

THERE IS A THIRD THING

Taken from O Globo

Translated by Pepe Rojo

Brazilian capo speaks like a prophet; everything he said is both actual and unsettling.

Marcos Camacho, better known by his nickname Marcola, is the leader of a criminal organization in São Paulo, Brazil, called Primer Comando de la Capital (PCC, Capital's First Commando).

Marcola's answers allow us to get a glimpse at what could be the future of common delinquency in Latin America.

O Globo: Are you part of PRIMER COMANDO DE LA CAPITAL (PCC)?

Marcola: Even more than that, I am a sign of these times. I was poor and invisible. You never glanced at me during decades, while it seemed easy to solve the problem of poverty.

The diagnosis was obvious: rural migration, income disparity, few slums, discrete peripheries; but the solution never appeared... What did they do? Nothing. Did the federal government ever set aside a budget for us? We were only news when landslides wiped out a slum, or in romantic song about the "beauty of the mountains at dawn"...

Now we are rich with the drug multinationals. And you are dying with fear. We are the late beginning of your social conscience. You see? I am cultured. I read Dante Alighieri in prison.

O Globo: But the solution would be....

Marcola: Solution? There's no solution, brother. The very idea of a "solution" is already a mistake. Have you seen the size of the 560 *villas miseria* (slums) in Río? Have you overseen the outskirts of São Paulo by helicopter? Solution: How? It could only happen through millions of dollars spent in an organized manner, with a high level government, an immense political will, economic growth, a revolution on education, general urbanization, and it would have to happen under the leadership of an "benevolent dictatorship" that could jump over our secular bureaucratic paralysis, that could pass over the Legislative conspiracy. Or do you think that the bloodsuckers are not going to act? If they are

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neglected they will rob even the PCC. And the judiciary that prevents punishment. There would have to be a radical reform of the penal system of the country, they would need intelligence and communication between provincial, state and federal police forces (we even make “conference calls” between inmates...) And all that would cost billions of dollars and would entail a deep psychosocial change in the political structure of the country. What I mean is: it’s impossible. There is no solution.

O Globo: Aren’t you afraid of dying?

Marcola: You are the ones afraid of dying, not me. Better said: here in jail, you can’t come over and kill me, but I can easily have you killed outside. We are human bombs. In the slums, there are a hundred thousand human bombs. We are right in the middle of the unsolvable. You are between evil and good, and in the middle, there’s the frontier of death, the only frontier. We are already a new “species,” different insects, different from you. For you, death is this Christian drama, a heart attack in bed. Death for us is daily bread thrown over a mass grave.

Weren’t you intellectuals talking about class struggle? About being a martyr? A hero? And then, we arrived! Ha, ha... I

read a lot; I’ve read 3,000 books, and I read Dante, but my soldiers are strange anomalies of the twisted development of this country.

No more *proletariat*, or unhappy people, or oppressed. There is a third thing growing out there, raised in the mud, educated through sheer illiteracy, getting their own diplomas on the street, like a monstrous Alien hidden under the crevasses of the city. A new language has already sprung. Do you not listen to our recordings “with permission” from the courts? That’s it. It is our other language.

You’re standing right before a kind of post-poverty. Post-poverty generates a new murderous culture, helped by technology, satellites, cellular phones, internet, modern weaponry. It’s all that shit with chips, megabytes. My subordinates are a mutation of the social species. They are the mushrooms of a big dirty mistake.

O Globo: What changed in the outskirts?

Marcola: Money. Now we have it. Do you think someone like Beria Mar, who has 40 million dollars, isn’t in charge? With 40 million, jail becomes a hotel, a desk... What police

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force is going to burn down that gold mine? You get me, right? We are a modern corporation, wealthy. If an official hesitates, he is fired and “placed in the microwave.”

You are the broken state, dominated by the incompetent. We have flexible management methods. You are slow, bureaucratic. We fight on our own soil. You fight in a strange land. We are not afraid of death. You are dying of fear. We are well armed. You only have .38s. We are on the attack. You are on the defense. You have the mania of humanism. We are cruel, merciless. You turned us into crime superstars. We regard you as clowns. We are helped by the population of the slums, either out of fear or love. You are hated. You are regional, provincial. Our weapons and products come from outside, we are “global.” We never forget you, you are our “clients.” You quickly forget us, as soon as your fright of us passes.

O Globo: But, what should we do?

Marcola: I’ll give you a hint. Go after the “dust barons” (coke lords)! There’s congressmen, senators, businessmen, there’s ex-presidents in the midst of the coke and the weapons. But, who is going to do that? The army? With what money?

There is no money for recruits. I am reading *On War* by Clausewitz. There’s no prospect of success. We are devouring ants, hidden in the corners. We even have anti-tank missiles. If you do something wrong, we’ll send some Stingers by. To destroy us... only an atomic bomb in the *villas*. Can you imagine? Radioactive Ipanema?

O Globo: But, couldn’t there be a solution?

Marcola: You will only get somewhere if you stop defending “normalcy.” There is no more normal. You need to reflect on your own incompetence. And to be quite frank, your morality. We are at the center of the unsolvable. The difference is we live here, and you have no way out. Only shit. And we are already working inside it. Understand me, brother, there’s no solution. And you know why? Because you can’t even comprehend how widespread the problem is. As the divine Dante wrote: “Abandon all hope. We are all in Hell.”