

FOR THOSE WHO DIDN'T RUN FOR COVER DURING THE TEMPEST

On the trial of the Lecce anarchists and their struggle against the Cpt

The trial against 13 anarchists began on January 19. As well as a series of actions against some of the multinationals that get rich on war and genocide they are accused of the crime of having carried out a constant and determined struggle against the concentration camps for immigrants in San Foca. Two of them have been in prison since May 12 2005, another two are under house arrest, a fourth is on bail. Once again this trial is based on article 270bis or 'conspiracy with terrorist aims', with which dozens of revolutionaries, rebels or simply left-wing militants have been arrested over recent years without a trace of proof. Nowadays a slogan on the wall is enough to be accused of 'subversive association' (conspiracy).

But that is not what we really want to say here. We know that the laws of the State are spiders' webs for the rich and steel chains for the poor, just as we have never looked for any sense of justice in the articles of the law books. We want to point out what makes these anarchists dangerous and what there is that is universal in their struggle. There has been a lot of talk about CPT [Centri di Permanenza Temporanea, i.e. Detention Centres] over the past months. Since some investigative journalism has reported on the inhuman conditions that women and men are surviving under in these structures, the various political forces have come to blows over who is responsible for such 'management'. But the point is not how the CPT are being managed, so much as the very nature of these institutions. Introduced in Italy in 1998 by the centre-left government with the Turco-Napolitano law (approved also with votes from the Greens and Rifondazione Comunista), the CPT are to all effects concentration camps. Exactly like the fascist and nazi concentration camps (and before them the colonial ones, in Cuba and South Africa), these are places where people are locked up and held at the total discretion of the police, without having committed any crime. Conditions inside are desperate. The disgusting food and ill treatment are terrible consequences, but they are not the main problem. It doesn't take much to realise that.

What for an Italian is a simple 'administrative misdemeanor' (not having documents), has become a crime worthy of internment for foreigners. As history teaches us – it is enough to think of the racist laws of all the States between the two world wars – in order for such concentration camps to exist it is necessary to establish the equation foreigner = delinquent. That is how the legislation on immigration – by both right and left – should be understood in Italy (but we could say in Europe and the world). If the same criteria were applied to so-called citizens as that which immigrants require in order to be conceded a stay permit, millions of us would be locked up or forced to live in clandestinity. How many Italians can demonstrate that they have work 'according to the rules'? How many live more than three to a flat of 60 square metres? Knowing that temporary contracts are not valid for obtaining a stay permit, how many of us would turn out to be 'regular'? It is not rhetoric to define all that State racism, it is a necessary observation.

Now, the CPT (but more generally all forms of administrative detention, including the identification centres or 'waiting areas' in which refugees or those seeking political asylum are held) are the realisation of this racism. Barbed wire has been the symbol of concentration camps and totalitarian oppression for sixty years, and power has surrounded these new camps with the same in its involuntary coherence. Just as it is no coincidence that administrative detention, a device typical of colonial dominion, is spreading all over the world today (from the Palestinian ghettos to Guantanamo, from the secret British ones where immigrants 'suspected of terrorism' are locked up, to the Italian CPT). At a time when bombing and massacring is being carried out in the name of 'human rights', millions of undesirables are being brutally deprived of any 'rights' and are detained in camps surrounded by police and entrusted to the 'care' of some 'humanitarian organisation'.

If the CPT are concentration camps – as many now agree – it is quite logical to try to destroy them and to help the women and men interned in them to escape. And it is quite logical to strike the collaborators who build or manage them. This is what the Lecce anarchists thought. Amidst widespread indifference, they publicly denounced the responsibility



KIDNAPPED WHILE AWAITING TRIAL

May 12 2005 operation 'Nottetempo' is underway: there are raids all over Italy, five Lecce anarchists arrested, another 13 under investigation on bail. For all the charge is 'subversive association with aims of subverting democratic order' (article 270bis C.p.) In the days that follow there are many spontaneous demonstrations of solidarity.

May 21 a large demo in solidarity with the arrested and against the CPT goes through the streets of the city centre. The day after Lecce prison where three of the arrested are being held is picketed. The other two comrades are under house arrest. Applications for bail are rejected and two are transferred to Melfi and Salerno.

August 6 one comrade is put under house arrest and a month later another under house arrest is freed but compelled not to leave the town. Throughout the summer there are demonstrations of solidarity to the arrested and the struggles against expulsion continue. After two months' harsh isolation Salvatore is transferred from Salerno to Sulmona.

November 8 a demo in solidarity with the arrested takes place to corroborate the struggle against the concentration camps.

November 9 the preliminary hearing takes place. All charges against two of the accused, and some charges are dropped for the others. The trial is due to start on **January 19**.

THE PUBLICITY THEY DESERVE

In the trial against the Lecce anarchists, the following have sued for

of the direction of the CPT of San Foca – that is the Lecce catholic church, through the foundation 'Regina Pacis' – and the infamous conditions the prisoners were subjected to. They gathered first hand accounts, data, and they organised themselves. They have become a thorn in the side of the church and local power. Already in the summer of 2004 one of them was arrested for trying to help some immigrants escape during a revolt that broke out inside 'Regina Pacis'. Then they went to the village markets and made known the names and surnames of the agents responsible for the beatings inside the CPT, the doctors who covered them up, as well as the director who beat them, kidnapped and forced muslims to eat pork. Without ever losing sight of their objective: to close these concentration camps for ever, not to make them 'more humane'.

While all this was happening, some anonymous actions struck the banks that financed the CPT, as well as church property and that of the director of 'Regina Pacis', Don Cesare Lodeserto. And the anarchists were quick to praise them publicly. The authorities could no longer hide the problem. So what did they do? First they arrested Lodeserto on charges of kidnapping, embezzlement, private violence and spreading tendentious and false news (the prelate sent himself threatening messages which he then attributed to 'Albanese criminal elements'), then they had the San Foca CPT shut down. Lodeserto was put under house arrest, then released. They then arrested the anarchists with the aim of getting them out of the way for years. Important people strongly defended the priest. For the most part, those who defended the anarchists were simply honest previous offenders.

Justice has been done... But something doesn't tally. The tower of accusations against the rebels is clumsy and tottering, but above all, struggles against the CPT are gaining ground all over Italy.. In April the internees of the concentration camps in via Corelli in Milan climb on to the roof, they cut themselves and shout the most universal of all demands: freedom! After them, the immigrants interned in the CPT of Corso Brunelleschi in Turin, then the protest spreads to Bologna, Rome, Crotona. Dozens manage to escape, while outside practical support for the struggle begins to self-organise. Along with posters and initiatives denouncing the responsibilities of those who get rich on the deportation of immigrants (from Alitalia to the Red Cross, from the transport companies to the private firms implicated in the management of the camps), small acts of sabotage start to spread. With that spontaneous convergence that is the secret of all struggles, the crimes that the Lecce anarchists are accused of begin to multiply.

It is this movement – still weak, but it is growing – that has publicly exposed the problem of the CPT, making left wing politicians run for cover in their pathetic attempt to attribute full responsibility for the concentration camps to the right wing government. That all this annoys them is demonstrated in the declarations of home minister Pisanu concerning anarchists and antagonists who 'incite' the immigrants (as if the inhuman conditions they are living in was not a constant incitement) and on the need of the CPT to contrast 'terrorism' (it's a well known fact that anyone wanting to pass police controls in order to carry out an attack goes around without papers).

Why?

The CPT lay bare the fact that exclusion and violence are the foundation of democracy. They also expose the profound links between a permanent state of war, racism and the militarisation of society. It is no coincidence that the Red

damages: the manager of an ESSO petrol station sabotaged (due to the American company's great responsibility for the genocide in Iraq, pumps were damaged at petrol stations all over Italy), the doctors of San Foca Cazzato and Roberti, and the ex-director don Cesare Lodeserto.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REGINA PACIS

June-August 2002.

The first demonstrations outside Regina Pacis take place.

31.08.02, Melendugno. A Town Council is disrupted to the sound of football supporters' trumpets in protest against the mayor who had forbidden a demo and an exhibition against Regina Pacis in San Foca.

3.11.02, Monteroni. Demo in front of the church where Mons. Ruppi (director of the foundation Regina Pacis) is about to give a sermon. An exhibition about immigration is put up, banners hung and leaflets distributed. The Bishop renounces coming out on the balcony to talk to the people and escapes through a back door.

12.11.02, Lecce, in the evening, some spoil-sports gather outside the Prefecture. With whistles, trumpets and megaphones, they show their disgust for the 11 home ministers who are due to hold a summit on control and immigration next day. A series of road blocks take place and leaflets are handed out.

13.11.02, Lecce. During the demo of the Social Forum against the ministers' summit, some demonstrators aim rotten fruit and eggs at the police, journalists and Lecce Social Forum cops (whose spokesperson had condemned the demonstrations against Mons. Ruppi).

20.11.02, Casarano. During an Alliance Nazionale conference on 'Bossi-Fini' fifteen comrades unfurl a banner against expulsions. Home undersecretary Mantovano and Don Lodeserto were participating in the conference.

10.05.03, Lecce. Shortly before the start of the cycle race Giro d'Italia, slogans against the CPT and its directors appear on the asphalt and nearby walls.

12.10.03, San Foca. Outside the CPT about a dozen people show their solidarity to the inmates. From inside the immigrants reply by throwing objects and rubbish at the carabinieri. At the end of the demonstration a thick shower of eggs full of red paint leaves its mark on the walls of the CPT.

8.11.03, Lecce and Lequile. Two cashpoints of Banca Intesa, which hosts the Regina Pacis accounts, are burned.

3.12.03, Calimera. Leaflets and graffiti against doctor Catia Cazzato. Following the beating of some of the immigrants she signed false medical certificates maintaining that the immigrants had been wounded accidentally.

16.03.04, Lecce. Failed attack on a Banca Intesa branch.

01.04.04, Lecce. About fifteen people gather outside the chapel where Monsignor Rупpi is celebrating Easter mass.

11.04.04, Lecce. Easter day, a banner against the CPT appears on scaffolding near the cathedral.

18.04.04, Lecce. 'Progetto Marta' takes place in the square, an initiative in which the Regina Pacis foundation tries to clean up its image by collecting goods and redistributing them among poor people, immigrants and homeless. Some comrades contest the initiative in a leaflet. On their refusal to show their identity cards the police react pushing and shoving but don't manage to take them to the police station.

Cross is present alongside the army in war and is at the same time implicated in the numerous concentration camps in Italy. Just as it is no coincidence that it participates in the 'antiterrorist' exercises with which the government wants to accustom us to war and catastrophe.

The criminalisation of the foreigner – scapegoat of the collective malaise – has always been a distinctive feature of dying societies and at the same time a precise project of exploitation. If they did not live in terror of being locked up and sent back home – where war, hunger, desperation often await them – immigrants without papers certainly wouldn't work for two euros an hour on the building sites of some Great Work, or die and have some cement thrown over them when they fall from the scaffolding. Progress needs them: that is why they are made clandestine but not all are expelled. They are 'welcomed' in the concentration camps, they are sorted, selected on the basis of agreements with their various countries of origin and according to the amount of docility they show the boss. What awaits them is the reflection of a society at war (against economic and political rivals, against populations, against one's own natural limitations).

One of the first victims of this whole mobilisation is language. The current use of expressions such as 'humanitarian war' – or for a concentration camp to be called a 'welcome centre' – says a lot about the deviation between the horror that surrounds us and the words they use to describe it. And at the same time this deviation anaesthetises the conscience. We call the CPTs 'concentration camps' then we go and vote for those who built them, we talk about 'massacre' but we are content to march peacefully against the war, so long as nothing happens. While the oceanic demonstration was taking place on the 25th April in Milan, the rebels of via Corelli were on the rooftops shouting that the resistance isn't over, but the rhetoric of 'liberation' did not budge an inch, it carried on celebrating.

Perhaps something is changing. While State propaganda is equalizing the enemy within - the rebel, the 'terrorist', the Stranger, the fanatic, the kamikaze -, the resistance is arming itself and the 'suburbs' two steps from here, where the poor are burning the last illusions of integration in this society, are exploding. Generous young people mean concentration camps when they say it, and they organise as a result, like foreigners in a foreign world. They are disposed to conquer freedom along with the others, even at the risk of losing their own. They hate prisons, to the point that they do not even wish them on the worst swine (the many, too many, Lodesertos). These forms of active discontent are spreading at a distance, but they already bear a trace of something in common. False words are mutinying, and new behaviour is unleashing new words into the reality of daily life..

We will not abandon to the revenge of the judges those who did not stay in safety when others were overcome by the tempest. In these sad and servile times, one choice contains all the others: which side are you on?

THE TRIAL

As the authorities knew that comrades would be coming from all over Italy to attend the event, the judge decided that the hearing would be very short. He justified this decision by claiming that a more serious trial was due to begin the same day. Salvatore and Saverio, the two anarchists still in prison, were taken to the court handcuffed and faced the court locked in two separate cages. Dozens of comrades were in court to greet them. Public prosecutor Lino Giorgio Bruno asked for further restrictions to be inflicted on Marina and Cristian, the two anarchists under house arrest, but no relevant decision was made on this occasion. The next hearing will be held on March 2, and these will continue throughout the following months. A number of initiatives, such as public meetings, road blocks and protest gatherings were organised around the day of the trial.

11.07.04, San Foca. While there is a demo going on outside, the internees rebel, destroying everything they can. One of them manages to climb the wall, and is immediately chased by the carabinieri. The demonstrators put themselves in the midst of this and the military charge. One girl comrade has a broken leg and another is beaten and arrested: a few days later he is sent home under house arrest.

17.08.04, San Foca. After that has happened in the preceding weeks dozens of internees managed to escape from the CPT, other try. Blocked by the carabinieri they are beaten up: the director don Cesare Lodeserto also participates. That night a window of his house is struck by an incendiary bottle. A leaflet claiming the action says, 'Against don Cesare and against the CPT'.

29.08.04, San Foca. While a demo is taking place outside the CPT, some prisoners make it known that they are on hunger strike.

A FEW EPISODES OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CPT OVER THE PAST MONTHS

19 May, Turin. The inmates of the Cpt rebel by burning mattresses and damaging whatever they can. They begin a hungerstrike. To avoid his imminent repatriation one breaks a window and swallows glass: he spends the morning in hospital and loses the deportation plane. In the afternoon 150 people gather outside the CPT. Some climb on to the walls with a banner, some make a hole in the wall. The riot cops charge but are pushed back. The gathering disperses but a group of demonstrators aims for the tram depot to explain to the drivers the responsibilities of their firm, the Gtt, concerning expulsions. At the terminal a demonstrator is arrested.

19 May, Genoa. Locks of the metro are glued 'For Ibrahima and Mamadou', two Senegalese brothers killed by 'the forces of order' of terror. For all those locked up in the prisons and the CPT who are rebelling and struggling.'

21 May, Turin. On hunger strike again, the detainees in the Cpt are rebelling once more. Many are threatening suicide and a number of them swallow glass and batteries. One cuts his stomach so seriously that he has to be rushed to hospital to have it stitched. During the afternoon demo outside prisoners climb on to the roof and talk to some demonstrators. That way they find out that it is often precisely the Red Cross that opposes the release of those who have the right to leave.

23 May, Milan. In the evening a group of immigrants goes up on the roofs of via Corelli shouting 'free everyone'. While two of them swallow razorblades, the others start to damage the structure of the concentration camp from the roof, soon imitated by those on the floor underneath. 21 inmates are arrested and accused of 'serious damage' and 'arson'.

May 25, Turin. During a round up a little Nigerian boy, Eddy, falls from a cornice which he was hanging from to escape the mastins in uniform. Two girls, the only witnesses to the affair, are dragged to the police station in Corso Brunelleschi. Furious, the Nigerians in the area come out into the streets and clash with police.

27 May, Turin. Demo outside the Moroccan consulate which is also involved in the expulsions, and in San Salvario where, months before, a Moroccan girl fell from a roof to escape a round-up by city cops. In the afternoon, at Eddy's commemoration the tension rises and new clashes with police are in the air.

28 May, Turin. A demonstration of over one thousand people goes through the city. Although there in force, the cops only show themselves to stop the march from reaching the police station. The immigrants are furious. When they get to Porta Susa station they block the railway lines: 'In a town that kills no one should be travelling' Some damage, particularly of a cashpoint of the San Paolo.

7 June Caltanissetta (Sicily). In the morning two tanks of petrol are found at the entrance to the local Red Cross, on the wall 'No CPT' and a note 'The Red Cross manages the CPT of Pian del lago. Solidarity to the immigrants.'

8 June, Turin. A group of comrades interrupts a debate to confront the mayor and city councillors with their responsibility and to remember the immigrants killed.

11 June, Milan. Around eleven o'clock in the evening two people go up on to the roof of one of the sheds of the CPT in via Corelli and take advantage of an opening in the wall that is being rebuilt to leg it.

15 June, Bologna. Presidium outside the head offices of Castelmaggiore della Concerta Spa, the firm that supplies the

food to the CPTs of Bologna and Modena.

16 June, Turin. About one hundred parking meters belonging to the Gtt company which is involved in expulsions, are glued.

29 June, Bologna. In 6 they manage to escape from the CPT of via Mattei.

2 July, Bari. 91 people escape from the CPT rigged up in Palese airport.

5 July, Bologna. At sunset ten immigrants try to escape from CPT. Raising one of the security grids that cover the courtyard, they climb over the wall. Five of them make it.

9 July, Turin. Taking advantage of a demo outside the gates of the centre, seven prisoners jump over the side wall of the CPT. At the same time a new hunger strike is started inside.

1 August, Ragusa. A demo against the CPT in via Napoleone Colajanni ends with an invasion of the entrance yard.

16 September, Rovereto. A BNL agency becomes a target for paint. The same bank was also attacked on March 12 during a demo against fascism in all its forms.

22 September. The final hearing of a trial against 21 immigrants accused of destroying the Cpt of via Corelli on May 23. Some loudly denounce the fact that the trial is illegal and ask for it to be annulled. Many of those waiting to go into the courtroom protest loudly until the judge orders them outside. Baton-wielding cops immediately put that into effect.

26 September, Bologna. The inmates of via Mattei begin a hunger strike in protest against the 'filth, lack of medicine and the beatings against those who rebel'.

2 October, Bologna. From today there will be a demo outside the CPT every Saturday.

4 October, Turin. About a dozen BNL cashpoints are sabotaged. Notes are found accusing the bank of complicity with the CPT and the war in Iraq.

12 October, Caltanissetta. A revolt breaks out on the bus under police

escort transferring 140 immigrants from the CPT of Pian del Lago to Fontanarossa airport, Catania. Twelve cops are wounded and seven prisoners disappear into the countryside.

21 October, Gorizia. Occupation of the Red Cross headquarters. A month later the director sends a letter to the Prefecture in which he renounces the management of the CPT under construction in Bari.

26 October, Turin. 'Torino Cronaca', the Turin daily flagbearer of the most boorish populist racism, reports one of its vans being demolished one night by unknown vandals.

End of October, Rovereto. Bogu, a Croatian anarchist who has been resident in the town for 10 years and married to an Italian, receives an order to leave Italy signed by the police commissioner of Trento. A mobilisation begins immediately in solidarity with him and against expulsion in general. During the whole of November there are meetings, films, pickets and a demo.

2 November, Caltanissetta. 43 escape from Pian del Lago CPT.

12 November, Bergamo. The doors of three branches of Banca Intesa are damaged during the night with molotovs and pick axe blows, for its involvement in the management of Regina Pacis.

23 November, Gorizia. With a blitz on the opening of the Town Council in Gradisca, a group of demonstrators demands the suspension of the connection of the CPT's drainage system.

2 December, Rome. A group of students occupy the hall where the Council of Misericordia is due to take place.

3 November, Rovereto. Two trains from Trentitalia are burned. In the claim reference is made to the rail company's responsibility in the deportation of immigrants.

29 November, Rovereto. A group of supporters interrupt the town council and throw leaflets denouncing the institutions' responsibility for the Bogu's eventual expulsion. A few days later the court decides that the Croatian anarchist's stay permit is to be renewed.

Addresses of the Lecce anarchists in prison or under house arrest

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