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El Escudo (The Shield)

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## El Escudo (The Shield)

Iñaki De Juana Chaos

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I watch TV I listen to the radio. I read newspapers and magazines. And the bombing is intense and permanent. The enemy is self-infatuated. Arrests in both the Northern and Southern Basque Country. Round ups both in the Spanish and French State. Poisonous reports trying to inoculate the virus of mistrust.

“El Lobo” (“the wolf”) a simple grass to whom the pigs emptied before they threw him to the dunghill of uselessness (as they do with every little grass) is being recovered and raised to the category of hero of infiltration and secret services. He is being raised to the status of starring role in films and documentaries where he shows off bizarrely thanks to TV & film scripts and cheque-books.<sup>1</sup>

Discouragement manoeuvres. Publication of private correspondence and conversations, totally or partially, but either

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<sup>1</sup> N. of trans. El Lobo, Mikel Lejarza Egia, was a famous informer of Franco’s police. In the last years the Spanish far-right journal “El Mundo” or connected media has published a book, a series of TV “documentaries”, and even a fiction film with a handsome and popular actor has been devoted to his figure.

way in manipulated and interested versions (even if we should admit that we shouldn't be giving them such facilities).<sup>2</sup>

Penal dispersion: from prison to prison and within each prison. Mistreatment, tortures... renewed in time but permanent in their forms and as ancient as political repression is. Aggressions. Sick mates blackmailed with the gravity of their situation.

Yes, the assault is strong in every front as much as it is undeniable. Maybe the enemy conjectures that he can end up with us? that he can finish with the Basque National Liberation Movement? Do they think they will manage to make a whole people give in or at least silence its steps by making it walk exclusively over a carpeted floor?

I don't need to be a soothsayer in order to cry out, with all my strength and conviction, this politically incorrect expression: you are done with! fuck off with all of that because you are not going to win. Or haven't you noticed yet that we have an invulnerable shield which is no other than reason?

As every totalitarian power, fascist or neo-fascist, the current PSOE government, (as did its predecessor and as the former ones did) is in permanent need of re-writing history. In permanent need of manipulating and lying, creating evil and good characters at will, by far surpassing the limits of the well-known orwellian fiction. And this is a war strategy with the only and stated purpose of assimilating us, obtaining our resignation from our principles, values, and rights and our integration in their system.

Conniving judges, corrupt politicians, torture professionals, ruthless jailers you are boring, tiring and foreseeable. You don't

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<sup>2</sup> N. of trans. The promotion of the informer was matched by the promotion of the surrendering resistant in the Spanish media. In those days, a private letter of some inmates showing their "tiredness" and disposition to abandon the fight was conveniently "filtrated" to the press as representative of the basque prisoners' collective.

deserve any respect or consideration, not even a minimal one such as to keep down the tone of this letter.

But all this deserves explanation. Is Zapatero “mood”<sup>3</sup> totalitarian? Are those little blue eyes and angel-like smile fascist? The very self-same who took the troops off Iraq? The one who is going to modify abortion, divorce and so many other laws to get a tamed left satisfied? Well, yes, totalitarianism without a single doubt. Because he who — taking the Basque Country as a first priority, as it couldn’t be otherwise — passes martial laws, creates special courts, protects torture, prosecutes and represses rights of association, expression and freedom of the press, bans people from political and electoral participation, and does all this in order to keep a nation silent and denying its right to self-determination, is a hand-book fascist. And we can forget about language embellishments.

Technically, the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2004, I finished serving the prison sentence that their legal and penal system imposed on me by the Criminal Code of 1973, a francoist code uncomparably “softer” than the current one devised by Franco’s heirs. From this date on, I haven’t left prison, officially because the judge Gómez Bermúdez another meteoric starlette built upon Basque suffering — has “doubts” as to the served sentence. Once more I cannot avoid being astonished — and I hope I never lose this capability — the contempt in which their servants have their own laws. That we, who combat them, reject them is only natural but that those who eat by them despise them is an index of which their function is.

The terms “illegality”, “kidnapping” etc. cannot and shouldn’t be used in my case, though. And I don’t like they use it in my defense, because it is 700 mates that we are retained in an illegal form and kidnapped by an authoritarian system — some of them from a longer time than I am. And out of the

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<sup>3</sup> N. of trans. The original says “talante” an expression made famous during Zapatero’s campaign before his election.

prison walls the whole non-conformist part of society stands in a similar situation. Anyway, there hundreds of thousands of Basques enduring a penal 4<sup>th</sup> grade,<sup>4</sup> awaiting for uniformed people to hit their door and notify them repression for bad behavior.

The minister López Aguilar has been far clearer: De Juana cannot leave prison in any way whatsoever. And that's it. ¿The reason why? He doesn't show any sign of "resocialization". Fortunately enough, it is a vast majority of the 700 inmates and a great part of Basque socitey who doesn't display any "signs of resocialization".

Because "resocialize" in the sense the enemy employs it, implies the defeat and acceptance of the counter-values so magnificently represented by Lopez Aguilar, Zapatero and Gomez Bermudez. But they should ask themselves a question: if 700 mates with thousands of years served and to serve in prison upon our backs do not display signs of "resocialization", doesn't it mean something fails in their "penal treatment"? the failing bit is that we count on the shield of reason. This and that there is nothing, whether in the personal o political sphere, that cannot be overcome, unless it is the internalization of failure.

Any process knows ups and downs. Appearances are deceitful. In politics, noise doesn't mean strength, as silence doesn't mean weakness. We are going to win. Let us read the history of other processes but of successful ones, not of those that failed. Let us compare the acceptance of our political discourse on the part of Basque society now and 25 years ago. The rest is easy: work, sacrifice, learning from mistakes and not to put sticks in our own bicycle's wheels.

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<sup>4</sup> N. of trans. There 3 "grades" of prison inmates in Spain: very roughly 1<sup>st</sup> grades are uncommunicated within prison, 2<sup>nd</sup> grades not, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades may spend the day out of prison.

Years ago, I heard a very appreciated mate crying loudly: "take off your dirty hands from the Basque Country". Yes, you take them off, because any other road only implies more suffering still. Otherwise the future will end up showing, doubtless, that you lost them.