

VareseNews

Clean hands 20 years ago when the bribes were shameful

Pubblicato: Venerdì 17 Febbraio 2012

On February 17, the anniversary of the arrest of Mario Chiesa in Milan (photo), Socialist from Milan that gave way to a season of arrests called Clean Hands. In Varese the investigation began a few months before.

We talked about this in a forum for you readers, with journalists Marco Giovannelli and Roberto Rotondo, the journalist of the Corriere della Sera Claudio Del Frate and Giuseppe Adamoli longtime Democratic politician, who was acquitted of all charges after a mistrial.

Giovannelli: "Who was the first arrested for *tangentopoli*?"

Del Frate: "He was a doctor, Dr. Garofalo from the therapeutic nursing home Domus Cunardo. The investigation was for the abbot pm mistreatment, he said he paid the province to obtain favours. Notices for guaranties for two bigs of the of the DC and the PSI. But the real acceleration is between 6 and 8 May 1992. On 6 May they searched the headquarters of the PSI on Gradisca Road in Varese. In the drawer of Facchini they found a diary with information about the bribes. Two days after the arrests began. Part of a crackdown that hit all the big politicians of the time, De Feo, Broggi, Rezzonico and Sabatini. The mayor, however, never confessed."

Adamoli: "I was already leader of the Democrats in the region, and the signs were all there."

Del Frate: "The inquest collected straightaway 4 fugitives. But the point is that the political elite of the county ended up under investigation, at the highest levels."

Adamoli: "And then also the Communist Party."

Del Frate: "Yes, but in a second step, towards the end of 1992."

Adamoli: "Not only in Varese that but also Busto Arsizio, where tangentopoli involved DC, PCI and PSI."

Giovannelli: "How did the system work?"

Del Frate: "From the minutes emerge that there weren't precise percentages specified in Varese that instead happened in Milan."

Giovanelli: "The business of *Piazza Repubblica* in Varese was sensational."

Del Frate: "In that case, an architect brought a case on behalf of two constructors to the then mayor Bronzi. Then also the responsibility of leaders emerged as the PCI Pino Merla. Other arrests came to the Malnate area two thousand. "

Giovanelli: "And in Milan, how did it go? You, Adamoli, were a politician at the regional level. "

Adamoli: "I make a premise. Clean Hands luckily took place. There was the need to intervene. There was a legendary sermon of Cardinal Martini in the Duomo, where he warned the politicians. There was little restraint, too many expenses. But we were not all equal. We of the Left Democrats, remember, we entered into the regional government after the elections of 1990 because we did not like the document that the then Secretary Frigerio had created with the PSI. There was a haze, I said so in the regional council."

Giovanelli: "Your personal story when did it begin?".

Adamoli: "My arrest took place at the end of 1992. I signed the junta Ghilardotti program, one that would unite the Christian Democratic Party and the PDS, a council of emergency, after the first series of arrests.

We presented the new addition to the press, and that night I was arrested. I've said and written many times. I stayed 3 days in jail. I asked to meet with Frigerio who was accusing me. Prosecutors took the bait. They wrote that two people were accusing me, Frigerio and a contractor, but declarations of the latter actually acquitted me. At the trial Di Pietro never presented the indictment, the court took note of it. My lawyer told me that the gesture was an acquittal, because the act actually contained incorrect information. I had the compensation, but I would not ever go to the European court of justice. My compensation came in 2000 when I could introduce myself to my constituents that voted en masse and brought me back into the regional council. "

Giovanelli: "And then?"

Adamoli: "People often ask me but how could you not know? Sure, business committees act in secret, so there were the rumors, but some "unholy pact" are kept well hidden. I say this for the Penati case. If it appeared that he was guilty, did his advisors and counsellors know? Most likely not. "

Del Frate: "The most convincing explanation of the Clean Hands is the one which gave Piercamillo Davigo, a judge who was part of the pool.

The system jumps, in his opinion, when entrepreneurs, who had benefited, they see that it is not convenient anymore. No longer they have the return they hoped. During those years Italy risked defaulting, the system of public works that kept in operation the political parties stopped. The state no longer had the money. At this point I break a lance in favour of politicians and say that also entrepreneurs had huge responsibilities. An episode is the same for everyone. Mario Chiesa didn't explain tangentopoli to the magistrates, he in reality was quiet. It took the other arrested businessmen to tell all they knew. The conspiracy theory of the judges is totally wrong. There was the line to go to confession to the magistrates, and entrepreneurs to protect their companies told everything. "

Adamoli: "It is true, but I'll comment. Even now the state has no money, so why doesn't the same thing happen then? I give this answer. There was once a part of the accused as the desire to get rid of a huge burden for what happened, not today. There is a sense of impunity, of arrogance, that once there wasn't. It has been elevated to a model the sly behaviour. "

Rotondo: " Wasn't it like this in the nineties?"

Adamoli: "Those were the years when you felt really ashamed, much less today. The laws are more lax. No more false accounting. There have been amnesties. Tax evasion has been underestimated. It is an addiction. "

Del Frate: "It is one of the paradoxes of Clean Hands. The great hope of purification is the lasted two years. From '94 onwards began instead a showdown against judges. Then it must be said that today the parties are lighter and therefore it is difficult to repeat certain dynamics. I remember that the PCI had at least 10 officers in Varese. "

Giovannelli: "Milan and Varese were the centre of the Clean Hands?"

Del Frate: "Not only, throughout Italy, there were inquiries. Milan, Genoa, Turin were in the forefront. Only a dozen places throughout Italy were not affected. And I remember one thing. There were no interceptions. The surveys were all based on confessions. "

Adamoli: "Sure, but Milan was the epicentre. Tangentopoli was a national phenomenon, but the pool of Clean Hands was in Milan. A pool that had no equal in Italy. "

Del Frate: "In Milan there was a group of trained judges. But even a reflective middle class that had in some way opened a season in which they asked for a new morality. There was a

group of civil society that had personalities like Bassetti, Spataro. "

Giovanelli: "After the Clean Hands, the only party that has remained the same as before is the *Lega*. Why?"

Del Frate: "The contribution of the *Lega* in its investigation, for accusations was zero. The political was a thousand. The people with the *Lega* realised that another policy was possible. It appeared as an alternative, even though the *Lega* itself was left burnt. Bossi was questioned by Di Pietro and admitted that part of the Enimont money had gone to the party. "

Adamoli: "The *Lega*, at that time, was not in any control room. But in 1990 it was already the second largest party in regional elections. So, the mobilisation of the people occurred, the Northern *Lega's* vote was against the system and was already bringing out a certain group that he wanted justice, even cursory.

At the time it took just a whistle to rush people. From 1995-96 the climate changed. The television of Berlusconi who stirred up the square in the years 92-93, then did the opposite. I never speak of conspiracy never, never, because there was no conspiracy. "

Rotondo: "Why do you think the climate changed?"

Adamoli: "Doubts about the excesses of some judges. The final figures said that 40% of suspects was convicted. "

Del Frate: "The figures capture well how it went. 40% were convicted, 40% time lapsed, and 20% discharged. But many prescriptions and acquittals occurred after some laws were changed. That is, the game was already underway when they changed the rules, it must be said. "

Adamoli: "Of course, some events dragged on for years. But I was, in a sense, lucky, acquitted in 1994, one of the very first in Italy. "

Del Frate: "There is an episode which, in my opinion, reveals how the climate has changed. Mario Chiesa was arrested a second time in 2009 for bribery in connection with an investigation on waste. More or less in the same period, the former magistrate Gherardo Colombo held a conference in Como, and the mayor withdrew the sponsorship. The moral, the Church still has access to the municipalities, does business with them and tricks the mayors as it did then. To Colombo instead they barricaded the doors."

Adamoli: "The investigation was fair, I already told you."

Del Frate: "Clean Hands has shown that there was corruption, and that it was sanctioned. It told the public that morality is the precondition for political purposes. And that politics alone is not able to regulate itself. "

Adamoli: "And today you could still go wrong. If Lega minister Pini's amendment on the liability of the judges were to pass, the system would collapse. In the local government, then, mayors and presidents have so much power with little supervision. The assemblies hardly count anymore and that does not help the morality."

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