

Barcelona. 21st. March, 1976
In front of the local prison "La Modelo"
Entença Street.

To a policeman,

I find it hard to speak to you. In fact, I have been asked to write to you, but honestly, I find it hard. There lies such a great distance between you and I! You always speak Spanish. I always speak Catalàn. It seems odd to me to be writing to you in Catalàn. I have never spoken to a policeman in Catalàn. It sounds absurd, doesn't it? In fact, what is really absurd is that there are no Catalàn policemen in my country. I know you all very well because I have been taken to the Police station; because I have been there eight times, and have spoken with you. In fact, I have been in touch with you due to demonstrations, gatherings, arrests, etc. I have even "travelled" with you from Girona to Zamora and from Barcelona to Madrid. I have had a lot of talks with you at the "Clinic" Hospital in which I was kept in solitary confinement for some days. On number occasions I have been in touch with you. On my body I have felt your beatings, you have often pushed me about violently. I know of your personal problems, I have been kicked by you. I have known about your innermost problems. I know you very well indeed. I have been watching you from my barred window in the prison of Carabanchel while you were on sentry duty, inside your sentry boxes. I have been watching you in your white patrol cars standing by keeping a close watch on the "captaires de la pau" (beggars for peace) standing in front of the Barcelona local prison "La Modelo" from 9 a.m. in the morning till 9 p.m. waiting for the Amnesty to be granted. I do know a lot of things about you, yet I cannot mention them all because if I did, this letter would be too long. I like to know people closely. I love you deeply. Some people hate you, some feel pity for you; some are your friends, some are your masters and make good use of you. So far, I have not any friends among policemen, but I love you deeply. No country in the world is devoid of policemen up to the present time, yet a time may come when the police force are abolished. Still policemen are necessary. It should be borne in mind that you play a role in society. One day, I was arrested and found myself in one of your patrol vans I was sitting in the back seat between two policemen; we could hardly move. One corporal and the driver in the front seat. The "boss" was handling the radio-telephone. A voice from the police station was giving instruction they were ordering a patrol van to rush to offer assistance to an elderly lady who was suffering from the effects of a gas leak in a flat in Pelayo street.

"The policemen also carry out good actions, you see?" the "boss" said to me. I kept silence in protest for my illegal arrest. Yet, I must confess he was right. Policemen do good things, they even perform acts of heroism.

One day, I witnessed one of your fellow policemen drew out his club and started beating those who were with me. "This is unfair!" I shouted. He said "What the police do is always wrong".

"No", I answered. "The police do good things, but what you have done is unfair". He stopped the beatings and left.

Unfortunately, the police are compelled to act in a ruthless way sometimes. Those who hate the police, and when taking part in demonstrations, demands the abolishment of the repressive police corps or shout at them "murderers" seem to forget that thanks to the police intervention a lot of problems are satisfactorily solved. The police often render valuable services, They assist the injured and also avoid many accidents. All that accounts for the existence of the police. They render a service to the people.

But the higher-ups, taking advantage of the police services, use them to impose upon the weak the law of the stronger. It is a tragic operation. The humble people, in most cases the economically weaker, and also the most oppressed, is lured into joining the police force by offering them an attractive salary of 25.000 Ptas. a month -They have never had such a big heap of money! - The powerful elements use them against the people, against their own fellow policemen and in support of those who keep the people under their control. Should this be done on purpose, it would be considered under the denomination of "treason". Those who join the police force either for lack of money or culture don't seem to realize the consequences of their action. They don't seem to be aware that with their action they betray the people. Once they are part of the police forces, their leaders make every possible efforts to get into their heads hatred against the working people, hate against students, against demonstrators, hate against political parties, and against the people as a whole. The masterpiece of the mighty is to make the people fight one another while they enjoy the "show" with satisfaction.

Although I have not a friend among the policemen I love them deeply. Jesus Christ command us to love our enemies. I consider policemen the enemies of the people, so they are my enemies as well. I am of course referring to the Spanish police. They are traitors to the people, they are therefore enemies of the people. Many of them unwillingly; others willingly. Sooner or later, you will be aware of the role you are playing in this country. A very tragic role, indeed!

The clergy in Spain is also at the service of the mighty. A large number of priests and catholics have given up our service as such and have joined forces with the oppressed. That's why you hate us and pursue us. I myself heard your "boss" say "You will see what happens when things change for the worse with priests". I think you will also have to give up serving the mighty".

- I have to support a family, but you haven't.
- Take another job.
- We wouldn't earn so much money because we have not a qualified job.
- A lot of workmen change their job and they have children.

Yes, indeed. To become a policeman is an easy thing, but under the present circumstances is a serious mistake.

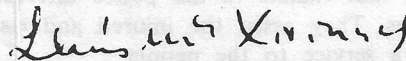
I think that there are perhaps a limited number of your fellow policemen who are aware that they are traitors to the people, yet there are quite a lot of them who are aware of this fact. This is evident on your eyes. You look nervous to the breaking point when you are forced to arrest an innocent. Your inner feelings give yourselves away when you keep a distance between you and the secret police. "They work little and get plenty of money" whereas you get a shameless salary and work hard and, to top it all, they look down on us" said a policeman who was on duty in one of the cells I was locked in in the gloomy "Layetana" Police station. You are no doubt aware of your betrayal to the people, as otherwise you would not beat so viciously peaceful and unarmed citizens. You do hate yourselves. Life has thrown you into a mousetrap. You are scared at the thought of what became of the Portuguese police under Salazar's dictatorship. You are used to acting arbitrarily. You are used to obeying instructions without pondering over the consequences even if the orders you got were both monstrous and inhumane. You have been acting wildly too long and people no longer say "this policeman is wicked" now they say "the police are wicked". You now feel like cornered animals and full of fear. You become dangerously aggressive. You have been provoking people recently and people, in turn, provoke you. People against people while the powerful ones watch the "show" with satisfaction. Aren't you aware you have got into a trap?

You are part of the people yourselves. You should support for people's claims for social justice and freedom. You should feel sympathy for the political parties as well for the popular working unions, for those students who are worried about the inhuman conditions of the oppressed. You belong to the people and perhaps you come from parts of the country where people are still more oppressed. Why don't you place yourselves at the service of the oppressed making whatever sacrifices are necessary to attain this goal?

Before bringing this letter to an end, written standing up in front of the prison, a letter which I had often to interrupt because of the large amount of people who join me in my appeal for amnesty, I would like to make you a rather strange confession.

I have been arrested. I have been beaten, I have often been insulted. Do you want to know my inner feelings when I am lying on the floor trying to protect my head from the rain of blows falling on me? I do feel a deep sadness because I am aware you are forced to beat me. I am really sorry to be the cause of your losing your dignity by beating an innocent and peaceful human being. I am ashamed of the numberless advantages I have had and which have prevented me to become a policeman under this regime while you, incapable of finding better opportunities in life. You come from zones which are exploited by people from others zones and also from my own country. You are no doubt forced to play a sad role. I am rich in having opportunities whereas you have been thrown into a sinister trap set by yourselves to destroy others. Injustice has made of me a qualified human being. Injustice has made of you instruments of violence. This injustice claims for revenge. When you beat me, you are no doubt unaware you carry out an act of justice. You try to rid yourself of the hate you feel inside you by beating me and I myself get rid of a just shame felt by the privileged ones. When the type of society we are longing for takes shape, you will no longer beat me because you will no longer envy me; because you and I will have the very same opportunities to have a place in life.

When that very day comes, we shall embrace.



(signed) Lluís M. Xirinacs.

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