



Fabio Bortolotti

# PRODITIO BETRAYAL

(OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES)

Albatros



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**Albatrós**

*Honeste vivere  
Alterum non laedere  
Suum cuique tribuere*

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## *Betrayal*

In the treacherous world of contemporary politics, where betrayal, deceit and secret agreements represent the daily routine and have no boundaries, betrayers perform the role of Members of Parliament and are endowed with a huge malice and guile, which would exceed even Dante's imagination.

The overall situation is frightful for a series of reasons, including the inurement, the lethargy, the complete indifference of the citizens towards the betrayal as a system, even when things are no longer acceptable. Once they narcotise citizens with easy promises, the honourable *lords of politics*, who hold the power, do not hesitate before weaving new betrayals and plots aiming at endorsing small circles of citizens, rather than communities.

The decline and betrayals of politics depend on the oligarchy of the parties and on the irresponsibility of the honourable lords of politics, who exploit a fake democracy, which substantially finds its only representation in the voting right (which is influenced itself.)

If democracy is not fed, supported and boosted by the people, it becomes easy for an oligarchy of parties to turn it into a dictatorship, performing the highest forms of betrayal.

In order to fix the flaws, the deviant behaviours and the twistedness of democracy, people should not expect oligarchies of parties to provide solutions and to solve every problem; on the contrary, they should react and find ways to give value to the basic principles of democracy. In other words, people should take action resolutely, without accepting the betrayal of democratic principles by the oligarchy of parties and the honourable lords of politics. They should not accept bad politics; they should not give up, because that could lead to new and worse betrayals.

It's time for citizens to use the weapon of popular sovereignty, mentioned in the Italian Republican Constitution: Article 1 – “*Italy is a democratic Republic [...] Sovereignty belongs to the People.*” Currently, these words are only partially implemented because of two main reasons:

- Nowadays, popular sovereignty is greatly weakened by the EU and international organizations, which - directly or indirectly - are confining it into increasingly smaller boxes;

- popular sovereignty is strongly conditioned by oligarchy of parties, which restrains and represses it.

Italy, in order to keep in step with the times and have political, moral and social progress, should:

- eliminate bicameralism, which is useless and expensive;

- get rid of the current multitude of jugglers and illusionists of politics who paralyse democracy;

- reduce the members of Parliament to 250;

- equip itself with an upstanding political class, made of competent and honest people who can give concrete answers to modern society's problems.

It is time to stop systemic betrayals and useless chattering. It is time for Italy to reach the standards set by the more advanced European countries. In other words, it is time to eliminate all the betrayals deceiving the citizens and creating moral and social decay.

It is also time to end the artifices and the tricks of politics, which are not ethical nor transparent, and can no longer be tolerated.

Once they have obtained the power, the main political coalition acts according to the *sic volo, sic iubeo* principle, which means that what prevails – sometimes irrationally – is the coalition's will, which represents the will of the parties, rather than the will of people.

Deceitful ideologies, demagogism and intrigues of politics are cause for concern, and they often represent a betrayal of democratic principles, jeopardising the morality and the need for transparency of those who perform public functions.

In a mature and complete democracy, there should be no room for the so-called *arcana imperii*, the political betrayals, the ambiguity and the enigmatic behaviours of the honourable lords of politics.

Politics should be based on decency and transparency, which are always fulfilling values.

### *Systemic betrayal*

Current politics have a strong relationship with endemic evils, like betrayals, deceits and wiles, which are now part of the system itself. Political behaviours based on these miserable features are nothing but disgusting, but the citizens are unfortunately used to this.



Apparently, for the honourable lords of politics it is normal to cheat each other, and ambiguity, betrayals and opportunism are increasingly shared values. The heinous political plans are developed secretly, and are full of systemic betrayals. On the contrary, what the citizens see is showy agreements, sealed with hugs and kisses *coram publico*. Of course, nothing of what we see is real. Such behaviours are fake, false formality drenched with duplicity and lies.

These honourable people tend to conceal things in order to exonerate their own behaviours or their party's. Basically, what they try to do is hide their wrongdoings, running away from their moral and political responsibilities, and sometimes they even become "heroes". All of this confirms the saying "truth and power never overlap." Moreover, it is possible to argue that today "truthfulness, objectivity and honesty" are unknown to power.

If the democratic system rests on an endless series of lies, it means that a systemic betrayal is taking place, that the unaware citizens' right to know the truth is not respected, that they are destined to be victims of a global deceit. All in all, the concealment of truth and the lies of the honourable lords of politics not only provide a bad example, they also testify how the duties of *loyalty, discipline and hon-*

*our* provided for by article 54 of the Constitution are disrespected, leading to a systemic betrayal and an ethical and moral denial.

The primary concern of the honourable lords of politics is to have an alibi, to preserve face, even when their behaviour is wrong or immoral; in other words, a systemic betrayal.

A cornerstone of representative democracy is the concept of majority, adopted by the Parliament and many institutional committees to take decisions and administrative measures. This principle implies the compliance with laws and regulation, in order to guarantee the right functioning of the institutional bodies. The Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) incisively argued that “majority has the power, but it’s not right,” because “in a democracy, you have to take everybody into account: the just, the deceitful and the empty-headed (H. Ibsen – *An Enemy of the People*.) This means that a political majority is made of all the three kinds of people.

Political analysts and experts claim that if an institutional body is wrongly assembled or democratic principles are jeopardised, then the entire democracy is subject to an irreversible crisis, because it is not able to carry out its functions properly.

The different types of democratic crisis within an institutional body, representing a systemic betrayal, can be identified as follows:

- lack of opposition forces;
- excessive longevity of a political majority;
- lack of alternating opposition parties.

When a systemic betrayal occurs, there's the risk of having a crystallization of power and the stiffening of institutions and political narrative, with a consequent loss of accountability by both the majority and the opposition. A serious systemic betrayal is the current Italian absolutist electoral law, which does not include:

- a 5% minimum threshold for electoral lists;
- a two-round run-off system (like the French);
- the possibility to express three preferences;
- a 10-year maximum office for elected officials, namely two consecutive legislatures.

Since Italian electoral law does not provide for the democratic provisions above, prefigures a condition of inferiority towards the power, similar to a political vassalage, therefore it represents a systemic betrayal. When such democratic provisions are not taken into consideration, the rise of absolutisms is unavoidable, fostered by the honourable lords of politics. In the long run, this kind of democracy is

destined to become weak and crumble, highlighting all its systemic betrayals.

Another alarming phenomenon weakening democracy and the system is juridical uncertainty of legislative texts, due to an endless overlapping of laws and their superficiality and approximation.

This situation is an insult to jurists. It frustrates the fundamental democratic principles and has double negative impact:

- it allows dishonest and aggressive people to trick the weak, since thanks to uncertain laws, they can take advantage of their privileged position;
- it jeopardises the position of the weak and the vulnerable, since thanks to uncertain laws, they are more exposed to abuse of power and injustice by the dishonest and the aggressive.

Juridical uncertainty represents a danger for the neutrality of the law, since it might frustrate the principle according to which all are equal before it. This unfortunately wide-spread framework highlights a serious betrayal of both the juridical and democratic system.

The legislator has produced a huge amount of laws and provisions that have eventually overlapped and contradicted each other, generating such confusion

that it's now almost impossible to understand and implement the laws properly. The endless legislative production confirms the existence of many juridical flaws, which have so far been neglected by the honourable lords of politics, who have never proved themselves willing to avoid a systemic betrayal.

Such wicked political strategies are supported by intricate performance, control and compliance check procedures that do not lead to any concrete outcome, since they do not impose adequate pecuniary sanctions.

The situation described above is a violation of the basic principles of jurisprudence, such as transparency and clarity, and represents a clear betrayal of the democratic system.

As a result of many deviant behaviours, omissions and insolvencies, we now have an indescribable legal maze - burdened by preventive and subsequent checks that are due to a substantial mistrust in citizens- which has so far proven to be useless.

You might wonder why the honourable lords of politics have adopted this strategy in formulating laws and provisions. The answer is very easy: it was convenient. Actually, this strategy allows them to:

- nurture the parties' affiliates and trap the non-affiliates;

- . create dissoluteness and possible tax evasion;
- create sneaky corruption;
- delight lawyers, who get more and more work.

When laws are uncertain, non-coercive and devoid of pecuniary, administrative, disciplinary and legal sanctions, decency and honesty in public institutions tend to disappear.

The aggressive, those who have the power, the rich and the influential find plenty of space to indulge in corruption, in order to get something that they couldn't get through honesty and legal ways. The current, inadequate legal provisions, without proper sanctions, inevitably lead to the betrayal of the legislative function itself, of the entire system and of the licit expectancies of the citizens.

Lastly, the many deviant behaviours, omissions, insolvencies and transgressions, as the lack of decency and transparency in the management of the *res publica*, all represent a clear betrayal of the democratic system.

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In a Country dominated by a fraudulent system, where constitutional principles are only apparently observed, democratic ones undervalued and public ethics and responsibilities in free fall, there can be no future.

As long as a useless multitude of jugglers and illusionists of politics will rule the Country, being generously paid to deceive the citizens, flaws and misinterpretations of democratic principles are destined to increase.

In these essay the author deals with ethically despicable political activities and behaviours, which against every democratic principle (rules, obligations and duties), jeopardise the sovereignty of the State and the moral and juridical integrity of public institutions.

The term *proditio* (betrayal) is here used to describe actions and behaviours that, in different contexts, disappoint people around us, maybe failing to keep promises and moral commitments.

The betrayal of democratic principles performed by the honourable lords of politics actualises in the dissolution of the bond between institutions and citizens, which is the main cause for current political and moral neglect.

**Fabio Bortolotti** is a jurist, a teacher and an essayist. He has had different roles in the public administration and worked for public institutions. He has been commissioner ad acta for many municipalities and institutional bodies, a special commissioner for several municipalities, head commissioner for competitive exams, ombudsman for the Trentino region, teacher on a specialisation course for municipal secretaries and a training course for mayors and council members, and a professor at the UTETD. He has written many essays about moral and political aspects of jurisprudence.

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