

THE FAILURE OF THE STRATEGY OF COLLABORATION WITH BOURGEOIS GOVERNMENTS AFTER WW2.

0. Foreword

The question of collaboration not only with governments, but also with bourgeois parties, is very complex and ultimately concerns the fundamental strategic problem whether, under what conditions, to what extent and for what purposes the workers' parties can participate in the institutions of the bourgeois state in the frame of bourgeois democracy.

The general consideration on this question that our parties have to face is therefore very large and can not be finished herein. Because of this, in our contribution we will restrict our synthetic analysis to only the historical experience of Communists in Italy, distinguishing between collaboration with some bourgeois parties, participation in elective institutions in the context of bourgeois democracy and support, or worse still, participation in governments, i.e. the "business committees" of the bourgeoisie.

1. Historical and theoretical premises

In the first ten years of its existence, within the CPI (it will be renamed as ICP after 1943) there was an even harsh debate among the various positions on these issues, sometimes in contrast with the positions of the Communist International. Bordiga and the majority of the central leadership till 1926 were standing on intransigent positions that wanted a "pure and uncontaminated" party, excluding any form of cooperation with other parties, as well as the participation in elections and the parliament. In this way the Communists' organized participation in the "Arditi del Popolo" (People's Assault Troupes, armed anti-fascist groups composed of socialists, anarchists, revolutionary trade-unionists, republicans, non-party elements and communists in disagreement with Bordiga) was lacking, despite Lenin's, Comintern's and Gramsci's anti-sectarian recommendations, splitting the anti-fascist movement and severely compromising the capacity for resistance to fascism. Gramsci and the new majority after the 3rd Congress in 1926 and the expulsion of Bordiga from the Party in 1930 were standing in defense of the Comintern's positions, but they were obliged to operate in illegality, in conditions of open fascist dictatorship; moreover, many leaders were imprisoned, including Gramsci himself. The conflict between this new majority and the right wing of the party, led by Angelo Tasca, was about the line to be taken towards social democracy in the fight against fascism. In fact, Tasca supported the need to reach an agreement with the Social Democrats and the General Labor Confederation leadership, largely merged into fascist unions, to develop a common anti-fascist action with undefined outlets. Togliatti, Grieco, Secchia, Longo and the majority, albeit with different nuances, underline the active role of social democracy in the repression of the labor movement in Germany and, more generally, in Europe, its responsibilities in the rise of fascism to power in Italy and its collusion with the fascist government. In line with the formal position of the Comintern on social-fascism, they categorically exclude, in the current phase, any forms of collaboration with social democracy, that is to be denounced and attacked to build communist hegemony in the working class, bringing it back to revolutionary positions and open confrontation with fascism. The confrontation with Tasca will end with his expulsion in 1929.

Nevertheless, the divergences of strategic conception are very strong even within the majority left by the 3rd Congress and will deeply influence the Party's line in the years to come, during the Resistance and after WW2.

In a very schematic way, we can say that Togliatti in those years was already affected by gradualism; he was proposing, as the objective of the fight against fascism and the war, considered

unavoidable, the establishment of a Republican Assembly, supported by workers' councils, which, once defeated fascism by insurrection, could promote democratic reforms. Later, in order to find a compromise, Togliatti will say that the Republican Assembly is only a form of agitation slogan, a kind of intermediate goal, but the final goal remains the workers' state. Secchia, Longo and the communist youth were standing on the position of transforming the unavoidable imperialist war into anti-fascist insurrection and civil war for the establishment of the worker and peasant government; since imperialist war does not turn into a revolutionary civil war by itself, it was necessary to strengthen the Party by creating a "Domestic Center", able to operate at the same time both in "legality", in direct contact with the masses, infiltrating the fascist mass organizations, and in the strictest clandestine conspiracy. Togliatti's approach is more "parliamentarian", compared to the approach by Secchia and Longo, more oriented towards a direct contact with the working masses. This difference will remain and strongly affect the further debate inside the Party. However, these are two political lines that, beyond their historical validity, are equally sincere and noble, even if inspired by different concepts. It would be wrong to see in them dishonesty and treacherous intents, unlike the sleazy and low diatribes of the heirs of the protagonists of those years. The later prevailing in the ICP after 1943 of Togliatti's line, obviously adapted to the new developments occurred, partially explains the political attitude of the ICP after the war, until its dissolution in 1991, towards governments and bourgeois parties.

2. The Governments of Antifascist Unity (1944-1947)

The debate between these two positions remained alive throughout the period of clandestinity, the participation in the Spanish Civil War and the anti-fascist armed Resistance, with different nuances, in compliance with the successive lines of the Comintern, from the united front to social-fascism, to popular fronts.

Togliatti returned from Moscow to Italy at the end of 1943, after the arrest of Mussolini, the Anglo-American landing in Sicily, the armistice and the getaway of the king and the court. Italy is divided and under two occupations: Northern Italy is occupied by Nazis and fascists, Southern Italy by Anglo-Americans troops. While in Northern Italy the armed Resistance, under the leadership of the Communist Party, has begun, in Southern Italy the mechanisms of the previous monarchic-liberal state have been restored, under the government of Marshal Badoglio and Communists have their representatives in a kind of bourgeois parliament. In Northern Italy, Communists are the leading party in both the armed struggle and the new political bodies, born in it, the National Liberation Committees. Here we see a difference in positions between the Northern Communists engaged in the armed struggle and the Southern Communists, involved in good faith in the compromising quagmire of bourgeois parliamentarianism. The former see in the armed antifascist Resistance not only a way of national liberation, but also a way of social emancipation and revolutionary anti-capitalist transformation; the latter conceive the Resistance exclusively under the aspect of military action to liberate the country and defeat Nazi-fascism, concerned about not damaging the Soviet Union's war effort by breaking anti-fascist unity due to issues of state form (monarchy or republic?) or social system (capitalism or socialism?). On his return to Italy, Togliatti proposed to the Party this second line, which postponed the struggle for the institutional and economic-social goals to a moment after the end of the war and the defeat of Nazi-fascism, creating a dichotomy between liberation struggle and revolutionary struggle for socialism, between the military and the political moment. After a harsh debate within the Party, Togliatti's line prevailed, despite the strong resistance by the cadres of the armed struggle, who accepted it by discipline, certainly not by conviction, given Togliatti's undisputed authority in the Party. On April 22nd, 1944, in Salerno, on the basis of the temporary waiver by the Communist Party of any anti-monarchy and anti-

capitalistic preconditions until the complete liberation of the country, the second government Badoglio was formed, with the participation of the ICP and Togliatti as the Deputy Prime Minister until 1945, then as the Minister of Justice until 1946. Nobody can say, whether this line was really suggested by Stalin, but it is a matter of fact that inside the Party and outside it, Togliatti was considered as Stalin's spokesperson, what does not fully correspond to truth. On the other side, considering the situation of military occupation of the country and the need to concentrate all efforts in the defense of the only Socialist state in the world, this choice to collaborate with other bourgeois parties and even with the monarchy was justified, even if bourgeois parties were mostly represented in the political bodies than in the armed units of partisans. The participation of the Italian Communist Party in the so-called "anti-fascist unity governments" lasted till June 1st, 1947, when, by order of the United States, Communists were excluded from the government. Because of Togliatti's excessive fears of provoking a conflict situation, not even an hour of strike was called; there were only a few shy bleating protests on the pages of L'Unità, the Party's newspaper.

After the end of the war and the referendum on the state form, monarchy or republic, a Constituent Assembly was formed with a significant participation of leaders of the Italian Communist Party that left their imprinting in the text of the Italian Constitution, making it different and more socially progressive, compared to the constitutions of other bourgeois states and the previous liberal state. However, the new Italian constitution was the result of laborious parliamentary compromises, achieved without resorting to the pressure of the people's masses and remained anyway the constitution of a bourgeois state, albeit advanced. The alternative institutional bodies, born directly from the armed antifascist struggle and expression of the self-liberated Northern Italy, were excluded from it in the name of the bourgeois parliamentarianism. Moreover, it was a programmatic constitution and, as such, would have been frozen in the future by behaviors legally lawful, but politically opposed to its implementation.

What balance can be drawn from these events? We consider seriously wrong both trying to justify whatever it takes the line of Togliatti and the majority of the leading group of the ICP at that time and exonerating ourselves from the necessary self-criticism resorting to the comfortable category of "betrayal". The need to help the Soviet Union by any possible mean in its effort to militarily defeat Nazi-fascism objectively justified the temporary postponement of the revolutionary objectives and the compromise with the monarchy and the bourgeois parties. We think that the further developments, unfavorable to the working class and the Communists, were the result of a mistaken assessment by Togliatti of the other conditions occurring and his wrong interpretation of Gramsci's teachings on the socialist revolution in Italy's conditions.

A first mistake is the acceptance a priori of the mechanisms and the forms of bourgeois democracy. Without prejudice to the postponement of the state form after the liberation, it would have been undoubtedly more coherent with Marxism-Leninism not to embrace tout court the solution of the constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage (in a country unaccustomed to the exercise of democratic rights, largely illiterate and manipulated by priests!), but to refer to those forms of organization of state power that were concretely arising from the Resistance.

A second mistake is the perpetuation of a compromise that should have been temporary and limited to the period of belligerence, up to the definitive acceptance, after the 20th Congress of the CPSU, of the "parliamentarian way" to socialism through the participation in bourgeois institutions as the only possible ground of struggle. We believe that these deviations derive, first of all, from a misinterpretation of Gramsci's teachings and from a gradualistic, evolutionary and non-dialectical conception of the revolutionary process, what led to the failure to understand that the "democratic state born from the Resistance" was however a bourgeois state. Secondly, the underestimation of the strength of a party that had, at the end of the war, 2,500,000 members,

including 500,000 in arms, generated in Togliatti the fear that the Communists would not be able to stand a test of strength with the allied occupation forces and with the bourgeoisie. This fear prevented the struggle to introduce into the Constitution social contents more favorable to the working class and to react to the parliamentary coup which excluded the communists from the government in 1947. Thirdly, Togliatti overestimated the steadiness and the duration of anti-fascist unity, on the one hand, and the real opportunities that bourgeois formal democracy leaves open to the struggle of the proletariat, on the other hand. Because of those errors, wrong assessments and the resulting fears, not because of a betrayal, the Communist Party was unable to resolve in its favor the dualism of power, created at the end of the Resistance in post-fascist Italy, despite its great human and material strength.

The period of participation of the Italian Communist Party to the coalition and the government of anti-fascist unity ended with an unexpected defeat that would have led the Party to a long period of opposition, sometimes very harsh, with insurrectionist forms too.

3. The opposition period from 1947 to 1972.

The exclusion of Communists from the government in 1947 marks the end of antifascist unity. Gradually, the partisans were excluded from the state apparatus, the police and the army, while the fascists were restored, amnestied by a provision signed by Togliatti himself, again on the basis of his errors of assessment on the real nature of the state and the duration of antifascist unity. At the economic and social level, the Communist Party, through the labor union, opened a long-lasting season of effective offensive struggles, which will lead, in the following '70s, to a significant improvement in the living conditions of workers and to the legislative recognition of their rights. At the political level, however, the ICP got stuck on purely defensive positions of defense of a "state born of the Resistance" that no longer existed since 1947. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the 8th Congress of ICP, this line of defense of the bourgeois state, uncritically identified with the "state born of the Resistance" and the affirmation of the parliamentary road to socialism through the mechanisms of bourgeois democracy became definitely part of the political program of the Italian Communist Party. Once again, the struggle in a defensive form was determined by the fear of Togliatti and the majority of the leadership of the ICP that any offensive, in those conditions – in hindsight we can say erroneously understood - could lead to a reaction that the Party would not be able to face, with its definitive ban as a consequence.

It can not be said that this line of shelving of the question of power, of passivity towards the restoration of the fascists in the state apparatus after the amnesty was shared by the whole party body, especially by those who participated in the armed struggle against fascism. Let's think of the case of the Red Quick-intervention Squads, armed departments of workers and partisans that up to the 1950s have been executing fascists and collaborators amnestied or released by the bourgeois courts. Let's think of the numerous semi-spontaneous episodes of armed uprisings, always to repel fascist resurgence, in Milan in 1947, in Genoa and in many other Italian cities in 1948 after the attempt to assassinate Togliatti, again in Genoa, in Reggio Emilia, Rome in 1960. In all these cases, the ICP's central leadership demanded to renounce any further revolutionary development for fear that the Party would be outlawed and a direct military intervention by the United States would occur. The repressions anyway were harsh and the Communist Party, which never publicly admitted the existence of its own military structure, was obliged to rescue many of the comrades who had been part of it, making them escape to socialist countries, especially in Czechoslovakia, Democratic Germany and Soviet Union. However, this did not change the official position of the Party, lying on the illusion of a gradual and parliamentary path to socialism and on the acceptance of formal bourgeois democracy as the only ground for struggle.

In order to understand the beginning of the degeneration of the Party, we can not to mention the cadres changes, decided in the 4th Organizational Conference in preparation of the 8th Congress. Up to the 30% of cadres were replaced by elements that joined the Party after the end of the war and did not experience the armed struggle. The process of mutation of the class composition of the Party will be completed in the 13th Congress, in 1972. On that occasion the vote of the territorial organizations was ratified as the only valid for the election of the congress delegates, excluding the vote of the factory party organizations. With the criteria in force up to then, the delegates were voted both in the factory and in the territorial organizations, to guarantee the prevalence of workers' delegates, present both in the factory and in the territory. From then on the worker component would have been diluted in territories, where the non-proletarian component would have been majority and this would have led to a prevalence in the party of elements extraneous to the working class. Having said that, we must stress that, until that moment, socialism remains the objective of the Party's action and its conceptual substance is not called into question. Till the 13th Congress the basic ideological concepts of Marxism-Leninism were not put into question; they were surely misunderstood and deformed, but not formally denied. We must, however, recognize and criticize:

- a contradiction in the line of the Party between the final goal (Socialism) and the way to achieve it (bourgeois democratic, parliamentary way), due to a wrong analysis of the state class nature and a wrong classless concept of democracy;
- an erroneous concept of the relation between consent and coercion in the defense of the socialist state (see the support to Dubček attempt of counterrevolution in 1968);
- a strong discrepancy between the intensity of the struggle for economic, social and civil rights and that of the political struggle for the seizure of power, practically non-existent;
- a wrong policy of cadres and of safeguarding the class nature of the Party.

4. Eurocommunism and the external support to bourgeois governments

At the death of Togliatti in 1964, Luigi Longo, legendary commander of the International Brigades in Spain and of the Communist armed groups during the Resistance, was elected Secretary General of the Party. In 1972, at the 13th Congress, because of Longo's bad health conditions, Enrico Berlinguer was elected the Party's Secretary General. Under his secretariat begins the process of progressive abandonment of Marxism-Leninism also from an ideological point of view. Founding father of one of the most destructive revisionist aberrations, Eurocommunism, Berlinguer laid the foundations for the self-dissolution of the Italian Communist Party.

Here we can not fully analyze the ideological and political deviations of which Berlinguer and the Eurocommunist leadership of the Party are responsible, from the rejection of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state, the deformation of Gramsci's thought, the theory of historical compromise, the cancellation from the Statute of the Party of all references to Marxism-Leninism, the acceptance of NATO, the break with the Communist Parties of the USSR and Eastern Europe, etc.. We will only say that Berlinguer and Eurocommunism have ideologically disarmed the working class and distorted its party. For the purpose of this contribution, we would like to point out the attitude of the ICP led by Berlinguer towards the bourgeois state and governments.

In the '70s Italy underwent a deep economic crisis, reflecting the crisis in the international payments system due to the unilateral termination by the USA of Bretton Woods agreements and the rise in oil and raw materials, accentuated in Italy by the unscrupulous use of competitive devaluation to favor exporting sectors. Inflation reached 22%, and even the indexation of wages was not able to fully protect workers from prices increase. In those years, under the secretariat of Berlinguer, the Italian Communist Party adopted a clearly reformist strategy, proposing a program

of reforms of the various sectors of society and the economy that, in fact, was not putting into question the nature of capitalist production relations. On the theoretical level, Berlinguer and the ICP leadership group argued that the "structural" reforms would introduce "elements of socialism", allowing a gradual and "democratic" overcoming of capitalism. Apart from the non-scientific character of this theory of transition to socialism, the Eurocommunists distorted the same concept of socialism as the ultimate goal. The proletarian dictatorship, as the form of the socialist state, was rejected, while the democracy and formal liberties of bourgeois society were universalized in an anti-historical and classless way. The socialization of the means of production was also disavowed, ensuring that the property would still be safeguarded, in a society where the state would be limited to nationalizing companies in crisis or, at most, large strategic enterprises. It was a party that had already abandoned Marxism-Leninism to become "secular" and ideologically eclectic. A party with huge economic assets, consisting of real estate and companies that were operating in a pure market logic. A party that, after the success in the 1975 administrative elections and the policies of 1976, was in the government of many regions, provinces and municipalities, with a strong representation in both chambers of the parliament. A party, therefore, well placed in institutions and in the bourgeois state, with the will to remain there, making at most meliorative adjustments to some aspects of the system, but not radical changes. The party electorate, traditionally made up of workers and people's strata, began to be composed also of elements of the "leftist" bourgeoisie, which, within the party's leading group, already had a greater weight than the proletarian elements. However, despite being the second party in Italy by electoral force and despite having a strong entrenchment in the working masses, the Communist Party was formally in opposition, due to the persistence of an anti-communist prejudice, internationally supported by the USA. To demonstrate to the bourgeoisie its reliability, the ICP continued to slide down the slope of the renunciation of the principles and of the guarantee of "governability", that is of an increasingly weaker opposition, characterized, among other things, by a moderation of the labor union claims. In 1977, the so-called "EUR line" was approved by the Congress of the General Confederation of Labor, transforming it from a conflictual union into a concertative one: from then on, no more fight, but negotiation and dialog with the employers. This line of yielding and demonstration of loyalty to the bourgeoisie and its state convinced a part of the bourgeoisie, politically represented by the Secretary of the Christian Democratic Party, Aldo Moro, to hypothesize the involvement of the Communists in the government of the country, to ensure in this way the acquiescence of the people's masses and the labor unions facing the austerity measures adopted to cope with the crisis. Needless to say, the ICP of Berlinguer became a champion of the austerity policy, asking the workers for new sacrifices to face the crisis. Sacrifices for the people, disguised under an elaboration that claimed for "austerity, as a new model of development and consumption", became one of the cornerstones of the ICP's political line and one of the main tools to increase exploitation and make the workers pay for the capitalistic crisis. A galaxy of non-parliamentary left-wing groups, which no longer recognized themselves in the reformist drift of the ICP, had begun to form on its left since 1963. In 1970, the Red Brigades were founded, a group that was openly inspired by the armed struggle in historical conditions that objectively excluded it. Composed of elements leaked from the ICP and intellectuals of Catholic-social formation, the Red Brigades, although at first they received limited sympathies in the working class, never had a broad support by the workers. The preference given to the military aspect of the struggle, neglecting the mass political work made them lose all links with the working class, making them isolated and easily infiltrated by provokers and agents of the intelligence, not only Italian. For example, the contacts of the second strategic directing committee of the Red Brigades are proved with the Israeli Mossad. The escalation of the terrorist actions of the Red

Brigades reached its peak with the kidnapping and killing of Aldo Moro, the political secretary of the Christian Democrats, an advocate of the involvement of the ICP in the government of the country. Facing a crisis that harshly hits the working class, instead of engaging in a revolutionary battle, taking advantage of the change in international correlation of forces after the Revolution of the Carnations in Portugal, the victories of the liberation movements in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Angola and Mozambique, and in domestic correlation of forces, after the electoral success in 1975 and 1976, the Italian Communist Party fell into the trap of the instrumental use of terrorism by the bourgeoisie and concentrated all its strength and its influence on the uncritical defense of the bourgeois state, summarized by the slogan "with the state, against the Red Brigades", while in the meantime the bourgeois state was using terrorism to sharpen the repression of class conflict. The condemnation of terrorism as a method alien to the working class and contrary to Lenin's teachings was surely a duty, but the support to a state that was expression and guarantee of class oppression was undoubtedly a very serious mistake, from which the ICP will not recover anymore. In 1976, the ICP refrained from voting against the government, assuring his survival until 1978, when, following the killing of Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades, it gave its vote of confidence in the so-called national solidarity government, providing it with external support until 1979. The subsequent rethinking of the ICP, with the adoption of the tactic of "left alternative", will not stop the slow electoral decline of the party and the decrease in its members till the death of Berlinguer in 1984, just before the European elections. On this occasion, on the emotional wave aroused by the death of Berlinguer, the Italian Communist Party, even without reaching the historical high of 1976, overcame the Christian Democracy for the first time, becoming the first Italian party. This success, due to emotional causes and not to political reasons, was short-lived and did not restore the political trust of the working masses in the party. In this way the process of dissolution began of what had been the strongest communist party in the capitalist world and that, by now, so far distanced itself from the same perspective of socialism that it could not be defined even as a social-democratic party. Closing ingloriously a glorious page of Italian history, in 1991 the ICP broke up and a part of its members founded the Party of Left Democrats, while a minority founded the Communist Refoundation Party.

5. Collaboration with bourgeois parties and governments after the dissolution of ICP (1991 – 2008)

The noble attempt to keep the communist project alive in Italy after the self-dissolution of the ICP arises and develops with an original underlying defect: the intention to repropose the ICP experience without the necessary self-criticism on its history, in a line of continuity that, in fact, had as its reference a party that had from a long ceased to be a communist party. Without any critical analysis on the ICP experience, the Communist Refoundation Party was founded in an ideologically eclectic way, simply by gathering those, who in some way referred to that denomination, including Trotskyist elements totally unrelated to the labor movement. Without the necessary self-criticism on past experiences, without a solid Marxist-Leninist ideological background and a serious political program, it was obvious that the new party would fall into the trap of parliamentarianism and collaboration with bourgeois governments, despite its radical phraseology.

The end of the second republic, which took place in the courtrooms for corruption and violation of the law on the public financing of the parties, also meant the end of the traditional parties that had been protagonists of Italian history. The Christian Democrats, which had ruled the country for over 45 years, shattered, spreading their pieces in new political right and left formations and the Italian Socialist Party, overwhelmed by scandals, practically disappeared as a party from the

political arena. In this situation, Silvio Berlusconi, a viscerally anti-Communist entrepreneur, linked to the most compromised exponents of the Socialist Party, entered into politics. His choice was mainly dictated by the need to protect himself from judicial inquiries against him and to favor companies in his group. His decision, however, scared professional politicians, not so much for the possibility of a right turn in the country, but for reasons of competition and fear of losing parliamentary weight.

In 1994 the Communist Refoundation Party became part of the center-left electoral coalition, called "Progressives", giving up, for the first of a disastrous series of times, the name and the symbols of the party in the name of the unity of the left. The coalition's electoral program reflected its heterogeneity and the weight of the CRP positions was almost non-existent. The real cement that was holding the coalition together was anti-berlusconism. This "joyous war machine", as its promoter Achille Occhetto, one of the liquidators of the ICP, called it, obviously lost the elections, crushed by the center-right coalition led by Berlusconi.

For the 1996 political elections, the Communist Refoundation Party stood on its own, after signing an agreement with the center-left coalition for the division of electoral constituencies. The left-centrist coalition won the elections and Romano Prodi formed the new government with the external support of the CRP. Once again the two-stroke policy was used: immediate sacrifices charged on the workers to meet the requirements to enter the Euro area in exchange for promises that will remain a dead letter. In 1998 the CRP, with great delay, withdrew its external support, causing the government to fall. In disagreement with this choice, a patrol of members of the parliament, led by Armando Cossutta and Oliviero Diliberto, split from the CRP and founded the Party of Italian Communists. The reason for this splitting was certainly not the idea of finally affirming the communist project, but rather the will to keep alive the center-left government and, above all, to safeguard their well-paid positions in bourgeois institutions of all levels. In the following years, the Party of Italian Communists will participate in all the coalitions and all the center-left governments with at least two ministers until the 2008 elections, becoming accomplice in the criminal war against Yugoslavia and the most odious legislative measures to the detriment of workers, such as two counter-reforms of pensions, the theft of severance package, given employers and insurance companies away, the restriction of labor rights, the growing economic sacrifices imposed on workers in the name of Europe and the euro, etc.. The Communist Refoundation Party, which had remained in opposition till 2006 and had adopted a position against the war in Yugoslavia, albeit from a standpoint of classless pacifism, did not hesitate to participate in the second Prodi government with those same political forces that carried out the war and the social massacre of the Italian working class. For the 2008 elections, both parties run in a "radical left" coalition, named "The Rainbow", together with the Green Federation which, despite being a worthless minority, managed to veto the use of communist symbols. The participation in bourgeois governments and the complicity in the adoption of anti-people measures to support big capital, the lack of a serious program in favor of the working class and the people's strata were harshly punished by voters: the "Rainbow" coalition did not even elect a deputy. For the first time in Italian history, the communists had no parliamentary representation. With the 2008 elections, the story ends of the participation of the two self-styled Communist parties to bourgeois central governments. Despite formal self-criticism, changes in denomination and leadership, however, collaboration with the bourgeois parties, impossible at the central level due to the elimination of their parliamentary representation, continues extensively at the local level, as well as the surrender to participate in elections with the communist name and symbols, disguising themselves under generic and non-characterizing coalition names.

Our Party, the Communist Party (Italy), born in 2009 basing on a Marxist-Leninist criticism and self-criticism of the ICP history and the following attempts to keep alive a communist project in Italy, is proud to have given the workers back, for the first time after 17 years, the possibility to vote for their party, the Communist Party, with its historical symbols, the red flag with the sickle, the hammer and the star, the flag that we raise without compromises, fear or concessions.

6. Conclusion

The position of our Party regarding the attitude to be held towards institutions, governments and bourgeois parties is clear and articulated. We believe that the primary task of the Party consists in the development of the class struggle at every level and in the creation of a revolutionary social block of the working class with all the people's strata potentially allied with it, able to overthrow the domination of capital and the bourgeoisie. In order to do this, the participation in elections and, in the case of success, in the parliament and in other elected bodies, is a form of struggle that we must practice, but it is not the only one. The main fields on which we have to conduct the class battle remain the places of work, the places of study and the squares, that is, the places where the class contradictions arise, develop and appear. The working style of the communists elected in the representative bodies of the bourgeois state must be consistent with the aim of overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and capital. As Lenin taught, they must act as "agitators in the camp of the enemy", working within the institution, but against it.

History has shown that the involvement of the communists in bourgeois governments has not changed the class nature of those governments and their policies and has not favored the workers. On the contrary, it has changed in a degenerative sense the class nature of those parties, making them accomplices of anti-people policies and breaking off their ties with the workers until their disappearance from the political arena. Therefore, we exclude any participation in executive bodies of management of the bourgeois state, from central government to local governments.

The construction of a revolutionary social block under the leadership of the working class, involves the development of its social alliances with non-proletarian people's strata, anyway oppressed by capital. We must be able to demonstrate the commonality of their interests with those of the working class and its universality as the class which, freeing itself, frees the whole of society. This, however, does not involve the development of political alliances with bourgeois parties, not even if they are parties that, directly or indirectly, are the political expression of those people's strata that we want to turn into allies of the working class. Therefore we exclude any form of coalition agreement for electoral purposes, where mathematics would prevail over politics. In this case too, the historical experience of the last 25 years shows that these coalitions bind the party to mediated and botched programs, totally devoid of class content. This is not sectarianism, but the duty to preserve the autonomy the Party needs to coherently carry on with its program of revolutionary transformation of society towards Socialism-Communism.