

We publish the statements read by some of the anarchist comrades accused in the Sibilla trial in the preliminary hearing held on the 15th of January in Perugia. Amongst the defendants, is also Alfredo Cospito, who attended by videoconference from Bancali prison in (Sardinia) where he is locked up in the 41bis regime, who read a statement. The hearing ended with a dismissal of all charges against all defendants, bringing to a conclusion an infamous case, which apart from aiming at the silencing of anarchist revolutionary publications, had a central role in Alfredo's transfer to the 41bis regime. For a few hours Alfredo was able to hear the voices of his comrades, to see their faces, to speak, breaking the wall of silence in which they are trying to bury him. And this is certainly more stirring than any decision made by any state bureaucrat. In particular, Alfredo's own words resonate as a powerful denunciation against the totalitarian horror of the 41bis regime. Those children's handprints on the dividing glass in the visiting room should shake the consciences, of those who still have a conscience.

We do not know to what extent the intervention of the comrades in the courtroom somehow influenced the court's decision not to venture into a shaky trial in itself. However, on January 15, it became clear that subsequent potential hearings would also undoubtedly provide an opportunity to intervene, breaking the wall of isolation of the 41bis, on behalf of Alfredo and the other accused comrades. Certainly, it should not take a trial like this one to initiate moments of mobilization against the international shame of 41 bis, and in Alfredo's specific case, as of today the justifications for confinement in this special regime have one important piece missing. To make them pay the price for this contradiction, it is more urgent than ever to undertake other paths and revitalize initiatives against 41 bis and the warmongering and repressive policies of States.

Statement of Alfredo Cospito during the preliminary hearing for the "Sibilla Trial"

Today, you the representatives of the judiciary branch of this republic are putting us on trial for writing on the walls, for our words, for our books and magazines, forcing, as a matter of fact, anarchy into clandestinity. We are in good company, with this post-fascist government, censorship and repression are expanding to the entire social body, accelerating the transition from totalitarian democracy to a tragicomic opera regime. Saying this, I must thank you: after a year of silence, thanks to your embarrassing and anachronistic prosecution, I am allowed to express my thought publicly. Even if remotely, even if for the brief time of a blink of an eye, today I can tear off the gag, the medieval bridle of a 41bis that a moderate left-wing government applied to me years ago to silence an uncomfortable voice, for however minor and irrelevant, however surely an enemy of your democracy. These two years of special regime have most definitely opened my eyes to the true face of your law, of your constitutional rights, revealing to me a criminogenic system composed of an obscene, crude and murderous totalitarianism.

Today in this courtroom we are undergoing an inquisitorial trial based on an interview given through regular prison mail and not through a conversation with my sister in a prison visit as the prosecution wants us to believe, dragging her to the courthouse only for the mere fact of continuing undeterred to attend prison visits with her brother. It is a classic strategy of

all authoritarian regimes, used regularly in the 41 bis regime, to burn all bridges with all emotional bonds at the exterior of the prison.

It is indicative, with every visit I attend, to see children's handprints on the security glass that separates them from their fathers or mothers. But after all, what to expect from a democracy that puts children in prison?

Of course, I take full responsibility of the interview, which is the reason for which today I find myself in 41bis, after all I take full responsibility for all my writings, the last one in chronological order being a small essay on the MIL ¹ experience in the post Francoist Spain, written in the High Security regime before being transferred to this grave for the living, which I am sure, has already been published or it is about to be.

And therein lies the particularity of this judicial story of mine. Placed in this regime to silence me permanently on charges of a “leading role”, as you define me in your contorted and twisted language. A nasty precedent, mine, with disturbing implications. Having succeeded in pushing through the thesis that an anarchist can play a leadership role, a role that is inherently authoritarian, thus incompatible with what is the very idea of anarchy, opens wide the gates of the 41bis to anyone who disturbs power, whether a single revolutionary or radical movement, as well as making abnormal prosecutions such as the one I have to witness today as a defendant, easier. I declare this because I firmly believe that my being transferred to 41bis regime and this very trial are fundamentally an attack on freedom of thought and freedom of press. This is the heart of the matter, the heart of this trial.

The dangerousness of the 41bis cannot be reduced to a ridiculous right-wing honcho who sets up a pathetic trap for an equally ridiculous political opposition (indicative in this regard is my other directed transfer two years ago from one section to another in view of the arrival of politicians from Rome to stage a little theatre with different actors on convenience)². Its real danger is something far more obscure, a powerful instrument for a formidable repressive shortcut in the event of social conflict. What better way to silence radical movements and oppositions than an already active and tested emergency regime. A state of exception in which many rights are suspended, in which absolute censorship already tried and tested over decades of practice on the ground reigns. Who will be the first to experience this special regime on their own skin? The comrades who struggle for Palestine? The anarchists that continue to talk about a revolution? The communists who have never surrendered? Four of them are resisting with pride since dozens of years in this regime in the most absolute isolation, without ever bending over.

If the West's imperialist war overflows by reaction from Ukraine's borders and bursts on our doorsteps, if social conflicts exceed the sustainable limit of a shaky mechanism, or even if just the soft and gradual transition to a regime is not feasible, the 41bis, thanks to its very gloss of legality, will be the ideal repressive tool for a forced social anesthetization, a kind of castor oil to bring recalcitrant elements back in line, a gradual and lawful coup. And this

¹ Iberian Liberation Movement – *Movimiento Ibérico de Liberación*

² Translator's note: in January 2023, Alfredo Cospito was suddenly transferred in a new wing of Bancali prison. In the new wing Alfredo was “listened to” as he talked with prisoners sentenced for mafia association (the only prisoners he could actually talk to). The right-wing government, which had ordered the transfer to this new wing in the intent to set Alfredo up, instrumentalized the issue to underline Alfredo's dangerousness and to propose an obscure theory of an alleged anarchy – mafia association. On the other hand, the left-wing opposition parties took Alfredo Cospito's side, of course also in an instrumental manner.

would explain why an emergency regime is needed in the absence of a real emergency. To make people accept this forcing, this aberration of your own law, what better trojan horse than to fight against the ultimate villains, the Mafiosi? Undefendable people, made irredeemable by the same politicians who first used them for the dirty work and then buried them in here to avoid recriminations over favours done and never returned. An open secret that surprises no one any more.

With the excuse of fighting against the mafias you have trampled on your very laws; by betraying the Constitution, you have revealed its inconsistency and its real “fig leaf” essence. With the excuse of fighting the mafia you have put in place a sort of ethnic persecution. Here, together with me, only people from Calabria, Campania, Sicily, Puglia and obviously also gypsy Roms, unpresentable children of a South populated by B-class citizens. People imprisoned sometimes just for bearing their last name. People whose theoretically unalienable rights are being denied to push them towards repentance, which in your aberrant conception of law is made concrete in the reporting against one’s own father, mother or brother and sister. Lawyers accused of collusion when they are not intimidated by public prosecutor Torquemada, closed visits without any physical or human contact, visits in which relatives are forcibly covered with plasters in order to hide any tattoo they might have on their body and all recorded looking for pretexts to arrest and investigate them. A sword of Damocles constantly hanging over their heads to terrify those who undeterred continue not to want to abandon their loved ones. A State terrorism that aims to deprive the prisoner of the most natural solidarity, that of their children, wives, husbands and mothers, which is the only solidarity that people in here can afford and understand. A repressive technique that deprives us of human solidarity and empathy, dehumanizes us. At that point anything can be done to the prisoner because he is no longer a human being, he is just a number to extract information from. In case he does not bend, the prisoner becomes a subject to be tortured with murderous isolation, depriving him of all hope, in case of a life-sentence without parole, until death.

A conception of law worthy of your ethics. This is the leprosy you call civilization.

Alfredo Cospito, January 2025