



**Gilda Sportiello**

**POTEVI PENSARCI PRIMA / YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT EARLIER...**

**And other moral lessons on women's bodies**

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In Italy and around the world, abortion is back at the centre of public debate. And the conversation isn't going away anytime soon, because the attack on a right we thought had been secured long ago has only just begun.

An angry pamphlet, a well-documented investigation, a defence of a right under siege, and the hope for better politics.

Unsolicited judgments, attempts at dissuasion, counselling rooms, psychological intimidation, misinformation: this is what a woman faces when she decides to terminate a pregnancy. These are all tactics designed to make her feel guilty, wrong, sinful, and burdened by the stigma of pain.

This is how abortion is framed by morality—or bad politics disguised as morality. It is treated as a taboo, not recognized as a healthcare right, and thus obstructed and undermined by non-existent services, gutted counselling centres, objection rates so high they prevent access, and unacceptable practices that amount to unpunished violence.

Gilda Sportiello urges us to remain vigilant against the assault on safe and legal abortion being waged in Italy and many other countries by the right wing. She presents undeniable data, dismantles the rhetoric of pain and guilt, and reaffirms that women are neither saints and mothers nor criminals and infanticides. Abortion must be defended as the product of a free and conscious choice, provided in spaces that are safe and free from judgment.

**Gilda Sportiello** (Naples, 1987) is a member of the Italian Parliament for the Five Star Movement. A spokesperson in the Chamber of Deputies, she serves on the Social Affairs Committee, the Parliamentary Committee for Childhood and Adolescence, and the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee on the death of student Giulio Regeni.

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