & Gabriel Pombo Da Silva**

Originally published by Leeds Anarchist
Black Cross in February 2007

PDF edition released March 2012



ALSO AVAILABLE FROM LEEDS ABC



Down With The Prison Walls! - A Talk By
Laudelino Iglesias Martinez - £1

With A Smile And A Twinkle In My Eye! - An
Interview With Anarchist Ex-Prisoner Mark
Barnsley - £1

Prison Was Created For The Poor -Mothers &
Sons: From FIES To Aachen - Pastora &
Xose Tarrío Gonzalez, Julia & Gabriel Pombo
Da Silva - £2

If It Was Easy, They Wouldn't Call It Struggle
- Mark Barnsley Talks About Repression &
Resistance In

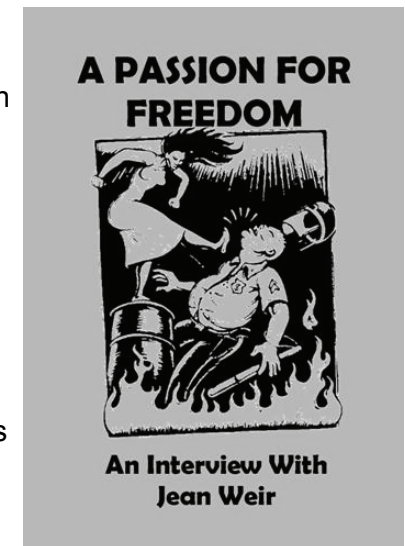
British Prisons - £2.50

A Passion For Freedom - An Interview With
Jean Weir - £2

Activism Is My Revenge - Mark Barnsley -
£2.50

Please add 80p per pamphlet postage in
the UK. Contact us for international rates.

For a full list of books, pamphlets, DVDs,
CDs, T-shirts, badges, etc please e-mail us
or write enclosing a SAE.



**Leeds ABC, 145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds,
LS6 1LJ. England.**
leedsabc@riseup.net
www.leedsabc.org

The final speech of the prosecutor began with his declaration that he had never experienced anything like this in his 25 year career - firstly because of the behaviour of the defendants in court and their intention to make the trial a political one; secondly because of their supporters whose behaviour was unbearable and who made a report after every day of the trial which could be read online. He rejected the political aspect vehemently. Regarding this he read a text quoting so-called anarchists who declared that taking hostages has nothing in common with anarchism, that a free society works without violence or force and that the defendants from Aachen are nothing but criminals, a poignant example of the way in which elements of the Left end up colluding with the State.

Begoña Pombo da Silva received a non-custodial sentence for being with her brother while he was on the run. Bart de Geeter, who as a militant of the ABC, was assisting them, received a sentence of 2 1/2 years. He has now been released. Gabriel and José remain in prison, serving 13 and 14 years respectively. After the completion of these sentences they will be transferred back to prisons in Spain. They deserve our fullest possible support.



PRISON WAS CREATED FOR THE POOR

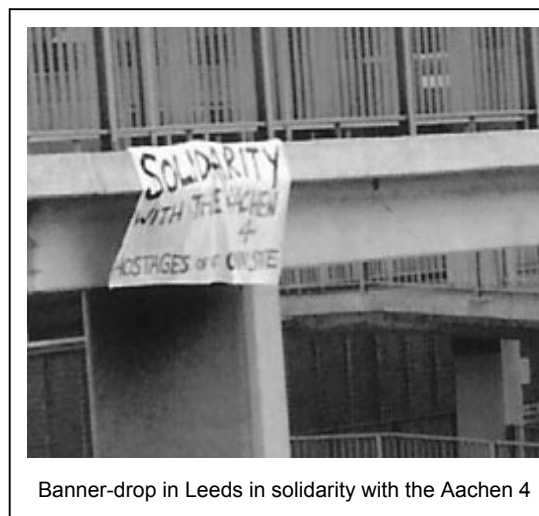
**Mothers & Sons: From FIES To
Aachen**

Pastora & Xose Tarrio Gonzalez

Julia & Gabriel Pombo Da Silva

CONTENTS

Introduction to the PDF Edition.....	5
Original Introduction.....	7
The Sons.....	9
Musta & Che Meet in Zamora Prison.....	12
The Mothers.....	13
The Aachen Trial: Prison Activists Against The State.....	31



Banner-drop in Leeds in solidarity with the Aachen 4

explain the effects of isolation, ongoing torture and beatings in the FIES units; people who were willing to testify about the deaths of prisoners and the systematic cruelty within these punishment units, were considered to be of "no relevance" to the trial. It was denied that José and Gabriel, or anyone, could be suffering from trauma as a result of being imprisoned and tortured for 20 years if their will had still not been broken. Direct appeals to the 'experts' and the reading of statements by Gabriel describing the torture he has endured, and

witnessed others endure, were ignored by court officials, while journalists notably laid their pens down at these moments.

The media story, as in so many cases of autonomous action, was that the accused were gangsters akin to terrorists. The court refused to consider or discuss torture in prison as part of the trial. What happened in Aachen cannot be judged without looking at the fact that Gabriel and José had just escaped from prison, and the reason for their escape cannot be judged without acknowledging their experiences inside. They had spent almost all of their adult lives caged and brutalised, and when nearing the end of the sentences were informed they would be kept locked-up indefinitely.

As the trial continued into August, the arguments of the defence continued to be rejected by the judge and the end of the trial was anticipated by lawyers and supporters. By the end of August security measures in court had tightened significantly, demonstrating that sentencing would soon begin. Eventually on the morning of the 24th August supporters were forcibly dragged out of court by police and some were arrested for resisting. By chance though, some supporters travelling to the court had been delayed and didn't arrive until the afternoon session. So, when the trial resumed more friends walked in to the courtroom to take the places of those who had been ejected.

On the 5th September the taking of evidence ceased, two applications to hear further witnesses being rejected, and the prosecutor gave his summing-up speech. The session began abruptly as the judge wouldn't wait for all the supporters to make it through the controls so there were no loud and friendly greetings this time. There were more police present than usual and in the neighbouring street 8 police cars waited instead of one.

in the courtroom in protest at the demeaning strip searches before and after every move. Supporters responded with shouts and raised fists. When the judges finally entered the court - in all the unrest created it took almost an hour before the trial could start - supporters shouted, "blindfolds off", "shackles off", "trousers on", "stop the torture". José also stood up and shouted that the torture must end, that 8 months of isolation was too much, and that he could and would take it no more.

Gabriel continued to appear in court in only his underwear every day from then on, and Begofia appeared in a bikini and bath robe in solidarity with her brother.

Throughout the trial, the four comrades were shown solidarity from activists all over the world. On the first day, approximately fifty people from Belgium, Germany, England, Holland and Spain protested outside the court and the courtroom filled up with supporters. As the prisoners were brought in separately, the famous revolutionary anthem *A las Barricadas* was sung for each of them following loud applause.

As the trial continued over the weeks and months, the practise of applauding the defendants and exchanging greetings, news, and words of encouragement became a common feature, in spite of complaints from the judge. Supporters also showed their disrespect for the farce of 'justice' by remaining seated when he entered the court. Supporters were monitored and harassed throughout the trial, which included the repeated copying of identity cards and passports, and obvious surveillance by plain-clothes cops.

On April 20th, seven supporters undressed during the court proceedings in solidarity with the prisoners, disrupting the trial and resulting in their arrest. Supporters tried to focus resistance on the treatment of José and Gabriel. Before the trial began, José had complained of headaches and heart palpitations, a symptom of chronic anxiety brought on by isolation, from which many long-term prisoners suffer. After complaints from the defence, José was supposedly excused from attending court for more than a few hours each day. However, this time limit was repeatedly exceeded. José's heart problems are also likely to have been exacerbated by high-speed transport while under sensory deprivation caused by the hoods that prevent prisoners from hearing as well as seeing anything. At the same time, for both José and Gabriel, this treatment was reminiscent of the torture they endured for years in Spanish prisons.

Following a call for an international day of solidarity on May 4th, there were actions ranging from public demonstrations, to graffiti, to the trashing of buildings, in at least a dozen cities around the world.

Much of the defence for José and Gabriel's actions whilst on the run was based on the brutality they experienced prior to their escape in Spain. However, time and again these appeals were dismissed by the judge. Witnesses who could

Introduction To The PDF Edition

The interview with Pastora and Julia, which forms the main part of **Prison Was Created For The Poor**, took place during the trial of Julia's son, Gabriel, and her daughter Begofia, and of Gent ABC activist Bart De Geeter and Gabriel's fellow escapee, José Fernandez Delgado, in Aachen, Germany, in 2005 (see pg 31). The interview was filmed and Leeds ABC, who had been involved in solidarity work since the group were arrested in 2004, had originally intended to provide an English translation for the film. Great pains were taken over the translation, but the film project hit technical difficulties. In any case, the power of the language used in the interview and the way it moved us, made us want to release it in written form. The result was the original version of this pamphlet, which was released in 2007.

Like far too many comrades, Gabriel and Jose remain in the dungeons of The Enemy, and as with so many long-term prisoners, attention has shifted away from them to the point where little recent material can be found about them on the internet. In view of this, we received a request to release our pamphlet as a PDF file. While Leeds ABC remain committed to publishing material in 'hard copy', which we believe is more universally accessible, and also raises funds for the direct support of prisoners (and not for the arrogant North American parasites who constantly rip-off our publications), as with some of our other pamphlets, we have decided to publish **Prison Was Created For The Poor** as a PDF in the hope that its wider circulation will increase solidarity with Gabriel and Jose.

We hope that you will enjoy reading **Prison Was Created For The Poor** and that it inspires you to revolutionary action or at least to support those comrades who find themselves behind bars. Gabriel and Jose's prison addresses are as follows:

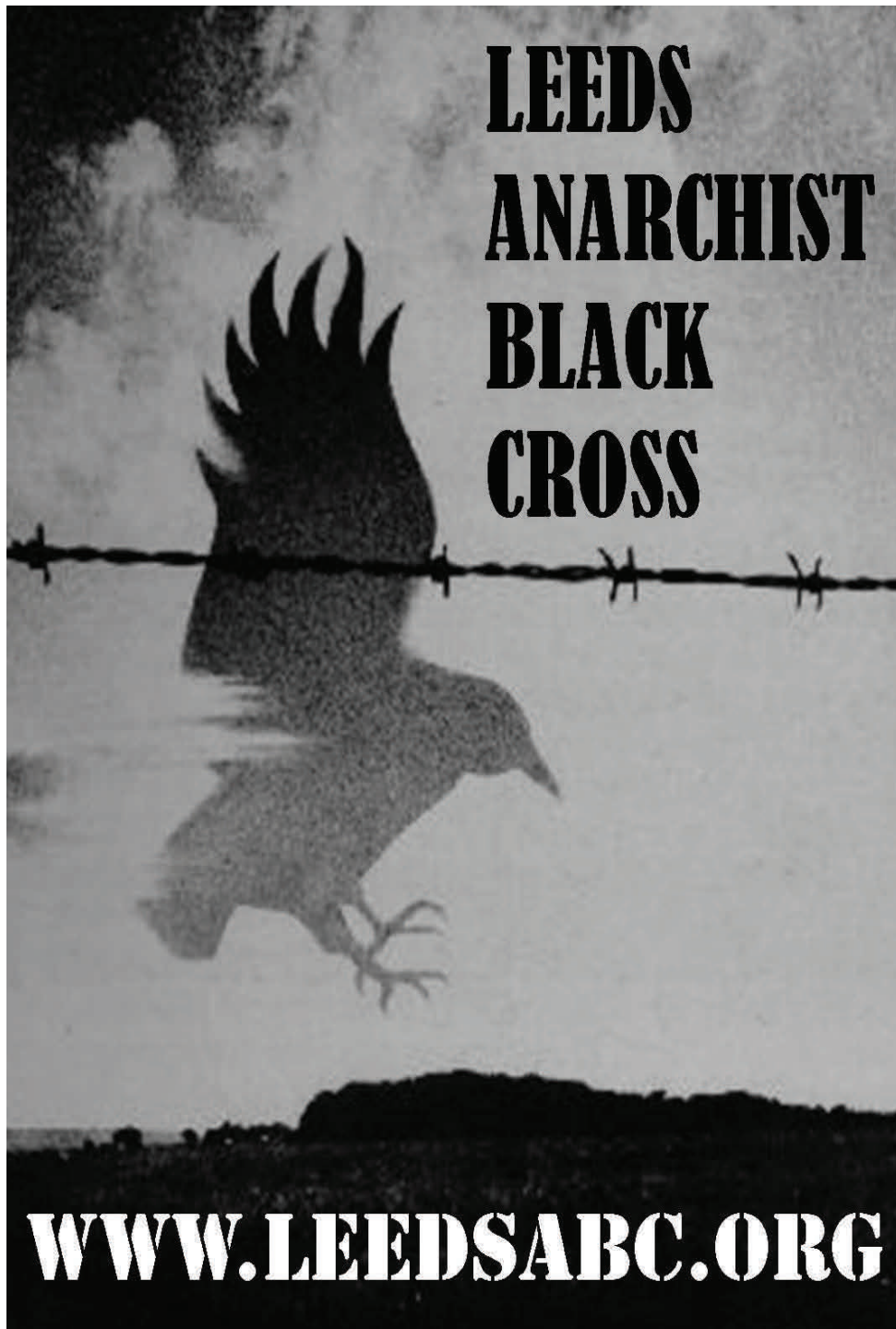
**Gabriel Pombo Da Silva,
JVA Aachen,
Kefeller Str. 251,
52070,
Aachen,
Germany.**

**Jose Fernandez Delgado,
Aachenstr. 47,
53359,
Rheinbach,
Germany.**

Advice on writing to prisoners, as well as the details of other imprisoned comrades in need of support can be found on the Leeds ABC website.

If you would prefer to read **Prison Was Created For The Poor** in hard-copy, it can be obtained from Leeds ABC (details on page 35) or from radical booksellers such as AK Press.

Leeds Anarchist Black Cross



The Aachen Trial: Prison Activists Against The State

In June 2004, 4 people were arrested close to the German/Dutch border. Along with Gabriel Pombo da Silva was José Fernandez Delgado, another Spanish anarchist prisoner on the run. Also with them was Bart De Geeter, of Gent Anarchist Black Cross, and Gabriel's sister Begonia . They came to be known as 'The Aachen 4'.

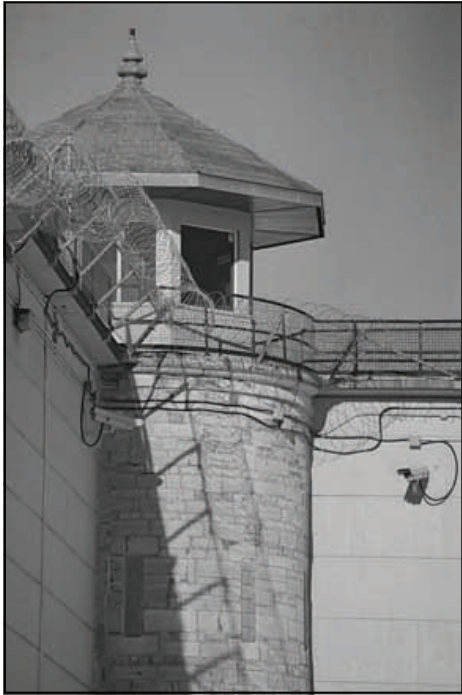
When the police stopped their car at a checkpoint and attempted to search it the fugitives made a bid to escape. A gun was drawn, and José, Gabriel and Bart fled. They were captured only after a car chase where they shot at the police cars pursuing them.

While hostages were briefly taken (for 15 minutes) as another vehicle was hijacked, no threats were made against them nor were attempts made to negotiate with the police for their release. Nonetheless, the taking of the hostages became a focal point for the support and defence of the 4, or rather the lack of it in the case of some individuals and groups within the Left, who refused to support them. This was the expression of what Gabriel has called "solidarity with excuses". Or, "solidarity which needs to be justified because of what others could say or think about us". Gabriel goes on to say: "We are anarchist rebels, antagonists and revolutionaries, with our own combative, political and social history. We come from a determined and concrete context, with our dead, prisoners, exiles and fugitives. We struggle against State-Capital; against prison society and prisons, against repression and poverty marginalisation and dogmatism. And in this sense we do not beg for the solidarity of Authoritarian or Humanist Leftists who play at being revolutionaries."

Throughout the legal proceedings, supporters of the 4 took steps to also offer their respect, care, support and understanding to the people whose car was hijacked, Mr and Mrs Schultz, who accepted the regret of the defendants, were able to understand the circumstances under which it occurred, and ultimately came out in support of them.

The jury-less trial began on March 23rd 2005 in the city court of Aachen. From the first day, and for 6 months, with 22 days in court, Gabriel and José were brought from the cells in chains, with their hands and feet shackled and in the court itself their feet were kept chained. They were also hooded during transit to and from the court, treatment which was immediately criticised by one of Gabriel's lawyers, without effect. Another lawyer also demanded that the judge, Nohl, speak with the police about the unnecessary use of chains. He responded that he would "take care of that". Yet their treatment remained the same throughout the entire trial.

On the fourth day of the trial Gabriel tore off his clothes and appeared half naked



Interviewer: Valladolid?

Pastora: No.

Interviewer: Villabona?

Pastora: Yes, Villabona, a prison that had always really impressed me. I saw someone's father there, crying in the bar and the lady from the bar and I asked him, "What happened?"

And he said, "I am a sailor, I have five sons, I have only two days ashore, I earn 100.000 pesetas (£400) I spent 30.000 pesetas (£100) on the taxi to come here to see my son and to bring him a pair of shoes and a shirt. They have not let me see my son nor given him the parcel." And that man was crying.

The other lady says, "Don't tell me they have done this to you! Well, leave the packet with me, because the prison guards come here, see if I can talk to them and give it to him."

And this same thing happened to me too. They play with all family's feelings. And well, I would like to make very clear that my son did not die because of any illness, but because of prison. They killed him. To me, they are all to blame. Julia, sorry I interrupted you.

Julia: No, no, it's alright.

Interviewer: Well, I think it is the moment to stop this interview now, because the three of us are on the verge of tears, so we are going to leave it here.



Original Introduction

When I was put in prison, still unconvicted, in 1994, my youngest daughter, Daisy, was less than two months old. Her older sister, Ellie, was under five. So several times each week, my partner would have to struggle over from Sheffield to Doncaster, where I was held, with them. She would also sometimes bring with her my older daughter, Emma (then just nine) who has a different mother.

Not only did she have to look after a baby and a young child alone, and with very little money or assistance, but she tried to do the hundred and one things I asked of her whilst I struggled to organise my defence from in prison.

Almost every time she came to see me there was some new provocation, some new indignity, such as searching the children, or refusing to allow in Daisy's baby food. Herself and the other visitors, mainly women, would be kept waiting for hours, and after already having travelled so far. Often you would hear stories of a visitor being turned away, and on one occasion the police questioned and strip-searched every single visitor to the prison, even elderly women coming to see their sons.

When the 'rub-down' searches of visitors first began in 1995 I told my partner to refuse to submit to them, and so we had to have our visits 'behind glass'. Then I was ghosted to Lincoln prison, which was much further away, so my partner found it even harder, and was only able to visit once a week.

Over the coming years things got ten times worse for visitors, my partner could bear it no longer and we separated. The stories of mothers and girlfriends being turned away, strip-searched, insulted, arrested, even assaulted, became more and more frequent, and all visitors suffered. Many of my visitors I'm sure didn't tell me about the way they were treated because they knew what my reaction would be.

Conditions in the visiting rooms got worse, many visits were behind glass, and it got harder and harder to 'book' them. Little wonder that the numbers of people going into prison as visitors has plummeted despite the spiralling incarceration rate.

As for myself, I was ghosted all over the country, from segregation unit to segregation unit, everywhere from Cardiff to Durham to the Isle of Wight, and everywhere in between. Sometimes I passed my visitors in the outgoing prison van as they waited to get in, other times they arrived days after I'd already been moved. How could I arrange visits under such conditions? How could I send the 'Visiting Order'? How could my visitors book the visit and arrange their transport? It was impossible. Visits from my children were affected most dramatically, in one year I saw them only once.

Such is the way that our enemies treat not only their prisoners, but the prisoners' families, even stripping naked babies to search their nappies, while the guards

themselves make fat profits flooding the jails with heroin. At Parkhurst they even have a stipulated time for couples to kiss each other – six whole seconds! That's if they're lucky enough not to have a pane of Plexiglas between them.

And so, despite the difference in location, I can very much relate to this powerful tale. I KNOW first-hand Pastora's anger, I KNOW, having spent ten years behind bars myself, the evil she and her son Xose, murdered by our enemies, talk about. I can identify with almost every line of this mothers' story because it is the same everywhere. Everywhere there are prisons, there is injustice, inhumanity and barbarism. Every jailer, every cop, is part of some sort of international brotherhood of bastards, and the world would be a much better place if every single one of them no longer existed.

Xose Tarrío went to prison for a minor crime, but prison killed him. Just as it kills young men and women all over the world; Dying through sheer neglect, banging on a steel door screaming for help that never comes; Driven to suicide or madness by inhumane conditions; Or simply being murdered directly by those invested with their supposed 'care'.

Our comrade Gabriel Pombo da Silva, along with Jose Fernandez Delgado, and too many others, is still behind bars, still in the clutches of these wicked people, still suffering injustice after daily injustice.

Will we forget these comrades, and those many thousands from our class kidnapped and held hostage by the state? Never! How long they remain there, how long people have to die on the concrete floors of segregation units or hanging from heating pipes; unknown; uncared for; unsupported; unavenged is up to us. A single day is too long.

Mark Barnsley
February 2007



Julia: They should copy the good things of Germany, because Germany has some good things. But the things that were here in Germany before were copied in Spain. Only the bad things are copied.

Pastora: They are fucked-up people with twisted minds. And to think that we have voted for these people is one of the saddest things in life.

Julia: It is true. You end up, saying, "Well, I don't vote. I don't vote because if I do so, they will harm my son even more". This is what you think. So you say, "No, I don't vote".

Pastora: I blame the politicians, and I blame the media that do not help at all. They just accept their words, instead of listening to their friends; to the people who they have met... this is what I try to tell them. And do not stick to only my words either, ask the people who met him, ask his friends.

Julia: Gabriel has a heart of gold. He is a lovely guy, he worries a lot about others; about his family, his friends... I don't know what to say.

Pastora: My son suffered a lot. He used to say, "Why do some have to have everything and others nothing at all?" And he wasn't saying that for himself - he talked a lot about this; and you actually can read it in his book. He used to tell me this in our conversations when I was going to see him, "Do you realise they put us here, them being the good ones, but they are producing armaments to kill human beings. They are the real assassins. They allow all those children to die instead of investing money to solve it." My son suffered a lot for all these things. I've heard all these things from my son; we talked about it thousands of times. My son suffered a lot with this. "This is not normal", he said, "and they go through life as if they are the good ones." So more than anything he used to complain about what they did with them and the reason why. And that was they only punished the poor for being poor. This is how it is. I had to see all this. And with the situation of my son, when I was going to see the judge at court, and I arrive there and they tell me he is on holiday. "There must be a judge on duty though," I said.

"No, there is only the young offender's one, and he cannot attend you," they said.

How can it be that there is no judge on duty for the adults!! You feel helpless, and you feel like that because you've got no fucking money to pay for a good lawyer, do you understand? They are only punished for being poor. And the same happens with the families, because if you want to see your children you have to take lots of shit; lots of shit from them. In one place you get there with a plastic bag and they tell you it is not allowed, that you need a zipped one. Then you go and buy a zipped bag, come back, after paying for taxis. You go back another time to another prison and they say that the zipped bag is not permitted, that you need a plastic one. Years and years like this. They have taken my son to Tenerife, to Salamanca, everywhere in Spain. I remember once going to see him in Villanubla. No, not in Villanubla...

me!!” So imagine the sort of treatment he received. But he did not want to say, he did not want to talk about it. I always feared what could happen to him. And I have never been able to enjoy my son as a mother either. He was just a kid then, only seventeen years old. And yes, we do not agree with people committing crimes, but there is no need to ill-treat them. They need to pay for their crimes through justice, but not with ill-treatment. They don't have to kick them, torture them or kill them; because nobody has got the right to take another person's life. And crime? What crime? Just kids silly little things. And they end up in Hell. That is not the solution either. There are psychologists, they can re-educate them in another way, they can teach them a profession for example. But they do not do it. Many things that they could be doing and they are not. In Spain they are still building more prisons. Why? Why do they not build centres to re-educate young people? They have all those young people in prison, why? Prisons teach nothing!

Pastora: It is very clear why they put them there, to hide them; it has always been like this

Julia: And like me there are many other mothers, because it is not only me. We have a son behind bars, you know. And what happened here, it was scary for them, with the fake ID and all.

Interviewer: You are talking about the arrests of Gabriel, Xosé, Bart and Begoña right?

Julia: Yes, and for that, they do all this theatre here in Aachen which is like if they killed lots of people or something.

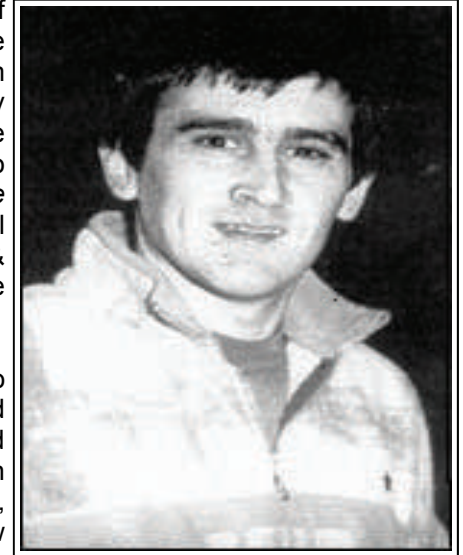
Interviewer: What do you think about how your son is being transported?

Julia: In Spain it was bad, but here my son goes to court wearing just underwear because they keep him handcuffed and they cover his head so he can't see anything. And he does that because of the way he is being transported. Today, I saw the cars leaving, as if it was a president of state who was there; with the entire street closed down. I had never seen this. Stopping all the traffic so two cars that transport prisoners can leave. That is why he goes in just his underwear. Where has such a thing been seen before? I can't look at it, because I feel very bad. But I keep all my feelings inside me, you know? And this lady here is the one that had to live with this a lot.

Pastora: No, no, it is all the same. The story of your son is just the same. It is all stories of parents that had to emigrate to bring food to the table, families that unfortunately had to leave their countries to bring up their children. And yes there is torture in Spain, but there is a lot of psychological torture, because FIES is horrible, what can be worse than FIES? People have to know what it is. And let's see who the terrorists are. Them that do it in hiding, without being permitted by the law; this is what people need to know. FIES has to disappear.

The Sons

XOSÉ TARRÍO GONZÁLEZ (or Che to his friends) spent the majority of his life resisting captivity. He was born in 1968 to a poor family in La Coruña (Spain.) At 11 years old, due to family problems, he was sent to a boarding school, from which he escaped twice. By the age of 14 he had begun to carry out some petty acts of theft, which led to him being sent to the Coruñan reformatory Palavea a dozen times. Each time he escaped and eventually he was sent to the *Reformatorio Especial de Tratamiento & Orientación* ('Special Reformatory for Treatment & Guidance') in Madrid. There he remained until he was 16.



Che's family had emigrated to Switzerland for economic reasons, and he continued a life of theft and detention. At 19 he was sent to prison with a sentence of 2 years, 4 months, and 1 day. Che's spirit would not allow him to accept the authority of the officials in charge of the institution, nor ignore the harsh abuse meted out to his fellow inmates. He responded to the brutal circumstances of prison with dignity and a hard-won courage. He became involved in riots, hunger strikes and hostage taking in order to draw attention to and change the callous treatment the prison administration deemed fit to rehabilitate those defined as criminals. He was an active member of the group *APRE – Asociación de Presxs en Regimen Especial* ('Association of Prisoners under Special Regime'). They drew up a list of demands regarding the use of isolation, the continued detention of prisoners with incurable diseases, and prison conditions and ill-treatment in general, for example harassment, torture, and the lack of educational activities and medical attention. APRE sought to make the country aware of the vicious realities of the prison system through making these demands public with extreme measures, literally putting their lives at risk for this. Che was particularly concerned to obtain the modification of Article 60 of the Spanish prison service regulations regarding prisoners with incurable diseases, so that they could be conditionally released during the middle stages of their illness, and not when they were actually dying. He saw and remembered people dying in all of the prisons he was kept in, their agonising last days in a cold miserable cell or chained to a hospital bed. Che had a special empathy with this issue as he himself suffered from AIDS. He struggled and strove to end the cruelty performed by prison through head-on confrontations with the authorities, and he consistently demonstrated his

solidarity with those around him, helping to build a resistance movement in violent and depressing circumstances. He constantly hatched escape plans with the other free-minded men locked up that he met. He wrote a book about their struggle, telling the stories of their suffering and strength, explaining the political/ideological opposition to imprisonment, and shedding light on some of the painful details of a life behind bars. Smuggled out a few pages at a time, this book (*'Huye, Hombre, Huye'* – Due to be published for the first time in English by Elephant Editions shortly) was first published in 1997 and has inspired people all over the world.

Xosé Tarrío died on the 2nd January 2005. At the beginning of June 2004 his health had begun to worsen, and he was admitted to the infirmary in Teixeira prison where what would later be discovered to be a brain seizure was diagnosed as “flu”. It has been suggested that the embolism that caused him to have a brain seizure may have been a consequence of a blow he received from a screw in Dueso prison 10 years previously. At the end of June he was admitted to hospital but, after a slight improvement, was taken back to prison. A week later he was back in Casualty with the left side of his body paralysed, having lost the power of speech and experiencing difficulties maintaining consciousness. From then on his condition would only deteriorate, and the screw guarding him who did not let up harassing him and his mother, causing her extreme stress and anxiety, exacerbated the situation. Xosé obtained conditional release from prison on the 7th August, but by now he could not leave the hospital and on the 10th of October he went into a coma. Because of his political actions the initial 2 years, 4 months and 1 day sentence had become a 71 year stretch which he would never complete, and he still had charges pending which would have taken it to more than 100 years. His challenge to the system was unpardonable. He had spent over 16 years in prison and 10 of those in isolation between ‘1st Grade’ (maximum security) and the FIES regime. He had suffered from AIDS for many years but this was not what killed him. All that he had fought against killed him – the torture, the lack of medical attention, the isolation, the separation from loved ones through removal to distant parts of the country – as it had killed so many others before him. He knew this, and so did his mother who suffered the state sanctions with him, as do all the friends and family of people locked up.

GABRIEL POMBO DA SILVA (aka Musta) is a well-known Spanish anarchist who has been locked up in Spain and now in Germany for a total of over 20 years, 14 of which he spent struggling within the isolation units of the notorious FIES regime. The FIES regime was introduced by the Spanish State in 1991, in response to prison uprisings, collective actions and solidarity among prisoners. Features of this special punishment regime for disobedient prisoners include dispersion and isolation of prisoners, bare cells, censorship, deliberate medical neglect, psychological and physical torture, and indefinite detention.

The son of Spanish migrants, Gabriel grew up in Germany but moved back to Spain at a young age, saddened by the disciplinarianism of neo-fascist society

could, because I knew he would've liked his mother to do it, and so I did. And he would also like for me to keep on with this struggle and helping the others. He told me once before he died, “Do you know what Mum?” I have to say I had to emigrate to bring up my other children. He had to stay there, and he was the youngest. And he said to me: “Do you know Mum? I never knew about this strong facet of you!” And I said to him, “You do not quite know what your mum is capable of yet.” This is what I told him as a sort of a joke. And here I am. He died, but his mother and his brothers and sisters are still here to keep on with the fight, and helping others as much as we can.



Julia: Thanks, Pastora.

Pastora: Be brave. What I do ask of whoever sees this recording is that we need to be aware. We need to denounce what is happening; because my son paid for it, this lady's son is paying for it, and it is a tragedy, it's very hard. And prisons are very big, and it is not only our sons, there are lots and lots of other sons from other mothers. And all these mothers, sisters, uncles they need to get out to the streets and condemn it. And the same with all other people, because today is for us but tomorrow is for them. We need to show solidarity, and the poor need to help each other. Because I do not see many rich people out there protesting. I'm not saying there are none; there may be some, but well... And it's very easy to end up there. Anybody can end up in prison, even innocent people.

Interviewer: Do you want to talk a bit about your son, Julia?

Julia: Well, I just fear that all these things that this lady had to endure will happen. We have to travel so many thousands of kilometres, for then being just twenty minutes in front of glass, talking through those phones that you can hardly hear anything through. 2000 or 2500 km, and then the same to go back. And for what? For nothing. Yes, they let me see him but....

Interviewer: Gabriel has been in prison for twenty years right?

Julia: Yes, he went in when he was seventeen for five years, and in all those five years in Teruel, I was never allowed to hug him, always through glass. He wrote me letters and he used to say, “Mum, if they ever found me dead, I have not committed suicide, I have not killed myself. It will be because they have killed

And this is how I said it, not even fucking water. You may be swimming in it, but none of the prisoners told me of it being in use. And so I said to him, "You should start mentioning that in Spanish prisons FIES exists". And of course, imagine, it was a big talk you know, full of students and so on. I said, "You may be asking yourself what FIES is. Well, FIES means Fitxeros Internos de Especial Seguimiento, a prison inside prison. This is illegal according to the Spanish constitution. However, they have done it, and they have done it without the people and the society having any knowledge about it. Who are the criminals? Those inside, or you that do this secretly? Start with this, start saying that in Spanish prisons especially in yours, prisoners are tortured, they are left naked and tied by their hands and feet to the bed, and they have to do their own necessities on themselves for thirteen or fourteen days."

Of course, they took the microphone off me very quickly, but I said, "I don't care that you take the microphone away from me, because I have a very powerful voice and you will have to listen to me anyway." And they had to. They did not eject me. And all the students of course, were very surprised, because they knew nothing about it, not even the law ones. Because people don't know about it; people have no idea about FIES and about torture in prison. It is all illegal. "Do you all realise," I said. "This exists. And it's not a lie, because whenever you want, we have letters to show you from prisoners, with their signature and all."

Interviewer: And lots of deaths.

Pastora: Yes, of course, and lots of deaths.

Interviewer: There is a big list of them.

Pastora: Well yes, I am talking about my son. You know, I am here, but not for being here will they give my son back to me, the only thing I do is to increase my pain, which is very great. I cannot relax, because when I go to sleep and close my eyes I see him unhappy; I cannot see him happy like his other brothers and sisters. I always see him caged, ill, suffering, handcuffed and that person crushing him all the time. It is all a great trauma for me. I have a trauma. I entered a horror film and have not got out yet.

So I am here to support Gabriel Pombo da Silva's mother in these difficult moments, and to visit my children. I know she is also a fighting mother and as such she must be having a real hard time. And so I come here to talk about FIES and to say that prisons are not the answer to these problems, to support her and all the mothers. Because my son died, but I am here, and at any time that I have the opportunity and while I am alive I will keep on protesting this and giving talks. I know he would like me to be doing so. I said to him, "You are dying". He died in my arms, washed and shaved by me. Because during the time he was in a coma, at least they placed a bed near his for me. In the Oza sanatorium, I have to talk about this doctor that was with him, who was an excellent person, Eva Lopez. She kept an eye on him every day with lots of love and tenderness, and the same with me. There I washed, shaved and showered my son the best I

there and compelled by what he had read of the revolutionaries in his homeland. He was 16 when he was first imprisoned for robbery and, faced with the choice of submission or rebellion, became an anarchist inside. Like Tarrío, he travelled the predictable path laid down by poverty and maintained by the iniquitous forces of capitalist social control that leads from the reformatory to the prison. The different institutions of the State attempt to educate people like Gabriel in compliance and the acceptance of law and hierarchy; he educated himself in the ways of libertarianism instead, from the examples of comrades and motivated by his own free will. He is one of the many strong souls with a heart full of revolution and freedom that have been locked up in cages because they will not pretend to agree with the economically stylised version of justice promulgated by the power elite. He is his own judge and his own law; a heinous crime in the eyes of the State.



He is also among the Spanish prison activists who have resisted and fought to counter and transform the inhumanity of the prison system as well as the FIES regime, writing letters and articles (and a book – *Diario e Ideariode de un Delincuente*) denouncing

the management. Also, participating in cohesive actions, hunger strikes and hostage takings, and of course escape attempts, all of which guaranteed even harsher treatment at the hands of fascist screws.

He had almost completed 20 years in prison, which under the old penal code in Spain was the supposed maximum that anyone could be imprisoned for, when the Aznar government extended that limit to 40 years. So, in late 2003, he escaped from Nanclares de la Oca prison in Langraitz, Spain and went on the run. Six months later he was recaptured near the German/Dutch border, and he is currently serving a sentence of 13 years in a German prison for his response to that. This was to go up against the security forces pursuing him, shooting at them and hijacking a car while the occupants were still in it. He and one of his co-defendants José Fernandez Delgado will face further imprisonment in Spain after they have served their sentences in Germany on account of their escape.



Musta & Che Meet In Zamora Prison In February 1988

(From Xose Tarrío's book *Huye! Hombre, Huye!*)

I met him one morning when I was walking alone in the small yard of the isolation unit. He leant out of a window that looked onto the yard from the shower block and called to me –

“Hey, are you Che from La Coruña?”

His face was serious and his complexion dark. He had a crew cut and you could just make out a small four leaved clover tattooed on his shorn head.

“Yeah, that's me,” I replied, approaching the window.

“I'm Musta from Vigo,” he introduced himself, extending his hand to me.

We shook hands firmly. Then he continued:

“Be careful, around here everyone's armed with a knife and bad intentions. Do you carry a knife?”

“I don't have a problem with anyone.”

“That makes no difference here. You're a Galician and that is more than enough for you to be jumped at any time. And attacks don't usually get reported here, know what I mean?”

I understood him perfectly. We continued talking for a few minutes and then parted. His words left me pensive and I decided to make myself a knife for whatever might happen. Without knowing it I had just met the man who would become my soul mate. At times, in the worst times, he would be the best...

I continued the relationship with my fellow Galician Musta through notes. From time to time we saw each other in the yard and talked about personal matters, about political ideology or about the future. On one occasion he told me about his life. He was called Gabriel Pombo da Silva and, although he considered himself a Galician, he had been born in Germany, where his parents had emigrated to years ago. Like me, he was the son of immigrants. He had also been put into RETO* in Madrid, but years before my stay there. We laughed at the coincidences. They had arrested him at age 16 for various robberies. He was a bank robber. Now he was serving a sentence of five years in prison and had been inside for four. I liked him. Singular bonds of affection, forged in the anvil of a pact of mutual loyalty, began to join us both in a common feeling: friendship.

* *Reformatorio Especial de Tratamiento & Orientación* ('Special Reformatory for Treatment & Guidance')



to him. The prosecutor said to this person, “Are you the psychiatrist or what?” “No,” he said, “but I am a forensic psychologist, I have a title and I have studied the human mind.”

But they did not pay any attention to him.

This is what I have to say: prisons are not the answer. I ask for justice. I'll protest all this, even knowing that I will not win. I know I will not win, but I, as the mother of Xose Tarrío and as a free person that I am, I feel I have the duty to denounce it; first as a mother and then also as a person. Because I don't want them to do with anybody else's children what they did with my son. Somebody has to give me an explanation for what they have done with my son. And what they have done with my family. Because we have all been living with this, my children and I. It has been horrible. Horrible.

Interviewer: And so you have come here, to Aachen to give support to Gabriel?

Pastora: Yes, because he needs it. And because if the poor do not support each other, there is nothing left for us. And to shout the truth everywhere. As long as I am alive I'll be shouting the truth. The truth; I do not come here with lies. I do not go anywhere with lies. I only ask for justice; but real justice, justice for everyone. For example, the son of this woman here; I know everything about his life through all that my son told me. I know that he has never been a terrorist. He has got a heart as big as a house. That he fights for his rights like my son did. So then, what the fuck is this about him being a terrorist? They are the terrorists that under the protection of the law are doing all this. And the people do not know about it. And what is even sadder is that with our taxes, we contribute to the existence of all this, to the creation of prisons.

Prisons are not the solution, neither is FIES. When the Director of Texeiro prison gave a talk, the first talk he gave, the poor man, and I say the poor man because he had to face Tarrío's mother in that talk. He was talking about the prisons in Spain, but specifically the one in A Coruña that had just been finished, as if they were five star hotels. It had workshops; it had a swimming pool...

Julia: The swimming pool had no water though.

Pastora: Yes, the only water it had was rainwater.

Julia: And the workshops had nothing in them.

Pastora: So when this person was giving the talk, I asked to be allowed to speak. First of all, I said, I'd like to introduce myself, but I won't be making a personal issue of this, I come here as a representative of the Colectivo de Madres en Lucha (Collective of Mother's in Struggle) and I will be talking about prison. You Mr. Carmelo, this is how they called him, you are putting Spanish prisons forward as five star hotels, especially the Texeiro one. And they are far from being that!! They have workshops that don't work, as they were not functioning still by then, a swimming pool that does not even have fucking water.

myself, like a mother, it's taken a lot out of me to talk about my son here; a lot. Do you understand? And they have not just killed my son, they have killed my family. I have always been an optimistic person, that has believed in the good things in life; but now I have nothing. Nothing. Because what I have seen, what I have lived, and what they have done with my son. People that say they are just and fair, and that defend justice, they have not done it. Because there is never justice for the poor!! Prison has been built only for the poor. And as a matter of fact, in prison there are only poor people.

Not even when you are ill do they leave you alone. Imagine yourself, he was really ill, and the secret police came to my house! They had never come before; not once in my whole life had the secret police come to my house. So when they arrived, I asked, "Who are you?"

"Police," they said.

They showed me their identification, and I said to them, "What do you want?"

"Is Tarrío here?" they said.

"But have you not done enough to him, what else do you fucking want from my son now?" I said, "Have you not caused enough harm to Tarrío, yet? Do you realise how my son is now? Do you realise what you have done to my son?"

And so then, one took the other one and said "Let's go."

I said, "Don't even think about touching my son. If you have any problems, go and see his lawyer."

And they left because I did not let them see my son.

My son today is dead. This is Xose Tarrío Gonzalez. My son is dead. And the thing is that before falling into a coma he was very desperate, very ill. He said, "I wrote this book, condemning FIES and everything they do, and I thought the book would have a bigger impact than it had; that people would realise what is happening and that maybe the book would reach some organisation or authority that would take some measures." And so he was very disappointed. He thanked everyone that had been at his side, and everyone he met. That it had been worth all the fighting, but he thought it would have a bigger reaction. Tarrío like many other prisoners had not been punished because of doing anything serious, but because of being born poor and being poor. This is the sad reality; and it is like that for many other guys of the same age as him. And all that for a silly thing. They always pick on the vulnerable.

FIES, well...And excuse me for talking so much, but I would like to see a judge's daughter, nephew, the judges or all those who invented FIES in there themselves. Not twelve years, but just three years in a row. I'd like them to be put in there and to experience what loneliness FIES is, with the same treatment that prisoners receive, of course. I would like to see some of them in there, to experience it and to see what their opinion of FIES is afterwards. Because FIES, like the forensic psychologist said at Tarrío's trial, and explained very well to the prosecutor and to the judge: the destruction that FIES causes to the human mind, it's terrible. It completely annihilates you. It creates anxieties, fears and completely destroys your mind. He explained all this and they did not even listen

The Mothers

This interview with the mothers of Gabriel and Xose took place in Aachen, Germany, during the trial of The Aachen 4.

Interviewer: We are going to talk a little bit with two mothers of prisoners, one of them (Xose Tarrío) unfortunately killed in January this year by the Spanish prison system. Here we have his mother Pastora, and also Julia, the mother of Gabriel



Pombo da Silva, who is imprisoned here in Aachen. We want to know what they think as mothers, and as people, about the treatment that their sons receive in prison; about prisons; Spanish prisons; but at the end of the day about any prison in the world. We'll start asking what they think as

mothers having their sons inside, and about the difficulties they have encountered during so many years of imprisonment. We think it's better to do an open interview where they can express what they feel. So, if you want to start talking, obviously, about prison?

Pastora: I, for example, think that prison does not rehabilitate anybody and is not the answer. I'm going to talk about the case of my son, which is the one I know in more depth. My son got a prison sentence of two and a half years when he was 17 years old. He didn't commit any crime of violence; he went into prison for petty theft, but not even for himself - just to consume drugs - because although we were poor we were able to keep going. His sentence turned into seventeen years, twelve of them in the FIES regime. He never killed anybody outside, but inside he killed another prisoner in self-defence. What I mean is that prison does not help to rehabilitate anybody, the only thing it does is to destroy any will to live for the one inside and for those outside. Prison is only there to destroy the person physically and psychologically. They finish the prisoner and they finish the relatives.

Many people will ask how come he ended up serving seventeen years if he had a sentence of two and a half? It's because my son, and I am not saying it just because he is my son, he has always been a person very pure in his heart. Even

though many people won't think so, he was a person that always denounced the torture, the beatings, and everything that they did with them. For example, he explained to me, as a mother, that to keep them imprisoned and quiet, so like prisoners that don't complain, they gave them pills. They drugged them, and obviously the person who is drugged, or on pills as he used to say, this person doesn't protest, doesn't do anything. And he was a person that as time went by started to realise about many things. He did not want to take those pills, nor do things that he was told to do, because he could see that those things were not good, things were worse there than on the streets. And so, denouncing this became a nightmare for him.

They started to put him in isolation for reclaiming his rights and the rights of all prisoners. They tortured him, they kicked him, they had him tied to the bed, and they have done many, many other things; many humiliations. So, you imagine now that they have you for twelve years, being seventeen years old, in the prime of your life! Because I think that when a person starts to take drugs at seventeen years old, it should be psychologists and specialist centres that help to understand why that kid was taking drugs, the reason for the drugs themselves and for the petty theft. From my point of view, as a mother and as the person that I am, I think we should have this type of centre with very friendly and caring people that could have normal conversations with them. But not prison and, even less, these twelve years of isolation. How can they keep a person alone all these years? Because he used to tell me that even in the exercise-yard they did not let him talk to other prisoners.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a bit about what the FIES regime is, as Gabriel is a FIES prisoner too?

Pastora: Well in this case I am talking about my son, but like him, I am here with Gabriel's mother at my side, whose son was a close friend of my own son. He was also a kid that started when he was very young and they cared for each other a lot. I had been told that he was a great kid with a very good heart, and what I know of him myself, I can say that yes, he is a very good person. And now when talking one day to his mother on the phone, she told me that they accused him of being a terrorist. I laughed at it, because the real terrorists are them, and our sons and ourselves are controlled by them. But who controls them? When in prison, the screws torture and beat people up, and do whatever they want with the prisoners. And I am telling you from the bottom of my heart and I know it is true, because apart from this I am a member of the Nais en Loita (Mothers in Struggle) collective. We have received lots of complaints from kids, and we have letters from them that we can show you, where they explain what they have had done to them. Prison is not good. Inside prison those who say that they are protecting are worse than the ones they say are the criminals; much worse.

So they had my son there. I have always said they would not give me my son back alive; that my son would only leave prison dead - and this is how it

in two weeks, we managed to get him out of prison, because he was very ill. He called me from the infirmary and said, "Mum, get me out of here because I am dying. You can't imagine how they treat us here in the infirmary!" This was the first time he'd been hospitalised. "My friends that are infected with AIDS have their "nappies" down round their ankles; they have to clean each other up. Nobody helps us to have a shower, we fall in the showers - this is terrible. Mum, please get me out of here because I am dying."

I could feel already that my son, besides everything he had, he had a deep depression. And so, when I went to pick him up in prison and saw him with a plastic bag with all his clothes in it and in a wheelchair, I knew he was coming out to die. He lost his speech. He had to tell me by signs to help him to write, because he didn't have the coordination to write, it was terrible, until he fell into a coma. And not satisfied with that, they transferred him to Veintelago hospital, to a doctor that knew nothing of the illness that he had. And so, when she saw him, she transferred him back to Juan Canalejo hospital. What they did with Tarrío does not have god's forgiveness. As if he was a piece of furniture!

From Veintelago they sent him back to Juan Canalejo. Ah! And when leaving prison I asked them to do physiotherapy with my son. I said to him, "Do not worry, you'll be fine." Because he wanted to walk, he wanted to feel like he used to be. And what happened is that they told me there was no room and I had to wait for a month. I said that I could not wait for a month. We paid for physiotherapy for him in a private clinic - that his sisters sent the money for, by the way, because I did not have the money. But his illness was very advanced already. When the day of the physio arrived, that was 13th of September, they checked him to take him on, and said no, because he could not do what they told him. But he didn't do it because by then he could not recognise it anymore. They sent him to Veintelago. And from that hospital, the doctor told me she knew nothing about the illness, so sent him back to Juan Canalejo. There, what they offered us was to sedate him.

Interviewer: To die in peace!!

Pastora: I still thought that he would get well. Now I realise that I still do not accept the death of my son. I don't accept that my son is dead. I was the only one thinking that my son was not dying. The doctors were telling me he was dying up until his sister and I started to scream because we saw that they were not treating him well. So they took him to an intensive care unit. Just before that, he fell into a coma. They did a tracheotomy on him; I was still thinking he would recover. They allocated a psychologist to me, who wanted to prepare me for the death of my son. But I did not want to.

This is what they had done with Tarrío. Tarrío died because of PRISON. Because Tarrío should not have been there, and like him many other kids. And they did this with him because he had written a book, he had denounced the system, and because he had denounced everything that they had done. And

he asked to go back to prison voluntarily. This was when he asked him about reading and writing and the thing about the children. And he doesn't allow anybody to be disrespectful to his mother. And he says, "You better talk nice to my mother because if I ever stand up again, we will see each other face to face." He kept provoking him - this person took me out, without saying anything else, just because he felt like it. And my son said that he wanted the all clear because he could not be with this person anymore. He had terrible headaches because of him. Then he left and he felt worse. But let's be clear about it, my son asked to go back to prison. Not because he wanted to, like the doctors said, because my son was very ill, but because of this person. He told him once, when he was in emergency, that if it was up to him, he would tie him up by his arms and legs and shoot him in the head. Yes, yes, my son told me whispering once the officials weren't there.

When I spoke with the nurses, this person told everybody not to listen to the mother. I know this because of the nurses and also through a friend's husband who was there hospitalised and had my son's book. When the nurses saw Xose Tarrío's name on it, they said, "Oh, we had a patient with that name on this floor." They said, "How come this guy wrote a book?" "Yes," he said. "I am a friend of his mother." "But he is very dangerous," they said. "Very dangerous? No, he is a lovely kid, I know him." "No way," they answered. "The police officer told us he is very dangerous, a murderer..." All sorts, that person told them. They said, "Yeah, it seemed a bit strange to us because he was a very polite kid," when they realised that he was a nice guy.

As I was saying, they sent him back to prison. I asked the doctor what time they were sending him back, so I could say goodbye to my son. She promised me they would wait until 2pm, so I could say goodbye. I got there at noon, because I already knew how they work, and they had taken him away already. So I say, "How come that they have taken him away? Did you not promise me till 2pm?" "Yes, but the police officer told me that for security reasons it was better to send him at 11am." And the patients that were there had told me, because my son had been there for a month and many of them had bought my son's book whilst he was there. They told me he asked for a wheelchair because he could not walk. One of this officer's colleagues brought it, and he told him to take it away again. They put all my son's books in a bag. They made him walk handcuffed with his hands behind his back. And with this bag full of books on his good hand, because with the other he could carry nothing, he had to walk falling to the floor like Jesus Christ. Falling and standing up, falling and standing up, with just one hand. I asked the doctor how she allowed this to happen. "None of my business," she said. This is what they had done with my son until they sent him back to prison.

I was already moving lots of things with Guillermo Presas, my son's lawyer. And

happened. After seventeen years they freed my son, who spent a year and a half more than he should've done without being able to enjoy any conditional release or anything else. I remember when I went to pick him up from prison that he told me, "Mum, drive slow because I feel like the buildings are moving from one side to another!"

My son was in his mother's house and when he saw such a big bed, and I am saying this because I was really shocked to see how he felt, he got in and said, "This bed is too big for me!" He wrapped himself up with the blanket, and I reckon that he did so because he used to do the same in prison. In bed, instead of enjoying the whole blanket, he used to place it very, very close to his body. He used to wake up many times at night because he wasn't able to sleep and when he did so, he slept like this, with one eye closed and the other open. This means that in prison he was always expecting something to happen; just walking into his room he was always startled. This three months that my son was out, he didn't even enjoy freedom. They had finished him physically and psychologically.

Interviewer: Your son was ill for a long time, wasn't he?

Pastora: Yes, and another thing that I wanted to say is that people who are ill need to be in hospital. They can't tell me that justice exists, because there is no justice for the poor; justice has never existed for the poor. In prison you only see poor people, and prison was created for the poor, and if not, all judges from around the world should tell me if there is one rich person in prison. There are none, because they don't even get to the point of sleeping in or being in prison.

The big drug dealers that are getting rich from the suffering of so many families, that are killing so many children, that are building such big houses, that are maintaining their families so well; they pay a bail fee and are back to the fucking streets. And your son and mine, for smoking a small dose are there; and in prison there are much more drugs than outside. And I don't bring them in, it is not the relatives that bring them inside, it is the guards and the people who work there that deal them, not the relatives. When I used to go to visit my son they checked me from head to toe. Even more, in Jaen, when he was in there, I went there with my two daughters, and although it was illegal to strip-search visitors, I had to see my two daughters being made to undress, otherwise they would not let us in. And I had to let them do it because we had just paid to fly from Switzerland to go there. At the end of the day, what was important for us was to see my son who was there, and that is why we went there. But it is humiliating for a mother to see how they strip-search her two daughters. It is shameful, it is shameful.

There is also the treatment of the relatives; sending the prisoners even further away every time. We are an emigrant family as it is, for example with Pombo's mother, who has to work all day to eat, like I had to do and like my daughters are still doing. Now I don't work anymore. Because of working so much, I have health problems that prevent me working anymore. But how many times did we

have to ask for credit to go and see our sons, because they send them here, they send them there and everywhere? We were still able to go and see them, but what about those mothers who had no money to pay for a taxi or a train, or that can't leave work? Because I know the mother of another prisoner who can't do that.

Julia: And then you travel thousands of kilometres to see them through a pane of glass.

Pastora: And how many times, up until around five or six years ago, we had only twenty minute visits and through glass? But for me, the worst of all is that my son, after seventeen years, he died being only 36 years old. He died because of prison not because of an illness. He died of prison, and they are the ones who killed him. Because he, being ill, should not have been in FIES, and for what he had done he should have not even been in prison. I spoke once with a prison governor and he said that he was a prison leader, a leader for his comrades, that what Tarrío said was what was done in prison. But it was because they asked for changes. Tarrío made a couple of mutinies and they had him down as a dangerous prisoner. Yes, in Tenerife he took hostages; he took seven hostages to be able to talk to Cristina Almeida (she is a politician) to ask for improvements in prisons for him and for his comrades, because they didn't have books in the library. He did another mutiny in Valladolid, but he never hit or killed anybody. He let them go. So what do they call dangerous? To ask that they install gym and sports equipment, to give them books, to demand their rights?



This is what he used to say, "Mum, if I have done something I am paying for it, but they do not have the right to do what they do to us. They imprisoned me for robbing, to rob a tiny little bit, but who condemns them for stealing my life? Who condemns these people for stealing my life? Because they stole my life and my desire for living!" Terrible like this! Precisely like I said, they gave my son back to me dead. This is my son, Xose Tarrío, a good son and a better person; and they send him to me dead, half dead already from prison. He had an embolism [a blood clot or clots in one or more blood vessels]. When he had an embolism and he could move neither his arm nor his leg, the doctor talked to me, and I am going to repeat again that it was a very serious illness.

different thing. And so when she came back, the only thing she did, which she should be ashamed of; was give him a tranquilizer. For a brain injury!! A tranquilizer and a saline-drip at night, that was it! But when you have paralysis or apoplexy, they should've sent somebody to do physiotherapy with his body. But it was his mother that had to do so because they didn't send anybody, although I demanded for a doctor to come; because he was not allowed to leave.

Then they told me that he had to go to another hospital, but she couldn't send him there. My son did not belong to me; he belonged to the prison. I said to her, "Can you not see that you can't send him to prison like this?" She took him off the sick register, but he was not feeling well; he was walking worse every day. My son when he went to hospital he was paralysed but he was still able to move his fingers, like this. But there, because of being handcuffed, he stopped moving anything, legs and all. In fact he fell a few times in hospital. Being in hospital, once I found him all black and blue, and I said, "What happened to you?"

"I fell in the shower," he said.

"But did they not help you?"

"No, Mum. In fact I was kicking the door because I could not stand up," he said. Having a shower it's all wet, you don't have any strength and you fall, obviously.

And this person, always the same one, hearing the kicks, he went there and asked, "Why are you kicking the door?"

"Because I fell and I can't stand up," Tarrío said.

"I don't care if you can stand up or not, that is your problem."

He closed the door and left him there, until he managed to stand up dragging himself. This person did this and many other things.

Then my children came to see my son, and they searched them in the middle of the corridor. Only for being Xose Tarrío's brother, they searched Oscar, whom I have working here, right in the middle of the hospital. You tell me why? They also asked him if he had a criminal record. Terrible!! Like this, every day. You feel full of rage. Then, unhappy with only that, the doctor gave him the all clear to leave the hospital. I was asking them not to do so, because my son was not well enough to go to a prison; my son should have been staying in a hospital. Another brain seizure could occur any time with him being in prison. She did not give him treatment for the illness that he had when he asked her to; and I did too. So she sent him back with a little note saying that he needed to do physiotherapy in prison. "But can you not see that he won't get any of it in prison," I said.

"Oh, that is not my problem," she said.

Seeing the way they treated him, I spoke with all the doctors that attended him, and asked them how a doctor whose job is to cure, could allow what they were doing to a person in his state? I only saw one that seemed to be a bit human. They told me to stick with questions that related to the illness of my son; that it was the only thing that they could talk about. The rest was none of their business. And I am leaving lots of things out. When he went back the second time, because when this person that I've told you about already provoked him,

have any feelings. And I do feel very sorry for your children too.” Very politely and with these words is how I told him. “Because with a father like you, I can’t imagine how your children are going to end up?”

He left very annoyed and came back with what looked like a pile of notes, sat down, and said, looking at my son, “Do you know how to read and write?” This is a total provocation, of course. And Tarrío says, “More than you, stupid. Because I can tell you the article of the Spanish constitution, number so and page so - I can’t remember it myself now - where it says that you cannot have a prisoner in my conditions handcuffed like you have me.” And the other one said, “There is no article saying that I cannot do it either though, is there?”

So see what a provocation! And every time when I went in with this person it was only ten minutes, with the others it was the stipulated time. When somebody else was on duty and he arrived, he asked, “Is she still there?”

“Yes,” they would say.

“You should know already, ten minutes and that’s it,” he said, because I could hear him.

And so the others were afraid because he was the one in charge. And they had him like this in Juan Canalejos, handcuffed for a long, long time, till at the end other people arrived, and I cannot say that they were good, but they simply carried out their jobs how they were supposed to do.

Interviewer: And the hospital did nothing during all this time?

Pastora: No, nothing. And that is what is even more curious about what they did to my son that I still don’t understand. It was like a horror film. I never told my son, but I used to leave crying. And I am not lying because I had people around when this was happening, more than four people that have been witnesses to all these things I had to endure. I had an attack because of this person. And what I wanted to say that is curious is that they started putting him on the fourth floor, then they moved him to the sixth. I asked the doctors, and he was nobody’s patient. Tarrío was none of their patients. “He is not one of mine, but he is here because there is no room on the ninth floor,” one would say. I would go another day and they had him on the sixth floor. And it would be the same thing, “No, he does not belong to me, he is from a doctor who is now on holiday.” Tarrío was like this for more than a month and a half.

They had to do a scan, because one would say it was a thrombosis, another that it was a brain seizure and another that it was from a blow he received a long time ago. That it was from a blow he received in Santoña with a metal bar from one of the guards, and since then, he had very bad headaches. It is because of this, because of that or the other, but he wasn’t getting the scan. When it is a brain injury and we all know that the brain is the one that leads the whole body, a scan needs to be done immediately. There nobody did him a scan, until this woman, Doctor Castro, came back from holiday, I don’t know if she was on holiday or not. He went through five different doctors, all of them saying a

Interviewer: But before saying that it was an embolism, they said that it was just the flu, didn’t they?

Pastora: First in prison they said, “He started like...” Well I am going to miss a few things because I already feel angry just thinking about it. Let’s see, when they took him, I went to see him and I saw he was thinner and worse every time. And one day whilst eating, he was putting his hand on his arm and I said to him, “Xosé, what happened with your arm?”

“I don’t know what I have in this arm but I don’t seem to have much feeling in it.” I thought it was maybe just a bit of rheumatism and that is what I said to him, and so we did not pay it much importance.

In the second month... as I used to go only once a month because he did not want to see his mum through glass, so it was always face to face. As you probably know face to face is being in a room as we are here now. And so I thought it was a bit strange because I saw him again putting his hand on his arm again, and I said, “Xosé what do you have in your arm?” And he said nothing. “Come on, you’ve got to go to the doctor, go and get it checked.” He looked even more lifeless, more subdued, more down. Then I saw he was dribbling, but he was not aware of it. So I said, “Son, are you alright? You have your mouth a bit twisted, do you realise you are dribbling?”

“Really?” he said.

And so then he stood up towards the window and as he did so he staggered. I said, “Xosé you are not well.”

“Yes, I don’t know what is happening to me.”

“Go quickly to the doctor and get checked because you are having an embolism or something.”

He went and they told him it was just the flu. They gave him an aspirin, as they normally do in prison with all prisoners, because nobody cares about them. And so when I went back, three months having already passed by, I saw my son having to get his arm like this and putting it onto the table like this. I said, “What...?”

“I can’t feel it Mum”, he said.

So I went outside and I said, “Please take a look at my son, because there is something happening to him, can you not see how he is dragging his leg and how bad his arm is?” You feel impotent because you can’t bring a doctor or do anything about it. They didn’t say or answer anything to me. I said, “Xosé, go to the doctor.” He went back to the doctor in the infirmary, he told me, and again they gave him a few aspirins and told him that it was nothing. So, all in all it was already more than three months.

Around the 28th of July he called me by phone and I felt that his voice was very strange, and I said, “What is going on?”

He said, “I don’t feel very well.”

I said, “What happened? You sound very strange.”

He said, “I’ve just been to the hospital.”

And I said, “What happened to you then? You are not feeling well, what

happened?”

And he said, “Mum, they told me it is thrombosis.”

I said, “So what are you doing? Where are you now?”

“In prison”, he said. “And what are you doing in prison? How come you are not in hospital?”

“Because I didn’t remember your telephone number!!!”

My son, imagine how bad he must’ve been already to not remember the telephone number of his own mother!

“So I asked to get out of the hospital voluntarily to be able to come here, get your number and give you a call.”

I said, “Go quickly back to the hospital and your mum will be there.”

He went back, and there was his mother. There I saw how they took him inside in a wheelchair. So I wanted to go in to see him, and of course, the police stopped me from doing so. The police denied me entry to see my son, because, they said, he was still in emergency. They promised me that when he left emergency and got transferred to a room, I would be able to see him. He got out of there, I went to see him and they didn’t let me see him.

“Let’s see,” I said, “I am his mother and I have the right to see him, plus I am authorised to do so.”

“Yes,” this cop said. “Here I have your permit.”

He mentioned my name; he mentioned my children: Emilia, Oscar and his step-brother.

I said, “I don’t know if in your family the word step-brother exists, but in mine it doesn’t. In mine they are all brothers.” So he answered me saying that such a word was in the Spanish dictionary. At that point I wanted to say something that I thought to myself, but I didn’t tell him. Well I said, “You don’t let me see him,” him putting the permit right in front of my nose. “You don’t let me see him, but you have to give me a reason why I cannot see my son!”

“I don’t let you see him because I don’t feel like it!”

This, said by a police officer. When I asked for his number he told me that if I wanted to report him, I had to say that he was the custody guard of the 8pm shift. That is what he said to me with sadistic pleasure. My son, obviously hearing me and seeing that they didn’t let me in, started to scream and to say to leave his mother alone and let her in. “Stay calm,” I said. “Your mother will come.”

I left, and the next day when I went back, the same person was there and said to me that I couldn’t go in - the same police officer. I didn’t understand why, because my son’s behaviour had been fine all the time. “You don’t let me in?” I said.

“No, I don’t let you in.”

So I left, walked around for a while, went back, saw my son getting very agitated and told him to stay calm, because he didn’t need that. I told him not to worry; that his mother would come in.

When I got home I got on the phone and moved a few people. But why did I have to get in touch with people when I have my rights and so has my son? Because my son in hospital is another sick person, he is not a prisoner. He is another sick person. And I, as a mother, have the right to see my son the three or four hours that the hospital allows. All this was allowed to happen in Juan Canalejo hospital. That same day I said to this person, “You’ll see how I get to come in and see my son.”

“We shall see,” he said.

“You will see indeed,” I answered back.

I made a few phone calls to certain people that I don’t like to turn to, because there are some rights and those are the ones that have to be worth something, not that you know some people or have some friends. But of course I wanted to see my son. And so they called me saying that I was allowed to go and see my son; that they had spoken with a superior of that officer. So I went to see my son and he couldn’t do anything else but let me in. I went in, and because I sat at his side I didn’t realise that he was handcuffed. They told me ten minutes, and it was ten minutes that I was with him. I gave him a kiss and so on. Until the next day that I went back...I’m not too sure if it was just the day after or not. I don’t remember the precise dates, so I don’t exactly recall if it was one or two days after, that I met again with this person, when I went in and saw my son with the hand that he had paralysed with only one handcuff, and instead of having him chained to the railings at the side of the bed, they had him chained to the spring mattress. So imagine...yeah, yeah, yeah, they had him like this! With only one handcuff attached to the spring mattress! Imagine that he couldn’t turn round, move or do anything at all. And when I saw his arm like that, red like he had it, with his hand so, so, tight, without any circulation, a hand that hardly had any already, and so, so swollen. I couldn’t take it anymore.

Also, this person every time that I went in...My son was in a room with two beds, one at this side that was his, and this other one here that was empty. When the other officers were on duty they stayed outside. But with him, when I used to go in to see him, he placed himself here, at the height of the bed’s headboard sitting on the other bed provocatively. It was a total provocation. Listening to our conversations; when in prison when you go to see your son you don’t have those kinds of measures, you don’t have them. And so when I saw my son in those conditions I thought I would have a fit or something. “This I cannot take,” I said to him. “I won’t talk to you as a mother anymore, but as a person. Are you a father?” I said.

“Yes,” he answered.

“Do you have children?”

“Yes, I have three, but they are not like yours.”

Yes, yes, yes, this is how he answered.

“Look,” I said, “I have five children, and of the five I have I feel absolutely proud of them. Do you know why? Because my children have known what love is; I have shown them love. They have met love and they have feelings. But I feel very sorry for you because you have never known what love is and you don’t